

Comprehension check

Answer the following questions.

1. When did the Soviet Army occupy Latvia?
2. How old was Melanie's son, Aleksandrs at the moment he is deported?
3. How many Latvians were deported to Siberia in 1941?
4. When was the next wave of deportations?
5. How many years did Melanie spend in Siberia?
6. When was Melania freed?
7. How long did Melania's husband, Aleksandrs survive in the harsh environment?



Reading Task

Sentences A – D come from the text. Decide where they go in the text. One sentence is extra, you do not need it.

The film “The Chronicles of Melanie” is based on the life story of Melanie Vanaga, a Latvian woman who managed to survive her deportation to Siberia. It is a truthful human character, who was a part of greatest tragedy facing the Latvian nation. It is the story of Latvian women who had to suffer and survive physically and emotionally in order for Latvia to love. **(1)**____. The authorities break into the house of Melanie and her husband Aleksandrs, editor of a newspaper of independent Latvia, make them wake up their eight-year-old son Andrejs and get into a lorry. **(2)**____. On this day, the Soviets deported about 17,000 people from Latvia (the next wave of deportations came in March of 1949).

The deported are taken to Siberia in cattle cars. Melanie and her son first have to survive – the three-week long ride to the remote Tiukhtet village, the first months in the alien environment, famine and illness – and then to live. **(3)**____. This drives some to the point of collapse, yet Melanie is aware of “only one string sounding and that string is hope.” She takes detailed notes that later becomes a weighty literary work about the 16 years spent in Siberia.

- A. At the station the men are separated from their families.
- B. An early morning of 15 June 1941 in Soviet-occupied Latvia.
- C. Melanie spends the rest of her life working as a cow herder.
- D. They have to make place with the new life and accept it even though everything seems to have lost its point and reason.



Vocabulary Task

Use the word given in capitals at the end of some of the lines of this text to form a word that fits in the gap.

Out of her notes, Melanie Vanaga prepared a book of (1)_____ prose “Veļupes krastā”, which was published in 1991, soon after Latvia regained independence. Later, it served as the (2)_____ volume in Vanaga’s seven-book series “The Gathering of Souls” about the personal history of her family and entire Latvia.

For the entire period of her exile (1941–1957), Melanie writes letters to Aleksandrs without sending them and dedicates a (3)_____ family chronicle to her husband Aleksandrs, for she herself no longer hopes to return to Latvia. In 1957 Melanie is (4)_____. She goes to Riga where she finds out that Aleksandrs barely survived a year in the harsh environment to which he was sent. Melanie spends the rest of her life working as a cow herder.

To maintain hope, to preserve in oneself a person who is (5)_____ than famine, cold, cruelty and even death and is capable of taking on (6)_____ for another person, to help others – such is the confirmation of Melanie Vanaga, her (7)_____ and also this film to the light in the world and in every one of us.

DOCUMENT

CONCLUSION

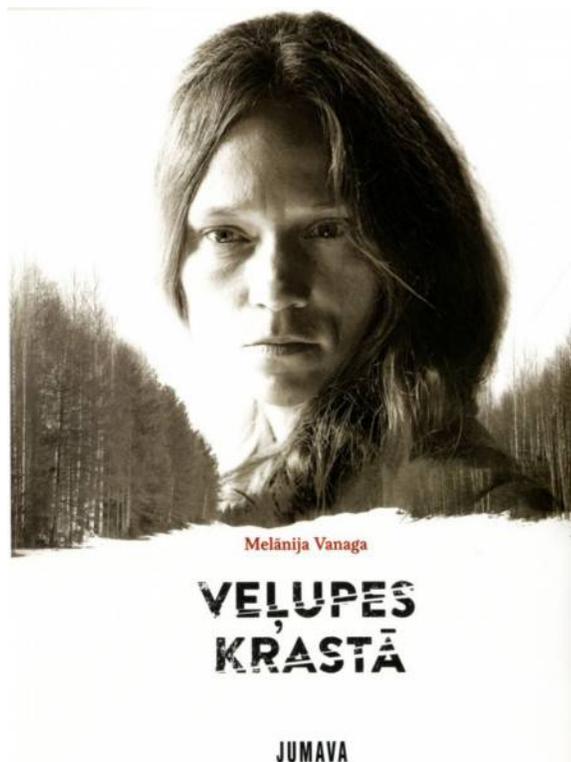
HANDWRITE

FREE

STRENGTH

RESPONSE

MEMORY



Keys:

Comprehension check

1. In June, 1941
2. 8 years old
3. About 17000 people
4. In 1949
5. 16 years
6. In 1957
7. One year

Reading task

1. B
2. A
3. D

C – extra

Vocabulary task

1. Documentary
2. Concluding
3. Handwritten
4. Freed
5. Stronger
6. Responsibility
7. memories