

THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PAJAMAS

Lexile 530L

The Boy in the Striped Pajamas is a historical fiction novel. It is written by John Boyne. It was first published in 2006. This is Boyne's first novel for young adults. The narrator is a nine-year-old German boy named Bruno. Bruno and his family live in Berlin, Germany, in 1943. This is during World War II. Bruno's father is a Nazi Commandant. The Nazis were a political party led by Adolf Hitler. A Commandant was a leader. Bruno's father is in charge of Auschwitz. This was a prison and death camp for Jewish people. It was located in southern Poland. *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* was made into a movie in 2008.

Background

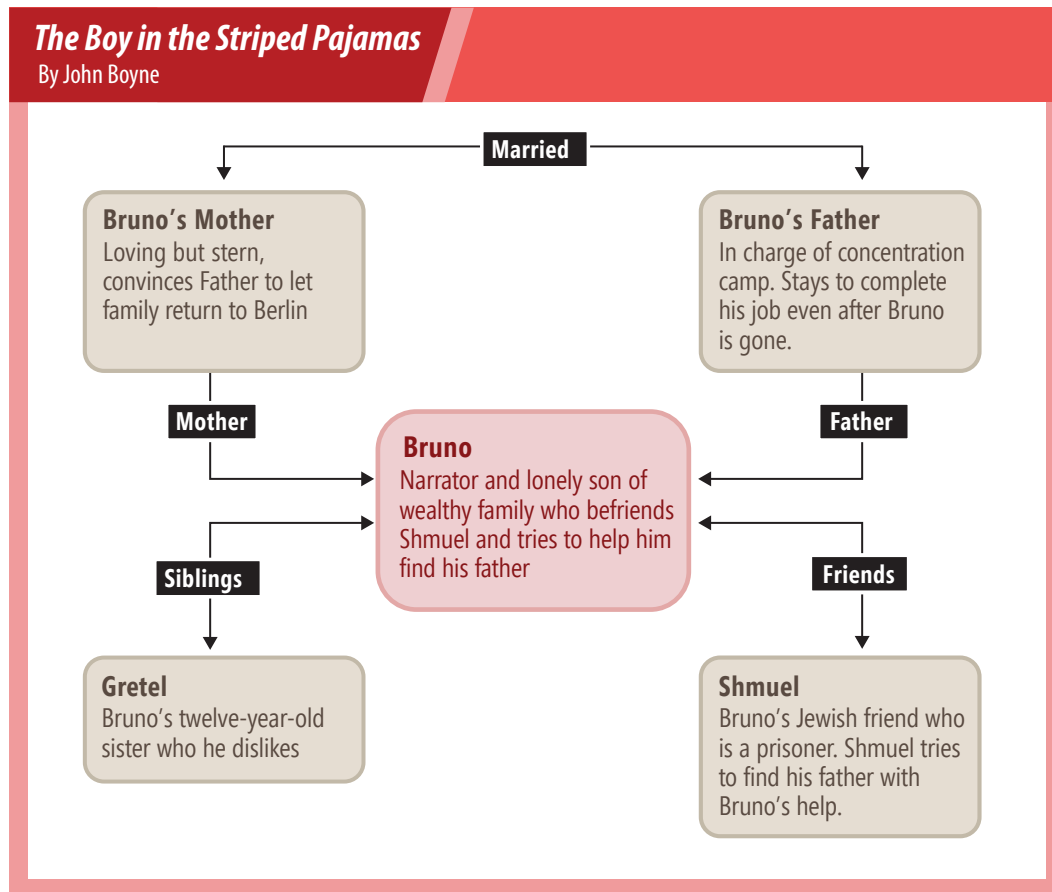
The Boy in the Striped Pajamas takes place during the **Holocaust**. This was a terrible time in history. It occurred during World War II. The Nazi Party controlled Germany. They were led by Adolf Hitler. Hitler hated Jewish people. The Nazi Party forced Jewish people into *concentration camps*. A concentration camp was a prison or death camp. Auschwitz was the largest of these camps. Jewish people were murdered at this camp. They were sent into gas chambers. Six million Jews died during the Holocaust. One million of them were children.

Summary

Nine-year-old Bruno is the *narrator* of the novel. The narrator is the character who tells the story. Bruno and his family live in Berlin, Germany. They are wealthy. Bruno comes home from school one day to learn his family is moving. His belongings are already packed. They are moving to Auschwitz. Bruno calls it "Out-With." It is in Poland. Father will be in charge of the concentration camp. Most of the people in the prison camp are Jewish. Adolf Hitler is the leader of Germany. He hates Jewish people. He thinks they are the enemy.

Bruno is lonely at Auschwitz. He misses his three best friends in Berlin. He has only his twelve-year-old sister to play with. Her name is Gretel. Bruno does not like her. Bruno's house is on a hill. It is the only house in the area. Bruno can see the camp from his window. He sees many children. They are all wearing striped pajamas. Bruno discovers some of them are actually men. They are very thin.

One of the waiters in Bruno's house is an old man named Pavel. Bruno learns Pavel lives in the prison camp. A soldier often visits Bruno's family. His name is Lieutenant Kotler. Pavel spills a glass of wine, and Kotler beats him.



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One day Bruno walks along the fence around the prison camp. He is not supposed to do this. He makes friends with a boy named Shmuel. He lives on the other side of the fence. Shmuel is wearing striped pajamas. Bruno likes Shmuel. He visits him almost every day for months. Shmuel is very thin, so Bruno brings him food. Shmuel tells Bruno about the day when the soldiers took him from his home and brought him here.

Bruno's mother also misses Berlin. She convinces Father to let them return. Bruno's father will stay and complete his job. Bruno does not want to leave Shmuel behind. He goes to say goodbye to Shmuel. The two boys come up with a plan for the next day. Bruno will dress in striped pajamas. He will crawl under the fence and see the camp. He will help Shmuel look for his father. He has not seen him in several days.

The next day, Bruno makes it inside the camp. He hears soldiers yelling. He sees people who are thin and sick. He is scared and wants to leave. But Shmuel asks him to help him find his father. But they cannot find him. The soldiers make the prisoners get in a line and march. Bruno does not have time to go back under the fence.

The boys do as they are told. They enter a dark room together. They hold hands. Then the soldiers shut the door and lock the prisoners inside.

Bruno is gone. His mother and sister return to Berlin. Bruno's clothes and boots are eventually found outside the fence. Father discovers what has happened to his son. He collapses.

Months later, new soldiers arrive at the camp. Father does his job. But he no longer cares what happens to him.

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■ By Adrienne Kennedy, MA

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COMPREHENSION TEST

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. How does Bruno feel when he is inside the prison camp?

- A. excited
 - B. confused
 - C. scared
 - D. pleased
-

2. Where do the soldiers take Bruno and Shmuel?

- A. to a prison cell
 - B. to a gas chamber
 - C. to a prison camp
 - D. to a house on a hill
-

3. Who is Bruno's father?

- A. the leader of Germany
- B. a soldier during World War II
- C. a prisoner in a death camp
- D. a member of the Nazi Party

Fill-in-the-Blank Questions

4. Bruno's mother and sister return to _____ Germany.

5. The novel takes place during the _____.

6. The character who tells the story is the _____.

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5. The novel takes place during the Holocaust.

6. The character who tells the story is the narrator.