

Name: _____
Current Unit

Date: _____
Team: _____

The Diary of Anne Frank

NOVEMBER 9, 1942 - AUGUST 3, 1943

Summary

By November, the group has been in hiding for almost six months. Even though the Nazis have tried to confiscate all radios and the large set in the office downstairs has been turned in, the Jewish hideouts constantly listen to a small set given to them by their Dutch protectors. Anne writes that “the radio with its marvelous voice helps us to keep up our morale, . . . [hoping] better times will come.” They dream of hearing news about Hitler’s defeat and the end of the war; however, such news does not arrive. Instead, the fighting spreads to Holland, and there are frequent air raids and bombings. The Franks and van Daans grow nervous and fearful. Amidst the misery and fear, Anne tries to maintain a sense of hope in these entries, for she has heard on the radio that the English, French, and Russians have made advances, while Hitler has suffered some defeats.

Anne reveals that another Jew joins the group in the annex on November 17; it is a dentist named Dussel. At first, Anne thinks he is a nice gentleman, but conflicts with him soon begin when she learns she must share her room with him. She tries to be tolerant and to remember that what is most important is to keep one more Jew from being killed by the Nazis. Fortunately, things in the annex are lightened by the preparations for Chanukah (a Jewish celebration) and Saint Nicholas’ Day (a Dutch celebration). At the appropriate time, the group lights Chanukah candles and opens the gifts provided by their Dutch protectors. The attempt by these Jews in hiding to retain a facade of normalcy in the most abnormal of times is indeed remarkable.

These entries in the diary give details about the war and its affect on the occupants of the annex. The fighting in Holland continues. Anne tells how many of the Dutch provinces are purged of Jews; it is like the Nazis are getting rid of cockroaches. Everyone of the group in the annex has difficulty fighting depression about the war and their circumstances. They often find they cannot sleep, and their health deteriorates. Sometimes when she is afraid at night, Anne crawls in bed with her parents, even though she later judges it is a childish thing to do.

Anne tries not to complain excessively about her miserable living conditions, for she knows that the annex is a paradise in comparison to the concentration camps. She accepts that she must live with meals of stale food, underwear that is too small, and beds made with dirty sheets. She is also used to the smell of burning trash, for they cannot throw away their garbage, for fear of being caught. She acknowledges that “one can be betrayed by being a little careless.” Anne does complain, however, that her mother makes life more difficult. So do the air raids, the regular gunfire, and the constant fear of being discovered.

The later entries in this section become brighter and more optimistic. England has been giving solid resistance to the Germans, and there is hope among the group that the British will soon push forward to rescue Holland from the Nazi hold. They dare to again hope for freedom. Anne is feeling so positive that she even tells about a humorous

situation involving Peter and herself. He is dragging a sack of dried brown beans when it suddenly bursts open. A hailstorm of beans cascades down the stairs, and Anne, at the bottom of the steps, becomes “a little island amongst a sea of beans,” causing everyone to laugh. As they gather the beans, they laugh even harder. Anne tells about another humorous incident that occurs with Mrs. van Daan. Dussel, who has become an irritating and bossy old man, insists upon giving the fussy woman a dental check-up. As she resists in total nervousness, he makes it into a form of entertainment for the group, with everyone having a good chuckle at her expense. Such moments of humor help to relieve the tension created in the close quarters.

Anne tells about the celebration held in honor of her fourteenth birthday, on June 12, 1943. She receives several small gifts, including some new books, from her own family and the van Daans. Her father also writes a poem for her, a German tradition that he honors. It is a special day for Anne and helps brighten her spirits temporarily. She is especially delighted to have some new reading material, for books have become an all-important source of amusement for her. She also finds relief from the monotony when she and Margot are sometimes allowed to go downstairs and help in the office, which makes Anne feel important.

Anne also explains group members also entertain themselves by talking about what they will do once they are again free. They also talk about their pasts, especially their childhoods, and tell humorous anecdotes on themselves. Additionally, they discuss their thankfulness at being hidden safely away in the annex with enough food to eat. But there is always an underlying concern for their friends and neighbors who may not be so lucky. Anne fears that her own school friends may have been “delivered into the hands of the cruelest brutes that walk the earth. And all because they are Jews!”

Anne complains about her roommate, Mr. Dussel, a constant source of irritation to her. There is a worktable in their room that she is allowed to use for an hour and a half each day, as Mr. Dussel sleeps. Wanting more time to work on her studies in the room, she politely approaches the bossy old man and asks for an extra three hours a week. Without an explanation, he refuses to grant Anne her request. Although she is furious, she holds her temper and asks him to reconsider. Dussel melodramatically answers with a lengthy criticism of her and her request. As a result, Anne goes to her father to beg for help, and Mr. Frank convinces Dussel to give the girl another three hours on the table. Dussel, however, refuses to speak to Anne for two full days. She calls him “pedantic and small-minded.” She also complains that Mr. Dussel and Mrs. van Daan continue to criticize her constantly, saying her behavior indicates a poor upbringing. Anne writes, “I suppose it’s their idea of a good upbringing to always try to set me against my parents, because that is what they often do.” She goes on to say that Mrs. Daan is “selfish, cunning, and calculating.”

The entry, dated Wednesday, January 13, 1943, reveals that Anne is upset and depressed. She is tired of the war and the cramped quarters. The bossy Dussel is driving her crazy; she is sick of hearing the planes flying over the Holland skies and dropping bombs; and she is miserable about the fate of the Jews. She lives in constant fear of being discovered by the Nazis or burned to death if the office building, with its secret annex, is hit during one of the bombings. Most of all she worries about what is happening at the hands of Hitler. She writes, “It is terrible outside. Day and night more of those miserable people are being dragged off . . . Children coming home from school find that their parents have disappeared. Women return from shopping to find their

homes shut up and their families gone . . . It has even got so bad in Holland that countless children stop the passer-by and beg for a piece of bread. I could go on for hours about all the suffering war has brought, but then I would only make myself more dejected. There is nothing we can do but wait as calmly as we can till the misery comes to an end. Jews and Christians wait, the whole earth waits, and there are many who wait for death.”

Anne admits that she cries a great deal when she is alone. The strange surroundings and circumstances have made her touchy, even though she tries to cope with her daily existence. Her negative emotions increase as the war draws closer to the annex. She constantly hears the bombardment just beyond the walls of the building and grows anxious. As she becomes more tense, Anne finds herself fighting more with her mother. After one heated argument, she writes, “The love between us was gone . . . They expected me to apologize; but this is something I can’t do . . . I spoke the truth.”

Anne writes that the emotions of the group improve when they hear of the fall of Mussolini, the Fascist dictator of Italy. Once again they have a ray of hope for survival.

Notes

These entries reveal Anne’s wavering emotions. She tries to stay cheerful and hopeful, but it is very difficult for many reasons. First, Dussel arrives to stay in the annex and complicates the teenager’s life. She must share her room with him, losing even more of her privacy. She also finds him to be an irritating and bossy old man who makes her life more miserable. In addition, the Nazis invade and capture Holland; therefore, there is constant gunfire and bombardment, sometimes just outside the office building where the annex is located. Also, they hear that more and more Jews are being captured and killed. The close proximity of the fighting and the loss of so many Jews make everyone in the annex more tense, including Anne. As a result, she finds that she and her mother are fighting even more. She even states that she feels there is no love left between the two of them. Feeling lonely, scared, and miserable, Anne still cries frequently; but she tries not to complain excessively about her misery.

In spite of the misery, the Jewish families make some attempt at normalcy. They celebrate birthdays, Chanukah, and Saint Nicolas’ Day. They also listen to the radio regularly, always hoping to hear some bit of good news. When they learn that the English are making advances against the Germans, they all dare to hope there is a chance for the end of the war and freedom; however, their spirits are always dashed by additional negative news.

It is also amazing that the van Daans and the Franks can still find things to laugh about. Anne tells about the time that a bag of beans broke upon and spilled down the steps. Anne, at the bottom of the stairs, was caught in the onslaught, and everyone in the annex had a good laugh. They also found humor in the way that the cranky Mrs. van Daan reacted to Dussel’s dental examination. These moments of humor and entertainment did much to relief some of the tension in the cramped annex.