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Shadow Life: A Portrait of Anne Frank and Her Family

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Denenberg, Barry. *Shadow Life: A Portrait of Anne Frank and Her Family*. Scholastic Press, 2005. ISBN 0439416787. \$16.95. 224 pp.

Reviewer: Sarah Wanlass

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Biographies;

Subject: Frank, Anne, 1929-1945--Family--Juvenile literature; Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Netherlands--Amsterdam--Biography--Juvenile literature; Frank, Margot--Diaries--Juvenile literature;

Millions have read *The Diary of Anne Frank* and have been inspired and touched by the words of an ordinary Jewish girl living during an extraordinary time. In *Shadow Life*, Denenberg presents the story of the Frank family before, during, and after their time in the "Secret Annexe" where they spent much of World War II. Denenberg divides their experience into four main sections: (1) living, (2) hiding, (3) dying, and (4) surviving. The first, third, and fourth sections serve as a narrative of the Franks' lives before and after their years in hiding; the second section is a recreation of what Margot Frank's diary may have been like as she lived side-by-side her more famous and forthright sister and the other inhabitants of the secret apartment behind Otto Frank's former workplace.

For those who are interested in the process, Denenberg writes a brief introduction which details his extensive research and explains how he chose to organize the Franks' story. He bases his writings off of Anne's diary as well as many other accounts and resources (as evidenced by his long bibliography). A chronology of the Frank family is also included. The tale of the Otto Frank family comes across clearly in Denenberg's writing; readers can see the strengths and failings of the Franks and their friends in a very holistic way. The writing is simple and the story is moving because it is real. *Shadow Life* is an inspirational story that will work wonderfully as a companion book to *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, though it is equally worthy to read on its own.