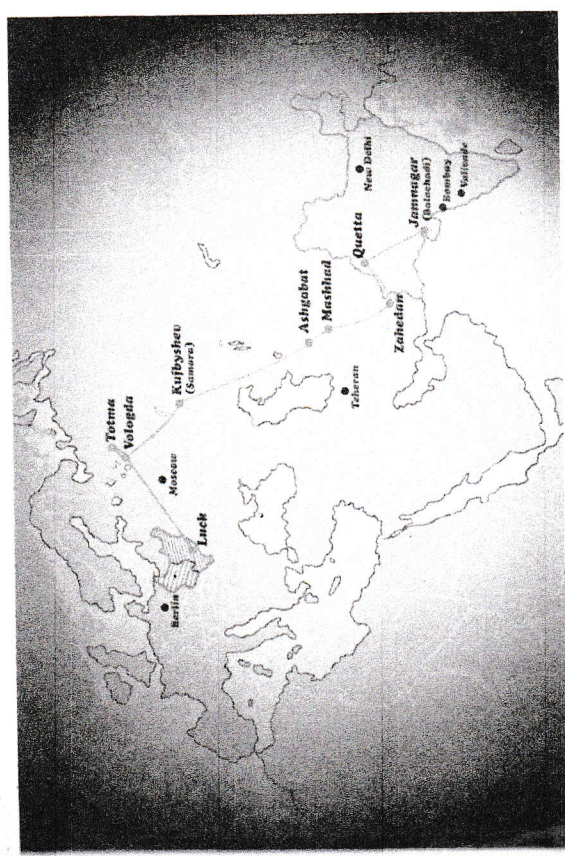


One Star Away by Imogene Salva

READING GROUP GUIDE

1. Many people think the Final Solution regarding the Jews of Europe defines WWII. Does this story change your thoughts about how history is written?
2. Why does Tola take Polish soil with her when the family is arrested?
3. When Kasia is orphaned during the train trip from Poland, she is taken in by Tola and Kostek. How does this generosity effect Ziuta and her siblings in the short term? In the long term?
4. An old woman wants Kasia's boots after her death. What do you think of this woman's request? How does one balance morality, loss, and survival?
5. What role does faith play in keeping people alive when confronted with extreme cruelty?
6. Do you believe Ziuta and her siblings will ever overcome the

MAP OF ZIUTA'S JOURNEY



- Driving distance from Luck to Vologda: 1,734 km; 1,078 miles*
- Walking distance from Vologda to Chotm settlement: 300km; 186 miles*
- Driving distance from Vologda to Kuybyshev*: 1,277 km; 793 miles*
- Driving distance from Kuybyshev to Ashgabat: 1,820 km; 1131 miles*
- Driving distance from Ashgabat to Mashhad: 270 km; 270 miles*
- Driving distance from Mashhad to Quetta: 1,678km; 1,043 miles*

*In 1935, Samara was renamed Kuybyshev in honor of the Bolshevik leader Valerian Kuybyshev. In January 1991, the city's historical name was restored.

emotional scars of their train ride and life in the Inhuman Land? What factors play a role in the recovery of their humanity?

7. "Not all Russians are bad." How do experiences in a young person's life shape attitudes about people, places, and things?

8. What role does tradition play in keeping the children alive?

9. What is the symbolism of the spar tree in the logging camp?

10. Kostek tells Tadek he would be responsible for the family if something happened to Kostek. What do you think would have happened to the family if Kostek died?

11. Tola and Kostek suffer the strain of sending three of their children to India. Given the dangers/disease the children encountered along the way, would they have sent their children if they had advanced knowledge of these perils?

12. What characteristics of fatherhood does the Maharaja embody? How important is his physical presence to the children?

13. Mr. Bajaj suggests the elephant, Riti, knows Bolek. Understanding Riti's past, what do you surmise Bolek's past was like?

14. Why is the story of Bolek's death important?

15. The sound of hammering nails into coffins haunts Ziuta for the rest of her life. Having seen people shot, inhumane treatment, and mangled corpses, why does the hammering in particular scare her so much?

16. Throughout the story Ziuta is told to forgive the Russians. Do you think she does?

17. One of the great tragedies of this story is Tola's death which occurs before she knows the fate of her three children. Before she dies, she dreams of Ziuta on the stage. From the stage, Ziuta sees her mother. What is the significance of these events regarding the theme of the story?

18. Ziuta decided to come to the US. What were the reasons for her choice? Would she have chosen America if Jadzia had decided to return to Poland?

19. In their adult lives, Jadzia became a nun and Ziuta a nurse. What do these choices say about their recovery from their experiences and the scars that remain with them?

20. What part does the Shah of Iran play in furthering our understanding of human behavior and the underlying message of *One Star Away*?

21. Would you expect Ziuta to draw closer to her religious upbringing in later life or fall away from it? Why?

22. What would it be like to be a child of Ziuta's growing up in America? Would Ziuta be a drill sergeant or a pushover as a parent?