

When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit



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Synopsis

Country of Origin:

Release Year: 2019

Director: Caroline Link

Runtime: 119 minutes

Languages: English, German, Swiss German, French

Themes: Refugees, Anti-Semitism and WWII, Family

A beautifully rendered historical drama about displacement and exile based on Judith Kerr's beloved children's book. Nine-year old Anna's privileged life comes to an end when her father is arrested and she must flee Germany with her mother and brother, leaving behind her beloved stuffed rabbit. Over the next few years, they will move from Switzerland to Paris, before finally settling in London. In each place, Anna must learn new languages and cultures in order to assimilate into a new life as a refugee seeking asylum in a foreign country.

Curriculum Links

When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit can be used as part of the Social Studies Curriculum from Grades 5-8 and as part of the Media Literacy component of the English curriculum from Grades 5-8.

Related Website

Interview with director Caroline Link:

<https://www.dw.com/en/filmmaker-caroline-link-on-directing-when-hitler-stole-the-pink-rabbit/a-51585510>

Interview with Judith Kerr:

<https://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2015/feb/18/judith-kerr-interview-when-hitler-stole-pink-rabbit-mog>

Context: Anti-Semitism and the Rise of the Nazi Party

When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit opens in 1933 on the eve of elections that saw Hitler rise to power. As such, the timeline of the film allows primary school teachers to introduce students to the context in which the Holocaust occurred without having to address the full scope of the atrocities that followed. Anti-Semitism manifests itself in both explicit and implicit ways in the film; Anna and Max hear people say negative things about Jews at school and in the various places they move to, but the more pervasive form of anti-Semitism are the laws that are enacted beginning in 1933 that force Anna's family to take flight. Introducing students to the Nuremberg laws that were enacted when Hitler rose to power offers students a way of understanding that Anna's father felt that they

had to leave Germany not just because of his vocal criticism of Hitler, but because their religion made them a target for persecution.

Nuremberg Laws Lesson Plan

(Adapted from the Holocaust Educational Trust lesson plan: Impossible Choices: Life Under Nazi Persecution: <https://www.het.org.uk/primary/impossible-choices>)

Before formulating their long-term plan for the total destruction of the Jewish population, the Nazis' initial goal after coming to power was the exclusion of Jews from German society, first by boycotting Jewish shops and later by barring them from the civil service. Further measures were added over time and, in 1935, the Germans passed the Nuremberg Laws which aimed to isolate Jews from "Aryan" society by depriving them the rights of citizens and banning marriages or sexual relations with non-Jews. As the anti-Jewish laws were implemented, many German Jews tried to emigrate, but due to a combination of anti-immigrant sentiment and the lingering economic effects of the Great Depression, most countries would only admit people who were financially able to support themselves. Given that the Nazis tried to strip Jews of their assets, emigration was all but impossible for most German Jews.

The introduction of the anti-Jewish laws provides a useful starting point to studying *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit*. As the film opens, Anna and her family live a comfortable, middle class life, but their situation gradually deteriorates as each new law is enacted. Below is a timeline of anti-Jewish laws that were passed between 1933 and 1939 and three related activities that teachers could use in their classrooms before viewing the film in order to provide students with the historical context necessary to understanding the film.

Timeline of Anti-Jewish Laws

April 1933: Jewish people are not allowed to be members of sports clubs

April 1933: Jewish people are not allowed to work for the government

July 1933: Jewish people are not allowed to drive cars

July 1933: Jewish people are not allowed to join chess clubs.

March 1934: Jewish actors are not allowed to perform

July 1934: Jewish people are not allowed to be dance teachers

September 1935: Jewish people are not allowed to marry non-Jews

September 1935: Jewish people lose the rights of German citizens

April 1936: Jewish people are not allowed to be veterinarians

July 1938: Jewish doctors can't treat non-Jewish patients

November 1938: Jewish people are not allowed to attend cinemas

November 1938: Jewish children not allowed to attend school with non-Jews

November 1938: Jewish people are not allowed to own businesses

December 1938: Jewish people are not allowed to drive cars

December 1938: Jewish people are not allowed to attend universities

April 1939: Jewish people can be thrown out of their homes at any time

September 1939: Jewish people not allowed to own radios

September 1939: Jewish people must be home before 8 p.m. in the winter and 9 p.m. in the summer

Related Activity 1

Before showing students the timeline, begin by asking:

1. What are laws?
2. Why do we have them?

3. Are all laws good or can some be bad?
4. What can we do today if we disagree with a law? (Students should come away with the understanding that citizens in a democracy have the power to protest in order to influence their elected officials. Moreover, the right to vote allows gives them a right to determine who will become their representatives.)

Related Activity 2

Provide students with the timeline of laws passed between 1933 and 1939 and pose the following questions:

1. What do they notice about the laws over the years? (point to the increasing levels of persecution reflected in the laws)
2. What else can we learn about Nazi persecution of Jews from these laws? (i.e. that they encroach on almost every aspect of daily life)
3. Which laws make them feel angry?
4. Which laws make them feel sad?
5. Which laws frighten them?

Discuss students' responses as a class.

Related Activity 3

Looking at the timeline of increasingly harsh laws enacted against the Jewish population, many students might wonder why Jews did not leave Germany to escape persecution. Two questions are central to exploring this issue:

1. Why might some Jews have not wanted to leave Germany? (e.g. Germany was their home for generations, dependents such as children or elderly relatives, fear of the unknown, lack of resources, hope that things would get better)
2. What challenges would Jewish people have faced in trying to emigrate? (e.g. having to learn a new culture or language, having to find employment, having to leave friends and family behind, having to find the money to move, having to find a country willing to take them).

Context: Refugees

When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit is an ideal novel to introduce younger students to one of the today's most pressing issues. Before watching the film, teachers should prepare students by devoting at least one lesson to defining what constitutes a refugee and what kinds of situations would necessitate having to risk one's life in order to find safety in another country. Explain to students that refugees are not people who choose to move to a different country but rather people who are forced to flee their home countries. Listed below are some questions you might want to ask to start a discussion:

1. What kind of dangers or threats might make someone run away from their home and country? Write down words like war, persecution, religion, race, dictatorships and ask students what these words mean and how they might force people to do anything in order to stay safe.
2. Have you heard stories about refugees before? If so, where have you heard about them?
3. Do you know any countries that refugees have fled?

4. How do you think you would feel if you suddenly had to leave your country, taking only the barest essentials? What would you take with you if you could only carry one backpack?

There are several sites that provide teachers with age-appropriate sites and lesson plans relating to refugees. Listed below are a few:

United Nations Association in Canada

<https://acgc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/PK2-Refugees.pdf>

Schools Welcome Refugees

<https://schoolswelcomerefugees.ca/resources/>

The UN Refugee Agency

<https://www.unhcr.org/teaching-materials-ages-6-9.html>

Common Sense Education:

<https://www.commonsense.org/education/lesson-plans/the-journey-of-a-refugee>

National Education Association:

<http://www.useaut.org/tools/lessons/63678.htm>

Pulitzer Centre

<https://pulitzercenter.org/builder/lesson/migration-and-refugees-lesson-plans-20360>

Teaching Tolerance

<https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/exploring-young-immigrant-stories>

Amnesty International

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/education/2015/10/8-educational-resources-to-better-understand-the-refugee-crisis/>

ADL

<https://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/we-were-strangers-too-learning-about-refugees-through-art>

Suggested Activity:

Ask students to pretend that a Syrian refugee has joined their class and pose the following questions:

1. How did the refugee end up in Canada?
2. What do you think the refugee would want to know about you?
3. Where would you take the refugee to introduce him/her to the city?
4. What does the refugee need to know about your school?
5. Do you think the refugee will encounter any prejudice in your school? Why/why not?
6. What would you do to help the refugee adapt to a Canadian school?

Breaking the Film into Chapters

When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit can be seen as a coming of age tale. One way to explore the film is to break it into chapters, each one reflecting a different stage of Anna's life as she moves from innocence to experience with each new place she moves to. Below is a summary of each chapter with some guiding discussion questions for each.

Chapter One: Idyllic Childhood in Berlin

As the film opens, Anna and her brother Max are living in a comfortable, upper middle class life with their journalist father, musician mother and faithful housekeeper who is regarded as part of the family. At this point, the only Nazi threat would seem to be the kids in Nazi costumes chasing Anna at a school carnival. Signs of sinister things to come occur when Anna's mother gets a phone call that clearly disturbs her and causes her to cancel her evening plans. Anna knows something is amiss and sneaks in to see her father who is sick in bed and meant to be quarantining from the rest of the family. She shows him her drawing of a shipwreck – clearly, she senses something bad is happening even if everything seems normal on the surface.

By the next morning, it is obvious that things are changing. Anna's mother explains that the call the night before came from a sympathetic police officer who warned her father to leave the country because Hitler was planning to silence his critics should he win the election. Max and Anna are warned that they are not to tell anyone that their father left the country and to pretend that he is just convalescing. Not long after, Anna comes home to find Uncle Julius, a family friend, talking to her mother and explaining that their father wants the family to meet him in Switzerland immediately. The children must pack their belongings into one suitcase and are only allowed to take two books and one toy. Anna agonizes over what stuffed animal to take and reluctantly chooses to leave her beloved pink rabbit at home. Heimpi the housekeeper promises to pack a separate suitcase filled with books and games that she will send to her. Anna tries to make her promise to bring it to her when she comes to Switzerland, but Heimpi avoids making that promise. Clearly, Heimpi knows that it is unlikely that she will see Anna again.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is Anna's friend's mother always asking where Anna's father is? What does her attitude seem to be towards Anna and her family?
2. What does Anna mean when she protests that "we're not even proper Jews"?
3. Why is Anna's friend Elisabeth surprised to find out that Anna is Jewish? Why does she think that Jews should look different than other Germans?
4. Why does the family's lack of religious observance not help their predicament?
5. What is the significance of Uncle Julius' pocket watch? What happened when Anna blows on it?
6. What signs are we given that the adults know more than they are letting on to Max and Anna?
7. Why are Max and Anna warned that they can't tell anyone that their father has left country?
8. Why are Max and Anna told to tell the train conductor that they are going on holidays for a few days rather than the truth?
9. Max gives Anna a book on famous people and Anna notices that it "seems like every famous person had a difficult childhood" and that she fears that "we won't ever be famous." What do you think this suggests?

10. Why does Anna's father tell the family to meet him in Switzerland rather than Czechoslovakia where he first went?

Chapter Two: Switzerland

Anna's first two weeks in Switzerland are spent in a haze of delirium from the fever she caught from her father. She hallucinates seeing an elephant in the room and calls out for Heimpi, unaware that she is no longer at home and that Heimpi is not with them. Not only does her illness cause added stress to her family, but it also drains their savings because of hotel and medical fees. Once she recovers, they move to the Zwirn guesthouse in the countryside.

Life in Switzerland brings with it many changes that force Anna to adapt to a new way of life. Although the Swiss speak German, it is a different dialect to the one she is used to and she doesn't understand it at first. The food is also very different than what the family is used to eating, as are the local customs, both socially and at school. At this point, Anna still believes that she will be going back to Berlin within a few months, and she sets up a chart, crossing off each day that she spends in Switzerland in the hope that there will be definite end date in the near future. Max, however, is a bit older and understands that the family's displacement will be more permanent.

Indeed, the bad news starts to filter through shortly after the family's arrival at the Zwirn's. Uncle Julius arrives to tell them that the Nazis came to their house the day after the election to confiscate their possessions and their passports. Heimpi manages to convince them that she didn't know where their passports were, but all of the family's possessions were taken apart from a box of first edition books that Papa entrusted Julius with. Unaware of the gravity of the situation, Anna is only worried about her suitcase with her pink rabbit.

More bad comes on Anna's birthday. Although she is thrilled to get a phone call from Heimpi, Anna's hopes of seeing her again are dashed when Heimpi tells her that she had to take a job with another family. Moreover, it looks like another move will be on the horizon because the Swiss won't allow to Papa publish his articles in the Swiss press.

On the positive side, Anna and Max make friends with the two Zwin children, Franz and Vreneli who help them get used to their new environment. Anna's fearless and outgoing personality also endears her to her classmates and she very quickly becomes popular, especially with the boys. No sooner does she feel settled, it is time for Anna to leave. Once again, she must say goodbye to people and places in town that she has grown attached to.

Discussion Questions

1. What are Anna and Max's initial reactions to their new living conditions? How do they differ from Berlin?
2. Why does Anna regret not having taken pink rabbit? Why do her parents get annoyed with her when she asks Julius to try to get her suitcase with the rabbit? What does this suggest about how much Anna understands the seriousness of her family's situation?
3. What other evidence to we have in this chapter that things are getting worse for Jews in Germany?
4. How do Anna's classmates react to her? How is she able to make friends?

5. Julius offers to sell Papa's first edition books that are the only possessions the family have left in Berlin, but Papa refuses. Why? What does this say about him?
6. Julius tries to get Anna to blow on his pocket watch the way he used to, but Anna refuses to do it this time. Why? What does this suggest about Anna at this point?
7. Two other German children move to the town but they are not allowed to play with Anna and her brother. Why? What is Anna's response to Vreneli when she asks if Anna minds her playing with them?
8. Papa tells Anna and Max that "we Jews live scattered around the world and the Nazis are spreading terrible lies about us. So it is very important for people like to prove that they are wrong." How does Max try to do that with the German family that comes to stay at the inn? What is their reaction?
9. When Vreneli asks Anna if she's sad about having to move, Anna says "yes, but as a refugee, you often say goodbye. It's part of my difficult childhood." Why does Anna see her difficulties as something positive?
10. What evidence do we have that Anna will miss her time in Switzerland?

Chapter Three: Paris

By the time they arrive in Paris, Anna and her family have almost no money. Their living accommodations are the former servants' quarters and they have to share a bathroom with a young Austrian woman who clearly is suspicious of them. Anna and Max secretly express their disappointment to one another, but they put on a cheerful front for their parents. After Mama burns the food she tried to cook, the family eats bread and cheese and joke about how they have to get used to new kinds of smelly cheese in each new place they live.

Although Papa finds a job writing, his wages will not be enough to cover rent and food. Max is put into a private school but there is not enough money to send Anna to one and her mother refuses to send her to public school because "that's where simple people send their kids." Mama tells Anna that "we may be poor, but education comes first" and she undertakes to home school her. Things are so dire financially that Papa writes to Julius asking him to sell his precious first editions and Mama secretly goes to pawn her jewelry in order to be able to buy Christmas presents for the kids.

Although they are not remotely religious, Anna and her father attend a synagogue. Anna asks her father if he believes in God and he says that he "only believes in gratefulness." He celebrates Christmas even though he is Jewish, but he does not see the holiday as a religious one, but rather a German national holiday. The fact that he was just stripped of his citizenship in Germany because of his religion does not seem to detract from his national pride.

Over time, Anna's mother relents and lets her go to public school where Anna must study in a new language and once again get used to new people and new ways of doing things. The family's financial predicament goes from bad to worse and Anna resorts to fishing coins out of a fountain to be able to buy a light bulb. Max complains about not being able to go to the cinema with his new friends but his mother tells him his choice is either a hot meal or the cinema. Worst of all, the landlady warns them that their rent is overdue.

Max, Anna and Mama finally enjoy a brief respite at the home of the Steins, a wealthy German Jewish family who are also living in Paris. Mr. Stein was a theatre director that Papa had dismissed as "intensely untalented." Anna and Max are overwhelmed by the assortment of pastries that are

laid out for them and they stuff their pockets with treats to take home. While Mama and Mrs. Stein play the piano (a luxury Mama has not had since leaving Berlin), the kids play dress up and Mrs Stein sends the family home with clothes and books. Papa is furious when he sees that the family has taken charity from someone, especially someone that he sees as a “a clown”, but Mama reminds him that he is “not a famous critic in Grunewald anymore.”

Bad news arrives from Germany when Heinz Rosenfeld comes to visit and tells them that Julius has died after he was fired from both his job at the natural history museum and could no longer even get menial work. Though Julius himself was not Jewish, his grandfather was and that made him Jewish in the eyes of the Nazis. Mr. Rosenfeld hands Anna Julius’ pocket watch and tells her that Julius thought it was important she had it. Though Anna has faced many disappointments thus far, Julius’ death is the first time she allows herself to cry.

Money problems intensify to the point where Anna’s family hides in their apartment pretending not to be home when the landlady bangs on the door asking for overdue rent, calling Papa a “dirty Jew.” Just when things look like they can’t get any worse, Anna wins a school essay competition, earning her 10 francs and the honour of reading her story about a journey in the front of her whole class. Max also finishes at the top of his class, though the happy mood is dampened when their Austrian neighbour snarls “you Jews always have to be the best, don’t you?”

After Anna wins her prize, the family takes a trip to the Eiffel Tower where Anna releases a red balloon that Julius sent her. As they watch it fly over the city, they say goodbye to Julius. Papa tells the family that it is time to move to England because there is not enough work for him in Paris. Anna wonders if they will ever be able to go back home to Germany and Papa replies that “maybe we’ll never be at home in one single place, but a little bit at home in many places.”

Once again, Anna is in a position where she must say goodbye to the new places that she has just gotten used to. Before she leaves the apartment, she rips up the sheet of paper with the crosses marking the time she has been away, indicating her understanding that she will never return to Germany. As the family boards the boat to England, Mama jokes that she can’t wait to eat a lovely piece of cheese in London, a reference to the new food they will once again have to get used to. Listening to a group of British people speaking, Anna remarks that she doesn’t understand a word but it doesn’t matter “because soon, I will understand it all.” By now, the prospect of a new place seems like less of a setback and more of an adventure to be savoured.

Discussion Questions:

1. Although the family has suffered a huge financial losses and social standing, both Mama and Papa retain a degree of snobbery. How is this evident in their attitudes and behaviour?
2. Why is education so important to the family? Why do Anna’s parents look down on public school education? What do they think are important subjects that Max and Anna should learn?
3. What indications are given that the situation for Jews in Europe is becoming more dangerous?
4. Papa tells Anna that “Jews are experienced emigrants and although it is painful, I am proud to belong to a people with such a rich heritage.” What does he mean by “experienced emigrants?”
5. Why is Papa so angry that Mama agreed to take charity from the Steins? Is his anger justified?

6. What is the significance of Julius bequeathing his pocket watch to Anna?
7. Papa says that “maybe we’ll never be at home in one single place, but a little bit at home in many different places.” Which do you think is preferable? Why?
8. What is the significance of Anna ripping up the chart marking the days that the family has been away from Germany?
9. Before they leave their apartment, Papa says something to the landlady that we can’t hear. What do you think he says to her?
10. Do you think that Anna had a difficult childhood? Why/why not?

Themes

Adaptability

One of the biggest challenges facing Anna and her family is having to constantly adapt to new places, people and linguistic challenges everywhere that they go. With each move, the challenges seem bigger. Though people in Switzerland speak German, it is a different dialect than the one that the family uses. In France, the challenge is even greater as Anna has to learn a new language from scratch, as she will have to again when she moves to England. With each move, Anna and her family must endure a further strain on their finances. When the film opens, Anna lives in a large house with her own room and a housekeeper who does all the cooking and cleaning. In Switzerland, she and Max share a room and watch as Papa struggles to find work. By the time they get to France, they cannot even pay the rent in their one room apartment and Max complains that he is hungry all the time because there is not enough to eat. Socially, Max and Anna have to find new friends and adapt to new schools, a challenge made harder because of their the linguistic challenges each move entails. It is the family's resilience and ability to be flexible that allows them to flourish where other people might collapse under the weight of such challenges.

Focus Questions/Activities

1. Create a chart for each place that Anna lives. What new challenge does each place bring? How does she manage to overcome each new obstacle?
2. How do Mama and Papa help Anna and Max get used to each new place?
3. What do you think is the hardest challenge that faces the family overall?
4. Though they are both remarkable at adapting, Max and Anna occasionally feel an overwhelming sense of despair. Find examples in the film where their resilience starts to crack. How do they pull themselves out of that despair?
5. How do Max and Anna help each other adapt to each new place?
6. How do Mama and Papa help each other to adapt to each new place?
7. What are some of the positive changes that each new place has to offer?
8. Which family member do you think has the hardest time adapting to the family's changed fortunes? Why do you think so?

Innocence to Experience

While the film can be seen as a coming of age tale as Anna moves from a state of total innocence to a deeper understanding of the world around her, Anna is largely shielded from the horrors that are starting to unfold in Europe. Much of this has to do with her parents who try to see to it that the kids still celebrate birthdays, receive presents at Christmas and encourage Max and Anna to treat moves adventures to be celebrated rather than feared.

Despite Mama and Papa's attempts to shield Anna and Max as best they can, the family is nevertheless impacted by the Nazi regime. The most obvious sign of this the pink rabbit that Anna left behind, a symbol of the childhood that was robbed by Hitler. The pocket watch is also a symbol of Anna's childhood. We first see Anna delighted in supposedly being able to open Uncle Julius'

pocket watch just by blowing on it. While she may not quite be convinced that the trick is real, she has fun pretending that it works. After she notes the alarm on her father's face when Julius visits them in Switzerland, she is no longer willing to play along with the trick. Anna's naïve belief that she will one day return to Germany finally comes to an end when the family prepares to move yet again. Anna's acceptance of the family's fate as permanent exiles is reflected the way that she rips up the chart that she had been keeping crossing off the days until she can return home.

Focus Questions/Activities

1. Draw a chart that lists the key moments/events that move Anna away from her childhood toward a deeper understanding the world around her.
2. How do Anna's parents try to protect her from what is happening? Do you think it is a good idea for parents to hide things from their children? Why/why not?
3. What signs indicate that Anna has some understanding that bad things are happening in the world even though she is herself is always safe? (Think about the things she draws)
4. What do you think the title *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit* means? Did Hitler really steal Anna's stuffed animal?
5. Although Max is a few years older and more mature than Anna, he also undergoes a transformation over the course of the film. Draw a chart listing key moment/events that reflect his growing maturity.

Anti-Semitism

When *Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit* takes place in the early 30s, before the outbreak of WWII and the subsequent attempt to eradicate Jews. Nevertheless, anti-Semitism is a thread throughout the film, both implicitly and explicitly.

Throughout the film, there is a pervasive sense of danger looming over Anna's family because of their religion. Papa's vocal opposition to Hitler leads to his exile as Hitler sought to suppress the writing of Jewish intellectuals. The children are told not to have any visitors or tell anyone that their father has left, but nosy neighbours like Anna's friend's mother are clearly watching the family suspiciously. Snippets of information that arrive from Germany through Uncle Julius also indicate that it is becoming increasingly dangerous for Jews back home. The looming disaster ahead is foreshadowed when the family is stripped of their citizenship because of their religion, ensuring they will never go back to Germany.

As the film progresses, Anna and Max start to experience anti-Semitism firsthand. In Switzerland, a family of Germans comes to stay at the inn and refuses to play with Anna because they are Nazis and won't play with Jews. In France, both the landlady and the Austrian woman who lives upstairs display suspicion towards the family that turns into openly anti-Semitic comments as time goes on.

Focus Questions:

1. Anna wonders why her family is being targeted for being Jewish even though they are not religious and even celebrate Christmas. Why does the family's lack of religious observance not protect them from anti-Semitism?
2. Papa tells Max and Anna that it is "important for people like us to prove that [anti-Semites] are wrong and that they need to be "more honest, hard-working, generous and polite" than other people. Do you agree with this? Why/why not?
3. How does Max try to implement Papa's advice with the other German family at the inn? What is their reaction?
4. What characters in the film embrace the family despite their religion?
5. What characters display overtly anti-Semitic attitudes? Provide specific examples.

Family Unity

Anna and Max's ability to flourish despite so much upheaval in their lives can be attributed in no small part to the support they provide to one another as well as the unconditional love they receive from their parents. Likewise, Mama and Papa's devotion to one another and their unconditional love toward their children ensure that the family survives as a unit. That is not to say that they are perfect; like any siblings, Max and Anna experience sibling rivalry, especially when it comes to Max being allowed to go to private school.

As someone who grew up wealthy and is used to having a housekeeper to do all the cooking and cleaning, Mama must get used to be a homemaker instead of a musician. In order to provide the family with Christmas presents, she sells the little jewelry she has left. However, the strain of living in poverty occasionally does show, such as the time where she snaps at Max that he can either go

out with friends to the cinema or have a hot meal to eat the next day. Papa is sensitive to the difficulties she is having and he tries to lift her spirits with the occasional treat like a piece of rich pastry or the cloth keyboard he gives her for Christmas.

Papa is the one who faces the biggest challenge. If he can no longer publish anywhere, the family will have no source of income. In addition to the practical challenge that poses, Papa's self-esteem plummets as he becomes persona non grata in the publishing world. When they first move to Switzerland, Anna notes that back in Germany, Papa knew how to do everything. Max's response to that is an unequivocal "those days are over." While his professional standing is in tatters, Papa's position as the head of the house remains intact and the family never wavers in their belief that he will be able to provide for and protect them.

Focus Questions/Activities

1. Write a paragraph charting Max and Anna's relationship over the course of the film. When are they critical of each other? When do they support each other?
2. How do Mama and Papa try to bolster Anna and Max's spirits in each new place they move to? Provide specific examples throughout the film.
3. Although Mama is almost saint-like in her devotion to Papa, she does lose her temper and defy him once in the film. When does she do that? Why? Do you agree with her? Why/why not?
4. What are the values that are most important to the family and how do they uphold them wherever they go?

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(All websites cited are from October 2020)

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