

Kauffman Museum and a Mennonite Boy



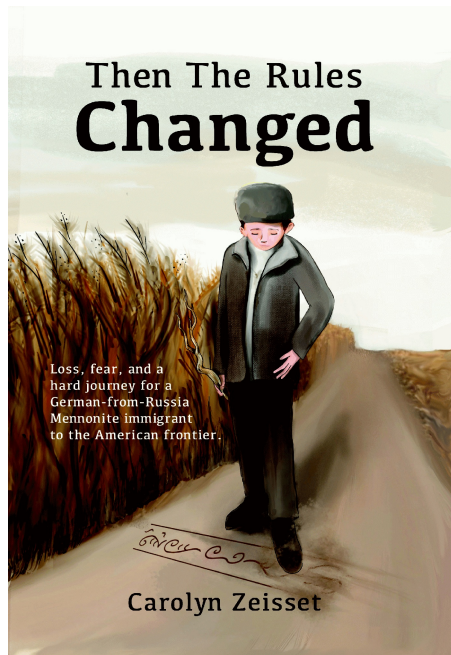
“Help Daniel fetch the wicker travel hamper,” said Mother. “The basket maker wove a new one.” When Isaac and Daniel arrived home, Tante Maria said, “Just bring your mother’s shawl once.” She placed it over the shrouds that lay in the bottom of the hamper. (Pages 14-15)

How did they carry the hamper?



A travel hamper was carry-on luggage. What would you put in it?

Find museum items that are in the book.



To You from Isaac, Autumn 1879

Everyone knows how the world works.

The Czar of Russia makes rules, grown-ups know the rules, and children must obey the rules, if they understand them or not. That is just the way the world works.

When the Czar changed the rules, grown-ups said we could no longer live in our German Mennonite way in Russia. I did not understand, but my life changed. (Page vii)



Isaac wanted to pack the toy horse and wagon Grandfather Janzen had carved for him, but there was no room. ...In Kansas the men made handles for the sickle, scythe, and knife blades Father brought in the steamer trunk. (Page 19, 76)

Isaac’s family could take only one trunk. What would be most important to take? Why?



How would your family move things to a different place?



Isaac scooped up a handful of wheat seeds and dropped them into the crockery jar.

“NO, NO, NO,” shrieked Lena. “You ruined everything.”

Tante Maria brought a pan and poured the already chosen seed into it. “Take out the poor grains you put into Lena’s good seed.”

Isaac picked up one grain, examined it, and dropped it into the empty jar. He picked up another. Another. Another, and another, and another. (Pages 11-12)



About how many kernels do you think there are on one head of wheat?

What is a task you need to do carefully? _____

What is a task you get tired of doing? _____



Butchering lasted all week. Each evening Isaac climbed into Father’s wagon and held a small crock of white lard or tucked a small sausage beneath the straw. (Page 142)

Where could you sit in the wagon? _____

How did the wagon move? _____



Painting was an elegant trade. Everyone saw flowers, grape vines, or birds on furniture, and painting that imitated the grain of fine wood. (Page 3)

What designs are on the wood?

How many different wood grains do you see?

Isaac wanted to be a painter. What do you want to be?



Isaac knelt beside the trunk that was a bench for him and Daniel at the table. He traced the painted patterns on it with his finger. “Cornelius’ father painted it as a dowry chest for your mother,” Tante Maria said. (Page 15)

Isaac’s mother had the dowry chest to store clothes and other things she would need after her wedding. Where do you put things you want to keep?

The dowry chest was also a bench at the table. What has more than one use at your house?





When Isaac took the clock from the steamer trunk, the single hand still pointed to just before ten, the time it stopped when Lena packed it in the trunk in Russia. Father hung it on the window frame. (Page 118)

What time is it on the museum clock?

Isaac's family lived in the sod house several weeks before they hung the clock. How do you think they told time without a clock?

What are at least two ways you tell time?



Sunday had its own restrictions. Isaac's gray linen pants and coarse white shirt were scratchy and hot in the small church.. (Page 96)

When Isaac wore the shirt, how did he fasten it?

What do you wear that is uncomfortable?



Isaac jumped up and pulled on his coat and fur hat and boots. "Isaac?" Mother looked at him. "The fire is low," he mumbled. Isaac did not stop running until he reached the corn field. He stooped down and tucked a bulky stalk under one arm pit. (Page 159-160)

When would Isaac wear a fur hat? _____

Isaac is wearing a fur hat in the picture next to the quote from the story. How is it different from the one in the museum?

What kind of hat do you have?





Isaac pulled off his woven reed shoes and wiggled his toes in the dust. (Page 2)

How did Isaac keep his reed shoes on his feet?

What kind of shoes do you wear in summer?



Isaac stumbled over his boots when he rose from his grass and coat bed. Sunday again, he thought. Clean everyday clothes lay beside his boots. He put on the clothes but left the boots. They were tight, and there was no need to wear them just to fetch water. He was used to crunching in hare feet on hard, cold sod.

(Page 120)

The museum boots are for a man. How big would 10-year old Isaac's boots be?

Isaac had only his boots for shoes in America. How many shoes do you have?



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For more information about ***Then the Rules Changed*** see <https://carolynzeisset.com>

Included are activities and discussion starters



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