



Grandpa's Third Drawer

Activity and Discussion Suggestions for the Classroom

READING & PERCEIVING

Suggestions for Interactive Reading

By Yael Yeshua, *a member of the Zeev Prize children's literature committee*



A

First read and talk about pages 1–11

Illustration 1

Uri draws his grandparents' house.

In the drawing we see a little house with happy smiling people inside. We see the birds in the background, which symbolize the freedom and sense of security the people at home are feeling. The chimney symbolizes the warmth of the house; the dog is watching over the people; the surroundings are natural and pastoral; they represent life and connection with the world.

Illustration 2

What is inside the first and second drawers?

There are old toys from Germany—a red police car, a monkey riding a giraffe, a balloon—and Uri's markers. Which toys would Uri have at his home?

Illustration 3

A teapot and teacup, red apples in a fruit bowl, flowers in a vase, a handmade tablecloth—what do all of these little details convey?

Illustration 4

A musical atmosphere.

Who were Mozart and Beethoven? Notice the warm colors the illustrator uses: a picture of Beethoven, an old record, a violin, and some musical notes. If you were to draw a certain musical atmosphere, what would you choose?

Illustration 5

The drawing on the candy box.

What kind of a view is this? Where do you think it is from?

Illustration 6

Grandpa's good memories from Germany.

Grandpa remembers the beautiful house he lived in; his parents dressed so elegantly; and his sister, so sweet and young. Everything is relaxed, calm and civilized.



Next, divide the class into three groups

**The children can work alone, in pairs, or as a group.
The teacher reads the first six pages again.**

1. The first group will write what they already know about Grandpa Yuda.
2. The second group will write what they already know about Grandma Genia.
3. The third group will write what they already know about Uri.

For example:

Uri	Grandma Genia	Grandpa Yuda
He loves to go to Grandpa and Grandma's house.	She bakes cookies and makes hot chocolate.	He always has time to play with Uri.
Grandpa is his best friend.	She sometimes knits.	In the second desk drawer are his old childhood toys.
He likes spending time in Grandpa's study.	She sets the table with beautifully decorated china.	His neighbors kept his old toys for him.
His favorite crayons are in Grandpa's first drawer.	She crochets beautiful napkins.	He likes listening to old records and sometimes plays the piano.
He likes looking at the plants and pictures on the wall.	She grows flowering plants.	When he listens to Mozart, he is happy.
He draws in Grandpa's study and likes playing with Grandpa's toys.	She makes a great breakfast, which takes a long time.	He doesn't read the newspapers or listen to the news.
He tries to guess what is in the third drawer.	She spoils Uri and makes sure there are always fresh sweets in the candy box.	He doesn't want to go back to Germany.
He can eat as many sweets as he likes.	She allows Uri to eat as many sweets as he likes.	
He likes looking at old pictures from Grandpa's family in Germany.		
He asked Grandpa to take him to Germany.		

Collect the answers and share them with the class.

To summarize: Uri's Grandparents love him very much and he loves them. Their house is warm and pleasant; they are cultural people. But yet, there is an unsolved mystery in their house: the third drawer. Something is hidden in it, a forbidden secret.

What kinds of secrets do you have?

Do you hide them in a symbolic or real locked drawer?



C

Now, read page 13, where Uri opens the forbidden third drawer

The mystery is about to be resolved.

At this point ask the children to draw or write what they think is in that drawer. What is Grandpa trying to hide, and why. (*You may want to prepare a big empty drawer on a sheet of paper that can be copied and given to each child.*)

D

Show the children what is in the drawer on pages 14–15

Ask the children to say what they see in the drawer.

Point out the items and tell the children more about what they are seeing: a yellow Star of David with the word JUDE on it, prisoner's clothes, domino pieces, a ragged doll, a registration chart, a luggage number, a diary.

E

Read page 16, when Grandpa comes in and “catches” Uri

Ask the children to dramatize the scene.

Here there is a significant change in Grandpa. At first, Grandpa is angry because his privacy was “invaded,” but when he sees how upset Uri is, he calms down. In this moment, he is finally ready to tell his story. Grandpa realizes that even if he wasn't able to tell his children what happened, it is important to tell his grandchildren.



Now read the rest of the story

Uri sees Grandpa crying for the first time. He and Grandpa play dominoes with the set Grandpa made while he lived in the ghetto. Now Uri loves Grandpa even more.

Uri always loved Grandpa. *Why does he love him even more now?*

Grandpa shared his most precious, private treasure with Uri: his most painful memories. Now they have no secrets.

Did this help Grandpa?

Why did Grandpa hide these items from Uri for so many years?

• • •

My family

Think of a family member you are close to: mom, dad, brother, sister, grandpa, grandma, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew. Ask the children to write or draw about one of the following questions:

1. What do you like to do together?
2. What do you two have in common?
3. Is there a shared experience you remember?

My drawer

In front of you are different materials: cardboard, paper, colors, scissors.

1. Build your own drawers.
2. Decorate them according to your personal taste.
3. Write a secret of yours on a piece of paper or bring a secret item of yours from home.
4. Hide it in one of your drawers.
5. Do the same at home with your family members and share your work with your classmates.



Learning More

By Hadas Laor Ashur

The names in the book

Yuda—Grandpa's name. A nickname used for Yehuda, an ancient Jewish name. (Later known as Judas from the New Testament.) Yehuda was Joseph's brother, the tribe of King David's ancestors. (Grandpa represents the Jewish people as a whole. His personal story is that of many others.)

Genia—Grandma's name. A name of Russian origin, which means "noble." Why was Grandma named Genia? Why was she given a non-Jewish name if she was a Jew? (The Jews were scattered among the nations and live all over the world and were influenced by their surroundings.)

Uri—A nickname for Uriel. The angle of wisdom and bravery according to the Zohar (which is the central book in the literature of Jewish mysticism). Was Uri worthy of this name in your opinion?

Some cultural concepts in the book

Neighbors (pp. 2–3)—We read about Grandpa's good neighbors from Germany who kept his toys for him until the war was over. Who are your neighbors? What kind of a relationship do you have with them? What do you do for them? What do they do for you?

Home (pp. 4–9)—The study, the desk, the piano, toys, fresh bread, a table with beautifully decorated china, flowerpots, drawings, a ray of sunlight, dust. What are the things that make your house a pleasant home to be in?

Music (pp. 6–7)—The piano, the record player, Mozart, and Beethoven all characterize the German culture. What kind of music do your grandparents listen to? (This is an opportunity to listen to different kinds of music and talk about the children's grandparents.)

Sweets (pp. 8–9)—Candy, chocolate. What are your favorite sweets? Do your grandparents keep a special sweet box for you at home?



Holocaust concepts

These are discussion issues based on both innocent responses of Israeli children and teachers' insights. These are optional possibilities for further knowledge and thought, depending on the children's age and maturity.

1. "Grandpa had to leave his house . . . until the war was over" (p. 2)

Who sent Grandpa from his home?

Because of what war?

Are people always sent from their homes during war?

Is there a war going on in our country?

Will we ever have to leave our home?

Does our army make other people leave their homes?

2. "The Nazis came to power" (p. 19)

Who were the Nazis?

What does it mean to "come to power?"

Who let them rule?

If they were bad people why weren't they denounced?

3. "We were forced from our homes" (p. 19)

Why were the Jews sent from their homes?

Am I Jewish?

What does that mean, being Jewish?

Will I have to leave my home?

4. "They sent us all to live in the ghetto, behind a high wall in old, crowded houses" (p. 19)

In my neighborhood there are old crowded houses and a high wall near the highway. Do I live in a ghetto?

5. "We were forced to wear this yellow Star of David. It marked us Jews as . . . inferior outcasts" (p. 19)

What does "inferior" mean?

The Star of David is a nice decoration.

What happened if some Jew wouldn't wear it?

Could he then wear something else?

6. "These are stamps from the ghetto. For them, we were given very small portions of food" (p. 20)

So did someone take care of them and provide them with food?

7. "Then one day, the Nazi soldiers divided all the Jews of the ghetto into groups and sent us by train to many different places" (p. 23)

Why groups?

What kind of groups?

Are groups good or bad?

8. “My grandfather and grandmother were sent to a concentration camp” (p. 23)

What kind of a camp is a concentration camp?

What do they concentrate on?

Why did old people go to camp?

Did they take care of old people there?

9. “I was sent to work in a labor camp” (p. 23)

What kind of a camp is a labor camp?

Did they go there for the summer?

10. “This was the first time I had ever seen Grandpa cry” (p. 23)

What happened to his family?

Why didn’t he ever see them again?

11. “I never knew that Grandpa was such a brave kid. I never knew what he’d been through. Now, I love him even more” (p. 24)

What does being brave mean?

What brave deeds did he do?

What’s the difference between love and admiration?

Do we love someone more because he is brave?

Reading with a Puppet

Another option for the classroom is to read while a puppet asks questions and responds to the story.

For example:

“Oh no! Tell Uri not to open that drawer! It’s not allowed!”

or

“Awww . . . is this gonna be a sad story?”