Reading Guide Questions

Page 12-34

1. Right before someone came to get Eliezer’s father to tell him about the transports, it says that “Night fell.” In fact, the author mentions “night,” “midnight,” and other times of the night several times throughout these opening scenes. What do you think “night” symbolizes?
2. How is Tzipora, Eliezer’s youngest sister described? Why do you think he keeps mentioning her hair color?
3. Describe the conditions for the people on the train.

1. Who is Madame Schachter and what was she screaming? Why might it be significant?
2. How did the other people treat Madame Schachter? Why do you think they treated her this way?
3. Another prisoner yells at Eliezer and his father, correcting them about their ages. Why do you think he did that?
4. What was the significance of being sent to the left or to the right?
5. What did Eliezer see that, he said, caused him to be unable to sleep at night?
6. What is the Kaddish? Why was it unusual that the people were saying it?
7. **Directions: Annotate the following speech. Make comments, inferences, and ask questions. Find symbolism, metaphor, imagery, personification and repetition in this speech.**

Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, that turned my life into one long night seven times sealed.

Never shall I forget that smoke.

Never shall I forget the small faces of the children whose bodies I saw transformed under a silent sky.

Never shall I forget those flames that consumed my faith forever.

Never shall I forget the nocturnal silence that deprived me for all eternity of the desire to live.

Never shall I forget those moments that murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to ashes.

Never shall I forget those things, even were I condemned to live as long as God Himself.

Never.

1. Discuss the complicated emotions that Eliezer’s father is having here: "What a shame, a shame that you did not go with your mother…I saw many children your age go with their mothers…" His voice was terribly sad. I understood that he did not wish to see what they would do to me. He did not wish to see his only son go up in flames”
2. What happened when Eliezer’s father had to go to the bathroom? How did Eliezer respond?
3. What is ironic about this statement: “That SS officer in the muddy barrack must have been lying: Auschwitz was, after all, a convalescent home…” (42)
4. What is Eliezer’s new name? (What effect does getting a new name have on the prisoners?)
5. Who is Stein? What lie did Eliezer tell Stein? Do you think he was right to lie? Why or why not?
6. On page 45, Eliezer says that Stein left and they never saw him again because “he had been given the news. The real news.” What can we infer happened to Stein? How do you know?
7. How would you describe Eliezer and his father’s relationship at this point in the story? Give a specific example to prove your idea.
8. We see a character named “Akiba Drumer” for the first time. What is his theory about why things are so hard for the Jews?
9. On page 46, Eliezer describes how the prisoners were marched through German towns, and some girls came up and flirted with the German soldiers. Why do you think the author includes this detail?