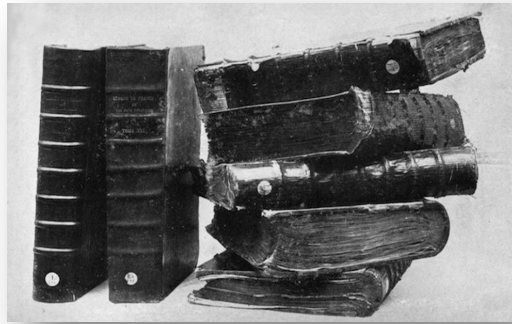


## **Teacher's Discussion Guide**

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

At the turn of the century, the Russian Empire dominated the small country of Lithuania, which had tried unsuccessfully for generations to free itself. Finally, the Tsar determined that the best way to quash the people's desire for independence was to destroy their language, and with it, their culture. To accomplish this, all books in the Lithuanian language were to be destroyed.



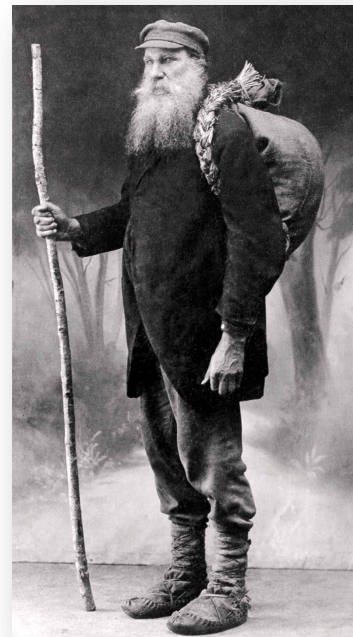
Since it was illegal to print new books in Lithuanian, the *knygnesiai* (book carriers) began printing them abroad and smuggling them into the country. Getting past the border guards required passing through three dangerous levels of security. Those who were caught might be whipped, sent to prison, or given a one-way ticket to Siberia.

What began as a movement of a few individuals eventually spread to thousands of people, nearly the entire population of Lithuanians who were smuggling, transporting, hiding, teaching, or purchasing the illegal books. Over the forty years of the ban, nearly eight million books were published across 1740 titles. More than 3000 people were arrested in connection with the ban, and approximately 10% of the books were seized by authorities.

The Kraziai Massacre on November 23, 1892 deepened the Lithuanian resentment against the Russian occupation and efforts to resist their laws intensified.

Ultimately, the book ban created the exact opposite effect the Empire had hoped; the passion to preserve its culture and language became so encompassing that it reignited the desire for independence and ultimately was a factor leading to Russia's designation of independence for Lithuania on February 16, 1918.

Another seventy-three years of difficulty with Russia followed until 1991 when Lithuania finally regained its independence, which exists today. The *knygnesiai* are still honored today as national heroes.



## PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

**Zikaris:** zick-ARE-iss

**Henri:** on-REE

**Siluva:** Sil-OO-va

**Venska:** VEN-ska

**Milda Sabiene:** MIL-duh SAY-bee-enne

**Cossack:** COE-sack

**Rusakov:** ROOSE-uh-kov

**Prussia:** PRUSH-uh

**Tsar:** TZAR

**Siberia:** si-BEER-ee-uh

**Kugelis:** KOO-gel-is

**Varpas:** VAR-pas

**Roze:** ROSE

**Spurgos:** SPUR-goes

**Šiauliai:** sye-OWL-yay

**aš labai pasiilgau tavęs:** AWES LA-bye PAWS-eel-go TAW-vays

**motina:** MOW-tin-uh

**Kunigas:** COON-i-gas

**Adeen, dva Pyat, chitiri:** uh-DEEN, div-ee-AY, PEE-it, CHI-tear-ee

**Kražiai:** KRAWS-ee-eye

## VOCABULARY WORDS

### Chp 2

*Broached (v)*: To raise a subject for discussion, often an uncomfortable subject

### Chp 3

*Engulfed (adj)*: Completely covered

### Chp 4

*Tentative (adv)*: Not certain or definite

### Chp 5

*Hobble (v)*: An awkward walk, usually because of an injury or pain

### Chp 6

*Copse (n)*: A small group of trees

### Chp 7

*Satchel (n)*: A shoulder bag with a flap that closes the opening

### Chp 9

*Scenario ()*: A presentation of the possible order of an event

### Chp 10

*Kugelis (n)*: A Lithuanian potato dish made with milk, onions, bacon, and eggs

### Chp 11

*Spurgos (n)*: A Lithuanian doughnut

### Chp 12

*Seamstress (n)*: A woman who sews

### Chp 13

*Dismount (v)*: To get off of a horse

### Chp 14

*aš labai pasiilgau tavęs*: Lithuanian phrase for “I really miss you.”

### Chp 16

*Lush (adj)*: Thick and rich growth of plants

### Chp 17

*Jumble (v)*: A messy, disorganized collection

### Chp 19

*Diminish (v)*: Become less



Chp 21

*Douse (v)*: To cover in a liquid, or to put out a fire

Chp 22

*Cling (v)*: Hold to tightly

Chp 25

*Crochet (n)*: A craft in which a hooked needle creates a patterned fabric out of yarn

Chp 26

*Riffle (v)*: To quickly search through something

Chp 27

*Vital (adj)*: Absolutely necessary

Chp 28

*Forage (v)*: To search for food or needed supplies

Chp 30

*Smug (adj)*: Showing great pride in oneself; being highly self-satisfied

Chp 31

*Emerge (v)*: To come into view

Chp 32

*Illuminate (v)*: To light up something

Chp 35

*Ruble (n)*: The basic unit of money in Russia

Chp 37

*Flinch (v)*: A quick, nervous movement as a reaction to fear, surprise, or pain

Chp 38

*Momentum (n)*: The amount of motion in an object

Chp 39

*Ajar (adj)*: Slightly open

Chp 41

*Huddle (v)*: Closely crowded together

Epilogue

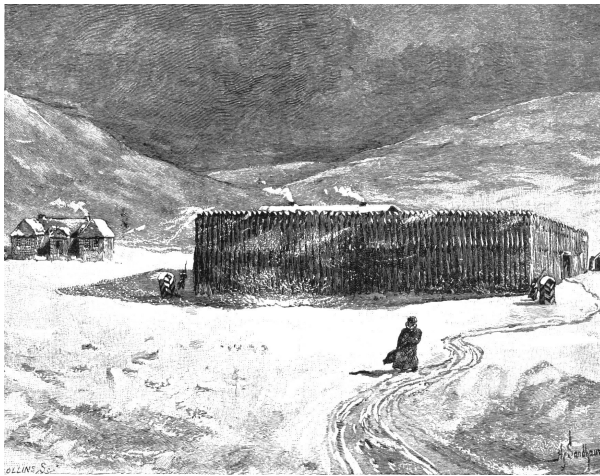
*Catastrophic (adj)*: An event causing great damage; a disaster

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does Audra at the beginning of the story compare with Audra at the end?
2. Do you agree with the decision of Audra's parents to keep their smuggling activities a secret? Why or why not? (Chapter 2)
3. What symbolism do you see in Audra's father being a street magician?
4. How does Lukas's story about the snake and the bear compare to Audra? To all of Lithuania? (Chapter 7)
5. When Audra first realizes she has been carrying a book, why is she so angry? (Chapter 8)
6. When do you think Audra's idea about books changes? (Chapter 10)
7. What else could Audra have done to hide the Spurgos? (Chapter 11)
8. How did your opinion of Ben change as you read this book? (Chapter 12)
9. One of the issues that Audra has to deal with is whether the law is always right. Do you think it is possible for the law to ever be wrong, and if so, what are legal way people can change that law? (Chapter 14)
10. When Lukas is caught, he receives a whipping for the books he was attempting to smuggle. Do you think that Lukas believes what he is doing was worth the whipping? (Chapter 16)
11. Audra has to make the decision of whether to betray the smugglers and save her parents. How would you have decided and why? (Chapter 17)
12. What is so powerful about books that they are banned or burned? (Chapter 19)
13. When the people have access to information, how does that threaten the power of those who wish to control the people? (Chapter 25)
14. Lukas describes the three layers of border security. How would you cross? (Chapter 29)
15. When you learn the truth about Officer Rusakov and Lukas, did your opinions of either of them change? (Chapter 40)
16. How did Milda become like a mother to during the story? (Epilogue)
17. Did you guess that Audra's parents would one day come home again? (Epilogue)

18. There were many ways to be involved in smuggling (printing, smuggling, transporting, hiding, buying, teaching, learning). Put them in order from least to most dangerous.
19. What book have you read that you would most want saved?
20. How are you different because of books?

## IMAGES FROM THE BOOK



(Siberia, courtesy of wikisource)



(Church at Kražiai courtesy of wikipedia)



(Lithuanian Forests, courtesy of glit.il)



(courtesy of True Lithuania)

## THE LITHUANIAN ALPHABET

(courtesy of omniglot.com)

### Lithuanian alphabet (lietuvių abėcėlė) & pronunciation

A a	Ą ą	B b	C c	Č č	D d	E e	Ę ę	Ė ė
a	a nosiné	bé	cé	čé	dé	e	e nosiné	é
[a/a:]	[a:]	[b]	[ts̪]	[tʃ̪]	[d]	[ɛ/ɛ:]	[ɛ:]	[e:]
F f	G g	H h	I i	Į į	Y y	J j	K k	L l
ef	gé	ha	i	i nosiné	i ilgoji	jot	ka	el
[f]	[g]	[h̪]	[i]	[i:]	[i:]	[j]	[k]	[l]
M m	N n	O o	P p	R r	S s	Š š	T t	U u
em	en	o	pé	er	es	eš	té	u
[m]	[n]	[o:]	[p]	[r]	[s]	[ʃ̪]	[t]	[u]
U ū	Ū ū	V v	Z z	Ž ž				
u nosiné	u ilgoji	vé	zé	žé				
[u:]	[u:]	[v]	[z]	[ʒ]				