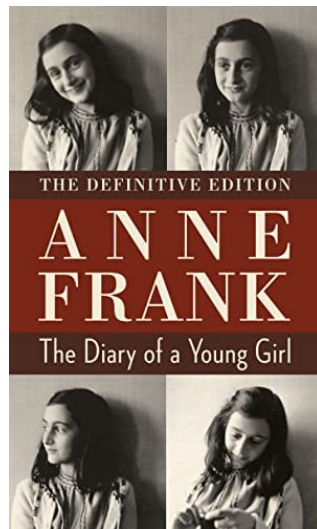


Second Reaction: A Mother-Daughter Perspective

Anne Frank. *The Diary of a Young Girl: The Definitive Edition*. New York City, NY: Bantam Books, 1997. Print..

Elizabeth Dougherty and Maddie Dougherty



Who better to provide perspective on the importance of the diary of a teenage girl than a teenage girl and a child's first teacher: their mother? The following review contains the reactions of a mother-daughter duo who read Anne Frank's famous diary at the same time and then wrote their reactions separately.

Elizabeth Dougherty (mother):

It's interesting coming to Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* as an adult, and especially as a parent. Nothing had ever kept me from it – it wasn't prohibited in any of my schools growing up, we actually read a lot about the people and atrocities of World War II in assorted works. It was also never assigned, and then, as now, I don't often seek out tragedy in my recreational reading. And that is very much what I thought I would find.

It was so much more, and less, than what I thought it would be. It touched much on what was known about the world outside of the Secret Annex – the news and rumors about the greater world, the war itself, but also about the people they had known and the uncertain fate many of them had met, simply because they were Jews or as those who had dared to assist them. The uncertainty and fear that were an undercurrent in every minute of their lives, but tempered (and for me, this was unexpected) so much by the mundane day-to-day humanity of routines, of living with several people (even, and perhaps especially, those you love), the upsets, the joys, the silliness, and the feelings that often had no outlet. The frustration of being a young girl who is trying to understand ordinary life and all of its changes in *extraordinary* circumstances.

As a parent, there was much Anne wrote that cuts to the heart of our relationships with our children. Knowing we know more (and usually better) but constantly locked in a battle with an emerging adolescent who vehemently disagrees. Wishing to keep our young people young, or innocent, especially in an often harsh world that seeks to age, or harden, them before they're (or we're) ready. But the overwhelming take-away for me, and what makes this such an important work for anyone, and especially young people, to read, aside from the very important historical understanding, is the knowledge that you are NOT alone in your feelings, in your uncertainties, your curiosities about yourself or the world around you. These things are universal, across time, place and circumstance. And the truth of the matter is that all of that *can* be uncomfortable, but that doesn't mean we should hide from it or hide it away.

Maddie Dougherty (daughter):

Anne Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl*, was exactly that: a diary. And in this diary, she wrote down her innermost thoughts and feelings while in hiding from the Nazis. It was personal to her and she used it as an escape from the dangerous world she was living in. Overall, it was an intensely emotional book to read, as she ended up tragically dying in a concentration camp.

While reading this book for the first time, I kept searching for a reason that it could be banned. Towards the end, however, I could not possibly see why this fourteen-year old's diary would be banned. I later found out that it is because she discusses her body. This shocked me tremendously. The whole time while reading this book, I viewed it exactly as it was. Anne describes exactly what it is like to be a growing teen. She fights with her parents, crushes on boys, and ultimately discusses her thoughts and dreams. To find that a girl discussing going through puberty could be the reason for banning such an important book was eye-opening.

This book was so extremely powerful because what she wrote down felt real. I was speechless because I expected her diary to be all about the war and oppression and yet it wasn't. I realized that she processed and experienced things exactly as I did. She was just a scared young girl who had no idea what the future would hold. This idea that she must've lived in an endless cycle of panic and nothingness and fear had been engraved into my brain for so long that I was quite emotional reading it, because it could've been me writing those words on those pages. I could've been the one who was in hiding, writing down my fears in a diary that I thought no one would ever read. That is why I believe that this book should not be banned. People need to see the truth of what happened. They need to be enlightened and see what it is like, all through the eyes of this ordinary girl, especially in these current times when people seem to forget what has happened. We cannot let there be more Anne Franks, girls with so much promise and hope for the future, whose lives are cut short by cruel fates such as hers. She should definitely be an

inspiration to all, as she never gave up even when things looked bleak. I am so glad that I read this book, or else I might still be living in oblivious darkness.

About the Authors

Elizabeth Dougherty is a mother of five, with kids ranging in age from 15 to 4. She has a history degree from Saint Joseph's College. Reading and buying more books for herself and her family to read are her favorite hobbies.

Maddie Dougherty is 15 years old and a freshman at Marian High School. She has always loved reading and learning about history, especially World War II.