

**Discussion Questions for  
Classrooms & Homeschools**  
*One Degree of Freedom*



1. Have you read any of the six novels Adriana reads? (See the reading List on page 11.)  
How did that help you follow the story?
2. What does Adriana learn from each heroine of the novels she reads?
  - Lucy Peverzie
  - Jo March
  - Heidi
  - Sara Crewe
  - Dorothy Gale
  - Anne Shirley
3. What circumstances in Adriana's life parallel those in her novels?
  - The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*
  - Little Women*
  - Heidi*
  - A Little Princess*
  - The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*
  - Anne of Green Gables*

4. Adriana says her uncle frequently quotes George Orwell's *Animal Farm* by saying, "And some are more equal than others." What do you think this means?
5. Why do you think the authorities arrest Mihai?
6. Name some of the freedoms that people who lived during that time and place did not have. Which freedom do you think would have been the hardest for you to lose?
7. Adriana was tired of bearing secrets. What are some of the secrets she had to keep and why did she have to keep them?
8. Discuss the following policies and how they affect regular citizens:
  - Systematization
  - Collectivization
  - Industrialization
  - Rational Eating Plan to Reduce Obesity
  - Resettlement
  - Reeducation
  - Censorship
  - Austerity measures
  - Propaganda
  - Curfew
9. Discuss the importance of some of the following events and people from history.
  - Sputnik, Laika, and the Space Race
  - The Securitate
  - The gulags
  - The Brasov Rebellion
  - The Young Pioneers
  - Nicolae & Elena Ceaușescu
10. When Adriana looks for a book to read in the secret room, she comes across one called *1984*. She dismisses it since that was four years ago and nothing interesting happened that year. Do you know what this book is about? Why do you think the author included this?

## ANSWERS for Classrooms & Homeschools

### *One Degree of Freedom*

1. Have you read any of the six novels Adriana reads? (See the reading List on page 11.)  
Did that help you with the story?
2. What does Adriana learn from each heroine of the novels she reads?  
Lucy Peverzie – to be fearless and bold.  
Jo March – to be herself, to pursue what she's passionate about.  
Heidi – to be winsome and soften people's tough shells.  
Sara Crewe – to be courageous and dignified, to keep her imagination alive.  
Dorothy Gale – to find her way home, to look beyond what she sees on the outside.  
Anne Shirley – to have spunk and fire.
3. What circumstances in Adriana's life parallel those in her novels?  
*The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* - walking through the wardrobe  
*Little Women* - not wanting to do what's expected of her  
*Heidi* - mountain village, window with stars  
*A Little Princess* - rat, ridicule in school, magic leaving after her father burns her book  
*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* - park green like Emerald City, being in small room during storm like Dorothy in Kansas tornado  
*Anne of Green Gables* - losing her father
4. Adriana says her uncle frequently quotes George Orwell's *Animal Farm* by saying, "And some are more equal than others." (See Chapter 17.) What does this mean?  
Mr. Marx would be pleased. Class distinctions didn't exist in the bread line. All Romanians were equal here. She smiled as she remembered Uncle Mihai once saying, Whenever he said that, her aunt laughed and shushed him all the same time.
5. Why do you think the authorities arrest Mihai?  
He passed on information that influenced the rebellion in Braşov.

6. Name some of the freedoms that people who lived during that time and place did not have. Which freedom do you think would have been the hardest for you to lose?

Spies everywhere, could not speak freely

Not told the truth but told lies—no freedom of the press

No freedom to choose—fields of study, jobs, etc.

Water only one hour per day

Not able to go outside whenever you want

Empty stores

Churches illegal

7. Adriana was tired of bearing secrets. What are some of the secrets she had to keep and why did she have to keep them?

Wardrobe, Room in the wall

Reading forbidden novels

Spies in Violeta's apartment

What happened to Violeta as a teenager

Celebrating Christmas with Bunica

Underground church at Gabi's

Mihai's royal connection

Violeta's story of The Space Dog

Underground resistance

Alex's father as a hero

Her father's death

Groza's body

8. Discuss the following policies and how they affect regular citizens:

Systematization - urban planning (razing parts of cities and whole villages)

Collectivization - government confiscated crops and animals farmers raised

Industrialization – cities reshaped by factories

Rational Eating Plan to Reduce Obesity - ration cards distributed, limited food

Resettlement - villagers moved to apartment blocks in cities

Reeducation - taught that God doesn't exist - especially in gulags

Censorship - letters read, books banned

Austerity measures - water, electricity, heat, gas controlled by the government

Propaganda - lies and misleading information

Curfew – not allowed outside after dark

9. Discuss the importance of some of the following events and people from history.

Sputnik, Laika, and the Space Race – this gave the USSR credibility on the world stage

The Securitate – this was how the government controlled the people

The gulags of the 1950s – the government tortured and reeducated anyone in opposition

The Brasov Rebellion - It set the stage for the revolution in two years.

It showed that people were ready for change.

The Young Pioneers – From a very young age, the government controlled the children

Nicolae & Elena Ceaușescu – They were Romania's uneducated leaders

10. When Adriana looks for a book to read in the secret room, she comes across one called 1984. She dismisses it since that was four years ago and nothing interesting happened that year. Why do you think the author included this? (Ch. 30)

George Orwell published it in 1949, a dystopian futuristic novel about Big Brother that could have been describing Romania during Adriana's time.

For backstory - Watch my video at [tarynhutchison.com](http://tarynhutchison.com)

Documentaries to watch

The Rise and Fall of Ceausescu - Part I and II - with Edward Behr, British newscaster

The King of Communism

The Lost World of Communism - Part III - Romania