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Period: _____

Maus I and II Study Guide: Chapters 6 – Chapter 2

Mrs. Howard

Chapter 6: Mouse Trap

1. Spiegelman shows Artie commenting on the book that he is writing – within the very book, *Maus*, that Artie refers to. What is the literary term for this type of narrative?
2. Artie honestly admits to Mala that he worries about the way he is portraying his father in his book. What worries him about this portrayal?
3. We see that since Artie has been spending time with his father in preparation for the book, he is becoming more involved in his life. Artie finds himself giving marital advice to both Mala and Vladek. What advice does he give his father?
4. On page 135, Artie says, “I’ve got to write this conversation down before I forget it.” What conversation did he mean, and why would he want to keep a record of it?

5. Richieu's governess, Janina, had offered in the past to help the Spiegelmans if it became necessary. When they knock on her door, however, she tells them to go away quickly before they bring trouble to her household. What can we assume has changed Janina's mind?
6. Vladek tells Artie that it was easier for him to pass as a non-Jewish Pole than it was for Anja. How does Spiegelman's illustration of his parents walking in the street subtly convey this fact?
7. What happens to Vladek as an immediate result of his daring to answer a stranger on the street in Hebrew?
8. How are Anja and Vladek able to travel openly and without incident to Mrs. Motonawa's house, twenty kilometers from their hiding place?
9. What does the incident with Vladek and the playing schoolchildren tell us about the way anti-Semitism is passed from generation to generation during the war?
10. Describe the conditions Miloch, his wife, and his young son are living in.

11. What convinces Vladek to trust the Poles who have offered to smuggle him and Anja into Hungary?
12. What does Artie call Vladek when he learns that Vladek has burned Anja's diaries? Why do you think Artie chooses this word?
13. Why is "Mouse Trap" an appropriate title for Chapter 6?

Maus II: And Here My Troubles Began

Epigraph

1. Comment on the epigraph – a quote from a German newspaper of the 1930s – that Spiegelman has placed at the beginning of *Maus II*. What comment of Vladek's in *Maus I* does it recall? What does it tell us about the journalist who wrote it and those who read it and agreed with it?

Chapter 1: Mauschwitz

1. The subtitle, "And Here My Troubles Began," is an example of what literary term?
2. As what animal does Artie end up drawing Francois?

3. What concerns does Artie have about the book he is working on? Why do you think Spiegelman decides to have Artie voice those concerns within the pages of the book itself?
4. Sum up the nature of Artie's feelings about Richieu.
5. Why do you think Spiegelman has placed a snapshot of Richieu at the beginning of *Maus II*?
6. In *Maus I*, Mala dismisses the possibility that Vladek is tight with money as a direct result of his experience in the camps. After meeting the Karpis, what other characteristic of Vladek's does Artie realize is probably not an after-effect of the camps?
7. What is the first thing that happens to Vladek and Anja at Auschwitz?
8. What happens to the Poles who betrayed Vladek after offering to smuggle him into Hungary?
9. Look at the panel of present-day Vladek on page 186. What is the purpose of the numbers on Vladek's arm? Why does the priest say they are lucky?

10. What does Spiegelman depict Mandelbaum praying for in Auschwitz? What does this depiction indicate? What literary term would it exemplify?
11. What is Vladek able to exchange for a good breakfast and better clothes for himself and Mandelbaum?
12. What is the explanation Vladek gives for Mendelbaum's disappearance?

Chapter 2: Auschwitz (Time Flies)

1. Spiegelman writes, "Vladek started working as a tinman in Auschwitz in the spring of 1944...I started working on this page at the very end of February 1987." He uses this same kind of balanced sentence structure to report the dates of other "then" and "now" events. What is the technical term for this type of structure?
2. On the first page of this chapter, Spiegelman portrays himself – not "Artie" – for the first time. He draws himself as a human in a mouse mask. How does this differ markedly from the way he drew Vladek wearing a big mask in *Maus I*? What is the significance of the difference?
3. Look at the last panel on page 201 and describe what is going on. What is Art Spiegelman struggling with?

4. Why is publishing *Maus I* in German an issue?
5. What is behind Pavel's comment that perhaps people need a "newer, bigger Holocaust"?
6. How does Vladek manage to appease the volatile chief of the tinsmiths, Yidl?
7. What were the chief differences between Birkenau and Auschwitz?
8. How did Mancia help out Vladek and Anja?
9. What does Vladek rebuke Anja for when he finally gets to see her at Birkenau?
10. After suffering a vicious beating, why does Vladek struggle to work rather than allow himself to be taken to the hospital?

11. When Vladek was saving up to buy Anja a place in the new barracks in Auschwitz I, what did he have to pay with?
12. What is known as “black work” at Auschwitz?
13. How is it that Vladek comes to see the inside of a gas chamber and survive to tell of it?
14. Examine Spiegelman’s drawing of the inside of a gas chamber. How did the Germans convincingly make the chamber appear like a shower room?
15. Vladek moves seamlessly from saying, “The fat from the burning bodies they scooped and poured again so everyone could burn better” to saying, “Ach! It’s 2:30. Look how the time is flying. And it’s still so much to do today.” Comment on the effect of this seamless transition.
16. One commonly asked question about the Holocaust is, “Why didn’t the Jews at least *try* to resist?” In fact, Artie himself asks it. How does Vladek explain it?
17. What do you find ironic about the last few panels immediately before the next chapter begins?

