

# **THE DOOR**

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INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT Q&A

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# THE DOOR

Juanita Wilson

## Q&A

### 1. What is Chernobyl? What happened there?

The Chernobyl nuclear power plant was gradually commissioned from 1977 (Block No. 1) to 1983 (Block No. 4). **On Saturday, April 26, 1986 at 1.23am a serious accident occurred in Block 4.** Burning, the reactor ejected a cloud 500 times more radioactive than the one caused by an atomic bomb in Hiroshima. The cloud hit Belarus, Russia and Ukraine the most. Gradually, however, it left its destructive footprint in almost all European countries. In total, they were contaminated 200 thousand km<sup>2</sup>, and **350 thousand people had to run away from radiation**. In the ruins of Block No. 4 in 1986 a steel and concrete sarcophagus was built. In the years 2010–2019 a new enclosure was created that surrounds both the reactor and the original sarcophagus. The power plant was definitely closed in 2000.

### 2. Is anyone responsible for the accident?

The largest nuclear disaster in the history of mankind occurred due to a failed technical test-Nego. **The fault lay on the wrong construction site of the power plant, inexperienced personnel night shift and fatal reactor operator's decision.**

### 3. Where other countries informed about the tragedy?

At first, the Soviet leaders tried to hide the disaster and its terrible consequences. It took days for the rest of the world to find out. In the measuring station in Mikołajki there was radiation contamination air-generating 550 thousand times stronger than usual, but only two days after the news disaster about worrying indicators were forwarded to Warsaw. It was still not known where the ray came from. On April 28 evening, the BBC reported that the Chernobyl disaster had occurred. It was recommended to take high dose of iodine. Pharmaceutical resources quickly declined, so the authorities decided to give the liquid Lugol for children and youth.

Deputy Chief Engineer Anatoly Diatlov, power plant head Viktor Briuchanov and his deputy Nikolai Fomin were all condemned to length of unconditional prison sentence. **Indirectly, the entire system can be called the culprit The Soviet Union and its bureaucratism and blind faith in atomic energy and human superiority.** As American historian writes about Ukrainian roots, Serhii Plokha, published recently the book *Chernobyl. The History of a Nuclear Disaster*:

“Chernobyl as a history is a history of a disaster technological, which contributed to burying not only the Soviet nuclear industry, but of the whole system. ”

### 3. How many people have died or suffers from lifelong consequences as a result this event?

After the exvacuation from the 30-kilometer area around the power plant, **100,000 people were forcibly resettled**. Today, several dozen of them have returned to live in this zone. According to Ida Oradowski from the Institute of Immunology at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, **up to 84% of the residents of Pripyat suffered with serious chronic diseases**. "These are diseases that affected them about 15 years later. Their body, it ages prematurely." Old-age diseases still affect young people suffering from the area. Children of that period are facing an epidemic of thyroid cancer due to late protection iodine tablets. In the most affected areas the increase in **cancer rates were up to 40%**.

Scientists still disagree on how many lives have been devoured by Chernobyl. For example, according to the Greenpeace organization, research conducted by 50 renowned scientists from 6 countries, up to 100,000 people died from radiation sickness, and in Belarus alone about 1/4 million people suffer from different types or get cancer.

### 4. What happened in Pripyat? Where were the inhabitants evacuated and what is the situation now?

**Pripyat was built in the 1970s, about 3 km from the Chernobyl power plant for its workers and their families**. It was a city of young people, the average age did not exceed 30 years. 50 thousand people lived there. They were lucky on the memorable day of the explosion, because thanks to the direction of the wind, the main mass radioactivity was transferred northwest, so the largest radioactivity attack was bypassed Pripyat. Later, however, its inhabitants were exposed to air pollution and rainfall from the power plant. After the accident, the whole city was evacuated, many people later died of illness. The area is still heavily contaminated and 22 thousand years will pass before radio activity will fall to a level acceptable to the human body. **Today, Pripyat is a ghost town, also called "Modern Pompeii"**. Most recently, Cherynobl has now become an increasingly frequent tourist destination.

### 5. What inspired Jaunita Wilso to make the film The Door?

Juanita Wilson was inspired by the story of Nikolai Fomicz Kaługin. His confession, *Monologue A Life Written on Doors*, **found in the book Chernobyl prayer, Chronicle of the Future by the Belarusian writer and Nobel Prize laureate in 2015, Svetlana Aleksijewicz**. The book (in English entitled *Voices from Chernobyl: The Oral History of a Nuclear Disaster*) consists of authentic interviews with people from the Chernobyl region whose life has been seriously affected by disaster.

### 6. What did Lena die of? How and where was she buried?

Nikolai Kaługin in his account recorded in the book states: "My daughter has died because of Chernobyl." He describes that Lena had spots caused by strong radiation". **The girl probably died as a result of exposure to very strong radiation after the explosion at the power plant**. Unfortunately, we do not know the details of Lena's funeral, we know only that their family tradition is to place the deceased on the door of the apartment where he lived. Only then is the body transferred to the casket and buried.

## 7. Why was the door of their former apartment so important to Lena's father?

### Why was the girl laid on the door?

Kaługin actually went to the door of his apartment two years after the city was evacuated. He took his door because it was the most important thing he had at home. In his testimony-describes:

"Our door ... Our talisman! Family relics. My father was lying on that door. I do not know, by custom, this is not the case everywhere, but in my country my mother told me a dead man must lie on the door of his home. He lies there until they bring the coffins. They are in the door signs ... When I was growing up ... First, second and seventh are marked. ... And next to it I marked how my son grew ... my daughter. Our life was saved on this door. How can I leave them here? "

**The door was the most valuable relic for the Kaluga family** , so Nikolai wanted to put Lena on the door when she died.

Ukrainian ethnographer Olena Kruszyńska comments on the issue of burial on the door in the following way:

"Regarding whether there was a tradition of burying the door or something similar in Ukraine, certainly no There may be exceptions, but the funeral ritual is probably the most stable and practical unchanged to this day. The symbolic meaning of the door in traditional culture was associated with home security. "

## 8. What is a ritual? Can he help us with anything?

As Václav Soukup writes in the book *Dějiny Anthropologie* , **ritual is a standardized way of preserving and a set of ceremonial activities through which members of a certain group retain and consolidate the values and norms of their culture** . In traditional societies this was usually the case with a magical or religious activity. According to Norwegian anthropologist Thomas H. Eriksen, rituals can be seen as public events related to principles that somewhat motivate between the earth and the spiritual world.

In particular, **funeral rituals are characterized by complexity and diversity** . Varying on the nationality, gender, age, social status of the individual, etc.. In funeral rituals systematically attended by the French ethnologist Arnold van Gennep, who classified them in category the so-called **transitional rituals, symbolizing the transition of a person from one stage of life to another (e.g. birth, marriage, conception, death)** . Each of these stages may be accompanied by ceremonies to allow a person to move as shown above. Every culture has other funeral ritualsthat help survivors cope with the loss of a loved one and then they symbolize and confirm the dignity of the deceased, which does not end with death.

The funeral ceremony presents respect and assessment of the deceased's life as part of a funeral ritual, others have the opportunity to assess that person's life and remember their successes and failures, but they can also show your attitudes, relationships and life prospects.

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