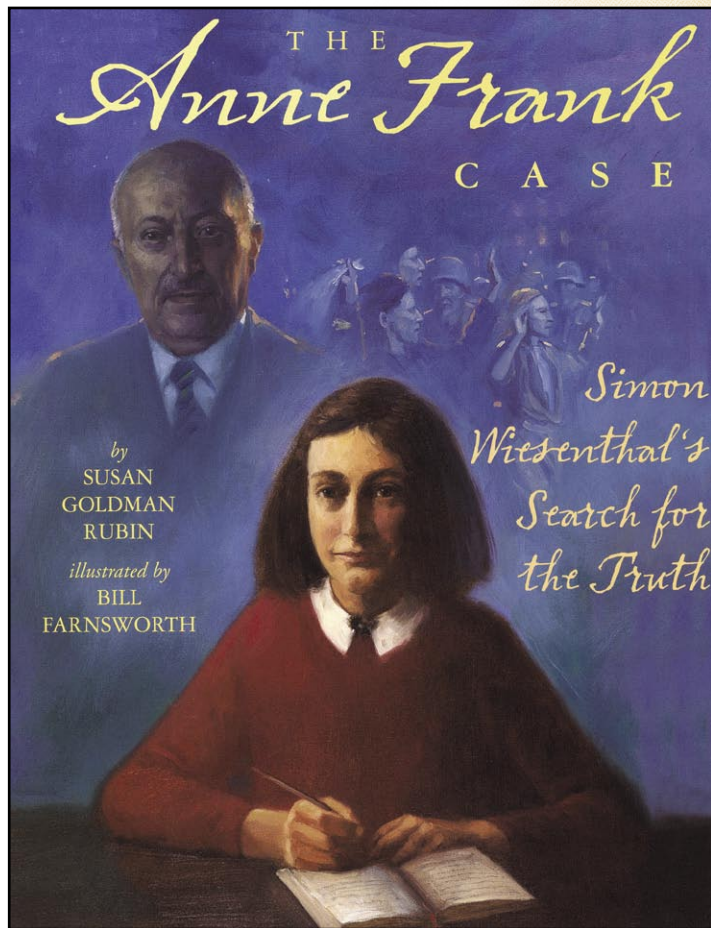


Holiday House Educators' Guide



★ "Even those who have heard of Wiesenthal will be thrilled by this account."—*Booklist* (starred review)

"Highly recommended." —*School Library Journal*

Themes

- Anti-Semitism/Bigotry
- Survival
- Hope
- Courage
- Truth
- Propaganda
- Determination

Grades 5 up

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The Anne Frank Case Simon Wiesenthal's Search for the Truth

by Susan Goldman Rubin
illustrated by Bill Farnsworth

About the Book

This inspiring and suspenseful account of Simon Wiesenthal's search for the Gestapo officer who arrested Anne Frank and her family testifies to the difference that one man's dedication can make.

Simon Wiesenthal was a Holocaust survivor, but he could never forget those who perished. He dedicated his life to hunting down Nazi war criminals and to educating people about the Holocaust. He was especially interested in revealing the "truth" to young people. In the fall of 1958, Wiesenthal was at his home in Linz, Austria, when he received a disturbing call. Teenagers had disrupted a live performance of *The Diary of Anne Frank* by shouting, "This play is a fraud." Motivated by this refusal of belief, Wiesenthal vowed to prove that Anne Frank existed and that her family's story was true. He felt the best proof was to find the Gestapo officer who had arrested the Franks. There were times when his mission seemed hopeless, but he finally located Karl Silberbauer, who admitted that he arrested the Frank family. The irony: Silberbauer worked at police headquarters, a ten-minute walk from Wiesenthal's office. This is Simon Wiesenthal's story. And his story is a tribute to the millions of victims of the Holocaust.

Pre-Reading Activity

Divide the class into eleven small groups and instruct them to visit each one of the online exhibits at the United States Holocaust Museum (<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/>). Ask each group to prepare a brief presentation that a museum guide might deliver to a visiting school group. Then take the class on a virtual field trip through all of the exhibits with each group acting as a guide.

Thematic Connections

Questions for Classroom Discussion

Anti-Semitism/Bigotry—Ask students to define *bigotry*. How did the parents of the teenagers who protested the performance of *The Diary of Anne Frank* at the Landes Theater contribute to their children's act of bigotry? Have students look at the double-page illustration on pages 6–7. Ask them to explain the attitude of the woman in the yellow dress. Simon Wiesenthal's work to bring Nazi war criminals to justice made him the target of neo-Nazi groups. One group even put a price on his head—"dead, not alive" (p. 37). Discuss how such bigotry drove Wiesenthal to continue his crusade for justice. History reveals that bigotry is the root of much "evil" in the world. Ask students to discuss how bigotry is caused by ignorance. Identify global issues today that are caused by bigotry and ignorance.

Survival—Simon Wiesenthal's life was spared on several occasions, even as those all around him were being executed. How did his art talent contribute to his survival? Though Anne Frank didn't survive the Holocaust, her diary reveals that writing helped her cope with the daily challenges and fears of living in hiding. Discuss why Otto Frank felt it important to publish his daughter's diary. Which is the more difficult, emotional or physical survival? For a long time Simon Wiesenthal believed that his wife had died in a concentration camp. Discuss how he survived the thought that he might never see her again.

Hope—Life for Jews in the Nazi concentration camps seemed hopeless. Simon Wiesenthal said, "I was the only person I knew in the camps who still believed in miracles" (p. 14). How was Wiesenthal's life touched by miracles? Explain how these miracles gave Wiesenthal hope. Later, he dedicated his life to tracking down the Gestapo officer who had arrested Anne Frank. At what point did his mission seem hopeless?

Courage—Ask students to discuss how Wiesenthal's work to expose Nazi war criminals was an act of courage. Wiesenthal never again saw the teenager who challenged him to hunt down the Gestapo officer who arrested the Franks. Why would it have taken courage for the teenager to step forward and admit that he was wrong in believing that Anne Frank's diary was "a clever forgery"? Explain why Wiesenthal believed that neo-Nazis lacked courage.

Truth—Simon Wiesenthal and his wife, Cyla, named their daughter for her two grandmothers who died in the Holocaust. Discuss why it was difficult for the Wiesenthals to tell their daughter the truth about the deaths of her grandmothers and other relatives. Simon Wiesenthal dedicated his life to revealing the "truth" about the Holocaust and to bringing Nazi criminals to trial. His daughter later said that she didn't know the nature of her father's work. Ask students to discuss why Wiesenthal protected his daughter from the "truth" when he felt it important to reveal all of the facts about the Holocaust to the world community. Explain how "truth" leads to healing.

Propaganda—Ask students to define *propaganda*. Why is it difficult to identify propaganda? The teenagers who disrupted the performance of *The Diary of Anne Frank* in Linz, Austria, believed that Anne Frank never existed and that her diary was a fraud. Who was responsible for such propaganda? Why were the teenage protesters suspicious of Simon Wiesenthal?

Determination—In 1945 Wiesenthal offered his services to the War Crimes Office run by Americans, but he was told to return to his bunk and take it easy. How did he finally convince the Americans to accept his services? Later, Wiesenthal opened the Historical Documentation Center in Linz, Austria. How did his determination to find Nazi war criminals become a personal obsession? When lack of funding forced Wiesenthal to close the office in Linz, he sent most of the records to the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Israel. Why did he keep the records on Adolf Eichmann?

Curriculum Connections

Language Arts—Ask students to explore the Anne Frank House website (www.annefrankhouse.org). Have them use the information they gathered from this site and write an article titled "If Walls Could Talk" for a history magazine.

Have students take a virtual field trip of the Museum of Tolerance (www.motlc.wiesenthal.com/). Ask them to take inspiration from one of the exhibits and write a poem about tolerance.

Social Studies—The Commission of Human Rights, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, was formed under the United Nations Charter. The adoption of "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights" by the United Nations on December 10, 1948, was guided by her leadership. Ask students to read about Eleanor Roosevelt and discuss why she was chosen to chair the Commission on Human Rights. Write a tribute to Mrs. Roosevelt that Simon Wiesenthal may have written on the day of her death in 1962.

In 2006 the United Nations General Assembly designated January 27 as an annual International Day of Commemoration to honor the victims of the Holocaust. Ask the class to plan a schoolwide program for this special day. Have them consider the following ideas: (1) A display of books and other materials about the Holocaust in the school library, (2) Assist other students in navigating websites about the Holocaust, (3) Serve as docents for virtual field trips to various Holocaust museums, (4) Deliver a tribute to Simon Wiesenthal and Anne Frank, (5) Invite a rabbi and others from the local Jewish community to make brief remarks, (6) An exhibit of student art that symbolizes tolerance, (7) A statement of commemoration for the school website.

Art—Simon Wiesenthal published political cartoons in magazines and newspapers before he became an architect. Draw a political cartoon that he may have published when Karl Silberbauer admitted that he was the Nazi officer who arrested Anne Frank and her family. Make the cartoon a message to the teenagers who believed that Anne Frank's diary was a fraud.

Ask students to look closely at the illustration on page 28. Who are the people in the picture? How does this illustration reflect the themes of bigotry, hope, courage, truth, and determination? Have students think about the color palette that the illustrator used in the book. What do the dark colors symbolize? There is one illustration that is brighter than any other illustration in the book. Ask students to find that illustration and discuss how the color reflects the mood of the event it represents.

Drama—Simon Wiesenthal died in 2005 at the age of ninety-six. Have students locate a copy of *The Diary of Anne Frank* and select an appropriate entry to perform as a monologue in tribute to Wiesenthal's work.

Vocabulary/Use of Language

There is a glossary of words specifically related to the Holocaust in the back of the book. Ask students to jot down other unfamiliar words and try to define them by taking clues from the context. Such words may include: *inferior* (p. 5), *heritage* (p. 7), *phenomenal* (p. 14), *liberated* (p. 18), *arrogant* (p. 29), *colleagues* (p. 30), and *deporting* (p. 34).

Web Links

Simon Wiesenthal Center

www.wiesenthal.com/site/apps/content.aspc

The international Jewish human rights organization's biography of Simon Wiesenthal

Jewish Virtual Library

www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/source/biography/frank.html

A short biography of Anne Frank (1929–1945)

www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/source/biography/Wiesenthal.html

A brief biography of Simon Wiesenthal (1908–2005)

Jewish Studies: A Global Directory of Holocaust Museums

www.science.co.il/holocaust-museums.asp

A list of the Holocaust museums around the world

About the Author and Illustrator



Susan Goldman Rubin is the author of *Fireflies in the Dark: The Story of Friedl Dicker-Brandeis and the Children of Terezin*, a Sydney Taylor Award Honor Book, a National Jewish Book Award finalist, and a *Booklist* Top Ten Art Book for Youth. Her other books include *The Flag with Fifty-six Stars: A Gift from the Survivors of Mauthausen*, illustrated by Bill Farnsworth, and a collaboration with Ela Weissberger, *The Cat with the Yellow Star: Coming of Age in Terezin*. She lives in Malibu, California. For more about Susan, visit her online at www.susangoldmanrubin.com.



Bill Farnsworth has illustrated numerous books for children, including *A Hero and the Holocaust: The Story of Janusz Korczak and His Children* and *A Hero for Civil Rights*, both by David A. Adler. In addition to his work with children's books, Bill is a fine artist who has created paintings for magazines, advertisements, and commissioned portraits and landscapes. For more about him, visit www.billfarnsworth.com.

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