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The extraordinary adventure of one courageous Christian woman who became a militant heroine of the anti-Nazi underground.

THE HIDING PLACE

THE TRIUMPHANT TRUE STORY OF CORRIE TEN BOOM

WITH JOHN AND ELIZABETH SHERRILL
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THE HIDING PLACE STUDY GUIDE for chapters 1-10
(Only this portion of the guide was available for free)

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 insistences 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.

_Toons 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.

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**The Hiding Place Summary**

**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 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’ 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.

The Hiding Place Book Notes

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.

**Corrie ten Boom - 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 and Analysis

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 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 obvious traits: a constant feeling of love, peace, and joy in spite of her terrible experiences in a concentration camp; a deep commitment to a ministry of comfort and counsel to people who have been severely scarred, both physically and emotionally; and a loving memory for the places and the people she loved.

They also indicate from where the title of the book was derived: Isaiah’s comments in the Bible about the hiding place. So we know now that what we are about to read is not just about a physical place God provides to protect us from the storm, but also the deep emotional comfort he offers when we need it most.
The story opens in 1937, in Haarlem, Holland, with the 100th birthday party for the watch shop. Corrie is the narrator who tells about the house where she lives - how she can’t see anything but the walls of the buildings beside her room until she looks straight up and sees that it’s going to be a sunny day. She was 45 years old at this point in her life and unmarried. She bemoaned the loss of her waistline while commenting that her sister, Betsie, in spite of being seven years older, still had the same slender grace that made people turn and look after her in the street.

The house where she lived was a curious old house - known as the Beje (pronounced bay yay) - which was three stories high, two rooms deep, and one room wide. It was actually two houses that had at one time been separate, after which their back walls had been knocked out and a narrow, twisting staircase added in between.

It seemed as if all of Haarlem was coming to the party, even the delivery boy who brought flowers from Herman Sluring, an enormously wealthy customer whom she and Betsie called Pickwick, because he looked so much like the illustration of that character in their copy of Dickens’ book. Corrie carried the flowers into the workroom to find an artful spot to place them. Corrie mentioned how much she loved this room behind the customer part of their shop, where there was the sound of the thousands of ticks of the many clocks in there.

The party was for the shop which opened in January of 1837 by Corrie’s grandfather, but it was also for her father whom everyone in Haarlem seemed to love, calling him “Haarlem’s Grand Old Man.” We learn just what a kind man he was when Corrie mentioned their saleslady-bookkeeper, Toos, who had such an ill temper that she could never hold a job until Casper ten Boom hired her and disarmed and mellowed her.

Corrie went to the heart of the house - the dining room - for breakfast and we see from her description of that room and the people who were no longer there except in spirit - her mother, her two aunts, her other sister, Nollie, and her brother, Willem - that this was a very loving family. Here they had all sat around the table and enjoyed each other’s company. She marveled that somehow her father had managed to feed, dress, and care for eleven more foster children after his own four had grown up. She and her sister, Betsie, reminisced about their mother and aunts who had always worn only black from head to toe and yet who would probably have loved the new styles and colors of 1937. Corrie wondered to herself as the narrator how either of them could have guessed at that moment how just around the corner was anguish and horror and even heaven. She wondered, too, how at the time, she could never have imagined that her white-bearded father - called Opa, or Grandfather, by all the children of Haarlem - would be thrown by strangers into a grave without a name. She wondered how she could ever have imagined
that her conservative, loving sister would stand naked before a roomful of men. On this day, on the 100th birthday, such thoughts were not even thinkable.

We learn further about the deep faith of the ten Boom family who met every morning at 8:30 for Scripture reading and opened their devotionals to any and all, including their employees, who included Hans the apprentice, Toos, the saleslady-bookkeeper, and Christoffels. Christoffels was an itinerant clock mender who had once trudged all over Holland repairing tall pendulum clocks in every Dutch farmhouse.

Eventually, Betsie sent Corrie to the home of their younger sister, Nollie, for her cups, because a steady stream of guests began to find their way to the ten Boom home to congratulate their father. She rode her bicycle there and once again stops, as the narrator, to wonder how she could have foreseen that day how on a summer day in the not so distant future, she would brake her bicycle once again in front of this house, daring to go no further for fear of what was happening inside. While waiting on the cups, Corrie introduces the readers to her nephew, Peter, who at thirteen was a musical prodigy and the pride of her life.

Later in the chapter, Corrie introduces us to other people who would come together again and again in the future under very different circumstances: the policemen, Pickwick, Mr. and Mrs. Kan, the owners of the other watch shop, and of course, Willem, her older brother. She notes that these characters were all so very different from each other and yet, in her father’s eyes, all alike. That was his secret: he not only overlooked the differences in people, he actually had no idea they were there. She tells us more about Willem, who was the only one of the children to go to college and had become an ordained minister. She felt he was so much more observant than other people, because back in 1927, in Germany, where he had completed his doctoral thesis, he had written about a terrible evil that was taking root there, the seeds of contempt for human life such as the world had never seen. At that time, the few who read his paper had merely laughed. Now, of course, in 1937, they weren’t laughing anymore, for some of the businesses owned by Jews, with which the family had done business for years, had simply vanished.

As a result, Willem had scrimped and saved enough money to open an old folk’s home for elderly Jews and then, opened it, also, to younger and younger Jewish refugees from Germany. With these people came tales of a mounting madness. That day, Willem brought with him a man named Herr Gutlieber, a young Jewish man whose face had been severely burned. He had just arrived from Germany that morning and his burns were the result of a group of teenage boys in Munich who had set his beard on fire. As Corrie struck up a conversation with the newcomer, she overheard the watch salesman say that the police in Munich would catch up to the young hooligans, because “Germany was a civilized country.”

Corrie observes that the shadow of war fell only lightly over them on that winter afternoon in 1937. Nobody believed the shadow would grow until it was too late and blocked out the sky. She knows now that the experiences of our lives, “when we let God use them, become the mysterious and perfect preparation for the work He will give us to do.” Now she can think back to how events of the past stand out in perfect focus against
the blur of the rest of her life as though they were unfinished, as though they had something more to say.

Notes

This chapter is one of introduction for the reader to the members of Corrie’s family and all of their friends who will have a profound impact on the events which are waiting just around the corner. It helps set the stage for the sad events which affect such a highly loved group of people who will become victims of the Nazi war machine. We, too, will be affected, because it’s obvious what a devout, decent family the ten Booms are. They accept anyone, no matter what faith or what class, into their homes, and so we can begin to understand that they would willingly make it a hiding place for anyone as well. There are some interesting ironies, many examples of foreshadowing, and symbolic moments as well. Corrie’s commentary about how they could never have known what was awaiting them just around the corner on that winter afternoon prepares us for the horrific experiences that await them. The watch salesman’s comment that Germany is a civilized country, is ironic, given that all readers must now know how uncivilized they actually were. And the dear old watch shop, with its many ticking clocks, which brings Corrie such comfort and joy, is actually the ticking of a symbolic time bomb leading to the horrors they will face.

It is also important to note that now Corrie sees how the events of her life were all intended by God to help her find something significant that He wanted her to do.

Chapter Two - Full Table

Summary

This chapter is one in which Corrie reflects on events of her childhood. It begins with her memories of her first day of school and how she didn’t want to go. The Beje was full at that time with Father and Mother and the four children as well as Mother’s three sisters, Tante Jans, Tante Bep, and Tante Anna. Tante Jans took the two best rooms in the front of the house for herself where she wrote the Christian tracts for which she was known all over Holland. She had given Betsie a new hat for school, and Betsie found it to be too old-fashioned for her taste, wanting to wear a lovely little fur one instead. However, Betsie would not lie and hide the little hat under the big bonnet until she had left the house. This honesty in her youth will prepare us for how she deals with life in a Nazi prison. As for Corrie’s decision not to go to school, she remembered how her father put an almost religious importance on education. He had been forced to leave school at an early age to go to work, and so he had taught himself history, theology, and literature in five languages. So Corrie knew that getting him to accept her decision would be difficult.
They all sat down to breakfast where Father read from the Scriptures the passage, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path . . . Thou art my hiding place and my shield; I hope in thy word . . .” After the Scriptures, the other children grabbed their coats and hats and raced out the door for school, but Corrie stayed behind. Her mother realized she was still there and told her she was a big girl now and must go to school, too. Corrie announced she was not going, and when the Aunts began to comment on her defiance, Father stood up and announced that she would be accompanied to school by him. She tried to hold on to the railing on the front steps, but Father gently unwound her fingers and lead her away as she howled and struggled.

Another memory came to Corrie’s mind, one in which she had wanted to be with Father. He took the train every Monday to Amsterdam to get the exact time at the Naval Observatory. She loved to go with him on these trips. While they were there, Father would visit the shops of Jewish wholesalers for parts and watches. He loved to go there, because one wholesaler in particular enjoyed his company as they argued and discussed the truth of religion as each saw it. It was never a time of rancor or bitterness, but always a lively discussion filled with respect for each other. The way to Amsterdam was always occupied with looking out the wind and admiring the view, but on the way home, it was a time when Corrie and her father talked about many things, even sex. One day, she asked him what it was, and since they were getting off the train at the time, Father asked her to carry his traveling case which was very heavy. When she complained that she couldn’t lift it, he replied that he would be a poor father if he asked her to carry such a load. In the same way, he said that he would not burden her with the knowledge of sex at such a young age. When she became old and stronger, then she could carry that knowledge just as she would be able to carry the suitcase. She was content with his answer, because she felt safe in his keeping.

Corrie also remembered how the Beje was filled with music every night except those nights when they stood in the alley beside their home and listened to music from the concert hall. They also went to concerts in the cathedral, even though they weren’t Catholic. The cathedral was very cold, and she loved to sit with her feet on the foot warmers and listen to the organist play Bach.

Another memory she recalled involved the visits her mother made to the poor. One night, she accompanied her to a house where a baby had died. She thought to herself as she recalled this moment that it was a strange society where the idea of sex must be hidden, but that death was open to any age to observe. It was her first experience with death and she even touched the little body in the homemade crib and felt how very cold it was. She remembered how it affected her to suddenly realize that death could happen to anyone, even a little baby. When Father came to tuck her in that night, Corrie sobbed that he couldn’t die, because she needed him. Father told her that he never gave her the ticket until they boarded the train, and in the same way, God always waited to give us what we needed at just the right time. So He would give her the strength she needed just at the time when any one of them had to die.

Notes
This chapter is full of reminiscences that Corrie remembers as the ways she learned how to cope with the bad experiences life brings us all. She learned to be honest from Betsie; she learned she had to go to school from Father; she learned that sex was knowledge that one needs only to know when one is older; she learned to care for the poor and downtrodden from her mother; and she learned that death, and how to have the strength to bear it, comes in God’s time and He will provide what she needs. Knowing all these valuable lessons would help Corrie later bear with the tragedies that war and Nazi Germany brought to her, her loved ones, and her country.

Chapter Three - Karel

Summary

In this chapter, Corrie related the tale of Karel, the only man she ever considered marrying and whom she lost to another woman. She met him at one of her mother’s “occasions,” parties her mother could organize around any event at any moment. Willem had brought him and introduced Karel as a friend from Leiden, his university. Corrie “took that strong hand, looked up into those deep brown eyes and fell irretrievably in love.” She had accepted for most of her youth that she was never noticed, because Nollie, her sister, was so much prettier. She knew that the boys always fell for the pretty one, but she felt that Karel was different.

Corrie didn’t see Karel again for two years when she and Nollie paid their brother a visit. While they were eating cream buns and drinking coffee in Willem’s dorm room, four of his friends burst in and one of them was Karel. He remembered having met Corrie two years before, but she was too shy to carry on much of a conversation with him, like Nollie could, especially when she wasn’t going to university and would just stay home with her mother and her aunts.

Corrie finished school that spring and took over the management of the ten Boom household, just like it was always planned she would. She was especially needed, because her Tante Bep had developed tuberculosis. Corrie actually loved the work she did, except for the nursing of Tante Bep whose illness and whose disappointing life lay like a shadow over the house. Her mother also became more ill, because her gallstones could no longer be removed since she had a slight stroke. Her pain was sporadic, but also placed stress on their home. As for her feelings about Tante Bep’s sad life, she spoke to her mother about how they might make her days easier and happier. Her mother reminded Corrie that “happiness isn’t something that depends on our surroundings. It’s something we make inside ourselves.
Eventually, in the next few years, Tante Bep died, and then, Tante Jans developed diabetes. This aunt’s reaction to the diagnosis was to throw herself even more forcefully into writing, speaking, forming clubs, and launching projects. Because it was a time of mobilization for war - 1914 - Tante Jans conceived of the idea of a soldier’s center. Her medication and tests became a financial problem, so Corrie was taught how to run the tests by the doctor’s sister, Tine Van Veen. She became an even greater part of the ten Boom household when she and Willem fell in love and married two months after Willem’s ordination. For Corrie, this was an important event, because Karel would be there, and the five years difference in their ages was no longer significant.

Betsie helped Corrie fix her hair and made her a new silk dress for the wedding and when Karel saw her for the first time, he was speechless. He had remembered her as a little girl with enormous blue eyes, and now she was an attractive young woman.

Not long after the wedding, the test Corrie had been running for Tante Jans turned black, a sign that she hadn’t long to live. In fact, in those days before insulin, the doctor diagnosed her as having three weeks at most. The family went to Tante Jans’ rooms and told her together that she was dying. They also praised all of her accomplishments in her life; however, she burst into tears, because she felt her accomplishments were mere trinkets, and that she would have to face Jesus empty-handed. She died soon after, but not before she had cleaned her desk and left everything she had in order. Corrie watched these events unfold, rooted to the spot in Tante Jans’ room, and realized that she had witnessed a mystery: “it was Father’s train ticket, given at the moment itself.”

Four months later, the family was invited to Willem’s first sermon. In the Dutch Reformed Church, this was one of the most solemn, joyous, and emotional moments an unemotional people could ever conceive. All the way to the church on the train, Corrie’s mother was racked with pain, as her illness was progressing. However, three days after the service, Karel came to Willem’s home and invited Corrie to go for a walk. From then on, each day, it was taken for granted that they would take their walks together. These wonderful moments took place in the midst of the Great War raging around them. Holland was neutral, and so the horrors were not felt personally, but Willem, from his pulpit, reminded his congregation that “no matter which side won, a way of life was gone forever.”

As time went on, Corrie and Karel began to talk not about what he was going to do in the future, but what they were going to do together. The word marriage was never spoken, but she felt as if they were moving towards commitment. One day, Willem and Tine spoke to Corrie about Karel’s intentions. They gently told her that no marriage could ever be made between them, because his family expected him to “marry well.” Corrie would not be a suitable bride to them, and Karel was bound by his family’s desires. Karel left about a week or so later and begged Corrie to write to him. This made her heart soar with hope, and she faithfully wrote to him about everything happening in the Beje, the house he called the “happiest home in Holland.” However, his letters became infrequent, and eventually came not at all. Then, one day, the bell rang and Corrie, who was washing dishes, ran to answer the door. There stood Karel beside a young woman, who he introduced as his fiancée. She must have said something to them and led them to the parlor, but later, she couldn’t remember at all. They stayed for about a half hour, and
when it ended and they had been seen to the door, Corrie ran to her room and sobbed out her deep sadness, until later her father entered the room and gave her the way to deal with the pain. He told her that she could do one of two things now that her love for Karel was blocked: she could kill the love to stop the pain even though part of her would die as well; or she could ask God to open up another route for that love to travel. He had given her a secret key that would help her to open other dark rooms she would enter where there was no love at all. So, Corrie gave her love for Karel to God and knew that by doing so she hadn’t given up the joy and wonder that had grown with it. However, she knew there would never be another that she could love so much except God.

Notes

This chapter is a treatise on happiness. Corrie meets the man she thinks she will marry while around her, people she loves are dying. She worries about whether they lived happy lives and learns from her mother that happiness comes from within us. Tante Bep died feeling she had accomplished nothing, and to Corrie, it looks as if she might have been right. Tante Jans, who worked very hard for the things she believed in, died, also believing she had accomplished little and went to Jesus empty-handed. Then, when Corrie loses her love, Karel, because she is not from a high enough social class to marry him, all these thoughts of unhappiness come rushing in on her. The difference between her and her aunts, however, can be summed up as follows: Corrie learns to put herself in God’s hands and allow Him to take her love for Karel even though he can’t. As a result, she finds a way, over the following years, to bring meaning to her life, even though she had faced the worst disappointment she would ever face.

C - The Watch Shop

Summary

Chapter four opens in 1918 when the dreadful Great War was finally over. Corrie’s mother was peeling potatoes for lunch, and Corrie noticed that she was allowing the water to run unnecessarily. Then, she heard her mother call her name, realized she was very ill, and with Tante Anna’s help, got her into bed. The family watched for over an hour as a cerebral hemorrhage slowly affected their mother. She lay in a coma for two months until unexpectedly, she opened her eyes and began to improve. She regained some of the use of her arms and legs, but she never regained her speech, other than the names of her family members and the words yes and no. By using process of elimination in question format, Corrie was able to deduce what her mother wanted. The elder woman would sit in the window for the next three years, partially paralyzed, but more able to love her family and those she saw out the window than ever before.

Meantime, Nollie had met a young man who taught at the school where she taught - Flip van Woerden. The wedding was planned, and because Mama couldn’t speak, Tante Anna climbed the steps the night before the wedding for the traditional mother-daughter talk. Even though the older woman had never been married, the tradition had to be followed! Somehow they all got through the embarrassment she felt, and the next day, Nollie was
radiant at her wedding. However, Corrie couldn’t take her eyes off her mother who was as radiant as Nollie. She was sparkling with happiness over this great event, the only wedding that would ever take place in the ten Boom home. Years before, Betsie had been told that because of her own ill health, she would never be able to have children, so she had decided she would never marry. Corrie, of course, had lost Karel and decided there would never be another she could love as much. So, Mama was in her glory, and Corrie realized at that moment that spending the rest of her life in the Beje was a happy thought. Now she could ask God to bless Karel and accept what life had brought her.

A great miracle occurred at Nollie’s wedding: the final hymn of the ceremony was Mama’s favorite - “Fairest Lord Jesus” - and as it began to play, Mama began to sing. She sang every word to the end of the song and then never said another word. It was a gift from God in Corrie’s eyes, and even though they hoped it was a sign of Mama’s further improvement, she died with a smile on her face in her sleep four weeks later.

In late November of that year, Betsie came down with a cold, and because of her sister’s frail health, Corrie took over her work in the watch shop. She discovered that the bookkeeping system was a mess and began to develop a system of billing to truly figure out what profits they were making. The greatest discovery for Corrie was that she loved it. Then, she began to notice that Betsie, while supposedly sick in bed, had made a number of changes in the house to make it warmer and more inviting. Then, they both discovered that they really preferred each other’s jobs - Betsie wanted to stay in the house and Corrie wanted to be in the shop. Betsie began to make the house sing while Corrie soon became the first licensed woman watchmaker in Holland. This pattern became the one they would follow for the next twenty years.

In those twenty years, Corrie began to take on the persona of Betsie in how she handled the customers, and Father continued to use prayer to help solve even the smallest problem. They also took in foster children and watched their sister, Nollie, and brother, Willem, add to their families. Because of the beauty of the concerts they could hear on it, they began to save money to buy a radio. Unfortunately, Father became very ill with hepatitis and nearly died. However, when he returned home from the hospital, many Haarlem citizens, who had realized when he almost died how much he meant to them, had gone together with their pennies and bought him a radio. It was a large model that was destined to bring them many years of joy. Around that radio one evening, young Peter, Corrie’s nephew, commented on what he called a bad piano during a concert they were listening to. Then, as little as he was, he still was able to go to their piano and point out which note was wrong. Once he had pointed this out, everyone could hear that the B on the concert’s grand piano was flat. Corrie spent the rest of the afternoon giving Peter musical quizzes at the piano and discovered that he had a phenomenal musical memory and perfect pitch. He eventually outgrew what she could teach him and moved on to other teachers.

The radio also changed something else in their lives: Father discovered that the chiming of Big Ben in London on the BBC exactly coincided with their clocks and so eventually, he traveled less and less to the Naval Observatory each week to get the exact time. He even decided he could set the astronomical clock by Big Ben. The ten Boom family continued to live their lives within these new patterns while to the east, their neighbor -
Germany - was gearing up for war. They would hear Hitler screaming on the radio and hurry to turn it off, believing that Germany would not put up with that man for long. But they were wrong.

Soon, a young man named Otto came to apprentice under Father. He was German and proudly proclaimed he was a member of the Hitler Youth. He was very critical of the Dutch and constantly reminded them that the world would see what Germany could do. He even watched Father read from the Old Testament and declared it “a Jewish book of lies.” Later, the landlady who ran the rooming house where Otto lived came to Father and the other ten Booms and showed them a knife with a curving ten inch blade she found in his room. Even with all these things, father tried to put a good interpretation on the boy’s behavior, claiming that he had just been taught wrong and that they should pray for him. However, Father eventually did fire Otto—the first apprentice he had ever fired in sixty years in business - because of the way he treated Christoffels. Otto was very brusque with the old man and showed him no courtesy or respect. Willem, who understood the new German mentality better than the rest of the family, insisted that Otto’s behavior towards Christoffels was deliberate, because the Germans no longer valued the old people of their country.

When Father questioned Willem’s interpretation, pointing out that Otto was unusually courteous to him, Willem replied that this behavior was the sign of respect the Germans felt for authority. Father was the boss and so was treated deferentially. The old and the weak in the new German State were intended to be eliminated. The ten Booms later learned that Otto was even more insidious towards Christoffels outside their house, physically attacking him in small ways to and from work. The old man was too proud to tell the ten Booms he was under attack until finally one morning in February, 1939, he stumbled through their door with a bleeding cheek and a torn coat. Even then, Christoffels said nothing, but was saved when a group of witnesses to the attack came to the shop and told the ten Booms that Otto had deliberately shoved Christoffels into the wall of a building and ground his face against the bricks. After Father fired Otto, he tried to explain to him why such behavior was wrong. However, Otto never said a word, only turning around at the door as he left, giving the family a look of the most utter contempt Corrie had ever seen.

Notes

This chapter is a study in contrasts. Corrie shows the reader the many small miracles and good events in her life from 1918 until 1939, contrasting with events that were not so good. We see the unfortunate stroke that leaves her mother disabled, but at the same time, we see how God now gives her the time to feel and show even more love for her family and friends. She even somehow sings an entire hymn at Nollie’s wedding even though she hasn’t been able to speak more than a few words since the stroke. Even her death was a study in contrasts - a moment of pain and perhaps fear was a calm slipping into sleep and not waking up. She even had a smile on her face.
Furthermore, Nollie meets Flip and falls in love. It might have been a very distressing moment for Corrie to watch her sister plan her wedding, but instead, Corrie realizes that Karel will always be the only man for her, and now she can give her love to God instead.

Another contrast can be seen in the switch in household jobs that comes about between Corrie and Betsie. Betsie comes down with a bad cold, and Corrie must take her place in the shop. In the time she’s sick, they both come to realize that Betsie prefers to be in the house, and Corrie loves to be in the shop. So what had begun on a bad note - Betsie’s cold on top of her weak health - ends in a much more comfortable way to live.

Later, Father becomes very ill with hepatitis and nearly dies. But out of that fearful moment came the radio, given by the people of Haarlem who were grateful he had survived. The radio brings them music and the discovery that Peter is a musical prodigy. It brings them news of the outside world, and it means that Father will no longer have to take the weekly trip to the Naval Observatory for the correct time, because the chiming of Big Ben is exact.

Unfortunately, the chapter ends on the bad side of these contrasts with the case of Otto who is the ultimate example to the ten Booms of the horror that is emerging from Germany. The utter contempt with which he leaves them foreshadows the coming invasion of their country and the fear they will live under for the next several years. It is also significant that, in spite of the fact that Corrie can show the good in all the unfortunate things that happened to her family, there is no good to alleviate the bad effect Otto has on the watch shop.

Chapter Five - Invasion

Summary

The night that Otto left their home, everyone stayed up later than usual, because the Prime Minister was going to address the Dutch nation over the radio. When the Prime Minister told the people that there would be no war and that both sides had agreed to respect Holland’s neutrality, Father abruptly turned off the radio and declared that it was wrong to give hope where there was none. He was convinced that the Germans would attack them and the country would fall. However, as he climbed the stairs to bed, he reassured his daughters by saying that he felt sorry for those who did not know God, for even though they would be beaten, God would not. Nonetheless, Corrie and Betsie were rooted to their chairs as he went to bed. If Father could find no good in the situation, then war was inevitable.
Five hours after the radio address, Corrie and the rest of her family were awakened by the sound of the bombs as Germany did indeed invade. They prayed all night for their country, their army, and their Queen. Incredibly to Corrie, Betsie even prayed for the Germans. She later fell asleep for a little while and dreamed the dream that came to foreshadow all that would befall her family. In the dream, she saw the town square and recognized all the buildings that were so familiar to her. Then, across the square came a horse-drawn wagon and in it were Father, she, and Betsie as well as many of their friends and a few strangers. She knew that they were unable to get off the wagon, and it was taking them far away. When she told Betsie all about it and asked her if she thought it was a vision, her older sister replied that she didn’t know for sure. But if God was showing them the bad times ahead, she was comforted, because He was telling them that this, too, was in His hands.

Holland held out against the Germans for five days and in that time, the ten Booms kept the shop open so that people could come in and pray with them and receive some kind of comfort. They then boarded their windows and waited for news. Eventually, the radio told them that the Queen had left the country, and they all knew that they were lost. Everyone in Haarlem felt the need to be outside, and so there were strollers everywhere. Then, they heard someone open a window and shout out that Holland had surrendered. Father told a young boy who was too young to fight and was in tears at his own frustration, it was good that he had wanted to be there, because Holland’s battle had just begun.

The occupation was not so hard for Corrie and her family in the first month, because little changed except for the hated identity and ration cards. They also had some difficulty adjusting to newspapers that no longer carried the real news, but only the great and glowing successes of the German army, as well as the order to turn in their radios. They decided to turn in the portable one and hide the big one in a hollow space beneath the winding staircase. Peter had come up with this suggestion, but it was Corrie who had to face the officials gathering up the radios and tell the first deliberate lie she had ever told in her life. She was distressed by the lie, but even more distressed by how easy it been to tell it.

One night, she tossed and turned in her bed while a dogfight between enemy planes raged overhead. When she heard Betsie in the kitchen, she got up to have tea. They stayed there until they heard the planes die away and even suffered the sound of an explosion far away, but close enough to make the dishes rattle in the cupboards. Eventually, Corrie returned to bed, and when she reached for her pillow, she cut her finger on something sharp. She ran to Betsie’s room with a large piece of shrapnel that would have killed her if she had stayed in her bed. When she told Betsie this, her sister reminded her that there are no “ifs” in God’s world, that the center of His will was their only safety.

Corrie tells the reader that the true horror of the occupation came over them only gradually. Attacks on Jews began sporadically as if the Germans were testing the will of the Dutch people: how many would go along with the Germans? To Corrie’s horror, many did. The collaborative organization formed by the Dutch was called The Nationalist Social Bond and attracted those who just wanted more ration cards and other benefits as well as those who were anti-Semitic. So signs began to appear in windows denying Jews
service, Jews were forced to wear yellow stars, and people began disappearing. One day, Corrie and Father saw a truckload of Jews being taken away, and Father remarked that he felt sorry for the Germans, because they had touched the apple of God’s eye.

The entire ten Boom family discussed how they could help their Jewish friends. Willem had even begun finding hiding places for Jews in country homes. Corrie, Betsie, and their father were still unsure of what they should do, when one day, German soldiers broke down the door of the furrier across the street, a Jew named Weil. They trashed his shop and stole all of his merchandise while he stood in the street unable to move. At that moment, Corrie and Betsie reacted quickly and pulled him into their home, questioning him as to the whereabouts of his wife. Fortunately, she was in Amsterdam visiting her sister. They hid him until Corrie could catch the train to Willem’s town and get his help for Mr. Weil. It was his son, Kik, who helped Corrie by coming to get Mr. Weil that night after dark. Two weeks later, she saw Kik again and asked him what had happened to the Jewish man. Kik told her she would have to stop asking so many questions if she were to be a part of the Dutch underground. Corrie then was even more worried that both Willem and his son were working with this secret and illegal organization. Furthermore, she worried, because the underground was involved in activities that she had been told all her life were wrong. She wondered, “How should a Christian act when evil was in power?”

On one of their daily walks, Corrie and Father met up with the same man they saw everyday, the man they called Bulldog. He always nodded to them, but they had never actually spoken, just admired his two bulldogs that accompanied him on every walk. On this day, however, he was alone. So, Father finally introduced himself and Corrie to the man named Harry de Vries. When Father asked him if his dogs were well, the man admitted that he hoped they were well even though they were dead. He said he had put poison in their dishes, because he was a Jew who had become a Christian, but he feared the Germans would come for him anyway, and he worried that his dogs would suffer as a result of being left behind. They extended an invitation for him to visit them any night after dark and soon, Harry and his wife, Cato, were almost nightly visitors. Father and Harry became fast friends especially when Harry saw Father’s books on Jewish theology. Father called him a completed Jew and a follower of the one perfect Jew. The books were the property of a rabbi Father knew and he had brought them to Father for safekeeping. Father told the rabbi that he was right to save the books, because after they both were dead, they would speak to generations they would never see.

One night, Corrie, who had begun making deliveries for their Jewish customers, visited the home of the Heemstras, a doctor and his wife and two children from a very old Dutch Jewish family. While she had tea with them, it finally hit her that even though this family was carrying on their lives as normally as possible, at any minute there could come a knock at the door, and they would be loaded into a truck and never seen again. So Corrie prayed to God and offered herself at that moment in service to those she called God’s People. Immediately, her original dream ran by her eyes again, and she now wondered once more just where that wagon was going.

Notes
This chapter describes the first two years after Germany invades Holland. In that time, through all the events they witness and all the discussions they have about the dangers for the Jews, Corrie has never decided how they are meant to help. It is only when she sees the Heemstras that she know she must offer herself in service to God’s People and takes the irrevocable step that will lead to the wagon she had dreamed. It has become a moral question for her: how are Christians to behave when evil is in power? She finally finds the answer and puts herself in God’s hands to do his service.

Chapter Six - The Secret Room

Summary

The chapter begins on Sunday, May 10, 1942. The occupation had grown more strict and harsh. Now the Dutch were even forbidden to sing their national anthem. Peter had won a post as the organist at a small church in Velsen, a small port town not far from Haarlem. On this Sunday, the ten Booms were attending church there to hear him. The church was packed when they arrived, because the Dutch were rediscovering their religious roots now that the Germans occupied their country. After the closing prayers had been said, Peter suddenly and without warning, broke into the national anthem. Everyone rose to their feet, Father being the first up, and sang lustily the song that meant so much to them. Afterwards, everyone wanted to shake his hand and thank him for giving them that wonderful moment. But Corrie, in spite of her pride in her nephew, was also angry at him, out of fear that the Gestapo would hear. It could impact on all of them, not just him. Her fears came true when the police came for him three days later and took him to the federal prison in Amsterdam.

Peter had been in prison for two weeks when the ten Booms received a knock at their alley door. There stood a woman dressed in heavy outwear and carrying a suitcase. She introduced herself as Mrs. Kleermaker, a Jew, and told them that she had heard that they had befriended Mr. Weil. Now she needed their help as well. Two nights later, it happened again, and they ended up with three Jews hidden in their house. Since the Beje was only a half a block from the police station, they went to Willem again for help. Unfortunately, Willem was being watched and couldn’t help them, because his contacts in the countryside would only take Jews with ration cards. He told Corrie that to get ration cards, she would either have to counterfeit them or steal them. On the way home, Corrie remembered Fred Koonrstra, a man who used to read their electric meter. He now had a new job in the Food Office. She went to him, and he explained how they could set up a fake robbery and when he asked her how many cards she needed, she surprised herself by replying, “One hundred.” A week later, she returned to his home, and he had all the cards she had asked for, and he had even made it possible for her to return to the office once a month and receive one hundred more. They decided though that it would be safer for Fred to pretend he was once again reading the electric meter and bring them to the ten Boom house each month. He would place the cards in the hollow of a step she
pried up and then leave the house again. They decided to test this plan on July 1, 1942. Just before Fred was to arrive, Rolf van Vliet, a policeman they knew, stepped into the shop. Corrie’s throat went dry as the man chose to continue a conversation with Father and didn’t leave immediately. Fred arrived without any warning, but kept his calm and delivered the cards, and Rolf never knew the difference. However, Corrie knew they needed some kind of warning system.

Besides the warning system, other problems cropped up as people continued to come to their house for help. Willem told them again that they would have to find their own resources, and at first, Corrie worried that she had taken on an impossible task. But then she realized that her family knew half of the people in Haarlem, people in records offices and hospitals and in businesses and in services. They didn’t know the political views of all these people, but God did, and He would help.

A few nights later, the bell rang again, and when Corrie answered the door, her nephew, Kik, stood there. He told her to get her bicycle and come with him. He took her to a fashionable home in the wealthy suburb of Aardenhout. It was the home of Pickwick, and Kik began to introduce her to many people there who never gave their real name and always told her to ask for Smit if they needed help. Kik explained that Smit was the only last name in the underground. Their chief work was to maintain a liaison with the English and the Free Dutch Forces, and they offered her many of their services, from the use of a car to false identity papers. One of the men there informed her that Pickwick had told him her home lacked a hiding place and that he would pay them a visit in the coming weeks. Years later, she learned he was one of the most famous architects in Europe, but she only ever knew him as Mr. Smit. Just as she and Kik were about to leave, Pickwick gave them very good news. Peter was about to be released.

So Peter came home three days later, and Mr. Smit arrived to “inspect” the house. He first designed a warning system, using the sign which said “Alpina Watches.” If the sign were in place, it was safe to enter. He then looked all over the house for a spot to build a secret room and decided that Corrie’s room was the best place. He explained that they would build a false wall big enough to hide a cot mattress behind it. Corrie didn’t want it there, but over the next few days, workmen arrived and began the job anyway. When it was finished, the room looked as old as all the rooms in the house, and the new wall held built-in bookshelves under which was a sliding panel that opened into the secret room. Mr. Smit also explained that whenever an official visit was made, not only the person to be hidden must go in there, but also everything he had brought with him. He declared that the Gestapo could search for a year and never find that room.

Notes

This chapter shows how slowly, but surely, the ten Boom family becomes more involved in the underground movement. They are able to compromise their beliefs when necessary, because it is for the good of innocent people who are in danger. So the Hiding Place is born and with it, their responsibility to fight evil in the name of God.
Chapter Seven - Eusie

Summary

Even though Peter had come home, he was still not safe, because German soldiers were using a method of forced servitude that the Dutch called the “razzia.” They would perform a lightning search and seizure of all the young men they could find and transport them away to work in munitions factories. One night, it happened in their neighborhood, and Peter and his older brother, Bob, rushed into Nollie’s house, looking for a place to hide. Nollie put them in her secret spot in the potato cellar under the kitchen table. When the soldiers burst down the door, they demanded the boys’ younger sister, Cocky, tell them where her brothers were. Without missing beat, she said they were under the table. When the soldiers lifted up the tablecloth, Cocky began to laugh, and so did everyone else. The soldiers, feeling humiliated, left, and the ten Booms spent the rest of the evening feeling both grateful for their safety and arguing over Cocky’s insistence on telling the truth. Nollie stood by her daughter and said, “God honors truth-telling with perfect protection!” Corrie finally realized that the argument was unsolvable and that even though they were often forced to lie, like Christ, they could honor both truth and love at the same time - by dying, if necessary. It was a significant realization for her, and one which would help her through the next few years.

One day, Harry de Vries and his wife, Cato, came to the shop in the daylight rather than the night, and Corrie knew something serious had happened. When they had seated him, he explained that an NSB member had confiscated his shop in the name of the state, and Harry knew he was now a security risk. That was the first problem to arise now that hiding places for the Jews were becoming less and less available. Also, a woman named Mrs. De Boer told Corrie that she had twenty Jews hiding in her attic, all young people, and that they were becoming more and more noisy because of being cooped up inside for so long. However, she accepted Harry and Cato as borders when Corrie asked.

The winter of 1943 was very cold; Christoffels was found frozen in his bed, because fuel was scarce. The ten Booms accepted the responsibility of burying him. One week later, Cato burst into their home and told them that the Jewish boys at Mrs. De Boer’s house had finally gone outside and were arrested. They gave up everyone in the home, including Mrs. De Boer and Harry. Cato went to the police station for the next three nights trying to get Harry released. Then, Rolf van Vliet came to the watch shop to have his watch “repaired” and gave them the news that Harry would be taken to Amsterdam the next day. So if they wanted to see him, they must come promptly at three that day. Harry told them all goodbye and promised Corrie that he would use the place where they were taking him as his witness stand for Jesus. Corrie believed that she would never see him again.

Corrie now knew that Rolf would be of help to her underground activities, and she went to see him to ask what he would like in return for his kindness. He told her that the son of the cleaning lady at the jail was looking for a place to hide from the razzia and perhaps Corrie could help. The ten Booms offered help by sending the boy to a tulip farmer. The
boy’s mother was so grateful that she promised Corrie she would do whatever she wanted should the need arise. Corrie, however, couldn’t see how such a simple little soul could ever be of help to their work.

Corrie also worried more and more about how long they could go on with each new danger coming to their door. One day, an intern from the maternity hospital left a young Jewish woman and her baby with them at the same time Fred Koonrstra was bringing the ration cards. It was a very frightening moment for everyone, but Corrie accepted the baby and his mother. Later, a pastor from one of the local churches came into the shop and Corrie believed this might be the answer for the problem of the baby. She brought the man upstairs and showed him the baby, but he refused to put his and his family’s lives on the line for a Jewish child. Father then took the baby in his own arms and said to the pastor, “You say we could lose our lives for this child. I would consider that the greatest honor that could come to my family.” The pastor still refused, and Corrie was forced to send the mother and baby to a farm which was not considered very safe any more. A few weeks later, the farm was raided, and she never learned what happened to the Jewish mother and child.

Even though they had a telephone, the ten Booms could never be sure the line wasn’t tapped, so they worked out a code in terms of watches. One day, Corrie received a message that the caller had a man’s watch that was giving him trouble, and he couldn’t find anyone to repair it. It had an old-fashioned face as well. This told Corrie that the person needing help had obvious Jewish features and would be immediately arrested. So, at 7:00 PM that evening, the new curfew time, the knock came at the door, and thus entered Meyer Mossel into their home. Corrie immediately liked his smiling attitude and concern for their comfort. He struck up a friendship with Father and became an integral part of their home. They decided to give him a less Jewish name and chose Eusebius Smit, Eusie for short. They even managed to get him to eat non-kosher food.

Because there were so many people living at the Beje, Pickwick insisted that they must put buzzers in every place that might expose them to danger and that they must practice their warning system. A “Mr. Smit” came to the house and explained to Corrie how she must prepare for a raid. Then, he had them all sit down to lunch and rang the buzzer when they weren’t prepared. After the drill, he showed them the incriminating evidence they had left behind. He warned them they needed to get their time down to one minute, but they only were able to make it to their hiding place in about two minutes. Nonetheless, Corrie was satisfied that they were much better prepared.

Then, three new people came into the Beje, one of whom worried Corrie the most: Mary Itallie, who was seventy-six and asthmatic. However, the group voted that Mary be allowed to stay even though she could be a danger to them all. So their little family was formed. Even though others came and went for short periods of time, the last seven they had taken in, including Eusie and Mary, stayed on indefinitely.

Notes
This chapter reinforces the great dangers the ten Booms face in working with the underground. Even though they take as many precautions as possible, Corrie is under the stress of knowing that it could all blow up in their faces at any time. Nonetheless, with Father the strongest among them, they accept whatever fate will befall them, because they know they are doing God’s work. Father says that he would consider it an honor to give up his life and the lives of his family to save a two week old Jewish baby. It is foreshadowing of what is yet to befall them.

Chapter Eight - Storm Clouds Gather

Summary

This chapter opens with Corrie remembering how broad their network had become. They were the center of a ring that spread to all the corners of Holland, and she worried that at some point, they were going to make a mistake. One day at lunch, Corrie saw a figure standing immobilized outside their window, and when she went to investigate, she discovered old Katrien who lived at Nollie’s house. The old woman cried out that Nollie had gone mad and revealed, when they were being questioned by the S.D., that one of the women living there - Annaliese - was a Jew. Corrie was appalled that Nollie’s rigid honesty might have compromised them all. When Corrie arrived at Nollie’s house, she saw her sister and Annaliese being taken away in a car. Later, she learned that Nollie was being held at the police station near Corrie’s home, but that Annaliese had been transported to Amsterdam from where Jews were being shipped to extermination camps. Then, the little cleaning woman, whose son had helped by Corrie and who had promised anything that she could do for them in her gratitude, kept the family in touch with Nollie since she cleaned at the station. The woman told Corrie that Nollie was in good spirits. Nollie also insisted that Annaliese would not be taken to Germany; God would not let her suffer, because Nollie had obeyed His law. Nonetheless, Corrie was furious that her sister had betrayed another human being.

Six days after Nollie and Annaliese were taken, Pickwick called, and Corrie traveled to his home for a message that could only be delivered in person: the Jewish theater in Amsterdam where Annaliese had been taken had been broken into, and Annaliese had been set free! Corrie could only wonder how Nollie had been so sure.

Nollie was eventually transferred to a federal prison in Amsterdam where Pickwick said a humane doctor, who occasionally arranged a medical discharge, was in practice. Corrie went at once to speak with him and, using the Dale Carnegie method from his book How to Win Friends and Influence People, spoke to the doctor at length about his passion: dogs. Then, the doctor promised after Corrie explained her real mission that he would do what he could. So they waited.

The family had another moment of worry one day when they were all sitting around the table for lunch. A man washing the window was looking in at their table. Eusie had the
idea that they should all sing Happy Birthday to Father, and then, Corrie went outside to see what was going on. The window washer pretended that he had the wrong house, so no one knew if they had faced a spy. To Corrie, that was hardest part of everything: never knowing when they were safe and when they were in danger. She also worried about a raid that might occur in the middle of the night, because, even though she was better at it than before, she still often said things that would endanger them when she was awakened suddenly.

As for Willem, his work was watched more and more closely. He had managed to protect most of his old Jewish patients in his nursing home, but the Gestapo had still taken away one old blind woman who was 91 years old. She couldn’t even walk, and they arrested her!

One night after curfew, when the doorbell on the shop door chimed, Corrie answered it to discover Otto, the apprentice that Father had been forced to fire. He forced his way inside and called himself Captain Altschuler even though his insignia said he was far from being a captain. Corrie managed to reach one of the buzzers just as Otto was determined to go upstairs. He thought he heard it, but she insisted that there was no ringing sound. Then she locked the front door and took Otto upstairs. When the door was opened, there was only Father and Betsie sitting at the table with Corrie’s plate off to the side. Where once there had been twelve places, now there were only two. He eventually left, but they were all left shaken from the incident.

In the second week of October, the secret telephone rang, and when Corrie answered it, she heard Nollie’s voice asking her to come pick her up at the train station in Amsterdam. She had been in prison for seven weeks; she was totally confused when a prison doctor had declared that her low blood pressure might leave her permanently disabled. She had no idea how Corrie had managed to get the doctor to help.

At Christmas in 1943, they celebrated both the Christian holiday and Hanukkah. Unfortunately, the Jews who celebrated this Festival of Lights sang so loudly that their neighbor came to Corrie and urged her to quiet them down. Corrie was then reminded that if the neighbor knew so much, how much did the authorities know? She soon discovered that one of the authorities who did know was the Chief of Police himself. She received a notice from him to come to his office one afternoon in January at 3:00 PM. Corrie prepared for the eventuality that this might be a precursor to a raid. She even packed a “prison bag” for herself in case they took her into custody. When she arrived at the man’s office, a radio was playing and instead of turning it down, he turned it up. He proceeded then to tell her that he knew about her work in hiding Jews, and that some of them at the station were in sympathy with her family. He wanted to know if she knew the name of someone whom she could recommend to kill an informer in the police department. Her answer to the Chief of Police was to suggest that they pray for this man to no longer betray his countrymen. He then allowed her to leave and told her that it had been wrong of him to ask her for such help. When she arrived home again, Corrie told the family only parts of what had happened, because she didn’t want to burden them with the knowledge that they had been asked to kill.
The fact that they had friends in such high places did not make Corrie or her family feel any better. It only emphasized that too many people knew about their underground ring. They knew they should stop the work, but felt they could not. Too many people were depending on them. One night, Rolf came to the Beje to tell Corrie that a house in Ede was going to be raided, and they needed someone from her network to warn the people there. However, no one was available except Jop, their apprentice, who had never done any of this work before. Knowing they had no choice, they dressed him as a girl and sent him to the house. When he arrived, the Gestapo was already there and pretended to be the owners of the house. They arrested him and everyone there. Corrie and Rolf knew that they were in more danger than ever, because Jop would easily be broken. Corrie thought to herself, “This was evil’s hour: we could not run away from it. Perhaps only when human effort had done its best and failed, would God’s power alone be free to work.”

Notes

This chapter continues to enumerate the many instances when the ten Boom’s network might have come crashing down around their heads. They seemed to have been moving closer and closer to discovery, because so many people knew about it. However, Corrie emphasizes in this chapter how their faith and their belief that they must continue their work was the overriding influence on their decisions. They had to do everything they could before God could do His work.

Chapter Nine - The Raid

Summary

The chapter begins on the morning of February 28, 1944, and Corrie has had influenza for two days. She was awakened by their Jews returning bed clothes to the secret room and Betsie, who had brought her some tea. Betsie told her that there was a man at the door who had insisted he would speak only to Corrie. He said he was from Ermelo, and Betsie had never seen him before. She got up and got dressed, even though she was so ill, because there was so much to do for the network. She noticed before she went downstairs what she called her talisman - her packed prison bag - which seemed like a safeguard to her against the terrors of prison. The man told Corrie that he needed 600 guilders to pay a bribe to a policeman at the local station to free his wife. Corrie hesitated, because something about the man’s demeanor worried her, but she also worried that someone might really need their help. She made arrangements to get the man the money and then returned to bed.

Corrie was awakened later by the sound of running and buzzers ringing and came out of her sick sleep to realize that this was a real raid. The six people in the house at the time, including Mary Itallie with her wheezing asthma, dove into the secret room just in time, while Corrie prayed that Jesus would heal Mary long enough to calm her breathing.
police arrived and forced Corrie out of bed, demanding to see all their papers. She got dressed quickly and went to reach for her prison bag when she realized that in her haste, she had pushed it against the secret panel. Fearing that taking it would give away the secret room, she walked away from the talisman she had kept carefully packed for so long. She was then taken alone into the shop where one of the soldiers beat her to try to get information out of her. They also beat Betsie and discovered the warning system with the Alpine Watches sign. This left their home a place of danger for anyone from the network that might appear. They had even arrested Pickwick and discovered the radio beneath the stairs. In the meantime, they were knocking into walls and trashing the Beje, trying to discover the hidden Jews. Even the secret telephone rang. The voice on the other end, in its haste to warn the ten Booms, gave the police information about the network. In the end, they arrested Corrie, Betsie, Father, Nollie, Peter, and Willem. As they were led out the door, Father stopped to rewind the old Frisian clock as if he believed they would be home again someday. In all, thirty-five people were arrested that day. As they all sat together at the police station, Corrie, in her illness, tried to get them all to decide the story they would tell as protection. It was Peter who finally told her to be quiet, because the watchmaker who had come in with them was actually a Gestapo plant. Towards the end of the day, while they were still seated in the station, Father gathered everyone around him for the evening prayers which Corrie had shared at the end of every day of her life. This time, Father once again recited: “Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word . . . Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe . . .”

Around noon the next day, they were all rounded up and taken to a bus to be transported to another prison. The people of Haarlem stood outside and gasped in horror, many bursting into tears, as they watched “the Grand Old Man of Haarlem” being led away. For Corrie, it brought reminders of her dream of herself, her family, and many of her friends taken prisoner across the main square of Haarlem. She only had one question: where now were they going?

Notes

The long-feared day finally arrives and Corrie and her family are taken away by the Gestapo. The vision comes to past as well: they are all led away across the Smedstraat, the square Corrie had seen in her dream the night of the invasion so many years before. Their fate is now in God’s hands, because they have reached the point she believed they had to reach first: doing everything humanly possible to save those who needed them. He would take over now, and He would be their safety.

It is important to note that Corrie had the sense that the man from Ermelo was someone who might not be trustworthy (foreshadowing), but that she turned away from her instinct to help someone who might have been in need. It cost them their own safety, but in Corrie’s mind it was worth the risk.
Chapter Ten - Scheveningen

Summary

They ended up in The Hague at the Gestapo Headquarters for all of Holland. The Gestapo chief seemed inclined to send Father home, if he promised not to cause any more trouble. But Father replied, “If I go home today, tomorrow I will open my door again to any man in need who knocks.” They sent him back in line, and they were all then questioned endlessly the remainder of the day. Later that night, they were loaded into an army truck and taken to the federal prison of Scheveningen. They were unloaded and stood noses against the wall until the women prisoners were eventually separated. As Corrie and Betsie were led away, Corrie turned and shouted, “Father! God be with you!” The Grand Old Man of Haarlem quietly turned their way and replied, “And with you, my daughters.” Corrie had no idea if she would ever see her father again. Betsie and Corrie were then led to separate cells so that no two people from Haarlem would be together. Already it seemed to Corrie that the events of the Beje had taken place hundreds of years before. She ended up in a cell with four other women, who at first were angry that she was ill, but eventually stopped their complaining and accepted her presence. Corrie settled into the worse part of all: the prison boredom which allowed her too much time to think. To overcome her wild thoughts, she asked Frau Mikes, one of the other women in her cell, to teach her how to play cards. The woman had made a deck from toilet tissue and taught Corrie how to play Solitaire. Corrie wondered why Father had never allowed cards in their house, because it seemed an innocent pastime. But soon, she began to recognize the subtle danger: when the cards went well, her spirits rose, too; but when she lost, she gave into despair. So, at last, she had to stop playing.

Corrie’s illness didn’t let up, and one day about two weeks after she was arrested, she was led to a black car in the courtyard of the prison and taken away with two other very ill people. She wondered if they were being taken to a hospital. Eventually, she was taken to a very crowded building and led away from the lobby by a uniformed nurse. The nurse quickly asked her if there was anything she could get her. Corrie asked immediately for a Bible, needle and thread, and a toothbrush and soap. The nurse’s kindness shone throughout the room, and she promised Corrie to get what she could. When she saw a doctor at last, he diagnosed her with pleurisy and said she was pre-tubercular. He whispered that he hoped he was doing her favor with the diagnosis. They finally took her back to the prison, and when she opened the little package the nurse had secretly handed to her, she found two bars of soap, a whole packet of safety pins, and the four Gospels. She shared all she had with her cellmates, but none would accept the Gospels out of fear of the reprisals if they were discovered.

Two evenings later, Corrie was moved from her cell deeper into the prison to another cell where she was alone. She wondered if this was her sentence: to be held in solitary confinement forever. Her illness raged on, and the only human contact she ever saw was
the hand of someone delivering her food or a matron appearing with a tray. Even then, no one would talk to her. Also, every day, a trusty from medical supply would bring her some stinging yellow medicine from a dirty bottle. Here her thoughts became even greater enemies than the Germans as she had no idea what had happened to those she loved. She would dream of personal comforts like toothpaste and then scold herself for such selfish thoughts. Fortunately, this cell had a window that was high on the wall and barred, but at least, it allowed her to see the sky. She sustained herself with this view of “Heaven” and the Scriptures she could read. Eventually, she began to wonder if all of this suffering was no accident, just as the suffering Jesus had endured had a greater purpose. It gave her comfort in the bleak surroundings where she found herself imprisoned.

Two days after her birthday, April 17, 1944, Corrie finally was led to the showers. She didn’t see Betsie or Nollie, but thought that all the other women waiting in line were her sisters, too. The shower was glorious, and when she was led back to her solitary cell, she discovered she was no longer alone: a single, busy black ant had come into the cell and was living in a crack in the floor. Corrie gave him pieces of her bread and admired his strength and courage as he struggled with it back into the crack in the floor. She now felt less alone.

One evening, she began to hear voices from other cells around her. The guards had left to celebrate Hitler’s birthday, and it gave the prisoners the chance to communicate with each other and learn what gossip or news everyone knew. Corrie learned that Betsie was in cell 312 and that she had told someone to tell Corrie that God was good. Nollie had been in cell 318, but she had been released a month before. Peter, Pickwick, and Willem had also been released, but there was no word of Father.

A week later, the trusty threw a package into Corrie’s cell and inside was a light blue sweater from Nollie as well as cookies, vitamins, needle and thread, and a bright red towel. Corrie, who had been starved for color, was delighted with the package and even used the bright red cellophane that had been around the cookies to fashion a lamp shade around the overhead bulb in the ceiling of her cell. Then, she discovered that the address on the package was not written in Nollie’s handwriting, and she remembered how a message had once come to the Beje underneath the stamp of a package. So she carefully worked the stamp on this package free until she read the words underneath: “All the watches in your closet are safe.” She now knew that the Jews who had gone to the secret room on the day of the raid were safe. She thanked God for His goodness.

Later, a German officer came into her cell and read off many names to see if she knew who they were and if they were part of her network. She honestly could say this time that she knew none of them and realized the wisdom of the network calling everyone by the name of “Smit.”

By the third of May, 1944, Corrie had come up with a new activity: pulling the threads from the red towel and embroidering bright figures on the pajamas that she had recently stopped wearing under her clothes. On the same day, a letter arrived from Nollie, and it frightened her, because it was the first one she had received. Nollie asked her in her fine handwriting to be very brave, because Father had survived his arrest by only ten days. She had no details about how he had died and had no idea where he was buried. Corrie
was so overcome by grief that she called out to one of the guards to talk to her, but the guard only told her it was her own fault since she had hidden Jews. Corrie pulled back with the realization that she should have never turned to humans for comfort when God was there with her. She was grateful that Father and Mother were now together and walking the bright streets of Heaven. She wrote on the wall of her cell, as she had every day since she had come there, the date and words to note what the day had brought. This day, however, she wrote a different date, the date of her father’s death: March 9, 1944. Father. Released.

Notes

In this retelling of Corrie’s time at Scheveningen Prison, we see how she learns to deal with adversity. There are many metaphors to note: first, the deck of cards represents how turning to something other than God can turn one’s thoughts to despair; when Corrie is taken to the solitary cell, she walks through a maze of corridors, deeper and deeper into the prison, which represents how her life is also now a maze of prison corridors with which she must learn to deal; the ant’s heroic effort to take the pieces of bread through the crack in the floor represents the strength Corrie herself must strive for in this time of fear and adversity; the package from Nollie with its longed-for colors is reminiscent of hope and light in the midst of the dark; and Corrie’s writing on the cell wall that Father was released is a metaphor of being released from the burden of life and being one with God.
This is a drawing of the Ten Boom family home, Barteljorisstraat 19, Haarlem, Holland. The drawing looks very much like the house does today. In 1837 Willem ten Boom opened a watch shop in this house. His family lived in the rooms above the shop. The home was later passed down to Willem’s son, Casper, and then to Casper’s daughter, Corrie. In 1987 the Corrie ten Boom House Foundation purchased the building. To continue this family’s witness, in 1988 the Foundation opened this home as a museum. It is often called the Hiding Place. It has become a symbol that surpasses national boundaries. Let us share the inspiring story of the Ten Booms and the Hiding Place with you!

The Ten Boom family were devoted Christians who dedicated their lives in service to their fellow man. Their home was always an "open house" for anyone in need. Through the decades the Ten Booms were very active in social work in Haarlem, and their faith inspired them to serve the religious community and society at large.

During the Second World War, the Ten Boom home became a refuge, a hiding place, for fugitives and those hunted by the Nazis. By protecting these people, Casper and his daughters, Corrie and Betsie, risked their lives. This non-violent resistance against the Nazi- oppressors was the Ten Booms' way of living out their Christian faith. This faith led them to hide Jews, students who refused to cooperate with the Nazis, and members of the Dutch underground resistance movement.

During 1943 and into 1944, there were usually 6-7 people illegally living in this home: 4 Jews and 2 or 3 members of the Dutch underground. Additional refugees would stay with the Ten Booms for a few hours or a few days until another "safe house" could be located for them. Corrie became a ringleader within the network of the Haarlem underground. Corrie and "the Beje group" would search for courageous Dutch families who would take in refugees, and much of Corrie's time was spent caring for these people once they were in hiding. Through these activities, the Ten Boom family and their many friends saved the lives of an estimated 800 Jews, and protected many Dutch underground workers.

On February 28, 1944, this family was betrayed and the Gestapo (the Nazi secret police) raided their home. The Gestapo set a trap and waited throughout the day, seizing everyone who came to the house. By evening about 30 people had been taken into
custody! Casper, Corrie and Betsie were all arrested. Corrie’s brother Willem, sister Nollie, and nephew Peter were at the house that day, and were also taken to prison.

Although the Gestapo systematically searched the house, they could not find what they sought most. They suspected Jews were in the house, but the Jews were safely hidden behind a false wall in Corrie’s bedroom. In this "hiding place" were two Jewish men, two Jewish women and two members of the Dutch underground. Although the house remained under guard, the Resistance was able to liberate the refugees 47 hours later. The six people had managed to stay quiet in their cramped, dark hiding place for all that time, even though they had no water and very little food. The four Jews were taken to new "safe houses,” and three survived the war. One of the underground workers was killed during the war years, but the other survived.

Because underground materials and extra ration cards were found in their home, the Ten Boom family was imprisoned. Casper (84 years old) died after only 10 days in Scheveningen Prison. When Casper was asked if he knew he could die for helping Jews, he replied, "It would be an honor to give my life for God's ancient people." Corrie and Betsie spent 10 months in three different prisons, the last was the infamous Ravensbruck Concentration Camp located near Berlin, Germany. Life in the camp was almost unbearable, but Corrie and Betsie spent their time sharing Jesus' love with their fellow prisoners. Many women became Christians in that terrible place because of Corrie and Betsie's witness to them. Betsie (59) died in Ravensbruck, but Corrie survived. Corrie’s nephew, Christiaan (24), had been sent to Bergen Belsen for his work in the underground, and never returned. Corrie’s brother, Willem (60), was also a ring leader in the Dutch underground. While in prison for this "crime," he contracted spinal tuberculosis and died shortly after the war.

Four Ten Booms gave their lives for this family’s commitment, but Corrie came home from the death camp. She realized her life was a gift from God, and she needed to share what she and Betsy had learned in Ravensbruck: "There is no pit so deep that God’s love is not deeper still" and "God will give us the love to be able to forgive our enemies." At age 53, Corrie began a world-wide ministry which took her into more than 60 countries in the next 33 years! She testified to God’s love and encouraged all she met with the message that "Jesus is Victor."

Corrie received many tributes. Corrie was knighted by the Queen of Holland. In 1968, the Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem (Yad Vashem) asked Corrie to plant a tree in the Garden of Righteousness, in honor of the many Jewish lives her family saved. Corrie’s tree stands there today. In the early 1970’s Corrie’s book THE HIDING PLACE became a best seller and World Wide Pictures released the major motion picture "The Hiding Place." Corrie went on to write many other inspiring books and make several evangelical videos.

Corrie was a woman who was faithful to God. She died on her 91st birthday, April 15, 1983. It is interesting that Corrie's passing occurred on her birthday. In the Jewish
tradition, it is only very blessed people who are allowed the special privilege of dying on their birthday!

Exhibitions

Corrie ten Boom’s house is now the Corrie ten Boom Museum! It is located at 19 Barteljorisstraat, in the center of Haarlem, Holland. Taking a tour of the Ten Boom home is like stepping back in time. This is a home of love and laughter, prayer and praise, compassion and ultimate sacrifice. Listening to Corrie's story in her own home is a life-changing experience!

The museum displays many rare family photographs. From pictures of Corrie’s grandparents to pictures spanning Corrie’s entire life, visitors gain new insight into this family. Below are several of these treasured photographs:
Left photo: Corrie's parents, Casper and Cor, wed in 1884.
Right photo: Casper ten Boom (back left) and helpers in the workroom of his watch shop.
The photo above is the family’s dining room. Over the years, many people have taken their places around the Ten Booms’ oval table. There were nine in the household as Corrie grew up: Corrie’s parents, Casper and Cor; the four children, Betsie, Willem, Nollie and Corrie; and the three aunts, Tante Jans, Tante Bep and Tante Anna. Later, the Ten Booms cared for a series of foster children, orphans and missionary children. During the Nazi occupation of Holland, the places around the table were filled with Jews and others in hiding.
In the photo, Papa’s Bible is open to Psalm 91. The Alpina watch company sign (the underground's signal) is in the window. Today, many of Corrie’s books are sold from the shelves in this room.

This is the Ten Booms' living room, also called the "Liberation Room." During the occupation this was the one place in the house large enough for everyone to gather: Papa, Corrie and Betsie together with those who were in hiding. They shared like a family and supported one another through that incredibly dangerous time.

It is amazing that there are photographs of the Ten Booms with their “extended family,” Jews and underground workers—all in hiding in their home. Many of these pictures are on display in the museum. The Corrie ten Boom House Foundation is grateful to Hans Poley for these photographs.

Corrie is second from the left in the top row, Casper is in front of Corrie, Betsie is on the right of the top row, and Hans Poley is in front of Betsie.

Yes, visitors to the Corrie ten Boom Museum are actually able to see “the hiding place.” It is an area behind a false wall in Corrie’s bedroom where Jews and others were
hidden. On the day of the Gestapo raid, four Jews and two Dutch underground workers rushed into this small space. They entered through the sliding door located in the bottom of the linen closet (on the left of the photograph). They remained in this small space for 47 hours, until they were rescued by the underground! All six left this home safely. The Jews were taken to new safe houses, and three of the four Jews survived the war. The large hole in the brick wall allows museum visitors see inside the hiding place.

For their crime of helping Jews, the Ten Boom family was sent to prison. Papa died within ten days of his arrest. He had said it would be a privilege to give his life for the Jews. Willem and his son Christiaan also died due to their imprisonments. Corrie and Betsie spent a total of ten months in three different prisons. The last was Ravensbruck Concentration Camp, located near Berlin, Germany. Betsie died there, but through a clerical error (God’s miracle), Corrie was released. Starting at age 53, she spent the next 33 years sharing what she and Betsie had learned in Ravensbruck. “There is no pit so deep that God’s love is not deeper still” and “God will enable you to forgive your enemies.”
Following strokes, Corrie died on her birthday, April 15, 1983, when she was 91 years old. Below is one of the last photographs taken of her. Today, the Ten Boom's witness still touches hearts through Corrie’s books, videos and through the Corrie ten Boom Museum.

The Corrie ten Boom Museum also includes an exhibition of the Dutch Underground Resistance Movement. Many photographs and mementos of the occupation years are on display.
Corrie ten Boom
1892-1983

Nationality: Dutch
Place of Birth: Netherlands

Personal Information: Family: Born April 15, 1892, in the Netherlands; came to the United States c. 1945; died of a heart ailment, April 15, 1983, in Placentia, Calif.; daughter of Caspar ten Boom (a clockmaker); children: Do Van Nguyen (adopted).


WRITINGS BY THE AUTHOR:


(With John and Elizabeth Sherrill) The Hiding Place (autobiography), Revell, 1971.


Corrie's Christmas Memories, Revell, 1976.

(With C. C. Carlson) In My Father's House: The Years Before "The Hiding Place" (autobiography), Revell, 1976.


Father ten Boom: God's Man (biography), Revell, 1978.
This Day Is the Lord's, Revell, 1979.


"Her Jesus is Victor" series; published by Revell:

He Cares, He Comforts, 1977.

He Sets the Captive Free, 1977.

Don't Wrestle, Just Nestle, 1978.

**Media Adaptations:** The Hiding Place was adapted by Allan Sloane and Lawrence Holben for a motion picture that starred Julie Harris and was released by Wide World Pictures in 1975.

**"Sidelights"

Prior to World War II, Corrie ten Boom and her family lived a quiet life above her father's clock and watch shop, where they often conducted Bible classes and prayer meetings in an effort to share their Christian faith with their community. But with the 1940 Nazi takeover of the Netherlands, the ten Booms' gentle life became one of intrigue and danger. Smuggling to their shop bricks in a grandfather clock case and paint in milk bottles, the family built on the third floor of their home a bookcase, behind which they hid Jews from Nazi officers. Some one hundred local teenagers assisted the ten Booms, and their work saved an estimated seven hundred Jewish lives.

In 1944 the Nazis discovered the ten Booms' participation in the Dutch underground and arrested the family. Corrie's father died in prison, her nephew Kik was never seen again (later the family would learn he had died at a concentration camp), and she and her sister Betsie were sent to the concentration camp at Ravensbrueck. Betsie died there, but Corrie was released on a clerical error just one day before all of the women at Ravensbrueck were executed. Corrie's brother, Willem, who had been released from prison, died in 1946 of tuberculosis of the spine.

Upon her release Corrie ten Boom helped establish a refuge for Dutch war victims, and then became what she called a "tramp for the Lord," touring the world and speaking before groups about Jesus and salvation. In addition she wrote numerous books, among them her autobiography The Hiding Place, which was a best-seller. She used the royalties from the book's sale to found Christians, Incorporated, a group that supports the work of missionaries from ten different racial backgrounds.

**FURTHER READINGS ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**
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Obituary Notice:
Born April 15, 1892, in the Netherlands; died of a heart ailment, April 15, 1983, in Placentia, Calif. Author. Corrie ten Boom was a Dutch Christian who sheltered Jews from the Nazis during World War II. Her experiences in Holland and the concentration camp in Ravensbruck, Germany, became the basis for her best-selling book, The Hiding Place, which was adapted as a motion picture and released in 1973. Ten Boom came to the United States after the war, wrote eighteen books, and gave lectures at churches and before Christian groups around the world. Obituaries and other sources: New York Times, April 17, 1983, April 21, 1983; Washington Post, April 18, 1983; Detroit Free Press, April 19, 1983; Chicago Tribune, April 20, 1983.

Obituary and Other Sources:

PERIODICALS


Source: Contemporary Authors Online, Gale, 2002.

Gale Database: Contemporary Authors