



Anne Frank: The Diary of A Young Girl Readers' Groups Discussion Points

About the Author

Anne Frank was born in Germany on 12th June 1929. She moved with her family to Amsterdam in 1933 when the Nazis came to power in Germany. Anne and her family were trapped in The Netherlands when the Nazi invasion began in 1940.

In July 1942 the Frank family and four other people went into hiding in a secret annex. The group in the annex stayed hidden for two years but were finally betrayed, arrested and transported to concentration camps. Anne died of typhus in Bergen Belsen. Her father Otto was the only survivor of the secret annex. When he returned to Amsterdam he found that Anne's diary had been saved. An edited version was first published in 1947 but more original passages have since been added to Otto Frank's selection.

Anne is perhaps the most famous victim of the Holocaust but as an ordinary Jewish teenager she represents the millions who died because of one group's hatred of another.

About the Book

Anne began to keep a personal diary on her thirteenth birthday when she received a diary as a birthday present. She wrote "I hope I will be able to confide everything to you, as I have never been able to confide in anyone, and I hope you will be a great source of comfort and support."

Anne wrote the diary for her eyes only but in 1944 she heard a radio broadcast from London which said that it would be important to collect eyewitness accounts of the suffering under Nazi occupation. Anne decided that when the war ended she would publish a book based on her diary and she started to rewrite and edit it.

The diary ends shortly before the betrayal of the inhabitants of the secret annex.

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Discussion Questions

Please note that some of these questions will act as spoilers for the book.

1. Why did Otto publish the diary and why do you think he asked for an edited version to be released, instead of the full text, in 1947?
2. Anne is only thirteen when she begins to write her diary. What evidence can we find within the diary of what could be called typical teenage struggles and dilemmas as opposed to problems caused by living in hiding? In what ways did living in hiding make these problems even more difficult?
3. On 4th August 1943 Anne tries to describe a typical day in hiding. Which part of the day do you think a teenager would find the most difficult and for what reasons?
4. On many occasions Anne writes of her feelings towards her mother. Would you say that this is evidence of a typical mother and teenage daughter relationship? What does Anne believe about the role of mothers in general?
5. Anne sometimes writes down thoughts which she thinks might shock her parents. What or with whom are these thoughts connected? How does she justify them and why, since they might shock, do you think she wrote them in a diary she intended to publish?
6. "I wanted to be brave but it was hard." What fears does Anne describe? What evidence do we have of other fears which she does not put into words?

7. In her final diary entry Anne writes about being split in two. She attempts to describe her own character. From your reading of the whole diary how accurate is her personal character study?

For further information:

Anne Frank

<http://www.annefrank.org/content.asp?pid=1&lid=2>
<http://www.annefrank.org.uk>

Hidden Children

<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/hiddenchildren/insideX/>

Bergen Belsen

<http://www.bergenbelsen.de/en/>