

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl

STORY SUMMARY

When Adolf Hitler was elected Chancellor of Germany in 1933, the Jewish people became the primary target of his outrageous hatred. Because Anne Frank's family was Jewish, they felt it would be safer in Holland; therefore, they left Germany to start a new life in Amsterdam. Unfortunately, the hatred of the Nazis followed them there, too. In May of 1940, the Germans invaded Holland, and the Jews in Amsterdam began to feel the effects of Hitler's control. They were forced to wear yellow stars on their clothing and were not allowed in many public places. Jewish children were not even allowed to attend Dutch schools. Anne and her sister were transferred to a Jewish Secondary School.

Early in July of 1942 Anne's sister Margot received a work order instructing her to report to a labour camp. The Frank family knew it was time for them to go into hiding. With the aid of their Christian friends, the Franks created a secret annexe in the upstairs of the building where Mr Frank had worked.

Anne and her family shared the small space with Mr and Mrs Van Daan; their son Peter; and Dr Albert Dussel, a dentist. Four rooms plus a bathroom and an attic became home to this new family group. There they shared moments of sadness, happiness, anger, fear and love. A movable bookcase was added to disguise the stairs leading to the annexe. Miep, Elli, Koophuis and other brave friends brought food, clothing and holiday gifts to the occupants of the annexe.

In her diary, which she had received in June for her thirteenth birthday, Anne vividly and emotionally described life in the cramped quarters. She detailed her often troubled relationships with the others. Although she realised that she was lucky to be alive, at times she wished that she could have the freedom that the other Dutch girls enjoyed.

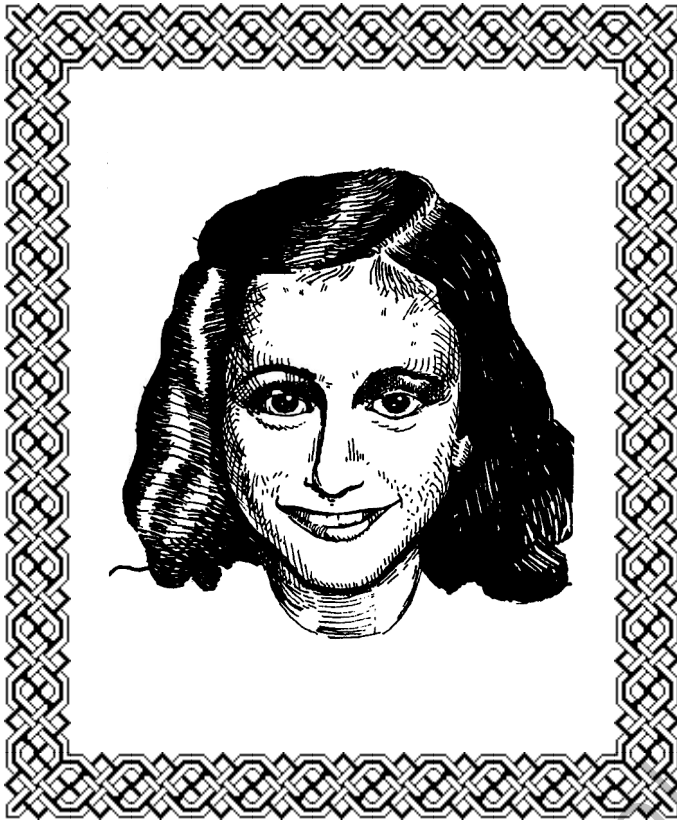
During the summer of 1944 the Frank family was cheered by news of Allied victories and German losses. It seemed that the Allied liberation of Holland was near. Sadly, on Friday, 4 August 1944, the Nazis discovered their hideout. Anne and the others were sent to the grim and insufferable concentration camps. Only Mr Frank survived.

When Mr Frank returned to Amsterdam after the war, he discovered Anne's diary. In 1947 he had it published. Since then, this insightful and heartbreaking account of the tragedy of the Holocaust, as seen from a young girl's point of view, has been read by millions of people all over the world. Hopefully, the words of Anne Frank have helped people to better understand the terrible price of prejudice.



Meet the Author

Anne Frank



Anne Frank was born on 12 June, 1929 in Frankfurt, Germany. Her father, Otto Frank, was a successful businessman. Anne, her parents and her older sister lived in a comfortable five-room apartment. In the summer of 1933, however, Nazi persecution of the Jews had gotten bad enough to cause the Franks to fear for their lives. They knew that things would only get worse. Otto Frank arranged for his family to move to Holland. Holland had been providing refuge for the Jews, just as it had served as a refuge for persecuted groups in the past. Mr and Mrs Frank and their two daughters settled in Amsterdam. They enjoyed their life in their new homeland until the Germans invaded Holland in 1940.

The Germans put into effect harsh anti-Jewish measures. All Jews were forced to wear a yellow star to identify them. They were forbidden to ride bicycles, ride trams or drive. Jewish children were forced to attend separate schools. Many other restrictions on their activities were also imposed. In 1941 the Germans began to gather Jews and deport them to extermination camps.

In July 1942, about one month after Anne's birthday, the Frank family went into hiding. They were joined by the Van Daan family and Albert Dussel, an elderly dentist. The eight hid in a secret annexe of the office building where Mr Frank had worked. Mr Frank's Dutch former associates and employees helped them. They brought food and small gifts and provided them with news of the outside world. While there, Anne wrote her autobiography without intending to do so. Her entries in her diary were her means of sharing her feelings in the absence of a close friend. She even named her diary Kitty.

The refugees managed to stay hidden for two years. Sadly, a Dutch informer told of their whereabouts. The Gestapo found them and removed them on 4 August, 1944. Anne's mother died on 6 January, 1945. Margot died about two months later. Anne died a few days after that. She wasn't even sixteen! The war ended only a few months after her death.

Anne had written in her diary, "I want to go on living even after my death! ... I am grateful to God for giving me this gift of writing, of expressing all that is in me." After the war Anne's journals and notes were published in a slightly edited form. Since that time her diary has been translated into many different languages. Her story was also adapted for the theatre, film and television. Millions of people have been touched by her story. Millions more will be affected by it for generations to come.

Pre-Reading Information

Nazi Persecution of the Jews

The Nazi Party started as a political movement in Germany shortly after World War I. Because of the war and a world-wide depression, Germany was in a desperate situation. Many Germans believed the promises made by the Nazis: jobs, prosperity and glory for their humiliated country.

Adolf Hitler became the leader of the Nazi Party in 1919. There were other political parties in Germany, but the Nazis managed to eliminate their opposition. They convinced the German people that the Jews were to blame for their problems.

In 1933 the Nazis began to imprison Jews and their political enemies in concentration camps. By the start of World War II in 1939, there were twenty-two such camps. Prisoners were treated with brutality. They were subjected to horrible experiments, both medical and scientific. In some camps gas chambers were used to kill the prisoners. Among the most infamous were Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Belsen and Dachau. About one and a half million people were exterminated at Auschwitz alone.

THE HOLOCAUST

When World War II began in 1939, Nazi Germany had conquered most of Europe. Jews in the conquered area came under Nazi control. Adolf Hitler wanted to rid the world of the Jews, whom he blamed for all of Germany's problems. He gave the order to round-up and exterminate the Jews; he called this the "final solution". Millions of Jews were killed by firing squads. Millions more died in the concentration camps. This genocide of European Jews and others is known as the Holocaust. Altogether about twelve million civilians were killed by the Nazis. About six million of them were Jews. Catholic priests and Gypsies were also targeted.

The Nazis under Hitler ruled Germany until the Allies successfully defeated them, bringing World War II to an end. After the war, many Nazi leaders were brought to trial and imprisoned for their horrible crimes against humanity. The Nazi Party was outlawed in Germany.

Many monuments and museums have been dedicated to ensure that we never forget this terrible episode in human history.



— Cooperative-Learning Activity —

Rules of the Secret Annexe

Re-read the Prospectus and Guide to the “Secret Annexe”; it is found in Anne’s entry dated Tuesday, 17 November, 1942. The Van Daans developed rules for the residents. Other rules were added as the need to update became obvious.

With your cooperative-learning group, discuss the following questions. As a group, decide on an answer for each.

Were these rules necessary? Explain.

Would you add any rules not mentioned? Explain.

What rules do you have in school that are for your safety and the safety of others? Are these rules effective? How would you change them?

Does your family have rules for the safety and well-being of its members? What are they? Do they need to be re-negotiated? Explain.

What are some of the things to consider when making rules or laws?

