

Reader's Guide

1. Discuss the role music plays in Tasa's life and in the novel. What significance did Klezmer music and Gypsy references bring to the novel?
2. Why do you think the author chose to tell the story from Tasa's point of view? Was this approach effective?
3. How does Tasa's character change over the course of the novel? Describe some of her unique qualities.
4. Share your thoughts about how the relationship between Danik and Tasa began and ended. Were there alternatives to the choices they made?
5. Discuss the role family plays in Tasa's life.
6. What was the significance of Frau Rothstein as a character in this story? Of Josef Gnyp?
7. What role does religion play in the lives of these characters? How does it help them deal with adversity and respond to anti-Semitism? Why do you think Salomon denied that their lives as Jews were in danger?

8. What is the significance of the zloty coin?
9. Discuss the novel's settings—Podkamien, Brody, Vienna. Did these locales feel authentic to you? How did they enhance the story for you?
10. How does Tasa keep her memories of her mother from fading during their five years of separation? How does their relationship evolve as the novel unfolds?
11. Explain why the teenagers' prank in Brody was critical to the narrative. What did it reveal about Tasa and her friends? About the Soviet occupation of eastern Poland?
12. Did you like reading the letters that were inserted at various points in the novel? Why or why not?
13. As the novel ends, what kind of future does Tasa imagine for herself in Atlantic City?
14. Did knowing that this novel is inspired by actual events affect your interest in, and attachment to, the characters? Which characters did you like best, and why?

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