



Traitor

Amanda McCrina



Tome Society It List Discussion Guide

Pre-reading questions

1. Traitor is set during WWII, but is unique in that it tells the history of Poland and Ukraine. Do a little research into Poland and Ukraine's role in WWII. What did you find? How do you think this will play into the story?
2. Have you ever read historical fiction before? If so, what are some you have enjoyed reading in the past? What do you think makes a good historical fiction novel? Do you think you will like this one?
3. The author, Amanda McCrina, titled this novel *Traitor* and some of the main themes throughout the book are betrayal and sacrifice. What do you predict will happen based on the title of the book? Who or what do you the traitor will be?

Post-reading questions

1. How does the author begin the story? Why do you think she chose to drop the reader right into the action of that particular scene the way she did?
2. Describe Solovey's test of Tolya's skill with a sniper rifle. Why did Solovey ask Tolya to retrieve the cap? What was he trying to prove to himself as well as Tolya?
3. Discuss this quote by Solovey, "Never mistake stupidity for bravery. Both can kill you, but only one can kill you for a purpose." How does this quote highlight the actions of different characters throughout the book?
4. Compare and contrast Solovey and Vitalik. Whose "side" are each of these men on? Explain your answer.
5. Why do you think the author decided to include both Tolya's and Solovey's perspectives? How did each character's point of view and the timeline of the narrative affect how you read the other's? Were you shocked to learn of Aleksey's story? Is there another character you wish you could have read from the perspective of?
6. Throughout the book, many characters have to make unbearable decisions and often times their decisions are influenced by the threat of death or violence. For example, Tolya believes he betrayed his parents by joining the Soviets in Lwow. Do you think what he did to survive could be considered betrayal? What are some other examples? How do you think you would have handled such decisions?
7. How do you think each character is affected by constantly being betrayed and the inability to trust others. How does this affect the way think, treat others, and make decisions? Why does Aleksey continue to trust Andriy even though he betrayed him originally?
8. After discussing the often heartbreaking choices of the characters throughout the book. Who do you believe was the biggest traitor? What was the biggest betrayal? Is there a traitor at all?
9. Re-read the passage on page 280 beginning, "He was sprawled on his stomach..." and ending on page 281 "...But he knew he'd lost". What does Father Dmytro mean when he says "hate is like hogweed"? Which do you think is hardest, forgiveness or hate? How does this quote connect with what Lena says on page 304 regarding "punishing the many for the sins of the few"?

Post-reading activities

1. After finishing the book, create an organizational chart or infographic to help explain events, characters, and political groups such as the NKVD, UPA, SS, Nachtigallen, and the Polish Resistance. Once you are finished, use your infographic to summarize the book to a friend. If you would like, ask your advisor to submit your finished project to the It List Historical Fiction Infographic competition. Be sure to check out the instructions and guidelines on the Tome website.

2. What are your feelings about how the author decided to end the book? Why do you think she chose to end the book that way? Write an epilogue chapter that features one or more of the remaining characters and what they are doing. You can choose to have your epilogue chapter take place a few months to many years after the events in the book took place. Ask your advisor to submit your completed project to the Tome Society It List Fan Fiction competition. Instructions and guidelines can be found on the Tome website.

More About This Book

Author's Website: <https://fly-casual.net/>

Publisher Discussion Guide: <https://images.macmillan.com/folio-assets/teachers-guides/9780374313524TG.pdf>

Book Club Kit (Author interview, discussion questions and more!):

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_GCLlBkz5w-OT-fhjmBaXy72-c_43--E/view?usp=sharing

Official Book Trailer: <https://youtu.be/Lrho1gGIpqM>