

Chapter 1 : This Way for the Gas Ladies and Gentlemen Summary and Analysis (like SparkNotes) | Free E

*This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen is a collection of short stories by Polish author Tadeusz Borowski, who was imprisoned at Auschwitz concentration camp for two years. In to*

In , his father, whose bookstore had been nationalized by the communists, was sent to a camp in the Gulag system in Russian Karelia because he had been a member of a Polish military organization during World War I. During this time Tadeusz lived with his aunt. He settled in Warsaw with his brother Juliusz. Experiences under Nazi occupation[ edit ] In Borowski finished his secondary schooling in a secret underground lyceum in Nazi-occupied Poland, and then began studies at the underground Warsaw University Polish language and literature. He also became involved in several underground newspapers and started to publish his poems and short novels in the monthly Droga, all the while working in a warehouse as a night watchman. It was during this period that he wrote most of his wartime poetry, and he clandestinely published his first collection, titled Gdziekolwiek Ziemia Wherever the Earth. While a member of the educational underground in Warsaw, Borowski was living with his fiancée Maria. After Maria did not return home one night in February , Borowski began to suspect that she had been arrested. He was arrested, placed in the infamous Pawiak prison and then transported to Auschwitz. Forced into slave labor in extremely harsh conditions, Borowski later reflected on this experience in his writing. In particular, working on a railway ramp in Auschwitz-Birkenau, he witnessed arriving Jews being told to leave their personal property behind, and then being transferred directly from the trains to the gas chambers. While a prisoner at Auschwitz, Borowski caught pneumonia ; afterwards, he was put to work in a Nazi medical experiment "hospital. Dachau-Allach, where Borowski was imprisoned, was liberated by the Americans on May 1, and after that Borowski found himself in a camp for displaced persons near Munich. After the war[ edit ] He spent some time in Paris , and then returned to Poland on May 31, His fiancée, who had survived the camps and emigrated to Sweden, returned to Poland in late , and they were married in December The main stories are written in the first person from the perspective of an Auschwitz inmate; they describe the morally numbing effect of everyday terror, with prisoners, trying to survive, often being indifferent or mean towards each other; the privileges of non-Jewish inmates like Borowski; and the absence of any heroism. Early on after its publication in Poland, the work was accused of being nihilistic, amoral and decadent. At first he believed that Communism was the only political force truly capable of preventing any future Auschwitz from happening. He returned to Warsaw a year later and entered into an extramarital affair with a young girl. Borowski tried to intervene on his behalf and failed; he became completely disillusioned with the regime. Death[ edit ] On July 1, , at the age of 28, Borowski committed suicide by breathing in gas from a gas stove. His wife had given birth to their daughter three days prior to his death.

**Chapter 2 : This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen Quotes by Tadeusz Borowski**

*They have been collected under the jaunty, sardonic title THIS WAY FOR THE GAS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. The book is a unique contribution to concentration camp literature.*

Not like Joyce or Proust or Faulkner, but because " when exactly do you read this? In the evening after a good dinner? Well, at bedtime then? Not unless you want nightmares. I have read a few of these concentration camp memoirs, which, strangely insultingly, are classified as FICTION when they are, of course, the truth. But here, in the concentration camp world, reality reads like fiction, it is true. Tadeusz Borowski writes with a heavy black humour I found this book very difficult to read. Tadeusz Borowski writes with a heavy black humour about Auschwitz, which some may find almost unbearable. I now have a certain level of knowledge. I can distinguish between the wildcat camps of , the political prisoner camps like Dachau, the work camps like Mauthausen, and the terminal points of the three extermination camps Treblinka, Belzec and Sobibor, which really should be much more famous than they are. But their fate was to exist very temporarily, for a year or 18 months, then to be bulldozed, and for the ground to be ploughed, and tilled, and for a farmhouse to be built and a family installed there who were to say they had farmed the land of Belzec for generations. Unlike the camps which were liberated, and therefore photographed. No photos of Belzec! And I can compare all those to the empire that was Auschwitz. So the nuts and bolts of the holocaust have become well known to me over the years. It is jolting and upsetting. The first jolt comes on the third page of the title story and what a title, surely one of the greatest titles in literature. These were prisoners whose job was to get the Jews out of the cattle trucks, up the ramps and off to the crematoria. Once that was done they picked up all the luggage which the Jews could not, of course, take with them. In this luggage was a whole lot of food " good stuff too, wine, cured meat, sausage, cheese, you name it. They also had their pick of the clothes in the luggage, so they dressed pretty well too. Imagine, prisoners living well at Auschwitz! It is almost over. The dead are being cleared off the ramp and piled into the last truck. The Canada men, weighed down under a load of bread, marmalade and sugar, and smelling of perfume and fresh linen, line up to go. For several days the entire camp will live off this transport. So now we overhear a conversation between two of these prisoners. He appreciates the good things these transports of Jews are constantly bringing. But " how long can this go on? No more sausages, for sure. Well, it was a worry. The stories here inhabit what Primo Levi calls the grey zone, the compromised, corrupted world where there is no innocence, only degrees of guilt. He describes the recreational facilities in Auschwitz. Right after the boxing match I took in another show " I went to hear a concert. Over in Birkenau you could probably never imagine what feats of culture we are exposed to up here, just a few kilometres away from the smouldering chimneys. This is a distraction, like other author suicides. The work always stands by itself, it is not placed by the grotesque act of suicide into a sphere beyond judgement. Readers encounter the reality inside these words, not outside. And inside these stories the atmosphere is oppressive, the fumes acrid, the stench is unbearable, the company not the best. When I finished this book I looked around. One of the cats jumped onto the windowledge for another few hours of birdwatching. Do I recommend this book?

**Chapter 3 : This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen by Tadeusz Borowski**

*This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen, also known as Ladies and Gentlemen, to the Gas Chamber, is a collection of short stories by Tadeusz Borowski.*

In to , the Soviet Army was advancing on Poland, and the SS began transferring the remaining prisoners to other concentration camps and destroying the evidence of the mass killings at Auschwitz. Borowski was sent on a death march to Dachau concentration camp, where he was later liberated by the Americans. The prisoners have just been deloused and are walking around naked. Tadek, the first-person narrator, returns to his bunkhouse, sits on the top bunk with some of the other prisoners, and eats the food he received in a package from Warsaw. As the prisoners are unloaded from the train, they ask to know what will happen to them, but Tadek says he does not speak Polish. After the prisoners have all gotten off the train, the SS officer tells the kommando to clean up the car. The SS man tells them not to put the infants on the truck but to give them to the women. Afterwards, Tadek turns to Henri, a French prisoner, and asks if they are good people. Tadek says that he feels no pity for the Jews going to the gas chamber, only anger. Henri responds that it is perfectly logical, and even healthy, for Tadek to take out his anger on someone weaker than him. She asks Tadek what is going to happen to her, and, when he does not answer, she says that she knows what is going to happen. He makes his way over to the metal rails, where he lies down and imagines being back in his bunk with the other prisoners who are not going to the gas tonight. Harmenz was a subcamp of Auschwitz where prisoners performed agricultural labor on an SS farm. In the first section, Tadek sits in the shade of the chestnut trees, tightening the fishplates along the tracks. Haneczka, a kind woman who lives at Harmenz, comes outside and offers Tadek some food, but Tadek refuses. Becker, an old Jewish prisoner, tells Tadek that he is wrong to refuse food and should ask for more potatoes. Tadek says that he will be glad when Becker is taken to the gas because Becker killed his own people when he was a camp senior. Later in the day, the Kommandofuhrer tells Tadek to give him his pocket watch. When Tadek refuses, the Kommandofuhrer throws it against a brick wall. The prisoners take a break for dinner, and Tadek describes the prisoners eating their soup in complete silence without breaking their rank formations. After everyone has a bowl of soup, the Kapo gets to decide who will get a second bowl. The second bowl is reserved only for the strongest prisoners, while the weaker prisoners are only allowed one serving. A guard overhears him, accuses him of spreading political rumors, and demands his number. Tadek claims that the guard misunderstood him and that he was actually talking about sticks. They return to camp, but the men become anxious because they realize they are returning too early in the day. The Unterscharfuhrer searches them and finds that one of the old Greeks has stolen a goose from the farm. Ivan, a Russian prisoner, steps forward and says he gave the Greek the goose. His number is written down for the selection. Back at the camp, Tadek returns to his bunk during the selection. As the prisoners play soccer, thousands of Jews walk past them on their way to the gas chamber. Tadek tells her that he marched from Birkenau to Auschwitz and describes how much things have improved for him since his arrival at Auschwitz. He writes that he is relatively safe at Auschwitz, since the SS have stopped gassing non-Jews. In his letters, Tadek also explores the passivity of the prisoners at Auschwitz and ponders what the world will look like if the Germans win the war. The Germans will be free to write their own invented history and create their own version of beauty in the world. When he is selected for the gas chamber, he refuses to leave behind his package. Tadek tells the doctor that the Schreiber should know better and give the package to someone who will be able to use it rather than taking it with him to the gas chamber. The doctor says that he is not sure what he would do in that situation, and, if it was him, he might want to bring the package with him as well. The camp elder announces that the starving prisoners will not receive any supper that night. The Kommandont leave the corpses piled by the fence, and, after the SS men are out of sight, the prisoners swarm around the corpses. Another man, Kapo Kwasniak, is in the bed next to Tadek and demands that Tadek tell him a story. Tadek tells him about a young boy with a Bible who was put in his jail cell. The boy refused to admit that he was a Jew, even to the other Jews in the cell. An American officer tells the survivors that they should resist the temptation to exact revenge on the German prisoners and that the SS men will be held responsible for their

crimes in a court of law. After the American leaves, the survivors uncover a German prisoner and trample him to death. They all long to leave Germany and spend their time searching for missing loved ones. After the war, Tadek becomes a writer. He spends the summer afternoons wandering through the poorest parts of the city and finds that it makes him feel nothing.

*1 TADEUSZ BOROWSKI This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen All of us walk around naked. The delousing is finally over and our striped suits are back.*

The narrator joins in the task of unloading thousands of Jews from the cattle cars and sending them to their death in the gas chamber, all to acquire food and maybe a pair of shoes. As readers grow to understand that the narrator is forced to this extreme in order to continue to perform the work that guarantees his own existence, they become implicated themselves – they become part of the community of the concentration camp. Author Biography Borowski was born in to a poor Polish family in what was then part of the Soviet Ukraine. The young Borowski was educated at a Franciscan boarding school. Schools were closed down, so Borowski studied in underground classes and managed to graduate from secondary school. He then attended the underground Warsaw University, majoring in Polish language and literature. Already a budding writer, Borowski also worked as a stockboy and a night watchman. In , Borowski printed and distributed his first book of poetry, *Gdziekolwiek ziemia* translated as *Wherever the Earth*. Borowski anonymously published this collection of metaphoric verse that centered on the death of civilized man in the German labor camps and then distributed it secretly. He was sent to several prison camps before arriving at Auschwitz. To ensure his survival, Borowski got a job as an orderly in the camp hospital. As the Allied liberation forces drew close to Auschwitz, Borowski and other prisoners were moved to Dachau. Army liberated the camp in May Borowski was then transferred to a camp for displaced persons. He learned that she was living in Sweden, but he was unable to cross international borders to reach her. His fiancée joined him in November, and they were married the following year. Some of these stories as well as his poetry had been published in Poland before his return. Along with two other Polish Gentile writers, Borowski compiled *We Were in Auschwitz*, stories of life in the concentration camp. The Polish readership, though shocked at the amoral world Borowski depicted, recognized his talent. *Pozegnanie z Maria* Farewell to Maria and *Kamienny świat* World of Stone were both published toward the end of the s. Borowski was wooed by and joined the Communist party in He turned to writing political propaganda – pro-communist journalistic pieces for Warsaw newspapers. These writings had little literary merit; however, he received a government prize for them. In the summer of , he was sent to Berlin for a year to work in the press section at the Polish Military Mission. He was also given a secret intelligence assignment by the secret police. Less than fifteen months after his return to Poland, in July , Borowski committed suicide. His five-volume *Utwory zebrane* Collected Works was published in Warsaw in Translations of his works have been published in other countries as well. Plot Summary In the barracks of Auschwitz, the unnamed narrator eats his breakfast with Henri, his friend and fellow prisoner. Henri is a member of the so-called Canada squad, members of the Kommando labor gang whose job is to unload the Jewish prisoners from the cattle cars and send them either to the work camp or to the gas chambers. In the midst of their meal, a messenger comes with the news that a transport is arriving. It is the first transport that the camp has seen in several days, and Henri invites the narrator to come work on the ramp. This is how prisoners get food and items of clothing. In the past, the narrator had to depend on Henri for these items, and he accepts the offer. The narrator and the other workers go to the railroad station. They are joined by SS officers and guards, all of whom wait for the first train to arrive. As the train rounds the bend, the workers all jump to their feet. The train stops on the tracks, alongside the ramp. Anguished cries for water and air can be heard coming from inside. Heads push out through the windows, and bodies pound against the inside of the train. To silence the prisoners, a soldier shoots a volley of rounds into the side of the cattle car. The SS officer warns the workers not to take anything from the Jews beside food. Then the train doors open. People rush forth from inside. They are ordered to make a pile of their possessions – luggage, blankets, coats, food, money. The Jews are made to go either to the left or the right. Those on the left side board the waiting trucks that will take them to the gas chamber. Those on the right will go to Auschwitz to work. The men carry out the selection quickly, shoving prisoners into the trucks. One SS officer keeps track of how many people have gone to the gas chambers with hash marks. After the train has been emptied, the prisoner-workers must clean it up.

Inside, the narrator finds babies among the filth and squalor. The narrator gives them to an old woman to take to the gas chamber, and she shows her sympathy for him. The narrator suddenly feels very tired. He asks Henri if they are good people; he is concerned because he feels no pity for the Jews. Just as the workers have completed this task, another train rolls in. Unloading this train, the workers react more brutally and more impatiently. A woman attempts to leave behind her small child, hoping that she will be selected as a laborer. A guard curses her, throwing her on the trucks, and tossing the child in after her. The narrator sees an attractive young woman. She walks off to the truck, though she is young and strong, and her life would have been spared. After unloading the two transports, the narrator declares to Henri that he is done with this work. Henri tells him to sit quietly and not let an SS soldier see him. By the light of the stars and the overhead bulbs, the narrator watches the work begin again. He sees a little girl crawl out the window of a train that has just pulled onto the tracks. She walks in circles, stunned and terrified. An SS man kicks her down and then shoots her with his revolver. The narrator goes back to the ramp to work, but when he touches yet another corpse, he vomits. Leaning against the stack of rails, the narrator dreams of being back at his bunk. He longs to return to the camp, which is a place of peace compared to the hell he is now in. Then, finally, the last transport has been unloaded. The dead are cleared off the ramp. The prisoners line up to go back to camp, weighted down with the food belonging to the Jews.

**Characters** Andrei Andrei is a Russian sailor who is a member of the labor gang that unloads the Jews from the cattle cars. He attacks a woman who is trying to deny her child to keep from being sent to the gas chambers. Through his act of attacking the woman, he wins the approval of the SS officers.

**Girl** The narrator notices an attractive, confident Jewish girl. She calmly asks him what will happen to them. Though he will not answer her, she tells him that she already knows the truth. Instead of allowing herself to be among the women chosen to go to the labor camp, she puts herself on the trucks headed for the gas chambers.

**A member of the Canada labor gang, Henri** regularly smuggles back food and clothing for his friends. He has a cynical attitude toward the camp, his fellow prisoners, and the Jewish victims, as well as a clear understanding that the welfare of the prisoner-workers depends on the continuing destruction of the Jews.

**Little Girl** The little girl pushes herself out of the train window. Her mind has been unhinged by the experience, and she walks in circles until an SS man knocks her down with a kick and then shoots her dead.

**Narrator** The unnamed narrator is a Polish gentile imprisoned in Auschwitz. He is better off than most prisoners, receiving food packages from his family. His trip to the ramp is the first time he has worked such duty. On his way to the train station, he considers himself lucky to get this work detail because he knows he will be rewarded with food. However, he does not anticipate the horror of the work: After unloading his first transport, the narrator feels tired and nauseous, yet completely disassociated from himself. Instead of feeling pity for the Jews, he is furious with them because, as he rationalizes it, if the Nazis were not determined to murder them, he would not be forced to carry out this disturbing and dehumanizing work. As a response to his malaise, he loses control, unloading the second train with barely restrained brutality; he wants the Jews to be gone so he is not reminded of what he is doing. After working on two transports, he is unable to continue. Instead, he longs only to return to the peace that the concentration camp provides where at least he remains among the living and not in continual contact with those who are like the waking dead. Around six million Jews died in the Holocaust, along with at least three million prisoners of other backgrounds. The Nazis organized this mass extermination with extreme efficiency; for example, by the end of the day that the story takes place, 15, people have been sent almost effortlessly to their deaths. Writers such as Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel have produced some of the most famous accounts of survivor testimony. Holocaust literature focuses on how people survived amidst the horror of the concentration camps. Different Holocaust survivors have posited different explanations.

## Chapter 5 : This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen by Aubrie Kent on Prezi

*This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen Questions and Answers. The Question and Answer section for This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen is a great resource to ask questions, find answers, and discuss the novel.*

A group of prisoners known as Canada in camp jargon works here. The work of these people was hard, physically exhausting, and psychologically not to be endured by the occasional actor. The work continues without a break for several hours, several days, several years. Lasts without a break through four and a half million burned people. They were Jews whose families were also burned. All of us walk around naked. The delousing is finally over, and our striped suits are back from the tanks of Cyclone B solution, an efficient killer of lice in clothing and of men in gas chambers. But all the same, all of us walk around naked: The camp has been sealed off tight. Not a single prisoner, not one solitary louse, can sneak through the gate. The labor Kommandos have stopped working. We have been sleeping on plain boards, since our mattresses and blankets are still being disinfected. From the rear Blocks we have a view of the FKL "Frauenkonzentrationslager, there too the delousing is in full swing. Twenty-eight thousand women have been stripped naked and driven out of the barracks. Now they swarm around the large yard between the Blocks. The heat rises, the hours are endless. We are without even our usual diversion: For several days now, no new transports have come in. Part of Canada has been liquidated and detailed to a labor Kommando "one of the very toughest" at Harmenz. For there exists in the camp a special brand of justice based on envy: Several of us sit on the top bunk, our legs dangling over the edge. We slice the neat loaves of crisp, crunchy bread. It is a bit coarse to the taste, the kind that stays fresh for days. Sent all the way from Warsaw "only a week ago my mother held this white loaf in her hands" dear Lord, dear Lord. We unwrap the bacon, the onion, we open a can of evaporated milk. Henri, the fat Frenchman, dreams aloud of the French wine brought by the transports from Strasbourg, Paris, Marseille! Sweat streams down his body. Why not try and organize some shoes for me instead "you know, the perforated kind, with a double sole, and what about that shirt you promised me long ago? We have been friends for a long time, but I do not even know his last name. All of us live on what they bring.

## Chapter 6 : This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen Summary & Study Guide

*This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen was reissued in , as part of a series of literature from Eastern Europe. Again, it drew overwhelmingly favorable criticism. Again, it drew overwhelmingly favorable criticism.*

## Chapter 7 : Tadeusz Borowski | Polish author | theinnatdunvilla.com

*This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen is a report of the man who survived. And this is a horrific testimony. And this is a horrific testimony. Borowski's prose, full of sharp and dispassionate descriptions, is so brutal and harsh, such dense that you barely can breath.*

## Chapter 8 : Tadeusz Borowski - Wikipedia

*This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen is a novel by Tadeusz Borowski. The book paints a dramatic picture of the way the Jews who came to Auschwitz were treated. Short stories additionally address the way of life in these concentration camps for both the prisoners and, to some extent, the leaders.*

## Chapter 9 : This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen - Tadeusz Borowski - Google Books

*"This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen" by Tadeusz Borowski.*