

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1942

Dearest Kitty, Mr. and Mrs. Van Daan have had a terrible fight. I've never seen anything like it, since Mother and Father wouldn't dream of shouting at each other like that. The argument was based on something so trivial it didn't seem worth wasting a single word on it. Oh well, to each his own.

Of course, it's very difficult for Peter, who gets caught in the middle, but no one takes Peter seriously anymore, since he's hypersensitive and lazy. Yesterday he was beside himself with worry because his tongue was blue instead of pink. This rare phenomenon disappeared as quickly as it came. Today he's walking around with a heavy scarf on because he's got a stiff neck. His Highness has been complaining of lumbago too. Aches and pains in his heart, kidneys and lungs are also par for the course. He's an absolute hypochondriac! (That's the right word, isn't it?)

Mother and Mrs. Van Daan aren't getting along very well. There are enough reasons for the friction. To give you one small example, Mrs. Van D. has removed all but three of her sheets from our communal linen closet. She's assuming that Mother's can be used for both families. She'll be in for a nasty surprise when she discovers that Mother has followed her lead. Furthermore, Mrs. Van D. is ticked off because we're using her china instead of ours. She's still trying to find out what we've done with our plates; they're a lot closer than she thinks, since they're packed in cardboard boxes in the attic, behind a load of Opekta advertising material. As long as we're in hiding, the plates will remain out of her reach.

Since I'm always having accidents, it's just as well! Yesterday I broke one of Mrs. van D.'s soup bowls. "Oh!" she angrily exclaimed. "Can't you be more careful? That was my last one."

Last week there was a brief interruption in our monotonous routine. This was provided by Peter -- and a book about women. I should explain that Margot and Peter are allowed to read nearly all the books Mr. Kleiman lends us. But the adults preferred to keep this special book to themselves. This immediately piqued Peter's curiosity. What forbidden fruit did it contain? He snuck off with it when his mother was downstairs talking, and took himself and his booty to the loft. For two days all was well. Mrs. Van Daan knew what he was up to, but kept mum until Mr. Van Daan found out about it. He threw a fit, took the book away and assumed that would be the end of the business. However, he'd neglected to take his son's curiosity into account. Peter, not in the least fazed by his father's swift action, began thinking up ways to read the rest of this vastly interesting book. In the meantime, Mrs. Van D. asked Mother for her opinion. Mother didn't think this particular book was suitable for Margot, but she saw no harm in letting her read most other books.

"You see, Mrs. Van Daan," Mother said, "there's a big difference between Margot and Peter. To begin with, Margot's a girl, and girls are always more mature than boys. Second, she's already read many serious books and doesn't go looking for those which are no longer forbidden. Third, Margot's much more sensible and intellectually advanced, as a result of her four years at an excellent school." Mrs. van Daan agreed with her, but felt it was wrong as a matter of principle to let youngsters read books written for adults.

Meanwhile, Peter had thought of a suitable time when no one would be interested in either him or the book. At seven-thirty in the evening, when the entire family was listening to the radio in the private office, he took his treasure and stole off to the loft again.

The scene that followed was not surprising: after a slap, a whack and a tug-of-war, the book lay on the table and Peter was in the loft.

Peter didn't apologize, and stayed in the loft. Mr. Van Daan decided to leave well enough alone, though he did note the next morning that Peter's bed had been slept in. At seven Peter went to the attic again, but was persuaded to come downstairs when Father spoke a few friendly words to him. After three days of sullen looks and stubborn silence, everything was back to normal. Yours, Anne

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1942

Dearest Kitty, Today I'll tell you the general news here in the Annex.

Mrs. Van Daan is unbearable. I'm continually being scolded for my incessant chatter when I'm upstairs. I simply let the words bounce right off me! Madame now has a new trick up her sleeve: trying to get out of washing the pots and pans. If there's a bit of food left at the bottom of the pan, she leaves it to spoil instead of transferring it to a glass dish. Then in the afternoon when Margot is stuck with cleaning all the pots and pans, Madame exclaims, "Oh, poor Margot, you have so much work to do!"

I'd just finished writing something about Mrs. van Daan when she walked into the room. Thump, I slammed the book shut. "Hey, Anne, can't I even take a peek?" "No, Mrs. van Daan." "Just the last page then?" "No, not even the last page, Mrs. van Daan." Of course, I nearly died, since that particular page contained a rather unflattering description of her. There's something happening every day, but I'm too tired and lazy to write it all down. Yours, Anne

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1942

Dearest Kitty, Mother and I had a so-called "discussion" today, but the annoying part is that I burst into tears. I can't help it. Daddy is always nice to me, and he also understands me much better. At moments like these I can't stand Mother. It's obvious that I'm a stranger to her; she doesn't even know what I think about the most ordinary things. At any rate, Daddy usually comes to my defense. Without him I wouldn't be able to stick it out here. I don't get along with Margot very well either. Even though our family never has the same kind of outbursts they have upstairs, I find it far from pleasant. Margot's and Mother's personalities are so alien to me. I understand my girlfriends better than my own mother. Isn't that a shame?

For the umpteenth time, Mrs. Van Daan is sulking. She's very moody and has been removing more and more of her belongings and locking them up. It's too bad Mother doesn't repay every Van Daan "disappearing act" with a Frank "disappearing act."

Some people, like the van Daans, seem to take special delight not only in raising their own children but in helping others raise theirs. More than once the air has been filled with the Van Daans' admonitions and my saucy replies. Father and Mother always defend me fiercely. Without them I wouldn't be able to jump back into the fray with my usual composure. They keep telling me I should talk less, mind my own business and be more modest, but I seem doomed to failure. If Father weren't so patient, I'd have long ago given up hope of ever meeting my parents' quite moderate expectations.

If I take a small helping of a vegetable I loathe and eat potatoes instead, the Van Daans, especially Mrs. Van Daan, can't get over how spoiled I am. "Come on, Anne, eat some more vegetables," she says. "No, thank you, ma'am," I reply. "The potatoes are more than enough." "Vegetables are good for you; your

mother says so too. Have some more," she insists, until Father intervenes and upholds my right to refuse a dish I don't like. Then Mrs. van D. really flies off the handle: "You should have been at our house, where children were brought up the way they should be. I don't call this a proper upbringing. Anne is terribly spoiled. I'd never allow that. If Anne were my daughter. . ." This is always how her tirades begin and end: "If Anne were my daughter. . ." Thank goodness I'm not. Yours, Anne

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1942

Dearest Kitty, I had to stop yesterday, though I was nowhere near finished. I'm dying to tell you about another one of our clashes, but before I do I'd like to say this: I think it's odd that grown-ups quarrel so easily and so often and about such petty matters. Up to now I always thought bickering was just something children did and that they outgrew it. Often, of course, there's sometimes a reason to have a real quarrel, but the verbal exchanges that take place here are just plain bickering. (They refer to these as "discussions" instead of "quarrels," but Germans don't know the difference!)

They criticize everything, and I mean everything, about me: my behavior, my personality, my manners; every inch of me, from head to toe and back again, is the subject of gossip and debate. Harsh words and shouts are constantly being flung at my head, though I'm absolutely not used to it. According to the powers that be, I'm supposed to grin and bear it. But I can't! I have no intention of taking their insults lying down. I'll show them that Anne Frank wasn't born yesterday. They'll sit up and take notice and keep their big mouths shut when I make them see they ought to attend to their own manners instead of mine. How dare they act that way! It's simply barbaric. I've been astonished, time and again, at such rudeness and most of all. . . at such stupidity (Mrs. Van Daan).

Am I really as bad-mannered, headstrong, stubborn, pushy, stupid, lazy, etc., etc., as the Van Daans say I am? No, of course not. I know I have my faults and shortcomings, but they blow them all out of proportion! If you only knew, Kitty, how I seethe when they scold and mock me. It won't take long before I explode with pent-up rage. But enough of that. I've bored you long enough with my quarrels, but Mrs. Van Daan is a Germanic, mean and vulgar, exactly like some fat, red-faced fishwife.

If I could draw, I'd like to have sketched her as she was when she was angry. She struck me as so comical, that silly little scatterbrain! I've learned one thing: you only really get to know a person after a fight. Only then can you judge their true character! Yours, Anne