

The Diary of Anne Frank

Reading comprehension

Y6

DIFFICULTY : HARD

The following extracts are taken from the diary of Anne Frank between 1942 and 1944, during the time she lived in hiding in Amsterdam with her family.

July 8th 1942: "At three o'clock (Hello had left but was supposed to come back later), the doorbell rang. I didn't hear it, since I was out on the balcony, lazily reading in the sun. A little while later Margot appeared in the kitchen doorway looking very agitated. "Father has received a call-up notice from the SS," she whispered. "Mother has gone to see Mr. van Daan" (Mr. van Daan is Father's business partner and a good friend). I was stunned. A call-up: everyone knows what that means. Visions of concentration camps and lonely cells raced through my head. How could we let Father go to such a fate? "Of course he's not going," declared Margot as we waited for Mother in the living room. "Mother's gone to Mr. van Daan to ask whether we can move to our hiding place tomorrow. The van Daans are going with us. There will be seven of us altogether." Silence. We couldn't speak. The thought of Father off visiting someone in the Jewish Hospital and completely unaware of what was happening, the long wait for Mother, the heat, the suspense – all this reduced us to silence.

July 9th 1942: "Here's a description of the building... A wooden staircase leads from the downstairs hallway to the third floor. At the top of the stairs is a landing, with doors on either side. The door on the left takes you up to the spice storage area, attic and loft in the front part of the house. A typically Dutch, very steep, ankle-twisting flight of stairs also runs from the front part of the house to another door opening onto the street. The door to the right of the landing leads to the Secret Annex at the back of the house. No one would ever suspect there were so many rooms behind that plain grey door. There's just one small step in front of the door, and then you're inside. Straight ahead of you is a steep flight of stairs. To the left is a narrow hallway opening onto a room that serves as the Frank family's living room and bedroom. Next door is a smaller room, the bedroom and study of the two young ladies of the family. To the right of the stairs is a windowless washroom with a sink. The door in the corner leads to the toilet and another one to Margot's and my room... Now I've introduced you to the whole of our lovely Annex!"



August 21st 1942: “Now our Secret Annex has truly become secret. Because so many houses are being searched for hidden bicycles, Mr. Kugler thought it would be better to have a bookcase built in front of the entrance to our hiding place. It swings out on its hinges and opens like a door. Mr. Voskuijl did the carpentry work (Mr. Voskuijl has been told that the seven of us are in hiding, and he’s been most helpful). Now whenever we want to go downstairs we have to duck and then jump. After the first three days we were all walking around with bumps on our foreheads from banging our heads against the low doorway. Then Peter cushioned it by nailing a towel stuffed with wood shavings to the doorframe. Let’s see if it helps!”

October 9th 1942: “Today I have nothing but dismal and depressing news to report. Our many Jewish friends and acquaintances are being taken away in droves. The Gestapo is treating them very roughly and transporting them in cattle cars to Westerbork, the big camp in Drenthe to which they’re sending all the Jews. Miep told us about someone who’d managed to escape from there. It must be terrible in Westerbork. The people get almost nothing to eat, much less to drink, as water is available only one hour a day, and there’s only one toilet and sink for several thousand people. Men and women sleep in the same room, and women and children often have their heads shaved. Escape is almost impossible; many people look Jewish, and they’re branded by their shorn heads. If it’s that bad in Holland, what must it be like in those faraway and uncivilized places where the Germans are sending them? We assume that most of them are being murdered. The English radio says they’re being gassed. Perhaps that’s the quickest way to die. I feel terrible. Miep’s accounts of these horrors are so heartrending... Fine specimens of humanity, those Germans, and to think I’m actually one of them! No, that’s not true, Hitler took away our nationality long ago. And besides, there are no greater enemies on earth than the Germans and Jews.”

October 20th 1942: “My hands still shaking, though it’s been two hours since we had the scare... The office staff stupidly forgot to warn us that the carpenter, or whatever he’s called, was coming to fill the extinguishers... After working for about fifteen minutes, he laid his hammer and some other tools on our bookcase (or so we thought!) and banged on our door. We turned white with fear. Had he heard something after all and did he now want to check out this mysterious looking bookcase? It seemed so, since he kept knocking, pulling, pushing and jerking on it. I was so scared I nearly fainted at the thought



of this total stranger managing to discover our wonderful hiding place..."

February 3rd 1944: "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."

July 15th 1944: "It's utterly impossible for me to build my life on a foundation of chaos, suffering and death. I see the world being slowly transformed into a wilderness, I hear the approaching thunder that, one day, will destroy us too, I feel the suffering of millions. And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too will end, that peace and tranquillity will return once more. In the meantime, I must hold on to my ideals. Perhaps the day will come when I'll be able to realise them."



Questions

DIFFICULTY : HARD

1. Define the following words from the text.

word	word class	definition
agitated		
fate		
narrow		
dismal		
acquaintances		

2. What does Anne suggest a 'call up' means?

3. Where was Father when the 'call up notice' was delivered?

4. Find and copy the phrase used to describe the staircase at the front part of the house.

5. Who does Anne share a room with inside the secret annex?

Questions

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6. Complete the table.

Quote from the text

"Mr. Kugler thought it would be better to have a bookcase built in front of the entrance to our hiding place. It swings out on its hinges and opens like a door. Mr. Voskuijl did the carpentry work..."

What does it suggest about the characters?

"And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too will end, that peace and tranquillity will return once more."

7. Sequence the following events in order from 1-5.

German authorities search for hidden bicycles.

☐

The door is replaced with a bookcase to conceal the entrance.

☐

The carpenter comes to fill the extinguishers.

☐

Father receives a 'call up notice'.

☐

Jewish people are being transported to Westerbork camp.

☐

8. a) Explain, with reference to the text, how Anne's mood changes throughout the extracts.

Questions

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8. b) Why might Anne's mood change?

9. Find and copy an example of sarcasm in the text.

5. Complete the table.

	True	False	Evidence
Anne is from Germany.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jews are not allowed bicycles.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Anne was annoyed with the office staff on October 20th.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

