

THE DEVIL'S ARITHMETIC
STUDY QUESTIONS

CHAPTER ONE

1. At the beginning of the story, where is Hannah going?
2. Why does she dislike going there?
3. How do Aunt Rose and Aunt Eva treat Hannah?

CHAPTER TWO

1. What television show upsets Grandpa Will? Why?
2. What does the five-digit number on Grandpa Will's arm signify? What did Hannah do when she was younger?
3. Why is Hannah intrigued about Aunt Eva?

CHAPTER THREE

1. Why is Hannah so distressed at the Seder? Why does she wish she was elsewhere?
2. What does Hannah get to do now that she is 13 years old?
3. What does Hannah see when she opens the apartment door for Elijah?

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Who are the people in this "new place" where Hannah finds herself?
2. Write a description of these people.
3. Describe their house and the surrounding area.
4. By what name do these people call Hannah?

5. According to the people who live in the house, why is Hannah acting so strangely?

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Jokingly, Shmuel says that something frightens him. What is it?

2. Where does Shmuel say that Hannah is from? From what place does Hannah say that she came?

3. Who is Yitzchak? Write a description of him.

4. Who are Reuven and Tzipporah? What do they look like?

CHAPTER SIX

1. Why doesn't Hannah like the dress that she wears?

2. How has Hannah's appearance changed?

3. Hannah meets four girls her own age. What are their names, and how does Hannah remember them?

4. Why do the girls find Hannah's stories so entertaining?

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. What other stories does Hannah tell the girls?

2. Where are Hannah and the other people going? What are these festivities like?

3. What is a badchan?

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Who is Fayge? What does she look like?
2. Describe Viosk.
3. What seems out of place in this beautiful setting?
4. What does the badchan say about whom he sees?
5. When Hannah asks what year it is, what is she told? Why does this frighten her?

CHAPTER NINE

1. What do the soldiers want the people to do?
2. Apparently, other relatives were to meet Fayge and Shmuel at Viosk. What happened to those people?
3. The soldiers tell everyone that they are being “resettled.” What is the true destination?
4. What are the people to do with their possessions?
5. What predictions does the badchan make?

CHAPTER TEN

1. Where do the trucks take everyone?
2. What does Hannah notice on the ground as she jumps out of the truck?
3. What do the soldiers tell everyone to do? What happens if anyone disobeys?
4. What do the soldiers take from the people?

5. Describe the conditions in the railroad car.

6. What stories do the people tell?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. How long does their journey take?

2. What instructions are given to the women when they reach the barracks?

3. What happened to Rachel?

4. Why do they shave the women's heads?

CHAPTER TWELVE

1. What does Hannah notice about the woman in the blue dress, the one who gave them instructions and orders?

2. What type of clothes are Hannah and the others given?

3. After they are clothed, what comes next?

4. What happens when Gitl tries to go for food?

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1. What happens to Tzipporah?

2. How does Gitl react to this? Why?

3. How does Hannah meet Rivka? What important information does Rivka tell her?

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1. Rivka speaks with Hannah again. What does she tell her?
2. How does Rivka explain her numbers?
3. What does Rivka say about Esther when she walks away?
4. What is “Lilith’s Cave”?
5. Where do the smaller children go when Commandant Breuer visits the camp? Why?
6. Rivka gives Hannah “real” shoes. Why is this so special?
7. How does Hannah remember her number?

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1. When the Commandant arrives, where do the young children hide? How are they signaled of the danger?
2. What does Hannah do to save the baby? Why does this upset Leye?
3. What type of work is Hannah assigned?
4. What does Hannah do with portions of her food ration?
5. What does “choosing” mean?
6. What words did Rivka tell Chaya NEVER to use? What words should she use instead?
7. What does Gitl give Hannah for her birthday?
8. What has happened to Rabbi Boruch and others who were brought to the camp?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1. What does Gitl mean by the term “devil’s arithmetic”?
2. What happens to Reuven?
3. Why does Rivka gasp when Hannah speaks to the Commandant?
4. What does Rivka mean by the statement “We are all heroes here”?

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

1. What is “the plan” that Gitl refers to? Who is part of the plan, and what is the reason for it?
2. What does Gitl give to Hannah?
3. Why are they able to get out of the barracks so easily?
4. Why doesn’t Fayge go with them?
5. Whose shoes are left outside the barracks? Why does this amuse Gitl?

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

1. What does Hannah see when she awakens the next morning?
2. What happens to Shmuel and Fayge? What became of Yitzchak?
3. What is so ironic about the setting of nature and the setting in the camp?
4. Hannah speaks differently now about “remembering.” What does she say?
5. What decision does the new guard make concerning Hannah, Rivka, Shifre, and Esther?
6. What does Hannah do for Rivka? Why?

CHAPTER NINETEEN

1. Where is Hannah at the beginning of the chapter?
2. As Aunt Eva drinks her wine, what does Hannah see on her arm? Why is this significant?
3. What is the special connection between Aunt Eva and Rivka?

EPILOGUE

1. When the camp was liberated in 1945, who were the survivors?