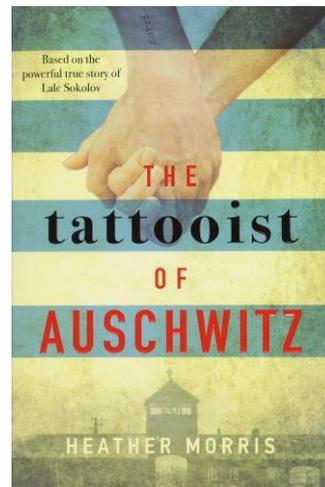


The Tattooist of Auschwitz

Heather Morris

Reading Group Questions

1. What do you think was Morris's purpose in writing this novel? Is it for entertainment? Is it for an educational purpose? Or do you think Morris wrote this novel for some other reason.
2. Should this novel have been marketed as being based on a true story when such a large portion of it is actually based on conjecture?
3. Did your perception of Lale change throughout the novel? If so, how?
4. Why do you think Gita was so hesitant to tell Lale personal details about herself, such as her surname or where she was from?
5. What do you think of the way the relationship between Lale and Baretzki is portrayed?
6. Throughout the book, Lale constantly thinks, speaks, and acts in a hopeful and uplifting manner. Is the theme of hope out of place in a novel about the Holocaust, or is it fitting for a story of survival against the odds?
7. In 2003, Lale Sokolov was in fear of being prosecuted as a Nazi collaborator. Given the facts of his story, do you think this was a likely possibility?
8. The novel includes many horrifying moments throughout Lale's time in Auschwitz. What part(s) of the novel did you find the most shocking, and why?
9. The novel also describes many instances of humanity, for example the builders giving Lale something to eat. How did these small acts of humanity effect your reading experience? Which scenes made the deeper impression on you – the scenes of horror, or the scenes of humanity?
10. At the end of the novel, Morris gives a short commentary on the lives of the prisoners after the story ends. Did this information change your perception of any of the characters? Did you find anything surprising?
11. Some of Lale Sokolov's memories have turned out to be historically inaccurate. For example, he misremembered the number of Gita's tattoo. Do you think Morris was right to stick to Lale's version of events,



in spite of historical fact?

12. How would you respond to the suggestion that this novel romanticised the Holocaust?

A Survivors Perspective

Arek Hersh

Arek Hersh is an Auschwitz survivor who grew up in Poland. He was imprisoned in the Łódź ghetto and then in Auschwitz-Birkenau before being liberated in 1945. Arek's experiences in Auschwitz reflect Lale's as he, too, survived by taking advantage of certain situations, such as a disturbance which distracted guards upon his arrival to Auschwitz. This allowed him to sneak into the line of people that were bound for work in the camp, an opportunity that helped him to escape the gas chambers for which he was originally headed. Like Lale, Arek was forced into cruel labour where he witnessed first-hand the suffering of the other prisoners.



<https://holocaustlearning.org.uk/stories/arek-hersh/>