# Table of Contents

- Page 2  
  Preparing for the Play  
- Page 3  
  The Characters  
- Page 4  
  Power and Persecution  
- Page 5  
  Juden Verboten  
- Page 6  
  Kristallnacht  
- Page 7  
  Kindertransport  
- Page 8  
  Write to Us  

---

**ArtsPower National Touring Theatre**

Gary W. Blackman • Mark A. Blackman  
Executive Producers  

**My Heart in a Suitcase**  
Based on the book by Anne L. Fox  

- Play by Greg Gunning  
- Music by Richard DeRosa  

Costume Design & Construction by Fred Sorrentino  
Set Construction by Tom Carroll Studios  

---

**My Heart in a Suitcase**  
Performance Study Buddy  

Written by Dr. Rosalind Flynn  
Designed by Tony Gibson

Please photocopy any or all of the following pages to distribute to students.

---

A one-act play based on the book by Anne L. Fox  

Generously funded by Anonymous with additional support from Panasonic
Prefering for the Play

**Note to Teachers:**

This study guide is designed to help you and your students prepare for, enjoy, and discuss *My Heart in a Suitcase*. It contains background information and cross-curricular activities to complete both before and after the performance.

Based on the memoirs of Anne L. Fox, this play is a dramatization of the experiences of real people in a real period of history. While parts of the play are light and upbeat, students should know that they will see and hear evidence of discrimination and violence.

To present historically accurate visual images, this production incorporates symbols and gestures that are now considered universally offensive: the Nazi swastika and uniform, the "Heil, Hitler" salute, and the six-pointed yellow Star of David inscribed with the word "Jew."

### The Plot of *My Heart in a Suitcase*

To help students understand the action of the play, read this plot summary to them. The characters’ names appear in **boldface** type.

**Anne** Lehmann is a young Jewish girl in Berlin, Germany. Since her older brother Gunther moved to England, she is the only child living with her parents. She calls her father **Vati** (VAH-tee), and her mother **Mutti** (MOO-tee). Up until the fall of 1938, Anne went to school and played regularly with her best friend **Dorit**. Life for Anne and all Jewish people in Germany begins to change under the rule of the Nazi Party. Anne's father loses his job and no one will hire him. Anne's teacher, **Mrs. Waldenburg**, tells Anne that she is no longer permitted to attend German public school. Even Dorit becomes lost to Anne when she joins a Nazi Youth Group—the Union of German Girls.

Anne’s family is forced to wear six-pointed yellow stars that identify them as Jews. Mutti believes that this persecution will stop and good people will come to their senses, but after a terrifying night of brutal attacks on Jews, the Lehmann family makes an important decision. They register Anne for the *Kindertransport*—a program that permits Jewish children to leave Nazi-occupied countries and re-settle in Great Britain. With only one small suitcase, young Anne boards a train alone and says good-bye to her parents forever.

### Resources

To read the book that inspired this play, look for: Fox, Anne L. *My Heart in a Suitcase*. Portland, OR: Vallentine Mitchell, 1996.

To read the letters Anne’s parents wrote her and her brother in England, look for: Fox, Anne L. *Between the Lines: Letters from the Holocaust*. Atlantic City, NJ: ComteQ Publishing, 2005.

For more stories of the *Kindertransport*, watch: “Into the Arms of Strangers,” the 2000 Warner Brothers Academy Award-winner for Best Documentary Feature produced by Deborah Oppenheimer and Mark Jonathan Harris.

For information about the *Kindertransport* and the children involved, visit: www2.warnerbros.com/intothearmsofstrangers and www.kindertransport.org
Sometimes your heart wants certain moments to stay forever—knowing somehow it’s an important moment—not wanting it to end—holding onto it like some important picture—like a photograph or something. That’s the way I felt seeing them all standing there—my mother and father—who I called Mutti and Vati—and Dorit—my best friend.

Many years later, Anne and her best friend Dorit shared a love of the movies, Shirley Temple, Charlie Chaplin, and Mickey Mouse. Anne and Dorit have remained friends to this day.

Anne left her home in Berlin when she was just 12 years old. Pictured is actress Christina Doikos.
Dramatically Speaking

A theatre convention is a practice that is accepted in the presentation of a play. Reading letters aloud on stage is a centuries-old theatre convention.

Throughout My Heart in a Suitcase, you will hear characters read letters to Anne's brother Günter. The letters reveal information and emotions that help the audience understand the play.

Student Activity

The first set of lines on this page are from Vati's letter to Günter. They express concern about unfair rules. What rule do you think is unfair to you? Write the first five or six sentences of a letter to a friend explaining the rule and your feelings about it. Read your letter aloud to classmates.

Vati
Dear Günter—Our situation under this Nazi government grows worse. Every day they pass more laws which take away our rights. I still can't find a job—no Jews are allowed to work in banking. Now I'm even beginning to fear for the safety of your mother and sister.

Dorit and Waldenburg
“Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!”

Vati
The Nazis aren't going to let us leave the country! They're going to kill us!

Mutti
Kill us? Stop talking nonsense! This is 1938 Germany—not the Dark Ages!

Vati
We're disappearing….The war is coming. And when it does—the curtain will finally close around us. Then they'll do just what they want. They'll simply drag us out of our beds in the middle of the night. What's to stop them?

Did You Know?

In 2005, Anne L. Fox published the letters her parents wrote to her and her brother Günter after their arrival in England in the book, Between the Lines: Letters from the Holocaust (published by Comteq Publishing. Margate, New Jersey).

The Nazi government was in power in Germany from 1933-1945. Nazi is short for the National Socialist German Workers Party. Its leader, Adolf Hitler, was a dictator—he had complete control over law-making, police, military, and people's public and private lives. The Nazis passed laws saying that Jewish people were no longer citizens. They were banned from all professional jobs. Their children were prohibited from attending public schools. Without basic citizens’ rights, Jews could be mistreated, robbed, and imprisoned.

Sieg Heil! or “Victory and Hail” was a common Nazi exclamation. The phrase was usually chanted three times, accompanied by the Hitler salute: right hand held upward, either at a right angle to the chest or slightly raised.
Juden Verboten

Dramatically Speaking

Carefully read the lines of dialogue printed on this page. Notice all the negative words—words that communicate “No Jews.”

Echoes

Assign a reader for each line on this page. As each reader reads the lines aloud with expression, have the rest of the class softly echo any negative words or phrases. Practice several times, working together to create a vocal collage with a serious tone.

During the performance, listen for these lines.

Historically Speaking

Juden verboten—“No Jews”—signs began appearing in German towns, villages, restaurants, and shops in 1935. Jewish businesses, doctors, and lawyers were boycotted. Jews were forbidden to hold jobs they had been educated for and to frequent places they had always gone.

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, the Nazis made it mandatory for all Jewish people to wear a yellow Star of David with the word "Jew" on the left chest of outer clothing. This visual labeling clearly distinguished Jews from non-Jews. The “Jewish Badge” made it easier for those in power to discriminate against and persecute Jews.

My Heart in a Suitcase 5

Parole für die Nationalversammlung:
Wählt keine Juden!

“Our national motto - NO JEWS.”
ANNE
But it went on into the night—breaking glass—shouting—crying. I looked out one of our windows—to the sidewalk where Dorit and I used to play: Men running by with torches—whole families—neighbors pulled out into the street—spit on, kicked, beaten, or just taken away. I…I couldn’t believe it—that this was happening in Berlin….It was all like some kind of a … a nightmare or something!

VATI
Dear Günter—No synagogues exist anymore in the whole of Germany which were not burned down or burning still.

ANNE
But something else was destroyed on this “Kristallnacht,” this “Night of Broken Glass”—you no longer felt safe—not even in your own home.

HISTORICALLY Speaking
On the nights of November 9-10, 1938, the Nazis organized mobs throughout Germany and Austria to freely attack Jews in their streets, homes, and places of work and worship. Close to 100 Jews were killed. Thousands of Jewish businesses, synagogues, cemeteries, schools, and homes were damaged or destroyed. Thirty thousand Jews were arrested and sent to concentration camps—huge prisons in which prisoners were mistreated, starved, overworked, tortured, and killed.

In German, Kristall translates to “crystal,” meaning broken glass, and Nacht means “night.” Because of the huge amount of shattered store windowpanes that covered German streets, these violent attacks came to be called Kristallnacht—"Night of Broken Glass."
My Heart in a Suitcase

Kindertransport

MUTTI
Your father and I have decided to...to register you so that you can leave the country....

ANNE
Register me?

MUTTI
Because of unfavorable world reaction, the Nazis have agreed—and the British government has agreed—to allow some children under the age of seventeen to go to England.

ANNE
But what about you and Vati?

MUTTI
No...no parents would be allowed to leave.

ANNE
But why only children?

MUTTI
Well, most countries like England are afraid that a flood of working adults would take jobs away from their own citizens. But children would only be going to school... Now—they will only allow you to take one small suitcase.

Kinder is the German word for children. From December 1938 to September 1939, 10,000 Jewish children from Nazi-occupied countries were transported to Great Britain. The efforts of the small number of organizers of the Kindertransport and the generosity of the British government saved them from certain death.

The children lived in British homes or orphanages. Although most never saw their parents again, many of these adult survivors report great joy in survival. They made new lives, families, and contributions to their communities and countries.

For information about the Kindertransport and the children involved, visit: www.kindertransport.org www2.warnerbros.com/intothearmsofstrangers

The lines of dialogue on this play are a "cutting"—a short portion—from the script. In pairs, read and rehearse the short scene in the center of this page. Try different ways of delivering each character's lines. Mutti may speak as a strict, no-nonsense mother or she may be nervous and emotional. Anne may react to her words with panic or with a calm disbelief. How else might actors interpret these lines? Experiment with several interpretations. Share your scene with classmates.

During the performance, listen for this scene.
Write to Us

After you attend *My Heart in a Suitcase*, please share your thoughts with ArtsPower, or visit ArtsPower online at www.artspower.org and click on “Contact Us” on the top tool bar.

Teacher’s Name: _______________________________________
Your School: ___________________________________________
City, State: ___________________________________________
Date: _______________________________

ArtsPower National Touring Theatre
39 South Fullerton Avenue
Montclair, NJ 07042-3354

I saw *My Heart in a Suitcase* at ___________________________. Here’s what I learned by attending this performance:
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Here’s what I would like to tell Anne L. Fox:
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Sincerely,
Your Name: ___________________________________________
Theater Etiquette

Each year, thousands of teachers, students, bus drivers, and parents take part in CSB/SJU's Fine Arts Education Series. Please review the LOOKING and LISTENING information below with your students to help make your theater experience the best it can be.

**LOOKING and LISTENING**
Attending a live performance of *My Heart in a Suitcase* will be interesting and enjoyable for everyone if you remember to...

- watch for facial expressions to help you understand what the actors are feeling.
- listen in order to understand the communication between the actors.

The performers in *My Heart in a Suitcase* need help from you, the audience. You are an important part of the play. Being an audience member in a theater is different from watching a movie or television show. The performers are in the same room with you and are affected by what you do. To do their best, the performers need you to watch and listen closely. Audience members also depend on your quiet attention during the performance so that they can enjoy their theater experience as well.

**PROCEDURES**

Please review the PROCEDURES information below to help your theater visit go smoothly.

- Please bring a minimum of one adult chaperone for every fifteen students.
- Please remind chaperones that the theater etiquette they model speaks volumes to your students.
- Prepare your students to enter the theater in single file in order of seating.
- Position your chaperones to maximize adult supervision of your group.
- Please wait until your whole group is seated before making trips to the rest room. Then students may go in small groups with the teacher’s permission. Younger students making trips to the rest room will need to be chaperoned.
- The theater is a food, gum, drink, radio, camera, tape, and video recorder free zone!
- Please leave inappropriate behaviors behind when visiting the theater.
- Please remain seated following the performance. Your group will be dismissed from the theater by a Fine Arts Programming staff member.

**Enjoy My Heart in a Suitcase!**

This study guide was provided by ArtsPower National Touring Theatre