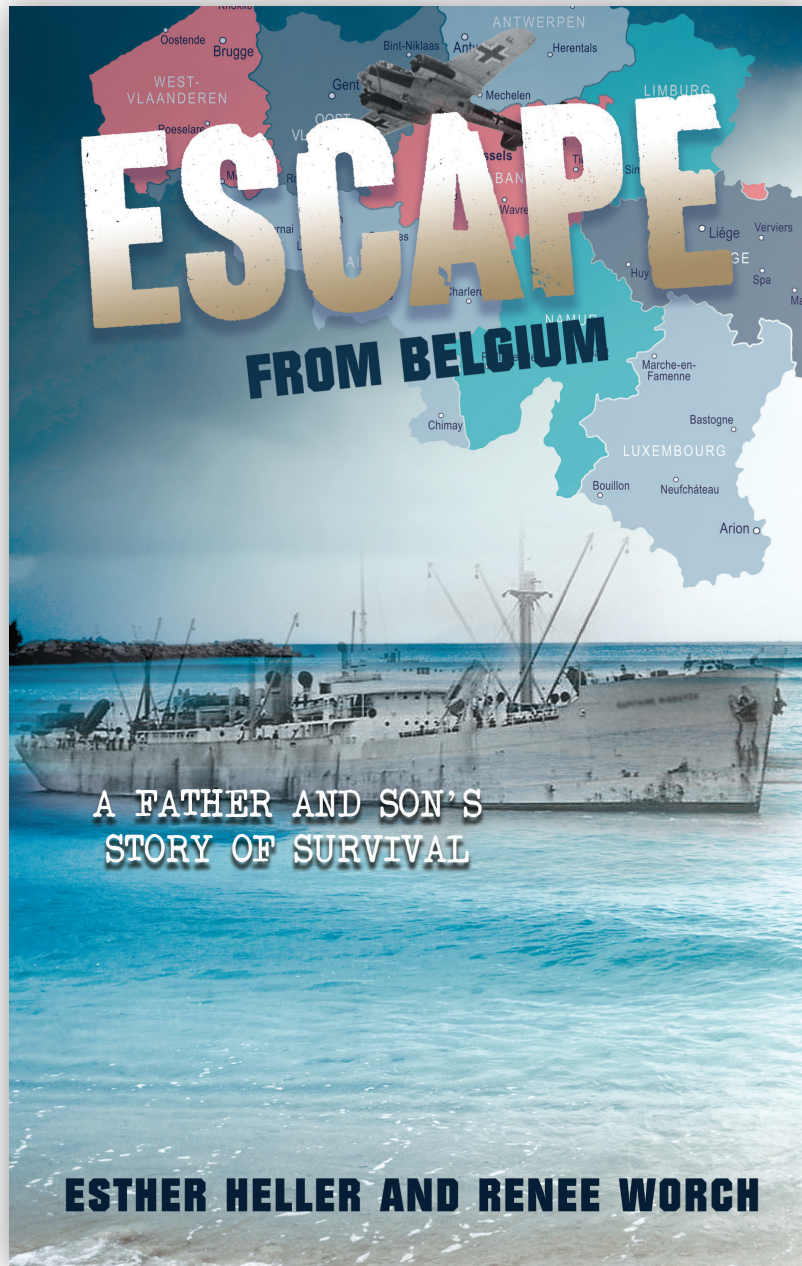


Educator's Guide



1235 38th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11218 • www.menchaclassrooms.com



CONTENTS

For the Teacher	3
Pre-Reading Activities.....	4
Prologue	4
Chapter 1: A Strange Rattling Noise.....	5
Chapter 2: Refugees	6
Chapter 3: Separated!.....	7
Chapter 4: Finding Shelter.....	8
Chapter 5: “More Chocolate, Please”	9
Chapter 6: Return to Antwerp	10
Chapter 7: “You’ll Be Back”.....	11
Chapter 8: Olive Oil and Cotton Wool	12
Chapter 9: A Friendly Home	13
Chapter 10: Looking for Mr. Berkovits.....	14
Chapter 11: A Grand House	15
Chapter 12: Guides and Guards.....	16
Chapter 13: Across the Border	17
Chapter 14: Good News	18
Chapter 15: The Man in the Dark Suit	19
Chapter 16: Across the River.....	20
Chapter 17: Imprisoned!	21
Chapter 18: A Flight to England; Epilogue.....	22
Supplementary Activities	23

FOR THE TEACHER

This guide consists of lessons to assist you in using *Escape from Belgium: A Father and Son's Story of Survival* in your classroom. The guide is written in a chapter-by-chapter format and includes a synopsis, pre-reading activities, and comprehension questions, as well as supplementary activities to be used at the end of the book.

The book and its accompanying guide can be used in a number of ways. Students reading at the same level might participate in a small-group guided reading of the book, returning to it over several weeks as they read and discuss it with the teacher. The entire class might read the book and discuss it in small groups using literature circles or reciprocal teaching. The teacher can then use the suggested questions to guide students in their discussions. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. Students should be encouraged to support their answers with evidence from the text. Students might keep a notebook of their responses throughout the year, which can then be used for progress monitoring and assessment purposes.

This teacher's guide includes many document-based questions. These questions focus on utilizing critical-thinking skills. Students are also asked to make comparisons, draw analogies, and apply historic analysis using primary and secondary sources from this time period. Source material for questions include photographs, maps, and documents. The questions can be used to teach students how to analyze source documents and deepen their understanding of the life and times of the people featured in this book.

Using this guide can help you as a teacher create more active readers. Students who are encouraged to think about their reading, make inferences, compare and contrast events and characters, and notice authors' language will read more closely and carefully. They will become more thoughtful readers, and their reading comprehension will improve. Working on this in the context of authentic literature helps to inspire a motivation and love for reading.

SYNOPSIS Brudi and his father escape war-torn Belgium on a journey filled with heroism and commitment to Yiddishkeit.

Pre-Reading Activities

Use one or more of the following activities to introduce the book.

1. **Predictions:** Have students preview the book by reading the title, the author, and looking at the picture on the cover. What do they think this book will be about? Have they read any other books in this series? What clues can they gather from the photograph on the cover?
2. **Building Background:** This book tells the escape story of a boy living in Belgium during World War II. Discuss with students the historical background to the story, including the process of Nazi invasion on the European continent.
3. **Genre Focus:** *Escape from Belgium: A Father and Son's Story of Survival* is a true story. Students can read the disclaimer on the copyright page and discuss: Why are some conversations and minor episodes changed in the book? Students can also read the first paragraph of the acknowledgments and discuss: What is a memoir? How is this book similar to, and different from, the memoir *Flight to Freedom*?
4. **Geography:** Have students the map on the inside front spread of the book to acquaint themselves with the route Brudi and his father traveled on their escape journey. Have them refer to it while they read the book, and trace the route as it develops.
5. **Predict:** What hardships might Brudi and his father have faced on the way?

PROLOGUE



1. What are some questions you now have about Brudi's story? Note these questions and leave space to record their answers as you read the rest of the book.
2. As you read this section, visualize (picture) what is happening with the rope and the pulley system. How do you think Brudi may have felt? Why?
3. Explain why the guards selected Brudi to be the first one to cross the cliff.

CHAPTER 1: A STRANGE RATTLING NOISE

SYNOPSIS As the Germans advance into Belgium, Antwerp's Jews need to decide whether to stay, hide, or flee.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out what life is like for the Berkovits family as the Germans take over Belgium.

Guided Questions


1. Keep track of the Berkovits family by creating a family tree with important information about each family member based on what you have read in this chapter.
-  2. **Infer:** What were the dark shapes that Brudi saw “gliding silently through the sky”?
3. Why do you think there was no more school for Brudi and his friends?
4. How do you think Pappa felt as he took the shop keys from Mr. Lieberman?
-  5. **Document-based question:** Study the photograph of the Jewish quarter on page 12. Describe what you see, and contrast it to American cities you know.

CHAPTER 2: REFUGEES

SYNOPSIS Brudi and his family leave Antwerp by train for the coast.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out what the Berkovits family decides and how they leave Antwerp.

Guided Questions

1. Describe the scene of Dutch refugees fleeing through Holland.
2. Use the map on the inside front cover to explain why Antwerp was full of Dutch refugees fleeing their homes.
3. The text says, "In the past, he would have been happy to have a free day to play. But not anymore." Why not?
4. Describe how the refugees carried their belongings with them. Why didn't they own regular suitcases?
5. Use details from chapters 1 and 2 to describe Pappa's personality.
6.  **Creative writing:** Write a diary entry for Brudi as he rides the train. Include his thoughts and feelings at that time.

CHAPTER 3: SEPARATED!

SYNOPSIS Afraid of getting caught in cross fire as the Allies try to hold back the Germans, the Berkovits family boards ships to France and is separated.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how the Berkovits family ends up leaving the port city of Ostend and what happens as they leave.

Guided Questions


1. Explain why families decided to camp out right where they were.
2. Describe the noises the Berkovitses heard during the night.
3. Why were so many people streaming to the harbor in the middle of the night?
4. Explain how the Berkovits family ended up being separated.

CHAPTER 4: FINDING SHELTER

SYNOPSIS Brudi and his father start walking to France.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how Brudi and his father try to reach France by foot.

Guided Questions


1. Use the map on page 38 to trace the route that Brudi and his father planned to France. Contrast this with the route of the rest of the family on the boat.
2. Why was it important for Brudi and his father to stay away from buildings as they walked?
3. Describe some of the events of Divine Providence (*hashgachah pratis*) that Brudi's family experienced until this point in their escape journey.
4. Why did the crowds become thicker and thicker as they approached the Belgian-French border?
5.  **Document-based question:** Study the photograph on page 34. What details do you notice in the picture?

CHAPTER 5: "MORE CHOCOLATE, PLEASE"

SYNOPSIS After the Germans conquer Belgium, Brudi and his father turn back to Antwerp.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out what happens after the Battle of Belgium.

Guided Questions

1. Describe some of the steps Brudi took to get food for his father and himself.
2. Explain why it got so quiet at night.
3. Why did Pappa decide to abandon his plans for escape and instead return to Antwerp?
4. Describe how the Belgian refugees ended up with food and shelter for the night.
5. Why did the rest of the journey back to Antwerp take much longer than usual?
6. Look at the title of the next chapter and predict what might happen next.
-  7. **Document-based question:** Study the photograph on page 47. Describe the tanks seen in the picture and explain what they're doing at the side of the road.




CHAPTER 6: RETURN TO ANTWERP

SYNOPSIS Brudi and Pappa return to Antwerp, and a measure of normalcy returns to their lives.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out what happens when Brudi and Pappa return to Antwerp.

Guided Questions

1. Although the Belgian army had not yet surrendered to the British, for the Jewish refugees it was as if they had. In what ways?
2. Describe some of the ways Brudi changed since he left Antwerp.
3. How did a feeling of normalcy slowly return to Antwerp?
4. Describe some of Brudi's feelings as he gave away his marbles to a young boy.
5. Why did the Germans act polite and civil to the Jews of Antwerp?
6.  **Creative writing:** Write a poem from Brudi's perspective as he returns to his home in Antwerp.

CHAPTER 7: "YOU'LL BE BACK"

SYNOPSIS Brudi and Pappa leave Antwerp for Portugal but are detained in France.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how Brudi and Pappa leave Antwerp.

Guided Questions


1. Describe Pappa's escape plan. Where did he plan to go, and why?
2. When Pappa and Brudi left home, it was "with great faith — and little baggage." Explain.
3. Use the map on the inside front cover of the book to trace the escape route in this chapter.
4. Explain why Pappa requested a short-stay permit from the Portuguese border control and how they responded.

CHAPTER 8: OLIVE OIL AND COTTON WOOL

SYNOPSIS After much hardship, Brudi and Pappa manage to obtain train tickets to France.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how Brudi and Pappa continue to try to leave war-torn Europe.

Guided Questions


1. Why were Pappa, Brudi, and the other refugees sent on a train back to France?
2. The text says, "Now they were worse off than before." Explain why Pappa and Brudi were worse off now that they were left with only their Hungarian passports.
3. When Pappa and Brudi finally received train tickets to Bordeaux, they were relieved that the clerk never asked to see their travel documents. Why were they so relieved about this?
4. Describe the *hashgachah pratis* Brudi and Pappa experienced in the Bordeaux train station.
-  5. **Predict:** Who is the Schwartz family, and how will they help Brudi and Pappa?

CHAPTER 9: A FRIENDLY HOME

SYNOPSIS Brudi and Pappa arrive in Paris and are warmly greeted by the Schwartz family.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how Brudi and Pappa settle down in Paris.

Guided Questions

1. The text describes how Pappa walked with false confidence among the German soldiers at the train station because he did not want to appear nervous. Why?
2. If Mr. Schwartz didn't know anyone in Bordeaux, who do you think was the man who gave Pappa and Brudi his name?
3. How do you think Brudi may have felt when he met the Schwartz family?
-  4. **Creative writing:** Write a thank-you note from Brudi to Mrs. Schwartz. Be sure to thank her for her hospitality and include what this meant to Brudi when he was stuck in Paris.




CHAPTER 10: LOOKING FOR MR. BERKOVITS

SYNOPSIS Pappa spends his time trying to find a way to leave Paris.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how Pappa and Brudi spend their days in Paris.

Guided Questions


1. Describe some of the ways Brudi's life changed after he left Antwerp.
2. Explain why Pappa was working so hard to get exit visas. How would those help?
3. List and describe some of the new friends that Pappa and Brudi made in Paris.
4. Explain the title of this chapter, "Looking for Mr. Berkovits."
5.  **Predict:** Who is the wealthy man who sent a visiting card, and what might he want from Pappa?

CHAPTER 11: A GRAND HOUSE

SYNOPSIS Pappa meets the Blanc family, who gives him a generous gift to repay an old debt of gratitude.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out what happens at the wealthy man's house.

Guided Questions

1. According to the elderly Mrs. Blanc, why did she owe the Berkovits family her gratitude?
2. Why did Pappa decide to return to the hotel by foot instead of by bus?
3. The text says that "Finally, Pappa received the call he had been waiting for." What call was this?
4. Why did Pappa tell the hotelkeeper that he was going to join relatives outside of Paris?
5.  **Document-based question:** Study the photograph of the bus on page 86. What details do you notice in the picture?

CHAPTER 12: GUIDES AND GUARDS

SYNOPSIS Pappa and Brudi join a group of people attempting escape across the Spanish border, but they are caught and imprisoned by the Germans.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out happens when Pappa and Brudi leave France.

Guided Questions

1. When the Germans searched the group, the guides were gone. Where do you think they went?
2. Why were the smugglers particularly worried about Brudi betraying them?
3. Explain Pappa's argument to the German commander. Why did he believe he should be released from the German prison camp?




CHAPTER 13: ACROSS THE BORDER

SYNOPSIS Pappa and Brudi return to Paris and then escape to Vichy France.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out what happens when Pappa and Brudi return to Paris.

Guided Questions


1. Describe some of the ways Pappa and Brudi were protected on their return to Paris.
2. Why did Pappa want to reach Marseilles?
-  3. **Predict:** Look at the title of the next chapter. What might be the good news that is coming?

CHAPTER 14: GOOD NEWS

SYNOPSIS Pappa and Brudi settle in Nice. Discovering that the rest of the family is in England, they travel to Spain en route to England.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out what happens in Vichy France.

Guided Questions

1. The city of Marseilles was located in Vichy France. What does this mean?
2. Although Vichy France was not controlled by Germany, in which ways was it still dangerous?
3. Why did Pappa and Brudi leave Nice and return to Marseilles?
4. How would a transit visa to Venezuela be helpful to Pappa?
5. Explain the risk Pappa and Brudi were taking when they crossed the border into Spain.
-  6. **Document-based question:** Study the photograph on page 103. Contrast life in Nice to what Pappa and Brudi had experienced until now.



CHAPTER 15: THE MAN IN THE DARK SUIT

SYNOPSIS Pappa and Brudi reach Bilbao and are welcomed by Jewish representatives. They then find out that their family is in Manchester, England.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how Pappa tries to arrange passage to England.

Guided Questions


1. Why did Pappa and Brudi leave Barcelona, Spain, for Bilbao?
2. Why was it important for Pappa not to mention that he was looking for work in Spain?
3. Why would it be tempting for Brudi to remain in the hotel in Bilbao?
4. Why do you think it was “very unlikely” that Pappa would get permission to enter England?

CHAPTER 16: ACROSS THE RIVER

SYNOPSIS Pappa and Brudi join a group illegally crossing the Spanish border into Portugal.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out how Pappa tries to leave Spain for Portugal.

Guided Questions

1. Why did Pappa think he might have better luck reaching England from Portugal than from Spain?
2. Why did the refugees decide to abandon their guides and continue on their own?
3. Why did the baker leave the group stranded in the cemetery?
4.  **Document-based question:** Study the photograph on page 117. What details do you notice in the picture? How does this contribute to the danger in which Pappa, Brudi, and the other refugees found themselves?

CHAPTER 17: IMPRISONED!

SYNOPSIS The group of refugees is caught and imprisoned on the way to Lisbon, but with help from the Joint they are ultimately released.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out what happens when the group of refugees is left on its own.

Guided Questions

1. Why were the Jewish refugees imprisoned?
2. Why did Pappa tell Brudi to accept his freedom even while leaving his father in jail?
3. Describe Brudi's character. Bring evidence from events in the past few chapters to support your ideas.
4. When Brudi met up with Pappa in Ericeira, "they were safe and free at last." Explain why.



CHAPTER 18: A FLIGHT TO ENGLAND; EPILOGUE

SYNOPSIS Pappa and Brudi settle down to life in Ericeira and constantly seek a way to reach England.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out what happens when Pappa and Brudi settle in Ericeira.

Guided Questions

1. What were some of the ways Pappa and Brudi assisted with Jewish life in Ericeira?
2. Why did Pappa decide to try to reach England by plane instead of by boat?
3. Why would Brudi have a better chance of getting on a plane to England than Pappa would?
4. Describe some of Brudi's feelings when he was finally reunited with his family in England.

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

Use one or more of the following activities to conclude the book.

Life Lessons

Read the author's note at the back of the book. What lessons can we gain from reading the Berkovits family story?

Art

Create a poster to advertise this book so people will want to read it.

Creative Writing

- Write a speech that Pappa may have delivered to his extended family on the anniversary of his escape from Belgium. Reflect on the lessons he learned from his life story and the message he'd want his family to take from that.
- Compare this story with another one in the Escape series. How are the stories similar? How are they different?