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STUDY GUIDE



kinderttransport

by diane samuels

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Kindertransport by Diane Samuels - A Brief Study Guide

Compiled by Amanda Lockitch



<http://www.childrenwhocheatedthenazis.co.uk/>

Kindertransports

http://www1.yadvashem.org/about_holocaust/faqs/answers/faq_11a.html

From December 1938 until the outbreak of World War II on September 1, 1939, 9354 children and youth, 70% of them Jewish, reached Great Britain mostly from the German Reich in organized groups known as the Kindertransports. The trigger for the start of this rescue operation was the terrible violence of the pogrom of November 9, 1938, known as Kristalnacht. In its wake the Jewish community in Palestine declared their desire to accept 10,000 Jewish children from the Reich.

However, the British who ruled Palestine were unwilling to allow the children to go there owing to the very restrictive immigration policy they had adopted. Instead the British government declared its willingness to allow the children to come to Great Britain. Various groups in Great Britain – B'nai Brith, The Woman's Appeal Committee, the Chief Rabbi's Emergency Council, The Children's Inter-Aid Committee and The Movement for the Care of Children from Germany – along with Youth Aliyah, all played a role in placing the children in private homes and institutions, and caring for them. Many of the children remained in Great Britain after the war, some who were reunited with family members, and who had lost their entire families during the Holocaust.

More information:

<http://www.kindertransport.org/index.html>

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/article.php?lang=en&ModuleId=10005260>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kindertransport>

The British Evacuation

<http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/Homework/war/evacuation.htm>

The British government was worried that a new war might begin when Hitler came to power in 1933. They were afraid that British cities and towns would be targets for bombing raids by aircraft. People, especially children, were evacuated by train and road for their own safety.

By the end of the Second World War around 3.5 million people, mainly children had experienced evacuation. No one was forced to go but parents were encouraged by posters and told that their children would be safer from German bombs if they moved to the country.

More Information:

http://www.homesweethomefront.co.uk/web_pages/hshf_evacuees_pg.htm

<http://www.learningcurve.gov.uk/snapshots/snapshot35/snapshot35.htm>

THE RATCATCHER

<http://www.ims.uni-stuttgart.de/~jonas/piedpiper.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pied_Piper

THE PLAYWRIGHT (In her own words...) http://www.writewords.org.uk/interviews/diane_samuels.asp

I was born in Liverpool in 1960, was educated at the Kind David High school and studied history at Sidney Sussex college, Cambridge. I worked as a drama teacher in inner London secondary schools and then as an education officer at the Unicorn Theatre for children before **becoming a full time writer** in 1992. My work for the theatre includes: "Frankie's Monster" (adapted from Vivien Alcock's novel, "The Monster Garden", Unicorn Theatre, 1991. Published by Heinemann.); "Chalk Circle" (Unicorn Theatre, 1991); "Salt of the Earth" (Theatre Centre, 1993); "The Bonekeeper" (Tricycle Youth Theatre, short-listed for the W. H. Smith Awards for plays for children, 1992); "Watch Out for Mister Stork" (one-act play, Soho Theatre Company's Writers' Festival, 1992, and Finborough Theatre, 1995; Regents Park Open Air Theatre, August 1995); "Kindertransport" (**co-winner of the 1992 Verity Bargate Award, winner of 1993 Meyer Whitworth Award**. Produced by Soho Theatre Company at the Cockpit, 1993; at the Palace Theatre, Watford transferring to the Vaudeville Theatre, West End, 1996.

Also, Manhattan Theater Club, New York, 1994. Other productions throughout the USA, also Sweden, Japan, Germany, Austria, Canada and South Africa. Published in Britain by Nick Hern Books and in the USA by Plume/Penguin); "Turncoat" (Theatre Centre national tour, 1994); "How To Beat A Giant" (SNAP People's Theatre Trust, 1995); "One Hundred Million Footsteps", (Quicksilver Theatre Company national tours, spring and autumn 1997); "Forever and Ever" (SNAP People's Theatre Trust, 1998); "The True Life Legend of Mata Hari", Palace Theatre, Watford, 2002. My work for BBC radio includes: "Two Together?" (Radio 4, 1993); "Frankie's Monster" (Radio 5, 1992); "Watch Out For Mister Stork" (Radio 4, 1994); "Kindertransport" (Radio 4, 1995); "Swine" (Radio 4, 1996). "Hardly Cinderella" (Radio 4, 1997); "Doctor Y" (Radio 4, 1997); "Hen Party" (Radio 4, 2001). A short story, "Rope" was chosen as one of the winners in Radio 4's 2001 DotDotDot online short story competition, broadcast 2002. I have recently written "Mrs Gorsky" about an American mother, housewife and communist spy for Birmingham Rep Theatre. **I was awarded a Science on Stage and Screen Award** by the Wellcome Trust in 2001 to undertake an experimental collaboration with 3 medical specialists, playwright Sarah Woods and visual artist Alexa Wright to make an innovative piece of documentary, visual theatre about the nature of pain. The resulting work, PUSH, was showcased at The People Show Studios in London in June 2003. I am currently writing a new play for the Unicorn Theatre, "Narcissus" (working title), have **just completed my first novel**, an exploration of myth and memoir, "Cinderella's Daughter", and am currently writing a novel for children inspired by the medieval children's crusade. I tutor playwrighting for young people as part of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket's Masterclass scheme, has lectured part-time at Middlesex University, Oxford University, Goldsmiths' College, London and Birmingham University on writing and drama. I have also worked as a writer-in-residence at Hugh Myddelton Primary school in Islington, north London, and now run a regular group for writers of all levels, one off workshops on a variety of themes, as well as writing children's book reviews for The Guardian. I am currently a participator in Exiled Writers INK's writing and dialogue group "Across the Divide" for Jewish, Muslim, Israeli and Palestinian writers.

SYNOPSIS: by Amanda Lockitch

Kindertransport explores deeply complex mother and daughter relationships. As a child, Eva is sent out of Germany by her mother Helga through the Kindertransport movement. In Britain she is raised as a daughter by Lil. After many futile years of trying to bring her parents to safety, Eva embraces her new British home and baptizes herself as Evelyn forever turning away from her Jewish/German heritage. Helga survives the war and comes to find Eva who refuses to go with her to the United States. Evelyn stays in London and has a daughter of her own, keeping her past a secret.

In this play Evelyn's daughter Faith uncovers the past. Creating a challenging theatrical convention, Samuels depicts two time periods on stage throughout the play. She shows the journey of the child Eva starting in Germany and coming to Britain while simultaneously showing the grown up Eva as Evelyn coming to terms with her daughter's discoveries of her past.

Questions for Discussion:

- 1) What does the Ratcatcher symbolize for Evelyn and Eva. Does his power change as the child grows into adulthood?
- 2) Examine the theatrical convention of having two time periods sharing the same stage space. How does seeing Eva's story acted out inform your view of Evelyn? What about Lil?
- 3) Can you think of other plays that place two time periods in the same space? Do they share props and set pieces the same way? (Like the suitcase, mouth organ and the book that get used in both times).
- 4) Was Lil responsible, in part, for Evelyn's decision to leave her past behind. Should Lil have treated Eva as more of a guest rather than as a daughter?
- 5) Look at the role of men in the play. What do you make of the absence of fathers and brothers? Why do men play such a minimal role in the play?
- 6) There is only one male actor who plays numerous roles. Does he always play a slightly antagonistic character? If so, do we ever empathise with him? (Ratcatcher, Postman, Station Guard, Nazi Boarder Officer, English Organizer).
- 7) Have you ever had to lie about some aspect of your personality in order to feel safe? How did you resolve this issue?
- 8) Is Samuels equating the children following the Ratcher in the story to the Kinder movement which brought children to safety?