Anne Frank: The book, the life, the afterlife

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Description
In June 1942, Anne Frank received a red-and-white-checked diary for her thirteenth birthday, just weeks before she and her family went into hiding in an Amsterdam attic to escape the Nazis. For two years, with ever-increasing maturity, Anne crafted a memoir that has become one of the most compelling documents of modern history. She described life in vivid, unforgettable detail, explored apparently irreconcilable views of human nature—people are good at heart but capable of unimaginable evil—and grappled with the unfolding events of World War II, until the hidden attic was raided in August 1944. But Anne Frank's diary, argues Francine Prose, is as much a work of art as a historical record. Through close reading, she marvels at the teenage Frank's skillfully natural narrative voice, at her finely tuned dialogue and ability to turn living people into characters. And Prose addresses what few of the diary's millions of readers may know: this book is a deliberate work of art. During her last months in hiding, Anne Frank furiously revised and edited her work, crafting a piece of literature that she had hoped would be read by the public after the war. Read it has been. Few books have been as influential for as long, and Prose thoroughly investigates the diary's unique afterlife: the obstacles and criticism Otto Frank faced in publishing his daughter's words; the controversy surrounding the diary's Broadway and film adaptations; and the claims of conspiracy theorists who have cried fraud, along with the scientific analysis that proved them wrong. Finally, Prose, a teacher herself, considers the rewards and challenges of sharing one of the world's most read, and most banned, books with students. How has the life and death of one girl become emblematic of the lives and deaths of so many, and why do her words continue to inspire? Anne Frank: The Book, The Life, The Afterlife tells the extraordinary story of the book that became a force in the world. Along the way, Francine Prose definitively establishes that Anne Frank was not an accidental author or a casual teenage chronicler, but a writer of prodigious talent and ambition.
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