



1. The book opens with a young Virginia explaining how attending church under Communist rule “came at a great personal risk.” To what lengths would you go to attend church under similar circumstances?
2. In chapter 2, Virginia talks about how she loves to escape through books, and she remarks at how much she has in common with Charlotte Bronte’s classic heroine, *Jane Eyre*. What character from classic literature do you most closely identify with and why?
3. In chapter 3, Virginia’s Uncle Carol tells her a chilling story about the little girl who lives next door. What do we learn from this story about Communism as well as about the short- and long-term psychological effect it has on those who live under its rule?
4. Chapter 5 opens with Virginia reciting the definition of *persona non grata*. How does the description compare with citizens’ rights under a democracy? How would you define the ultimate goals of Communist Romania versus a democracy?
5. In chapter 6, we see both Virginia and Cassandra reacting very passionately to unexpected intrusions of certain men in their lives—Radu, for Virginia, and a stranger named John, for Cassandra. To what do you attribute the intensity of their reactions, and what does each woman’s reaction reveal about her character?
6. What do you think motivated Elena to travel all the way to Bucharest to demand Virginia’s return to Techirghiol?
7. In chapter 8, Virginia represents her first client in court. In what ways was her first trial a victory, and in what ways was it a defeat? What surprised you the most about Anton’s case, and what does it teach us about the Romanian legal system under Ceaușescu?

8. In chapter 9, Virginia finally finds “the truth she had been looking for” her entire life. What are some of the lies she has encountered thus far in her journey, and how does this newfound truth help reconcile them?
9. In chapter 9, Constantine tells Virginia about the day the *Securitate* forced all the church members to choose between following Christ or going to jail (which under Communist rule could result in much worse punishment—even death), and asks her how she would prepare for such a day should it happen again. How would you prepare yourself for such a situation?
10. In chapter 10, we learn more about Ceaușescu’s mistreatment of Christians and the church. Why do you think Ceaușescu was so opposed to Christianity? What threat did organized religion pose to his rule over Romania?
11. In chapter 10, it becomes clear that not only is Virginia putting her own life at risk by defending fellow Christians, she is also placing the lives of her children at risk. How would you cope with such a harsh reality?
12. In chapter 11, we begin to see some of the ways Ceaușescu’s spies and secret police threatened Christians on a daily basis. In what ways do Virginia’s clients’ situations mirror those of the early Christians in the Bible? What other parallels can be drawn between Communist Romania and Christians living in the first century?
13. Think about the encounter Virginia has with the little boy on the street asking for bread. As he is led away by his mother, Virginia wonders if the little boy will grow up to be yet another defeated and obedient citizen. Bearing in mind that Virginia was once a hungry child herself, what characteristics did Virginia possess that not only kept her from becoming a defeated, obedient servant, but put her in a position to help others?
14. What do you think of Andreea’s teacher’s decision to remain silent about her faith until after she retires? How do you think you would have responded in her situation?
15. Back in chapter 9, Constantine asked Virginia how she would prepare herself for the day she might have to choose between her faith and her life. In chapter 12, Virginia is faced with this very threat. How *has* Virginia prepared herself for such a moment?
16. In chapter 13, we finally see Virginia face her would-be-assassin. Put yourself in Virginia’s shoes that day. How do you believe you would have responded to such a threat? What might you have said?
17. One of the major themes of Virginia’s story is to constantly “pray for your enemies.” We see Virginia do this several times throughout the book. Describe the impact Virginia’s prayers and acts of kindness have on those she is praying for.

18. Upon their arrival in Rome, Virginia is appalled at the open display of adult magazines on the street and muses that “even freedom has its ugly side.” What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of living in a free society?
19. Both Virginia and Michael decided to accept Christ after seeing firsthand the impact that faith in him had on others (Nestor for Virginia, and Virginia for Michael). What can you do as a believer to reflect Christ’s power and love to others the way that Nestor and Virginia did?
20. Go back and revisit the brief epigraphs at the beginning of each chapter and discuss how each quote epitomizes a specific portion of Virginia’s journey.