

Surviving Hitler: A Boy in the Nazi Death Camps

Answer Key

Acknowledgements

1. Who is this story about?

Jack Mandelbaum

Introduction

2. How did Andrea Warren first learn the truth about the Holocaust? (1)

Andrea Warren met a survivor named Sam.

3. Warren used a provoking question to end the introduction. She leaves the reader with something to ponder. What was her question? What did she mean by this? (3)

“Who might be the next target of the kind of ‘ethnic cleansing’ practiced by the Nazis? Could it be you?” Andrea Warren meant are we going to make sure that the Holocaust never happens again or are we going to be bystanders?

Chapter 1: Rumors of War, 1939

4. How was Jack’s life similar to yours?

Jack lived with his mother, father, sister and brother; he had a stamp collection; he went to the beach; he went to school; etc.

5. Jack’s hometown of Gdynia, population 250,000, had a small Jewish population.

How did this affect Jack? (16)

Jack was highly assimilated. He knew a lot about Catholicism.

6. What did Jack’s father do that made Jack proud of him? (19)

Jack’s father helped Jews escape from Germany.

7. What happened to Jack’s Hebrew teacher? (18-19)

Jack’s teacher disappeared.

8. Since Jewish schools were abolished, how did Jack spend his time? (19)

Jack spent his time at the docks watching the Polish Navy train.

9. Jack’s father had to make an important decision regarding his family. What was it? (19)

Jack’s father decided to send his family to stay with his father who lived in small town three hundred miles away.

Chapter 2: Occupation

10. After reading about the separation of Jack’s family, what can you predict? (20)

11. Soon after Jack moved to his grandfather’s house, the Nazis invaded Poland. Write about three changes the Jews endured under Nazi invasion.

Jews were ordered to wear the Star of David on their clothing.

Jewish children could not attend school.

Most Jews could not hold jobs.

12. Why did Jadzia, Jack’s sister, leave her grandfather’s home? (29-30)

Jack’s aunt was expecting a baby and wanted Jadzia to come help her.

Chapter 3: A Growing Fear

13. Where is Jack living now? How was it different from living at his grandfather's home? (31)
Jack, his mother, and his brother are now living with Mama's older brother in a nearby village. It was crowded with no running water. They had to use an outdoor latrine. It was hard to keep clean. They were hungry all the time.
14. Jack became an expert at doing what? (34)
Jack quickly became expert at avoiding soldiers.
15. Jack states, "I lost my fun-loving attitude about life" (34). What troubles did he have that caused him to say this?
He had to be the man in the family and look out for Mama and Jakob. Every week Nazis were posting new edicts against Polish Jews.
16. What big risk did Jack take, which ultimately saved his life? (38)
Jack had been assigned to assist a Catholic electrician who was rewiring the home of a Nazi official. He asked him to get him an official letter saying that he worked for the Nazis so he could come back and help him everyday. That way he would have papers that may help him in case there was a raid.
17. What was Jack's plan to survive the war? Hint: Find the Jack's quotation on page 39.
"Whatever they decided the rules of the game were, I made up my mind to play by them." (Jack did not know the futility of his theory.)

Chapter 4: Despair

18. Write a paragraph describing the "roundup." (41-46)
Early in the morning, soldiers ordered the Jews out of their houses. Several were shot. All nine hundred Jews were lined up and taken to a local brewery. They were signaled by a Nazi officer to go to the left or right. Jack was separated from his mother and brother.
19. Jack lied to Jakob, his brother, about what it means to be deported. Why did he do this?
It was better to tell Jakob that being deported meant to settle people somewhere else and give them a new home than to tell the truth. He didn't want to further frighten his brother. (It is possible that Jack may not have really known this at this point.)
20. According to Jack, what was "the worst moment in (his) life?" (46-47)
The worst moment of his life was when Jack was separated from his brother, mother, uncle, and family.

Chapter 5: The Right to Die

21. Why did the Nazis give prisoners a new identity? What was Jack's new identity? (52)
Reducing your identity to a number was part of their way of dehumanizing you. (Tattoos were imprinted on prisoners only at Auschwitz.)

Chapter 6: Learning the Rules

22. Define *kapo*. (54)

A Nazi concentration camp prisoner who was given privileges in return for supervising prisoner work gangs, often a common criminal and frequently brutal to fellow inmates.

23. Aaron said that he was fortunate that he had no children. What did he mean by this? (56)

No one had to suffer except Aaron and his wife.

24. Jack was grateful to Aaron for befriending him. What advice did Aaron give Jack which helped him survive? (57)

“Stay at perfect attention and do nothing to make them notice you.”

25. What are two different philosophies for survival? Which philosophy did Jack choose to follow? (59)

1 – Some tried to work as little as possible to conserve energy.

2 – Others tried to work harder so they could avoid beatings.

Jack’s choice: Jack chooses to work hard.

26. What was baked in the bread that made it taste so terrible? (60)

The bread was full of sawdust to physically and psychologically torment the prisoners.

Chapter 7: The Game

27. Why do you think this chapter is titled “The Game”?

Staying alive was like winning a game.

28. Did Jack hate the guards and officers at the camp? Explain the reason for his answer. (64)

Jack chose not to hate them. Hate was destructive and served no good.

29. Aaron believed that a key factor to surviving the camp was having previous experience in a ghetto. This is because the prisoners have already learned to live without what? (67)

They have already learned to live without freedom, food, cleanliness, security, etc.

30. According to Jack, what were five rules to follow in order to play “the game”? (67-68)

1. Find extra food so you do not starve to death.
2. Do what you are told.
3. Never call attention to yourself.
4. Help your fiends.
5. Stay healthy.

31. Why was Jack considered lucky to catch the disease, typhus? (70)

A mild case is like an inoculation. You never get it again.

Chapter 8: Hour by Hour

32. What jobs was Jack given at Gross-Rosen? (70-71)

He was selected to carry the heavy kettle of soup from barracks to barracks. He was assigned to help build a sand bed for a railroad. He helped load and unload chemicals into railroad cars. He unloaded cement bags from railroad cars.

Chapter 9: Death's Door

33. What deadly disease did Jack get? (81)

Jack contracted dysentery.

34. When he was in the sick barracks, he realized he had to get out of there whether he was sick or not. Why? (82)

He realized that within minutes of receiving a shot, the man would jerk spasmodically and then die. The doctor was killing them because they were no longer productive.

Chapter 10: Moniek

35. Jack was transferred to another camp where he met Moniek. How was Moniek different than other prisoners?

Moniek was friendly. He smiled and told jokes.

36. What did Moniek find to eat that was considered a treat? (89)

Moniek stole a jar of marmalade.

Chapter 11: The Miracle

37. What was the miracle that saved Jack and Moniek's life? (94)

Jack and Moniek were assigned to peel potatoes for the guards' soup. They managed to slip extra peels into their pockets to eat later. This helped them stay alive longer. This job was also inside and not outside in the freezing cold.

38. Even though their lives were on the line, Moniek and Jack helped their friends whenever they could. What did they do? (96)

When they were alone, they stole what they could for themselves and to give to their friends. Once they distracted a guard and stole bread. They shared their unneeded meal tickets with friends.

Chapter 12: Liberation

39. When the boys arrived at Doernhau camp, Moniek was brutally beaten by Hungarian Jews. Why was he picked out of the crowd? (102)

Earlier Moniek had gotten into a fight with a Hungarian Jewish prisoner trying to steal potatoes.

40. What was ironic about Jack's attitude the night before liberation? (104)

Jack thought Hitler had "won the game." He did not think he would live to see liberation.

41. While in the camps, Jack refused to let himself cry. What happened that caused Jack to cry after all this time? (105)

He saw Moniek alive.

Chapter 13: The Search

42. Jack and Moniek were the first prisoners to do what? (106)

Jack and Moniek were the first prisoners to walk outside.

43. What were Jack and Moniek's two main objectives after the war? (111)
Their objectives were to regain their health and to find their families.
44. How much did Jack weigh directly after the war? (112)
Jack weighed 80 pounds.
45. Moniek was reunited with what family members? (112)
Moniek was eventually reunited with both of his brothers.
46. Jack was eventually reunited with his uncle Sigmund, who told Jack that his father was dead. What made his death even more difficult to accept? (114)
Jack's father died in the Stutthof concentration camp the day before Sigmund arrived.
47. Jack's Aunt Hilda's husband gave Jack a gift. What was it and what was it made from? (115)
Aunt Hilda's husband gave Jack a coat made from a U.S. Army blanket.
48. What happened to Jack's grandfather and to his sister Jadzia? (116-117)
About two thousand Jews, including Jack's grandfather and his wife had been marched to a ravine outside town and shot. Their bodies were dumped into an enormous common grave. They may have not died instantly. Jadzia died in the gas chambers holding the baby she was minding when she was seventeen years old.
49. How many relatives did Jack have before the war? After the war? (118)
Before: 80 After: 4

Chapter 14: Creating a New Life

50. Describe in one paragraph how Jack thrived after arriving in Kansas City in 1946. Include at least four facts. (119-121)
Jack got a job working for a clothing-distribution wholesaler, sweeping floors and moving boxes. He shared a room with his uncle and took English classes at night. Ten years later, he bought the company and turned into an import business. He married; he and his wife have seven children.
51. Salek, a fellow survivor, attributed Jack for saving his life. How did Jack do this? (121)
Jack gave Salek his meal ticket. Without the extra food, he would not have survived.
52. What lesson can be learned from the above question?
Jack and Moniek helped their fellow prisoners. When they could be, they were generous.
53. By 1999, how many times had Jack visited Poland? (122)
Jack visited Poland eight times since the war in his effort to come to terms with what had happened to him.
54. What are the only two items that Jack has to remember his family by? (123)
Jack has only a photo of his father once sent to a cousin in Israel, and a photo of his mother's sister Tauba, which had also been sent to a cousin.
55. Jack and Isak Federman co-founded what? (125)
They cofounded the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education.

67. How many Gypsies were killed?

Approximately 500,00 Gypsies (Roma or Sinti) – one third of their population - were murdered by the Nazis.

68. How many people were murdered in the Holocaust?

The book says eleven million people were murdered in the concentration camps. But it was not just the camps. The figure eleven million includes the T4 program, Einsatzgruppen, local pogroms, labor camps, death marches, etc.

69. How many Jews were killed?

The books says over six million of Europe's 8.6 million Jews were murdered. It is really up to six million Jews.

70. What percentage of the Jewish population of Poland survived?

Only ten percent of the Jews of Poland survived.