



The Story of Corrie ten Boom's First Book

It was clear from a young age that Corrie ten Boom had a knack for storytelling. As a child growing up in the Netherlands, she would make up stories inspired by her Christian faith, writing them in homemade books, which she made herself.¹ After spending time studying at a local school,² she eventually got a job working alongside her father in their family-run watch shop. As she got older, she would write letters to encourage others in their faith and even share religious stories with her friends. Instead,³ she was involved in local Christian organizations and led a prayer group in her church. She became one of the most influential Christian voices during and after World War II.

While working in her family's shop, an unexpected history changing event⁴ launched her literary career. In 1944, after her family was arrested for hiding Jewish refugees, she was forced to spend time in a concentration camp. Her experiences became the cause of her new purpose,⁵ and she began to occupy herself by writing her story.

Too bashful to show it to anyone or even to acknowledge that she had written anything, one day, when a publisher from New York came to visit, she graciously shared her story without even mentioning that she had written it down. It was quickly accepted and finally published the following year. *The Hiding Place* received near universal praise both from the general public and from Christian critics: the book sold millions of copies and won multiple Christian literary awards. The film adaptation, premiering in theaters, was just as popular as the book. It won several awards, and when prices are adjusted for inflation, it still holds the record as one of the highest-grossing Christian films of all time, weirdly.⁶ Despite the success of *The Hiding Place*, Corrie ten Boom never published another major book. In fact,⁷ the success of her first book may have prevented her from more successful writings. She had immediately become an international Christian celebrity almost overnight,⁸ but the constant demands of fame were overwhelming for her. When a reporter once asked her whether she had been writing anything, she said she was too busy responding to letters and requests about her last book to work on anything new. But even without writing any other books, she had secured literary immortality. Upon her death in 1983, her obituary described *The Hiding Place* as "the most phenomenal best-seller ever written by an unknown author of a first Christian book."