



# Shadow Life: A Portrait of Anne Frank and Her Family

*Barry Denenberg*

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## **Shadow Life: A Portrait of Anne Frank and Her Family** Barry Denenberg

In a groundbreaking work, acclaimed author Barry Denenberg explores the history of the Holocaust and the lives of Anne Frank and her family.

Denenberg presents the complete story of Anne Frank and her family's life, from Frankfurt, Germany, where Anne and Margot were born before the war, up through to their murders at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. When the Franks leave Frankfurt for Amsterdam, they are hoping to find a place where they can resume a normal life, but instead, the family's freedoms are taken away bit by bit. But it is when they see that other Jews are being taken away, and sent to so-called labor camps that the Franks realize they have no choice but to go into hiding; they live in fear for 2 years.

## **Shadow Life: A Portrait of Anne Frank and Her Family Details**

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Author : Barry Denenberg

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# From Reader Review Shadow Life: A Portrait of Anne Frank and Her Family for online ebook

**Chris Connolly says**

Category (Informational)  
Page 275 in the textbook

## 1. Description

In this chilling event, the horrors of WWII are unleashed as the reader is given a detailed account of what happened to the Jews during the third reiche. Anne and Margot Frank write as they go from peace to sheer chaos; they are Jewish and painfully retell the moment the German soldiers overtook their town in the country of Demark. The young girls are brought to the camp, which will be their fate.

## 2. Organization

The author, Denenberg, gives the reader an account, historical background of how the Hitler's army came to be. Before the reader is introduced to Anne's diary and writings, Denenberg builds the historical events, then allows the reader to understand the remainder of the story.

## 3. Style

Denenberg writes with interest as he retells the vividness of the war and the people who suffered. The reader can tell that Denenberg knows about the content for which he writes.

## 4. Designs

Although this book has no illustrations, the content speaks as loudly as pictures; descriptive language, such as the coldness and the stench that are described, are enough to build a mental image of what is really must have been.

## 5. Accuracy

Denenberg gives an authentic and detailed reoccurrence of the lives of the Jews during WWII. Although the content is sometimes disturbing, the reader gets the real story of how terrible it was to live anywhere near Germany, and the reader can certainly appreciate the freedom that many Americans sacrificed their lives for.

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**Monica says**

This book was interesting, because you got to see the story of Anne Frank from her sister's view. I think it really expanded what I knew about Anne Frank.

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## Crystal says

The author's preface was very informative and inspired me to search the New Yorker archives for the 1997 Cynthia Ozick article "Who owns Anne Frank" that inspired him. I liked how the middle section was written in Margot's voice. The final section grippingly reminds us that Anne's story, for Anne, does not have a happy ending. It is sobering to realize that Anne might still be alive - and younger than my grandmother - if she had survived the war.

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## Elizabeth says

The book Shadow Life A Portrait of Anne Frank and Her Family by Barry Denenberg was a phenomenal book. The author does a fantastic job of explaining the Holocaust and what Anne and her family went through. It starts off by describing and telling us about the Frank family before going into hiding. How different their lives were but since the occupation of Germany they had to move. Running in fear, moving to a different place hoping to escape what was going on, but it didn't work. The Frank family had to go into hiding for two years into the "The Secret Annex". Anne's older sister Margot starts to write about their experience during hiding. How miserable it was and how they lived in fear each day. It wasn't until the German soldiers came and found them. Which then they were sent to a concentration camp. From here we start to learn what Anne and her family went through. The author combines everything and tells us about living in the concentration camp. Nobody should go through such a thing but to the Germans the only solution was to get rid of ALL the Jewish people.

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## Jessica says

In a new perspective on the known tale of Anne Frank, hiding in an attic while under attack by the Germans, we hear from her sister, who was also in hiding with her.

Curriculum Connection: History, Holocaust

This was an interesting tale on the sister of the infamous Anne Frank. She tells us that she is very different from her sister (does not sound too fond of her either), but we read her diary and feel the terror of what she went through. She shared her feelings only with her diary, so it is a very intimate experience. The truth in a biography always adds an element of emotion that sticks with the reader long after reading.

Genre: Biography/Informational

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## Lisa Lee says

This is a well researched account of the family of Otto Frank and the others who hid with them. The book is

divided into thirds. The first, "Living" is the background of the family and ends with the details of their going into hiding. The second, "Hiding" is a diary written by Margot, Anne's older sister, Margot did keep somewhat of a diary, but what is written here is the author's recreation of it. The final part "Dying" chronicles the arrest of the Franks, van Pelses, and Mr. Pfeffer. Their processing and the events that lead up to their deaths. This section included many eye-witness accounts from survivors. I found this book interesting. I think for those interested in the Frank family's ordeals there is some new information. As a teacher of WWII, I often used the play version of their story, and looking at their situation in hiding through Margot's eyes using details not included in the play was enlightening, as were the eye-witness accounts of the family after their arrest.

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### **Shubhada Kale says**

Though it is a fictitious account of Anne Frank's sister Margot Frank, it brings to life the image and situations that the inhabitants of The Secret Annex underwent while in hiding. The book is very informative and enlightening. Details given are very helpful. Perfectly written and a must read for people who have read Anne Frank's diary.

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### **Kris says**

Quick and enjoyable read, as I've always been into Anne Frank.

Book was broken into 3 main sections plus an afterwards. Only problem was the middle part (their hiding) was written as a faux diary of Margot's (Anne's sister). I usually hate it when authors do things like this, as it always seems to ring hollow. Especially when the diary entries were just basically reactions to Anne's, which were infinitely more interesting. Contrived. I would have enjoyed a straight up narrative on this time period instead.

Still, the rest of the book makes up for this and it's still engrossing, if often saddening.

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### **Aidan Owens says**

It was a really good book and a suggested read to middle schoolers. It is coming from Margot's perspective, which is Anne's older sister. It is really showing how it felt living under the war conditions at the time. The description in her diary entries was phenomenal, and it made me really think I was listening to her speak about the war conditions.

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### **Carol Littlejohn says**

This book is different from other books about Anne Frank because the author created a fictional diary from Anne's sister Margot. Apparently Margot had a diary, too, although her diary was destroyed. Using this technique, the author is able to present a well-rounded, fuller picture of life in the secret annex. Denenberg also gives details about the deaths of the families.

## Sarah Wilbern says

Denenberg, B. (2005). Shadow Life: A Portrait of Anne Frank and Her Family. New York: Scholastic Press.

Kirkus Review 2010.

Biography-Informational choice.

This book was a good book that showed Anne Frank's life from beginning to end. It talked about her parents and her family. It talked about how the family had to move when Anne was four because Hitler took over in Germany. Her life was good in Holland until Germany continued its hatred against Jews. Anne and her family went into hiding when the war started. They lived in a part of Anne's father's business that wasn't being used. The book talked about the others who came and hid with Anne and her family. It talked about how the deteriorated while in hiding. Then it talked about the police finding them and everyone being forced to go to the concentration camps. While everyone was in the camps, the book described what happened. At the end, each camp was liberated. Only 1 of the 8 people who were in hiding in Anne's father's business, survived and that was Anne's father.

This book would be a good book for grades 7-12. This would give students another insight to Anne and how Jews were treated in WWII and the Holocaust.

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## Miguel Ramirez says

Miguel Ramirez

12/30/14

Novel Review Essay

Shadow Life

"Like common criminals we are hiding. As if we did something we ought to be ashamed of. As if being Jewish were a crime." (Denenberg, 140) Shadow Life by Barry Denenberg is a portrait of Anne Frank and her family. The facts about World War II and the Holocaust and the creative fictional diary of Margot Frank tie the novel together. The frightened families, intriguing plot, and the theme of depression yet hope make Shadow Life an interesting novel.

The Frank family is at the heart of Shadow Life. In Margot's perspective, the story of the Frank's, Van Pels's, and Mr. Pfeffer is unraveled. The people of the Secret Annex must endure their limited freedom, fear of being discovered and try not to get on each other's nerves. The problems the residents have in the point of view of an often overlooked member of the Frank family, Margot Frank, gives great insight of what it was like to be in the annex during hiding. Different personalities conflict in the small territory which keep you intrigued in the terrified family's daily life. "We have sunk so low that now a mere pin can cause an argument." (Denenberg, 118)

Another important part to Shadow Life is the plot. Everyone in the annex has their own conflicts and personal battles which drive the plot forward. Every action has a chance to end them up in capture so they

are careful, knowing that any mistake might result in their lives. Rules from keeping quiet at a particular time to when to use the bathroom roam in their minds. Unfortunate events such as robberies and captures haunt the people of the Secret Annex. The only thing holding them together is the dream of being free.

Furthermore, the theme of depression is strong in the novel, with a slight piece of hope. Through out the novel depression sets in. Anne Frank for example, is a very cheerful girl before going into hiding, and still is sometimes during her life in the annex. Yet, as World War II goes on and hope in being free goes down, she starts to be less of the joyful girl she was. Also Mrs. Van Pels was a normal Jew before hiding with no serious problems what so ever. As time flies by, she gets thought of suicide. By the end of the time at the Secret Annex, any joy had escaped and hope was on the verge of being lost.

All in all, Shadow Life is a great book which tells of the life of families during World War II and the Holocaust. The scared families, plot, and themes help the book be what it is. This book is worth reading if you want to learn more about World War II or history in general.

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### **Judy G says**

There are flashes of greatness in this book about a Frank family during Nazi madness and it's in Germany and their next home in holland and then in Nazi concentration camps. Very painful to read about their young deaths and torture. Center of the book of many pages I didn't read Diary Margot Frank. It was to me fiction. This book is excellent effort to portray something so tragic.

Judy

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### **Brooke says**

I personally didn't really like this book, I found this book very boring. The book shadow life was written by Barry Denenberg. The author is very good at putting a big picture in your head by using a lot of details. Most of the time she goes into too much detail and talks about one thing for too long. She goes on to say that the most inspirational holocaust story she has ever read was the diary of Anne Frank. The book is mainly about Anne Frank and her experience.

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### **Aruna Kumar Gadepalli says**

After reading Anne Frank's diary, this book adds few more details. This book which is well researched helps one understand the family of Anne Frank. Simple style of narration and the extracts from the dairies, really helps one to understand the situation of Second World War and the Germany. Those who are interested in history particularly war, this is a good book.

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