

Corrie ten Boom This Is Your Life.

Characters:

Corrie ten Boom.

Compare

Gelda

Hans

Jasha

Greta

Miriam

Jacob

Sarah

Daniel

Gustav

Comp: Well Corrie, you were born in 1891 In Holland where you grew up with your parents, your sisters Betsie and Nollie, and your brother Willem.

You had a happy childhood and you loved your mother and father very much. They brought you up to love God and to follow Jesus every day. Your father was the local clock maker and you followed in his footsteps and became the first woman in Holland ever to qualify as a clock maker. But you did lots of other things as well, in particular running clubs and activities for the young girls of Haarlem.

Geld: (off stage) Oh yes Corrie was an inspiration to us all. It seemed that there was no limit to the things she could dream up for us to do.

Comp: Oh yes, you probably recognise the voice, someone you haven't seen for the past 50 years, but she was a member of the club, and has never forgotten about you. Yes it's Gelda!

(enter Gelda)

Comp: So Gelda, what was it like in one of Corrie's clubs?

Geld: Well, Corrie was always just amazing. We would always have something new to do, she would arrange exciting trips and walks and visits, and often get us to go and help other people, tidying gardens and all that sort of thing. But best of all, at the end of each meeting Corrie would sit us all down and tell us something about Jesus. She would tell us stories that made us feel as if we had actually met Jesus himself. Stories I have never forgotten, and stories that really helped me through the difficult years of war and all that. So Corrie, thank you for all you did for all of us.

Comp: Gelda thank you. Now Corrie, when the war started all the clubs you had run had to stop. The soldiers came to every house and took away all the radios they could find. But your father managed to hide one of his which became almost the only radio in the whole town.

Hans: (off stage) O yes, and how precious the news from that radio was to all of us!

Comp: Yes, again you haven't seen him for nearly 50 years, but we've found him. The Son of your neighbours in Harlem it's Hans.

(Enter Hans)

Comp: So Hans, tell us how important this radio was to all of you.

Hans: Well the soldiers took every radio they could find, they closed all the newspapers, and so we didn't know what was going on in the world outside of Haarlem at all. Old Papa ten Boom's radio was the source of all our news. He would listen and then slip bits of news into his conversations with others; soon the news had spread all over the town. It really kept our spirits up to know that we were not alone.

Comp: Hans thank you. Well Corrie as time went on the soldiers controlled more and more of your lives. But then you were really upset to see that some of your friends were beginning to suffer even more than everyone else. All the Jewish people in Haarlem were made to wear labels, the soldiers started to hit them and beat them up in the street, they started to smash the windows and steal from their homes. And then one day you saw the soldiers come to the home of your friends Mr and Mrs Weil who kept a Fur shop just across the road. The soldiers smashed all the windows and stole all the furs and left Mr and Mrs Weil battered and bruised.

Jash: (off stage) but you Corrie did not just stand around and watch like so many others. You went straight across the street and led my parents to safety.

Comp: Yes, someone else you haven't seen for many years, it's the son of your neighbours, Jasha Veil.

(Enter Jasha)

Comp: So Jasha, what happened then?

Jasha: Well, I was only a baby, but Corrie looked after my parents and myself and then she went off to see her brother who lived in Hilversum. All I was told by my parents was that that night some people came and led us away to safety. Otherwise we would have certainly have been rounded up with all the other Jews and taken away.

Comp: Thank you Jasha. Well Corrie Things began to get even worse. More and more of your Jewish friends were being taken away, and once the news spread that you had helped Jasha and his parents, more and more Jewish people started to arrive at the shop asking for help. It was very dangerous but you and your parents didn't hesitate to put them up in your spare rooms until you could find ways of moving them on to other places. At first the biggest problem was finding food. No one who didn't have a ration card could buy food, and all the Jewish people had had their ration cards taken away, the soldiers wanted them to starve to death. But then Corrie, one day you were thinking and praying about this and you remembered the name of someone you knew.

Gret: (off stage) And that name was Fred, Fred Konstra.

Comp: Yes it's your old friend Greta Konstra!

(Enter Gret)

Comp: So Gretta, what happened next?

Gret: Well you see my father worked in the government department that issued ration cards. He knew Corrie because I had been a member of one of her clubs a few years before, so when Corrie quietly suggested that she needed a few extra ration cards he knew that she wasn't trying to make money like so many others were at the time. So my father got some friends to stage a fake robbery at his office. He made it very realistic and got a black eye and some nasty bruises, but then a few days later he was able to call at the shop and give Corrie a pile of extra cards for all the people that she was trying to help. It was very dangerous, if he had been caught he would have been killed without a doubt, but because it was Corrie asking, he was happy to help.

Comp: Well thank you Gretta. Now Corrie, very soon the soldiers wanted to round up all the Jews and take them away. You couldn't keep them in the spare rooms any more; you would have to hide them. So you had a secret room built in the house. It was designed to be impossible to find and all the Jewish people that you had staying with you had to hide in the room whenever there was any danger.

Mir: (Off stage) Oh yes, and it was a tiny room for so many people, very tiny indeed!

Comp: Yes it's your friend from all those years ago Miriam.

(enter Miriam)

Comp: So what was it really like Miriam?

Mir: Well sometimes we had to hide in the secret room for days on end you know! It was small and stuffy and crowded and for us children there was nothing to do at all. But it was wonderful because we knew we were safe. Every day Corrie would bring us our food and she would talk and pray with us. She would ask that God would give us strength and help us to get on with each other. I can still remember her prayers, she had so much faith and it seemed to rub off on us as well. We were always very disappointed when she had to leave us.

Comp: Thank you Miriam. Well Corrie you did more and more things to help the Jewish people. But you always knew how dangerous it was. There were soldiers everywhere and it was always difficult to know who you could trust and who was going to report you to the soldiers. And so one day there was a very loud knocking at your door. A group of soldiers came crashing into the house and searched everywhere, but no matter how hard they tried they could not find the secret room. They took you and Betsie and your parents one by one into a room and shouted at you and hit you, but none of you gave away the secret. So they took you away to the local police station for questioning.

Jacob: (off stage) and I will always remember Papa Boon's voice that night as he quoted his bible from heart.

Comp: Yes from 50years ago, he was in prison with you then and has followed all you have done since, it's Jacob?

(enter Jacob)

Comp: Well Jacob, tell us what happened.

Jac: A whole bunch of resistance workers had been arrested and late that night we all gathered around Papa ten Boom. He remembered a verse from Psalm 119: "You are my hiding place and my shield: I hope in your word.... Hold me up, and I shall be safe." Somehow as he spoke all of his faith in God seemed to flow out and touch each of us as well. And then Corrie prayed and somehow we knew that whatever happened to us God would always be with us to look after us.

Comp: Well thank you Jacob. Now you were all taken to prison and sadly your father died there just a few days later. You Corrie were very ill, and so they kept you in a cell on your own for 4 months. All you had to eat was a bowl of thin porridge in the morning and a piece of mouldy bread in the evening. But you did have something that kept you going and that was some small copies of the 4 gospels, the story of Jesus that you read over and over again, and that really was the thing that kept you alive. But then after nearly a year you were suddenly marched off to the railway station with all the other prisoners and put on a train. Luckily though you met Betsie again and you were able to stay together. You arrived though at a prison camp where things were even worse and then later you were moved again by train to a prison camp in Germany called Ravensbrook. Here terrible things happened and many many people died.

Sarah: (off stage) Yes terrible things did happen, but things were all the better for Corrie and Betsie being around.

Comp: Yes it's your fellow prisoner and good friend, Sarah.

(enter Sarah)

Comp: Well Sarah, tell us about those times.

Sarah: Well you cannot imagine how horrible it was. There were over a thousand women packed into a small room and the whole place was full of fleas that bit us all over. At first we used to fight and get on each others nerves, but then Corrie started each evening to read parts of the Bible to us. Suddenly things started to change. We started to help each other just like we heard Jesus doing in the stories that Corrie read. Corrie had some special vitamin drops and she gave these to people who were ill to give them strength. It was only a little bottle but somehow it never seemed to run out. Every time we needed the drops there was always enough, it was a miracle! Betsie and Corrie taught us about God's love and about how we should love each other and they even told us that we should try not to hate the guards, and do you know that really made a difference.

Comp: Well thank you Sarah. Now Corrie, sadly your sister Betsie became ill and was taken into the prison hospital. You were not allowed to visit her but you used to go and look through the window at her whenever you could. But one day you went to look at Betsie and she was no longer there, you knew that she had died.

Dan: And I will never forget that day, never in my life.

Comp: Yes from all those years ago it's your fellow prisoner, Daniel.

(Enter Daniel)

Comp: Well Daniel, tell us more.

Dan: Well I met Corrie, she was crying and I asked her what was wrong. She told me all about Betsie and so I took her to the place where they put the people who had just died. We looked around and found Betsie and what we saw was amazing. Her face was completely changed. It wasn't shrivelled like our faces were, but it was bright and shining. She really did look like an angel. It looked as if Betsie had just seen the most amazing, the most wonderful, the most beautiful thing ever. She was dead, but we knew that she was safe, we knew that she had gone to heaven.

Comp: Thank you Daniel. Now Corrie your amazing story continues because just a little while later you were called into the prison office. You thought you were probably going to be punished, but instead you were given a card and a train ticket. On the card it said simply, released. You were free to go. Now you found out later that this was a mistake. They had mixed you up with someone else, but suddenly you found yourself on a train heading back to Holland. The war ended of course and since then you have spent your life helping people who were hurt by all the horrible things that happened to them during that time.

Gus: (off stage) You can't really say helping, that's not good enough, saving would be a better word.

Comp: Yes it's one of those people you helped, Gustav.

(enter Gustav)

Comp: Gustav, tell us why Corrie's help was so special for you.

Gus: Well you see during the war I was one of the soldiers. I was one of the soldiers who kept people locked up in prison camps. I was one of the soldiers who treated people so badly, who even killed people. And yet Corrie has even helped me. She has shown me how much God loves even me, despite all the terrible things I did. Corrie has shown me that if I say sorry to God even I can know his love, and that is amazing. I have been able to live again all thanks to Corrie.

Comp: Well thank you Gustav. And so Corrie Ten Boon, (handing the red book) this is your life!

