



# Fanny's Journey (Le Voyage de Fanny)

The year is 1943; Germany has just occupied France in World War II. Thirteen-year-old Fanny is sent with her little sisters to a foster home for Jewish children. When the orphanage becomes unsafe, the staff desperately organizes the departure of the children to Switzerland. Fanny and her sisters travel to the border, where the children are suddenly left to fend for themselves. Fanny takes the lead in this inspiring tale of bravery, strength and survival. Based on a true story.

**Recommended for ages 10+**

**Themes:** perseverance; resilience; teamwork; sibling dynamics; tolerance; inequality; identity; international

**Director(s):** Lola Doillon | **94 min** | **Drama** | **2016** | **Country:** France, Belgium | **Language:** French w/English subtitles



## SET THE STAGE | THOUGHT-STARTERS

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Nazi Germany invaded France in June of 1940, establishing control of the country's northern region. Following this occupation, French Jews started being deported to concentration camps. Laws were also put into place stripping Jewish people of their rights and businesses. As a result, several groups, including the Children's Aid Society (OSE), the Jewish Scout Movement, as well as individual families and churches began rescuing Jewish children, placing them in hiding or trying to send them to Switzerland. Switzerland remained neutral in World War II, meaning that it was safe for Jews to live there. These rescuers often had to move children frequently to ensure their safety as Germany began occupying more of the country. It is estimated that seven thousand Jewish children in France were saved from concentration camps due to these rescue efforts.

### WORDS TO KNOW

- **Holocaust:** The mass murder of Jews under the Nazi regime from 1941-1945. More than six million European Jews, as well as members of other persecuted groups, such as gypsies and homosexuals, were murdered at concentration camps like Auschwitz.
- **Anti-semitism:** Hostility to or prejudice against Jewish people.
- **Cinematography:** The art and technique of making motion pictures. This includes how the film uses light, shadow, color, movement, and composition within the frame.
- **Foreshadowing:** A warning or indication of a future event.
- **Plot Device:** Any technique in a narrative used to move the plot forward.

For more film terms, refer to the PCFF Film Glossary ([pcfFri.org/FilmHub](http://pcfFri.org/FilmHub)).

## TALK ABOUT IT | DISCUSSION

- Fanny is forced to take on a leadership role following the departure of Elie. What character traits make her a good leader? What would you have done in her position? What fears would you have to face in order to accomplish this?
- Was there any one character in the film who you connected with more than others? Why or why not?
- In one scene, Maurice taunts a Nazi officer to shoot him and the rest of the children. What did you think about this scene? Why do you think Maurice acted this way?
- Do you think Elie is a traitor? Why or why not?
- Throughout the film, the children are forced to take on new identities and remember them to avoid being deported to a concentration camp. Is this something you think you would be able to do? Why or why not? What might some of the challenges be in taking a new identity?
- How are the different settings portrayed stylistically in the film? Do any of these choices foreshadow the resulting events that happen in each area?



Clues and Cues

### Pay attention while watching

- As you watch the experience of war is shown from the children's perspectives, notice how the mood changes over the course of their journey.
- Think about the film techniques and stylistic choices used by the filmmaker to create a sense of time and place.

## GET CREATIVE | EXTENSION ACTIVITIES



For Activity Reel details, downloadable storyboard template and more, visit the the Film Hub website: [www.pcfri.org/FilmHub](http://www.pcfri.org/FilmHub)

### • Writing Prompt

*Materials Needed: Paper, pens, pencils*

At one point in the film, Victor tells Fanny “we can only rely on ourselves.” One of the film’s key themes is trust; knowing who to trust becomes a necessary part of the children’s survival. How is trust created and broken throughout the film? Think about the way in which the director chooses to reveal which characters can be trusted.

### • Forging Identities

*Materials Needed: Paper, pens, photograph*

In the film, Fanny and the rest of the Jewish children take on new identities to protect themselves from being sent to a concentration camp. While the children in *Fanny’s Journey* do not own forged identity cards, many children who went into hiding were given new identity papers to further legitimize their fake personas. Using (<http://chgs.umn.edu/museum/exhibitions/rescuers/documents.html>) as a guide, imagine you are a Jewish child fleeing the Nazis. Research what types of identities were viewed as most desirable and create your own “forged” identity card.

## BEYOND THE FILM | ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources complement the film and inspire further discussion or programming.

### BOOKS

#### • **Hidden: A Child’s Story of the Holocaust**

*by Loic Dauvillier*

In this graphic novel, a grandmother recounts to her granddaughter the story of how she was saved during World War II by hiding with neighbors and family friends.

#### • **The Upstairs Room**

*by Johanna Reiss*

A Jewish girl describes the almost three years she spent in hiding in the upstairs bedroom of a farmer’s house during World War II. Fictionalized account of the author’s autobiographical experience in hiding.

#### • **When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit**

*by Judith Kerr*

The story of a young Jewish girl and her family’s journey as they escape Nazi Germany through Switzerland, Paris and England.

### LOCAL CONNECTIONS

#### • **The Holocaust Education and Resource**

**Center of Rhode Island**

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

### FILMS

#### • **Wunderkinder** (2011)

Two Jewish musical prodigies living in Ukraine in 1941 become friends with a German girl who shares their love for classical music. This friendship is tested when Hitler invades the Soviet Union.

#### • **Au Revoir Les Enfants** (1987)

A French boarding school run by priests seems to be a haven from World War II until a new student arrives. He becomes the roommate of a top student in his class. Rivals at first, the roommates form a bond and share a secret.

#### • **Secret Lives: Hidden Children and Their Rescuers During World War II** (2002)

Documentary about the lives of the brave rescuers who took in Jewish children to save them from the Holocaust.

#### • **The Courageous Heart of Irena Sendler** (2009)

Tells the story of Irena Sendler, a Polish social worker who smuggled 2,500 Jewish children to safety during World War II.

• **Indicates PCFF festival selection**

### RELATED INTERNET LINKS

#### • **Information about hidden children by the**

**United States Holocaust Museum:**

[www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10006125](http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10006125)

#### • **Hidden children in France during the Holocaust:**

[www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/newsletter/24/hidden\\_children.asp](http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/newsletter/24/hidden_children.asp)

#### • **History of France during World War II:**

[www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwtwo/fall\\_france\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwtwo/fall_france_01.shtml)

