

Name: _____
Current Unit

Date: _____
Team: _____

The Diary of Anne Frank

THURSDAY, JULY 9, 1942 - THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1942

Summary

On July 9, 1942, Anne and Margot are told to hurriedly stuff their things into their school satchels, for it is time for the family to go into hiding. Margot, Anne's older sister, has been summoned to work in a concentration camp. Although their departure date had been set for July 16, Otto Frank, out of fear for his daughter's safety, moves the date up by a week. As the Franks walk to their hiding place, carrying a few belongings in shopping bags, it will be the last time that they are out in the open air and free to walk about. It is appropriate that it is raining outside, a foreshadowing of the misery they will endure. For the next twenty-five months, before they are discovered and seized by the Nazis, they will live in fear, sharing the close quarters of the secret annex with another Jewish family, the van Daans.

The diary entries from July 9 to November 12 deal with four main topics: 1) a discussion of the secret annex and its occupants; 2) their connection with the outside world, including their source of supplies; 3) Anne's concern about the concentration camps and gas chambers; and 4) the turmoil of being an adolescent, made more difficult by the trying circumstances under which she lives.

In the entry on July 9, Anne draws a sketch of the annex and tells how the secret hiding place in the office building is covered up by a cupboard. There are only a few rooms, and the quarters are cramped. Anne notes that her mother and sister feel too terrible to work, but Anne tries to remain cheerful as she and her father unpack and arrange things. It seems that she does not really understand the danger that she and her family are under. At first, it seems almost like a vacation to Anne, as if they were staying in some boarding house.

Two days later, in the entry dated July 11, Anne is beginning to struggle with her new life and to acknowledge her fears. She tells how the family has forbidden Margot to cough at night, for fear of discovery. She also writes, "I can't tell you how oppressive it is never to be able to go outdoors; also I'm very afraid that we shall be discovered and be shot." She also talks about her Dutch protectors, the men who work downstairs in the office building.

After the July 11th entry, Anne does not write in the diary for more than a month. By the time she continues to make her entries, the van Daans have arrived to stay in the secret annex, bringing news of the outside world. Anne states that Peter, their awkward, quiet, and shy son, will not be good company for her, even though he is only two years older than she. Ironically, they later develop and a close and loving friendship. Anne also points out that Mrs. van Daan is a difficult and picky woman. She complains that the group is using the dishes belonging to the Franks rather than the ones belonging to her. She also fusses at Anne for talking too much and does not help much with the cleaning.

Although living in a small, damp, dark dwelling is boring and miserable, Anne accepts that it is necessary. She knows that she cannot fret or worry about the living conditions; the only thing that is important is survival. Life grows more tense, however, with the presence of the new arrivals. Anne hates that she must witness a terrible quarrel over a trivial thing between Mr. and Mrs. van Daan and the affect it has on Peter. She also resents that Mrs. van Daan is always criticizing her behavior and saying, “I wouldn’t put up with it if she were my daughter.” In addition, she dislikes the fact that all of the van Daans seem a bit lazy to her, especially Peter.

Anne also finds her own mother and sister difficult to bear, for they are always correcting her and telling her she must be quiet. She writes, “Mummy gave me another frightful sermon this morning; I can’t bear them. Our ideas are completely opposite.” Later she states, “Margot’s and Mummy’s natures are completely strange for me.” Her disagreements with her mother and sister intensify her adolescent rebelliousness. She writes, “Nothing, I repeat, nothing about me is right; my general appearance, my character, my manners are discussed from A to Z. . . . I am not going to take all these insults lying down. I’ll show them that Anne Frank wasn’t born yesterday.” She goes on to say in a later entry, “I have my faults, just like everyone else, I know that, but they thoroughly exaggerate everything.” Her emotions are not atypical for a teenage girl, especially one confined to a small space with an anxious mother and quibbling sister.

In spite of the misery that she often feels because of the way she is treated by her mother, her sister, and Mrs. van Daan. Anne tries to make the best of it. She says, “You only really get to know people when you’ve had a jolly good row with them. Then and then only can you judge their true characters.” She also feels thankful that Mrs. van Daan is not her mother.

In contrast to her feelings about her mother and sister, Anne feels that “Daddy is a darling.” Otto Frank does, indeed, prove that he is caring, resourceful, and wise. He serves as the peacemaker of the group, “pouring oil on troubled waters.” He keeps Anne, Margot, and Peter engaged in studying, reading, and making family trees. He also tries to comfort Anne.

Beginning with the entries dated September 28, Anne writes detailed and matter-of-fact accounts of everything the family does and every problem it faces under the confined circumstances of their lives. In the entry on September 29, she even gives a description of how, where, and when each member takes a bath. She also talks about the unhygienic conditions and their being forced to use a glass jar as a toilet bowl until they can find a plumber they can trust with their secret. Another time they cannot speak a single word, move about, or bathe for three days for fear of being detected.

Anne also writes about good things. She tells of Mrs. van Daan’s birthday party, one of the few celebrations that are given in the annex. She also tells about how she and Margot receive sack-like skirts that cost 24 florins each, three times more than pre-war prices. Additionally, Anne reveals that she and her sister will soon begin a correspondence course for short hand.

Very few of the entries in “Kitty” mention life outside the annex or the fate of other Jews in Amsterdam. The family only receives selected news from Miep, Elli, Koophuis, and Kraler, their “Dutch protectors;” the worst information about the fate of Jewish people

is always kept from them. Then Mr. and Mrs. Frank only share a small portion of what they learn with their daughters, for they do not want to make them worried or afraid.

On October 9, Anne does reveal that she knows about Jewish imprisonments. She writes about Westerbork, a Jewish camp where thousands of her race are brought in large cattle trucks by the Gestapo. She states, "Westerbork sounds terrible. . . Men, women and children all sleep together. One hears of frightful immorality because of this; and a lot of the women, and even the girls who stay there any length of time, are expecting babies."

She also acknowledges that it is impossible for the Jews to escape and that many of them are murdered, usually by gassing. Anne, always trying to find something positive in the negative, states that at least a gas chamber is a quick way to die.

One night Miep and Henk come to the secret annex and stay for the night. Anne is excited to have company; it is a change from the monotonous routine. She relates a sad tale told by Miep. An old, crippled Jewess, terrified by all the shooting, was sitting at her doorstep simply waiting for the Gestapo to take her away to the crematorium. The family also learns how prisoners are lined up against a wall and shot dead. The next day the Germans say their deaths were "fatal accidents." After the Franks hear stories such as these, they are silent and filled with a sense of helplessness and dread. They acknowledge that the Nazis are horrendous enemies and wonder if it is hopeless to hope against hope for their own safety.

Anne tells of two frightening experiences. The occupants of the annex are not warned that some workmen are coming to check the fire extinguishers. Upon hearing outsiders, they fear that they have been discovered and that the intruders are Nazis. Even after they discover the truth and know they are safe, Anne shakes with fear for almost two hours. A second frightful experience is when Otto Frank becomes very ill. No medical help can be called, for it would be too dangerous. Mrs. Frank tells her daughters to pray for their father's recovery. The prayers are answered.

Anne's problems with Margot and her mother constantly fluctuate. In one entry she writes that "Mummy, Margot, and I are as thick as thieves again." She even tells how she and her sister share their diaries and talk about their appearance. Later, her feelings again change and she complains, "Mummy and her failings are something I find harder to bear than anything else. . . I have in my mind's eye an image of what a perfect mother and wife should be. . . and I find no trace of that image [in her]. . . Sometimes I believe that God wants to try me. . . and I must become good through my own efforts, without examples and without good advice." Anne is also certain that her mother loves Margot best, for Anne believes her sister is more beautiful, intelligent, and talented than she is, even though she claims that she is not jealous of her. As a result of her feelings about her mother and sister, Anne continues to turn to her father for comfort. She states, "I cling to Daddy because it is only through him that I am able to retain the remnant of family feeling." She also admits that she longs for his love, "not only as his child, but for me - Anne, myself."

Within these entries in the diary, Anne does much soul-searching and self-criticism. She always sees faults in herself and wants to find ways to be a better person. She writes, "Every day I try to improve myself, again and again." She also admits that she is fed up

with living in the cramped quarters with no escape. It is not surprising that she often cries herself to sleep at night. She is, however, at least thankful to have her diary, for she feels she can write her deepest thoughts within its pages; she even personifies the diary as her friend and confidante.

Notes

This section of entries shows the emotional side of Anne. Like a typical teenage girl, there are disagreements with her mother and sister. Anne, believing that Margot is more beautiful and talented, feels certain that Mrs. Frank loves her sister best. She also finds her anxious mother to be critical and demanding. As a result, Anne sometimes questions her self worth. Fortunately, she can turn to her caring father for support.

The cramped quarters of the annex have also begun to bother Anne. She talks of her lack of privacy and the unsanitary conditions they sometimes have to endure. She is uncomfortable when she must witness an argument between Mr. and Mrs. van Daan and feels sorry for Peter, who is troubled by the fighting. She also hates the dull routine and the fact that she can never go outside. At least Mr. Frank is resourceful enough to come up with lessons for the children to study and to send away for a correspondence course so that Anne and Margot can learn shorthand. There are also other small delights to break the monotony, like the overnight visit of Miep and Henk, the birthday celebration for Mrs. van Daan, and the receipt of a new skirt.

By these entries, Anne also reveals that she has begun to worry about the safety of her family and herself. One time some workmen come to the annex to make repairs, and the family is frightened that they have been discovered by the Nazis. Anne admits that she is so scared that she shakes for two hours. She has also heard the horrible stories of the concentration camps, the gas chambers, and the firing squads. She wonders if the plight of the family is hopeless. It is not wonder that she often cries herself to sleep.