Guided Discussion Cards

Card #1
What can you infer about the Grenzers?
- The Grenzers didn’t face the westerners on the other side of the fence. They watched us.

Card #2
What can you infer about Greta’s statement?
- Greta already understood more than I wanted to. The fence was only the beginning.

Card #3
What can you infer about Papa?
- Papa wiped his mouth with a napkin, and after a warning glance for us to remain calm, he went to answer the door.

Card #4
What can you infer about the people in this paragraph and why no one fought back?
- It was still very early in the morning, and large bulldozers could be heard, already tearing down homes or hundred-year-old trees that were in the way of the fence. Along with most of the people in my neighborhood, I stood on the road, facing the guns that faced us. Mama held one of my hands and Fritz held the other. No one around me cried and not even the strongest men fought back.

Card #5
What can you infer about the Mama and her reasons for not leaving?
- Nobody asked who might try leaving next, but everybody wondered. I kept waiting for Mama to tell us we were leaving too. Surely she would, any day now. But she never did. Maybe she had been a prisoner here long before the fence appeared.

Card #6
What inference can you make from this statement?
- With each brick, my hopes faded until nothing was left.

Card #7
What can you infer about the Soviets and life behind the wall?

- Fritz was there a week later, watching from a distance when a woman threw down a mattress and all her bedding from the third floor while our police banged on her locked apartment door. When the police got inside, she finally leapt out. But the cushions weren’t enough for the hard concrete below. The morning after, Fritz showed me the newspaper that described her as a deserter and someone with a weak mind who had believed the lies from the west.

Card #8

What inferences can you make from this statement?

- Mama once said the most wonderful things about being young is our ability to make things normal. That whatever life does to us, no matter how strange, it isn’t long before insanity seems ordinary, as if upside down is the way things should be.