

A Daily Chore in Our Little Community: Peeling Potatoes!

One person goes to get some newspapers; another, the knives (keeping the best for himself, of course); the third, the potatoes; and the fourth, the water. Mr. Dussel begins. He may not always peel them very well, but he does peel nonstop, glancing left and right to see if everyone is doing it the way he does. No, they're not!"Look, Anne, I am taking peeler in my hand like so and going from the top to bottom! Nein, not so . . . but so!"

"I think my way is easier, Mr. Dussel," I say tentatively. "But this is best way, Anne. This you can take from me. Of course, it is no matter, you do the way you want."

We go on peeling. I glance at Dussel out of the corner of my eye. Lost in thought, he shakes his head (over me, no doubt), but says no more. I keep on peeling. Then I look at Father, on the other side of me. To Father, peeling potatoes is not a chore, but precision work. When he reads, he has a deep wrinkle in the back of his head. But when he's preparing potatoes, beans or vegetables, he seems to be totally absorbed in his task. He puts on his potato-peeling face, and when it's set in that particular way, it would be impossible for him to turn out anything less than a perfectly peeled potato. I keep on working. I glance up for a second, but that's all the time I need. Mrs. VanD. is trying to attract Dussel's attention. She starts by looking in his direction, but Dussel pretends not to notice. She laughs, but Dussel still doesn't look up. Then Mother laughs too, but Dussel pays them no mind.

Having failed to achieve her goal, Mrs. van D. is obliged to change tactics. There's a brief silence. Then she says, "Putti, why don't you put on an apron? Otherwise, I'll have to spend all day tomorrow trying to get the spots out of your suit!"

"I'm not getting it dirty."

Another brief silence. "Putti, why don't you sit down?"

"I'm fine this way. I like standing up!"

Silence.

"Putti, look out, du spritzt schon!."* [*Now you're splashing!]

"I know, Mommy, but I'm being careful."

Mrs. van D. casts about for another topic. "Tell me, Putti, why aren't the British carrying out any bombing raids today?"

"Because the weather's bad, Kerli!"

"But yesterday it was such nice weather and they weren't flying then either."

"Let's drop the subject."

"Why? Can't a person talk about that or offer an opinion?"

"Well, why in the world not?"

"Oh, be quiet, Mammichen!"* [*Mommy]

"Mr. Frank always answers his wife."

Mr. van D. is trying to control himself. This remark always rubs him the wrong way, but Mrs. van D.'s not one to quit: "Oh, there's never going to be an invasion!"

Mr. van D. turns white, and when she notices it, Mrs. van D. turns red, but she's not about to be deterred: "The British aren't doing a thing!"

The bomb bursts. "And now shut up, Donnerwetter noch mal!" [*For crying out loud!"] Mother can barely stifle a laugh, and I stare straight ahead. Scenes like these are repeated almost daily, unless they've just had a terrible fight. In that case, neither Mr. nor Mrs. van D. says a word. It's time for me to get some more potatoes. I go up to the attic, where Peter is busy picking fleas from the cat. He looks up, the cat notices it, and whoosh. . . he's gone. Out the window and into the rain gutter.

Peter swears; I laugh and slip out of the room. Freedom in the Annex.

Five-thirty. Bep's arrival signals the beginning of our nightly freedom. Things get going right away. I go upstairs with Bep, who usually has her dessert before the rest of us. The moment she sits down, Mrs. van D. begins stating her wishes. Her list usually starts with "Oh, by the way, Bep, something else I'd like. . ." Bep winks at me. Mrs. van D. doesn't miss a chance to make her wishes known to whoever comes upstairs. It must be one of the reasons none of them like to go up there. Five forty-five. Bep leaves. I go down two floors to have a look around: first to the kitchen, then to the private office and then to the coal bin to open the cat door for Mouschi.

After a long tour of inspection, I wind up in Mr. Kugler's office. Mr. van

Daan is combing all the drawers and files for today's mail. Peter picks up Boche and the warehouse key; Pim lugs the typewriters upstairs; Margot looks around for a quiet place to do her office work; Mrs. van D. puts a kettle of water on the stove; Mother comes down the stairs with a pan of potatoes; we all know our jobs. Soon Peter comes back from the warehouse. The first question they ask him is whether he's remembered the bread. No, he hasn't. He crouches before the door to the front office to make himself as small as possible and crawls on his hands and knees to the steel cabinet, takes out the bread and starts to leave. At any rate, that's what he intends to do, but before he knows what's happened, Mouschi has jumped over him and gone to sit under the desk.

Peter looks all around him. Aha, there's the cat! He crawls back into the office and grabs the cat by the tail. Mouschi hisses, Peter sighs. What has he accomplished? Mouschi's now sitting by the window licking herself, very pleased at having escaped Peter's clutches. Peter has no choice but to lure her with a piece of bread. Mouschi takes the bait, follows him out, and the door closes. I watch the entire scene through a crack in the door.

Mr. van Daan is angry and slams the door. Margot and I exchange looks and think the same thing: he must have worked himself into a rage again because of some blunder on Mr. Kugler's part, and he's forgotten all about the Keg Company next door.

Another step is heard in the hallway. Dussel comes in, goes toward the window with an air of propriety, sniffs. . . coughs, sneezes and clears his throat. He's out of luck — it was pepper. He continues on to the front office. The curtains are open, which means he can't get at his writing paper. He disappears with a scowl. Margot and I exchange another glance. "One less page for his sweetheart tomorrow," I hear her say. I nod in agreement. An elephant's tread is heard on the stairway. It's Dussel, seeking comfort in his favorite spot.

We continue working. Knock, knock, knock. . . Three taps means dinnertime!

Monday, August 23, 1943

Wenn Die Uhr Halb Neune Schlaat . . . * [* When the clock strikes half past eight.] Margot and Mother are nervous. "Shh . . . Father. Be quiet, Otto. Shh . . . Pim! It's eight-thirty.

Come here, you can't run the water anymore. Walk softly!" A sample of what's said to Father in the bathroom. At the stroke of half past eight, he has to

be in the livingroom. No running water, no flushing toilet, no walking around, no noise whatsoever. As long as the office staff hasn't arrived, sounds travel more easily to the warehouse. The door opens upstairs at eight-twenty, and this is followed by three gentle taps on the floor. . . Anne's hot cereal. I clamber up the stairs to get my doggie dish.

Back downstairs, everything has to be done quickly, quickly: I comb my hair, put away the potty, shove the bed back in place. Quiet! The clock is striking eight-thirty! Mrs. van D. changes shoes and shuffles through the room in her slippers; Mr. van D. too— a veritable Charlie Chaplin. All is quiet. The ideal family scene has now reached its high point. I want to read or study and Margot does too. Father and Mother ditto. Father is sitting (with Dickens and the dictionary, of course) on the edge of the sagging, squeaky bed, which doesn't even have a decent mattress. Two bolsters can be piled on top of each other. "I don't need these," he thinks. "I can manage without them!"

Once he starts reading, he doesn't look up. He laughs now and then and tries to get Mother to read a story.

"I don't have the time right now!"

He looks disappointed, but then continues to read.

A little while later, when he comes across another good passage, he tries again: "You have to read this, Mother!"

Mother sits on the folding bed, either reading, sewing, knitting or studying, which ever is next on her list. An idea suddenly occurs to her, and she quickly says, so as not to forget, "Anne, remember to . . . Margot, jot this down. . . "

After a while it's quiet again. Margot slams her book shut; Father knits his forehead, his eyebrows forming a funny curve and his wrinkle of concentration reappearing at the back of his head, and he buries himself in his book again; Mother starts chatting with Margot; and I get curious and listen too. Pim is drawn into the conversation . . . Nine o'clock. Breakfast!

Friday, September 10, 1943

Dearest Kitty,

Every time I write to you, something special has happened, usually unpleasant rather than pleasant. This time, however, something wonderful is going on. On Wednesday, September 8, we were listening to the seven o'clock news when we heard an announcement: "Here is some of the best news of the

war so far: Italy has capitulated." Italy has unconditionally surrendered! The Dutch broadcast from England began at eight-fifteen with the news: "Listeners, an hour and fifteen minutes ago, just as I finished writing my daily report, we received the wonderful news of Italy's capitulation. I tell you, I never tossed my notes into the wastepaper basket with more delight than I did today!" "God Save the King," the American national anthem and the Russian 'Internationale' were played. As always, the Dutch program was uplifting without being too optimistic. The British have landed in Naples. Northern Italy is occupied by the Germans. The truce was signed on Friday, September 3, the day the British landed in Italy. The Germans are ranting and raving in all the newspapers at the treachery of Badoglio and the Italian king.

Still, there's bad news as well. It's about Mr. Kleiman. As you know, we all like him very much. He's unfailingly cheerful and amazingly brave, despite the fact that he's always sick and in pain and can't eat much or do a lot of walking. "When Mr. Kleiman enters a room, the sun begins to shine," Mother said recently, and she's absolutely right.

Now it seems he has to go to the hospital for a very difficult operation on his stomach, and will have to stay there for at least four weeks. You should have seen him when he told us good-bye. He acted so normally, as though he were just off to do an errand.

Yours, Anne

Thursday, September 16, 1943

Dearest Kitty,

Relationships here in the Annex are getting worse all the time. We don't dare open our mouths at mealtime (except to slip in a bite of food), because no matter what we say, someone is bound to resent it or take it the wrong way. Mr. Voskuijl occasionally comes to visit us. Unfortunately, he's not doing very well. He isn't making it any easier for his family, because his attitude seems to be: what do I care, I'm going to die anyway! When I think how touchy everyone is here, I can just imagine what it must be like at the Voskuijls'.

I've been taking valerian every day to fight the anxiety and depression, but it doesn't stop me from being even more miserable the next day. A good hearty laugh would help better than ten valerian drops, but we've almost forgotten how to laugh. Sometimes I'm afraid my face is going to sag with all this sorrow and that my mouth is going to permanently droop at the corners. The others aren't

doing any better. Everyone here is dreading the great terror known as winter. Another fact that doesn't exactly brighten up our days is that Mr. van Maaren, the man who works in the warehouse, is getting suspicious about the Annex. A person with any brains must have noticed by now that Miep sometimes says she's going to the lab, Bep to the file room and Mr. Kleiman to the Opekta supplies, while Mr. Kugler claims the Annex doesn't belong to this building at all, but to the one next door.

We wouldn't care what Mr. van Maaren thought of the situation except that he's known to be unreliable and to possess a high degree of curiosity. He's not one who can be put off with a flimsy excuse.

One day Mr. Kugler wanted to be extra cautious, so at twenty past twelve he put on his coat and went to the drugstore around the corner. Less than five minutes later he was back, and he sneaked up the stairs like a thief to visit us. At one-fifteen he started to leave, but Bep met him on the landing and warned him that van Maaren was in the office. Mr. Kugler did an about-face and stayed with us until one-thirty. Then he took off his shoes and went in his stockinged feet (despite his cold) to the front attic and down the other stairway, taking one step at a time to avoid the creaks. It took him fifteen minutes to negotiate the stairs, but he wound up safely in the office after having entered from the outside.

In the meantime, Bep had gotten rid of van Maaren and come to get Mr. Kugler from the Annex. But he'd already left and at that moment was still tiptoeing down the stairs. What must the passers by have thought when they saw the manager putting on his shoes outside? Hey, you there, in the socks!

Yours, Anne

Wednesday, September 29, 1943

Dearest Kitty,

It's Mrs. van Daan's birthday. Other than one ration stamp each for cheese, meat and bread, all she received from us was a jar of jam. Her husband, Dussel and the office staff gave her nothing but flowers and also food. Such are the times we live in! Bep had a nervous fit last week because she had so many errands to do. Ten times a day people were sending her out for something, each time insisting she go right away or go again or that she'd done it all wrong. And when you think that she has her regular office work to do, that Mr. Kleiman is sick, that Miep is home with a cold and that Bep herself has a sprained ankle, boyfriend troubles and a grouchy father, it's no wonder she's at the end of her

tether. We comforted her and told her that if she'd put her foot down once or twice and say she didn't have the time, the shopping lists would shrink of their own accord.

Saturday there was a big drama, the likes of which have never been seen here before. It started with a discussion of van Maaren and ended in a general argument and tears. Dussel complained to Mother that he was being treated like a leper, that no one was friendly to him and that, after all, he hadn't done anything to deserve it. This was followed by a lot of sweet talk, which luckily Mother didn't fall for this time. She told him we were disappointed in him and that, on more than one occasion, he'd been a source of great annoyance. Dussel promised her the moon, but, as usual, we haven't seen so much as a beam.

There's trouble brewing with the van Daans, I can tell! Father's furious because they're cheating us: they've been holding back meat and other things. Oh, what kind of bombshell is about to burst now? If only I weren't so involved in all these skirmishes! If only I could leave here! They're driving us crazy!

Yours, Anne

Sunday, October 17, 1943

Dearest Kitty,

Mr. Kleiman is back, thank goodness! He looks a bit pale, and yet he cheerfully set off to sell some clothes for Mr. van Daan. The disagreeable fact is that Mr. van Daan has run out of money. He lost his last hundred guilders in the warehouse, which is still creating trouble for us: the men are wondering how a hundred guilders could wind up in the warehouse on a Monday morning. Suspicion abounds. Meanwhile, the hundred guilders have been stolen. Who's the thief?

But I was talking about the money shortage. Mrs. van D. has scads of dresses, coats and shoes, none of which she feels she can do without. Mr. van D.'s suit is difficult to sell, and Peter's bike was put on the block, but is back again, since nobody wanted it. But the story doesn't end there. You see, Mrs. van D. is going to have to part with her fur coat. In her opinion, the firm should pay for our upkeep, but that's ridiculous.

They just had a flaming row about it and have entered the "oh, my sweet Putti" and "darling Kerli" stage of reconciliation.

My mind boggles at the profanity this honorable house has had to endure in

the past month. Father walks around with his lips pressed together, and whenever he hears his name, he looks up in alarm, as if he's afraid he'll be called upon to resolve an other delicate problem. Mother's so wrought up her cheeks are blotched with red, Margot complains of headaches, Dussel can't sleep, Mrs. van D. frets and fumes all day long, and I've gone completely round the bend. To tell you the truth, I sometimes forget who we're at odds with and who we're not. The only way to take my mind off it is to study, and I've been doing a lot of that lately.

Yours, Anne

Friday, October 29, 1943

My dearest Kitty,

Mr. Kleiman is out again; his stomach won't give him a moment's peace. He doesn't even know whether it's stopped bleeding. He came to tell us he wasn't feeling well and was going home, and for the first time he seemed really down. Mr. and Mrs. van D. have had more raging battles. The reason is simple: they're broke. They wanted to sell an overcoat and a suit of Mr. van D. 's, but were unable to find any buyers. His prices were way too high.

Some time ago Mr. Kleiman was talking about a furrier he knows. This gave Mr. vanD. the idea of selling his wife's fur coat. It's made of rabbit skin, and she's had it for seventeen years. Mrs. van D. got 325 guilders for it, an enormous amount. She wanted to keep the money herself to buy new clothes after the war, and it took some doing before Mr. van D. could make her understand that it was desperately needed to cover household expenses.

You can't imagine the screaming, shouting, stamping of feet and swearing that went on. It was terrifying. My family stood holding its breath at the bottom of the stairs, incase it might be necessary to drag them apart. All the bickering, tears and nervous tension have become such a stress and strain that I fall into my bed at night crying and thanking my lucky stars that I have half an hour to myself.

I'm doing fine, except I've got no appetite. I keep hearing: "Goodness, you look awful!" I must admit they're doing their best to keep me in condition: they're plying me with dextrose, cod-liver oil, brewer's yeast and calcium. My nerves often get the better of me, especially on Sundays; that's when I really feel miserable. The atmosphere is stifling, sluggish, leaden. Outside, you don't hear a single bird, and a deathly, oppressive silence hangs over the house and clings to

me as if it were going to drag me into the deepest regions of the underworld. At times like these, Father, Mother and Margot don't matter to me in the least. I wander from room to room, climb up and down the stairs and feel like a songbird whose wings have been ripped off and who keeps hurling itself against the bars of its dark cage. "Let me out, where there's fresh air and laughter!" a voice within me cries. I don't even bother to reply anymore, but lie down on the divan. Sleep makes the silence and the terrible fear go by more quickly, helps pass the time, since it's impossible to kill it.

Yours, Anne

Wednesday, November 3, 1943

Dearest Kitty,

To take our minds off matters as well as to develop them, Father ordered a catalog from a correspondence school. Margot pored through the thick brochure three times without finding anything to her liking and within her budget. Father was easier to satisfy and decided to write and ask for a trial lesson in "Elementary Latin." No sooner said than done. The lesson arrived, Margot set to work enthusiastically and decided to take the course, despite the expense. It's much too hard for me, though I'd really like to learn Latin.

To give me a new project as well, Father asked Mr. Kleiman for a children's Bible so I could finally learn something about the New Testament. "Are you planning to give Anne a Bible for Hanukkah?" Margot asked, somewhat perturbed.

"Yes. . . Well, maybe St. Nicholas Day would be a better occasion," Father replied. Jesus and Hanukkah don't exactly go together.

Since the vacuum cleaner's broken, I have to take an old brush to the rug every night. The window's closed, the light's on, the stove's burning, and there I am brushing away at the rug. "That's sure to be a problem," I thought to myself the first time. "There're bound to be complaints." I was right: Mother got a headache from the thick clouds of dust whirling around the room, Margot's new Latin dictionary was caked with dirt, and rim grumbled that the floor didn't look any different anyway. Small thanks for my pains.

We've decided that from now on the stove is going to be lit at seven-thirty on Sunday mornings instead of five-thirty. I think it's risky. What will the neighbors think of our smoking chimney?

It's the same with the curtains. Ever since we first went into hiding, they've been tacked firmly to the windows. Sometimes one of the ladies or gentlemen can't resist the urge to peek outside. The result: a storm of reproaches. The response: "Oh, nobody will notice." That's how every act of carelessness begins and ends. No one will notice, no one will hear, no one will pay the least bit of attention. Easy to say, but is it true?

At the moment, the tempestuous quarrels have subsided; only Dussel and the van Daans are still at loggerheads. When Dussel is talking about Mrs. van D., he invariably calls her 'that old bat' or "that stupid hag," and conversely, Mrs. van D. refers to our ever so learned gentleman as an "old maid" or a "touchy neurotic spinster, etc. The pot calling the kettle black!

Yours, Anne

Monday Evening, November 8, 1943

Dearest Kitty,

If you were to read all my letters in one sitting, you'd be struck by the fact that they were written in a variety of moods. It annoys me to be so dependent on the moods here in the Annex, but I'm not the only one: we're all subject to them. If I'm engrossed in a book, I have to rearrange my thoughts before I can mingle with other people, because otherwise they might think I was strange. As you can see, I'm currently in the middle of a depression. I couldn't really tell you what set it off, but I think it stems from my cowardice, which confronts me at every turn. This evening, when Bep was still here, the doorbell rang long and loud. I instantly turned white, my stomach churned, and my heart beat wildly — and all because I was afraid.

At night in bed I see myself alone in a dungeon, without Father and Mother. Or I'm roaming the streets, or the Annex is on fire, or they come in the middle of the night to take us away and I crawl under my bed in desperation. I see everything as if it were actually taking place. And to think it might all happen soon!

Miep often says she envies us because we have such peace and quiet here. That maybe true, but she's obviously not thinking about our fear. I simply can't imagine the world will ever be normal again for us. I do talk about "after the war," but it's as if I were talking about a castle in the air, something that can li never come true. I see the eight of us in the Annex as if we were a patch of blue sky surrounded by menacing black clouds. The perfectly round spot on which

we're standing is still safe, but the clouds are moving in on us, and the ring between us and the approaching danger is being pulled tighter and tighter. We're surrounded by darkness and danger, and in our desperate search for a way out we keep bumping into each other. We look at the fighting down below and the peace and beauty up above. In the meantime, we've been cut off by the dark mass of clouds, so that we can go neither up nor down. It looms before us like an impenetrable wall, trying to crush us, but not yet able to. I can only cry out and implore, "Oh, ring, ring, open wide and let us out!"

Yours, Anne

Thursday, November 11, 1943

Dearest Kitty,

I have a good title for this chapter:

Ode to My Fountain Pen

In Memoriam

My fountain pen was always one of my most prized possessions; I valued it highly, especially because it had a thick nib, and I can only write neatly with thick nibs. It has led a long and interesting fountain-pen life, which I will summarize below. When I was nine, my fountain pen (packed in cotton) arrived as a "sample of no commercial value" all the way from Aachen, where my grandmother (the kindly donor) used to live. I lay in bed with the flu, while the February winds howled around the apartment house. This splendid fountain pen came in a red leather case, and I showed it to my girlfriends the first chance I got. Me, Anne Frank, the proud owner of a fountain pen.

When I was ten, I was allowed to take the pen to school, and to my surprise, the teacher even let me write with it. When I was eleven, however, my treasure had to be tucked away again, because my sixth-grade teacher allowed us to use only school pens and inkpots. When I was twelve, I started at the Jewish Lyceum and my fountain pen was given a new case in honor of the occasion. Not only did it have room for a pencil, it also had a zipper, which was much more impressive. When I was thirteen, the fountain pen went with me to the Annex, and together we've raced through countless diaries and compositions. I'd turned fourteen and my fountain pen was enjoying the last year of its life with me when . . .

It was just after five on Friday afternoon. I came out of my room and was

about to sit down at the table to write when I was roughly pushed to one side to make room for Margot and Father, who wanted to practice their Latin. The fountain pen remained unused on the table, while its owner, sighing, was forced to make do with a very tiny corner of the table, where she began rubbing beans. That's how we remove mold from the beans and restore them to their original state. At a quarter to six I swept the floor, dumped the dirt into a news paper, along with the rotten beans, and tossed it into the stove. A giant flame shot up, and I thought it was wonderful that the stove, which had been gasping its last breath, had made such a miraculous recovery. All was quiet again. The Latin students had left, and I sat down at the table to pickup where I'd left off. But no matter where I looked, my fountain pen was nowhere insight. I took another look. Margot looked, Mother looked, Father looked, Dussel looked. But it had vanished.

"Maybe it fell in the stove, along with the beans!" Margot suggested.

"No, it couldn't have!" I replied.

But that evening, when my fountain pen still hadn't turned up, we all assumed it had been burned, especially because celluloid is highly inflammable. Our darkest fears were confirmed the next day when Father went to empty the stove and discovered the clip, used to fasten it to a pocket, among the ashes. Not a trace of the gold nib was left. "It must have melted into stone," Father conjectured. I'm left with one consolation, small though it may be: my fountain pen was cremated, just as I would like to be someday!

Yours, Anne

Wednesday, November 17, 1943

Dearest Kitty,

Recent events have the house rocking on its foundations. Owing to an outbreak of diphtheria at Bep's, she won't be allowed to come in contact with us for six weeks. Without her, the cooking and shopping will be very difficult, not to mention how much we'll miss her company. Mr. Kleiman is still in bed and has eaten nothing but gruel for three weeks. Mr. Kugler is up to his neck in work. Margot sends her Latin lessons to a teacher, who corrects and then returns them.

She's registered under Bep's name. The teacher's very nice, and witty too. I bet he's glad to have such a smart student.

Dussel is in a turmoil and we don't know why. It all began with Dussel's saying nothing when he was upstairs; he didn't exchange so much as a word with either Mr. or Mrs. van Daan. We all noticed it. This went on for a few days, and then Mother took the opportunity to warn him about Mrs. van D., who could make life miserable for him. Dussel said Mr. van Daan had started the silent treatment and he had no intention of breaking it. I should explain that yesterday was November 16, the first anniversary of his living in the Annex. Mother received a plant in honor of the occasion, but Mrs. van Daan, who had alluded to the date for weeks and made no bones about the fact that she thought Dussel should treat us to dinner, received nothing. Instead of making use of the opportunity to thank us — for the first time — for unselfishly taking him in, he didn't utter a word. And on the morning of the sixteenth, when I asked him whether I should offer him my congratulations or my condolences, he replied that either one would do. Mother, having cast herself in the role of peacemaker, made no headway whatsoever, and the situation finally ended in a draw.

I can say without exaggeration that Dussel has definitely got a screw loose. We of ten laugh to ourselves because he has no memory, no fixed opinions and no commonsense. He's amused us more than once by trying to pass on the news he's just heard, since the message invariably gets garbled in transmission. Furthermore, he answers every reproach or accusation with a load of fine promises, which he never manages to keep.

"Der Mann hat einen gross en GeistUna ist so klein van Taten!"*

[*A well-known expression:"The spirit of the man is great, How puny are his deeds."]

Yours, Anne

Saturday, November 27, 1943

Dearest Kitty,

Last night, just as I was falling asleep, Hanneli suddenly appeared before me. I saw her there, dressed in rags, her face thin and worn. She looked at me with such sadness and reproach in her enormous eyes that I could read the message in them:"Oh, Anne, why have you deserted me? Help me, help me, rescue me from this hell!"

And I can't help her. I can only stand by and watch while other people suffer and die. All I can do is pray to God to bring her back to us. I saw Hanneli,

and no one else, and I understood why. I misjudged her, wasn't mature enough to understand how difficult it was for her. She was devoted to her girlfriend, and it must have seemed as though I were trying to take her away. The poor thing, she must have felt awful! I know, because I recognize the feeling in myself! I had an occasional flash of understanding, but then got selfishly wrapped up again in my own problems and pleasures.

It was mean of me to treat her that way, and now she was looking at me, oh so helplessly, with her pale face and beseeching eyes. If only I could help her! Dear God, I have everything I could wish for, while fate has her in its deadly clutches. She was as devout as I am, maybe even more so, and she too wanted to do what was right. But then why have I been chosen to live, while she's probably going to die? What's the difference between us? Why are we now so far apart?

To be honest, I hadn't thought of her for months — no, for at least a year. I hadn't forgotten her entirely, and yet it wasn't until I saw her before me that I thought of all her suffering.

Oh, Hanneli, I hope that if you live to the end of the war and return to us, I'll be able to take you in and make up for the wrong I've done you. But even if I were ever in a position to help, she wouldn't need it more than she does now. I wonder if she ever thinks of me, and what she's feeling?

Merciful God, comfort her, so that at least she won't be alone. Oh, if only You could tell her I'm thinking of her with compassion and love, it might help her go on. I've got to stop dwelling on this. It won't get me anywhere. I keep seeing her enormous eyes, and they haunt me. Does Hanneli really and truly believe in God, or has religion merely been foisted upon her? I don't even know that. I never took the trouble to ask.

Hanneli, Hanneli, if only I could take you away, if only I could share everything I have with you. It's too late. I can't help, or undo the wrong I've done. But I'll never forget her again and I'll always pray for her!

Yours, Anne

Monday, December 6, 1943

Dearest Kitty,

The closer it got to St. Nicholas Day, the more we all thought back to last year's festively decorated basket.

More than anyone, I thought it would be terrible to skip a celebration this year. After long deliberation, I finally came up with an idea, something funny. I consulted Pim, and a week ago we set to work writing a verse for each person. Sunday evening at a quarter to eight we trooped upstairs carrying the big laundry basket, which had been decorated with cutouts and bows made of pink and blue carbon paper. On top was a large piece of brown wrapping paper with a note attached.

Everyone was rather amazed at the sheer size of the gift. I removed the note and read it aloud:

"Once again St. Nicholas Day
Has even come to our hideaway;
It won't be quite as Jun, I fear,
As the happy day we had last year.
Then we were hopeful, no reason to doubt
That optimism would win the bout,
And by the time this year came round,
We'd all be free, and safe and sound.
Still, let's not forget it's St. Nicholas Day,
Though we've nothing left to give away.
We'll have to find something else to do:
So everyone please look in their shoe!"

As each person took their own shoe out of the basket, there was a roar of laughter. Inside each shoe was a little wrapped package addressed to its owner.

Yours, Anne

Wednesday, December 22, 1943

Dearest Kitty,

A bad case of flu has prevented me from writing to you until today. Being sick here is dreadful. With every cough, I had to duck under the blanket — once, twice, three times — and try to keep from coughing anymore.

Most of the time the tickle refused to go away, so I had to drink milk with

honey, sugar or cough drops. I get dizzy just thinking about all the cures I've been subjected to: sweating out the fever, steam treatment, wet compresses, dry compresses, hot drinks, swabbing my throat, lying still, heating pad, hot-water bottles, lemonade and, every two hours, the thermometer. Will these remedies really make you better?

But enough about my illness. I'm fit as a fiddle again. I've grown almost half an inch and gained two pounds. I'm pale, but itching to get back to my books.

Ausnahmsweise* (the only word that will do here [* By way of exception]), we're all getting on well together. No squabbles, though that probably won't last long. There hasn't been such peace and quiet in this house for at least six months.

Bep is still in isolation, but any day now her sister will no longer be contagious.

For Christmas, we're getting extra cooking oil, candy and molasses. For Hanukkah, Mr. Dussel gave Mrs. van Daan and Mother a beautiful cake, which he'd asked Miep to bake. On top of all the work she has to do! Margot and I received a brooch made out of a penny, all bright and shiny. I can't really describe it, but it's lovely. I also have a Christmas present for Miep and Bep. For a whole month I've saved up the sugar I put on my hot cereal, and Mr. Kleiman has used it to have fondant made.

The weather is drizzly and overcast, the stove stinks, and the food lies heavily on our stomachs, producing a variety of rumbles.


The war is at an impasse, spirits are low.

Yours, Anne

Friday, December 24, 1943

Dear Kitty,

As I've written you many times before, moods have a tendency to affect us quite a bit here, and in my case it's been getting worse lately. "Himmelhoch jauchzend, zuTode betru'bt"* [* A famous line from Goethe: "On top of the world, or in the depths of despair."] certainly applies to me. I'm "on top of the world" when I think of how fortunate we are and compare myself to other Jewish children, and "in the depths of despair" when, for example, Mrs. Kleiman comes by and talks about Jopie's hockey club, canoe trips, school plays and afternoon teas with friends.



I don't think I'm jealous of Jopie, but I long to have a really good time for once and to laugh so hard, it hurts. We're stuck in this house like lepers, especially during winter and the Christmas and New Year's holidays. Actually, I shouldn't even be writing this, since it makes me seem so ungrateful, but I can't keep everything to myself, so I'll repeat what I said at the beginning: "Paper is more patient than people."

Whenever someone comes in from outside, with the wind in their clothes and the cold on their cheeks, I feel like burying my head under the blankets to keep from thinking, "When will we be allowed to breathe fresh air again?" I can't do that — on the contrary, I have to hold my head up high and put a bold face on things, but the thoughts keep coming anyway. Not just once, but over and over.

Believe me, if you've been shut up for a year and a half, it can get to be too much for you sometimes. But feelings can't be ignored, no matter how unjust or ungrateful they seem. I long to ride a bike, dance, whistle, look at the world, feel young and know that I'm free, and yet I can't let it show. Just imagine what would happen if all eight of us were to feel sorry for ourselves or walk around with the discontent clearly visible on our faces. Where would that get us? I sometimes wonder if anyone will ever understand what I mean, if anyone will ever overlook my ingratitude and not worry about whether or not I'm Jewish and merely see me as a teenager badly in need of some good plain fun. I don't know, and I wouldn't be able to talk about it with anyone, since I'm sure I'd start to cry. Crying can bring relief, as long as you don't cry alone. Despite all my theories and efforts, I miss — every day and every hour of the day — having a mother who understands me. That's why with everything I do and write, I imagine the kind of mom I'd like to be to my children later on. The kind of mom who doesn't take everything people say too seriously, but who does take me seriously. I find it difficult to describe what I mean, but the word "mom" says it all. Do you know what I've come up with? In order to give me the feeling of calling my mother something that sounds like "Mom," I often call her "Momsy." Sometimes I shorten it to "Moms"; an imperfect "Mom." I wish I could honor her by removing the "s." It's a good thing she doesn't realize this, since it would only make her unhappy. Well, that's enough of that. My writing has raised me somewhat from "the depths of despair."

Yours, Anne

It's the day after Christmas, and I can't help thinking about Pim and the story he told me this time last year. I didn't understand the meaning of his words then as well as I do now. If only he'd bring it up again, I might be able to show him I understood what he meant!

I think Pim told me because he, who knows the "intimate secrets" of so many others, needed to express his own feelings for once; Pim never talks about himself, and I don't think Margot has any inkling of what he's been through. Poor Pim, he can't fool me into thinking he's forgotten that girl. He never will. It's made him very accommodating, since he's not blind to Mother's faults. I hope I'm going to be a little like him, without having to go through what he has!

Anne

Monday, December 27, 1943

Friday evening, for the first time in my life, I received a Christmas present. Mr. Kleiman, Mr. Kugler and the girls had prepared a wonderful surprise for us. Miep made a delicious Christmas cake with "Peace 1944" written on top, and Bep provided a batch of cookies that was up to prewar standards.

There was a jar of yogurt for Peter, Margot and me, and a bottle of beer for each of the adults. And once again everything was wrapped so nicely, with pretty pictures glued to the packages. For the rest, the holidays passed by quickly for us.

Anne

Wednesday, December 29, 1943

I was very sad again last night. Grandma and Hanneli came to me once more. Grandma, oh, my sweet Grandma. How little we understood what she suffered, how kind she always was and what an interest she took in everything that concerned us. And to think that all that time she was carefully guarding her terrible secret. [*Anne's grandmother was terminally ill.]

Grandma was always so loyal and good. She would never have let any of us down. Whatever happened, no matter how much I misbehaved, Grandma always stuck up for me. Grandma, did you love me, or did you not understand me either? I don't know. How lonely Grandma must have been, in spite of us. You can be lonely even when you're loved by many people, since you're still not the 'One and Only' to any one.

And Hanneli? Is she still alive? What's she doing? Dear God, watch over her and bring her back to us. Hanneli, you're a reminder of what my fate might have been. I keep seeing myself in your place. So why am I often miserable about what goes on here? Shouldn't I be happy, contented and glad, except when I'm thinking of Hanneli and those suffering along with her? I'm selfish and cowardly. Why do I always think and dream the most awful things and want to scream in terror? Because, in spite of everything, I still don't have enough faith in God. He's given me so much, which I don't deserve, and yet each day I make so many mistakes!

Thinking about the suffering of those you hold dear can reduce you to tears; in fact, you could spend the whole day crying. The most you can do is pray for God to perform a miracle and save at least some of them. And I hope I'm doing enough of that!

Anne

Thursday, December 30, 1943

Dearest Kitty,

Since the last raging quarrels, things have settled down here, not only between ourselves, Dussel and "upstairs," but also between Mr. and Mrs. van D. Nevertheless, a few dark thunderclouds are heading this way, and all because of . . . food. Mrs. VanD. came up with the ridiculous idea of frying fewer potatoes in the morning and saving them for later in the day. Mother and Dussel and the rest of us didn't agree with her, so now we're dividing up the potatoes as well. It seems the fats and oils aren't being doled out fairly, and Mother's going to have to put a stop to it. I'll let you know if there are any interesting developments. For the last few months now we've been splitting up the meat (theirs with fat, ours without), the soup (they eat it, we don't), the potatoes (theirs peeled, ours not), the extras and now the fried potatoes too.

If only we could split up completely!

Yours, Anne

P.S. Bep had a picture postcard of the entire Royal Family copied for me. Juliana looks very young, and so does the Queen. The three little girls are adorable. It was incredibly nice of Bep, don't you think?

Sunday, January 2, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

This morning, when I had nothing to do, I leafed through the pages of my diary and came across so many letters dealing with the subject of “Mother” in such strong terms that I was shocked. I said to myself, “Anne, is that really you talking about hate? Oh, Anne, how could you?”

I continued to sit with the open book in my hand and wonder why I was filled with so much anger and hate that I had to confide it all to you. I tried to understand the Anne of last year and make apologies for her, because as long as I leave you with these accusations and don’t attempt to explain what prompted them, my conscience won’t be clear. I was suffering then (and still do) from moods that kept my head under water (figuratively speaking) and allowed me to see things only from my own perspective, without calmly considering what the others — those whom I, with my mercurial temperament, had hurt or offended — had said, and then acting as they would have done.

I hid inside myself, thought of no one but myself and calmly wrote down all my joy, sarcasm and sorrow in my diary. Because this diary has become a kind of memory book, it means a great deal to me, but I could easily write “over and done with” on many of its pages.

(Sunday, January 2, 1944)

(Mother-daughter relationship)

A child’s relationship with his/ her mother is very special. All relationships have some bitter and some sweet moments. Mother-child relationship is no different. Often your mother must have scolded you. At times you might even have felt that *she doesn’t understand*. But, it doesn’t mean that she loves you any less.

When you are upset with a dear one, especially after an altercation, try to distance yourself from that situation and examine it from afar. Thinking from the other person’s perspective shall give you new insights. You should examine your own behavior in that particular situation too. Maybe, you will realize that you have not been fair always. Anne also examines her emotional outpourings and rants against her mother. She writes, *‘Those violent outbursts on paper are simply expressions of anger that, in normal life, I could have worked off by locking myself in my room and stamping my foot a few times or calling Mother names behind her back.*

I was furious at Mother (and still am a lot of the time). It's true, she didn't understand me, but I didn't understand her either. Because she loved me, she was tender and affectionate, but because of the difficult situations I put her in, and the sad circumstances in which she found herself, she was nervous and irritable, so I can understand why she was often short with me.

I was offended, took it far too much to heart and was insolent and beastly to her, which, in turn, made her unhappy. We were caught in a vicious circle of unpleasantness and sorrow. Not a very happy period for either of us, but at least it's coming to an end. I didn't want to see what was going on, and I felt very sorry for myself, but that's understandable too.

Those violent outbursts on paper are simply expressions of anger that, in normal life, I could have worked off by locking myself in my room and stamping my foot a few times or calling Mother names behind her back. The period of tearfully passing judgment on Mother is over. I've grown wiser and Mother's nerves are a bit steadier. Most of the time I manage to hold my tongue when I'm annoyed, and she does too; so on the surface, we seem to be getting along better. But there's one thing I can't do, and that's to love Mother with the devotion of a child.

I soothe my conscience with the thought that it's better for unkind words to be down on paper than for Mother to have to carry them around in her heart.

Yours, Anne

Thursday, January 6, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Today I have two things to confess. It's going to take a long time, but I have to tell them to someone, and you're the most likely candidate, since I know you'll keep a secret, no matter what happens.

The first is about Mother. As you know, I've frequently complained about her and then tried my best to be nice. I've suddenly realized what's wrong with her. Mother has said that she sees us more as friends than as daughters. That's all very nice, of course, except that a friend can't take the place of a mother. I need my mother to set a good example and be a person I can respect. I have the feeling that Margot thinks so differently about these things that she'd never be able to understand what I've just told you. And Father avoids all conversations having to do with Mother.

I imagine a mother as a woman who, first and foremost, possesses a great deal of tact, especially toward her adolescent children, and not one who, like Mommy, pokes fun at me when I cry. Not because I'm in pain, but because of other things.

This may seem trivial, but there's one incident I've never forgiven her for. It happened one day when I had to go to the dentist. Mother and Margot planned to go with me and agreed I should take my bicycle. When the dentist was finished and we were back outside, Margot and Mother very sweetly informed me that they were going downtown to buy or look at something, I don't remember what, and of course I wanted to go along. But they said I couldn't come because I had my bike with me. Tears of rage rushed to my eyes, and Margot and Mother began laughing at me. I was so furious that I stuck my tongue out at them, right there on the street. A little old lady happened to be passing by, and she looked terribly shocked. I rode my bike home and must have cried for hours. Strangely enough, even though Mother has wounded me thousands of times, this particular wound still stings whenever I think of how angry I was.

Wednesday, January 12, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Bep's been back for the last two weeks, though her sister won't be allowed back at school until next week. Bep herself spent two days in bed with a bad cold. Miep and Jan were also out for two days, with upset stomachs. I'm currently going through a dance and ballet craze and am diligently practicing my dance steps every evening. I've made an ultramodern dance costume out of a lacy lavender slip belonging to Mommy. Bias tape is threaded through the top and tied just above the bust. A pink corded ribbon completes the ensemble. I tried to turn my tennis shoes into ballet slippers, but with no success. My stiff limbs are well on the way to becoming as limber as they used to be. A terrific exercise is to sit on the floor, place a heel in each hand and raise both legs in the air. I have to sit on a cushion, because otherwise my poor backside really takes a beating.

Everyone here is reading a book called *A Cloudless Morning*. Mother thought it was extremely good because it describes a number of adolescent problems. I thought to myself, a bit ironically, "Why don't you take more interest in your own adolescents first!"

I think Mother believes that Margot and I have a better relationship with our parents than anyone in the whole wide world, and that no mother is more involved in the lives of her children than she is. She must have my sister in mind, since I don't believe Margot has the same problems and thoughts as I do. Far be it from me to point out to Mother that one of her daughters is not at all what she imagines. She'd be completely bewildered, and anyway, she'd never be able to change; I'd like to spare her that grief, especially since I know that everything would remain the same. Mother does sense that Margot loves her much more than I do, but she thinks I'm just going through a phase.

Margot's gotten much nicer. She seems a lot different than she used to be. She's not nearly as catty these days and is becoming a real friend. She no longer thinks of me as a little kid who doesn't count.



It's funny, but I can sometimes see myself as others see me. I take a leisurely look at the person called "Anne Frank" and browse through the pages of her life as though she were a stranger.

Before I came here, when I didn't think about things as much as I do now, I occasionally had the feeling that I didn't belong to Mommy, Pim and Margot and that I would always be an outsider. I sometimes went around for six months at a time pretending I was an orphan. Then I'd chastise myself for playing the victim, when really, I'd always been so fortunate. After that I'd force myself to be friendly for awhile.

Every morning when I heard footsteps on the stairs, I hoped it would be Mother coming to say good morning. I'd greet her warmly, because I honestly did look forward to her affectionate glance. But then she'd snap at me for having made some comment or other (and I'd go off to school feeling completely discouraged).

On the way home I'd make excuses for her, telling myself that she had so many worries. I'd arrive home in high spirits, chatting nineteen to the dozen, until the events of the morning would repeat themselves and I'd leave the room with my school bag in my hand and a pensive look on my face. Sometimes I'd decide to stay angry, but then I always had so much to talk about after school that I'd forget my resolution and want Mother to stop whatever she was doing

and lend a willing ear. Then the time would come once more when I no longer listened for the steps on the stairs and felt lonely and cried into my pillow every night.

Everything has gotten much worse here. But you already knew that. Now God has sent someone to help me: Peter. I fondle my pendant, press it to my lips and think, "What do I care! Peter is mine and nobody knows it!" With this in mind, I can rise above every nasty remark. Which of the people here would suspect that so much is going on in the mind of a teenage girl?

Saturday, January 15, 1944

My dearest Kitty,

There's no reason for me to go on describing all our quarrels and arguments down to the last detail. It's enough to tell you that we've divided many things like meat and fats and oils and are frying our own potatoes. Recently we've been eating a little extra rye bread because by four o'clock we're so hungry for dinner we can barely control our rumbling stomachs.

Mother's birthday is rapidly approaching. She received some extra sugar from Mr. Kugler, which sparked off jealousy on the part of the van Daans, because Mrs. van D. didn't receive any on her birthday. But what's the point of boring you with harsh words, spiteful conversations and tears when you know they bore us even more?

Mother has expressed a wish, which isn't likely to come true any time soon: not to have to see Mr. van Daan's face for two whole weeks. I wonder if everyone who shares a house sooner or later ends up at odds with their fellow residents. Or have we just had a stroke of bad luck? At mealtime, when Dussel helps himself to a quarter of the half-filled gravy boat and leaves the rest of us to do without, I lose my appetite and feel like jumping to my feet, knocking him off his chair and throwing him out the door.

Are most people so stingy and selfish? I've gained some insight into human nature since I came here, which is good, but I've had enough for the present. Peter says the same.

The war is going to go on despite our quarrels and our longing for freedom and fresh air, so we should try to make the best of our stay here. I'm preaching, but I also believe that if I live here much longer, I'll turn into a dried-up old beanstalk. And all I really want is to be an honest-to-goodnessteenager!

Yours, Anne

Wednesday Evening, January 19, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

You know that I always used to be jealous of Margot's relationship with Father. There's not a trace of my jealousy left now; I still feel hurt when Father's nerves cause him to be unreasonable toward me, but then I think, "I can't blame you for being the way you are. You talk so much about the minds of children and adolescents, but you don't know the first thing about them!" I long for more than Father's affection, more than his hugs and kisses. Isn't it awful of me to be so preoccupied with myself? Shouldn't I, who want to be good and kind, forgive them first? I forgive Mother too, but every time she makes a sarcastic remark or laughs at me, it's all I can do to control myself. I know I'm far from being what I should; will I ever be?

Anne Frank

P.S. Father asked if I told you about the cake. For Mother's birthday, she received areal mocha cake, prewar quality, from the office. It was a really nice day! But at the moment there's no room in my head for things like that.

Saturday, January 22, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Can you tell me why people go to such lengths to hide their real selves? Or why I always behave very differently when I'm in the company of others? Why do people have so little trust in one another? I know there must be a reason, but sometimes I think it's horrible that you can't ever confide in anyone, not even those closest to you. It seems as if I've grown up since the night I had that dream, as if I've become more independent. You'll be amazed when I tell you that even my attitude toward the van Daans has changed. I've stopped looking at all the discussions and arguments from my family's biased point of view. What's brought on such a radical change? Well, you see, I suddenly realized that if Mother had been different, our relationship would have been very, very different. Mrs. van Daan is by no means a wonderful person, yet half the arguments could have been avoided if Mother hadn't been so hard to deal with every time they got onto a tricky subject. Mrs. van Daan does have one good point, though: you can talk to her. She may be selfish, stingy and underhanded, but she'll readily back down as long as you don't provoke her and make her unreasonable. This tactic doesn't work every time, but if you're patient, you can keep trying and see how far you get.

All the conflicts about our upbringing, about not pampering children, about the food – about everything, absolutely everything – might have taken a different turn if we'd remained open and on friendly terms instead of always seeing the worst side. I know exactly what you're going to say, Kitty." But, Anne, are these words really coming from your lips? From you, who have had to put up with so many unkind words from upstairs? From you, who are aware of all the injustices?"

And yet they are coming from me. I want to take a fresh look at things and form my own opinion, not just ape my parents, as in the proverb "The apple never falls far from the tree." I want to re-examine the van Daans and decide for myself what's true and what's been blown out of proportion. If I wind up being disappointed in them, I can always side with Father and Mother. But if not, I can try to change their attitude. And if that doesn't work, I'll have to stick with my own opinions and judgment. I'll take every opportunity to speak openly to Mrs. van D. about our many differences and not be afraid – despite my reputation as a smart aleck – to offer my impartial opinion. I won't say anything negative about my own family, though that doesn't mean I won't defend them if somebody else does, and as of today, my gossiping is a thing of the past.

Up to now I was absolutely convinced that the van Daans were entirely to blame for the quarrels, but now I'm sure the fault was largely ours. We were right as far as the subject matter was concerned, but intelligent people (such as ourselves!) should have more insight into how to deal with others.

I hope I've got at least a touch of that insight, and that I'll find an occasion to put it to good use.

Yours, Anne

Friday, January 28, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

In recent weeks I've developed a great liking for family trees and the genealogical tables of royal families. I've come to the conclusion that once you begin your search, you have to keep digging deeper and deeper into the past, which leads you to even more interesting discoveries. Although I'm extremely diligent when it comes to my schoolwork and can pretty much follow the BBC Home Service on the radio, I still spend many of my Sundays sorting out and looking over my movie-star collection, which has grown to a very respectable size. Mr. Kugler makes me happy every Monday by bringing me a copy of

Cinema & Theater magazine. The less worldly members of our household often refer to this small indulgence as a waste of money, yet they never fail to be surprised at how accurately I can list the actors in any given movie, even after a year. Bep, who often goes to the movies with her boyfriend on her day off, tells me on Saturday the name of the show they're going to see, and I then proceed to rattle off the names of the leading actors and actresses and the reviews. Moms recently remarked ; that I wouldn't need to go to the movies later on, because I know all the plots, the names of the stars and the reviews by heart. Whenever I come sailing in with a new hairstyle, I can read the disapproval on their faces, and I can be sure someone will ask which movie star I'm trying to imitate. My reply, that it's my own invention, is greeted with ~ skepticism. As for the hairdo, it doesn't hold its set for ~ more than half an hour. By that time I'm so sick and tired I of their remarks that I race to the bathroom and restore my hair to its normal mass of curls.

Yours, Anne

Friday, January 28, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

This morning I was wondering whether you ever felt like a cow, having to chew my stale news over and over again until you're so fed up with the monotonous fare that you yawn and secretly wish Anne would dig up something new. Sorry, I know you find it dull as ditch water, but imagine how sick and tired I am of hearing the same old stuff. If the talk at mealtime isn't about politics or good food, then Mother or Mrs. van D. trot out stories about their childhood that we've heard a thousand times before, or Dussel goes on and on about beautiful racehorses, his Charlotte's extensive wardrobe, leaky rowboats, boys who can swim at the age of four, aching muscles and frightened patients. It all boils down to this: whenever one of the eight of us opens his mouth, the other seven can finish the story for him. We know the punch line of every joke before it gets told, so that whoever's telling it is left to laugh alone. The various milkmen, grocers and butchers of the two former housewives have been praised to the skies or run into the ground so many times that in our imaginations they've grown as old as Methuselah; there's absolutely no chance of anything new or fresh being brought up for discussion in the Annex.

Still, all this might be bearable if only the grown-ups weren't in the habit of repeating the stories we hear from Mr. Kleiman, Jan or Miep, each time embellishing them with a few details of their own, so that I often have to pinch

my arm under the table to keep myself from setting the enthusiastic storyteller on the right track. Little children, such as Anne, must never, ever correct their elders, no matter how many blunders they make or how often they let their imaginations run away with them.

Jan and Mr. Kleiman love talking about people who have gone underground or into hiding; they know we're eager to hear about others in our situation and that we truly sympathize with the sorrow of those who've been arrested as well as the joy of prisoners who've been freed.

Going underground or into hiding has become as routine as the proverbial pipe and slippers that used to await the man of the house after a long day at work. There are many resistance groups, such as Free Netherlands, that forge identity cards, provide financial support to those in hiding, organize hiding places and find work for young Christians who go underground. It's amazing how much these generous and unselfish people do, risking their own lives to help and save others.

The best example of this is our own helpers, who have managed to pull us

(Friday, January 28, 1944)

(Heroism of workers)

Anne correctly feels that the workers are no less courageous than those fighting the war.

There are many people around us who impact our lives- the staff and helpers at school, helpers at home and in the community. These people render services that make our lives run smoothly. But, how often do we pause to give a thought to their contributions? We tend to focus our attention on those who are in an authoritative position or are similar to us. We rarely spare thought for the many others who facilitate us in our daily lives. Some of them tirelessly work for us despite facing multiple challenges . . . challenges like financial stress, long working hours, dual pressure of handling work and family and safety and care of children when they come for work.

It is important to be aware and give thought to the contributions of everyone in our environment. Small gestures express our appreciation and respect for the work being done by our helpers. Smiling, saying *thank-you*, listening to them and spending some time to let them know that they are important and valued are small things but they may mean a lot to them.

through so far and will hopefully bring us safely to shore, because otherwise they'll find themselves sharing the fate of those they're trying to protect. Never have they uttered a single word about the burden we must be, never have they complained that we're too much trouble. They come upstairs every day and talk to the men about business and politics, to the women about food and wartime difficulties and to the children about books and newspapers. They put on their most cheerful expressions, bring flowers and gifts for birthdays and holidays and are always ready to do what they can. That's something we should never forget; while others display their heroism in battle or against the Germans, our helpers prove theirs every day by their good spirits and affection.

The most bizarre stories are making the rounds, yet most of them are really true. For instance, Mr. Kleiman reported this week that a soccer match was held in the province of Gelderland; one team consisted entirely of men who had gone underground, and the other of eleven Military Policemen. In Hilversum, new registration cards were issued.

In order for the many people in hiding to get their rations (you have to show this card to obtain your ration book or else pay 60 guilders a book), the registrar asked all those hiding in that district to pick up their cards at a specified hour, when the documents could be collected at a separate table.

All the same, you have to be careful that stunts like these don't reach the ears of the Germans.

Yours, Anne

Sunday, January 30, 1944

My dearest Kit,

Another Sunday has rolled around; I don't mind them as much as I did in the beginning, but they're boring enough.

I still haven't gone to the warehouse yet, but maybe sometime soon. Last night I went downstairs in the dark, all by myself, after having been there with Father a few nights before. I stood at the top of the stairs while German planes flew back and forth, and I knew I was on my own, that I couldn't count on others for support. My fear vanished. I looked up at the sky and trusted in God.

I have an intense need to be alone. Father has noticed I'm not my usual self, but I can't tell him what's bothering me. All I want to do is scream "Let me be, leave me alone!" Who knows, perhaps the day will come when I'm left alone more than I'd like!

Anne Frank

Thursday, February 3, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Invasion fever is mounting daily throughout the country. If you were here, I'm sure you'd be as impressed as I am at the many preparations, though you'd no doubt laugh at all the fuss we're making. Who knows, it may all be for nothing! The papers are full of invasion news and are driving everyone insane with such statements as: "In the event of a British landing in Holland, the Germans will do what they can to defend the country, even flooding it, if necessary." They've published maps of Holland with the potential flood areas marked. Since large portions of Amsterdam were shaded in, our first question was what we should do if the water in the streets rose to above our waists. This tricky question elicited a variety of responses:

"It'll be impossible to walk or ride a bike, so we'll have to wade through the water."

"Don't be silly. We'll have to try and swim. We'll all put on our bathing suits and caps and swim underwater as much as we can, so nobody can see we're Jews."

"Oh, baloney! I can just imagine the ladies swimming with the rats biting their legs!" (That was a man, of course; we'll see who screams loudest!)

"We won't even be able to leave the house. The warehouse is so unstable it'll collapse if there's a flood."

"Listen, everyone, all joking aside, we really ought to try and get a boat."

"Why bother? I have a better idea. We can each take a packing crate from the attic and row with a wooden spoon."

"I'm going to walk on stilts. I used to be a whiz at it when I was young."

"Jan Gies won't need to. He'll let his wife ride piggyback, and then Miep will be on stilts."

So now you have a rough idea of what's going on, don't you, Kit? This lighthearted banter is all very amusing, but reality will prove otherwise. The second question about the invasion was bound to arise: what should we do if the Germans evacuate Amsterdam?

"Leave the city along with the others. Disguise ourselves as well as we can."

"Whatever happens, don't go outside! The best thing to do is to stay put! The Germans are capable of herding the entire population of Holland into Germany, where they'll all die."



“Of course we’ll stay here. This is the safest place.

We’ll try to talk Kleiman and his family into coming here to live with us. We’ll somehow get hold of a bag of wood shavings, so we can sleep on the floor. Let’s ask Miep and Kleiman to bring some blankets, just in case. And we’ll order some extra cereal grains to supplement the sixty-five pounds we already have. Jan can try to find some more beans. At the moment we’ve got about sixty-five pounds of beans and ten pounds of split peas. And don’t forget the fifty cans of vegetables.”

“What about the rest, Mother? Give us the latest figures.’ ,

“Ten cans of fish, forty cans of milk, twenty pounds of powdered milk, three bottles of oil, four crocks of butter, four jars of meat, two big jars of strawberries, two jars of raspberries, twenty jars of tomatoes, ten pounds of oatmeal, nine pounds of rice. That’s it.”

Our provisions are holding out fairly well. All the same, we have to feed the office staff, which means dipping into our stock every week, so it’s not as much as it seems. We have enough coal and firewood, candles too.”Let’s all make little moneybags to hide in our clothes so we can take our money with us if we need to leave here.”

"We can make lists of what to take first in case we have to run for it, and pack our knapsacks in advance."

"When the time comes, we'll put two people on the lookout, one in the loft at the front of the house and one in the back."

"Hey, what's the use of so much food if there isn't any water, gas or electricity?"

"We'll have to cook on the wood stove. Filter the water and boil it. We should clean some big jugs and fill them with water. We can also store water in the three kettles we use for canning, and in the washtub."

"Besides, we still have about two hundred and thirty pounds of winter potatoes in the spice storeroom."

All day long that's all I hear. Invasion, invasion, nothing but invasion. Arguments about going hungry, dying, bombs, fire extinguishers, sleeping bags, identity cards, poison gas, etc., etc. Not exactly cheerful.

A good example of the explicit warnings of the male contingent is the following conversation with Jan:

Annex: "We're afraid that when the Germans retreat, they'll take the entire population with them."

Jan: "That's impossible. They haven't got enough trains."

Annex: "Trains? Do you really think they'd put civilians on trains? Absolutely not. Everyone would have to hoof it." (Or, as Dussel always says, per pedes apostolorum.)

Jan: "I can't believe that. You're always looking on the dark side. What reason would they have to round up all the civilians and take them along?"

Annex: "Don't you remember Goebbels saying that if the Germans have to go, they'll slam the doors to all the occupied territories behind them?"

Jan: "They've said a lot of things."

Annex: "Do you think the Germans are too noble or humane to do it? Their reasoning is: if we go under, we'll drag everyone else down with us."

Jan: "You can say what you like, I just don't believe."

Annex: "It's always the same old story. No one wants to see the danger until it's staring them in the face."

Jan: "But you don't know anything for sure. You're just making an assumption."

Annex: "Because we've already been through it all ourselves, First in Germany and then here. What do you think's happening in Russia?"

Jan: "You shouldn't include the Jews. I don't think anyone knows what's going on in Russia. The British and the Russians are probably exaggerating for propaganda purposes, just like the Germans."

Annex: "Absolutely not. The BBC has always told the truth. And even if the news is slightly exaggerated, the facts are bad enough as they are. You can't deny that millions of peace-loving citizens in Poland and Russia have been murdered or gassed."

I'll spare you the rest of our conversations. I'm very calm and take no notice of all the fuss. I've reached the point where I hardly care whether I live or die. The world will keep on turning without me, and I can't do anything to change events anyway. I'll just let matters take their course and concentrate on studying and hope that everything will be all right in the end.

Yours, Anne

Tuesday, February 8, 1944

Dear Kitty,

I can't tell you how I feel. One minute I'm longing for peace and quiet, and the next for a little fun. We've forgotten how to laugh — I mean, laughing so hard you can't stop. This morning I had "the giggles"; you know, the kind we used to have at school. Margot and I were giggling like real teenagers.

Last night there was another scene with Mother. Margot was tucking her wool blanket around her when suddenly she leapt out of bed and carefully examined the blanket. What do you think she found? A pin! Mother had patched the blanket and forgotten to take it out. Father shook his head meaningfully and made a comment about how careless Mother is. Soon afterward Mother came in from the bathroom, and just to tease her I said, "Du bist doch eine echte Rabenmutter." [Oh, you are cruel.]

Of course, she asked me why I'd said that, and we told her about the pin she'd overlooked. She immediately assumed her haughtiest expression and said, "You're a fine one to talk. When you're sewing, the entire floor is covered with pins. And look, you've left the manicure set lying around again. You never put

that away either!" I said I hadn't used it, and Margot backed me up, since she was the guilty party. Mother went on talking about how messy I was until I got fed up and said, rather curtly, "I wasn't even the one who said you were careless. I'm always getting blamed for other people's mistakes!"

Mother fell silent, and less than a minute later I was obliged to kiss her good-night. This incident may not have been very important, but these days everything gets on my nerves.

Anne Mary Frank

Saturday, February 12, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

The sun is shining, the sky is deep blue, there's a magnificent breeze, and I'm longing— really longing — for everything: conversation, freedom, friends, being alone. I long. . . to cry! I feel as if I were about to explode. I know crying would help, but I can't cry. I'm restless. I walk from one room to another, breathe through the crack in the window frame, feel my heart beating as if to say, "Fulfill my longing at last. . ." I think spring is inside me. I feel spring awakening, I feel it in my entire body and soul. I have to force myself to act normally. I'm in a state of utter confusion, don't know what to read, what to write, what to do. I only know that I'm longing for something. .

Yours, Anne

Monday, February 14, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Sunday evening everyone, except Pim and me, were clustered around the radio, listening to the "Immortal Music of the German Masters." Dussel kept twisting and turning the knobs, which annoyed Peter, and the others too. After restraining himself for half an hour, Peter asked somewhat irritably if he would stop fiddling with the radio. Dussel replied in his haughtiest tone, "Ich mach' das schon!" [I'll decide that.] Peter got angry and made an insolent remark. Mr. van Daan sided with him, and Dussel had to back down. That was it. The reason for the disagreement wasn't particularly interesting in and of itself, but Peter has apparently taken the matter very much to heart, because this morning, when I was rummaging around in the crate of books in the attic, Peter came up and began telling me what had happened. I didn't know anything about it, but Peter soon realized he'd found an attentive listener and started warming up to his subject.

"Well, it's like this," he said. "I don't usually talk much, since I know beforehand I'll just be tongue-tied. I start stuttering and blushing and I twist my words around so much I finally have to stop, because I can't find the right words. That's what happened yesterday. I meant to say something entirely different, but once I started, I got all mixed up. It's awful. I used to have a bad habit, and sometimes I wish I still did: whenever I was mad at someone, I'd beat them up instead of arguing with them. I know this method won't get me anywhere, and that's why I admire you. You're never at a loss for words: you say exactly what you want to say and aren't in the least bit shy."

"Oh, you're wrong about that," I replied. "Most of what I say comes out very differently from the way I'd planned. Plus I talk too much and too long, and that's just as bad."

"Maybe, but you have the advantage that no one can see you're embarrassed. You don't blush or go to pieces."

I couldn't help being secretly amused at his words. However, since I wanted him to go on talking quietly about himself, I hid my laughter, sat down on a cushion on the floor, wrapped my arms around my knees and gazed at him intently.

I'm glad there's someone else in this house who flies into the same rages as I do. Peter seemed relieved that he could criticize Dussel without being afraid I'd tell. As for me, I was pleased too, because I sensed a strong feeling of fellowship, which I only remember having had with my girlfriends.

Yours, Anne

Tuesday, February 15, 1944

The minor run-in with Dussel had several repercussions, for which he had only himself to blame. Monday evening Dussel came in to see Mother and told her triumphantly that Peter had asked him that morning if he'd slept well, and then added how sorry he was about what had happened Sunday evening — he hadn't really meant what he'd said. Dussel assured him he hadn't taken it to heart. So everything was right as rain again. Mother passed this story on to me, and I was secretly amazed that Peter, who'd been so angry at Dussel, had humbled himself, despite all his assurances to the contrary. I couldn't refrain from sounding Peter out on the subject, and he instantly replied that Dussel had been lying. You should have seen Peter's face. I wish I'd had a camera. Indignation, rage, indecision, agitation and much more crossed his face in rapid

succession.

That evening Mr. van Daan and Peter really told Dussel off. But it couldn't have been all that bad, since Peter had another dental appointment today.

Actually, they never wanted to speak to each other again.

Wednesday, February 16, 1944

Peter and I hadn't talked to each other all day, except for a few meaningless words. It was too cold to go up to the attic, and anyway, it was Margot's birthday. At twelve-thirty he came to look at the presents and hung around chatting longer than was strictly necessary, something he'd never have done otherwise. But I got my chance in the afternoon. Since I felt like spoiling Margot on her birthday, I went to get the coffee, and after that the potatoes. When I came to Peter's room, he immediately took his papers off the stairs, and I asked if I should close the trapdoor to the attic.

"Sure," he said, "go ahead. When you're ready to come back down, just knock and I'll open it for you."

I thanked him, went upstairs and spent at least ten minutes searching around in the barrel for the smallest potatoes. My back started aching, and the attic was cold. Naturally, I didn't bother to knock but opened the trap-door myself. But he obligingly got up and took the pan out of my hands.

"I did my best, but I couldn't find any smaller ones."

"Did you look in the big barrel?"

"Yes, I've been through them all."

By this time I was at the bottom of the stairs, and he examined the pan of potatoe she was still holding. "Oh, but these are fine," he said, and added, as I took the pan from him, "My compliments!" As he said this, he gave me such a warm, tender look that I started glowing inside. I could tell he wanted to please me, but since he couldn't make a long complimentary speech, he said everything with his eyes. I understood him so well and was very grateful. It still makes me happy to think back to those words and that look!

When I went downstairs, Mother said she needed more potatoes, this time for dinner, so I volunteered to go back up. When I entered Peter's room, I apologized for disturbing him again. As I was going up the stairs, he stood up, went over to stand between the stairs and the wall, and tried to stop me.

"I'll go," he said. "I have to go upstairs anyway."

I replied that it wasn't really necessary, that I didn't have to get only the small ones this time. On my way back, he opened the trapdoor and once again took the pan from me. Standing by the door, I asked, "What are you working on?"

"French," he replied.

I asked if I could take a look at his lessons. Then I went to wash my hands and sat down across from him on the divan.

After I'd explained some French to him, we began to talk. He told me that after the war he wanted to go to the Dutch East Indies and live on a rubber plantation. He talked about his life at home, the black market and how he felt like a worthless bum. I told him he had a big inferiority complex. He talked about the war, saying that Russia and England were bound to go to war against each other, and about the Jews. He said life would have been much easier if he'd been a Christian or could become one after the war. I asked if he wanted to be baptized, but that wasn't what he meant either. He said he'd never be able to feel like a Christian, but that after the war he'd make sure nobody would know he was Jewish. I felt a momentary pang. It's such a shame he still has a touch of dishonesty in him.

Peter added, "The Jews have been and always will be the chosen people!"

I answered, "Just this once, I hope they'll be chosen for something good!"

But we went on chatting very pleasantly, about Father, about judging human character and all sorts of things, so many that I can't even remember them all. I left at a quarter past five, because Bep had arrived.

That evening he said something else I thought was nice. We were talking about the picture of a movie star I'd once given him, which has been hanging in his room for at least a year and a half. He liked it so much that I offered to give him a few more.

"No," he replied, "I'd rather keep the one I've got. I look at it every day, and the people in it have become my friends."

I now have a better understanding of why he always hugs Mouschi so tightly. He obviously needs affection too. I forgot to mention something else he was talking about. He said, "No, I'm not afraid, except when it comes to things about myself, but I'm working on that."

Peter has a huge inferiority complex. For example, he always thinks he's so stupid and we're so smart. When I help him with French, he thanks me a thousand times. One of these days I'm going to say, "Oh, cut it out! You're much better at English and Geography!"

Anne Frank

Thursday, February 17, 1944

Dear Kitty,

I was upstairs this morning, since I promised Mrs. van D. I'd read her some of my stories. I began with "Eva's Dream," which she liked a lot, and then I read a few passages from "The Secret Annex," which had her in stitches. Peter also listened for awhile (just the last part) and asked if I'd come to his room sometime to read more. I decided I had to take a chance right then and there, so I got my notebook and let him read that bit where Cady and Hans talk about God. I can't really tell what kind of impression it made on him. He said something I don't quite remember, not about whether it was good, but about the idea behind it. I told him I just wanted him to see that I didn't write only amusing things. He nodded, and I left the room. We'll see if I hear anything more!

Yours,

Anne Frank

Sunday, February 20, 1944

What happens in other people's houses during the rest of the week happens here in the Annex on Sundays. While other people put on their best clothes and go strolling in the sun, we scrub, sweep and do the laundry. Eight o'clock. Though the rest of us prefer to sleep in, Dussel gets up at eight. He goes to the bathroom, then downstairs, then up again and then to the bathroom, where he devotes a whole hour to washing himself. Nine-thirty. The stoves are lit, the blackout screen is taken down, and Mr. van Daan heads for the bathroom. One of my Sunday morning ordeals is having to lie in bed and look at Dussel's back when he's praying. I know it sounds strange, but a praying Dussel is a terrible sight to behold. It's not that he cries or gets sentimental, not a tall, but he does spend a quarter of an hour — an entire fifteen minutes — rocking from his toes to his heels. Back and forth, back and forth. It goes on forever, and if I don't shut my eyes tight, my head starts to spin.

Ten-fifteen. The van Daans whistle; the bathroom's free. In the Frank family quarters, the first sleepy faces are beginning to emerge from their pillows. Then everything happens fast, fast, fast. Margot and I take turns doing the laundry. Since it's quite cold downstairs, we put on pants and head scarves. Meanwhile, Father is busy in the bathroom. Either Margot or I have a turn in the bathroom at eleven, and then we're all clean.

Eleven-thirty. Breakfast. I won't dwell on this, since there's enough talk about food without my bringing the subject up as well.

Twelve-fifteen. We each go our separate ways. Father, clad in overalls, gets down on his hands and knees and brushes the rug so vigorously that the room is enveloped in a cloud of dust. Mr. Dussel makes the beds (all wrong, of course), always whistling the same Beethoven violin concerto as he goes about his work. Mother can be heard shuffling around the attic as she hangs up the washing. Mr. van Daan puts on his hat and disappears into the lower regions, usually followed by Peter and Mouschi. Mrs. van D. dons a long apron, a black wool jacket and overshoes, winds a red wool scarf around her head, scoops up a bundle of dirty laundry and, with a well-rehearsed washerwoman's nod, heads downstairs. Margot and I do the dishes and straighten up the room.

Wednesday, March 1, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

My own affairs have been pushed to the background by . . . a break-in. I'm boring you with all my break-ins, but what can I do when burglars take such pleasure in honoring Gies & Go. with their presence? This incident is much more complicated than the last one, in July 1943. Last night at seven-thirty Mr. van Daan was heading, as usual, for Mr. Kugler's office when he saw that both the glass door and the office door were open. He was surprised, but he went on through and was even more astonished to see that the alcove doors were open as well and that there was a terrible mess in the front office. "There's been a burglary" flashed through his mind. But just to make sure, he went downstairs to the front door, checked the lock and found everything closed. "Bep and Peter must just have been very careless this evening," Mr. van D. concluded. He remained for a while in Mr. Kugler's office, switched off the lamp and went upstairs without worrying much about the open doors or the messy office.

Early this morning Peter knocked at our door to tell us that the front door was wide open and that the projector and Mr. Kugler's new briefcase had

disappeared from the closet. Peter was instructed to lock the door. Mr. van Daan told us his discoveries of the night before, and we were extremely worried.

The only explanation is that the burglar must have had a duplicate key, since there were no signs of a forced entry. He must have sneaked in early in the evening, shut the door behind him, hidden himself when he heard Mr. van Daan, fled with the loot after Mr. van Daan went upstairs and, in his hurry, not bothered to shut the door.

Who could have our key? Why didn't the burglar go to the warehouse? Was it one of our own warehouse employees, and will he turn us in, now that he's heard Mr. van Daan and maybe even seen him?

It's really scary, since we don't know whether the burglar will take it into his head to try and get in again. Or was he so startled when he heard someone else in the building that he'll stay away?

Yours, Anne

P.S. We'd be delighted if you could hunt up a good detective for us. Obviously, there's one condition: he must be relied upon not to inform on people in hiding.

Thursday, March 2, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Margot and I were in the attic together today. I can't enjoy being there with her. I know she feels the same about most things as I do! While doing the dishes, Bep began talking to Mother and Mrs. van Daan about how discouraged she gets. What help did those two offer her? Our tactless mother, especially, only made things go from bad to worse. Do you know what her advice was? That she should think about all the other people in the world who are suffering!

How can thinking about the misery of others help if you're miserable yourself? I said as much. Their response, of course, was that I should stay out of conversations of this sort.

As if Peter, Margot, Bep and I didn't all have the same feelings. The only thing that helps is a mother's love, or that of a very, very close friend. But these two mothers don't understand the first thing about us! Perhaps Mrs. van Daan does, a bit more than Mother. Oh, I wish I could have said something to poor Bep, something that I know from my own experience would have helped. But Father came between us, pushing me roughly aside. They're all so rude! I also

talked to Margot about Father and Mother, about how nice it could be here if they weren't so aggravating. We'd be able to organize evenings in which everyone could take turns discussing a given subject. But we've already been through all that. It's impossible for me to talk here! Mr. van Daan goes on the offensive, Mother gets sarcastic and can't say anything in a normal voice, Father doesn't feel like taking part, nor does Mr. Dussel, and Mrs. van D. is attacked so often that she just sits therewith a red face, hardly able to put up a fight anymore. And what about us? We aren't allowed to have an opinion! My, my, aren't they progressive! Not have an opinion! People can tell you to shut up, but they can't keep you from having an opinion. You can't forbid someone to have an opinion, no matter how young they are! The only thing that would help Bep, Margot, Peter and me would be great love and devotion, which we don't get here. And no one, especially not the sages around here, is capable of understanding us, since we're more sensitive and much more advanced in our thinking than any of them ever suspect!

At the moment, Mother's grouching at me again; she's clearly jealous because I talk to Mrs. van Daan more than to her. What do I care! managed to get hold of Peter this afternoon, and we talked for at least forty-five minutes. He wanted to tell me something about himself, but didn't find it easy. He finally got it out, though it took a long time. I honestly didn't know whether it was better for me to stay or to go. But I wanted so much to help him! I told him about Bep and how tactless our mothers are. He told me that his parents fight constantly, about politics and cigarettes and all kinds of things. As I've told you before, Peter's very shy, but not too shy to admit that he'd be perfectly happy not to see his parents for a year or two. "My father isn't as nice as he looks," he said. "But in the matter of the cigarettes, Mother's absolutely right."

I also told him about my mother. But he came to Father's defense. He thought he was a "terrific guy."

Tonight when I was hanging up my apron after doing the dishes, he called me over and asked me not to say anything downstairs about his parents' having had another argument and not being on speaking terms. I promised, though I'd already told Margot. But I'm sure Margot won't pass it on.

"Oh no, Peter," I said, you don't have to worry about me. I've learned not to blab everything I hear. I never repeat what you tell me."

He was glad to hear that. I also told him what terrible gossips we are, and said, "Margot's quite right, of course, when she says I'm not being honest,

because as much as I want to stop gossiping, there's nothing I like better than discussing Mr. Dussel." "It's good that you admit it," he said. He blushed, and his sincere compliment almost embarrassed me too.

Then we talked about "upstairs" and "downstairs" some more. Peter was really rather surprised to hear that I don't like his parents. "Peter," I said, "you know I'm always honest, so why shouldn't I tell you this as well? We can see their faults too."

I added, "Peter, I'd really like to help you. Will you let me? You're caught in an awkward position, and I know, even though you don't say anything, that it upsets you."

"Oh, your help is always welcome!"

"Maybe it'd be better for you to talk to Father. You can tell him anything, he won't pass it on."

"I know, he's a real pal."

"You like him a lot, don't you?"

Peter nodded, and I continued, "Well, he likes you too, you know!"

He looked up quickly and blushed. It was really touching to see how happy these few words made him.

"You think so?" he asked.

"Yes," I said. "You can tell from the little things he lets slip now and then."

Then Mr. van Daan came in to do some dictating.

Peter's a "terrific guy," just like Father!

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Friday, March 3, 1944

My dearest Kitty,

When I looked into the candle tonight, I felt calm and happy again. It seems Grandma is in that candle, and it's Grandma who watches over and protects me and makes me feel happy again. I went to get the potatoes today, and while I was standing on the stairway with my pan full, he asked, "What did you do during the lunch break?"

I sat down on the stairs, and we began to talk. The potatoes didn't make it to the kitchen until five-fifteen (an hour after I'd gone to get them).

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Saturday, March 4, 1944

Dear Kitty,

This is the first Saturday in months that hasn't been tiresome, dreary and boring. The reason is Peter. This morning as I was on my way to the attic to hang up my apron, Father asked whether I wanted to stay and practice my French, and I said yes. We spoke French together for a while and I explained something to Peter, and then we worked on our English. Father read aloud from Dickens, and I was in seventh heaven, since I was sitting on Father's chair, close to Peter. I went downstairs at quarter to eleven. When I went back up at eleven-thirty, Peter was already waiting for me on the stairs. We talked until quarter to one. Whenever I leave the room, for example after a meal, and Peter, he says, "Bye, Anne, see you later."

Yours, Anne M. Frank

PS. Before I forget, last night everything was blanketed in snow. Now it's thawed and there's almost nothing left.

Tuesday, March 7, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

When I think back to my life in 1942, it all seems so unreal. The Anne Frank who enjoyed that heavenly existence was completely different from the one who has grown wise within these walls. Yes, it was heavenly. Five admirers on every street corner, twenty or so friends, the favorite of most of my teachers, spoiled rotten by Father and Mother, bags full of candy and a big allowance. What more could anyone ask for? You're probably wondering how I could have charmed all those people. Peter says it's because I'm "attractive," but that isn't it entirely. The teachers were amused and entertained by my clever answers, my witty remarks, my smiling face and my critical mind. That's all I was: a terrible flirt, coquettish and amusing. I had a few plus points, which kept me in everybody's good graces: I was hardworking, honest and generous. I would never have refused anyone who wanted to peek at my answers, I was magnanimous with my candy, and I wasn't stuck-up.

Would all that admiration eventually have made me overconfident? It's a

good thing that, at the height of my glory, I was suddenly plunged into reality. It took me more than a year to get used to doing without admiration.

How did they see me at school? As the class comedian, the eternal ringleader, never in a bad mood, never a crybaby. Was it any wonder that everyone wanted to bicycle to school with me or do me little favors?

I look back at that Anne Frank as a pleasant, amusing, but superficial girl, who has nothing to do with me. What did Peter say about me? "Whenever I saw you, you were surrounded by a flock of girls and at least two boys, you were always laughing, and you were always the center of attention!" He was right.

What's remained of that Anne Frank? Oh, I haven't forgotten how to laugh or toss off a remark, I'm just as good, if not better, at raking people over the coals, and I can still flirt and be amusing, if I want to be . . .

But there's the catch. I'd like to live that seemingly carefree and happy life for an evening, a few days, a week. At the end of that week I'd be exhausted, and would be grateful to the first person to talk to me about something meaningful. I want friends, not admirers. People who respect me for my character and my deeds, not my flattering smile. The circle around me would be much smaller, but what does that matter, as long as they're sincere?

In spite of everything, I wasn't altogether happy in 1942; I often felt I'd been deserted, but because I was on the go all day long, I didn't think about it. I enjoyed myself as much as I could, trying consciously or unconsciously to fill the void with jokes.

Looking back, I realize that this period of my life has irrevocably come to a close; my happy-go-lucky, carefree schooldays are gone forever. I don't even miss them. I've outgrown them. I can no longer just kid around, since my serious side is always there. I see my life up to New Year's 1944 as if I were looking through a powerful magnifying glass. When I was at home, my life was filled with sunshine. Then, in the middle of 1942, everything changed overnight. The quarrels, the accusations – I couldn't take it all in. I was caught off guard, and the only way I knew to keep my bearings was to talk back.

The first half of 1943 brought crying spells, loneliness and the gradual realization of my faults and shortcomings, which were numerous and seemed even more so. I filled the day with chatter, tried to draw Pim closer to me and failed. This left me on my own to face the difficult task of improving myself so I wouldn't have to hear their reproaches, because they made me so despondent.

The second half of the year was slightly better. I became a teenager, and was treated more like a grown-up. I began to think about things and to write stories, finally coming to the conclusion that the others no longer had anything to do with me. They had no right to swing me back and forth like a pendulum on a clock. I wanted to change myself in my own way. I realized I could manage without my mother, completely and totally, and that hurt. But what affected me even more was the realization that I was never going to be able to confide in Father. I didn't trust anyone but myself.

I lie in bed at night, after ending my prayers with the words "Ich Janke air fur all dasCute una Liebe una Schone,"* [* Thank you, God, for all that is good and dear and beautiful.] and I'm filled with joy. I think of going into hiding, my health and my whole being as Cute.

At such moments I don't think about all the misery, but about the beauty that still remains. This is where Mother and I differ greatly. Her advice in the face of melancholy is: "Think about all the suffering in the world and be thankful you're not part of it." My advice is: "Go outside, to the country, enjoy the sun and all nature has to offer. Go outside and try to recapture the happiness within yourself; think of all the beauty in yourself and in everything around you and be happy."

I don't think Mother's advice can be right, because what are you supposed to do if you become part of the suffering? You'd be completely lost. On the contrary, beauty remains, even in misfortune. If you just look for it, you discover more and more happiness and regain your balance. A person who's happy will make others happy; a person who has courage and faith will never die in misery!

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Wednesday, March 8, 1944

Margot and I have been writing each other notes, just for fun, of course. Anne: It's strange, but I can only remember the day after what has happened the night before. For example, I suddenly remembered that Mr. Dussel was snoring loudly last night. (It's now quarter to three on Wednesday afternoon and Mr. Dussel is snoring again, which is why it flashed through my mind, of course.) When I had to use the potty, I deliberately made more noise to get the snoring to stop.

Margot: Which is better, the snoring or the gasping for air?

Anne: The snoring's better, because it stops when I make noise, without waking the person in question.

Friday, March 10, 1944

My dearest Kitty,

The proverb “Misfortunes never come singly” definitely applies to today. Peter just got through saying it. Let me tell you all the awful things that have happened and that are still hanging over our heads.

First, Miep is sick, as a result of Henk and Aagje’s wedding yesterday. She caught cold in the Westerkerk, where the service was held. Second, Mr. Kleiman hasn’t returned to work since the last time his stomach started bleeding, so Bep’s been left to hold down the fort alone. Third, the police have arrested a man (whose name I won’t put in writing). It’s terrible not only for him, but for us as well, since he’s been supplying us with potatoes, butter and jam. Mr. M., as I’ll call him, has five children under the age of thirteen, and another on the way.

Last night we had another little scare: we were in the middle of dinner when suddenly someone knocked on the wall next door. For the rest of the evening we were nervous and gloomy.

Lately I haven’t been at all in the mood to write down what’s been going on here. I’ve been more wrapped up in myself. Don’t get me wrong, I’m terribly upset about what’s happened to poor, good-hearted Mr. M., but there’s not much room for him in my diary.

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday I was in Peter’s room from four-thirty to five-fifteen. We worked on our French and chatted about one thing and another. I really look forward to that hour or so in the afternoon, but best of all is that I think Peter’s just as pleased to see me.

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Sunday, March 12, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Things are getting crazier here as the days go by.

Yesterday afternoon I was so worn out by the sad news from the outside that I lay down on my divan for a nap. All I wanted was to sleep and not have to think. I slept until four, but then I had to go next door. It wasn’t easy, answering all Mother’s questions and inventing an excuse to explain my nap to Father. I pleaded a headache, which wasn’t a lie, since I did have one. . . on the inside! Ordinary people, ordinary girls, teenagers like myself, would think I’m a little

nuts with all my self-pity. But that's just it. I pour my heart out to you, and the rest of the time I'm as impudent, cheerful and self-confident as possible to avoid questions and keep from getting on my own nerves. Margot is very kind and would like me to confide in her, but I can't tell her very thing. She takes me too seriously, far too seriously, and spends a lot of time thinking about her loony sister, looking at me closely whenever I open my mouth and wondering, "Is she acting, or does she really mean it?"

It's because we're always together. I don't want the person I confide in to be around me all the time. When will I untangle my jumbled thoughts? When will I find inner peace again?

Yours, Anne

Tuesday, March 14, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

It might be amusing for you (though not for me) to hear what we're going to eat today. The cleaning lady is working downstairs, so at the moment I'm seated at the van Daans' oilcloth-covered table with a handkerchief sprinkled with fragrant prewar perfume pressed to my nose and mouth. You probably don't have the faintest idea what I'm talking about, so let me "begin at the beginning." The people who supply us with food coupons have been arrested, so we have just our five black-market ration books-no coupons, no fats and oils. Since Miep and Mr. Kleiman are sick again, Bep can't manage the shopping. The food is wretched, and so are we. As of tomorrow, we won't have a scrap of fat, butter or margarine. We can't eat fried potatoes for breakfast (which we've been doing to save on bread), so we're having hot cereal instead, and because Mrs. van D. thinks we're starving, we bought some half-and-half. Lunch today consists of mashed potatoes and pickled kale. This explains the precautionary measure with the handkerchief. You wouldn't believe how much kale can stink when it's a few years old! The kitchen smells like a mixture of spoiled plums, rotten eggs and brine. Ugh, just the thought of having to eat that muck makes me want to throw up! Besides that, our potatoes have contracted such strange diseases that one out of every two buckets of pommes de terre winds up in the garbage. We entertain ourselves by trying to figure out which disease they've got, and we've reached the conclusion that they suffer from cancer, smallpox and measles.

Honestly, being in hiding during the fourth year of the war is no picnic. If only the whole stinking mess were over!

To tell you the truth, the food wouldn't matter so much to me if life here were more pleasant in other ways. But that's just it: this tedious existence is starting to make us all disagreeable. Here are the opinions of the five grown-ups on the present situation (children aren't allowed to have opinions, and for once I'm sticking to the rules).

Mrs. van Daan: "I'd stopped wanting to be queen of the kitchen long ago. But sitting around doing nothing was boring, so I went back to cooking. Still, I can't help complaining: it's impossible to cook without oil, and all those disgusting smells make me sick to my stomach. Besides, what do I get in return for my efforts? Ingratitude and rude remarks. I'm always the black sheep; I get blamed for everything. What's more, it's my opinion that the war is making very little progress. The Germans will win in the end. I'm terrified that we're going to starve, and when I'm in a bad mood, I snap at everyone who comes near."

Mr. van Daan: "I just smoke and smoke and smoke. Then the food, the political situation and Kerli's moods don't seem so bad. Kerli's a sweetheart. If I don't have anything to smoke, I get sick, then I need to eat meat, life becomes unbearable, nothing's good enough, and there's bound to be a flaming row. My Kerli's an idiot." Mrs. Frank: "Food's not very important, but I'd love a slice of rye bread right now, because I'm so hungry. If I were Mrs. van Daan, I'd have put a stop to Mr. van Daan's smoking long ago. But I desperately need a cigarette now, because my head's in such a whirl. The van Daans are horrible people; the English may make a lot of mistakes, but the war is progressing. I should keep my mouth shut and be grateful I'm not in Poland."

Mr. Frank: "Everything's fine, I don't need a thing. Stay calm, we've got plenty of time. Just give me my potatoes, and I'll be quiet. Better set aside some of my rations for Bep. The political situation is improving, I'm extremely optimistic." Mr. Dussel: "I must complete the task I've set for myself, everything must be finished on time. The political situation is looking 'gut,' it's 'impossible' for us to get caught. Me, me, me . . ."

Yours, Anne

Thursday, March 16, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Whew! Released from the gloom and doom for a few moments! All I've been hearing today is: "If this and that happens, we're in trouble, and if so-and-

so gets sick, we'll be left to fend for ourselves, and if . . ." Well, you know the rest, or at any rate I assume you're familiar enough with the residents of the Annex to guess what they'd be talking about. The reason for all the "ifs" is that Mr. Kugler has been called up for a six-day work detail, Bep is down with a bad cold and will probably have to stay home tomorrow, Miep hasn't gotten over her flu, and Mr. Kleiman's stomach bled so much he lost consciousness. What a tale of woe! We think Mr. Kugler should go directly to a reliable doctor for a medical certificate of ill health, which he can present to the City Hall in Hilversum. The warehouse —employees have been given a day off tomorrow, so Bep will be alone in the office. If (there's another "if") Bep has to stay home, the door will remain locked and we'll have to be as quiet as mice so the Keg Company won't hear us. At one o'clock Jan will come for half an hour to check on us poor forsaken souls, like a zookeeper.

This afternoon, for the first time in ages, Jan gave us some news of the outside world. You should have seen us gathered around him; it looked exactly like a print: "At Grandmother's Knee."

He regaled his grateful audience with talk of-what else?-food. Mrs. P., a friend of Miep's, has been cooking his meals. The day before yesterday Jan ate carrots with green peas, yesterday he had the leftovers, today she's cooking marrowfat peas, and tomorrow she's planning to mash the remaining carrots with potatoes. We asked about Miep's doctor.

"Doctor?" said Jan. "What doctor? I called him this morning and got his secretary on the line. I asked for a flu prescription and was told I could come to pick it up tomorrow morning between eight and nine. If you've got a particularly bad case of flu, the doctor himself comes to the phone and says, 'Stick out your tongue and say "Aah." Oh, I can hear it, your throat's infected. I'll write out a prescription and you can bring it to the pharmacy. Good day.' And that's that. Easy job he's got, diagnosis by phone. But I shouldn't blame the doctors." After all, a person has only two hands, and these days there're too many patients and too few doctors."

Still, we all had a good laugh at Jan's phone call. I can just imagine what a doctor's waiting room looks like these days. Doctors no longer turn up their noses at the poorer patients, but at those with minor illnesses. "Hey, what are you doing here?" they think. "Go to the end of the line; real patients have priority!"

Yours, Anne

Thursday, March 16, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

The weather is gorgeous, indescribably beautiful; I'll be going up to the attic in a moment.

I now know why I'm so much more restless than Peter. He has his own room, where he can work, dream, think and sleep. I'm constantly being chased from one corner to another. I'm never alone in the room I share with Dussel, though I long to be so much. That's another reason I take refuge in the attic. When I'm there, or with you, I can be myself, at least for a little while. Still, I don't want to moan and groan. On the contrary, I want to be brave!

Thank goodness the others notice nothing of my innermost feelings, except that everyday I'm growing cooler and more contemptuous of Mother, less affectionate to Father and less willing to share a single thought with Margot; I'm closed up tighter than a drum. Above all, I have to maintain my air of confidence. No one must know that my heart and mind are constantly at war with each other. Up to now, reason has always won the battle, but will my emotions get the upper hand? Sometimes I fear they will, but more often I actually hope they do!

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Friday, March 17, 1944

My dearest darling,

Everything turned out all right after all; Bep just had a sore throat, not the flu, and Mr. Kugler got a medical certificate to excuse him from the work detail. The entire Annex breathed a huge sigh of relief. Everything's fine here! Except that Margot and I are rather tired of our parents.

Don't get me wrong. I still love Father as much as ever and Margot loves both Father and Mother, but when you're as old as we are, you want to make a few decisions for yourself, get out from under their thumb. Whenever I go upstairs, they ask what I'm going to do, they won't let me salt my food, Mother asks me every evening at eight-fifteen if it isn't time for me to change into my nightgown, I and they have to approve every book I read. I must admit, they're not at all strict about that and let me read nearly everything, but Margot and I are sick and tired of having to listen to their comments and questions all day long.

There's something else that displeases them: I no longer feel like giving them little kisses morning, noon and night. All those cute nicknames seem so affected, and Father's fondness for talking about farting and going to the bathroom is disgusting. In short, I'd like nothing better than to do without their company for a while, and they don't understand that. Not that Margot and I have ever said any of this to them. What would be the point? They wouldn't understand anyway.

Margot said last night, "What really bothers me is that if you happen to put your head in your hands and sigh once or twice, they immediately ask whether you have a headache or don't feel well."

For both of us, it's been quite a blow to suddenly realize that very little remains of the close and harmonious family we used to have at home! This is mostly because everything's out of kilter here. By that I mean that we're treated like children when it comes to external matters, while, inwardly, we're much older than other girls our age. Even though I'm only fourteen, I know what I want, I know who's right and who's wrong, I have my own opinions, ideas and principles, and though it may sound odd coming from a teenager, I feel I'm more of a person than a child — I feel I'm completely independent of others. I know I'm better at debating or carrying on a discussion than Mother, I know I'm more objective, I don't exaggerate as much, I'm much tidier and better with my hands, and because of that I feel (this may make you laugh) that I'm superior to her in many ways. To love someone, I have to admire and respect the person, but I feel neither respect nor admiration for Mother!

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Sunday, March 19, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

We talked about how neither of us really trusts our parents, and how his parents love each other a great deal and wish he'd confide in them, but that he doesn't want to. How I cry my heart out in bed and he goes up to the loft and swears. How Margot and I have only recently gotten to know each other and yet still tell each other very little, since we're always together. We talked about every imaginable thing, about trust, feelings and ourselves. Oh, Kitty, he was just as I thought he would be.

Then we talked about the year 1942, and how different we were back then; we don't even recognize ourselves from that period. How we couldn't stand

each other at first. He'd thought I was a noisy pest, and I'd quickly concluded that he was nothing special. I didn't understand why he didn't pay attention to me, but now I'm glad. He also mentioned how he often used to retreat to his room. I said that my noise and exuberance and his silence were two sides of the same coin, and that I also liked peace and quiet but don't have anything for myself alone, except my diary, and that everyone would rather see the back of me, starting with Mr. Dussel, and that I don't always want to sit with my parents. We discussed how glad he is that my parents have children and how glad I am that he's here.

How I now understand his need to withdraw and his relationship to his parents, and how much I'd like to help him when they argue.

"But you're always a help to me!" he said.

"How?" I asked, greatly surprised.

"By being cheerful."

That was the nicest thing he said all evening. He also told me that he didn't mind my coming to his room the way he used to; in fact, he liked it. I also told him that all of Father's and Mother's pet names were meaningless, that a kiss here and there didn't automatically lead to trust. We also talked about doing things your own way, the diary, loneliness, the difference between everyone's inner and outer selves, my mask, etc. It was wonderful. He must have come to love me as a friend, and, for the time being, that's enough. I'm so grateful and happy, I can't find the words. I must apologize, Kitty, since my style is not up to my usual standard today. I've just written whatever came into my head!

Your grateful and happy Anne

Wednesday, March 22, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

I received this letter last night from Margot:

Dear Anne,

After your letter of yesterday I have the unpleasant feeling that your conscience bothers you whenever you go to Peter's to work or talk; there's really no reason for that. In my heart, I know there's someone who deserves my trust (as I do his), and I wouldn't be able to tolerate Peter in his place.

However, as you wrote, I do think of Peter as a kind of brother. . . a younger

brother; we've been sending out feelers, and a brotherly and sisterly affection mayor may not develop at some later date, but it's certainly not reached that stage yet. So there's no need for you to feel sorry for me. Now that you've found companionship, enjoy it as much as you can.

My answer:

Dearest Margot,

I think the best thing is simply to wait and see what happens. It can't be much longer before Peter and I will have to decide whether to go back to the way we were or do something else. I don't know how it'll turn out; I can't see any farther than the end of my nose.

But I'm certain of one thing: if Peter and I do become friends, I'm going to tell him you're also very fond of him and are prepared to help him if he needs you. You wouldn't want me to, I'm sure, but I don't care; I don't know what Peter thinks of you, but I'll ask him when the time comes. It's certainly nothing bad — on the contrary! You're welcome to join us in the attic, or wherever we are. You won't be disturbing us, because we have an unspoken agreement to talk only in the evenings.

Keep your spirits up! I'm doing my best, though it's not always easy. Your time may come sooner than you think.

Yours, Anne

Thursday, March 23, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Things are more or less back to normal here. Our coupon men have been released from prison, thank goodness! Miep's been back since yesterday, but today it was her husband's turn to take to his bed—chills and fever, the usual flu symptoms. Bep is better, though she still has a cough, and Mr. Kleiman will have to stay home for a long time. Yesterday a plane crashed nearby. The crew was able to parachute out in time. It crashed on top of a school, but luckily there were no children inside. There was a small fire and a couple of people were killed. As the airmen made their descent, the Germans sprayed them with bullets. The Amsterdammers who saw it seethed with rage at such a dastardly deed. Brrr, I hate the sound of gunfire.

Yours, Anne

Saturday, March 25, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

You never realize how much you've changed until after it's happened. I've changed quite drastically, everything about me is different: my opinions, ideas, critical outlook. Inwardly, outwardly, nothing's the same. And, I might safely add, since it's true, I've changed for the better. I once told you that, after years of being adored, it was hard for me to adjust to the harsh reality of grown-ups and rebukes. But Father and Mother are largely to blame for my having to put up with so much. At home they wanted me to enjoy life, which was fine, but here they shouldn't have encouraged me to agree with them and only shown me "their" side of all the quarrels and gossip. It was a long time before I discovered the score was fifty-fifty. I now know that many blunders have been committed here, by young and old alike. Father and Mother's biggest mistake in dealing with the van Daans is that they're never candid and friendly (admittedly, the friendliness might have to be feigned). Above all, I want to keep the peace, and to neither quarrel nor gossip. With Father and Margot that's not difficult, but it is with Mother, which is why I'm glad she gives me an occasional rap on the knuckles. You can win Mr. van Daan to your side by agreeing with him, listening quietly, not saying much and most of all . . . responding to his teasing and his corny jokes with a joke of your own. Mrs. van D. can be won over by talking openly to her and admitting when you're wrong. She also frankly admits her faults, of which she has many. I know all too well that she doesn't think as badly of me as she did in the beginning. And that's simply because I'm honest and tell people right to their faces what I think, even when it's not very flattering. I want to be honest; I think it gets you further and also makes you feel better about yourself. Yesterday Mrs. van D. was talking about the rice we gave Mr. Kleiman. "All we do is give, give, give. But at a certain point I think that enough is enough. If he'd only take the trouble, Mr. Kleiman could scrounge up his own rice. Why should we give away all our supplies? We need them just as badly."

"No, Mrs. van Daan," I replied. "I don't agree with you. Mr. Kleiman may very well be able to get hold of a little rice, but he doesn't like having to worry about it. It's not our place to criticize the people who are helping us. We should give them whatever they need if we can possibly spare it. One less plate of rice a week won't make that much difference; we can always eat beans."

Mrs. van D. didn't see it my way, but she added that, even though she disagreed, she was willing to back down, and that was an entirely different matter.

Well, I've said enough. Sometimes I know what my place is and sometimes I have my doubts, but I'll eventually get where I want to be! I know I will ! Especially now that I have help, since Peter helps me through many a rough patch and rainy day!

I don't have much in the way of money or worldly possessions, I'm not beautiful, intelligent or clever, but I'm happy, and I intend to stay that way! I was born happy, I love people, I have a trusting nature, and I'd like everyone else to be happy too.

Your devoted friend, Anne M. Frank An empty day, though clear and bright, Is just as dark as any night. (I wrote this a few weeks ago and it no longer holds true, but I included it because my poems are so few and far between.)

Monday, March 27, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

At least one long chapter on our life in hiding should be about politics, but I've been avoiding the subject, since it interests me so little. Today, however, I'll devote an entire letter to politics.

Of course, there are many different opinions on this topic, and it's not surprising to hear it frequently discussed in times of war, but. . . arguing so much about politics is just plain stupid! Let them laugh, swear, make bets, grumble and do whatever they want as long as they stew in their own juice. But don't let them argue, since that only makes things worse. The people who come from outside bring us a lot of news that later proves to be untrue; however, up to now our radio has never lied. Jan, Miep, Mr. Kleiman, Bep and Mr. Kugler go up and down in their political moods, though Jan least of all.

Here in the Annex, the mood never varies. The endless debates over the invasion, air raids, speeches, etc., etc., are accompanied by countless exclamations such as "Eempossible!, Urn Gottes Willen* [* Oh, for heaven's sake]. If they're just getting started now, how long is it going to last!, It's going splendidly, But, great!" Optimists and pessimists – not to mention the realists – air their opinions with unflagging energy, and as with everything else, they're all certain that they have a monopoly on the truth. It annoys a certain lady that her spouse has such supreme faith in the British, and a certain husband attacks his wife because of her teasing and disparaging remarks about his beloved nation!

And so it goes from early in the morning to late at night; the funny part is that they never get tired of it. I've discovered a trick, and the effect is

overwhelming, just like pricking someone with a pin and watching them jump. Here's how it works: I start talking about politics.

All it takes is a single question, a word or a sentence, and before you know it, the entire family is involved! As if the German "Wehrmacht News" and the English BBC weren't enough, they've now added special air-raid announcements. In a word, splendid. But the other side of the coin is that the British Air Force is operating around the clock. Not unlike the German propaganda machine, which is cranking out lies twenty-four hours a day!

So the radio is switched on every morning at eight (if not earlier) and is listened to every hour until nine, ten or even eleven at night. This is the best evidence yet that the adults have infinite patience, but also that their brains have turned to mush (some of them, I mean, since I wouldn't want to insult anyone). One broadcast, two at the most, should be enough to last the entire day. But no, those old nincompoops. . . never mind, I've already said it all! "Music While You Work," the Dutch broadcast from England, Frank Phillips or Queen Wilhelmina, they each get a turn and find a willing listener. If the adults aren't eating or sleeping, they're clustered around the radio talking about eating, sleeping and politics. Whew! It's getting to be a bore, and it's all I can do to keep from turning into a dreary old crone myself! Though with all the old folks around me, that might not be such a bad idea! Here's a shining example, a speech made by our beloved Winston Churchill.

Nine o'clock, Sunday evening. The teapot, under its cozy, is on the table, and the guests enter the room.

Dussel sits to the left of the radio, Mr. van D. in front of it and Peter to the side. Mother is next to Mr. van D., with Mrs. van D. behind them. Margot and I are sitting in the last row and Pim at the table. I realize this isn't a very clear description of our seating arrangements, but it doesn't matter. The men smoke, Peter's eyes close from the strain of listening, Mama is dressed in her long, dark negligee, Mrs. van D. is trembling because of the planes, which take no notice of the speech but fly blithely on toward Essen, Father is slurping his tea, and Margot and I are united in a sisterly way by the sleeping Mouschi, who has taken possession of both our knees. Margot's hair is in curlers and my nightgown is too tight and too short. It all looks so intimate, cozy and peaceful, and for once it really is. Yet I await the end of the speech with dread. They're impatient, straining at the leash to start another argument! Pst, pst, like a cat luring a mouse from its hole, they goad each other into quarrels and dissent.

Yours, Anne

Wednesday, March 29, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Mr. Bolkestein, the Cabinet Minister, speaking on the Dutch broadcast from London, said that after the war a collection would be made of diaries and letters dealing with the war. Of course, everyone pounced on my diary. Just imagine how interesting it would be if I were to publish a novel about the Secret Annex. The title alone would make people think it was a detective story.

Seriously, though, ten years after the war people would find it very amusing to read how we lived, what we ate and what we talked about as Jews in hiding. Although I tell you a great deal about our lives, you still know very little about us. How frightened the women are during air raids; last Sunday, for instance, when 350 British planes dropped 550 tons of bombs on IJmuiden, so that the houses trembled like blades of grass in the wind. Or how many epidemics are raging here.

You know nothing of these matters, and it would take me all day to describe everything down to the last detail. People have to stand in line to buy vegetables and all kinds of goods; doctors can't visit their patients, since their cars and bikes are stolen the moment they turn their backs; burglaries and thefts are so common that you ask yourself what's suddenly gotten into the Dutch to make them so light-fingered.

Little children, eight- and eleven- year-olds, smash the windows of people's homes and steal whatever they can lay their hands on. People don't dare leave the house for even five minutes, since they're liable to come back and find all their belongings gone. Every day the newspapers are filled with reward notices for the return of stolen typewriters, Persian rugs, electric clocks, fabrics, etc. The electric clocks on street corners are dismantled, public phones are stripped down to the last wire. Morale among the Dutch can't be good. Everyone's hungry; except for the ersatz coffee, a week's food ration doesn't last two days. The invasion's long in coming, the men are being shipped off to Germany, the children are sick or undernourished, everyone's wearing worn-out clothes and run-down shoes. A new sole costs 7.50 guilders on the black market. Besides, few shoemakers will do repairs, or if they do, you have to wait four months for your shoes, which might very well have disappeared in the meantime.

One good thing has come out of this: as the food gets worse and the decrees more severe, the acts of sabotage against the authorities are increasing. The

ration board, the police, the officials-they're all either helping their fellow citizens or denouncing them and sending them off to prison. Fortunately, only a small percentage of Dutch people are on the wrong side.

Yours, Anne

Friday, March 31, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Just imagine, it's still fairly cold, and yet most people have been without coal for nearly a month. Sounds awful, doesn't it? There's a general mood of optimism about the Russian front, because that's going great guns! I don't often write about the political situation, but I must tell you where the Russians are at the moment. They've reached the Polish border and the Prut River in Romania. They're close to Odessa, and they've surrounded Ternopol. Every night we're expecting an extra communiqué from Stalin.



They're firing off so many salutes in Moscow, the city must be rumbling and shaking all day long. Whether they like to pretend the fighting's nearby or they simply don't have any other way to express their joy, I don't know!

(Tobacco danger)

Many reference have been given in the book about tobacco usage. Tobacco originated in the Americas and then spread to Europe and other parts of the world. It became extremely popular in Europe-both among men and women in the 18th century (the time when Anne was penning her diary). Researchers conclusively proved a link between Tobacco and lung cancer in the 1950s and legislation and advocacy campaigns soon started across the western world to discourage tobacco use.

It is a well-established scientific fact that tobacco-use, in any form, affects health adversely.

Hungary has been occupied by German troops. There are still a million Jews living there; they too are doomed.

Nothing special is happening here. Today is Mr. van Daan's birthday. He received two packets of tobacco, one serving of coffee, which his wife had managed to save, lemon punch from Mr. Kugler, sardines from Miep, eau de cologne from us, lilacs, tulips and, last but not least, a cake with raspberry filling, slightly gluey because of the poor quality of the flour and the lack of butter, but delicious anyway.

My life here has gotten better, much better. God has not forsaken me, and He never will.

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Monday, April 3, 1944

My dearest Kitty,

Contrary to my usual practice, I'm going to write you a detailed description of the food situation, since it's become a matter of some difficulty and importance, not only here in the Annex, but in all of Holland, all of Europe and even beyond.

In the twenty-one months we've lived here, we've been through a good many "food cycles" — you'll understand what that means in a moment. A "food cycle" is a period in which we have only one particular dish or type of vegetable to eat. For a long time we ate nothing but endive. Endive with sand, endive without sand, endive with mashed potatoes, endive-and-mashed potato casserole. Then it was spinach, followed by kohlrabi, salsify, cucumbers, tomatoes, sauerkraut, etc., etc. It's not much fun when you have to eat, say, sauerkraut every day for lunch and dinner, but when you're hungry enough, you do a lot of things. Now, however, we're going through the most delightful so far, because there are no vegetables at all. Our weekly lunch menu consists of brown beans, split-pea soup, potatoes with dumplings, potato kugel and, by the grace of God, turnip greens or rotten carrots, and then it's back to brown beans. Because of the bread shortage, we eat potatoes at every meal, starting with breakfast, but then we fry them a little. To make soup we use brown beans, navy beans, potatoes, packages of vegetable soup, packages of chicken soup and packages of bean soup. There are brown beans in everything, including the bread. For dinner we always have potatoes with imitation gravy and — thank goodness we've still got it — beet salad. I must tell you about the dumplings.

We make them with government-issue flour, water and yeast. They're so gluey and tough that it feels as if you had rocks in your stomach, but oh well! The high point is our weekly slice of liverwurst, and the jam on our unbuttered bread. But we're still alive, and much of the time it still tastes good too!

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Wednesday, April 5, 1944

My dearest Kitty,

For a long time now I didn't know why I was bothering to do any schoolwork. The end of the war still seemed so far away, so unreal, like a fairy tale. If the war isn't over by September, I won't go back to school, since I don't want to be two years behind.

I slid to the floor in my nightgown and began by saying my prayers, very fervently. Then I drew my knees to my chest, lay my head on my arms and cried, all huddled up on the bare floor. A loud sob brought me back down to earth, and I choked back my tears, since I didn't want anyone next door to hear me. Then I tried to pull myself together, saying over and over, "I must, I must, I must. . . ." Stiff from sitting in such an unusual position, I fell back against the side of the bed and kept up my struggle until just before ten-thirty, when I climbed back into bed. It was over! And now it's really over. I finally realized that I must do my schoolwork to keep from being ignorant, to get on in life, to become a journalist, because that's what I want! I know I can write. A few of my stories are good, my descriptions of the Secret Annex are humorous, much of my diary is vivid and alive, but. . . it remains to be seen whether I really have talent.

"Eva's Dream" is my best fairy tale, and the odd thing is that I don't have the faintest idea where it came from. Parts of "Cady's Life" are also good, but as a whole it's nothing special. I'm my best and harshest critic. I know what's good and what isn't. Unless you write yourself, you can't know how wonderful it is; I always used to bemoan the fact that I couldn't draw, but now I'm overjoyed that at least I can write. And if I don't have the talent to write books or newspaper articles, I can always write for myself. But I want to achieve more than that. I can't imagine having to live like Mother, Mrs. van Daan and all the women who go about their work and are then forgotten. I need to have something besides a husband and children to devote myself to! I don't want to have lived in vain like most people. I want to be useful or bring enjoyment to all people, even those I've never met. I want to go on living even after my death! And that's why I'm so

grateful to God for having given me this gift, which I can use to develop myself and to express all that's inside me!

When I write I can shake off all my cares. My sorrow disappears, my spirits are revived! But, and that's a big question, will I ever be able to write something great, will I ever become a journalist or a writer?

I hope so, oh, I hope so very much, because writing allows me to record everything, all my thoughts, ideals and fantasies. I haven't worked on "Cady's Life" for ages. In my mind I've worked out exactly what happens next, but the story doesn't seem to be coming along very well. I might never finish it, and it'll wind up in the wastepaper basket or the stove. That's a horrible thought, but then I say to myself, "At the age of fourteen and with so little experience, you can't write about philosophy."

So onward and upward, with renewed spirits. It'll all work out, because I'm determined to write!

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Thursday, April 6, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

You asked me what my hobbies and interests are and I'd like to answer, but I'd better warn you, I have lots of them, so don't be surprised.

First of all: writing, but I don't really think of that as a hobby.

Number two: genealogical charts. I'm looking in every newspaper, book and document I can find for the family trees of the French, German, Spanish, English, Austrian, Russian, Norwegian and Dutch royal families. I've made great progress with many of them, because for a long time I've been taking notes while reading biographies or history books. I even copy out many of the passages on history.

So my third hobby is history, and Father's already bought me numerous books. I can hardly wait for the day when I'll be able to go to the public library and ferret out the information I need.

Number four is Greek and Roman mythology. I have various books on this subject too. I can name The Nine Muses and The Seven Loves of Zeus. I have The Wives of Hercules, etc., etc.

My other hobbies are movie stars and family photographs. I'm crazy about

reading books. I adore the history of the arts, especially when it concerns writers, poets and painters; musicians may come later. I loathe algebra, geometry and arithmetic. I enjoy all my other school subjects, but history's my favorite!

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Tuesday, April 11, 1944

My dearest Kitty,

My head's in a whirl, I really don't know where to begin. Thursday (the last time I wrote you) everything was as usual. Friday afternoon (Good Friday) we played Monopoly; Saturday afternoon too. The days passed very quickly. Around two o'clock on Saturday, heavy firing began-machine guns, according to the men. For the rest, everything was quiet. Sunday afternoon Peter came to see me at four-thirty, at my invitation. At five-fifteen, we went to the front attic, where we stayed until six. There was a beautiful Mozart concert on the radio from six to seven-fifteen; I especially enjoyed the Kleine Nachtmusik. I can hardly bear to listen in the kitchen, since beautiful music stirs me to the very depths of my soul. Sunday evening Peter couldn't take his bath, because the washtub was down in the office kitchen, filled with laundry. The two of us went to the front attic together, and in order to be able to sit comfortably, I took along the only cushion I could find in my room. We seated ourselves on a packing crate. Since both the crate and the cushion were very narrow, we were sitting quite close, leaning against two other crates; Mouschi kept us company, so we weren't without a chaperon. Suddenly, at a quarter to nine, Mr. van Daan whistled and asked if we had Mr. Dussel's cushion. We jumped up and went downstairs with the cushion, the cat and Mr. van Daan. This cushion was the source of much misery. Dussel was angry because I'd taken the one he uses as a pillow, and he was afraid it might be covered with fleas; he had the entire house in an uproar because of this one cushion. In revenge, Peter and I stuck two hard brushes in his bed, but had to take them out again when Dussel unexpectedly decided to go and sit in his room. We had a really good laugh at this little intermezzo.

But our fun was short-lived. At nine-thirty Peter knocked gently on the door and asked Father to come upstairs and help him with a difficult English sentence. "That sounds fishy," I said to Margot. "It's obviously a pretext. You can tell by the way the men are talking that there's been a break-in!" I was right. The warehouse was being broken into at that very moment. Father, Mr. van Daan and Peter were downstairs in a flash. Margot, Mother, Mrs. van D. and I

waited. Four frightened women need to talk, so that's what we did until we heard a bang downstairs. After that all was quiet. The clock struck quarter to ten. The color had drained from our faces, but we remained calm, even though we were afraid. Where were the men? What was that bang? Were they fighting with the burglars? We were too scared to think; all we could do was wait.

Ten o'clock, footsteps on the stairs. Father, pale and nervous, came inside, followed by Mr. van Daan. "Lights out, tiptoe upstairs, we're expecting the police!" There wasn't time to be scared. The lights were switched off, I grabbed a jacket, and we sat down upstairs.

"What happened? Tell us quickly!"

There was no one to tell us; the men had gone back downstairs. The four of them didn't come back up until ten past ten. Two of them kept watch at Peter's open window. The door to the landing was locked, the bookcase shut. We draped a sweater over our night-light, and then they told us what had happened: Peter was on the landing when he heard two loud bangs. He went downstairs and saw that a large panel was missing from the left half of the warehouse door. He dashed upstairs, alerted the "Home Guard," and the four of them went downstairs. When they entered the warehouse, the burglars were going about their business. Without thinking, Mr. van Daan yelled "Police!" Hurried footsteps outside; the burglars had fled. The board was put back in the door so the police wouldn't notice the gap, but then a swiftkick from outside sent it flying to the floor. The men were amazed at the burglars' audacity. Both Peter and Mr. van Daan felt a murderous rage come over them. Mr. van Daan slammed an axe against the floor, and all was quiet again. Once more the panel was replaced, and once more the attempt was foiled. Outside, a man and a woman shone a glaring flashlight through the opening, lighting up the entire warehouse. "What the . . ." mumbled one of the men, but now their roles had been reversed. Instead of policemen, they were now burglars. All four of them raced upstairs. Dussel and Mr. van Daan snatched up Dussel's books, Peter opened the doors and windows in the kitchen and private office, hurled the phone to the ground, and the four of them finally ended up behind the bookcase.

In all probability the man and woman with the flashlight had alerted the police. It was Sunday night, Easter Sunday. The next day, Easter Monday, the office was going to be closed, which meant we wouldn't be able to move around until Tuesday morning. Think of it, having to sit in such terror for a day and two nights! We thought of nothing, but simply sat there in pitch darkness — in her

fear, Mrs. van D. had switched off the lamp. We whispered, and every time we heard a creak, someone said, "Shh, shh." It was ten-thirty, then eleven. Not a sound. Father and Mr. van Daan took turns coming upstairs to us. Then, at eleven-fifteen, a noise below. Up above you could hear the whole family breathing. For the rest, no one moved a muscle. Footsteps in the house, the private office, the kitchen, then. . . on the staircase. All sounds of breathing stopped, eight hearts pounded. Footsteps on the stairs, then a rattling at the bookcase. This moment is indescribable. "Now we're done for," I said, and I had visions of all fifteen of us being dragged away by the Gestapo that very night.

More rattling at the bookcase, twice. Then we heard a can fall, and the footsteps receded. We were out of danger, so far! A shiver went through everyone's body, I heard several sets of teeth chattering, no one said a word. We stayed like this until eleven-thirty.

There were no more sounds in the house, but a light was shining on our landing, right in front of the bookcase. Was that because the police thought it looked so suspicious or because they simply forgot? Was anyone going to come back and turn it off? We found our tongues again.

There were no longer any people inside the building, but perhaps someone was standing guard outside. We then did three things: tried to guess what was going on, trembled with fear and went to the bathroom. Since the buckets were in the attic, all we had was Peter's metal wastepaper basket. Mr. van Daan went first, then Father, but Mother was too embarrassed. Father brought the wastebasket to the next room, where Margot, Mrs. van Daan and I gratefully made use of it. Mother finally gave in. There was a great demand for paper, and luckily I had some in my pocket.

The wastebasket stank, everything went on in a whisper, and we were exhausted. It was midnight.

"Lie down on the floor and go to sleep!" Margot and I were each given a pillow and a blanket. Margot lay down near the food cupboard, and I made my bed between the table legs. The smell wasn't quite so bad when you were lying on the floor, but Mrs. van Daan quietly went and got some powdered bleach and draped a dish towel over the potty as a further precaution.

Talk, whispers, fear, stench, farting and people continually going to the bathroom; try sleeping through that! By two-thirty, however, I was so tired I dozed off and didn't hear a thing until three-thirty. I woke up when Mrs. van D.

lay her head on my feet. "For heaven's sake, give me something to put on!" I said. I was handed some clothes, but don't ask what: a pair of wool slacks over my pajamas, a red sweater and a black skirt, white under stockings and tattered knee socks.

Mrs. van D. sat back down on the chair, and Mr. van D. lay down with his head on my feet. From three- thirty onward I was engrossed in thought, and still shivering so much that Mr. van Daan couldn't sleep. I was preparing myself for the return of the police. We'd tell them we were in hiding; if they were good people, we'd be safe, and if they were Nazi sympathizers, we could try to bribe them!"We should hide the radio!" moaned Mrs. van D.

"Sure, in the stove," answered Mr. van D. "If they find us, they might as well find the radio!"

"Then they'll also find Anne's diary," added Father.

"So burn it," suggested the most terrified of the group.

This and the police rattling on the bookcase were the moments when I was most afraid. Oh, not my diary; if my diary goes, I go too! Thank goodness Father didn't say anything more.

There's no point in recounting all the conversations; so much was said. I comforted Mrs. van Daan, who was very frightened. We talked about escaping, being interrogated by the Gestapo, phoning Mr. Kleiman and being courageous.

"We must behave like soldiers, Mrs. van Daan. If our time has come, well then, it'll be for Queen and Country, for freedom, truth and justice, as they're always telling us on the radio. The only bad thing is that we'll drag the others down with us!"

After an hour Mr. van Daan switched places with his wife again, and Father came and sat beside me. The men smoked one cigarette after another, an occasional sigh was heard, somebody made another trip to the potty, and then everything began allover again.

Four o'clock, five, five-thirty. I went and sat with Peter by his window and listened, we spoke a word or two from time to time and listened intently. Next door they took down the blackout screen.

They made a list of everything they were planning to tell Mr. Kleiman over the phone, because they intended to call him at seven and ask him to send

someone over. They were taking a big chance, since the police guard at the door or in the warehouse might hear them calling, but there was an even greater risk that the police would return.

I'm enclosing their list, but for the sake of clarity, I'll copy it here.

Burglary: Police in building, up to bookcase, but no farther. Burglars apparently interrupted, forced warehouse door, fled through garden. Main entrance bolted; Kugler must have left through second door.

Typewriter and adding machine safe in black chest in private office.

Miep's or Bep's laundry in washtub in kitchen.

Only Bep or Kugler have key to second door; lock may be broken.

Try to warn Jan and get key, look around office; also feed cat.

For the rest, everything went according to plan. Mr. Kleiman was phoned, the poles were removed from the doors, the typewriter was put back in the chest. Then we all sat around the table again and waited for either Jan or the police.

Peter had dropped off to sleep and Mr. van Daan and I were lying on the floor when we heard loud footsteps below. I got up quietly. "It's Jan!"

"No, no, it's the police!" they all said.

There was a knocking at our bookcase. Miep whistled. This was too much for Mrs. van Daan, who sank limply in her chair, white as a sheet. If the tension had lasted another minute, she would have fainted. Jan and Miep came in and were met with a delightful scene. The table alone would have been worth a photograph: a copy of *Cinema & Theater*, opened to a page of dancing girls and smeared with jam and pectin, which we'd been taking to combat the diarrhea, two jam jars, half a bread roll, a quarter of a bread roll, pectin, a mirror, a comb, matches, ashes, cigarettes, tobacco, an ashtray, books, a pair of underpants, a flashlight, Mrs. van Daan's comb, toilet paper, etc. Jan and Miep were of course greeted with shouts and tears. Jan nailed a pinewood board over the gap in the door and went off again with Miep to inform the police of the break-in. Miep had also found a note under the warehouse door from Slegers, the night watchman, who had noticed the hole and alerted the police. Jan was also planning to see Slegers.

So we had half an hour in which to put the house and ourselves to rights. I've never seen such a transformation as in those thirty minutes. Margot and I

got the beds ready downstairs, went to the bathroom, brushed our teeth, washed our hands and combed our hair. Then I straightened up the room a bit and went back upstairs. The table had already been cleared, so we got some water, made coffee and tea, boiled the milk and set the table. Father and Peter emptied our improvised potties and rinsed them with warm water and powdered bleach. The largest one was filled to the brim and was so heavy they had a hard time lifting it. To make things worse, it was leaking, so they had to put it in a bucket.

At eleven o'clock Jan was back and joined us at the table, and gradually everyone began to relax. Jan had the following story to tell:

Mr. Slegers was asleep, but his wife told Jan that her husband had discovered the hole in the door while making his rounds. He called in a policeman, and the two of them searched the building. Mr. Slegers, in his capacity as night watchman, patrols the area every night on his bike, accompanied by his two dogs. His wife said he would come on Tuesday and tell Mr. Kugler the rest. No one at the police station seemed to know anything about the break-in, but they made a note to come first thing Tuesday morning to have a look.

On the way back Jan happened to run into Mr. van Hooven, the man who supplies us with potatoes, and told him of the break-in. "I know," Mr. van Hooven calmly replied. "Last night when my wife and I were walking past your building, I saw a gap in the door. My wife wanted to walk on, but I peeked inside with a flashlight, and that's when the burglars must have run off. To be on the safe side, I didn't call the police. I thought it wouldn't be wise in your case. I don't know anything, but I have my suspicions." Jan thanked him and went on. Mr. van Hooven obviously suspects we're here, because he always delivers the potatoes at lunchtime. A decent man! It was one o'clock by the time Jan left and we'd done the dishes. All eight of us went to bed. I woke up at quarter to three and saw that Mr. Dussel was already up.

None of us have ever been in such danger as we were that night. God was truly watching over us. Just think-the police were right at the bookcase, the light was on, and still no one had discovered our hiding place! "Now we're done for!" I'd whispered at that moment, but once again we were spared. When the invasion comes and the bombs start falling, it'll be every man for himself, but this time we feared for those good, innocent Christians who are helping us.

"We've been saved, keep on saving us!" That's all we can say.

This incident has brought about a whole lot of changes. As of now, Dussel will be doing his work in the bathroom, and Peter will be patrolling the house between eight-thirty and nine-thirty. Peter isn't allowed to open his window anymore, since one of the Keg people noticed it was open. We can no longer flush the toilet after nine-thirty at night. Mr. Slegers has been hired as night watchman, and tonight a carpenter from the underground is coming to make a barricade out of our white Frankfurt bedsteads. Debates are going on left and right in the Annex. Mr. Kugler has reproached us for our carelessness. Jan also said we should never go downstairs. What we have to do now is find out whether Slegers can be trusted, whether the dogs will bark if they hear someone behind the door, how to make the barricade, all sorts of things.

We've been strongly reminded of the fact that we're Jews in chains, chained to one spot, without any rights, but with a thousand obligations. We must put our feelings aside; we must be brave and strong, bear discomfort without complaint, do whatever is in our power and trust in God. One day this terrible war will be over. The time will come when we'll be people again and not just Jews!

Who has inflicted this on us? Who has set us apart from all the rest? Who has put us through such suffering? It's God who has made us the way we are, but it's also God who will lift us up again. In the eyes of the world, we're doomed, but if, after all this suffering, there are still Jews left, the Jewish people will be held up as an example. Who knows, maybe our religion will teach the world and all the people in it about goodness, and that's the reason, the only reason, we have to suffer. We can never be just Dutch, or just English, or whatever, we will always be Jews as well. And we'll have to keep on being Jews, but then, we'll want to be. Be brave! Let's remember our duty and perform it without complaint. There will be away out. God has never deserted our people. Through the ages Jews have had to suffer, but through the ages they've gone on living, and the centuries of suffering have only made them stronger. The weak shall fall and the strong shall survive and not be defeated!

That night I really thought I was going to die. I waited for the police and I was ready for death, like a soldier on a battlefield. I'd gladly have given my life for my country. But now, now that I've been spared, my first wish after the war is to become a Dutch citizen. I love the Dutch, I love this country, I love the language, and I want to work here. And even if I have to write to the Queen herself, I won't give up until I've reached my goal! I'm becoming more and more



independent of my parents. Young as I am, I face life with more courage and have a better and truer sense of justice than Mother. I know what I want, I have a goal, I have opinions, a religion and love. If only I can be myself, I'll be satisfied. I know that I'm a woman, a woman with inner strength and a great deal of courage!

If God lets me live, I'll achieve more than Mother ever did, I'll make my voice heard, I'll go out into the world and work for mankind!

I now know that courage and happiness are needed first!

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Friday, April 14, 1944

Dear Kitty,

Everyone here is still very tense. Pim has nearly reached the boiling point; Mrs. Van D. is lying in bed with a cold, grumbling; Mr. van D. is growing pale without his cigarettes; Dussel, who's having to give up many of his comforts, is carping at everyone; etc., etc. We seem to have run out of luck lately. The toilet's leaking, and the faucet's stuck. Thanks to our many connections, we'll soon be able to get these repaired.

Every day you hear, "If only it were all over!"

Work, love, courage and hope,

Make me good and help me cope!

I really believe, Kit, that I'm a little nutty today, and I don't know why. My writing's all mixed up, I'm jumping from one thing to another, and sometimes I seriously doubt whether anyone will ever be interested in this drivel. They'll probably call it "The Musings of an Ugly Duckling." My diaries certainly won't be of much use to Mr. Bolkestein or Mr. Gerbrandy.* [* Gerrit Bolkestein was the Minister of Education and Pieter Gerbrandy was the Prime Minister of the Dutch government in exile in London. See Anne's letter of March 29, 1944.]

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Saturday, April 15, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

"There's just one bad thing after another. When will it all end?" You can sure say that again. Guess what's happened now? Peter forgot to unbolt the front door. As a result, Mr. Kugler and the warehouse employees couldn't get in. He went to Keg's, smashed in our office kitchen window and got in that way. The windows in the Annex were open, and the Keg people saw that too. What must they be thinking? And van Maaren? Mr. Kugler's furious. We accuse him of not doing anything to reinforce the doors, and then we do a stupid thing like this! Peter's extremely upset. At the table, Mother said she felt more sorry for Peter than for anyone else, and he nearly began to cry. We're equally to blame, since we usually ask him every day if he's unbolted the door, and so does Mr. van Daan. Maybe I can go comfort him later on. I want to help him so much!

Here are the latest news bulletins about life in the Secret Annex over the last few weeks:

A week ago Saturday, Boche suddenly got sick. He sat quite still and started drooling. Miep immediately picked him up, rolled him in a towel, tucked him in her shopping bag and brought him to the dog-and-cat clinic. Boche had some kind of intestinal problem, so the vet gave him medicine. Peter gave it to him a few times, but Boche soon made himself scarce. I'll bet he was out courting his sweetheart. But now his nose is swollen and he meows whenever you pick him up-he was probably trying to steal food and somebody smacked him. Mouschi lost her voice for a few days. Just when we decided she had to be taken to the vet too, she started getting better. We now leave the attic window open a crack every night. Peter and I often sit up there in the evening.

Thanks to rubber cement and oil paint, our toilet could quickly be repaired. The broken faucet has been replaced.

Luckily, Mr. Kleiman is feeling better. He's going to see a specialist soon. We can only hope he won't need an operation.

This month we received eight Ration books. Unfortunately, for the next two weeks beans have been substituted for oatmeal or grouts. Our latest delicacy is piccalilli. If you're out of luck, all you get is a jar full of cucumber and mustard sauce.

Vegetables are hard to come by. There's only lettuce, lettuce and more lettuce. Our meals consist entirely of potatoes and imitation gravy.

The Russians are in possession of more than half the Crimea. The British aren't advancing beyond Cassino. We'll have to count on the Western Wall. There have been a lot of unbelievably heavy air raids. The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages in The Hague was bombed. All Dutch people will be issued new ration registration cards. Enough for today.

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Tuesday, April 18, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Everything's fine here. Last night the carpenter came again to put some sheets of iron over the door panels. Father just got through saying he definitely expects large-scale operations in Russia and Italy, as well as in the West, before May 20; the longer the war lasts, the harder it is to imagine being liberated from this place.

After our mild winter, we've been having a beautiful spring. April is glorious, not too hot and not too cold, with occasional light showers. Our chestnut tree is in leaf, and here and there you can already see a few small blossoms.

Bep presented us Saturday with four bouquets of flowers: three bouquets of daffodils, and one bouquet of grape hyacinths for me. Mr. Kugler is supplying us with more and more newspapers.

It's time to do my algebra, Kitty. Bye.

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Friday, April 21, 1944

My dearest Kitty,

I stayed in bed yesterday with a sore throat, but since I was already bored the very first afternoon and didn't have a fever, I got up today. My sore throat has nearly "verschwunden"* [* disappeared].

Yesterday, as you've probably already discovered, was our Fuhrer's fifty-fifth birthday. Today is the eighteenth birthday of Her Royal Highness Princess Elizabeth of York. The BBC reported that she hasn't yet been declared of age, though royal children usually are. We've been wondering which prince they'll marry this beauty off to, but can't think of a suitable candidate; perhaps her sister, Princess Margaret Rose, can have Crown Prince Baudouin of Belgium!

Here we've been going from one disaster to the next. No sooner have the outside doors been reinforced than van Maaren rears his head again. In all likelihood he's the one who stole the potato flour, and now he's trying to pin the blame on Bep. Not surprisingly, the Annex is once again in an uproar. Bep is beside herself with rage. Perhaps Mr. Kugler will finally have this shady character tailed.

The appraiser from Beethovenstraat was here this morning. He offered us 400 guilders for our chest; in our opinion, the other estimates are also too low. I want to ask the magazine The Prince if they'll take one of my fairy tales, under a pseudonym, of course. But up to now all my fairy tales have been too long, so I don't think I have much of a chance. Until the next time, darling.

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Tuesday, April 25, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

For the last ten days Dussel hasn't been on speaking terms with Mr. van Daan, and all because of the new security measures since the break-in. One of these was that he's no longer allowed to go downstairs in the evenings. Peter and Mr. van Daan make the last round every night at nine-thirty, and after that no one may go downstairs. We can't flush the toilet anymore after eight at night or after eight in the morning. The windows may be opened only in the morning when the lights go on in Mr. Kugler's office, and they can no longer be propped open with a stick at night. This last measure is the reason for Dussel's sulking. He claims that Mr. van Daan bawled him out, but he has only himself to blame.

He says he'd rather live without food than without air, and that they simply must figure out a way to keep the windows open.

"I'll have to speak to Mr. Kugler about this," he said to me. I replied that we never discussed matters of this sort with Mr. Kugler, only within the group.

"Everything's always happening behind my back. I'll have to talk to your father about that." He's also not allowed to sit in Mr. Kugler's office anymore on Saturday afternoons or Sundays, because the manager of Keg's might hear him if he happens to be next door.

Dussel promptly went and sat there anyway. Mr. van Daan was furious, and Father went downstairs to talk to Dussel, who came up with some flimsy excuse, but even Father didn't fall for it this time. Now Father's keeping his dealings with Dussel to a minimum because Dussel insulted him. Not one of us knows what he said, but it must have been pretty awful.

And to think this miserable man has his birthday next week. How can you celebrate your birthday when you've got the sulks, how can you accept gifts from people you won't even talk to?

Mr. Voskuijl is going downhill rapidly. For more than ten days he's had a temperature of almost a hundred and four. The doctor said his condition is hopeless; they think the cancer has spread to his lungs. The poor man, we'd so like to help him, but only God can help him now!

I've written an amusing story called "Blurry the Explorer," which was a big hit with my three listeners.

I still have a bad cold and have passed it on to Margot, as well as Mother and Father.

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Thursday, April 27, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Mrs. van D. was in a bad mood this morning. All she did was complain, first about her cold, not being able to get cough drops and the agony of having to blow her nose all the time. Next she grumbled that the sun wasn't shining, the invasion hadn't started, we weren't allowed to look out the windows, etc., etc. We couldn't help but laugh at her, and it couldn't have been that bad, since she soon joined in.

Our recipe for potato kugel modified due to lack of onions:

Put peeled potatoes through a food mill and add a little dry government-issue flour and salt. Grease a mold or oven proof dish with paraffin or stearin and bake for 2½ hours. Serve with rotten strawberry compote. (Onions not available. Nor oil for mold or dough!) At the moment I'm reading Emperor Charles V, written by a professor at the University of Gottingen; he's spent forty years working on this book. It took me five days to read fifty pages. I can't do any more than that. Since the book has 598 pages, you can figure out just how long it's going to take me. And that's not even counting the second volume. But. . . very interesting!

The things a schoolgirl has to do in the course of a single day! Take me, for example. First, I translated a passage on Nelson's last battle from Dutch into English. Then, I read more about the Northern War (1700-21) involving Peter the Great, Charles XII, Augustus the Strong, Stanislaus Leczinsky, Mazeppa, von Gorz, Brandenburg, Western Pomerania, Eastern Pomerania and Denmark, plus the usual dates. Next, I wound up in Brazil, where I read about Bahia tobacco, the abundance of coffee, the one and a half million inhabitants of Rio de Janeiro, Pernambuco and Sao Paulo and, last but not least, the Amazon River. Then about Negroes, mulattoes, mestizos, whites, the illiteracy rate — over 50 percent — and malaria. Since I had some time left, I glanced through a genealogical chart: John the Old, William Louis, Ernest Casimir I, Henry Casimir I, right up to little Margriet Franciska (born in 1943 in Ottawa).

Twelve o'clock: I resumed my studies in the attic, reading about deans, priests, ministers, popes and . . . whew, it was one o'clock!

At two the poor child (ho hum) was back at work. Old World and New World monkeys were next. Kitty, tell me quickly, how many toes does a hippopotamus have? Then came the Bible, Noah's Ark, Shem, Ham and Japheth. After that, Charles V. Then, with Peter, Thackeray's book about the colonel, in English. A French test, and then a comparison between the Mississippi and the Missouri! Enough for today. Adieu!

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Wednesday, May 3, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

First the weekly news! We're having a vacation from politics. There's nothing, and I mean absolutely nothing, to report. I'm also gradually starting to

believe that the invasion will come. After all, they can't let the Russians do all the dirty work; actually, the Russians aren't doing anything at the moment either. Mr. Kleiman comes to the office every morning now. He got a new set of springs for Peter's divan, so Peter will have to get to work reupholstering it; Not surprisingly, he isn't at all in the mood. Mr. Kleiman also brought some flea powder for the cats. Have I told you that our Boche has disappeared? We haven't seen hide nor hair of her since last Thursday. She's probably already in cat heaven, Peter is heartbroken.

For the last two weeks we've been eating lunch at eleven-thirty on Saturdays; in the mornings we have to make do with a cup of hot cereal. Starting tomorrow it'll be like this every day; that saves us a meal. Vegetables are still very hard to come by. This afternoon we had rotten boiled lettuce. Ordinary lettuce, spinach and boiled lettuce, that's all there is. Add to that rotten potatoes, and you have a meal fit for a king!

As you can no doubt imagine, we often say in despair, "What's the point of the war? Why, oh, why can't people live together peacefully? Why all this destruction?" The question is understandable, but up to now no one has come up with a satisfactory answer. Why is England manufacturing bigger and better airplanes and bombs and at the same time churning out new houses for reconstruction? Why are millions spent on the war each day, while not a penny is available for medical science, artists or the poor? Why do people have to starve when mountains of food are rotting away in other parts of the world? Oh, why are people so crazy?

I don't believe the war is simply the work of politicians and capitalists. Oh no, the common man is every bit as guilty; otherwise, people and nations would have rebelled long ago! There's a destructive urge in people, the urge to rage, murder and kill. And until all of humanity, without exception, undergoes a metamorphosis, wars will continue to be waged, and everything that has been carefully built up, cultivated and grown will be cut down and destroyed, only to start all over again! I've often been down in the dumps, but never desperate. I look upon our life in hiding as an interesting adventure, full of danger and romance, and every privation as an amusing addition to my diary. I've made up my mind to lead a different life from other girls, and not to become an ordinary housewife later on. What I'm experiencing here is a good beginning to an interesting life, and that's the reason — the only reason — why I have to laugh at the humorous side of the most dangerous moments.

I'm young and have many hidden qualities; I'm young and strong and living through a big adventure; I'm right in the middle of it and can't spend all day complaining because it's impossible to have any fun! I'm blessed with many things: happiness, a cheerful disposition and strength. Every day I feel myself maturing, I feel liberation drawing near, I feel the beauty of nature and the goodness of the people around me. Everyday I think what a fascinating and amusing adventure this is! With all that, why should I despair?

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Friday, May 5, 1944

Dear Kitty,

Father's unhappy with me. After our talk on Sunday, he thought I'd stop going upstairs every evening. He won't have any of that "Knutscherej"* [* Necking] going on. I can't stand that word. Talking about it was bad enough — why does he have to make me feel bad too! I'll have a word with him today. Margot gave me some good advice. Here's more or less what I'd like to say: I think you expect an explanation from me, Father, so I'll give you one. You're disappointed in me, you expected more restraint from me, you no doubt want me to act the way a fourteen-year-old is supposed to. But that's where you're wrong! Since we've been here, from July 1942 until a few weeks ago, I haven't had an easy time. If only you knew how much I used to cry at night, how unhappy and despondent I was, how lonely I felt, you'd understand my wanting to go upstairs! I've now reached the point where I don't need the support of Mother or anyone else. It didn't happen overnight. I've struggled long and hard and shed many tears to become as independent as I am now. You can laugh and refuse to believe me, but I don't care. I know I'm an independent person, and I don't feel I need to account to you for my actions. I'm only telling you this because I don't want you to think I'm doing things behind your back. But there's only one person I'm accountable to, and that's me. When I was having problems, everyone — and that includes you — closed their eyes and ears and didn't help me. On the contrary, all I ever got were admonitions not to be so noisy. I was noisy only to keep myself from being miserable all the time. I was overconfident to keep from having to listen to the voice inside me. I've been putting on an act for the last year and a half, day in, day out. I've never complained or dropped my mask, nothing of the kind, and now. . . now the battle is over. I've won! I'm independent, in both body and mind. I don't need a mother anymore, and I've emerged from the struggle a stronger person.

Now that it's over, now that I know the battle has been won, I want to go my own way, to follow the path that seems right to me. Don't think of me as a fourteen-year-old, since all these troubles have made me older; I won't regret my actions, I'll behave the way I think I should! Gentle persuasion won't keep me from going upstairs. You'll either have to forbid it, or trust me through thick and thin. Whatever you do, just leave me alone!

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Saturday, May 6, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Last night before dinner I tucked the letter I'd written into Father's pocket. According to Margot, he read it and was upset for the rest of the evening. (I was upstairs doing the dishes!) Poor Pim, I might have known what the effect of such an epistle would be. He's so sensitive! I immediately told Peter not to ask any questions or say anything more. Pim's said nothing else to me about the matter. Is he going to? Everything here is more or less back to normal. We can hardly believe what Jan, Mr. Kugler and Mr. Kleiman tell us about the prices and the people on the outside; half a pound of tea costs 350.00 guilders, half a pound of coffee 80.00 guilders, a pound of butter 35.00 guilders, one egg 1.45 guilders. People are paying 14.00 guilders an ounce for Bulgarian tobacco! Everyone's trading on the black market; every errand boy has something to offer. The delivery boy from the bakery has supplied us with darning thread-90 cents for one measly skein-the milkman can get hold of ration books, an undertaker delivers cheese. Break-ins, murders and thefts are daily occurrences. Even the police and night watchmen are getting in on the act. Everyone wants to put food in their stomachs, and since salaries have been frozen, people have had to resort to swindling. The police have their hands full trying to track down the many girls of fifteen, sixteen, seventeen and older who are reported missing every day. I want to try to finish my story about Ellen, the fairy. Just for fun, I can give it to Father on his birthday, together with all the copyrights.

See you later! (Actually, that's not the right phrase. In the German program broadcast from England they always close with "Aufwiederhoren." So I guess I should say, "Until we write again.")

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Sunday Morning, May 7, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Father and I had a long talk yesterday afternoon. I cried my eyes out, and he cried too. Do you know what he said to me, Kitty?"I've received many letters in my lifetime, but none as hurtful as this. You, who have had so much love from your parents. You, whose parents have always been ready to help you, who have always defended you, no matter what. You talk of not having to account to us for your actions! You feel you've been wronged and left to your own devices. No, Anne, you've done us a great injustice! "Perhaps you didn't mean it that way, but that's what you wrote. No, Anne, we have done nothing to deserve such a reproach!" Oh, I've failed miserably. This is the worst thing I've ever done in my entire life. I used my tears to show off, to make myself seem important so he'd respect me. I've certainly had my share of unhappiness, and everything I said about Mother is true. But to accuse Pim, who's so good and who's done everything for me-no, that was too cruel for words.

It's good that somebody has finally cut me down to size, has broken my pride, because I've been far too smug. Not everything Mistress Anne does is good! Anyone who deliberately causes such pain to someone they say they love is despicable, the lowest of the low!

What I'm most ashamed of is the way Father has forgiven me; he said he's going to throw the letter in the stove, and he's being so nice to me now, as if he were the one who'd done something wrong. Well, Anne, you still have a lot to learn. It's time you made a beginning, instead of looking down at others and always giving them the blame!

I've known a lot of sorrow, but who hasn't at my age? I've been putting on an act, but was hardly even aware of it. I've felt lonely, but never desperate! Not like Father, who once ran out into the street with a knife so he could put an end to it all. I've never gone that far.

I should be deeply ashamed of myself, and I am. What's done can't be undone, but at least you can keep it from happening again.

Yes, Anne, you knew full well that your letter was unkind and untrue, but you were actually proud of it! I'll take Father as my example once again, and I will improve myself.

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Monday, May 8, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Have I ever told you anything about our family? I don't think I have, so let me begin. Father was born in Frankfurt on Maine to very wealthy parents: Michael Frank owned a bank and became a millionaire, and Alice Stern's parents were prominent and well-to-do. Michael Frank didn't start out rich; he was a self-made man. In his youth Father led the life of a rich man's son. Parties every week, balls, banquets, beautiful girls, waltzing, dinners, a huge house, etc. After Grandpa died, most of the money was lost, and after the Great War and inflation there was nothing left at all. Up until the war there were still quite a few rich relatives. So Father was extremely well-bred, and he had to laugh yesterday because for the first time in his fifty-five years, he scraped out the frying pan at the table.

Mother's family wasn't as wealthy, but still fairly well-off, and we've listened openmouthed to stories of private balls, dinners and engagement parties with 250 guests.

We're far from rich now, but I've pinned all my hopes on after the war. I can assure you, I'm not so set on a bourgeois life as Mother and Margot. I'd like to spend a year in Paris and London learning the languages and studying art history. Compare that with Margot, who wants to nurse newborns in Palestine. I still have visions of gorgeous dresses and fascinating people. As I've told you many times before, I want to see the world and do all kinds of exciting things, and a little money won't hurt! This morning Miep told us about her cousin's engagement party, which she went to on Saturday. The cousin's parents are rich, and the groom's are even richer. Miep made our mouths water telling us about the food that was served: vegetable soup with meatballs, cheese, rolls with sliced meat, hors d'oeuvres made with eggs and roast beef, rolls with cheese, genoise, and cigarettes, and you could eat as much as you wanted. There were also two officers from the Homicide Squad, who took photographs of the wedding couple. You can see we're never far from Miep's thoughts, since she promptly noted their names and addresses in case anything should happen and we needed contacts with good Dutch people.

Our mouths were watering so much. We, who'd had nothing but two spoonful of hot cereal for breakfast and were absolutely famished; we, who get nothing but half-cooked spinach (for the vitamins!) and rotten potatoes day after day; we, who fill our empty stomachs with nothing but boiled lettuce, raw

lettuce, spinach, spinach and more spinach. Maybe we'll end up being as strong as Popeye, though up to now I've seen no sign of it!

If Miep had taken us along to the party, there wouldn't have been any rolls left over for the other guests. If we'd been there, we'd have snatched up everything in sight, including the furniture. I tell you, we were practically pulling the words right out of her mouth. We were gathered around her as if we'd never in all our lives heard of "delicious food or elegant people!" And these are the granddaughters of the distinguished millionaire. The world is a crazy place!

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Tuesday, May 9, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

I've finished my story about Ellen, the fairy. I've copied it out on nice notepaper, decorated it with red ink and sewn the pages together. The whole thing looks quite pretty, but I don't know if it's enough of a birthday present. Margot and Mother have both written poems.

Mr. Kugler came upstairs this afternoon with the news that starting Monday, Mrs. Broks would like to spend two hours in the office every afternoon. Just imagine! The office staff won't be able to come upstairs, the potatoes can't be delivered, Bep won't get her dinner, we can't go to the bathroom, we won't be able to move and all sorts of other inconveniences! We proposed a variety of ways to get rid of her. Mr. van Daan thought a good laxative in her coffee might do the trick. "No," Mr. Kleiman answered, "please don't, or we'll never get her off the can."

A roar of laughter. "The can?" Mrs. van D. asked. "What does that mean?" An explanation was given. "Is it all right to use that word?" she asked in perfect innocence. "Just imagine," Bep giggled, "there you are shopping at The Bijenkorf and you ask the way to the can. They wouldn't even know what you were talking about!" Dussel now sits on the "can," to borrow the expression, every day at twelve-thirty on the dot. This afternoon I boldly took a piece of pink paper and wrote:

Mr. Dussel's Toilet Timetable

Mornings from 7:15 to 7:30 A.M.

Afternoons after 1 P.M.

Otherwise, only as needed!

I tacked this to the green bathroom door while he was still inside. I might well have added 'Transgressors will be subject to confinement!' Because our bathroom can be locked from both the inside and the outside.

I still have work to do; it's already three o'clock.

Yours, Anne M. Frank

PS. Since I think I've mentioned the new cleaning lady, I just want to note that she's married, sixty years old and hard of hearing! Very convenient, in view of all the noise that eight people in hiding are capable of making.

Oh, Kit, it's such lovely weather. If only I could go outside!

Wednesday, May 10, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

We were sitting in the attic yesterday afternoon working on our French when suddenly I heard the splatter of water behind me. I asked Peter what it might be. Without pausing to reply, he dashed up to the loft-the scene of the disaster — and shoved Mouschi, who was squatting beside her soggy litter box, back to the right place. This was followed by shouts and squeals, and then Mouschi, who by that time had finished peeing, took off downstairs. In search of something similar to her box, Mouschi had found herself a pile of wood shavings, right over a crack in the floor. The puddle immediately trickled down to the attic and, as luck would have it, landed in and next to the potato barrel. The ceiling was dripping, and since the attic floor has also got its share of cracks, little yellow drops were leaking through the ceiling and onto the dining table, between a pile of stockings and books.

I was doubled up with laughter, it was such a funny sight. There was Mouschi crouched under a chair, Peter armed with water, powdered bleach and a cloth, and Mr. van Daan trying to calm everyone down. The room was soon set to rights, but it's a well-known fact that cat puddles stink to high heaven. The potatoes proved that all too well, as did the wood shavings, which Father collected in a bucket and brought downstairs to burn.

Poor Mouschi! How were you to know it's impossible to get peat for your box?

Anne

Thursday, May 11, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

A new sketch to make you laugh:

Peter's hair had to be cut, and as usual his mother was to be the hairdresser. At seven twenty-five Peter vanished into his room, and reappeared at the stroke of seven-thirty, stripped down to his blue swimming trunks and a pair of tennis shoes. "Are you coming?" he asked his mother.

"Yes, I'll be up in a minute, but I can't find the scissors!"

Peter helped her look, rummaging around in her cosmetics drawer. "Don't make such a mess, Peter," she grumbled.

I didn't catch Peter's reply, but it must have been insolent, because she cuffed him on the arm. He cuffed her back, she punched him with all her might, and Peter pulled his arm away with a look of mock horror on his face. "Come on, old girl!"

Mrs. van D. stayed put. Peter grabbed her by the wrists and pulled her all around the room. She laughed, cried, scolded and kicked, but nothing helped. Peter led his prisoner as far as the attic stairs, where he was obliged to let go of her. Mrs. van D. came back to the room and collapsed into a chair with a loud sigh.

"Die Enfuhrung der Mutter," I joked. [* The Abduction of Mother, a possible reference to Mozart's opera The Abduction from the Seraglio.]

"Yes, but he hurt me."

I went to have a look and cooled her hot, red wrists with water. Peter, still by the stairs and growing impatient again, strode into the room with his belt in his hand, like a lion tamer. Mrs. van D. didn't move, but stayed by her writing desk, looking for a handkerchief. "You've got to apologize first."

"All right, I hereby offer my apologies, but only because if I don't, we'll be here till midnight."

Mrs. van D. had to laugh in spite of herself. She got up and went toward the door, where she felt obliged to give us an explanation. (By us I mean Father, Mother and me; we were busy doing the dishes.) "He wasn't like this at home," she said. "I'd have belted him so hard he'd have gone flying down the stairs [!]. He's never been so insolent. This isn't the first time he's deserved a good hiding."

That's what you get with a modern upbringing, modern children. I'd never have grabbed my mother like that. Did you treat your mother that way, Mr. Frank?" She was very upset, pacing back and forth, saying whatever came into her head, and she still hadn't gone upstairs. Finally, at long last, she made her exit. Less than five minutes later she stormed back down the stairs, with her cheeks all puffed out, and flung her apron on a chair. When I asked if she was through, she replied that she was going downstairs. She tore down the stairs like a tornado, probably straight into the arms of her Putti. She didn't come up again until eight, this time with her husband. Peter was dragged from the attic, given a merciless scolding and showered with abuse: ill-mannered brat, no-good bum, bad example, Anne this, Margot that, I couldn't hear the rest.

Everything seems to have calmed down again today!

Yours, Anne M. Frank

P.S. Tuesday and Wednesday evening our beloved Queen addressed the country. She's taking a vacation so she'll be in good health for her return to the Netherlands. She used words like "soon, when I'm back in Holland," "a swift liberation," "heroism" and "heavy burdens."

This was followed by a speech by Prime Minister Gerbrandy. He has such a squeaky little child's voice that Mother instinctively said, "Oooh." A clergyman, who must have borrowed his voice from Mr. Edel, concluded by asking God to take care of the Jews, all those in concentration camps and prisons and everyone working in Germany.

Thursday, May 11, 1944

Dearest Kitty,

Since I've left my entire "junk box" — including my fountain pen — upstairs and I'm not allowed to disturb the grown-ups during their nap time (until two-thirty), you'll have to make do with a letter in pencil.

I'm terribly busy at the moment, and strange as it may sound, I don't have enough time to get through my pile of work. Shall I tell you briefly what I've got to do? Well then, before tomorrow I have to finish reading the first volume of a biography of Galileo Galilei, since it has to be returned to the library. I started reading it yesterday and have gotten up to page 220 out of 320 pages, so I'll manage it. Next week I have to read Palestine at the Cross-roads and the second volume of Galilei. Besides that, I finished the first volume of a biography of Emperor Charles V yesterday, and I still have to work out the many genealogical

charts I've collected and the notes I've taken.

Next I have three pages of foreign words from my various books, all of which have to be written down, memorized and read aloud. Number four: my movie stars are in a terrible disarray and are dying to be straightened out, but since it'll take several days to do that and Professor Anne is, as she's already said, up to her ears in work, they'll have to put up with the chaos a while longer. Then there're These us, Oedipus, Peleus, Orpheus, Jason and Hercules all waiting to be untangled, since their various deeds are running crisscross through my mind like multicolored threads in a dress. Myron and Phidias are also urgently in need of attention, or else I'll forget entirely how they fit into the picture. The same applies, for example, to the Seven Years' War and the Nine Years' War. Now I'm getting everything all mixed up. Well, what can you do with a memory like mine! Just imagine how forgetful I'll be when I'm eighty!

Oh, one more thing. The Bible. How long is it going to take before I come to the story of the bathing Susanna? And what do they mean by Sodom and Gomorrah? Oh, there's still so much to find out and learn. And in the meantime, I've left Charlotte of the Palatine in the lurch.

You can see, can't you, Kitty, that I'm full to bursting?

And now something else. You've known for a long time that my greatest wish is to be a journalist, and later on, a famous writer. We'll have to wait and see if these grand illusions (or delusions!) will ever come true, but up to now I've had no lack of topics. In any case, after the war I'd like to publish a book called The Secret Annex. It remains to be seen whether I'll succeed, but my diary can serve as the basis.

I also need to finish "Cady's Life." I've thought up the rest of the plot. After being cured in the sanatorium, Cady goes back home and continues writing to Hans. It's 1941, and it doesn't take her long to discover Hans's Nazi sympathies, and since Cady is deeply concerned with the plight of the Jews and of her friend Marianne, they begin drifting apart. They meet and get back together, but break up when Hans takes up with another girl. Cady is shattered, and because she wants to have a good job, she studies nursing. After graduation she accepts a position, at the urging of her father's friends, as a nurse in a TB sanatorium in Switzerland. During her first vacation she goes to Lake Como, where she runs into Hans. He tells her that two years earlier he'd married Cady's successor, but that his wife took her life in a fit of depression.

Now that he's seen his little Cady again, he realizes how much he loves her, and once more asks for her hand in marriage. Cady refuses, even though, in spite of herself, she loves him as much as ever. But her pride holds her back. Hans goes away, and years later Cady learns that he's wound up in England, where he's struggling with ill health. When she's twenty-seven, Cady marries a well-to-do man from the country, named Simon. She grows to love him, but not as much as Hans. She has two daughters and a son, Lthan, Judith and Nico. She and Simon are happy together, but Hans is always in the back of her mind until one night she dreams of him and says farewell. . .

It's not sentimental nonsense: it's based on the story of Father's life.

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Saturday, May 13, 1944

My dearest Kitty,

Yesterday was Father's birthday, Father and Mother's nineteenth wedding anniversary, a day without the cleaning lady. . . and the sun was shining as it's never shone before in 1944. Our chestnut tree is in full bloom. It's covered with leaves and is even more beautiful than last year.

Father received a biography of Linnaeus from Mr. Kleiman, a book on nature from Mr. Kugler, The Canals of Amsterdam from Dussel, a huge box from the van Daans (wrapped so beautifully it might have been done by a professional), containing three eggs, a bottle of beer, a jar of yogurt and a green tie. It made our jar of molasses seem rather paltry.

My roses smelled wonderful compared to Miep and Bep's red carnations. He was thoroughly spoiled. Fifty petits fours arrived from Siemons' Bakery, delicious! Father also treated us to spice cake, the men to beer and the ladies to yogurt. Everything was scrumptious!

Yours, Anne M. Frank

Tuesday, May 16, 1944

My dearest Kitty, just for a change (since we haven't had one of these in so long) I'll recount a little discussion between Mr. and Mrs. van D. last night:

Mrs. van D.: "The Germans have had plenty of time to fortify the Atlantic Wall, and they'll certainly do everything within their power to hold back the British. It's amazing how strong the Germans are!"

Mr. van D.: "Oh, yes, amazing.

Mrs. van D.: "It is!"

Mr. van D.: "They are so strong they're bound to win the war in the end, is that what you mean?"

Mrs. van D.: "They might. I'm not convinced that they won't."

Mr. van D.: "I won't even answer that."

Mrs. van D.: "You always wind up answering. You let yourself get carried away, every single time."

Mr. van D.: "No, I don't. I always keep my answers to the bare minimum."

Mrs. van D.: "But you always do have an answer and you always have to be right! Your predictions hardly ever come true, you know!"

Mr. van D.: "So far they have."

Mrs. van D.: "No they haven't. You said the invasion was going to start last year, the Finns were supposed to have been out of the war by now, the Italian campaign ought to have been over by last winter, and the Russians should already have captured Lemberg. Oh no, I don't set much store by your predictions."

Mr. van D. (leaping to his feet): "Why don't you shut your trap for a change? I'll show you who's right; someday you'll get tired of needling me. I can't stand your bellyaching a minute longer. just wait, one day I'll make you eat your words!" (End of Act One.)

Actually, I couldn't help giggling. Mother couldn't either, and even Peter was biting his lips to keep from laughing. Oh, those stupid grown-ups. They need to learn a few things first before they start making so many remarks about the younger generation! Since Friday we've been keeping the windows open again at night.

Yours, Anne M. Frank