

Dussel

Thursday, 12 November, 1942

Dear Journal,

Blasted fools!!! They want me to go into hiding with them without closing up my business first! I'm not one to leave loose ends!! Give me time people! I wish I didn't even have to leave. Why didn't I go with my wife and son? We probably could have managed it somehow? Now I'm forced to hide like a frightened child! Why, If I had an army, no one would know the name "Hitler."

While I was walking today I thought I was being followed by the German Police, and was prepared to run for my life. Block after block, they were only 10 meters behind me. Finally, they arrived at there destination and paid no attention to me.

I am dreading the morrow. I will have to begin to end friendships and tighten loose ties.

It's all the Nazi's fault. The idiot's don't even know what they're doing? They hate me just because I'm Jewish! They could hate me because I'm old and senile! But because I'm Jewish? That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard. Back in my days, there were Jewish communities and..... I suppose I'm just babbling now, like the old man I am.

-Yours, Dussel

Tuesday, 17 November, 1942

Dear Journal,

I have arrived at my new home, "The Secret Annexe." It is a dreadfully small place with many restrictions. However, I was very suprised that the secret annexe was here. You could not tell if you were standing outside the building, or in the building for that matter. Whoever thought of this place was genius, I'm quite sure I'll be very safe here.

I made a little sketch of this place from the outside:

The Van Daans(which is the same name Anne calls them, so I decided to use it also) presented me with a rather comical "PROSPECTUS AND GUIDE TO THE 'SECRET ANNEXE.'" It explained all the rules and such for this place.

The downside is I have to share a room with the youngest girl, Anne. She is quite a chatter-box. Also, we cannot use the rest room for the whole day..we must wait till evening to use it. So, when I finally get in there, I stay for a while.

I guess I should describe the people to you. The Franks are the first family, in it is Mr. and Mrs. Frank and their daughters, Margot and Anne. The other family is the Van Daans, which is Mr. and Mrs. Van Daan, and their son, Peter. More later.

-Yours, Dussel

Tuesday, 22 December, 1942

Dear Journal,

Sorry I have not written lately, but there is not many exciting things going on, I do lead a dreary, dismal life.

Anne is so annoying, why if I were her father, I would have turned up her rear-side many times! She shows off! She's ridiculous, rude, sly, lazy, selfish, cowardly, crafty, etc., etc.

She thinks she is perfect. Every single night, all I hear from her is tossing and turning in bed. So much tossing and turning that I repeatedly have to call out "ssh-ssh". Was this annoying child raised like this?

Mrs. Van Daan is also rather bothersome. She is in bed with a bruised rig, complains the whole day long, allows herself to be given fresh dressings all the time, and isn't satisfied with anything! She is self-centered and superficial. However, myself being the newest here, I cannot say anything out-loud, because

people might think me rude and unthankful. Furthermore, I must keep my mouth shut to keep the peace in this house. Who knows what would happen if we started fighting amongst ourselves, why, it would be a complete and total disaster!

However, the rest of the household is tolerable and some, rather pleasant. For instance, Peter, the Van Daan boy, introduced me to his cat, Mouschi, who loves to be petted and purrs loudly when you do so.

Good news, everyone will receive an extra quarter-pound of butter for Christmas! Everyone went and baked something, so the "Secret Annexe" is full of wonderful smells such as cakes and biscuits. At least something good happens around here,

Wednesday, 10 March, 1943

Dear Journal,

We had a short circuit last evening. Some of the women like Anne and Mrs. Van Daan, got quite scared and had to be reassured by someone. Almost every night now we can hear the A.A. guns roar. And they roar so loudly that you can't hear yourself speak. Because of the guns, Mrs. Van Daan was nearly crying. She is a pest! However, there is a BIG upside to the guns. Everynight Anne, out of fright, leaves the room to go sleep with her father, leaving me with much relief from her tossing and turning.

As usual Mrs. Van Daan was getting very scared by "sounds" coming from the attic. She thought she heard burglars! Imagine that! Well it turned out that these "burglars" were rats scampering around. Since these rats were eating our supplies we let Mouschi sleep in the attic, and they have not returned since.

Peter went up to the loft a couple of evenings ago to fetch some old newspapers. He had to hold the trap door firmly to get down the steps. He put his hand down without looking... and went tumbling down the ladder from the sudden shock and pain. Without knowing it he had put his hand on a large rat, and it had bitten him hard. By the time he reached us, as white as a sheet and with his knees knocking, the blood had soaked through his pajamas. And no wonder; it's not very pleasant to stroke a large rat; and to get bitten into the bargain is really dreadful.

-Yours, Dussel

Thursday, 25 March, 1943

Dear Journal,

Today there was a horrific scare. Peter came and told Mr. Frank that "a barrel had fallen over in the warehouse" and "someone fumbling about at the door." They went off immediately to investigate. Mrs. Van Daan came upstairs shortly after. She had been listening to the wireless when Mr. Frank told her to turn it off and go upstairs. Then Mr. Frank and Peter had hidden themselves under the stairs and waited...then finally they heard two loud bumps, just as if two doors were banged here in the house! Mr. Frank was upstairs in one leap. Peter warned me first, who finally landed upstairs with a little bit of noise. Then everyone went to the Van Daans on the next floor up

Now it was unfortunate that the wireless downstairs was still turned to England, and that the chairs were neatly arranged around it. If the door had been forced, and the air-raid wardens had noticed and warned the police, then the results might have been very unpleasant. So, Otto went downstairs with Mr. Van Daan and Peter behind him. They came back to report that the house was all quiet.

That night no one could get to sleep right. I had a better chance than most, except that Anne was tossing and turning all night! Too bad that hasn't changed.

-Yours, Dussel

Tuesday, 18 May, 1943

Dear Journal,

The other day Anne had another fight with her mother. I feel for Mrs. Frank

because Anne does not act like she loves her mother. If my son ever acted like that, I would be crushed.

If strangers walked into our "Secret Annexe" right now, they might wonder why we are wearing tattered rags. That's how it seems anyways. The children's clothes are too small and too tight. Mr. Frank has frayed trousers and Mrs. Franks corsets have split and are too old to be repaired.

I witnessed a terrific air battle between German and British planes. Unfortunately a couple of Allies had to jump from burning machines. Our milkman, who lives in Halfweg, saw four Canadians sitting by the roadside, one of them spoke fluent Dutch. He asked the milkman to give him a light for his cigarette, and told him that the crew had consisted of six men. To pilot was burned to death, and their fifth man had hidden himself somewhere. The German police came and fetched the four perfectly fit men. I wonder how they managed to have such clear brains after that terrifying parachute trip.

Although it is fairly warm, we have to light our fires every other day, in order to burn vegetable peelings and refuse. We can't put anything in the garbage pails, because we must always think of the warehouse boy. how easily one could be betrayed by being a little careless!

Before a quarter of an hour had passed the shooting started up again. Mrs. Van Daan sat bolt upright at once and then went downstairs to my room, seeking the rest which she could not find with her spouse. I received her with the words "Come into my bed, my child!" which sent everybody into uncontrollable laughter. Everyone's fear was banished. (Except Mrs. Van Daan of course, who was quite angry!)  
-Yours, Dussel

Tuesday, 13 July, 1943

Dear Journal,

It's that dreadful little girl again! Yesterday afternoon she asked if she could use the little table in our room twice a week in the afternoons. She tried to sound sincere and polite, but I could see through, right into that selfish little monster. So I told her "No" just plain "No." And what does she do? She had an absolute fit about it!

So then I told her:

"I have to work too, and if I can't work in the afternoons, then there is no time left for me at all. I must finish my task, otherwise I've started it all for nothing. Anyway, you don't work seriously at anything. Your mythology, now just what kind of work is that; knitting and reading are not work either. I am at the table and shall stay there." Her reply was:

"Mr. Dussel, I do work seriously and there is nowhere else for me to work in the afternoons. I beg of you to kindly reconsider my request!"

Yeah, right! I need the table, if I did not need it I would let her use it. I am using it, so therefore, there is no open space, therefore, she can't use it. How hard is it for her to understand? Besides, if she has no place to work, where has she been working beforehand? Then after that, she went off to complain to her daddy. That's just what I need, Otto, helping her out.

Then, after changing her strategy, she came back and said:

"Mr. Dussel, I don't suppose you see any point in discussing the matter any more, but I must ask you to do so." I then remarked in my sweetest smile, "I am always, and at all times, prepared to discuss this matter, but it has already been settled."

She went on talking, so I continually interrupted her. She said: "When you first came here, we arranged that this room should be for both of us; if we were to divide it fairly, you would have the morning and I all the afternoon! But I don't ask even that much, and I think that my two afternoons are really perfectly reasonable." At this I jumped in anger and scornfully replied: "You can't talk about your rights here at all. And where am I to go, then? I shall ask Mr. Van Daan whether he will build a little compartment in the attic, then I can go and sit there. I simply can't work anywhere. With you one always gets in trouble. If your sister Margot, who after all has more reason to ask such a thing, would have

come to me with the same questions, I should no think of refusing, but you....." and I went on and on about the mythology and the knitting and insulting Anne, then I finished by stating:"But you, one simply can't talk to you. You are so outrageously selfish, as long as you can get what you want, you don't mind pushing everyone else to one side, I've never seen such a child. But after all, I suppose I shall be obliged to give you your own way, because otherwise I shall be told later on that Anne Frank failed her exam because Mr. Dussel would not give up the table for her."

After giving vent to my fury, I left the room with a feeling of mixed wrath and triumph. But what do you know? The little booger went and cried to her daddy, again. Then Otto and I talked and discussed about everything in Holland, it seemed. Finally I had to give in to the persistence of Otto and Anne. I am very angry. I'm not speaking to Anne anymore. I'm staying out the that little boogers way, who knows maybe next she'll try to take my bed?!

-Yours, Dussel

Monday, 26 July, 1943

Dear Journal,

Burglars came again. That meant; no taps to be turned on' therefore, no washing, silence, everything to be finished by eight o'clock and no lavatory. We were all very glad we had slept so well and not heard anything. Not until half past eleven did we learn from Mr. Koophuis that the burglars had pushed in the outer door with a crowbar and had forced the warehouse door. However, they did not find much to steal, so they tried their luck upstairs. They stole two cash boxes containing forty florins, postal orders and checkbooks and then, worst of all, all the coupons for 150 kilos of sugar.

Mr. Koophuis think that they belonged to the same gang as the ones who tried all three doors six weeks ago. They were unsuccessful then.

North Amsterdam was very heavily bombed on Sunday. The destruction seems to be terrible. Whole streets lie in ruins, and it will take a long time before all the people are dug out. Up till now there are two hundred dead and countless wounded; the hospitals are crammed. You hear of children lost in the smoldering ruins, looking for their parents. I shudder when I recall the dull droning rumble in the distance, which for us marked the approaching destruction.

While we were having a lovely breakfast the first warning siren went off. However, all that means is that the planes are crossing the coast. At about half past two, the sirens began to wail again and the guns started firing. When the bombs were dropped the house rumbled and shook violently. I was in the main office when this happened, Peter, the attic, Mrs. Van Daan in the private office, Mr. Van Daan in the loft, and the Franks on the little landing. Nearby something was on fire and it seemed as though a thick mist hung everywhere. That evening at dinner, another air-raid alarm! But nothing came of it. Through the whole ordeal, Anne and Mrs. Van Daan were quite frightened.

Great news. Mussolini has resigned, the King of Italy has taken over the government. At least something good has happened. The war is going better for the allies, but there is no end in sight.

-Yours, Dussel

Thursday, 29 July, 1943

Dear Journal,

Anne and Margot can be ignorant and foolish sometimes. Anne brought up the subject of the book Henry from the Other Side. I told her it is an excellent book. I thought very highly of it. Anne and Margot thought it's far from excellent. Since Anne couldn't keep her mouth shut, she told me how much she dislike the book. Responding I stated:

"How can you understand the psychology of a man! Of a child is not so difficult. You are much too young for a book like that; why, even a man of twenty would not be able to grasp it. You know much too much about things that are unsuitable for you, you've been brought up all wrong. Later on, when you are

older, you won't enjoy anything, then you'll say: 'I read that in books twenty years ago.' You had better make haste, if you want to get a husband of all in love-or everything is sure to be a disappointment to you. You are already proficient in the theory, it's only the practice that you still lack!"

That booger! She gets me so angry! Her selfishness and ignorance! It makes me want to hit something. But I must restrain myself to keep the peace, as usual.  
-Yours, Dussel

Wednesday, 18 August, 1943

Dear Journal,

Potato peeling time again. I have found a very efficient way of peeling potatoes. Unfortunately, I cannot share my experience with Anne. The little booger refuses to be efficient. I tell her: "No! Anne, look here; I take the knife in my hand like this, scrape from the top downwards! No, not like that-like this!"

"I get on better with this, Mr. Dussel," she remarks.

"But still this is the best way. But take it from me. Naturally I don't care a bit, you must learn for yourself." We scrape on. She looks slyly once in my direction. I shake my head thoughtfully once more but am silent. I'm thinking "Fine! Do it the hard way! See if I care!"

Otto on the other hand is a good example of a potato peeler. For him scraping potatoes is not just a little odd job, but a piece of precision work. When he is peeling potatoes, he would never hand over an imperfectly scraped potato; it's out of the question when he gets into the peeling.

Mrs. Van Daan is quite a pest and a flirt! She is constantly trying to attract my attention. She's married for goodness sake! For instance, today, she looks in my direction and I pretend not to notice. Then she winks an eye; I work on. Then she laughs, and I don't look up. Then Mrs. Frank laughs too; I take no notice. Mrs. Van Daan doesn't achieve anything, so she thinks of other things. So she bothers the next best person. Mr. Van Daan.

-Yours, Dussel

