

The Big Idea:
Hope And Courage in
the Face of Atrocity

The Diary of

Anne Frank

Written by Frances Goodrich and
Albert Hackett

Adapted by Wendy Kesselman

“The Diary of Anne Frank (Adaptation by Wendy Kesselman)” is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.

CHILDSPRAY
RESOURCES

Meet the Team

Cast

Anne Frank.....	Ariella Centeno
Otto Frank.....	Rusty Ferracane*
Edith Frank.....	Brenda Jean Foley*
Margot Frank.....	Spencer Wareing
Miep Gies.....	Alison Campbell
Peter Van Daan.....	Zachary Sciortino
Mr. Kraler.....	Beau Heckman
Mrs. Van Daan.....	Debra K. Stevens
Mr. Van Daan.....	D. Scott Withers*
Dussel.....	Jon Gentry
Nazi Officer.....	Drew Leatham

Creative Team

Director.....	Jodie Weiss
Fight Choreographer.....	Rachelle Dart
Stage Manager.....	Aurora Winger*
Costume Coordinator.....	Haley Larsen
Lighting Designer.....	Tim Monson
Video Designer.....	Ricky Araiza
Sound Designer.....	Chris Neumeyer

*The Actor or Stage Manager appears through the courtesy of Actor's Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

What the Play is About

In Amsterdam on July 6, 1942. Thirteen-year-old Anne Frank, her sister Margot, and her parents, Otto and Edith Frank, arrive in the Secret Annex, a hidden space in Mr. Frank's business. They are Jewish, Amsterdam is under Nazi occupation, and they plan to hide in the Annex until the war ends. They share the space with Mr. and Mrs. van Daan, their 16-year-old son Peter, and Peter's cat Mousche. Anne starts a diary and initially sees the hiding as an adventure. Her diary quickly becomes her comfort and escape while living in the annex.

As the months pass, routines settle, and tensions rise over food and space. Sudden noises, like sirens, send everyone into a panic. Their helpers, Miep and Mr. Kraler, introduce Mr. Dussel, a dentist. He joins them and shares grim news about the fate of Jews outside.

Food is increasingly scarce, and they're eating rotten potatoes. Anne suffers from nightmares. Mr. Kraler warns them that an employee indicated that he may suspect their presence and asked for either a raise or a bribe.

The celebration of Hanukkah provides some moments of connection and levity for the group as Anne has made gifts for everyone in the Annex.

Anne describes her developing feelings for Peter in her diary and their friendship deepens, leading to their first kiss.

Tensions peak when Mr. van Daan is caught stealing bread. Miep interrupts with the exciting news that the Allies have finally started invading. Days later, a Nazi officer bursts in. The bustle of their capture is full of terror, and Anne must leave her diary behind.

The play ends with Anne's father, Mr. Frank, the only survivor, sharing the heartbreaking fate of each person in the secret annex. He receives Anne's diary, which becomes her legacy. This play, adapted by Wendy Kesselman, shows us Anne as a bright, hopeful girl who wants to "go on living even after [her] death."



Talk About It!

Start a conversation before the show:

- ★ Anne's diary was first published in 1947. Why do you think people still read it?
- ★ The word "holocaust" literally means absolute destruction, primarily through fire, as in a nuclear holocaust, for example. Why do you think Holocaust is the word used to describe the genocide of World War II?
- ★ While the Covid lockdown pales in comparison to the circumstances under which Anne lived, we briefly experienced a time during which we had to live our lives at home. What was the first thing you remember wanting to do after the lockdown was lifted? What were some of your feelings and thoughts during that time?

Start a conversation after the show:

- ★ Miep and Mr. Kraler risk their lives to help Anne and the others. What do you think motivated them to take such risks?
- ★ Miep doesn't consider herself a hero, although her support of the families in the annex was heroic. What does it mean to be a hero? Who do you consider to be a hero?
- ★ The play brings Anne Frank's diary to life on stage. What specific moments that stood out to you? What were some moments of tension in the play? Moments of hope? How did the acting and technical elements (sound, lights, etc.) help you experience these moments? How did it make you feel?
- ★ The characters in the play had to make difficult decisions. Were there any choices made by characters that surprised you? Did your perspective of the character change during the play?
- ★ What did you learn from the play that you didn't know before (either about Anne or the Holocaust or WWII)? Why is retelling Anne's story and other stories from the Holocaust so important? What can you do to make sure that this doesn't happen again?



Discover It!

Vocabulary

- **GENOCIDE:** the planned and organized killing of a group of people. Victims of genocide are killed because of their race, religion, ethnicity culture, or nationality.
- **NAZI:** the shortened title of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei in German). The Nazi party was a fascist political party.
- **FASCISM:** the political viewpoint that one's nation and race are superior to all others and the government controls everything; people aren't allowed to make many of their own choices.
- **HOLOCAUST:** a thorough destruction involving extensive loss of life especially through fire.
- **ANTI-SEMITISM:** hostility toward or discrimination against Jews as a religious, ethnic, or racial group.

What is Genocide?

The word "genocide" did not exist until 1944. It was coined by Ralph Lemkin, a Polish Jewish lawyer, in an effort to describe the atrocities that occurred during World War II. On December 9, 1948, the United Nations approved the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and established genocide as an international crime and the job of nations to "undertake to prevent and punish." While the word "genocide" didn't exist until 1944, there are several examples of genocide prior to the Holocaust. Sadly, there is still genocide in the world. Here is a brief list of genocide that has occurred since the Holocaust:

1975-1979 The Killing Fields: The Cambodian Genocide

1992-1995: Bosnia and Herzegovina

1994: Rwandan Genocide

2003-2005: Darfur

Want to learn more?

<https://genocideeducation.org/resources/modern-era-genocides/>

<https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/what-is-genocide>

Discover It!

Did You Know?

Anne used pseudonyms (fake names) for many of the people she spoke about in her diary. She didn't use pseudonyms for everyone, especially some of her helpers like Miep.



PSEUDONYM:
Henk

ACTUAL NAME:
Miep and Jan Gies



The Frank Family: Otto, Anne, Edith, and Margot
Attending Miep's wedding July 16, 1941.



PSEUDONYM:
Mr. Kraler

ACTUAL NAME:
Victor Kugler



PSEUDONYM:
Petronella Van Daan

ACTUAL NAME:
Auguste Van Pels



PSEUDONYM:
Peter Van Daan

ACTUAL NAME:
Peter Van Pels



PSEUDONYM:
Hans Van Daan

ACTUAL NAME:
Hermann Van Pels



PSEUDONYM:
Albert Dussel

ACTUAL NAME:
Fritz Pfeffer

The Timeline

15 moments that impacted the life and legacy of Anne Frank

June 12, 1929

Anneliese Marie Frank is born in Frankfurt

January 30, 1933

Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany.

April 1933

The Nazis declare a boycott of Jewish businesses and medical and legal practices and laws are passed causing the removal of Jewish people from government and teaching positions.



February 16, 1934

Anne, Margot, and Edith emigrate to Amsterdam and reunite with Otto who emigrated there the summer of 1933

September 1, 1939

Germany invades Poland. World War 2 begins.

February 22-23, 1941

Deportation of Dutch Jews begins



May 3, 1942

The "Yellow Badge" is introduced in the Netherlands

June 12, 1942

Anne receives a diary for her 13th birthday

July 5, 1942

Margot is "called up" for deportation to a labor camp.

July 6, 1942

The Frank family moves into the "Secret Annexe," 10 days earlier than planned.



Source: annefrank.org



Photo: Neil Tuller

The Timeline

15 moments that impacted the life and legacy of Anne Frank

August 4, 1944

The inhabitants of the “Secret Annexe” are discovered, arrested, and taken to Westerbork to await transport to Auschwitz

October 1944

Margot and Anne are moved from Auschwitz to Bergen-Belsen



*They awaited transport in barrack 67



February/March 1945

Anne and Margot contract typhus and die within days of each other.



May 7, 1945

Germany declares “unconditional surrender,” ending the war in Europe

June 25, 1947

Anne’s diary is published for the first time with the title “Het Achterhuis” (‘The Secret Annexe’)



Want to learn more?

Use the QR code to access a timeline with even more facts about the inhabitants of the Annex and events of World War II



Create It!

ERASURE POETRY

Erasure poetry is a creative way to make a poem from an existing text. You pick out words or phrases from the text that you like and erase the rest, creating your own unique work of art and poetry.

Materials Needed

- Excerpts from Anne Frank's diary
- Black markers or pens
- White paper
- Colored pencils or markers
- Scissors and glue

Use the QR code to access excerpts from Anne's diary



1

Choose a Text: Select an excerpt of Anne's diary that you find interesting.

2

Highlight Meaning: Use a colored marker or pen to highlight words or phrases that stand out to you, words that have a special meaning or feeling.

3

Black Out the Rest: With your black marker, cover or "erase" all the words you didn't highlight, leaving only your chosen words behind.

4

Craft Your Poem: Rearrange the selected words to create a poem.

Experiment with different orders and layouts to express yourself and make new meaning with the highlighted words:

- Rewrite highlighted words on a new sheet
- Decorate the black and white space around highlighted words
- Cut them out and glue them onto a new sheet.

5

Share and Explain: If you'd like, share your erasure poem with others and explain why you chose those particular words. It's a chance to show your creative process.

Imagine It!

GROUP SCULPTING

1

Gather students in a circle. Choose a small group (4 to 5 students) to step into the circle and be the sculpture; the students on the perimeter will be the sculptors.

2

Provide a prompt for your piece of art. This can be something concrete, like “preparing dinner,” or a more abstract concept or emotion connected to the theme you are exploring.

Examples of abstract concepts include:

Safety

Fear

Discovery

Silence

3

The students in the circle should stand in a neutral position. One at a time, the sculptors will step into the circle and make one adjustment to the sculpture, i.e. adjust an arm position or turn one person to face another. The sculptor should demonstrate the position or facial expression they’d like to see, and the sculpture will mirror it with their body.

Sculptors must make respectful and safe choices with their classmates’ bodies.

Sculptures must hold each new position until they are adjusted again. If necessary, they can shake out their body and relax for a moment before returning to position.

4

If you have a large group, give each sculptor one turn to fine tune the sculpture. For smaller groups, you might keep adjusting until the group feels like their piece is finished.

5

Invite one or more students to tell the “story” of the piece of art, with the understanding that there isn’t a right or wrong interpretation of what the group has created.

**If time allows,
choose new
students to step
into the circle and
do it again!**

THE WORLD OUTSIDE

A driving force behind Anne's happiness was her connection to nature. In the show, she smells Miep in an attempt to capture the essence of the outside. In her diary, Anne often describes what she sees out the attic window and how she longs to experience nature with all of her senses once again.

She begins entry 105 with: "It's lovely weather outside and I've quite perked up since yesterday. [...]From my favorite spot on the floor I look up at the blue sky and the bare chestnut tree, on whose branches little raindrops shine, appearing like silver, and at the seagulls and the other birds as they glide on the wind. [...]"

1

Look out of a window for 5 minutes and take a detailed mental picture of everything you see such as the number of trees, the color of the sky, or a person walking by.

2

After observing the outside world, create a diary entry describing, in detail, what you observed. Include details such as:

Visual cues such as movement
("...as they glide on the wind...")

Simile and metaphor
("...appearing like silver...").

Descriptive words
(...the bare chestnut tree...)

3

After your description is complete, consider your other senses.

**How do you imagine the world outside the window smells or feels?
What might be beyond what you can't see through the window?
What sounds might be happening?**

4

Write down all of your thoughts in your diary entry. If time, share entries aloud and compare the descriptions.

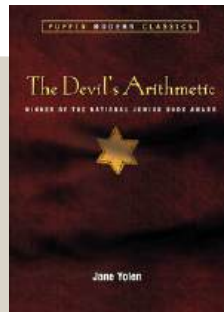
Read About It!

Keep the conversation going; check out this list of books connected to the themes in 'The Diary of Anne Frank.'



Anne Frank Beyond the Diary

By Ruud van der Rol & Rian Verhoeven
Ages 10-12



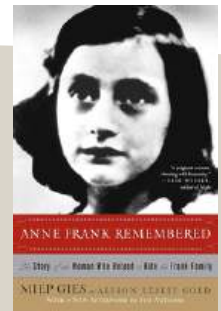
The Devil's Arithmetic

By Jane Yolen
Ages 11-13



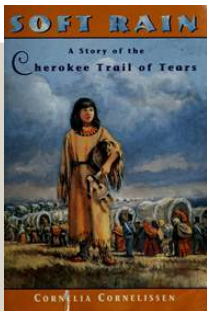
My Friend Anne

By Hannah Pick-Goslar and Dina Kraft
Ages 14-18



Anne Frank Remembered

By Miep Gies
Ages 14-18



Soft Rain

By Cornelia Cornelissen
Ages 9-11



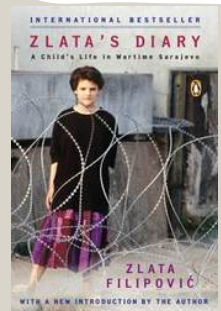
Broken Memories

By Élisabeth Combres
Ages 12-15



The Red Pencil

By Andrea Davis Pinkney & Shane W. Evans
Ages 9-12



Zlata's Diary

By Zlata Filipovic
Ages 12-15



When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit

By Judith Kerr
Ages 9-10



White Bird: A Wonder Story

By R.J. Palacio
Ages 12-14

Extend It!

The play is just the beginning - there's always more to learn. Scan the QR code to dig deeper into what interests you.

- ★ Visit the Anne Frank House website
- ★ Access the full timeline of events surrounding the story
- ★ Learn more about the history of genocide



Extend the Experience!

Bring a professional Teaching Artist to your classroom to lead an arts-based, standards-driven lesson connected to the play.

Email Jen at:
jgantwerker@childsplayaz.org

About Us!

About Childsplay

Our mission is to ignite imagination, wonder and joy by creating strikingly original theatre and learning experiences that inspire young minds to explore and soar.

For more information:
www.childsplayaz.org



Presented in partnership with The Bridge Initiative

The Bridge Initiative is a women-led artistic collective that uses theatre and media to build bridges in our community.

For more information:
www.bridgeinit.org



About Dirk Van Leenen

Our post-show Q&A features award-winning author and Holocaust survivor Dirk Van Leenen. He is an active speaker and writer who has penned 3 books about his experience during WWII since surviving the Holocaust in the Netherlands at a young age, particularly in the Nazi resistance led by his parents. His appearance was arranged with support from the Phoenix Holocaust Association.

Books by Mr. Van Leenen:
www.goodreads.com/author/show/3463467.Dirk_Van_Leenen



The Complete Timeline

Follow the lives of all of the inhabitants of the Secret Annexe and the major events leading up to, during, and after World War 2.

June 28, 1919

Treaty of Versailles signed: Article 231 is known as the “War Guilt Clause”. This clause forced Germany to accept full responsibility for World War 1 and to pay reparations to the Allied nations for their losses during the war. Protests against the Treaty begin in Germany.

July 29, 1921

Hitler voted official leader of the Nazi Party

May 12, 1925

Otto Frank and Edith Hollander marry

December 25, 1925

Hermann van Pels and Auguste Rottgen marry

June 12, 1929

Anneliese Marie Frank is born in Frankfurt, Germany

November 11, 1918

Armistice signed, effectively ending World War 1

*Armistice: a truce to end a war for a period of time

1919

Hitler joins the German Workers' Party (DAP)

February 1920

The DAP becomes the National Socialist German Workers' Party, or the Nazi Party

1925

While in prison, Hitler publishes Mein Kampf. Among other things, this book contains Hitler's plan to transform Germany into a race based society.

February 16, 1926

Margot Frank is born in Frankfurt, Germany

November 8, 1926

Peter van Pels is born in Osnabrück, Germany

October 24, 1929

U.S. Stock Market crashes causing Germany a compounded financial crisis alongside the Versailles reparations. The Nazi Party uses the opportunity to gain support by offering financial stability through job production and strengthening the economy

The Complete Timeline

January 30, 1933

Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany. Mein Kampf sells 1 million copies this year.

July 4, 1933

Otto Frank emigrates to the Netherlands, opens a business in Amsterdam

February 16, 1934

Anne, Margot, and Edith emigrate to Amsterdam

March 7, 1936

Hitler sends troops to occupy the Rhineland, a part of Germany bordering France stated as an area in which Germany may not station troops in the Treaty. Hitler receives no repercussions for this act.

December 1938

Fritz Pfeffer (Mr. Dussel) emigrates to the Netherlands

May 10, 1940

Germany invades the Netherlands.

May 15, 1940

Nazis occupy Amsterdam

April 1933

The Nazis declare a boycott of Jewish businesses and medical and legal practices and laws are passed causing the removal of Jewish people from government and teaching positions.

September 15, 1935

Nuremberg Race Laws established. These laws declared Jews as non citizens and a mixed marriage between an Aryan and Jew illegal

November 9 and 10, 1938

Kristallnacht "The Night of Broken Glass". Nazis in Germany and Austria looted and destroyed Jewish owned businesses and synagogues.

September 1, 1939

Germany invades Poland. World War 2 begins.

May 14, 1940

Germans bomb the city of Rotterdam; the Netherlands surrender to the Nazis.

The Complete Timeline

May 1941

Jews are not allowed on the beach, to parks, swimming pools, or hotels.

September 1941

'Forbidden for Jews' signs appear on libraries, restaurants, sports fields, markets, reading rooms, and museums.

January 20, 1942

The Wannsee Conference is held during which the plans for the "evacuation" and "appropriate treatment" of 11 million European Jews is laid out.

June 1942

Jews have to hand in their bicycles and other means of transport. Jews are not allowed to play sports.

July 5, 1942

Margot is "called up" for deportation to a labor camp.

July 13, 1942

The Van Pels (Van Daan) family moves into the "Secret Annexe"

November 16, 1942

Fritz Pfeffer (Mr. Dussel) moves into the "Secret Annexe"

February 22-23, 1941

Deportation of Dutch Jews begins

December 11, 1941

Germany declares war on the United States in response to the U.S. declaration of war against Japan, Germany's ally, after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

May 3, 1942

The "Yellow Badge" is introduced in the Netherlands

June 12, 1942

Anne receives a diary for her 13th birthday

June 14, 1942

Anne makes her first entry into her diary. It starts: "On Friday, June 12th, I woke up at six o'clock and no wonder; it was my birthday."

July 6, 1942

The Frank family moves into the "Secret Annexe," 10 days earlier than planned.

August 31, 1942

Bookcase placed in front of the entrance to the "Secret Annexe"

The Complete Timeline

March 1943

“All Jews must be out of the German-occupied countries before July 1. [...] Between May 1 and June 1 the provinces of North and South Holland.” Because so few responded to this decree, violent raids erupted in the weeks that followed.

March 29, 1944

Anne hears the call for writings from diaries after the war on the radio

July 20, 1944

German officers attempt to assassinate Hitler

August 4, 1944

The inhabitants of the “Secret Annexe” are discovered, arrested, and taken to Westerbork to await transport

September 3, 1944

The members of the “Secret Annexe” are transported to Auschwitz. The trip takes 3 days. Upon arrival, the men and women are separated. This is the last time Anne sees her Father and Peter.

January 31, 1943

Germans surrender in Stalingrad. This is the first major battle won against the Nazis.

Monday, July 25 1943

The area in which the “Secret Annexe” is located is bombed

September 1943

Talk of suspicious warehouse workers in the “Secret Annexe”

June 6, 1944

D-Day: The Allied forces land in Normandy.

August 1, 1944

Anne makes her last entry in her diary. It ends: [...]“I can’t keep that up; If I’m watched to that extent, I start by getting snappy, then unhappy, and finally I twist my heart round again, so that the bad is on the outside and the good is on the inside and keep on trying to find a way of becoming what I would so like to be, and what I could be, if...there weren’t any other people living in the world.

Yours, Anne”

The Complete Timeline

January 1945

Nazis begin abandoning Auschwitz and force prisoners to walk to their next camp: Mauthausen. According to records, Peter survived the walk only to fall ill once arriving.

February 1945

Mrs. Van Pels begins transport to Theresienstadt. She dies during transport.

April 15, 1945

Bergen-Belsen is liberated.

May 2, 1945

Peace negotiations with Germany begin

May 7, 1945

Germany declares “unconditional surrender,” ending the war in Europe

June 3, 1945

Otto Frank returns to Amsterdam

June 25, 1947

Anne’s diary is published for the first time with the title “Het Achterhuis’ (‘The Secret Annexe’)

1952

Anne’s diary is translated into English

October 1944

Margot, Anne, and Mrs. Van Pels moved to Bergen-Belsen. Mr. Van Pels sent to the gas chamber at Auschwitz

January 6, 1945

Mrs. Frank dies at Auschwitz

January 27, 1945

Auschwitz is liberated, Otto Frank among the 8,000 left behind at the camp.

February/March 1945

Anne and Margot contract typhus and die within days of each other.

April 30, 1945

Hitler commits suicide

May 5, 1945

Mauthausen is liberated.

May 10, 1945

Peter Van Pels dies from illness

July 1945

Otto receives official word of Anne and Margot’s death. Miep reveals she had been keeping Anne’s diary for her and gives it to Otto.

December 10, 1948

The United Nations adopts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights



Erasure Poetry Diary Excerpt

SATURDAY, 20 JUNE, 1942

I haven't written for a few days, because I wanted first of all to think about my diary. It's an odd idea for someone like me to keep a diary; not only because I have never done so before, but because it seems to me that neither I- nor for that matter anyone else- will be interested in the unbosomings of a thirteen-year-old schoolgirl. Still, what does that matter? I want to write, but more than that, I want to bring out all kinds of things that lie buried deep in my heart.

There is a saying that "paper is more patient than man"; it came back to me on one of my slightly melancholy days, while I sat chin in hand, feeling too bored and limp even to make up my mind whether to go out or stay at home. Yes, there's no doubt that paper is patient and I don't intend to show this cardboard-covered notebook, bearing the proud name of "diary," to anyone, unless I find a real friend, boy or girl, probably nobody cares. And now I come to the root of the matter, the reason for my starting a diary: it is that I have no such real friend.

Let me put it more clearly, since no one will believe that a girl of thirteen feels herself quite alone in the world, nor is it so. I have darling parents and a sister of sixteen. I know about thirty people whom one might call friends- I have strings of boy friends, anxious to catch a glimpse of me and who, failing that, peep at me through mirrors in class. I have relations, aunts and uncles, who are darlings too, a good home, no- I don't seem to lack anything. But it's the same with all my friends, just fun and joking, nothing more. I can never bring myself to talk of anything outside the common round. We don't seem to be able to get any closer, that is the root of the trouble. Perhaps I lack confidence, but anyway, there it is, a stubborn fact and I don't seem to be able to do anything about it.

Hence, this diary. In order to enhance in my mind's eye the picture of the friend for whom I have waited so long, I don't want to set down a series of bald facts in a diary like most people do, but I want this diary itself to be my friend, and I shall call my friend Kitty. No one will grasp what I'm talking about if I begin my letters to Kitty just out of the blue, so, albeit unwillingly, I will start by sketching in brief the story of my life. [...]



Erasure Poetry Diary Excerpt

SUNDAY, JUNE 13, 1943

Dear Kitty,

My birthday poem from Daddy is too good to keep from you. As Pim usually writes verses in German, Margot volunteered to translate it. Judge for yourself whether Margot didn't do it brilliantly. After the usual summary of the events of the year, this is how it ran:

Though youngest here, you are no longer small,
But life is very hard, since one and all
Aspire to be your teacher, thus and thus:
"We have experience, take a tip from us."
"We know because we did it long ago."
"Elders are always better, you must know."
At least that's been the rule since life began!
Our personal faults are much too small to scan,
This makes it easier to criticize
The faults of others, which seem double size.
Please bear with us, your parents, for we try
To judge you fairly and with sympathy.
Correction sometimes take against your will,
Though it's like swallowing a bitter pill,
Which must be done if we're to keep the peace,
While time goes by till all this suffering cease.
You read and study nearly all the day,
Who might have lived in such a different way.
You're never bored and bring us all fresh air.
Your only moan is this: "What can I wear?
I have no knickers, all my clothes are small,
My vest might be a loincloth, that is all!
To put on shoes would mean to cut off toes,
Oh dear, I'm worried by so many woes!"

There was also a bit about food that Margot could not translate into rhyme, so I shall leave it out. Don't you think my birthday poem is good? [...]



Erasure Poetry Diary Excerpt

MONDAY EVENING, 8 NOVEMBER, 1943

[...]At night, when I'm in bed, I see myself alone in a dungeon, without Mummy and Daddy. Sometimes I wander by the roadside, or our "Secret Annexe" is on fire, or they come and take us away at night. I see everything as if it is actually taking place, and this gives me the feeling that it may all happen to me very soon! Miep often says she envies us for possessing such tranquility here. That may be true, but she is not thinking about all our fears. I simply can't imagine that the world will ever be normal for us again. I do talk about "after the war," but then it is only a castle in the air, something that will never really happen. If I think back to our old house, my girl friends, the fun at school, it is just as if another person lived it all, not me.

I see the eight of us with our "Secret Annexe" as if we were a little piece of blue heaven, surrounded by heavy black rain clouds. The round, clearly defined spot where we stand is still safe, but the clouds gather more closely about us and the circle which separates us from the approaching danger closes more and more tightly. Now we are so surrounded by danger and darkness that we bump against each other, as we search desperately for a means of escape. We all look down below, where people are fighting each other, we look above, where it is quiet and beautiful, and meanwhile we are cut off by the great dark mass, which will not let us go upwards, but which stands before us as an impenetrable wall; it tries to crush us, but cannot do so yet. I can only cry and implore: "Oh, if only the black circle could recede and open the way for us!"

Yours, Anne



Erasure Poetry Diary Excerpt

SATURDAY, 12 FEBRUARY, 1944

Dear Kitty,

The sun is shining, the sky is a deep blue, there is a lovely breeze and I'm longing- so longing- for everything. To talk, for freedom, for friends, to be alone. And I do so long...to cry! I feel as if I'm going to burst, and I know that it would get better with crying; but I can't, I'm restless, I go from one room to the other, breathe through the crack of a closed window, feel my heart beating, as if it is saying, "Can't you satisfy my longings at last?"

I believe that it's spring within me, I feel that spring is awakening, I feel it in my whole body and soul. It is an effort to behave normally, I feel utterly confused, don't know what to read, what to write, what to do, I only know that I am longing...!

Yours, Anne



Erasure Poetry Diary Excerpt

TUESDAY, 7 MARCH, 1944

[...]How did I appear at school? The one who thought of new jokes and pranks, always “king of the castle,” never in a bad mood, never a crybaby. No wonder everyone liked to cycle with me, and I got their attentions.

Now I look back at that Anne as an amusing, but very superficial girl, who has nothing to do with the Anne of today. Peter said quite rightly about me: “If ever I saw you, you were always surrounded by two or more boys and a whole troupe of girls. You were always laughing and always the center of everything!”

What is left of this girl? Oh, don’t worry, I haven’t forgotten how to laugh or to answer back readily. I’m just as good, if not better, at criticizing people, and I can still flirt if...I wish. That’s not it though, I’d like that sort of life again for an evening, a few days, or even a week; the life which seems so carefree and gay. But at the end of that week, I should be dead beat and would be only too thankful to listen to anyone who began to talk about something sensible. I don’t want followers, but friends, admirers who fall not for a flattering smile but for what one does and for one’s character.

I know quite well that the circle around me would be much smaller. But what does that matter, as long as one still keeps a few sincere friends? [...]

[...]I don’t think then of all the misery, but of the beauty that still remains. This is one of the things that Mummy and I are so entirely different about. Her counsel when one feels melancholy is: “Think of all the misery in the world and be thankful that you are not sharing in it!” My advice is: “ Go outside, to the fields, enjoy nature and the sunshine, go out and try to recapture happiness in yourself and in God. Think of all the beauty that’s still left in and around you and be happy!”

I don’t see how Mummy’s idea can be right, because then how are you supposed to behave if you go through the misery yourself? Then you are lost. On the contrary, I’ve found that there is always some beauty left- in nature, sunshine, freedom, in yourself; these can all help you. Look at these things, then you find yourself again, and God, and then you regain your balance.

And whoever is happy will make others happy too. He who has courage and faith will never perish in misery!

Yours, Anne



Erasure Poetry Diary Excerpt

TUESDAY, 4 APRIL, 1944

[...]And now it's all over. I must work, so as not to be a fool, to get on, to become a journalist, because that's what I want! I know that I can write, a couple of my stories are good, my descriptions of the "Secret Annexe" are humorous, there's a lot in my diary that speaks, but- whether I have real talent remains to be seen.

"Eva's Dream" is my best fairy tale, and the queer thing about it is that I don't know where it comes from. Quite a lot of "Cady's Life" is good too, but, on the whole, it's nothing.

I am the best and sharpest critic of my own work. I know myself what is and what is not well written. Anyone who doesn't write doesn't know how wonderful it is; I used to bemoan the fact that I couldn't draw at all, but now I am more than happy that I can at least write. And if I haven't any talent for writing books or newspaper articles, well, then I can always write for myself.

I want to get on; I can't imagine that I would have to lead the same sort of life as Mummy and Mrs. Van Daan and all the women who do their work and are then forgotten. I must have something besides a husband and children, something that I can devote myself to!

I want to go on living even after my death! And therefore I am grateful to God for giving me this gift, this possibility of developing myself and of writing, of expressing all that is in me.

I can shake off everything if I write; my sorrows disappear, my courage is reborn. But, and that is the great question, will I ever be able to write anything great, will I ever become a journalist or a writer? I hope so, oh, I hope so very much, for I can recapture everything when I write, my thoughts, my ideals and my fantasies.

I haven't done anything more to "Cady's Life" for ages; in my mind I know exactly how to go on, but somehow it doesn't flow from my pen. Perhaps I never shall finish it; it may land up in the wastepaper basket, or the fire...that's a horrible idea, but then I think to myself, "At the age of fourteen and with so little experience, how can you write about philosophy?"

So I go on again with fresh courage; I think I shall succeed, because I want to write!

Yours, Anne

ACTIVITY 2: THE DENTIST EVENT

The beginning of Act 2 begins with Mrs. Van Daan getting her tooth pulled, an event every resident of the “Secret Annexe” was there to witness just as you experienced the moment dramatized on the stage. We all remember things differently. Our point of view and attention to detail are the things that make our account of a memorable moment uniquely ours.



1

Read Anne’s diary entry describing the tooth pulling event (on the next page).

2

As a class, reflect on what you remember happening onstage when Mrs. Van Daan had her tooth pulled.

3

Choose a resident of the “Secret Annexe” other than Anne.

4

Using both what you remember from the play and Anne’s diary entry, compose a diary entry describing the tooth pulling event from the point of view of the character you chose.

5

Share your diary entry with the class.



Write Like Anne: The Dentist Event

THURSDAY, 10 DECEMBER, 1942

[...]Dussel has opened his dental practice. For the fun of it, I must tell you about his first patient. Mummy was ironing; and Mrs. Van Daan was the first to face the ordeal. She went and sat on a chair in the middle of the room. Dussel began to unpack his case in an awfully important way, asked for some eau de cologne as a disinfectant and vaseline to take the place of wax. He looked in Mrs. Van Daan's mouth and found two teeth which, when touched, just made her crumple up as if she was going to pass out, uttering incoherent cries of pain. After a lengthy examination (in Mrs. Van Daan's case, lasting in actual fact not more than two minutes) Dussel began to scrape away at one of the holes. But, no fear- it was out of the question- the patient flung her arms and legs about wildly in all directions until at one point Dussel let go of the scraper-that remained stuck in Mrs. Van Daan's tooth.

Then the fat was really in the fire! She cried (as far as it was possible with such an instrument in one's mouth), tried to pull the thing out of her mouth, and only succeeded in pushing it further in. Mr. Dussel stood with his hands against his sides calmly watching the little comedy. The rest of the audience lost all control and roared with laughter. It was rotten of us, because I for one am quite sure that I should have screamed even louder. After much turning, kicking, screaming, and calling out, she got the instrument free at last and Mr. Dussel went on with his work, as if nothing had happened!

This he did so quickly that Mrs. Van Daan didn't have time to start any fresh tricks. But he'd never had so much help in all his life before. Two assistants are pretty useful: Van Daan and I performed our duties well. The whole scene looked like a picture from the Middle Ages entitled "A Quack at Work." [...]