

CHAPTER
32

Section 3

PRIMARY SOURCE *from The Diary of a Young Girl*
by Anne Frank

Anne Frank was a German Jewish girl who fled with her family to Amsterdam, the Netherlands, to escape Nazi persecution during World War II. She and her family hid for two years in a secret place Frank called the Annex. While hiding in the Annex, Frank kept a diary she addressed as Kitty. What does this diary entry reveal about the challenges of everyday life in the Annex?

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 [Bep and Miep are secretaries who work in the building] 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 may be 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 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

from Anne Frank, Susan Massotty, trans., The Diary of a Young Girl (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 144–145.

Research Options

1. **Writing Expository Paragraphs** Find out more about the life of Anne Frank. What had her life been like before World War II? With whom did she live in the Annex? What happened to her during the war? Write a short magazine article to report your findings.
2. **Visual, Audio, and Multimedia Sources** Locate and view the movie *Diary of Anne Frank*. Then, with classmates, share your reactions to the film's depiction of Frank's life in the Annex. Do you think it was important that Frank kept a diary to record her experiences?

Excerpt from *The Diary of Anne Frank: The Definitive Edition* by Anne Frank, edited by Otto H. Frank and Mirjam Pressler, translated by Susan Massotty. Copyright © 1986 by Anne Frank-Fonds, Basle/Switzerland, for all texts of Anne Frank. Used by permission of Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc.