

Sophie's Choice
William Styron

About the book

Sophie's Choice is the story of a young writer who meets and falls in love with Sophie, a Polish woman who has rebuilt her life in Brooklyn in 1947, shortly after her liberation from Auschwitz-Birkenau. Focussing on the relationship between Sophie and her lover Nathan, the narrator tells us about the guilt faced by Sophie, not only because of her survival but because of the impossible choice she was forced to make when she arrived at Auschwitz.

Discussion Questions

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

1. Is it important that we do not know what the choice Sophie has to make is until fairly close to the end of the book?
2. Why does Sophie feel so much guilt? Who does she direct it at?
3. Do you think that Nathan is 'good' for Sophie?
4. Why does Stingo feel so protective of Sophie?
5. Why does Sophie not give Nathan or Stingo the full truth about her life in Poland before she was imprisoned in Auschwitz?
6. What importance does Sophie place on music? Why is this?
7. Sophie tells Stingo that she worked for the Commandant at Auschwitz, Rudolf Höss. We have a picture painted for us that tells us a little of the life he and his family led. Does this surprise you?

You can use HMD resources to find out more about life in Nazi Concentration Camps <http://www.hmd.org.uk/genocides/the-holocaust/life-in-the-camps> and stories of those who survived <http://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/survivor-stories>.

HMDT provide suggestions of other books you may find interesting to read and discuss in your book group: <http://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/for-adults>