***Breaking Stalin’s Nose*** by Eugene Yelchin, A Newbery Honor book

**Lesson 8 (chapters 26-29)**

After Sasha’s discussion with Stalin’s nose, he returns to class to sit in the back with the rest of the “undesirables.” Here, he impulsively grabs the banner and jumps around the class singing patriotic songs. Suddenly, amid the chaos, the KGB bursts into the room, searches Nina Petrovna’s desk, and finds the plaster nose inside. She is arrested and taken out of the classroom.

Following the classroom scene, the principal takes Sasha to the basement. While walking, he confirms that Finkelstein’s parents were in fact executed. In the basement, Sasha discovers that this is where the school hides its undesirable features, like Vovka’s art, scribbled out faces, and Stalin’s defaced statue. Here, he meets with a senior KGB lieutenant, who tells Sasha that his father turned his mother in as a foreign national. At the end of their conversation, he offers Sasha a position as a pioneer in exchange for working as a spy.

Returning to the class, Sasha realizes this is the day he had been waiting for all his life. Given the events of the past couple days, his heart is no longer in it. Sasha puts the banner down and runs away from the school.

**Vocabulary**

Undesirable – A member of a political, ethnic, or national group that is considered an enemy to the state.

\*\*In *Breaking Stalin’s Nose*, Sasha becomes an “undesirable” when it is revealed that his father is an enemy of the state. As a result, he is forced to sit in the back of the class and receives second class treatment.

Censorship – The act of hiding and forbidding what people say, do, and create.

\*\*Totalitarian political organizations use censorship to block oppositional views and ideas. During Stalin’s time, the USSR censored almost everything that came from “enemies of the state.”

**Check it out:** Watch a video about the Young Pioneers during Stalin’s time and afterwards:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_QRhlq8Hy4>

Learn about censorship in Stalinist USSR

<https://www.rbth.com/arts/history/2017/06/27/soviet-censorship-how-did-the-ussr-control-the-public_790892>

**Predict:**With one chapter left, how do you foresee Sasha getting out of his situation? After leaving, where can he go? Where would you go? Would you change anything if you were in his shoes?

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