



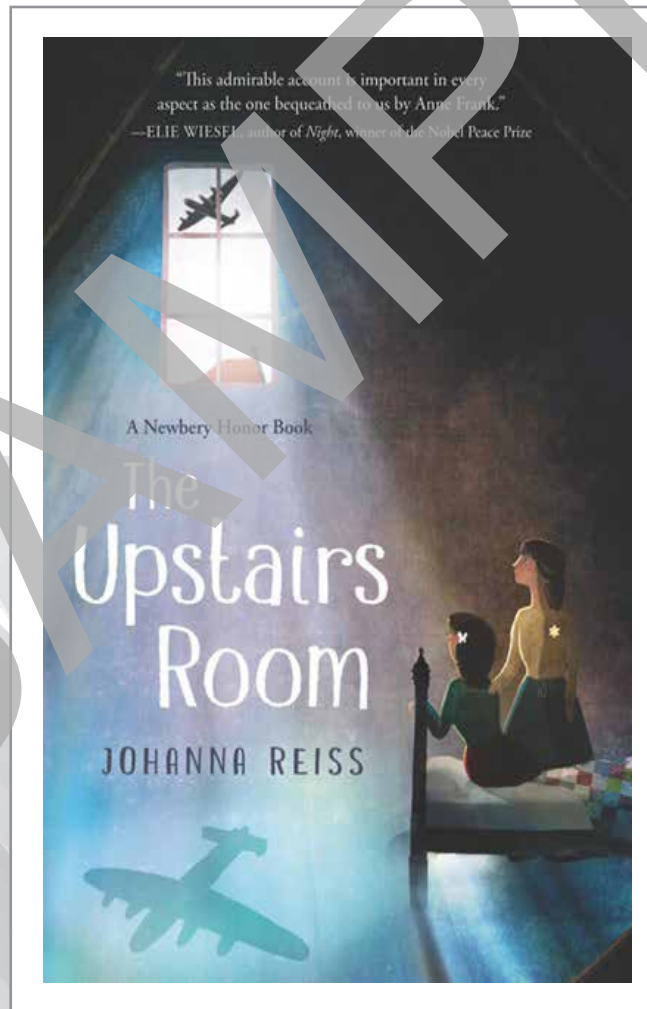
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 6-8**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# The Upstairs Room

Johanna Reiss



**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

# The Upstairs Room

Johanna Reiss

## TEACHER GUIDE

**NOTE:**

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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## Skills and Strategies

### Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing,  
comparison/contrast,  
inference

### Writing

Journaling, descriptive,  
narrative, letter-writing

### Thinking

Visualization, brainstorming,  
research

### Listening/Speaking

Drama, charades

### Vocabulary

Antonyms/synonyms, context  
clues, analogies

### Literary Elements

Historical account,  
symbolism, characterization,  
imagery

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## Summary

*The Upstairs Room* is a memoir of the author's young life in a Dutch Jewish family. Annie retells her experiences of hiding with her sister Sini in the farmhouse of a Dutch family who protected them during the worst of World War II.

## About the Author

Johanna de Leeuw Reiss was born in 1932 in Winterswijk, Holland, the youngest of three daughters. She lived *The Upstairs Room* story. After the war, she was reunited with her family and was educated in Holland. She then taught school in Holland for several years. Reiss later came to the United States and now lives in New York City with her two daughters.

*The Journey Back* is her second book for young people, published in 1976; the book details her readjustment after World War II.

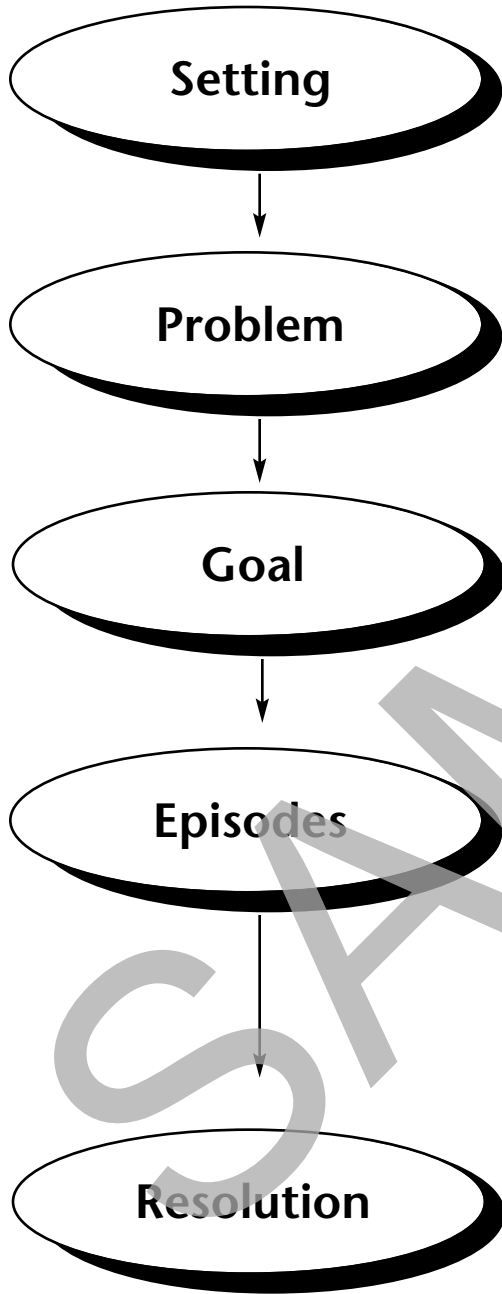
## Initiating Activities

(Several are included from which the teacher may choose for the particular students. Which-ever activities are chosen, invite students to make predictions about the book. Pages 5-6 of this guide give predicting help.)

1. Read *The Horrible Things: An Allegory of the Holocaust* aloud. What are the issues this book raises?
2. What was happening in the world in 1938?
3. Complete a clue search for the book. (See page 7 of this guide.)
4. *The Upstairs Room* has won these awards: Newbery Honor Award and School Library Journal Best Book of the Year. What do you expect?
5. *The Upstairs Room* is compared to *Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl*. What do you expect as themes in the book?
6. The book is a reminiscence of the author's own childhood experience. Think of stories your parents or grandparents have told you of their childhood. What do you expect of such a book?

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## Story Map



Characters \_\_\_\_\_

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Time and Place \_\_\_\_\_

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Beginning → Development → Outcome

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## Chapter 6—Pages 80-94

### Vocabulary

jubilantly 81	elated 82	sulkily 83	burrowed 84
rationed 91	bedridden 93	spectacle 94	

### Discussion Questions and Activities

1. What are some different ways of treating a calendar? (*Answers vary; counting off days, anticipating future events, making appointments.*) How did Sini and Opoe differ in their views of calendars? (*Page 80, Sini crossed off days; Opoe at 71 said "Days go fast anyway."*) What did their calendar ideas reflect of each of them? (*Answers vary.*)
2. Why was Dientje pleased on page 82? (*The girls said she was wonderful because she'd borrowed a book for them to read.*) What do you know about the character Dientje? Support your ideas with page references from the book. (*Answers vary; frightened, wife, deferred to husband, and didn't feel chipper in the morning.*)
3. What noises punctuated life in the upstairs room? (*Allied planes en route to bomb Germany, radio breaks, pages being turned in War and Peace.*)
4. How did the family make Opoe's birthday wonderful? (*special meal served on special, pretty plates; Sini and Annie ate with the family downstairs in the food room*)
5. What did the conversation at the table on Opoe's birthday tell you about the people? (*Opoe could barely eat because she only had a couple of teeth. Dientje and her mother squabbled a bit, and Opoe favored Sini and Annie. Johan tried to keep peace.*)
6. What news did the girls get of Rachel? (*She lived with a minister about 40 miles away.*)

### Supplementary Activities

1. Create a collage of details and scenes from the book. Cut out appropriate pictures from magazines.
2. Fill in the character chart on the next page.

## Chapter 7—Pages 95-113

### Vocabulary

spittle 100	crouched 100	animatedly 101	drastic 104
miserable 105	massaged 105	interfere 106	sheepishly 109
invasion 111			

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## Character Chart

Name	Physical Description	Representative Speech/ Phrase/Language	Attitude Toward the War	Attitude Toward Jews