

**NARRATIVE
NONFICTION**
reads like fiction—but
it's all true

CORBIS (BACKGROUND); ANNE FRANK FONDS BASEL/GETTY IMAGES (ALL OTHER IMAGES)



She was murdered by the Nazis during a time of evil and hatred. But her diary survived. This is the story of how **ANNE FRANK became one of the most important writers in history.**

BY KRISTIN LEWIS



The Girl Who Lived Forever



This is Anne's diary. She named her diary Kitty and wrote each entry as a letter.





AS YOU READ, THINK ABOUT:

How did writing in her diary help Anne?

It was just past dawn, and 13-year-old Anne Frank was hurrying down the street with her parents. The day was warm and muggy. But in spite of the summer heat, Anne was wearing two vests, three pairs of pants, a dress, a skirt, a jacket, a scarf, two pairs of stockings, a cap, and a coat.

Sweat rolled down Anne's face as she struggled to keep up with her parents. She felt foolish wearing so many clothes—but she kept that to herself. This was a life-or-death moment for her and her family,

and Anne knew it.

It was July 6, 1942, in Amsterdam, a city in the Netherlands. Because they were Jewish, the Franks were in grave danger. They had made the daring decision to go into hiding, to disappear without a trace.

The Frank family, left to right: Margot, Otto, Anne, and Edith (1941)

Despite their terror, Anne and her family had to pretend that they were simply a family out for a stroll. They had to wear all their clothing because carrying suitcases would make people suspicious.

If anyone discovered what they were doing, they could be arrested and killed.

A Terrifying Regime

Though Anne lived more than 70 years ago, she was not so different from you and your friends. She dreamed about going to Hollywood and decorated her room with posters of glamorous movie stars. She worried about boys and dreaded math.

But this ordinary girl had been swept into one of the most extraordinarily evil chapters in human history.



THE SECRET ANNEX

This is the attic in the annex, where food and supplies were stored. Anne liked to come to this attic to write and to look out the window. *Inset:* This steep staircase led to the attic. Peter van Pels's living area was at the bottom of the stairs.

Anne lived during the time of Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party, one of the most horrific **regimes** the world has ever seen. Hitler's rise to power started before Anne was born. After Germany lost World War I in 1918, its economy fell apart. Jobs became scarce. Anger and bitterness swept the country.

Hitler, a rising politician, offered Germany a **scapegoat**: Jewish people. Hitler said that Jewish people were to blame for Germany's problems. He believed that Jews did not deserve to live.

Anti-Semitism—prejudice against Jewish people—had been **ingrained** in European culture for centuries. Jewish people had different customs and beliefs that many viewed with suspicion and contempt. Hitler fanned the flames of these age-old prejudices until they exploded into violent hatred.

The Franks had lived peacefully

in Germany for generations. With Hitler in power, however, life had become dangerous. When Anne was 4, her father, Otto Frank, decided to move the family to Amsterdam. Far away from Germany, the Dutch city of beautiful winding streets and canals seemed like a good choice. The family had every reason to believe that they would be safe.

And for the first six years, they were. Otto's business flourished. (He owned a company that made pectin, an ingredient in jelly.) Anne and her older sister, Margot, made many friends at school. Hitler and his Nazis seemed like faraway monsters.

Invasion!

Then, in May 1940, Nazi forces invaded the Netherlands. And life for Jews like the Franks

became more frightening than even the darkest of horror tales.

The Nazis began passing laws to isolate Jewish people and remove them from daily life. Anne and Margot were expelled from their school. All Jewish people were banned from buses, trains, and cars. They couldn't go swimming or to the movies. All Jews had to wear yellow stars so the Nazis could easily target them. They couldn't be outside after 8 p.m.

Then Jewish people started to vanish. Later there would be whispers about places called concentration camps, where the Nazis were murdering Jews. Many, including many Jews themselves, refused to believe that even the Nazis could be so evil.

But Anne's parents, especially her father, Otto, had no doubt that staying in Amsterdam would mean certain death for the family. By 1942, Jewish people were not allowed to travel; even if they



Adolf Hitler

could, safer countries like the U.S. and England were allowing in only a very small number of Jewish people. The Germans had taken control of so much of Europe that for hundreds of miles there was no place a Jewish person could go without the risk of being killed.

The Franks were trapped.

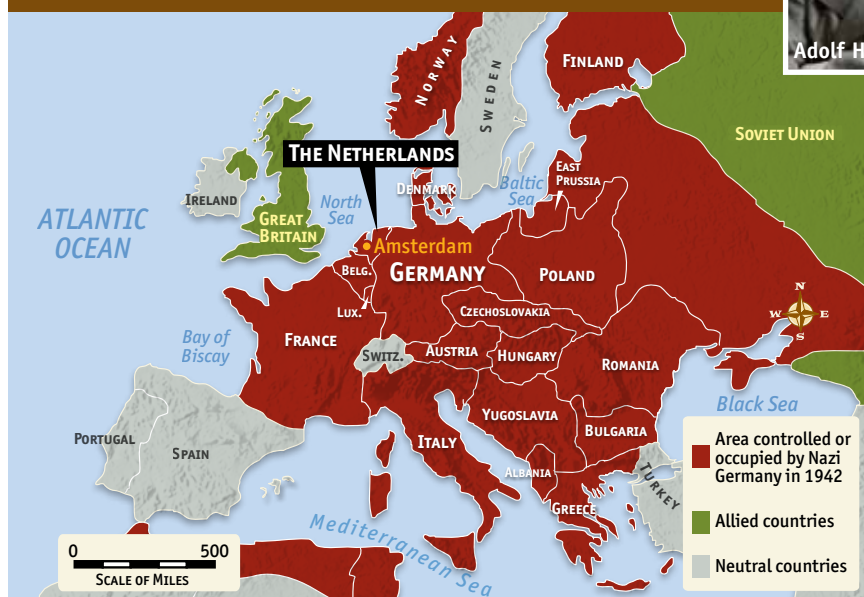
So Anne's father came up with another idea.

They would hide.

The main building of



NAZI-OCCUPIED EUROPE 1942





THE HELPERS

(left to right) Miep Gies, Victor Kugler, Bep Voskuijl, and Johannes Kleiman protected everyone in the annex. Miep grew especially close to Anne. All four helpers survived the war. They were among thousands who risked their lives to help Jewish people in Nazi-occupied Europe.

Otto's pectin business contained offices and a warehouse. Behind it was a smaller building—an annex—that could be reached only from inside. It seemed the perfect place for the Franks to hide until the war was over. Four of Otto's employees—Victor Kugler, Miep Gies, Johannes Kleiman, and Bep Voskuijl—agreed to help, despite the huge risk. Assisting Jewish people was against the law, punishable with prison—and worse.

It was to the annex that the Franks, dressed in all their clothing, were fleeing that hot July morning in 1942.

Living in Fear

Anne had no idea that her father and some of his workers had spent months preparing for her family to go into hiding. They

some of Anne's movie posters from her old bedroom.

A week after the Franks arrived, they were joined by Otto's business partner, Hermann van Pels, along with van Pels's wife, Auguste, and their 15-year-old son, Peter. A dentist named Fritz Pfeffer came a few months later. In total, eight people hid in the annex. It was a small maze of rooms, stairs, and hallways that might have been comfortable for one small family.

Business in the warehouse, meanwhile, went on as usual; other than the four helpers, the employees had no idea that eight people were hiding a few feet away. Anne and the others in the annex spoke in whispers and tiptoed around—they didn't dare flush a toilet or open a window, even

on the hottest days. The smallest noise—a cough, a laugh, a dropped dish—could give them away. The SS, the Nazi's ruthless military guards, gave cash rewards to anyone who turned in a Jew.

Fragile Hope

Living in such close quarters was a challenge, especially for the energetic Anne, who longed to run outside and feel the sun on her face. Her sole comfort was her diary, her most prized possession. It was only on the pages of her diary that she could freely vent her feelings and frustrations. "I'm longing—so longing—for everything," Anne wrote in an entry. "To talk, for freedom, for

DEATH CAMP

This image was taken at Auschwitz, one of the most notorious concentration camps. During the Holocaust, the Nazis murdered an estimated 6 million Jews. They also targeted homosexuals, Gypsies, and those with physical and mental disabilities.



ANNE FRANK FONDS BASEL/GETTY IMAGES (ALL IMAGES)

friends, to be alone. And I do so long . . . to cry!”

And yet, life went on, and the residents of the secret annex fell into a routine. Every morning, they had breakfast at 7, before the warehouse opened for business. During the day, Margot, Peter, and Anne did schoolwork. (Anne loathed the math problems her father assigned her.) Lunch was served at 1:15, when the employees in the warehouse went home to eat. In the evenings, Anne and the others ate dinner gathered around the radio, eagerly listening to the daily news broadcasts from Britain.

When the helpers snuck into the annex with food and other **provisions**, they often brought grim news of the outside world. World War II was raging across Europe. Many of the Jewish

families the Franks knew had been taken away by the Nazis. People were starving. Bombs were falling mere blocks away. Anne could often hear the rapid fire of shooting on the street outside the annex.

Yet there was always hope too. The Allies—Britain, the U.S., and the Soviet Union (today Russia)—were fighting against Hitler. The residents of the annex told each other it was only a matter of time before the Allies drove the Nazis out of the Netherlands, before they could leave the annex and be free.

But weeks of waiting turned into months.

And months turned into years.

“My Courage Is Reborn”

Anne would live in the secret annex for two long years. During

that time, she recorded in sharp and often funny detail everything that went on—the modest dinners cobbled together from rotting potatoes, her fights with Auguste van Pels, the challenge of finding enough privacy to take a sponge bath. (The annex did not have a bathtub.)

In her beautiful, looping cursive, Anne wrote that she wanted to live forever, that she wanted her life to have meaning. She vowed to become a famous writer, with her first book to be based on her now overflowing diary. She began going back to old entries, revising and rewriting.

“I can shake off everything if I write,” Anne wrote in April 1944. “My sorrows disappear, my courage is reborn.”

Then came catastrophe.



Betrayed

In August 1944, Dutch police, led by an SS officer, forced their way into the annex and dragged everyone away at gunpoint. To this day, no one knows for certain who betrayed those living in the annex.

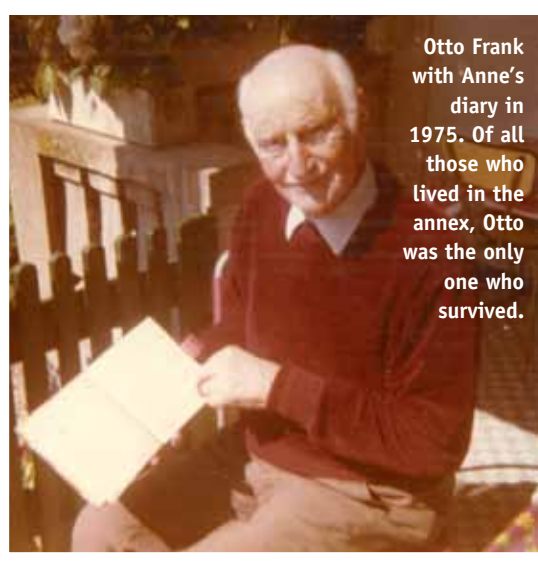
When the officers were gone, two of the helpers, Miep Gies and Bep Voskuijl, crept into the annex, their hearts heavy with fear and sadness. The officers had **ransacked** the place and stolen anything they thought held value. But they had left something precious behind. Strewn across the floor of the attic were the pages of Anne's diary. The women gathered them up. Miep told herself that she would keep them safe, locked away in her desk. She would return them to Anne after the war, when this nightmare was finally over.

Something Precious

Fighting in Europe would come to an end nine months later, in May 1945, when the Nazis were at last defeated. (World War II ended in September 1945.) By then, the Nazis had murdered an estimated 6 million Jews. This **genocide** came to be known as the Holocaust.

Otto Frank was rescued from a concentration camp called Auschwitz, in Poland. By then, he was gravely ill and **emaciated** from months of hard labor and starvation. He had no idea where his family was.

During his return to a battle-scarred Amsterdam, Otto learned that his wife had been killed at



Otto Frank with Anne's diary in 1975. Of all those who lived in the annex, Otto was the only one who survived.

Auschwitz. But the whereabouts of Anne and Margot were unknown. For weeks, Otto held out hope that his daughters had survived.

Those hopes were crushed when he received news that Anne and Margot had both died of the disease typhus at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp just weeks before it was **liberated**.

Otto went into his office and

shut the door. In that moment, his time spent in the secret annex must have seemed like a lifetime ago.

Miep Gies knocked softly. She had something to give him, something precious: Anne's diary.

Miep told Otto that out of respect for Anne, she had not read a word of it. Now Anne's words belonged to him. Otto decided to honor Anne's wish, to share her words with the world.

First published in 1947, *The Diary of a Young Girl* has since been translated into some 70 languages and is one of the most-read books in the world.

"If God lets me live . . . I shall not remain insignificant," Anne wrote in April 1944, only a few months before the officers stormed the annex. "I shall work in the world for mankind."

Indeed she has. Her diary has given voice to those silenced by the Holocaust. She has inspired millions of people with her courage and honesty, and with her refusal to give up hope during one of history's darkest times.

In this way, Anne's wish came true.

Through her diary, Anne Frank lives forever. ●

WRITING CONTEST

Your legacy is how you will be remembered and the contributions you make during your life. What is Anne Frank's legacy? Answer this question in a well-organized essay. Support your ideas with details from the article and video (optional). Send your essay to **ANNE FRANK CONTEST**. Five winners will each get a copy of *Once* by Morris Gleitzman. See page 2 for details.



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