

Questions related to Arriving at Auschwitz

1. What was the overwhelming physical need that Primo and the other 95 members of his group had when they arrived?
2. Why do you think the Germans made so much fuss about the shoes when in the end they were simply swept outside in a heap?
3. Why do you think the Nazis kept the men naked for so long?
4. What do you think happened to the women?
5. What is ironic about Flesch?
6. Explain the double meaning of the term "extermination camp."
7. Primo's prisoner number was 174517. Given that half a million people had already entered the camp by the time he got there, why wasn't his number a lot higher? (The excerpt doesn't actually answer this question, so just try to figure it out.)
8. Auschwitz was the only Nazi camp complex that tattooed each inmate with a number. According to Primo, how was the number used on a daily basis? Why else might Auschwitz have resorted to tattooing numbers on prisoners?