

## IN DARKNESS - For Discussion (Ages 15+)

### SYNOPSIS

The film is based on the true story of Leopold Socha, a sewer worker and petty thief in Nazi-occupied Lvov in Poland. He stumbles upon a group of Jews in the sewers who he agrees to hide for a price.

### PRE-VIEWING

1. Follow this link to read about the background to the film.

[http://www.sonyclassics.com/indarkness/In\\_Darkness\\_presskit.pdf](http://www.sonyclassics.com/indarkness/In_Darkness_presskit.pdf)

It is arranged in different sections. Each group should take one area to read about and report back on:

- Director's statement
- A writer's journey
- About the cinematography & production design
- About the costumes
- About the editing
- About the music

2. Read this review of a memoir from one of the girls whose story the film is based upon:

[http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/books/girl\\_green.asp](http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/books/girl_green.asp)

Make a note of questions you would like to ask about Krystyna's story or the history around it. With others in your group, try to find answers to these questions. Your facilitator will direct you to some useful websites.

3. From the trailer, the DVD cover and what you've read so far, what are your expectations of this film?

### DURING VIEWING

Try to think about these questions as you watch:

1. What do you think is Leopold Socha's motivation in the film? Does it change?
2. How is Polish society represented?
3. Why do you think Agnieszka Holland chose to make this film?

## AFTER VIEWING

1. Read this interview with survivor Krystyna Chiger. How does Krystyna's account compare with what you saw in the film?

- <http://www.ariel-leve.com/media/18289/notefromunderground.pdf>

2. Professor Donald Watt<sup>1</sup> suggests three criteria for judging a feature film from a professional historian's perspective:

- Firstly, the subject must be completely covered, within the limits of programme lengths and material availability.
- Secondly, it must be objective as defined by historian's practice, avoiding anachronism and bias, and it must seek to understand rather than to condemn.
- Thirdly, the facts must be accurate, and hypothesis, reconstruction and inference must be presented under their own colours.

Based on your study of the Holocaust, apply Professor Watt's criteria to *In Darkness*. How authentic a representation of the past do you think it is?

3. Read these two articles and discuss your responses in your group. Identify two or three key points from each article that has deepened your reflections on this film in particular or on your ideas about representing the Holocaust on film.

- <http://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2012/mar/23/terrible-times-agnieszka-holland-in-darkness>
- <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2012/mar/10/in-darkness-holocaust-films>

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *Film Education's Study Guide to Schindler's List*  
<http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/schindler.pdf>