

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

LOVERS IN AUSCHWITZ

by Keren Blankfeld

1. David and Zippi both grew up in middle class Jewish families. What were some similarities and differences in their upbringing?
2. How did antisemitism manifest differently in Warsaw and in Bratislava?
3. What were some of the ways in which the women in Auschwitz-Birkenau, including Zippi, helped take care of each other and resist the Nazis?
4. How did Katya and Zippi obtain their privileged positions? What surprised you in their behavior?
5. David found his entire family murdered in the Warsaw Ghetto when he was 15. What do you think helped motivate him to survive after seeing the pile of corpses?
6. What are some ways in which music and art played a role in *Lovers in Auschwitz*?
7. Both Zippi and David find opportunities to take revenge on the Nazis. What do you think about how they deal with these opportunities?
8. David and Zippi were not the only prisoners to have romantic affairs in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Were you surprised by some of the other love affairs?
9. Zippi called Mala Zimetbaum a “selfish, stupid girl,” for trying to break out of Auschwitz-Birkenau. What do you think of Zippi’s reaction?
10. Were you surprised that Zippi and David didn’t reunite in Warsaw after the war? Were you able to relate to either of them at that point in the book?
11. What do you think were the highest and lowest points for Zippi and David in the first couple of years after being liberated?

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12. Were you surprised by their neighbors' reactions when Zippi and Sara returned to their respective hometowns after the war?
13. Sam and Zippi grew up, mostly, in different households. What do you think about how their relationship evolved from childhood to old age?
14. After the war, Zippi married Erwin Tichauer and they traveled around the world. Why do you think that Zippi never practiced her career in graphic design? And why do you think she never played the mandolin again?
15. Why do you think it took David so long to tell his son about his past?
16. What do you think David and Zippi's lives would have looked like if they'd reunited in Warsaw?
17. In the Acknowledgments, the author notes that her four grandparents were Holocaust survivors and refugees. How do you think this connection to the Holocaust informed how she wrote the book?
18. Do you see any parallels in immigration, discrimination, and global politics before World War II and today?