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5. What are your impressions of Rasputin? Was the Empress wrong to seek his counsel? Do you think he helped or harmed the country?

6. On page 172, Mama tells Katya, “The country may be better off... but when it takes a murder to save a country, nothing will save it.” What do you think she means?

7. As a result of the war, how has Katya changed emotionally and intellectually? How does she see her future?

8. How has the ordeal of fighting in a war and witnessing the revolution changed the way Misha sees the future of Russia?

9. Katya and Misha’s opinions about Russian politics had been so different. Has that changed by the end of the novel? How and why?

Things to know:

- Russia takes up one-sixth of the earth’s land surface. It is 6,592,800 square miles (almost twice the territory of either the United States or China) and spans 11 time zones.
- It ranks sixth in world population.
- The official language is Slavic.
- The official religion is Russian Orthodox.
- The national currency is the ruble.
- Russia is now a democratic state, with a republican form of government. The president is elected and serves a term of five years.

Critical acclaim:

Praise for Homeless Bird, winner of the National Book Award:

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About the Author:

Gloria Whelan is a poet and the award-winning author of many books for young readers, including Homeless Bird, for which she was awarded the National Book Award for Young People’s Literature, Miranda’s Last Stand, and The Island Trilogy. She lives with her husband, Joseph, in the woods of northern Michigan.
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