

Book Club Discussion Guide



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The Betrayal of Anne Frank: a Cold Case Investigation

By Rosemary Sullivan

About the author:

Rosemary Sullivan has written poetry, short fiction, biography, literary criticism, reviews and articles. Her recent books include the critically acclaimed *Villa Air-Bel* and *Labyrinth of Desire*. She is a professor emerita at the University of Toronto, and has been awarded Guggenheim, Camargo, and Trudeau Fellowships. She is a recipient of the Lorne Pierce Medal awarded by the Royal Society of Canada for her contribution to Literature and Culture, and is an Officer of the Order of Canada.

Source: Publisher's website: (<https://www.harpercollins.ca/>)

About this book:

Less a mystery unsolved than a secret well kept...

Using new technology, recently discovered documents and sophisticated investigative techniques, an international team—led by an obsessed retired FBI

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agent—has finally solved the mystery that has haunted generations since World War II: Who betrayed Anne Frank and her family? And why?

Over thirty million people have read *The Diary of a Young Girl*, the journal teen-aged Anne Frank kept while living in an attic with her family and four other people in Amsterdam during World War II, until the Nazis arrested them and sent them to a concentration camp. But despite the many works—journalism, books, plays and novels—devoted to Anne’s story, none has ever conclusively explained how these eight people managed to live in hiding undetected for over two years—and who or what finally brought the Nazis to their door.

With painstaking care, retired FBI agent Vincent Pankoke and a team of indefatigable investigators pored over tens of thousands of pages of documents—some never before seen—and interviewed scores of descendants of people familiar with the Franks. Utilizing methods developed by the FBI, the Cold Case Team painstakingly pieced together the months leading to the infamous arrest—and came to a shocking conclusion.

The Betrayal of Anne Frank: A Cold Case Investigation is the riveting story of their mission. Rosemary Sullivan introduces us to the investigators, explains the behavior of both the captives and their captors and profiles a group of suspects. All the while, she vividly brings to life wartime Amsterdam: a place where no matter how wealthy, educated, or careful you were, you never knew whom you could trust.

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Discussion Questions:

(General nonfiction questions to get book club discussions off to a good start.)

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1. If your book offers a cultural portrait—of life in another country or region of your own country, start with questions a, b, and c:
 - a. What observations are made in the book? Does the author examine economics and politics family traditions, the arts, religious beliefs, language or food?
 - b. Does the author criticize or admire the culture? Does he/she wish to preserve or change the way of life? Either way, what would be risked or gained?
 - c. What is different from your own culture? What do you find most surprising, intriguing or difficult to understand?
2. What is the central idea discussed in the book? What issues or ideas does the author explore? Are they personal, sociological, global, political, economic, spiritual, medical, or scientific?
3. Do the issues affect your life? How so—directly, on a daily basis, or more generally? Now or sometime in the future?
4. What evidence does the author use to support the book's ideas? Is the evidence convincing...definitive or...speculative? Does the author depend on personal opinion, observation, and assessment? Or is the evidence factual—based on science, statistics, historical documents, or quotations from (credible) experts?
5. What kind of language does the author use? Is it objective and dispassionate? Or passionate and earnest? Is it biased, inflammatory, sarcastic? Does the language help or undercut the author's premise?
6. What are the implications for the future? Are there long- or short-term consequences to the issues raised in the book? Are they positive or negative...affirming or frightening?

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7. What solutions does the author propose? Are the author's recommendations concrete, sensible, doable? Who would implement those solutions?
8. How controversial are the issues raised in the book? Who is aligned on which sides of the issues? Where do you fall in that line-up?
9. Talk about specific passages that struck you as significant—or interesting, profound, amusing, illuminating, disturbing, sad...? What was memorable?
10. What have you learned after reading this book? Has it broadened your perspective about a difficult issue—personal or societal? Has it introduced you to a culture in another country...or an ethnic or regional culture in your own country?

Source: LitLovers (<http://www.litlovers.com>)