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In the Garden of Beasts

By Erik Larson

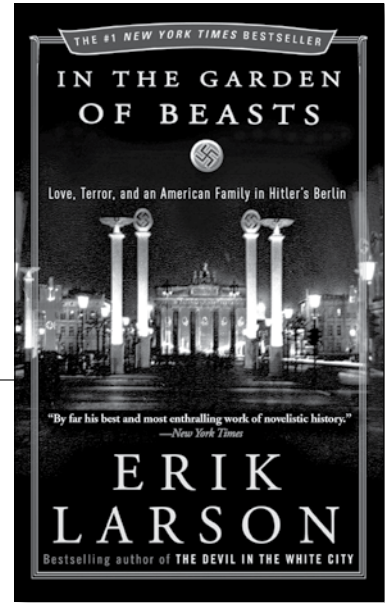
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• about the book •

In June of 1933, less than six months after Adolf Hitler was named chancellor, President Roosevelt offered a mild-mannered history professor from Chicago named William Dodd the position of American ambassador to Germany. Dodd viewed the position as an opportunity to finish the project that he believed would be his legacy: a multivolume history of the American South. It was also a chance to reconnect with his two adult children, Bill Jr. and Martha, whom he invited to accompany him overseas.

The Berlin that the Dodds initially encountered appeared, on the surface, to be vibrant and full of promise. Martha, in particular, was entranced, and she began a series of affairs with powerful and influential men, including officials within the Nazi party. In Hitler's Berlin, however, nothing was as it appeared to be, and reports of violence against Jews along with a series of attacks against Americans suggested that a more sinister reality lurked beneath the thin veneer of normalcy. As Dodd's distaste for the policies and practices of the Third Reich increased and Hitler's rhetoric grew more and more alarming, the ambassador found himself increasingly at odds with the embassy establishment, the State Department, and the Nazi party. Eventually, Hitler's horrific agenda became impossible to ignore and both Dodd and his daughter had to make decisions that would haunt them for the remainder of their lives.

Erik Larson's book paints a vivid portrait of this relatively unknown story in world history. Readers are invited to gaze out of the window of the Dodd's rented home, a mansion owned by a wealthy Jewish family in the prestigious Tiergartenstrasse district, a short walk away from the houses of senior Nazi party officials and the park known as the Tiergarten, "Animal Garden" or the "Garden of Beasts," and watch along side of Dodd and his daughter as one of the most brutal chapters in modern history unfolds before their eyes. This is the story of two Americans forced to acknowledge the reality of a previously unfathomable evil, and it raises questions that will resonate with contemporary readers about personal integrity and the way that people, and nations, allow themselves to be led astray.

• about the author •



ERIK LARSON is the bestselling author of *Isaac's Storm*, *Thunderstruck*, and *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair that Changed America*, which won the 2004 Edgar Award in the Best Fact Crime category and was a finalist for the National Book Award. He is a former writer for *The Wall Street Journal* and *Time* magazine. Larson has taught nonfiction writing at San Francisco State, the Johns Hopkins Writing Seminars, and the University of Oregon. He lives in Seattle.

Random House, Inc. Academic Dept. 1745 Broadway, New York, NY 10019

HIGH SCHOOL: www.randomhouse.com/highschool • highschool@randomhouse.com

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• about the guide

In the Garden of Beasts is focused on a five-year window of time during Hitler's rise to power. A glossary of people that describes each person by the position they held during the time frame of the book is included for reference.

Within this guide, **Guided Reading and Discussion Questions** are provided for each chapter. These questions will help students engage in a close reading of the text and synthesize the complex characters and events mentioned throughout the narrative. **Writing Prompts** ask students to relate the themes of the text to their own experiences or take a position about a relevant issue. Prompts could be adapted for use in Socratic seminars or class debates. **Topics for Further Discussion** will require students to expand their thinking and engage in significant research activities related to issues in the book. Several of these topics ask students to connect issues in the book to current events and contemporary political discourse. The questions in the guide encourage cross-curricular collaboration and are adaptable to curriculum for both social studies and language arts.

• before you read

Erik Larson's book covers a very specific period of history: it mainly focuses on 1933–1934. In order to place the events of the book in context, have students work as a class to create a time line of major world events from the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria in 1914 to the McCarthy trials. Events of particular relevance to the book include the presidency of Woodrow Wilson, the establishment of the Weimar Republic, the sinking of the *Lusitania*, the Armistice of 1918, the Treaty of Versailles (especially the "Guilt Clause"), the Russian Revolution and establishment of the Soviet Union, the appointment of Adolf Hitler as chancellor of Germany, the Reichstag fire, Kristallnacht, the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Nuremberg trials, the Geneva Convention, and the McCarthy trials. You may wish to post the time line in the classroom for reference during your study of the book.

• guided reading and discussion questions

Das Vorspiel: Prologue

Teachers may want to use the chapter "Das Vorspiel" (along with a review of the sources and acknowledgements section) to discuss the characteristics of nonfiction and to reflect on the sources that Larson used while writing this book.

1. Erik Larson used a variety of primary sources (especially letters, diaries, and other personal papers) when researching his book. How do you think the inclusion of these sources will impact the narrative focus of the book?
2. Based on this chapter and Larson's sources, how do you think this book will be different from other books that have been written about Nazi Germany?

The Man Behind the Curtain

1. What conclusion did Messersmith reach about the type of person that was needed to fill the vacant ambassador position?
2. What detail about the new ambassador suggested that he would not fit Messersmith's ideal?

Part One – Into the Wood

Chapter One

1. As a historian, what was Dodd's main area of expertise? Why did his research anger the Grand Camp of Confederate Veterans? What does his response to the controversy suggest about his moral character?
2. What did Dodd believe about Germany's role in World War I (The Great War)? Did he support American intervention in the war?

Chapter Two

3. Why do you think Roosevelt had difficulty filling the vacant ambassador position in Berlin?
4. In what ways was Dodd a "less than ideal" candidate for ambassador to Germany? Despite these issues, why was he still offered the position?
5. In 1933, what did the majority of Americans believe about Hitler's government?
6. Why did Dodd accept the position as ambassador? What did he hope to accomplish while in Germany? What was his reason for inviting his two adult children to accompany him?

Chapter Three

7. What reason did Martha give for the failure of her first marriage? What other factors do you think contributed to her divorce?
8. Why did Martha go to Berlin?

Chapter Four

9. What was Roosevelt's primary concern about the German government?
10. Why were Jewish leaders frustrated with President Roosevelt? Explain the two sides of the debate within the Jewish community about how America should have proceeded in its relationship with Nazi Germany.
11. How did the majority of Americans feel about immigration? Explain the "LPC clause" in the Immigration Act of 1912. How was this clause used to discriminate against Jewish visa applicants? What other immigration policies made it difficult for Jewish Germans to obtain visas?
12. What did Dodd believe to be an appropriate lifestyle for a diplomat? How did his view contrast with Ambassador Wilson's description of his fellow diplomats and their "pretty good club."
13. What did Dodd learn about the extent of Germany's financial obligation to the United States? Who did Dodd believe was primarily responsible for the burden of the debt?
14. How pervasive was anti-Semitic sentiment within the Roosevelt administration? What challenge could this present for an American ambassador to Germany?
15. At this point, do you believe Dodd was the "right man" for the job of ambassador to Germany? Why or why not?

Chapter Five

16. Martha described herself as being "slightly anti-Semitic." Did her views reflect the views of the majority of Americans prior to World War II?
17. What career did Martha intend to pursue? What advice did Sandburg and Wilder give her before she left for Berlin?
18. Why was Dodd unhappy with the arrangements Messersmith had made for them at the Esplanade hotel?

• guided reading and discussion questions continued

19. What was the Tiergarten?
20. Summarize Martha's initial response to Germany. How was it different than what she had expected based on the news reports she read in America?

Part Two – House Hunting in the Third Reich

Chapter Six

1. What did Sigrid Schultz and Martha Dodd disagree about? Why do you think Martha was so hesitant to believe Schultz?
2. Explain the significance of the "Aryan clause." Why weren't the restrictions caused by this clause evident to casual observers?
3. Why did Bassett visit Berlin? What was the outcome of his visit?

Chapter Seven

4. In what ways did Gordon believe that Dodd had violated embassy custom? What does this list of offenses tell you about the disparity between Dodd and Gordon's values and priorities?
5. Why was Dodd unable to be officially recognized as ambassador until the end of the summer?
6. What was the purpose of the Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases? Based on this early legislation, what can you infer about the values of the Hitler regime?
7. Why was Dodd unhappy with the officers and other employees of the embassy?
8. Summarize the conflicts that existed within Hitler's government.
9. Why did Dodd's interactions with Neurath give him hope for the Nazi party?
10. Why were Philip Zuckerman and his wife attacked? What was the tragic outcome of the beatings? Why did Messersmith believe that nothing could be done officially on Mrs. Zuckerman's behalf?
11. Consider Messersmith's choice of words in his dispatch on the Zuckerman case: "It has been a favorite pastime of the SA men to attack the Jews and one cannot avoid the plain language of stating that they do not like to be deprived of their prey." What are the connotations of the words that he used to describe the Nazis? What does this suggest about the way the SA operated?
12. Why did most American visitors to Germany fail to grasp the realities of Hitler's regime?

Chapter Eight

13. How did Martha meet Putzi Hanfstaengl? Why did Martha and Quentin Reynolds like him?

Chapter Nine

14. Describe some of the journalist Edgar Mowrer's methods for acquiring information about the Nazi party.
15. Explain the circumstances that caused Mowrer to feel betrayed by Messersmith and Dodd?
16. What did the chemist Fritz Haber invent? What was the intended use of his invention? How did the Nazi's eventually use it?
17. Why did Haber's wife kill herself?
18. Why did Haber visit Dodd? Why was Dodd unable to assist him?

19. Compare and contrast the perspectives of Messersmith, Wise, and Dodd concerning the persecution of Jews in Germany. Why do you think the men came to such different conclusions about the degree of harm being done by Hitler's regime?

Chapter Ten

20. Describe the circumstances that lead to the Dodds renting the three floors of the mansion at Tiergartenstrasse. Why did Panofsky want the Dodds living in his house?
21. What did the Dodd's house become known for among the diplomatic community?
22. Explain the significance of the location of Hitler's program to euthanize mentally and physically disabled people, which was called Aktion T-4. One might assume that a program like Aktion T-4 would be hidden from public view. What do you think Hitler's decision to house this program in the Tiergartenstrasse says about his agenda and methodology?

Part Three – Lucifer in the Garden

Chapter Eleven

1. Why was Daniel Mulvihill attacked? How did this attack differ from previous attacks against American citizens in Germany?
2. How did the U.S. consulate respond to the Mulvihill attack? What was the result of this response?
3. Explain the juxtaposition between the mood of the crowd that Martha and Reynolds encountered in Nuremberg and the purpose of their "parade." What does this suggest about the culture of the Nazi party?
4. After witnessing first hand one of the atrocities being perpetrated against Jews, what action did Quentin Reynolds take? Why do you think Martha was unwilling to condemn the Nazis?
5. How did Nazi leadership respond to international criticism over the Anna Rath incident?
6. Why was Dodd hesitant to attend the Nazi party rally in Nuremberg? What did he hope that a silent protest of the rally by the ambassadors of Spain, France, Britain, and the United States would accomplish?
7. Why were Phillips and Moffat unhappy with Dodd's decision to decline the Nazi's invitation to attend the rally?
8. Do you think Dodd's decision regarding the Nuremberg rally was appropriate given the circumstances? Should he have been more explicit in the way he expressed his disapproval? What might have been the consequences of a stronger rejection of the Nazi's invitation?

Chapter Twelve

9. Describe the circumstances of the Kaltenborn attack. What did Messersmith find ironic about the situation?
10. Why did Dodd and Messersmith disagree about asking the State Department to issue a warning against travel in Germany? At the time, which side would you have agreed with?
11. How did Martha Dodd's opinion of the Nazi party differ from her father's?
12. Explain the allusion and significance of Mower's final comment to Messersmith: "And you too, Brutus."
13. Why do you think Larson included the inventory list for the United States embassy's cupboard? What does this inventory suggest about the role and responsibility of an ambassador?

• guided reading and discussion questions continued

Chapter Thirteen

14. What did Martha consider to be her “dark secret”? How did she use it to her advantage?
15. What effect did Martha have on men? Why do you think she had this effect?
16. What criticism did Messersmith make to the State Department regarding Martha Dodd?
17. Explain the allusion and significance of Rudolf Diels’s nickname: “The Prince of Darkness.”
18. What techniques did the Gestapo use to create a climate of “violence and terror” in Germany? Why did Diels think that such a climate was necessary?

Chapter Fourteen

19. What was the significance of the song that Boris played for Martha on their first date?
20. Martha found Boris’s “interrogation” of her during their first date a little odd. What did she attribute his behavior to? Can you think of any ulterior motivation that could also explain his actions?
21. Why did Martha feel the need to be discreet about her burgeoning relationship with Boris?

Chapter Fifteen

22. What was the primary concern that Dodd raised during his meeting with Neurath? How did Neurath respond?
23. What did Dodd and Neurath consider to be the “Jewish problem”? What does their conversation reveal about the prejudices within the governments of both the United States and Germany?
24. What threat did Dodd make before leaving Neurath’s office? How did Neurath respond?
25. What actions by the German government suggest that Neurath was insincere in his comments to Dodd?

Chapter Sixteen

26. What did Panofsky eventually do to the fourth story of the house the Dodds rented from him? How did Dodd feel about this change to the terms of their rental agreement?
27. What did Klemperer notice about Hitler’s use of language?
28. What was the purpose of the Editorial Law?
29. Faced with evidence of escalating persecution of Jewish German citizens and the growing power of the Nazi party, Messersmith suggested that one possible solution to the crisis would be “forcible intervention from the outside.” What do you think the results of such an action would have been?
30. The State Department did not agree with Messersmith’s assessment of the situation. What was their primary concern regarding the relationship between America and Germany?

Chapter Seventeen

31. Based on the conflict between Diels and Packebusch, what conclusions can you draw about tensions within the leadership of the Nazi party?

Chapter Eighteen

32. In Dodd’s speech, “Economic Nationalism” he used the rhetorical appeal of historical analogy in an attempt to persuade the Nazi officials to adopt a more moderate political stance. Summarize the historical analogies that Dodd used in his speech.

33. Analyze the response to Dodd's speech. How did those present at the meeting receive it? How was it received elsewhere?
34. What startling news did Dodd receive regarding Hitler's actions? What did Dodd believe these actions signaled?
35. At this point in Hitler's rise to power no military action was taken to halt his ascension. What would have been the most likely outcome of preemptive military action?

Chapter Nineteen

36. Why did Hanfstaengl call Martha Dodd?
37. Make a prediction based on what you know about Martha: How do you think she will respond to Hanfstaengl's proposition? Why do you think she will respond this way?

Part Four – How the Skeleton Aches

Chapter Twenty

1. Paraphrase Dodd's first impression of Hitler. What subjects did the two men discuss? What was Hitler's justification for withdrawing from the League of Nations?
2. Why did Martha agree to meet Hitler?
3. Compare Dodd and Martha's responses to their encounters with Hitler. What conclusion did they both draw about the threat Hitler posed to the rest of the world? Why do you think they came to this conclusion?
4. What was the purpose of the letter Messersmith sent to Undersecretary Philips?

Chapter Twenty-One

5. Explain how the proposed changes to German law revealed an increased emphasis on racial purity.
6. What complaints did Dodd have about the way the American embassy operated? What do his complaints reveal about his own prejudices?
7. Describe the relationship between Messersmith and Dodd. Why was Dodd increasingly uneasy about Messersmith?

Chapter Twenty-Two

8. Summarize the positions of the prosecution and defense in the Reichstag arson trial.
9. One of the characteristics of a dictatorship is that the dictator operates outside the bounds of law. Explain how Göring's testimony in the Reichstag trial demonstrates that he has no regard for the rule of law.
10. Why was Martha able to attend the trial? What effect did witnessing the testimony have on her?

Chapter Twenty-Three

11. What did the conversation between Martha and Boris reveal about Martha's shifting sympathy towards communism?

Chapter Twenty-Four

12. Analyze the tactics (e.g., propaganda techniques, intimidation) that the Nazi party used to ensure an overwhelming victory in the public referendum on Hitler's decision to withdraw from the League of Nations and seek equality of armaments.
13. What significant decision did President Roosevelt make regarding the Soviet Union?

• guided reading and discussion questions continued

Chapter Twenty-Five

14. What secret did Boris confess to Martha? How did she respond?
15. Summarize the obstacles that Boris and Martha faced if they continued to be romantically involved. What is your opinion of their relationship? Do you think their feelings for one another were sincere?

Chapter Twenty-Six

16. Explain how the name “The Ministry of Public Enlightenment” is an example of doublespeak.
17. Explain Vice-Chancellor Papen’s role in Hitler’s rise to power.
18. What did Papen and Dodd disagree about? How did this disagreement change the relationship between the two men?
19. Why did Poulette decide not to attend the Little Press Ball?

Chapter Twenty-Seven

20. Why did the Gestapo arrest American citizen Erwin Wollstein? What role did Diels play in Wollstein’s release?
21. How did the mood of the Dodd family change during their first winter in Germany?
22. Explain the forces behind the growing campaign against Ambassador Dodd. Do you think any of their criticisms of Dodd were valid?
23. What was the outcome of the Reichstag trial?

Part Five – Disquiet

Chapter Twenty-Eight

1. What superficial changes at the beginning of 1934 gave Dodd and other foreign representatives the impression that the situation in Germany was improving?
2. Describe the changes that Eicke made to the way that concentration camps were operated. What effect did these changes have on the culture of the camps?

Chapter Twenty-Nine

3. How did Phillips and Moffat respond to Dodd’s complaints and concerns? What does their response suggest about the security of Dodd’s position as ambassador?

Chapter Thirty

4. Does anything about the elaborate date that Boris arranged for Martha strike you as strange? What do you think he hoped the date would accomplish?
5. Why do you think Martha felt a “sense of foreboding” as a result of her evening with Boris?

Chapter Thirty-One

6. Explain the effect that the fear of surveillance had on both German citizens in general and the Dodd family in particular. In your opinion, were their fears justified?

Chapter Thirty-Two

7. Describe the growing tension between Röhm and Hitler. What position had Röhm hoped to acquire? What action did Hitler take to curtail Röhm’s ambition? How did Röhm respond?

Chapter Thirty-Three

8. What does the extent of the Nazi party's anger about the mock trial being held in New York reveal about their sensitivity to foreign public opinion?
9. In their adamant demands that the United States government shut down the mock trial, what fundamental American right did the Nazis fail to grasp?
10. Why was Dodd asked to meet with Hitler?
11. Who did Hitler blame for the Nazi propaganda being distributed in the United States? Why is his argument illogical?
12. By the end of his meeting with Hitler, what did Dodd realize about Hitler's intention regarding the Jewish population of Germany and his protestations that he sought peace with other nations?
13. How did Secretary Hull respond to Germany's outrage over the mock trial?
14. What reason did R. Walton Moore give for the government's reluctance to adopt a resolution condemning the Nazis for their persecution of Jewish citizens? How do you think the United States should have responded?

Chapter Thirty-Four

15. Why was Diels increasingly afraid? How did he ask Martha to help him? How did she respond?

Chapter Thirty-Five

16. Explain how Hitler intended to use his praise of Roosevelt to elicit a response that would make it appear that Roosevelt and Hitler were ideological equals. How did Hull and Phillips avoid this rhetorical "trap"?
17. What did Dodd hope to accomplish by giving his speech criticizing the policies and practice of the Foreign Service and its "Pretty Good Club"? What effect did his speech have on Phillips and Moffat?

Chapter Thirty-Six

18. Why did Messersmith agree to help Diels?
19. What was the result of Messersmith's intervention on Diels's behalf?
20. Explain the secret deal that Hitler made with Blomberg.
21. How did the Gestapo change after the departure of Diels?

Chapter Thirty-Seven

22. What did the message from Soviet intelligence reveal about their intentions regarding Martha Dodd? Do you think Boris was aware of their intention prior to this message? Why or why not?

Chapter Thirty-Eight

23. Summarize the criticism leveled against Dodd in *FORTUNE* magazine. Do you agree with the position taken in the article?
24. How had the mood in Berlin changed during Dodd's absence? What factors do you think contributed to this change in atmosphere?

Part Six – Berlin at Dusk

Chapter Thirty-Nine

1. Why did Messersmith leave his post in Germany?
2. What did Bella Fromm learn about Röhm's position within the Nazi party?

• guided reading and discussion questions continued

3. What was the purpose of the dinner party hosted by Regendanz? Which two prominent men did he invite? What was the result of their dinner conversation?
4. Why did the Regendanz dinner become infamous?
5. What surprising opinions did Dieckhoff express to Dodd? How did Dodd respond?

Chapter Forty

6. What was the purpose of the Reich Literary Chamber?
7. Summarize the two ways that German writers responded to Hitler's ascension to power.
8. Why did Mildred Harnack and Heinrich Maria Ledig-Rowohlt question Fallada's decision to remain in Germany? What do you think Fallada should have done?
9. Describe the change that took place regarding Martha's opinion of the Nazi party. How did she express her dissatisfaction with Nazi ideology?

Chapter Forty-One

10. What ominous sign did the Dodds notice in Bendlerstrasse? What do you think this event might foreshadow?

Chapter Forty-Two

11. Why did Göring invite the foreign ambassadors to his home? What can you infer about him based on his behavior at his "open house"?
12. Explain why you agree or disagree with British ambassador Phipps's assessment of Göring.

Chapter Forty-Three

13. Describe the circumstances that led to Vice-Chancellor Papen giving the speech criticizing the Nazi regime. Whose idea was the speech? Why did Papen agree to read it in spite of his own misgivings?
14. How did President Hindenburg, the international community, and the German people respond to Papen's speech? What steps did Goebbels take to prevent the distribution of the speech?
15. Why do you think Papen was able to avoid being punished for publicly criticizing Hitler?

Chapter Forty-Four

16. What happened to Edgar Jung as a result of his involvement in the Marburg speech?
17. Why do you think Göring warned Diels to "watch himself for the next few days"?

Chapter Forty-Five

18. What was Martha Dodd's purpose for visiting the Soviet Union? Why might this visit have been a bad idea considering her father's position?
19. What details does the author use to create a tense mood in this chapter? What are the various "storms" that you think are brewing both in Germany and in the U.S.?

Chapter Forty-Six

20. Summarize the various events that convinced Hitler that he needed to take immediate action to "stamp down mercilessly" the rebels he viewed as potential instigators of a second revolution.
21. As Hitler prepared and launched his putsch, what was the mood within the Dodd household?

Part Seven – When Everything Changed

Chapter Forty-Seven

1. Describe the coordinated attack Hitler, Göring and Goebbels launched against their “enemies.” Did anyone seem to suspect what happened? Who were their main targets? What do you think they hoped to achieve?
2. When did Dodd learn about the events of Saturday, June 30, 1934? What was his immediate concern?

Chapter Forty-Eight

3. Describe the mood in Berlin when Martha and Boris returned to the Tiergartenstrasse.
4. Why would it have been an ominous sign to see only SS officers and members of Göring’s police force outside of Röhm’s house?
5. Why was Dodd worried about Papen’s safety?

Chapter Forty-Nine

6. Analyze Göring’s attitude and behavior during his press conference. What message do you think his performance was intended to convey?
7. What reason did Göring give for the mass arrests and assassinations?
8. After the purge, how far did the official Nazi tally of death differ from other estimates? Why do you think there is such a large discrepancy?
9. Larson includes details about the circumstances surrounding some of the confirmed deaths. What do these details suggest about the Nazi’s methodology?
10. How did Hanfstaengl avoid being executed?

Chapter Fifty

11. What does the fact that there was only “ordinary news” in German papers following the purge suggest about the Nazi’s control of the media and use of propaganda?
12. Why did Dodd attempt to visit Papen? Do you think Dodd’s presence made a difference in the fate of the Papen family?
13. What does the fact that Rohm was given an opportunity to kill himself during the purge suggest about Hitler’s feelings regarding Rohm and his execution?
14. What action did Defense Minister Blomberg announce after the purge? Why was this action pivotal in the consolidation of Hitler’s power?

Chapter Fifty-One

15. Explain the contrast between the concerns of Moffat and Hull and the concerns of ambassador Dodd? What reality did Moffat and Hull fail to grasp?
16. How did the events of June 30, 1934, change Martha’s perception of Nazi Germany? How did they change Dodd?
17. Do you think Dodd should have resigned at this point? Why or why not? What do you think would have happened if he had?

Chapter Fifty-Two

18. How did the actions of the French, British, and American ambassadors foreshadow their country’s future relationships with each other and with Nazi Germany?
19. In his speech, what “evidence” did Hitler give to justify the necessity of his use of his force? Was there any evidence to support his allegations about the Regendanz dinner?
20. Who was the only American official to publicly criticize Hitler’s actions? How did the Roosevelt administration respond? Why do you think they responded this way?

• guided reading and discussion questions continued

21. What did Dodd hope would happen after the Röhm purge and President Hindenburg's death? What happened instead?
22. What role did propaganda play in the German public's perception of the events of the purge?
23. What did Dodd find ironic about the way that people treated dogs and horses in Nazi Germany?

Chapter Fifty-Three

24. Why was the NKVD interested in recruiting Martha? What role did Boris play in her "recruitment"?
25. What could the use of the code name "Juliet #2" for Martha Dodd suggest?
26. At what point do you think Boris began thinking of Martha Dodd as a potential recruit?
27. Do you think Martha would make a good spy? Why or why not?

Chapter Fifty-Four

28. List the America officials that Dodd tried to warn about Hitler's ambitions and the potential threat posed by Nazi Germany. How did they respond?
29. What action did Dodd feel America should take?
30. What action did Dodd personally take in regards to Hitler's Third Reich? How did Phillips and Moffat respond to Dodd's actions?
31. What decision did Dodd make about resigning from his position as ambassador?
32. What request did Dodd make to President Roosevelt regarding his future as ambassador to Germany? Once Dodd returned to his post in Berlin, what news did he receive from Secretary Hull?
33. How did Boris and Martha's relationship end? What did Martha fail to realize about Boris?

Chapter Fifty-Five

34. How did the tone of Dodd's speeches about the threat posed by Hitler change after he ended his tenure as ambassador?
35. What personal tragedies did Dodd face after returning to the United States?
36. How was news of Dodd's illness reported in the German newspaper? What does this response suggest about the Nazi's perception of Dodd?
37. Who succeeded Dodd as ambassador to Germany? How did he differ from Dodd in the way he interacted with Hitler and other Nazi officials?
38. After his death, how did his colleagues remember Dodd? How do you think he should be remembered?

Epilogue

1. What happened to Martha Dodd after she returned to America? How did her experiences in Berlin shape the remainder of her life? Do you think she had any regrets?

• writing prompts

1. Erik Larson begins his book with the following quote from Dante: "In the middle of the journey of our life I came to myself in a dark wood where the straight way was lost." All of us have faced situations where we were deceived by something or someone. Think

critically about a time in your own life when you or someone you know was misled. In retrospect, were there warning signs? What led to the point where you “came to” and recognized the situation for what it was? Based on this experience, why do you think people sometimes allow themselves to be manipulated or deceived? How could you keep from being misled in the future?

2. In “Das Vorspiel,” Larson writes: “That’s the trouble with nonfiction. One has to put aside all we know—*now*—to be true, and try instead to accompany my two innocents through the world as they experienced it.” How important is objectivity for a writer or teacher? Why would a book about Ambassador Dodd be particularly challenging to write? How important is objectivity for a student of history? At what points during your reading did you find it difficult to remain objective?
3. Before Dodd arrived in Germany, Consul General Messersmith hoped that the new ambassador would be “a man of forceful character capable of projecting America’s interest and power, for power was all that Hitler and his men understood.” Do you believe that Messersmith was correct in his assessment? Compare Dodd to Messersmith’s description of an ideal ambassador and debate whether or not you feel Dodd was ultimately successful in projecting American interests and ideals.
4. One of Martha’s friends compared her to Scarlett O’Hara, a woman who was adept at charming men. Indeed, Martha appears to have possessed the ability to attract the attention of many powerful and influential men. Analyze Martha as a character. Do you find her admirable in any way? In what specific ways did she defy traditional expectations about gender roles? Do you think she should be considered a feminist? Would she have considered herself a feminist? What qualities made her so alluring to the men she encountered? What do you think motivated Martha to become involved with so many men? What did she get out of the relationships?
5. In a letter to Rabbi Wise about Germany’s persecution of the Jews, Dodd wrote: “Of course you know our Government cannot intervene in such domestic matters. All one can do is present the American point of view and stress the unhappy consequences of such a policy as has been pursued.” Dodd elaborated on his position in a letter to Roosevelt: “Fundamentally, I believe a people has a right to govern itself and other peoples must exercise patience even when cruelties and injustices are done.” Do you agree with Dodd? Debate whether or not the U.S. government has the right or responsibility to intervene in the domestic policies of other nations.
6. Undersecretary Philips criticized Dodd for his disapproval of the Nazi party. According to Philips, “an Ambassador, who is a privileged guest of the country to which he is accredited, should be careful not to give public expression to anything in the nature of criticism of his adopted country, because in so doing, he loses *ipso facto* the confidence of those very public officials whose good-will is so important to him in the success of his mission.” Research the origin and meaning of the word *diplomacy*. Do you think that Dodd’s response to Hitler was appropriate for a diplomat? How should America respond to regimes that we do not support or agree with? On a personal level, have you ever been in a situation where it was difficult to remain diplomatic? What did you do? What was the result of your actions?

• topics for further discussion

1. The book contains numerous description of anti-Semitic remarks made by U.S. officials. Students may be surprised to learn how widespread anti-Semitic sentiment has been in America. Research the history of anti-Semitism and other stereotypes in the United States and write a paper discussing the role that it has played in a particular U.S. foreign policy decision. You may wish to include examples of historical political cartoons in your discussion.

• topics for further discussion continued

2. Upon Dodd's death Roosevelt wrote, "Knowing his passion for historical truth and his rare ability to illuminate the meanings of history, his passing is a real loss to the nation." Throughout his tenure as ambassador, Dodd used historical allegory to frame his understanding of the actions of Hitler's regime: a perspective that eventually allowed him to correctly predict the threat that the Nazis posed to the rest of the world. Choose a current event that you feel has a historical precedent and research the similarities between the two. Use your understanding to predict a possible outcome and/or solution for the current situation.
3. Choose one of the many historical figures listed in the glossary and research their complete biography. How did the events of World War II impact the rest of their life? What legacy are they known for?
4. Research the time that elapsed between Dodd's departure from Berlin and America's decision to enter World War II. At what point did France, England, Italy, and Spain enter the war? Why did America refrain from engaging in the conflict for so long? How did public opinion about American involvement in the war change over time? What caused America to enter the war?
5. Dodd considered himself a "Jeffersonian Democrat." Research the history of Jeffersonian democracy. What are the core beliefs of this political philosophy? Do you believe it is relevant in today's political discourse? Which current or recent candidate do you feel most closely embodies a Jeffersonian Democrat? List specific positions taken by that candidate and explain how they align to Jeffersonian ideals.
6. During the rally in Nuremberg, the mayor presented Hitler with Albrecht Durer's famous print "Knight, Death, and the Devil." Examine the way that the Nazis used art and music as propaganda. Research a composer or artist (like Durer) that Hitler approved of and promoted and present examples of their work to your class. Explain the message that the Nazi party hoped to convey through the art or music. Alternately, you may research an artist, writer, or musician that Hitler banned and discuss why their work was considered "dangerous" to Hitler's agenda.
7. Ambassador Dodd concluded his speech "Economic Nationalism" with the following observation: "No system which implies control of society by privilege seekers has ever ended any other way than collapse." Relate Dodd's observation to the current debate about the distribution of political power and the influence of private financing and special interest groups in American politics. Explain whether or not you feel Dodd's comment is relevant to our current political landscape.
8. Dodd felt frustrated by what he viewed as the extravagant lifestyles of his colleagues in Foreign Service. According to Dodd, an American in foreign service should "be required to live within his salary," "know the history and customs of his host country," and "think of their country's interests, not so much about a different suit of clothes each day or sitting up at gay but silly dinners every night." Research the current requirements for working in Foreign Service. What type of person do you think would make an ideal ambassador? Would you ever consider a career in Foreign Service? Explain why or why not.
9. There is an ongoing debate about the United States government's use of "enhanced interrogation" techniques. Consider the current debate in light of the following quote by Gestapo director Diels: "The infliction of physical punishment is not every man's job, and naturally we were only too prepared to recruit men that showed no squeamishness at their task... it was only after a number of instances of unnecessary flogging and meaningless cruelty that I tumbled to the fact that my organization had been attracting all the sadists in Germany and Austria... It had actually been creating sadists. For it seems that corporal chastisement ultimately arouses sadistic leanings in apparently normal men and women." Research studies (e.g., the Milgram experiment) that look at

the psychological impact of techniques that require a subject to inflict physical pain on another person. Explain whether the studies support or refute Diels's assertion.

10. Counterfactual history is an exercise that seeks to demonstrate the relative importance of a single historical event by contemplating a scenario where that event did not occur or happened differently. The narrative of *In the Garden of Beasts* is filled with moments where the course of history could have been altered. Choose a moment in the book that you consider significant and make a researched speculation about how a change at that moment would have altered the course of history.

• other books by Erik Larson

The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair that Changed America
(2003)

Isaac's Storm: A Man, a Time, and the Deadliest Hurricane in History
(1999)

Thunderstruck
(2006)

• other titles of interest

Resisting Hitler: Mildred Harnack and the Red Orchestra
Shareen Blair Brysac

Hitler, 1889–1936: Hubris
Ian Kershaw

The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich
William Shirer

Hitler: A Study in Tyranny
Alan Bullock

Travels in the Reich, 1933–1945: Foreign Authors Report from Germany
Oliver Lubrich

Spies: The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America
Alexander Vassiliev, John Earl Haynes, and Harvey Klehr

Through Embassy Eyes
Martha Dodd

Red Orchestra: The Story of the Berlin Underground and the Circle of Friends Who Resisted Hitler
Anne Nelson

The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil
Philip Zimbardo

• online author resources

Author website: <http://eriklarsonbooks.com/>

NPR Interview with Erik Larson about *In the Garden of Beasts*:

<http://www.npr.org/2011/05/09/135922322/william-dodd-the-u-s-ambassador-in-hitlers-berlin>

• other online resources:

U.S. State Department's website for Foreign Service: <http://careers.state.gov/>

Florida Center for Instructional Technology's teaching guide on the Holocaust: Includes information on arts, literature, and music promoted and banned by the Nazi party.

<http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/>

National Endowment for the Humanities website: Includes numerous resources and primary documents related to World War II. <http://edsitement.neh.gov/>

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website: Has links to resources on Anti-Semitism and a timeline of WWII. <http://www.ushmm.org/>

PBS Website for The American Experience America and the Holocaust: Features links to several primary documents related to the book.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/holocaust/index.html>

• glossary

Americans in Foreign Service:

William E. Dodd—American ambassador to Germany. Former history professor at the University of Chicago

Martha (Mattie) Dodd—Dodd’s wife

William Jr. (Bill)—Dodd’s son

Martha Dodd—Dodd’s daughter

George Messersmith—consul general for Germany

Raymond Geist—vice consul for Germany

George Gordon—counselor of the American embassy in Germany

Henry Leverich—American vice consul in Leipzig

John C. White—replaced George Gordon as counselor of embassy

Orme Wilson—secretary of embassy

Americans Citizens Attacked by Nazis:

Samuel Bossard

Harold Dahlquist

H.V. Kaltenborn

Daniel Mulvihill

Joseph Schachno

Roland Velz

Philip Zuckerman

United States Government Officials:

William C. Bullitt—former ambassador to Russia

Wilbur J. Carr—Assistant Secretary of State

John Hickerson—State Department official

Colonel Edward House—friend and advisor of Roosevelt

Secretary Cordell Hull—Secretary of State

General Hugh Johnson—administrator of the National Recovery Administration

Douglas MacArthur—Army Chief of Staff

Colonel D. W. MacCormack—Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization

Jay Pierrepont Moffat—Chief of Western European affairs

R. Walton Moore—Assistant Secretary of State and friend of Dodd

William Phillips—Undersecretary of State, later ambassador to Italy

Franklin Roosevelt—president of the United States

Secretary Daniel Roper—Secretary of Commerce

Millard E. Tydings—U.S. senator who tried unsuccessfully to introduce a resolution condemning the Nazi’s persecution of Jews

Sumner Welles—Assistant Secretary of State and confidant of Roosevelt

Hugh Wilson—American diplomat who coined the term “Pretty Good Club”

Woodrow Wilson—former president of the United States

Men that Turned Down the Ambassador Position:

Newton Baker—Secretary of War under Woodrow Wilson

James M. Cox—former presidential candidate

Edward J. Flynn—key figure in the Democratic Party

Owen D. Young—prominent businessman

Men Romantically Linked to Martha Dodd:

George Bassett Roberts—New York banker and Martha’s first husband

Armand Berard—third secretary of the French embassy

James Burnham—briefly engaged to Martha

Max Delbrück—biophysicist who went on to win the Nobel Prize

Rudolf Diels—Nazi part official and first chief of the Gestapo

Prince Louis Ferdinand—son of Germany’s crown prince

H. R. Knickerbocker—correspondent for the *New York Evening Post*

Quentin Reynolds—correspondent for the Hearst News Service

W. L. River—American novelist

Heinrich Rochold—embassy employee fired due to speculation that he was spying for the Nazis

Carl Sandburg—American writer

Royall Henderson Snow—English professor at Ohio State. Briefly engaged to Martha.

Alfred Stern—Martha’s second husband

Ernst Udet—famous German flying ace from World War I

Thornton Wilder—American writer

Boris Winogradov—employed by the Soviet embassy and, secretly, an operative for Soviet intelligence

Thomas Wolfe—American writer

German Government and Nazi Party Officials:

Hans-Heinrich Dieckhoff—senior foreign ministry official under Hindenburg

Theodor Eicke—SS officer who codified regulations for the operation of concentration camps

Karl Ernst—head of the Berlin division of the SA

Joseph Goebbels—Minister of Propaganda

Hermann Göring—commander of the German air force

“Putzi” Hanfstaengl—Nazi foreign press chief and confidant of Hitler

Rudolf Hess—deputy leader to Hitler

Reinhard Heydrich—chief of the Gestapo after the departure of Diels

Heinrich Himmler—commander of the SS

Adolf Hitler—chancellor of Germany

Rudolf Höss—Commandant at Auschwitz and protégé of Eicke

Edgar Jung—speechwriter for Vice-Chancellor Papen

Hans Luther—German ambassador to the United States

Viktor Lutze—SA officer loyal to Hitler who reported Röhm

Herbert Packebusch—captain in the SS

Admiral Eric Raeder—head of the German navy

Captain Ernst Röhm—commander of the SA

General Schleicher—former Chancellor and Minister of Defense under Hindenburg

Martin Sommerfeldt—press adjutant to Göring

Hans Thomsen—foreign ministry liaison

General Werner von Blomberg—Minister of Defense

General Werner von Fritsch—chief of German army command

Paul von Hindenburg—president of Germany

Konstantin Freiherr von Neurath—Minister of Foreign Affairs

Franz von Papen—Vice-Chancellor

Fritz von Tschirschky—secretary to Vice-Chancellor Papen

Other Germans:

Rudolf Ditzen “Hans Fallada”—German novelist

Bella Fromm “Auntie Voss”—society columnist for a Berlin newspaper

Hans Gisevius—Gestapo memoirist

Fritz Haber—Jewish chemist and winner of the Nobel Prize

Victor Klemperer—Jewish philologist living in Berlin

Heinrich Maria Ledig-Rowohlt—friend of the Harnack’s

Alfred Panofsky—wealthy Jewish banker in Germany who rented his home to the Dodds

Anna Rath—young Aryan woman attacked for her decision to marry her Jewish fiancé

Walter Rathenau—former Foreign Minister of Germany, assassinated in 1922

Wilhelm Regendanz—wealthy banker who threw the fateful dinner party with
François-Poncet and Röhm

Hjalmar Schacht—head of Germany’s national bank

Wera “Poulette” von Huhn—German newspaper columnist

Jewish Leaders in America:

Judge Irving Lehman

Henry Morgenthau Jr.

Judge Joseph Proskauer

Lewis. L. Strauss

Felix Warburg

Rabbi Stephen S. Wise

Miscellaneous:

Frederick Birchall—*New York Times* reporter

Wilhelm Büniger—presiding judge in the Reichstag arson trial

Vittorio Cerruti—Italian ambassador to Germany

Georgi Dimitrov—defendant in the Reichstag arson trial

Andre François-Poncet—French ambassador to Germany

Arvid Harnack—Mildred’s husband, secret Soviet intelligence operative

Mildred Fish Harnack—American living in Berlin and friend of Martha Dodd

Louis Lochner—Associated Press

Maxim Litvinov—Soviet Commissar of Foreign Affairs

Gilbert L. MacMaster—American representative of the Quakers that visited Germany

• glossory continued

Edgar Mowrer—correspondent and author of controversial book *Germany Puts the Clock Back*
Sir Eric Phipps—British ambassador to Germany
Simon Popov—defendant in the Reichstag arson trial
Sigrid Schultz—correspondent for the *Chicago Tribune* covering Central Europe
Vassili Tanev—defendant in the Reichstag arson trial
Ernst Torgler—defendant in the Reichstag arson trial
Marinus van der Lubbe—man charged with starting the Reichstag fire
Ernst Von Salomon—accomplice in the assassination of Rathenau

• common core state standards

In the Garden of Beasts **Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity** for most high school grade levels. Schools are encouraged to adopt the text at the grade level where it best fits with ELA and Social Studies curriculum.

The questions and activities in the teaching guide for *In the Garden of Beasts* were written to support standards-based instruction and are directly linked to many of the Common Core State Standards for ELA and Social Studies. The primary areas of connection are in the ELA standards for **Reading: Informational Texts** for grades 11–12 and in the literacy standards for **Key Ideas and Details and Craft and Structure** in History/Social Studies. A complete list of the Common Core State Standards can be found at <http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards>. A list of primary standards addressed in the guide can be found below:

• common core standards for english language arts:

Reading: Key Ideas and Details

- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
- Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

Reading: Craft and Structure

- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).
- Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.

Comprehension and Collaboration

- Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
- Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
- Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

• literacy in history/social studies and science: anchor standards

Key Ideas and Details

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

- Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
- Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

• about this guide's writer

Amy Jurskis holds a BA in English from the University of Georgia and an MAT from Agnes Scott College. She is the department chair for language arts at Tri-Cities High School, an urban public high school in southwest Atlanta.



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