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# THE DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL

*Anne Frank*

(Translated by Susan Massotty: Definitive Edition)

**Anne Frank** (1929–1945) was a teenaged Jewish girl whose family lived in Holland where her father was in business. When the Germans occupied Holland in the 1940s, due to their anti-Jewish policy the Jews there were arrested, tortured and put in concentration camps. Anne in her diary, which she affectionately called "Kitty", recorded her family members' troubled experiences while they were in hiding.

Her diary entries vividly portray the miserable life led by the Jews under the Nazi regime. The following excerpts are from *The Diary of a Young Girl*. Anne Frank wrote it in Dutch and it was later translated into English by Susan Massotty.

List of names mentioned in the text:

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Mr Van Daan     | - Anne's father's friend                               |
| Harry           | - Anne's friend  |
| Margot          | - Anne's elder sister                                  |
| Mr Koophius     | - Anne's father's business partner                     |
| Miep            | - Anne's father's business partner and a family friend |
| Henk Van Santen | - Miep's new husband                                   |
| Peter           | - Mr Van Daan's son                                    |
| Elli and Kraler | - Employees in Anne's father's business                |

Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> July, 1942

Dearest Kitty,

It seems like years since Sunday morning. So much has happened, it's as if the whole world had suddenly turned

upside down. But as you can see, Kitty, I'm still alive, and that's the main thing, Father says, I'm alive all right, but don't ask where or how. You probably don't understand a word I'm saying today, so I'll begin by telling you what happened Sunday afternoon.

At three o'clock (Harry had left but was supposed to come back later), the doorbell rang. I didn't hear it, since I was out on the balcony, lazily reading in the sun. A little while later Margot appeared in the kitchen doorway looking very agitated. "Father has received a call-up notice from the SS," she whispered.

"Mother has gone to see Mr van Daan" (Mr van Daan is Father's business partner and a good friend.)

I was stunned. A call-up: everyone knows what that means. Visions of concentration camps and lonely cells raced through my head. How could we let Father go to such a fate? "Of course he's not going," declared Margot as we waited for Mother in the living room. "Mother's gone to Mr van Daan to ask whether we can move to our hiding place tomorrow. The van Daans are going with us. There will be seven of us altogether." Silence. We couldn't speak. The thought of Father off visiting someone in the Jewish Hospital and completely unaware of what was happening, the long wait for Mother, the heat, the suspense—all this reduced us to silence.

Suddenly the doorbell rang again. "That's Harry,"

I said. "Don't open the door!" exclaimed Margot to stop me. But it wasn't necessary, since we heard Mother and Mr van Daan downstairs talking to Harry, and then the two of them came inside and shut the door behind them. Every time the bell rang, either Margot or I had to tiptoe downstairs to see if it was Father, and we didn't let anyone else in.

Margot and I were sent from the room, as Mr van Daan wanted to talk to Mother alone. When she and I were sitting in our bedroom, Margot told me that the call-up was not for Father, but for her. At this second

shock, I began to cry. Margot is sixteen—apparently they want to send girls her age away on their own. But thank goodness she won't be going; Mother had said so herself, which must be what Father had meant when he talked to me about our going into hiding.

Hiding... where would we hide? In the city? In the country? In a house? In a shack? When, where, how...? These were questions I wasn't allowed to ask, but they still kept running through my mind.

Margot and I started packing our most important belongings into a schoolbag. The first thing I stuck in was this diary, and then curlers, handkerchiefs, schoolbooks, a comb and some old letters. Preoccupied by the thought of going into hiding, I stuck the craziest things in the bag, but I'm not sorry. Memories mean more to me than dresses.

Father finally came home around five o' clock, and we called **Mr Kleiman** to ask if he could come by that evening. Mr van Daan left and went to get Miep. Miep arrived and promised to return later that night, taking with her a bag full of shoes, dresses, jackets, underwear and stockings. After that it was quiet in our apartment; none of us felt like eating. It was still hot, and everything was very strange.

We had rented our big upstairs room to a **Mr Goldschmidt, a divorced man in his thirties**, who apparently had nothing to do that evening, since despite all our polite hints he hung around until ten o' clock. Miep and Jan Gies came at eleven. Miep, who's worked for Father's company since 1933, has become a close friend, and so has her husband Jan. Once again, shoes, stockings, books and underwear disappeared into Miep's bag and Jan's deep pockets. At eleven-thirty they too disappeared.

I was exhausted, and even though I knew it'd be my last night in my own bed, I fell asleep right away and didn't wake up until Mother called me at five-thirty the

next morning. Fortunately, it wasn't as hot as Sunday; a warm rain fell throughout the day. The four of us were wrapped in so many layers of clothes it looked as if we were going off to spend the night in a refrigerator, and all that just so we could take more clothes with us. No Jew in our situation would dare leave the house with a suitcase full of clothes. I was wearing two undershirts, three pairs of underpants, a dress, and over that a skirt, a jacket, a raincoat, two pairs of stockings, heavy shoes, a cap, a scarf and lots more. I was suffocating even before we left the house, but no one bothered to ask me how I felt.

Margot stuffed her schoolbag with schoolbooks, went to get her bicycle and, with Miep leading the way, rode off into the great unknown. At any rate, that's how I thought of it, since I still didn't know where our hiding place was. At seven-thirty we too closed the door behind us; **Moortje, my cat,** was the only living creature I said good-bye to. According to a note we left for Mr Goldschmidt, she was to be taken to the neighbors, who would give her a good home. The stripped beds, the breakfast things on the table, the pound of meat for the cat in the kitchen—all of these created the impression that we'd left in a hurry. But we weren't interested in impressions. We just wanted to get out of there, to get away and reach our destination in safety. Nothing else mattered.

More tomorrow.

Yours, Anne

*Thursday, May 25, 1944*

Dearest Kitty,

There's something fresh every day. **This morning Mr van Hoeven was arrested.** He was hiding two Jews in his house. It's a heavy blow for us, not only because those poor Jews are once again balancing on the edge of an abyss, but also because it's terrible for Mr van Hoeven.

The world's been turned upside down. The most decent people are being sent to concentration camps, prisons and lonely cells, while the lowest of the low rule over young and old, rich and poor. One gets caught for black marketeering, another for hiding Jews or other unfortunate souls. Unless you're a Nazi, you don't know what's going to happen to you from one day to the next.

Mr van Hooen is a great loss to us too. Elli can't possibly lug such huge amounts of potatoes all the way here, nor should she have to, so our only choice is to eat fewer of them. I'll tell you what we have in mind, but it's certainly not going to make life here any more agreeable. Mother says we'll skip breakfast, eat hot cereal and bread for lunch and fried potatoes for dinner and, if possible, vegetables or lettuce once or twice a week. That's all there is. We're going to be hungry, but nothing's worse than being caught.

Yours, Anne

*Friday, May 26, 1944*

My dearest Kitty,

At long, long last, I can sit quietly at my table before the crack in the window frame and write you everything, everything I want to say.

(I feel more miserable than I have in months. Even after the burglary I didn't feel so utterly broken, inside and out. On the one hand, there's the news about Mr van Hooen, the Jewish question (which is discussed in detail by everyone in the house), the invasion (which is so long in coming), the awful food, the tension, the miserable atmosphere, my disappointment in Peter. On the other hand, there's Elli's engagement, Whitsun reception, the flowers, Mr Kraler's birthday, cakes and stories about movies and concerts. That gap, that enormous gap, is always there. One day we're laughing at the comical side of life in hiding, and the next day (and there are many such

{Here anne is talking about the gap between the lives of people inside her house and outside.}

Note: Annex is a part of house where her family is in hiding.

days), we're frightened, and the fear, tension and despair can be read on our faces. Miep and Mr Kraler bear the greatest burden for us, and for all those in hiding. Miep in everything she does and Mr Kraler through his enormous responsibility for the eight of us, which is sometimes so overwhelming that he can hardly speak from the pent-up tension and strain. Mr Koophius and Elli also take very good care of us, but they're able to put the Annex out of their minds, even if it's only for a few hours or a few days. They have their own worries, Mr Koophius with his health and Elli with her engagement, which isn't looking very promising at the moment. But they also have their outings, their visits with friends, their everyday lives as ordinary people, so that the tension is sometimes relieved, if only for a short while, while ours never is, never has been, not once in the two years we've been here. How much longer will this increasingly oppressive, unbearable weight press down on us?

The drains are clogged again. We can't run the water, or if we do, only a trickle; we can't flush the toilet, so we have to use a toilet brush; and we've been putting our dirty water into a big earthenware jar. We can manage for today, but what will happen if the plumber can't fix it on his own? The Sanitation Department can't come until Tuesday.

Whitsun (or Whitsunday) is the seventh Sunday after Easter. It was traditionally celebrated with social gatherings, receptions.

Miep sent us a currant cake with "Happy Whitsun" written on top. It's almost as if she were mocking us, since our moods and cares are far from "happy." We've all become more frightened since the van Hoesen business. Once again you hear "shh" from all sides, and we're doing everything more quietly. The police forced the door open there; they could just as easily do that here too! What will we do if we're ever... no, I mustn't write that down. But the question won't let itself be pushed to the back of my mind today. On the contrary, all the fear I've already been through, is facing me again in all its frightfulness.

→ Warehouse

Warehouse

Office - 113

*The Diary of a Young Girl*

I had to go downstairs alone at eight this evening to use the bathroom. There was no one down there, since they were all listening to the radio. I wanted to be brave, but it was hard. I always feel safer upstairs than in that huge, silent house; when I'm alone with those mysterious muffled sounds from upstairs and the honking of horns in the street, I have to hurry and remind myself where I am to keep from getting the shivers.

I've asked myself again and again whether it wouldn't have been better if we hadn't gone into hiding, and if we were dead now and didn't have to go through this misery, especially so that the others could be spared the burden. But we all shrink from this thought. We still love life, we haven't yet forgotten the voice of nature, and we keep hoping, hoping for... everything. I hope something will happen soon, even an air raid. Nothing can be more crushing than this anxiety. Let the end come, however cruel; at least then we'll know whether we are finally going to win through or go under.

Yours, Anne

GLOSSARY

the SS	schutzstaffe, the military police of the German Nazi party in the Second World War
call-up notice	a notice ordering a person to show up before the SS
concentration camps	a place where Jews were kept in very unpleasant conditions and tortured
lettuce	a vegetable with large thin green leaves that is eaten raw in a salad
Whitsun	the day that commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit from heaven to earth. It is celebrated on the seventh Sunday after Easter.

<i>currant cake</i>	cake made out of small dark dried seedless grapes
<i>muffled sounds</i>	barely audible noises

## MAIN EXERCISES

### Vocabulary enhancement

#### TASK

- Identify where the following words/expressions occur in the text. Give their contextual meanings and use them in your own sentences.
 

a. turned upside down	b. looking very agitated
c. to tiptoe downstairs	d. rode off
e. blow for us	f. on the edge of an abyss
g. lowest of the low	h. a great loss to us
i. laugh at the comical side	j. from one day to the next
k. on the contrary	l. facing one

#### COMPREHENSION

#### Global comprehension

- How does Anne describe the sufferings of the Jews in Nazi Germany?
- Anne refuses to be despaired in spite of the fear and tension all around her. Substantiate this statement with textual evidence.
- How does Anne portray the sufferings of the Jewish community through an elaboration of her personal experiences while in hiding?

## Local comprehension

1. Annotate the following:
  - a. Hiding . . . where would we hide? In the city? In the country? In a house? In a shack? When, where, how . . . ?
  - b. It's a heavy blow for us, not only because those poor Jews are once again balancing on the edge of an abyss, but also because it's terrible for Mr van Hooen.
  - c. But we all shrink from this thought. We still love life, we haven't yet forgotten the voice of nature, and we keep hoping, hoping for . . . everything.
2. What does 'call-up' notice mean? Why does it lead to a tense atmosphere in the Frank household?
3. Why does Anne's family decide to go into hiding?
4. Describe how the Frank family move out of their house.
5. How does Anne portray the world turned "upside down" in her diary entry on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1944? What particular event led to this?
6. When Miep sends the currant cake, why does Anne think she is mocking them?
7. Discuss how Anne presents her conflict of wishing to live and to die at the same time.

## CRITICAL ANALYSIS

1. How do you think Anne's journal was a 'great support and comfort' while she was undergoing those harrowing experiences in her hiding?
2. Chronological narration (events narrated in the order in which they occurred) is a favoured technique of many writers. Comment upon Anne's employment of this technique.

## SUPPLEMENTARY EXERCISES

### CREATIVE TASKS

1. Taking cues from Anne's writing, give an account of an agonising experience in the form of a diary entry.
2. Imagine the experience of your meeting Anne Frank who, if alive, would have been in her eighties now. Interact with her to get her childhood experiences recounted in the form of an interview.

### FURTHER READING

A large amount of Holocaust literature is available for study today. Testimonies of survivors, the accounts of their rescue and resistance have made generations of readers relive the horror and brutality of the Holocaust. The most popular and widely read books of the genre include Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* and Elie Wiesel's *Night*. Read these books.

### PROJECT

Start keeping a diary, (if you haven't had one so far) to record significant experiences.

(Note: Many creative writers make entries of their thoughts, impressions and experiences, however raw they may be, from which they draw materials for their writings even years later.)