

The Girl in the Painted Caravan: Memories of a Romany Childhood Eva Petulengro

About the book

The Girl in the Painted Caravan: Memories of a Romany Childhood is the memoir of Eva Petulengro and her family. It charts her experience and the traditions of her Romany family in England between 1880 and the 1960s. She speaks of the decline of the Romany way of life; she celebrates the quality of their life and she also talks about the persecution that gypsies and travellers have faced here in the UK, particularly following the Second World War.

We're recommending this book as it helps to explore some of the issues raised on HMD such as modern-day discrimination and the need to celebrate the differences between individuals and groups in neighbourhoods.

About the author

Eva Petulengro is amongst the last of a generation who lived the traditional Romany way of life. She is a palmist and clairvoyant and lives in Brighton with her family and was a features editor on the Brighton *Evening Argus*.

Discussion Questions

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

1. why do you think Eva decided to write this book?
2. do you think the discrimination (such as the 'No Gypsies' signs in pubs) after World War Two still exists today?
3. did you find it helpful for Eva to trace her family as far back as she did?
4. can you understand Eva's mother not returning to her family? In what ways did Romany tradition play a part in this?
5. what impact did learning to read and write have on Eva's life?

You can use HMD resources to find out more:

Listen to Donald Kenrick talk about the persecution of the Roma and Sinti under the Nazi regime: <http://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/podcasts/victims-of-nazi-persecution-roma-and-sinti-donald-kenrick>

Watch Vicky Botton talking about persecution of Gypsies and Travellers in the UK today <http://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/films/untold-stories-vicky-botton>

Participate in Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month in June
<http://www.hmd.org.uk/genocides/dates-to-remember/gypsy-roma-and-traveller-history-month>