

Hannah Senesh



Prisoner of War

Many of us have read about World War II. You may have seen films of soldiers parachuting into battle. But did you know that one of the persons to parachute into a country and carry valuable information was a woman?

Hannah Senesh was a member of the Jewish faith during a time when Jews were being persecuted. She lived in Palestine, which was safe for Jewish people, but her mother lived in Hungary. If the German Nazis took over Hungary, Hannah knew her mother and many other Jews there would be in danger of being killed. Hannah and four Jewish men parachuted into Yugoslavia. They were going to deliver supplies and secret messages, take back war information to the English, and try to help some of the Jews escape from the Nazis in Hungary.

When Hannah had almost reached the border of Hungary, she was captured by Nazi soldiers. Hannah was carrying secret papers from the English, a radio for sending messages, and a secret code which she had memorized. Hannah knew that she would be questioned because of these items, but she resolved not to tell what she knew.

Hannah was tortured. Her teeth were knocked out. The soldiers forced her mother to watch them beat her. But Hannah did not tell the secrets. She would not betray the English soldiers or her Jewish friends and family. She was kept in prison for two months. In November, 1944, she was taken to the yard to be shot.

Twenty-three-year-old Hannah refused to be blindfolded. She faced those with rifles as she had faced life, pain, and duty—bravely, squarely, and without shame. Senesh kept her secrets and her pride.

How to Send a Secret Message

Sending secret messages was important during World War II. It can be important at times for you, too, since you sometimes have secrets you want to keep and messages you want to send. One way of sending a message and keeping it secret is to use invisible ink. Follow the instructions below to send your own secret message, using invisible ink.

Materials:

- 2 tablespoons (30 ml) of milk
- cup
- toothpick or cotton swab
- paper
- charcoal ashes or pencil shavings (found in a pencil sharpener)
- envelope

Secret Message Instructions

1. Put 2 tablespoons (30 mL) of milk in a cup.
2. Dip a toothpick or a cotton swab in the milk.
3. Now write your words on a piece of paper. When the milk dries, it is invisible.
4. To make the letters show up again, you will need developing powder. Take an envelope to the charcoal grill and put a few ashes inside. If you prefer, you can put the powdered pencil shavings from a pencil sharpener into your envelope. Now label your envelope "Magic Powder."
5. To make the message reappear, rub your finger into the magic powder and then across the page with the invisible ink. Presto! Your writing reappears.