

DEAR CANADA

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Prisoners in the Promised Land

The Ukrainian Internment Diary of Anya Soloniuk

By Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch

1. Where does Anya's diary come from, and where is she when she receives it? Who gave it to her, and why?
2. What happened to Anya's brother? How did he influence and support the family's move to Canada? What significant favour did he do for Anya, particularly?
3. Why do you think Stephan is so mean to Anya the first few times they meet? When does his behaviour begin to change? In what ways do the two become important to each other over the course of the story?
4. As the war intensifies, Anya describes Canadians as being "angry as bees." How is this an appropriate comparison? Compare Anya's subsequent thoughts on Galicia's position in the war. How is it similar to that of the Ukrainians in Canada?
5. Why were the internees' valuables taken from them when they entered the camp? Do you think the authorities intended to return them? What do you think happened to them? How might the people who took them have justified their actions?
6. The Ukrainians' new lives in Canada are not easy, yet they take consolation in being "free." What do you think they mean by this? In what ways were they *not* free in Galicia? How are Anya and her friends not free in Canada, even before the internment? During the internment, how do Anya's thoughts about freedom change?
7. In her diary, Anya wonders why the Canadian government built the internment camp on Pikogan land. Who are the Pikogan people, and what effect has the camp had on their lives? How is their situation similar or different from the Ukrainians'? What answer might you give to Anya's question?
8. Towards the end of the story, Anya observes that "people who don't have very much are always willing to share." What are some of the ways that Anya experienced this during her first year or so in Canada? Judging by your own experience, would you agree or disagree?