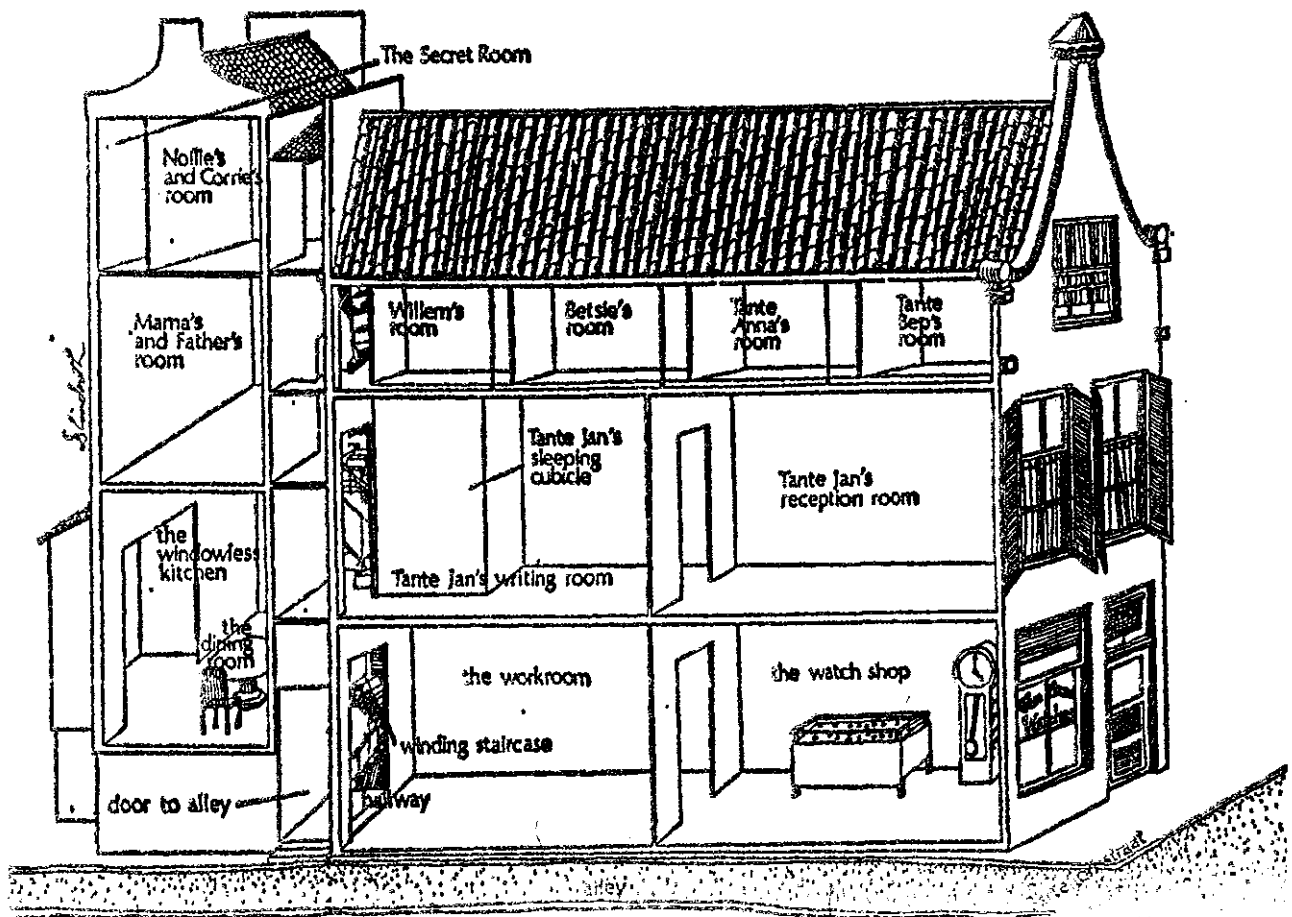


THE HIDING PLACE



KEY LITERARY ELEMENTS

SETTING

The setting for this memoir begins in Haarlem, Holland, in 1937, and ends with Corrie ten Boom's death in Orange County, California on April 15, 1983, her 91st birthday. In between, there are flashbacks to her youth in Haarlem where she was born in 1892, and explanations of the old and odd Dutch house where she grew up and lived most of her life, the Beje. Of course, there is also the year – February 28, 1944 through New Year's Day, 1945 – that she spent in two Dutch prisons – Scheveningen and Vught - and one concentration camp, which was in East Germany – Ravensbruck.

CHARACTER LIST

Major Characters

Corrie ten Boom – the narrator of her own autobiography, she was a Dutch woman who went to prison for subversive activities against the Nazi occupation in Holland.

Betsie ten Boom – Corrie's older sister, she was the most devout of a very religious Dutch family and foresaw Corrie's ministry from her death bed.

Casper ten Boom – Corrie's father, he was a very good, beloved member of the Haarlem community, where he had been a watch maker and repairer all his life.

Mama ten Boom – Corrie's mother who died from a stroke, but not before exhibiting a miraculous recovery at Nollie's wedding.

Minor Characters

Willem ten Boom – Corrie's brother, he became an ordained minister in the Dutch Reformed Church and later opened a nursing home for elderly Jews. He worked in the underground movement, finding hiding places for Jews of all ages.

Nollie ten Boom van Woerden – Corrie's younger sister, her insistence on honesty in all instances nearly got the Resistance workers into trouble several times.

Peter van Woerden – Corrie's nephew and Nollie's son, he was a musical prodigy who played the national anthem. even though it was forbidden, on the great church organ, inspiring his countrymen.

Kik ten Boom – Corrie's nephew and Willem's son, he died in Bergen-Belsen after being captured by the Nazis for helping an American parachutist make it to the North Sea.

Tante Jans, Tante Bep, and Tante Anna – Mama's sisters who all lived with the ten Booms in the Beje until their deaths.

Pickwick – the nickname of Herman Sluring who was a very wealthy Dutchmen and friend of the ten Boom family. He also worked for the Resistance movement in Holland.

Karel – the young man with whom Corrie fell in love, but who married another girl within his own social class. The loss of his love determines for Corrie that she will never marry.

Toos and Christoffels – two employees of the watch shop who could not find jobs in other shops, but for whom Father found a place in his shop and in his heart.

Meyer Mossel – the Jewish man whose obviously Jewish appearance made it imperative that the ten Booms offer him a place to hide. He was nicknamed Eusie and the family soon came to love him.

Harry de Vries and his wife, Cato – a couple from mixed backgrounds (he was Jewish, but converted to Christianity, and she was Christian), they came to the ten Booms early in the Occupation for help.

Otto Altschuler – a young German Youth who came to the watch shop to apprentice. Father eventually had to fire him for harassing Christoffels.

Lieutenant Rahms – a German soldier who helped Corrie, because he was sickened by the evil of which he was a part.

Mien – a prisoner at Ravensbruck who worked in the hospital, she gave Corrie the much needed vitamins and yeast compound to help keep them well, and she was the first to discover the miracle of Betsie's face after she died.

Jan Vogel – the man from Ermelo who had collaborated with the Germans and caused the Beje to be raided, leading Corrie, Betsie, and Father to be imprisoned.

Mrs. Bierens de Haan – the wealthy woman in Haarlem who promised God that she would open her house to those in need of healing after the war, if her son came home safely.

"Mr. and Mrs. Smit" – the names given to everyone in the Resistance Movement so that no one could be tortured to give up any actual names.

CONFLICT

Protagonist – The protagonist of a story is the main character who traditionally undergoes some sort of change. He or she must usually overcome some opposing force. The protagonist of this story is Corrie ten Boom who tells the true story of her life. She constantly faces adversity when she accepts the job of hiding Jews and other political prisoners from the Nazis. She is often at war with her own doubts and frustrations, but always turns to God for help and comfort.

Antagonist – The antagonist of a story is the force that provides an obstacle for the protagonist. The antagonist does not always have to be a single character or even a character at all. The enemy is usually the Nazis and their occupation of Holland, but it is also Corrie's doubts about her job in the Resistance and later, her ministry.

Rising Action – This part of the autobiography occurs from the beginning and the celebration of the 100 years the watch shop had been in business through a flashback of Corrie's life at the Beje through her and Betsie's experiences in prison to Betsie's death at Ravensbruck.

Climax – The climax of a plot is the major turning point that allows the protagonist to resolve the conflict. The climax comes when Betsie dies, foreseeing on her deathbed Corrie's ministry: to tell their story and help people find Jesus.

Falling Action – This part of the story takes place from the time Corrie is released from Ravensbruck until she discovers her true purpose to carry on Betsie's dream to bring healing and the name of God to people in need.

Outcome – Betsie dies at Ravensbruck, but her visions of the future lead Corrie to find a ministry where she will tell what happened during their imprisonment, and how God and Jesus were always with them at their

darkest hours. As a result, Corrie spends nearly the rest of her life setting up homes to help heal people damaged by the war, devoting a former concentration camp to the same purpose, and traveling to tell her story.

SHORT PLOT/CHAPTER SUMMARY (Synopsis)

Corrie ten Boom's autobiography began with the 100th anniversary of the founding of the ten Boom watch shop in Haarlem, Holland. The ten Boom family was a highly respected one known for their deep religious faith and good will towards anyone who might need their help. This celebration took place in 1937 within the shadow of World War II and the rise of Nazism. However, the Dutch people believed that just as in World War I, their neutrality would be honored. Unfortunately, they could not know the evil and the horrors that come with it were just around the corner for them.

Corrie described in detail the old, strangely built Dutch house where she was born, because it would become the main setting of *The Hiding Place* – a secret room they would build to hide Jews and political prisoners fleeing Nazi persecution. The big old house was a beloved part of Corrie's childhood as she used it as a backdrop to reminisce about how she grew up. She remembered many fond moments: trying to get out of going to school; a father who prized his faith and education above all; a mother who made it a regular habit to visit the poor and ill and bring them help; an older sister who was to always be one her greatest friends; an older brother who was educated and ordained a Protestant minister while also working later for the Resistance Movement; a younger sister whose strict honesty sometimes got her into trouble; three aunts, all different in personality and attitude toward life, but who were great examples to Corrie as she grew up; and people in the community of Haarlem who valued her family and their contribution to their city.

Corrie, her father, and her sister, Betsie, eventually had to face the Nazi invasion of Holland and became a part of the Resistance Movement. They provided a place for people who were fleeing the Nazis to live and a secret room for them to hide, in case the house was ever raided. During this time, Corrie often had doubts about whether her mission was wrong, but she always found her way back to the truth by relying on God. They practiced daily for the raid and continued to pray that it never happened. Unfortunately, that day did arrive as the result of a man who Corrie later learned was named Jan Vogel and was a Dutchman who collaborated with the Germans. The Jews hiding in the secret room were saved, but Corrie, her father, and Betsie were taken into custody. Father died ten days after his arrest and was buried in a pauper's grave while Corrie and Betsie found themselves imprisoned first in Scheveningen Prison, a Dutch federal prison used by the Nazis. There, Corrie, who was ill when the arrest occurred, was kept in solitary for a month or two. Every time she reached a moment of despair, God seemed to provide something to give her strength. For example, the only company she had other than a "hand" delivering her food tray through a slot in the cell wall each day was a black ant to whom she gave pieces of her bread. He provided an example of strength for her to follow as he struggled to take the bread back to his home through the crack in the floor.

Later, the two women were transported to Vught Prison, where Corrie was finally able to catch up and be with Betsie. Corrie knew that Betsie, who had had a weak heart all her life, needed her now more than ever. Here, with the help of a set of the four Gospels given to Corrie by a nurse in the hospital at Scheveningen, they told the story of God's love and the promise of Jesus' Resurrection.

In spite of being together at last, Corrie wished valiantly for release. Instead, they were soon transported in boxcars into eastern Germany and the infamous prison of Ravensbruck. Conditions there were horrifying, and gradually, Betsie became more and more ill. Throughout it all, however, they continued to bring the word of God to any prisoner who wanted to learn. They became the strength these women needed to face whatever the future might bring. Many miracles occurred there: the tiny vitamin bottle Corrie sneaked in to help keep Betsie strong, seemed to never empty, even though they shared its contents with anyone who appeared ill; the guards never tried to come in and confiscate their Scriptures even though it was common practice in the other barracks; on her deathbed, Betsie predicted that they would be released by the first of the year, 1945, and that Corrie

would open a huge home with tall windows and a garden for the injured of the war, all of which came true; and when Betsie died, her face miraculously lost its skeletal, lined appearance to look free, young and strong again, just as she looked at the Beje.

Corrie was eventually released and sent back to Holland. It was only later in 1957, when she returned for the first time to Ravensbruck that she learned her release was a clerical error and that all women her age the next week were sent to the gas chambers. The journey home was long and arduous, but eventually Corrie arrived at Willem's home first and then the Beje later. However, she was restless with whatever work she tried, from repairing and making watches to opening the Beje to the feeble-minded. Eventually, she began to speak to churches and other groups about her and Betsie's experiences. It was at one of these speaking engagements that she met Mrs. Bierens de Haan, a wealthy woman who promised that if her son came home from Germany, she would open her mansion to fulfill Betsie's dream. The son came home and Corrie readied the house for the hundreds of people who began filtering there to learn how to forgive those who had so horribly wronged them. She also opened up a former concentration camp for the same purpose.

Later, she took her ministry throughout Europe and the Near East and gained a great reputation for her stories about her time in Nazi prisons. This was how she met John and Elizabeth Sherrill, the husband and wife team who helped to co-write her story, *The Hiding Place*. Eventually, her age led to several debilitating strokes which robbed her of her power to speak, but she remained a source of inspiration to everyone who came to see her.

She died on her 91st birthday in Orange County, California, where she had been living with friends. Her story is still an inspiration 35 years after it was first published.

THEMES

The most important theme of this story is **God's love is always there** no matter how dark the shadows that fall over us. This theme overflows the events of the story as Corrie and Betsie always come back to it when despair threatens to overtake them.

Another theme involves the idea of **love for our fellow man**. The ten Booms never think of not allowing people who were in need into their home. Even before the war, eleven foster children were raised there and the family gave back a great deal to their community. Father and Mama taught them to never turn their backs on anyone who might need them.

The theme of **prejudice** weaves throughout the story as well when we see anti-Semitic feelings, even among some of the Dutch. The "Jewish Question" as handled by the Nazis and how it turned into nothing less than the genocide we now call the Holocaust is the backdrop to the story, but also the overriding reason why Corrie and Betsie end up in Nazi prisons.

There's also the theme of **honesty** and when it's right in the eyes of God to be dishonest. This idea is one that Corrie and her family found difficult to apply to the evil around them. Should they maintain their feeling that honesty is always the best policy or should they compromise their values when it might save someone's life?

Finally, there is the theme of **the responsibility of a Christian to stand up against evil**. Many of the Dutch turned their backs on their fellow countrymen and some even collaborated with the Germans. So, Corrie and her family weigh in on their knowledge that God looks for us to be responsible Christians.

MOOD

Many times, the mood of this story is one of fear and despair. The two women, Betsie and Corrie, are subjected to horrific conditions during their imprisonment, and they witness the deaths of many innocent people. However, the overall mood is uplifting and optimistic, because within the midst of the shadow of the Nazi

regime, there is goodness that is practiced, and hope always seems to give them the strength to go on. In the end, the mood is one of joy that Corrie lived to tell the story, even as the reader feels great sadness at the loss of such wonderful people as Casper ten Boom and his eldest daughter, Betsie.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION - BIOGRAPHY

Corrie ten Boom was born on April 15, 1892, in Haarlem, Holland, and lived there in a wonderful old house called the Beje most of her life. After an early disappointment in love, she chose to never marry; this seemed to be a part of God's plan for her as she became a minister of His word after spending a year in Nazi controlled prisons and in Ravensbruck, the infamous concentration camp that was responsible for the deaths of about 95,000 women. Corrie's experiences in these prisons are the basis for her well-known autobiography, *The Hiding Place*, written with the help of John and Elizabeth Sherrill. She spent the latter part of her life traveling and speaking to audiences hungry for the story her sister, Betsie, had encouraged her to tell even as she was lying on her death bed. Eventually, after suffering several strokes, she came to live in Orange County, California, with friends and died there on her 91st birthday, April 15, 1983.

LITERARY / HISTORICAL INFORMATION

This autobiography takes place at a time we have now come to know as the Holocaust. Although Corrie ten Boom only witnessed this horror from her own perspective and that of the Dutch, she accurately portrays how the Nazi regime systematically rounded up all those people they considered undesirable in their new state, including six million Jews, and exterminated them. This makes Corrie's story one that will resound among generations to come and will keep alive the truth about that time even as revisionist historians attempt to prove otherwise. She witnessed it firsthand, and so she is a source of truth when doubts would creep in and destroy it.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES WITH NOTES

PREFACE

July, 1971

Chappaqua, New York

Summary

The authors, John and Elizabeth Sherrill, give us an explanation of how they came to write *The Hiding Place* in the Preface. They point out that they were writing *God's Smuggler* when the name Corrie ten Boom began to crop up. She was known behind the "Iron Curtain" (former-Soviet controlled countries) and even called by the honorable title "Double-Old Grandmother" in Vietnam. They considered, upon hearing about her missionary work, to include her in the book, but changed their minds when they realized that she was a book unto herself.

Then, in 1968, at a church service in Germany, the authors listened to two speakers who had been prisoners in Nazi concentration camps. The first speaker showed the deep pain he still felt in his face and in his shaking hands, but the second speaker -- Corrie ten Boom -- radiated love, peace, and joy. She so intrigued the authors that they stayed behind to speak with her.

Corrie ten Boom was spreading a world wide ministry of comfort and counsel which had begun in the concentration camp where she had found, as Isaiah had promised, "a hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempest . . . the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." The authors got to know her and traveled with her to the places that held so much meaning for her. They came to the conclusion that they were not looking into the past, but into the future and came away learning many truths they adapted to their own lives. They also realized that this woman and the people from her life were people the authors wished they had known. And so they decided that they would make them known by writing about them.

Notes

The authors prepare us for this indefatigable woman who will character this book by examining some of her

THE HIDING PLACE PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

CHARACTERS

Corrie ten Boom	KOHR-ee tehn BOHM
Betsie	BEHT-see
Metzler	MEHTS-ler
Cornelia	kohr-NAY-lee-uh
Casper	KAHS-per
Willem	WIHL-uhm
Tine	TEE-nuh
Herman Sluring	HEHR-muhn SLYOOR-ing
Gutlieber	GOOT-lee-ber
Rachel Weil	RAH-khehl VYL
de Graaf	duh GRAHF
Smit	SMIHT
Meyer Mossel	MY-er MAW-suhl
Eusebius	oo-SAY-bee-uhs
Eusie	OO-see
Mary Itallie	MEHR-ee ee-TAHL-ee-uh
Meta Monsanto	MAY-tuh mohn-SAHN-toh
Rahms	RAHMZ

TITLES / THINGS

Beje	BAY-yay
Fräulein	FROY-lyn
Frau	FROW
Alpina	ahl-PEE-nuh
Gestapo	geh-SHTAH-poh
Talmud	TAHL-mood
Opa	OH-pah

PLACES

Bloemendaal	BLOO-mehn-dahl
Haarlem	HAHR-lehm
Barteljorisstraat ...	BAHR-tehl-YOHR-ihs-straht
Hillegom	HIH-luh-guhm
Leiden	LY-dehm
Rotterdam	ROH-ter-dahm
Utrecht	OO-trehcht
Hilversum	HIHL-vuhr-suhm
Amsterdam	AHM-ster-dahm
Grote Hout Straat	GROH-tuh HOWT straht
KoningStraat	KOH-ningstraht
Scheveningen	SKHAYV-ning-uhn
Emmerich	EHM-eh-rihch
Ravensbrück	RAH-vehnz-brook

OTHER NAMES

Kuiper	KY-puhr
Mrs. van der Elst	VAHN dehr ehlt
Petra Ballintijn	PAY-truh BAHL-uhn-tyn
Geert van Vliet	GAYRT vahn VLEET

FOREIGN PHRASES

Il bagno è molto vecchio e pericoloso	
..... eel BAHN-yo ay MOHL-toh VAY-kee-oh	
ay pehr-ee-koh-LOH-soh	
Schnell	SHNEHL

PHONETIC SYMBOLS

AH	as in "FATHER"	IH	as in "SIT"
AY	as in "PLAY"	Y	as in "BUY"
AW	as in "SAW"	OH	as in "SO"
E	as in "SIR"	OO	as in "DEW"
EH	as in "GET"	OW	as in "HOW"
EE	as in "SEE"	UH	as in "CUT"

G / KH : The Dutch "G" and Dutch/German "CH" are an aspirated sound at the back of the throat, as in the Scottish "LOCH." They may be pronounced as an English "G" and "K" at the director's discretion.