



# HOLIDAY HOUSE Educators' Guide



9780823438006 • Ages 8–12 • E-book available

## *Genevieve's War*

by Two-time Newbery Honor Winner

PATRICIA REILLY GIFF

★ "Engaging . . . full of hardship, peril, and quiet heroism."

—*Booklist*, Starred Review

### *About the Book*

Set at the same time as Patricia Reilly Giff's Newbery Honor-winning *Lily's Crossing*, *Genevieve's War* brings to life the shining moments of courage—and sheer terror—of wartime as a young girl attempts an act of heroism right under the Nazis' noses.

Thirteen-year-old Genevieve spends the summer of 1939 in Alsace, France, with a grandmother she has never known. It turns out that Mémé is tough, disagreeable, and a taskmaster. Genevieve longs for the summer to end, but on the day she is scheduled to return to New York, she abruptly changes her mind and decides to remain in Alsace to help her grandmother on the farm. There are times that she questions her decision, but there is no turning back because World War II has begun and the Germans are infiltrating Alsace. When her friend Rémy commits an act of sabotage, Genevieve and her grandmother shelter him in an attic room, one story above a bedroom that a German soldier has claimed. In the months that follow, Genevieve learns a lot about survival, and the value of friendship, love, and belonging.





# Pre-Reading Activity

Have students use books in the library or sites on the internet to find out about Hitler and the Nazi party. The following site is helpful: <http://kids.britannica.com/elementary/article-353523/Nazi-Party>. Then have students write a one-page paper that explains why people throughout Europe feared him.

**RI. 4-7.2, 4-7.3; W. 4-7.2; L. 4-7.1, 4-7.2; L. 4-7.3**

There is a map of Alsace, France, at the beginning of the novel. Point out the proximity of Alsace to Germany, and the fact that Germany once controlled this area of France. Then lead a class discussion about the imminent danger of the Alsatian people during World War II.

**SL. 4-7.1, 4-7.3; L. 4-7.1, 4-7.2; L. 4-7.3**

# Classroom Discussion

- Discuss the structure of the novel. How does beginning with “The End” establish the time and place of the novel? Explain how the section titled “Someday” connects to “The End.”
- Genevieve is thirteen when she leaves New York to visit her grandmother in Alsace, France. Describe Mémé from Genevieve’s point of view. How does Mémé view Genevieve? Explain how their relationship changes as the story progresses. At the end of the novel Genevieve says, “I couldn’t be sorry I’d come to Alsace. I’d never have loved her, never have known Papa” (p. 221). At what point does Genevieve realize that she loves Mémé? Explain how Mémé helps Genevieve make an emotional connection to her deceased father.
- Genevieve says, “It was unbearable to think that I was one bit like her” (p. 36). How is Genevieve like her grandmother? Explain how they are different. Discuss how their similarities and differences help them survive the war.
- Aunt Marie always said, “Doing the right thing will make you happy” (p. 24). How do these words contribute to Genevieve’s decision to remain in Alsace with her grandmother? How does Mémé react to Genevieve’s decision? At first, Genevieve thinks that she made a mistake to remain in Alsace. When does she realize that she made the right decision? Discuss other times in the novel that she makes the right decision. Debate whether these decisions make her happy.
- Discuss the relationship between Genevieve and André. Explain why Genevieve is so upset that her brother has returned home ahead of her. What is the first hint that André is still in Europe? Debate whether Mémé knows about André’s activities.
- Discuss the friendship between Genevieve and Katrin. How are they like sisters? What is Katrin’s view of America? How does talking with Katrin make Genevieve homesick?
- What changes do the Germans demand when they take over Alsace? Discuss the measures Genevieve and her grandmother take to survive after the German soldier, Fürst, takes over Mémé’s bedroom in the farmhouse.





- Mémé warns Genevieve that they can't trust anyone. Why does Genevieve disobey her grandmother and tell Katrin that they are hiding Rémy? How does this trust in Katrin lead to distrust? What causes Genevieve to confess to Mémé that she shared their secret with Katrin? Discuss Mémé's reaction. How do her words surprise Genevieve?
- Define "Resistance." Mémé sends Genevieve to Philippe, the bookseller, with a coded message that asks for help. How does Mémé know that Philippe is part of the Resistance?
- Genevieve sees André's sweater on a chair in Philippe's bookshop. Why does she think this is a sign of betrayal? Explain what Philippe means when he says, "My advice is for you to avoid seeing things" (p. 102). How is there danger in "seeing" and "not seeing"? What must Genevieve "see" and "not see" to survive the war?
- Discuss what Genevieve sees when she delivers the essays to Herr Albert. How does this knowledge change the way she views her teacher? Genevieve returns to the school to escort Herr Albert to the bookshop because the Germans are coming for him. Debate whether Herr Albert is thinking about André when he says that he isn't surprised that Genevieve is helping him.
- Why does Mémé feel the need to tell Genevieve about the Great War? How does this knowledge change the way Genevieve sees people like Philippe?
- Fürst takes the painting of Mémé when she was a child. Why does Genevieve blame herself that he stole the painting? Explain why Genevieve sobs when Mémé tells her that she had always meant for her to have the painting.
- Genevieve realizes that Mémé is brave. How does Genevieve grow braver as the plot advances? Discuss how Philippe acknowledges her bravery. How might André and Rémy recognize her bravery?
- Mémé gives Genevieve her wedding ring. What does the gift symbolize? Mémé had thought the ring was a parting gift. Why isn't she surprised that Genevieve chooses to remain in Alsace?
- Genevieve says that she isn't the same girl she was when she first came to Alsace in the summer of 1939. Explain the changes in her. What is the significance of Genevieve carving her initials next to her father's in the attic room?
- Discuss the title of the book. How does "war" have a literal and a figurative meaning? World War II officially ended on August 15, 1945. How is the "war" within Genevieve resolved?

***RL. 4-7.1, RL. 4-7.2, RL. 4-7.3, RL. 4-7.4; SL. 4-7.1, SL. 4-7.3, SL. 4-7.4; L. 4-7.1; L. 4-7.3***





# Curriculum Connections

## Language Arts

- Aunt Marie always called Genevieve Flyaway Girl. At the end of the novel, André also uses this term to describe his sister. Ask students to jot down adjectives that best support Aunt Marie and André's analysis of Genevieve. Then have students write an essay called "Genevieve: Flyaway Girl." Instruct them to use direct quotes and reference specific scenes from the novel to support their thoughts.  
**W. 4-7.1; L. 4-7.1; L. 4-7.3**
- "Loose Lips Sink Ships" was a slogan coined by Americans during World War II to warn people not to talk carelessly because the enemy could be listening. Write a paper that reveals how this slogan might apply to people working for the Resistance in Alsace.  
**W. 4-7.1; L. 4-7.1; L. 4-7.3**
- Giff uses simile to create certain images in the minds of readers. Explain the following simile: "Beyond the village was a glow of orange, almost as if the sun had risen" (p. 84). What is the orange referencing? Write a simile that describes the blue-gray house in the field where Genevieve finds Rémy.  
**L. 4-7.5**
- André has a plan to get Genevieve home, but she makes the decision to remain with her grandmother. Write a letter that Genevieve might write to Aunt Marie explaining her decision. Then write a reply from Aunt Marie.  
**W. 4-7.3; L. 4-7.2; L. 4-7.3**

## Language Arts / Drama

- Read *The Safest Lie* by Angela Cerrito. Stage a dialogue between Jolanta, a Resistance worker in Cerrito's novel, and André and Philippe in Giff's novel. How might they describe their experiences to one another? Invite questions from the audience.
- Read *Lily's Crossing* by Patricia Reilly Giff. Stage a talk show where Lily and Genevieve are guests. Have them reflect on their experiences during the war—Lily on the home front and Genevieve in Alsace.

**RL. 5-7.9; L. 4-7.1; L. 4-7.3**

## Social Studies

- Christmas customs vary around the world. Take note of the way Mémé celebrates Christmas in Alsace. Then use books in the library or sites on the internet to research other Christmas customs in France. The following website is helpful: [www.whychristmas.com/cultures/france.shtml](http://www.whychristmas.com/cultures/france.shtml). Instruct students to write a paper that contrasts American and French Christmas customs. Encourage peer editing for clarity, spelling, and grammar.  
**W. 4-7.2; W. 4-7.4, W. 4-7.5; W. 4-7.7, 4-7.8, 4-7.9; L. 4-7.2; L. 4-7.3**





- Herr Albert has Genevieve and Katrin write an essay on the history of Alsace. Have students use three resources from the library or the internet to gather facts about the history of Alsace. Then have them write their version of the paper that Genevieve wrote.

**W. 4-7.2; W. 4-7.4, W. 4-7.5; W. 4-7.7; L. 4-7.2; L. 4-7.3**

- Genevieve searches the German soldier's briefcase and discovers that the woodcutter was taken to Struthof Concentration Camp. Read about this camp on the following website: [www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007260](http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007260). Have students take note of the living and working conditions, and how many people perished. Allow students to work in small groups and produce a PowerPoint presentation about Struthof.

**W. 4-7.3; W. 4-7.4, 4-7.6; W. 4-7.7; L. 4-7.2; L. 4-7.3**

## Vocabulary / Use of Language

- Ask students to jot down unfamiliar words and try to define them taking clues from context. Such words may include: *sabots* (p.1), *impassively* (p. 19), *stanchion* (p. 21), *unsheathed* (p. 34), *deporting* (p. 53), *valise* (p. 59), *fortify* (p. 74), *devouring* (p. 82), *sabotage* (p. 85), *billeted* (p. 97), *punctual* (p. 116), *pewter* (p. 123), *transparent* (p. 127), *ungainly* (p. 128), *wary* (p. 134), *garrison* (p. 135), *couriers* (p. 146), *pockmarked* (p. 176), and *convoy* (p. 196).

**L. 4-7.4**

## Internet Resources

### Holocaust Memorial Museum

[www.ushmm.org/](http://www.ushmm.org/)

*This is the official site of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.*

### Alsace, France

[www.britannica.com/place/Alsace](http://www.britannica.com/place/Alsace)

*Encyclopedia Britannica offers an overview of Alsace, France.*

## Related Books

***The Safest Lie*** by Angela Cerrito

***Number the Stars*** by Lois Lowry

***The Grand Mosque of Paris: A Story of How Muslims Rescued Jews During the Holocaust***

by Karen Gray Ruelle, illustrated by Deborah Durland DeSaix

***Irena Sendler and the Children of the Warsaw Ghetto***

by Susan Goldman Rubin, illustrated by Bill Farnsworth







## About the Author

Two-time Newbery Honor-winning author Patricia Reilly Giff has written many highly acclaimed books for children, and her books have appeared on the *New York Times* and *Publishers Weekly* bestsellers lists, among others.

Pat's works include the timeless *Lily's Crossing*, a Newbery Honor Book and a *Boston Globe-Horn Book* Honor Book; *Pictures of Hollis Woods*, a Newbery Honor Book; and *Nory Ryan's Song*, an ALA Notable Children's Book, an ALA Best Book for Young Adults, a *School Library Journal* Best Book of the Year, and a Golden Kite Honor Book. Her works for younger readers include the bestselling Kids of the Polk Street School series and the Ronald Morgan books.

Pat's most recent books published by Holiday House include the Hunter Moran series and the nonfiction *Writing with Rosie: You Can Write a Story Too*. She lives in Connecticut with her husband.





# Key to the Instructional Standards

## *Reading Literature*

### **Key Ideas & Details**

- RL. 4-7.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- RL. 4-7.2 Determine a theme of a story from details in the text.
- RL. 4-7.3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story.

### **Craft & Structure**

- RL. 4-7.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text.

### **Integration of Knowledge & Ideas**

- RL. 5-7.9 Compare and contrast stories in the same genre on their approaches to similar themes and topics.

## *Reading: Informational Text*

### **Key Ideas & Details**

- RI. 4-7.2 Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details. Provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- RI. 4-7.3 Explain ideas or concepts in a historical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

## *Speaking & Listening*

### **Comprehension & Collaboration**

- SL. 4-7.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussion (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade level topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- SL. 4-7.3 Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

### **Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas**

- SL. 4-7.4 Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant descriptive details to support main ideas.

## *Language*

### **Conventions of Standard English**

- L. 4-7.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- L. 4-7.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.





### ***Knowledge of Language***

- L. 4-7.3 Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

### ***Vocabulary Acquisition & Use***

- L. 4-7.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade level reading and content.
- L. 4-7.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meaning.

## ***Writing***

### ***Text Types & Purposes***

- W. 4-7.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
- W. 4-7.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- W. 4-7.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

### ***Production & Distribution of Writing***

- W. 4-7.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- W. 4-7.5 With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
- W. 4-7.6 Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing.

### ***Research to Build & Present Knowledge***

- W. 4-7.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.
- W. 4-7.8 Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from prints and digital sources.
- W. 4-7.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

