

BACKGROUND: You have to “suspend disbelief” and accept the idea that a teenage girl can go back in time to experience the Holocaust so she can learn a lesson about tradition and the real meaning of the Jewish experience.

PRIMARY CHARACTERS:

- Hannah (Kristen Dunst) – teenage girl who “wakes up” in a village in Poland 50 years in the past to find out that her parents are dead, she is from Lublin, & she is living during the Holocaust with her cousin’s family.
- Aunt Eva – Hanna’s aunt at the beginning (modern times) who thinks Hanna doesn’t understand.
- Rivkah (Brittany Murphy) – Hanna’s cousin in Poland
- Leah– bride who gets married to a Yeshiva student at the beginning of the movie
- Rabbi Gershaw – religious leader of their village
- Ariel - Rabbi’s son who is interested in Hanna
- Minna – girl who is pregnant

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

1. What is the “modern” Hannah’s attitude toward her family and Jewish culture at the beginning of the movie AND WHY?
2. What do the Nazis tell the Jews when they make them leave their village? What is the reaction of the Jewish leaders there? What happens as they leave? HOW are they moved?
3. What immediately happens as they arrive at the camp? What are they told?
4. What are the different things you see happening to them when they arrive at the camp? Why do you think the Nazis are doing these things?
5. What do the Jews do & how are they treated after the first day in the camp? What problems do they face? What happens to the Rabbi’s wife & daughters and why?
6. Give examples of how Hannah becomes a leader in the camp. Why do you think this happens? How does she inspire and motivate the others?

7. What does Ariel (Rabbi's son) decide to do? What does Hannah do in response? What happens? How does the Nazi in charge of the camp use this to "teach everyone a lesson"?
8. What do you think are the biggest cruelties depicted AND WHY?
9. Give examples of how Rivkah helps Hannah. What does this show you about life in the camps?
10. How does ritual & religion play an important part in the survival of the Jews? Give examples.
11. Why & how does Hannah "die"?
12. Allied forces never bombed the camps, the perimeters, or the rail lines ---read the below excerpt -- yes, from Wikipedia, and yes, just about Auschwitz, but still---and give 2-3 sentences on what you think should have/could have been done.

*Bombing Auschwitz: Technical consideration*

*Since the controversy began in the 1970s, a number of military experts have looked at the problems involved in bombing Auschwitz and the rail lines and have concluded that it would have been extremely difficult and risky and that the chances of achieving significant results would have been small. It appears reasonable to assume that John J. McCloy was accurate in his early statements that the idea was never discussed with President Roosevelt. Later in life John J. McCloy may have found it expedient to share with FDR the blame heaped on him by average people and by those who seek to blame somebody in addition to the Germans for the Holocaust.[32][33][34][35]*

*A 2004 documentary, Auschwitz; the forgotten evidence included interviews with historians William Rubinstein and Richard Overy.[36] It mentioned the Jewish Agency's request to the Allies on 6 July to bomb Auschwitz and showed the aerial reconnaissance photographs. It then examined the operational and technical feasibility aspects, in two categories: precision bombing by Mosquito-type aircraft, and area bombing by larger aircraft. It considered that precision bombing of railway lines was so common by 1944 that the Germans had specialist teams that could repair damage within hours or days. The inmates' food supplies were assumed to come by rail, and so an unrepaired railway would cause them hardship. Area bombing risked killing too many prisoners.*

*From March 1944 onwards, the Allies were in control of the skies over Europe. According to historian David Wyman the 15th U.S. Army Air Force, which was based in Italy, had the range and capability to strike Auschwitz from early May 1944.[27][37] General Ira C. Eaker, the American Mediterranean Allied Air Forces Commander, whose airplanes were already bombing nearby Auschwitz,[27]in July 1944 visited the Air Ministry in London. When the request to bomb Auschwitz was put to Churchill, he gave it his full support. He regarded it as something that the American daylight bombers could and should do.[38]*

*On August 24, 1944, the U.S. Army Air Forces carried out a bombing operation against a factory adjacent to the Buchenwald concentration camp. Despite perfect weather conditions, 315 prisoners were killed, 525 seriously harmed, and 900 lightly wounded.[39]*

13. Give me 2-3 sentences on what you take away from this film.