

## **SUMMER READING GUIDE FOR SARTRE'S "NO EXIT"---**

**This will not be collected upon your return. But, you should take notes for the work you will be doing with the reading when the school year begins.**

1. The opening dialogue between Garcin and the Valet seeks to establish certain features of hell. What are they and what does this reveal about Sartre's view on life and the kind of life that would be worthwhile, however negatively characterized?

2. If it is true that Garcin is in prison, what might the words "Always broad daylight in my eyes" suggest? (6) What are the several senses these words can be given? What is ironic about this statement?

3. What does the scene about the bell suggest about the importance of hope in life and our relation to others in terms of what we might understand by the word "humanity"?

4. Is it true, as Inez suggests on page 10, that without hope there is no use to being afraid? (Relate this to the bell.)

5. What seems to be of most importance to each of these characters--Estelle, Inez, and Garcin?

6. Why does Inez step in front of Garcin during introductions? What does this seem to suggest about human nature? (11)

7. What does Inez seem to think is required of them in their situation? If she knows, why doesn't she do it? Why does she smile at Estelle? (13-15) (In this instance, is she like or unlike Garcin?)

8. Why is the fact that Garcin worked for a pacifist newspaper significant? What does this suggest about Sartre's view about the war? What does Sartre seem to think about *not* making a choice?

9. Inez remarks, "It's obvious what they're after--an economy of man-power--or devil-power if you prefer"(17). How might this remark reflect contemporary events? How might it be related to prior passages in the book? What implications does this have for the three of them?

10. What is the difference between "man-power" or "devil-power"(17)? What might this suggest about Sartre's message if there is one?

11. What issue does Garcin's remark, "I shall never be your torturer"(17) suggest about intentions, actions and perhaps professions? How might this be ironic?

12. What do you think of Garcin's plan?(17) Will it work? Why or why not? How are some of our preconceptions of human nature challenged?

13. Is Garcin's remark, "in this way we have worked out our salvations"(18) ironic? How so?

14. Does Estelle really need a glass? What does this suggest about her sense of identity? What does this suggest about human need and the value of different kinds of existences? (18-19)
15. When Inez remarks, "Do I look as if I wanted to hurt you?" And Estelle responds, "One can ever tell"(19), who is right? Could Estelle's attitude lead to a potential problem? If so, how? What does this suggest about the difference between appearance and reality?
16. Why should Estelle feel "embarrassed"(20) by Inez's suggestion and looks to Garcin for help? What might Estelle be afraid of? Does it "fit" their situation? How so? Provide examples from your own life.
17. How might Inez's comment about Estelle looking "crueler"(20) be troubling? What does this suggest about her? Is this consistent with what she has said so far? What does it suggest about the concept of punishment?
18. How is "taste" a source of conflict between Inez and Estelle? What does this show about each of them? Is it true or possible that Inez has the *same* taste as Estelle? If it is now possible, why not? (20)
19. What is the meaning of cruelty? Are cruelty and "niceness"--for lack of a better word--opposites? What does the exchange between Inez and Estelle suggest about reality and appearance? Which should we desire? (What does this have to do with Garcin?) (18-20)
20. Given the interchange between Inez and Estelle, what does Sartre seem to be suggesting about the morality of lying? (Also how might this relate to the furnishing of the room?)
21. When Estelle betrays that she desires that Garcin would notice her, Inez replies, "you've won"(21). When can we win? What does Inez mean? Is she being sarcastic or ironic or both? How so? If Inez is right what might this suggest about the value of Estelle's existence?
22. Inez vents, "every sound [Garcin's thoughts] comes to me soiled, because you have intercepted it on its way"(22). Why should she be so upset? What does this have to do with her prior conversation with Estelle and what does this suggest about her character? Is what she says true? How so? Provide some examples.
23. Are thoughts as transparent as Inez suggests on page 22? What is Sartre suggesting about action that is amiss in this situation?
24. Inez proclaims that "you can't prevent your *being there*"(22). What is behind this statement? What does Sartre seem to suggest about existence and responsibility?
25. What does Garcin ultimately desire? What prevents Garcin from loving his wife? What does this have to do with his present situation, at least seemingly according to him? (24) [preconceptions about women and love]

26. Based upon Garcin's confession, is his notion of love "romantic"? Why or why not? Compare his notion with that of Estelle's.

27. Why do both Garcin and Inez want to be thought cruel, and even compete? What would it mean? What does it have to do with regret? (26)

28. Is Estelle's unmentionable act tragic or anti-tragic--if there is such a thing? Why or why not?

29. What does Inez mean when she says, "well, Mr. Garcin, now you have us in the nude alright"(29)?

30. In what way does Inez's tale mirror their current situation? What is required for these three to make love, or "human feeling"(29) possible? Why is Inez pessimistic about this possibility? Is she right? Is this character shared by all three or only seems to belong to her? [self-pity, forgiveness and a weak will]

31. What is the significance of the paper-knife? Why is this not an exist? What does Sartre seem to suggest about the concept of suited and the nature of existence? (32)

32. Estelle seems to suggest that love is only possible with deception or at least concealment. Is that true? (32)

33. After Estelle's episode with Peter, she still has choice; she says to Inez "it's [she a hollow dummy] no for you"(34). Is this cruelty or is Sartre suggesting something about existence and choice? If the latter, what is he suggesting?

34. The exchange between Garcin and Estelle on page 37 seems to suggest that he wants to be lied to? What does this suggest about his understanding of love and "men" in general? Is this overly cynical?

35. Do you think Garcin is really a coward? Why or why not? How is this question pertinent to contemporary historical circumstance? In what way does Garcin miss the point in being concerned with being called a "coward"?

36. Garcin says to Inez, "I want to feel someone looking at me while they're talking about me on earth"(38). How does this supplement Inez's thoughts about what they are supposed to do upon first entering the room? In other words, how might this help Garcin?

37. In what sense is Garcin's story the real tragedy? If it is one? What does he mean by the words "I've left my fate in their hands"(39)? Is that true? Is this regret?

38. Garcin seems to think that Inez can redeem him if *she* believes in him? (39) This is an awfully romantic notion of love, as the Valet suggested at the beginning? Is love redeeming? Why or why not? How so?

39. Explain the animal similes on page 41. Why are they appropriate or inappropriate or both?

40. What was the knife used for in the end? In what sense is this the "final stage" of hell?