

Now

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About the book

Now is set in Australia in 2009, a year of devastating bush fires in Victoria. These fires form a backdrop to the story of Zelda, the granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor. Zelda knows she has been named after one of her grandfather's childhood friends. She knows that the first Zelda was an important part of his life because he has treasured her heart shaped locket for over 70 years. It's the only possession of hers which he has left.

The Zelda of today is often lonely. She has recently joined a new school and has yet to make friends. Her parents, both doctors, are working in Darfur and Zelda is staying with her grandfather Felix, a retired surgeon. Zelda knows that when Felix was 10 and lived in Poland he faced the Nazis and was very brave so she does not tell him that three older girls are bullying her. Then a catastrophic bush fire changes their lives forever.

Note to Teachers/Leaders – please note *Now* is the third book about Felix but the author states that the stories can be read in any order.

In *Once* <http://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/for-young-people/books-for-young-people-once> and *Then* <http://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/for-young-people/books-for-young-people-then> Felix was ten years old and trying to stay out of the clutches of the Nazis. He told his own stories as he and his six year old companion Zelda struggled to survive in occupied Poland. In *Now* Felix is an eighty year-old grandfather but the terrible events of the Holocaust still impact on his life. If *Now* is the first book encountered then readers will hear some of what happens in *Once* and *Then*.

Discussion Questions

Please note that some of these questions will act as spoilers for the book.

1. why does Zelda decide that she can't tell Felix about Tonya and her 'bully-mates'?
2. why does Felix refuse to be called Granddad, Gramps or Grandpa?
3. what is so special about the book Zelda buys for Felix's birthday?

4. when Felix makes turnip soup for his birthday what is he remembering?
5. how do members of the Holocaust survivors group help each other?
6. why is Felix stressed before his birthday party?
7. when Zelda finds out that Tonya is Josh's sister what effect does it have on the way she treats him?
8. why does Zelda think she started the fire?
9. how does catastrophe change Zelda's understanding of the term survivor and her relationships with Tonya, Josh and Felix?
10. how does the final ceremony, for the original Zelda, give present day Zelda the courage to speak up and tell everyone how she really feels about her family?

You can use HMD resources to find out more about the treatment of Jewish people in Nazi-occupied Poland <http://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/survivor-stories/holocaust-testimony-kitty-hartmoxon>.