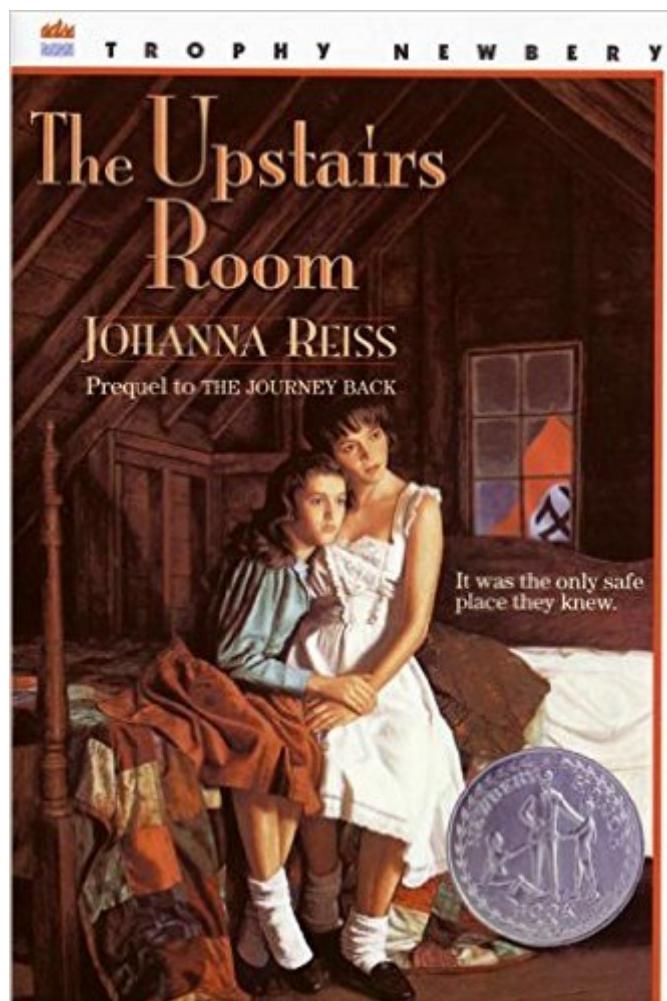


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# The Upstairs Room (Trophy Newbery)



## Synopsis

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 captured 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.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 380 (What's this?)

Series: Trophy Newbery

Paperback: 208 pages

Publisher: HarperCollins; Reissue edition (October 30, 1990)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 006440370X

ISBN-13: 978-0064403702

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.4 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (153 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #202,303 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #27 in Books > Children's Books > Religions > Judaism #38 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > Holocaust #176 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > Jewish

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 8 and up

## Customer Reviews

In class I was assigned to read *The Upstairs Room* by Johanna Reiss. The story takes place during the Holocaust in the city of Usselo, Holland. The main character is Annie. She is a small girl with dark hair. She has two sisters and her mother gets very sick. I have also read the book *Parallel Journeys* by Eleanor Ayer, with quotes from Alfons Heck, a German soldier, and Helen Waterford, a Jew. Both *Parallel Journeys* and *The Upstairs Room* are about the Holocaust and what it was like to be a Jew. I feel that the message of *The Upstairs Room* was to treat all people equal. During the Holocaust, Hitler hated the Jews and was killing them. The Jews had to hide so that they would not be killed, but if they were found, they would be sent to work or extermination camps. Hitler established the Hitler Youth in which there were ranks. If you got to the top of the ranks, you would then be moved to the German army. I think *The Upstairs Room* is an excellent book. It was very exciting. It made me imagine myself as Annie. I think Johanna Reiss did a good job telling the story as Annie. I would recommend this book to girls from grades six and up because there was some language inappropriate for young children and some boys that read *The Upstairs Room* told me that it was a girl's book. I hope this book review helps you decide if you want to read *The Upstairs Room*.

*The Upstairs Room* is an excellent book about Jews hiding during WWII. The main character is Annie de Leeuw. She was a nine-year-old Jewish girl living in Holland. Slowly Annie and her family were forced to quit school and their jobs. The loss of freedom destroyed Annie's spirit. She longed to be able to see her friends and play outside. The de Leeuw's decided to hide when they realized the Nazi's would be taking them to concentration camps. The entire family could not hide in the same location, so they split up. Annie's mother was ill, so she remained in a hospital. Annie and her sister, Sini, hid upstairs in the Oosterveld's farmhouse. Her father and sister, Raquel, stayed with a retired minister. Annie and Sini were cramped in a very small space, which was incredibly cold in the winter. The girls often spent many days in bed to keep warm. Annie was often forced to walk

back and forth across the room to strengthen her legs because they began to grow irregularly. The girls had to hide in a closet for days on end when Nazi soldiers used the Oosterveld's house as an office. The Oosterveld's took excellent care of Annie and Sini and became quite attached. The entire time spent in the room was stressful and depressing for the girls. They were only allowed to go outside a few times during the their time in hiding. Annie and her family hid for two years before they could return to their home. The sacrifice the Oosterveld's made to save the girls is incredibly moving. The strength and perseverance Annie and Sini possess will inspire readers for years to come.

This book is about 2 girls, Annie and Sini de Leeuw. Because they are Jewish and live in Holland they have to go into hiding from the Germans during World War II. If they don't they will be taken to a concentration camp and be killed. Both of the girls leave their parents and older sister to go to safety with the Hannicks. Mr Hannick is known for helping Jews get to different home to hide in. When someone sees Mr Hannick helping a Jewish family to another home, it becomes unsafe for the girls so they have to go somewhere else. They end up going to the Oosterveld's. The girls end up living in an upstairs room of the farmhouse. During the day they must quietly stay upstairs in their room and never go near the windows. In the evening, after dinner, the girls come down to listen to the radio. Mr. Oosterveld's makes a special hiding place so if the soldiers come to check the house the girls won't be caught. Do the soldiers come? Do they get caught? What happens to Sini, Annie and the Oosterveld's? Do Annie and Sini ever get to see their parents and sister again? You must read the book to see for yourself what the answers are.. So many exciting things happen throughout the book that I couldn't put it down and I bet you won't either. It's not another boring war book. It's hard to believe that it is based on fact. I can't wait to read the sequel - The Journey Back.....This book is a five star read

Set in Holland during the early 40's this first person story relates the persecution and hardships of the Jewish community under Nazi occupation. Ten-year-old Annie resents her decreasing personal freedom, diminished lifestyle, fragmented family and just generally being made to feel somehow odd in her own country. Her people are insulted, restricted, bullied, beaten and sent to "work" camps. The family unit disintegrates as Mother is hospitalized, Father goes into Hiding in another town, and the oldest sister insists on making it on her own. The two sisters who remain together resent each other and bicker often. At great risk some courageous Dutch citizens help the persecuted family. As she contemplates her face in the mirror in the Upstairs Room, Annie wonders if she suddenly looks

Jewish. Why is she, practically overnight, different from her Dutch friends? She also faces internal struggles during the almost 3 years spent in hiding with Sini (20). In times of extreme danger the sisters rush into a special hiding place behind a closet, or else play at being moles. It's not easy for a lively youngster to become invisible, instantly, or for a prolonged period of time. She rages against her sister, but most of all against the cramped spaces, restrictions on exercise, light and fresh air. In fact Annie accidentally puts them all (including their generous host family) at risk by her immature behavior. Still the kindly farm family grows to love their girls; after the village is liberated, they all dread the inevitable separation. This story is true, written by Johanna Reiss to enlighten her own daughters about the human desire to live and enjoy life, as well as to praise the integrity of the Dutch nation. Elementary girls will sympathize with the emotional suffering of the young protagonist.

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