

The Upstairs Room

By Johanna Reiss

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The Upstairs Room By Johanna Reiss

A Life in Hiding

When the German army occupied Holland, Annie de Leeuw was eight years old. Because she was Jewish, the occupation put her in grave danger-she knew that to stay alive she would have to hide. Fortunately, a Gentile family, the Oostervelds, offered to help. For two years they hid Annie and her sister, Sini, in the cramped upstairs room of their farmhouse.

Most people thought the war wouldn't last long. But for Annie and Sini -- separated from their family and confined to one tiny room -- the war seemed to go on forever.

In the part of the marketplace where flowers had been sold twice a week-tulips in the spring, roses in the summer-stood German tanks and German soldiers. Annie de Leeuw was eight years old in 1940 when the Germans attacked Holland and marched into the town of Winterswijk where she lived. Annie was ten when, because she was Jewish and in great danger of being cap-tured by the invaders, she and her sister Sini had to leave their father, mother, and older sister Rachel to go into hiding in the upstairs room of a remote farmhouse.

Johanna de Leeuw Reiss has written a remarkably fresh and moving account of her own experiences as a young girl during World War II. Like many adults she was innocent of the German plans for Jews, and she might have gone to a labor camp as scores of families did. "It won't be for long and the Germans have told us we'll be treated well," those families said. "What can happen?" They did not know, and they could not imagine.... But millions of Jews found out.

Mrs. Reiss's picture of the Oosterveld family with whom she lived, and of Annie and Sini, reflects a deep spirit of optimism, a faith in the ingenuity, backbone, and even humor with which ordinary human beings meet extraordinary challenges. In the steady, matter-of-fact, day-by-day courage they all showed lies a profound strength that transcends the horrors of the long and frightening war. Here is a memorable book, one that will be read and reread for years to come.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
In this Newbery Honor book, Reiss writes a stirring, fictionalized account of her own experiences as a Jewish girl during World War II. Ages 12-up.
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Review
"In this fine autobiographical novel, Johanna Reiss depicts the trials of her Dutch-Jewish family during World War II. . . . The youngest of three daughters tells how she and her sister hid for more than two years in the upstairs room of the peasant Oosterveld family. . . . Offers believable characterizations of unremarkable people who survived, if not thrived, and displayed an adaptability and generosity probably beyond their own expectations." -- *SLJ.*

From the Publisher
In this teachers guide, you will receive easy to use, inspiring lessons plans. The legwork is done for you! The guide incorporates essential reading, writing and thinking practice.(This is NOT the actual novel.)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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