Discussion Guide

*Directions: Discuss the following questions with your partner(s).*

1. Why do you think Irma was deceived by Nazi ideology?
2. Why was the ideology of Nazism so deceptive to the German people?
3. What experiences in Irma’s life may have influenced her views about Nazi ideology?
4. To what extent are individuals responsible for their deeds while participating in a collective action?
5. What do Irma Grese’s actions say about her views regarding the humanity of the individuals she was guarding?
6. How did tenants of Nazi ideology corrupt Irma’s view of humanity?
7. Do you think that Irma believed what she was doing was right or was she deceiving herself in order to find a sense of purpose and belonging? Does this change her level of moral culpability? If so, how?
8. Because she joined the League of German Women at a young age, was she responsible for the person that she grew to be or was she merely a product of indoctrination?
9. If she was merely a product of indoctrination, does this reduce her level of moral culpability or is a person always responsible for his or her actions as an adult?
10. Considering her level of moral culpability, are any of her actions or choices forgivable? Explain.
11. Should she be looked at as a truly horrific person who is responsible for deplorable acts or as a tragic figure who was indoctrinated at a young age into a dangerous and evil ideology? Can she be both of these things at the same time?
12. What does it say about Irma that she denied or refused to admit to the charges that were arraigned against her?
13. In light of this story, how should we examine the actions of those who joined the Hitler Youth and the League of German Women? Are they all morally culpable for their actions? Does indoctrination excuse or mitigate their actions?