

From Anna's Frank diary

Dearest Kitty,

Mother is terribly irritable, which puts me in danger. Is it just by chance that I'm always the one to pay for it, and never Margot? For example, last night Margot was reading a picture book with wonderful illustrations. At a certain point she got up and left the room, leaving the book open so she could continue reading it when she came back. I had nothing to do at the time, so I picked it up to look at the pictures. As soon as Margot came back, she saw me with the book in my hands, frowned and asked me to give it to her. I wanted to hold on to it for a little while longer. Margot got really angry, and then Mother stepped in and said,

"Margot was reading that book, so you must give it back to her."

Father came into the room, unaware of what was going on, saw Margot's sullen expression and exploded:

"I'd like to see what you'd do if Margot started leafing through one of your books!"

I backed down immediately and, after putting the book down, left the room, "miffed," as Father put it. I wasn't miffed or upset. I was simply sad.

Justice demanded that Father not scold me without first asking the reason for our quarrel. I would have given Margot the book myself, and much sooner, if Father and Mother hadn't interfered. Instead, they took my sister's side, as if I had wronged her.

Mother obviously protects Margot, and they always stick up for each other. I've become so used to this that I've become completely indifferent to Mother's reproaches and Margot's sulking.

I don't love them, but only because they're my mother and sister. With Father, it's different. I'm hurt every time he shows his preference for Margot, praises her, and showers her with compliments and caresses, because I love Papa so much. He's my great ideal. I don't love anyone in the world as much as I love Papa.

He doesn't understand that he doesn't treat Margot the same way he treats me. Margot is undoubtedly the smarter, kinder, prettier and nicer one! Still, I have the right to be taken seriously too. I've always been the clown of the family, I'm always being called insufferable and I'm always the scapegoat. I'm always the one who has to pay the piper, sometimes by being scolded and sometimes by choking down my despair. The apparent flattery no longer satisfies me, nor do the so-called serious conversations. I'm waiting for something from Father that he's not capable of giving me.

I don't envy Margot, I've never envied her, I've never coveted her beauty or intelligence. All I want is Father's love, his true affection, not just for his child, but for Anne, the person she is.

I cling to Father because he's the only one who keeps the last vestiges of family feeling alive in me. Father doesn't want to understand that sometimes I have an irresistible need to get things off my chest, to talk to him about Mother. He refuses to listen to me and avoids anything that has to do with her shortcomings.

More than anyone else, Mother, with her character and shortcomings, weighs on my heart. I don't know what attitude to take anymore. I don't want to tell her brutally that she's unreasonable, sarcastic and cruel. On the other hand, I can't always be accused.

No matter what you do, we're the complete opposites, and inevitably we clash. I don't judge Mother's character, because I'm not qualified to do so. I only compare her to the image of the mother I had in my mind. To me, Mother isn't always "the mother." And so I have to fulfill that role myself. I'm cut off from my parents, I've lost a little bit of my way, and I don't know in which port to anchor. All this is because I have in mind an ideal example: the ideal of the woman who is a mother, which I don't find at all in the woman I'm forced to call my mother.

I always intend to ignore Mother's flaws, to see only her virtues, and to try to find in myself what I'm vainly looking for in her. But I don't succeed, and the most desperate thing is that neither Father nor Mother suspect that they're missing something in my life, and that I disapprove of them for that reason. Are there any parents who can give their children complete satisfaction? Sometimes I think that God wants to test me, not only now but also later. The most important thing is for me to become wise, without examples and useless words, so that I can be stronger later. Who else will ever read these letters, except me?

Who else will comfort me, because I often need comfort? Very often I lack the strength, what I do is not enough and I do not finish anything. I do not ignore it; I try to improve, and every day I have to start from the beginning. They treat me in the most unexpected way. One day, Anna is very smart and one can talk to her about any subject; the next day, Anna is a fool who does not understand anything at all and imagines that she has learned great things from books.

However, I am no longer a child and the pampered little girl who is laughed at kindly in any case. I have my ideal, I even have many ideals; I have my ideas and plans, although I cannot yet express them.

Oh, how many things do not come to my mind at night, when I am alone, even during the day, when I am forced to endure those who annoy me and those who misunderstand what I want to say!

In the end, I always automatically return to my Diary, which is the beginning and the end for me, because Kitty never lacks patience. I promise her that in spite of everyone I will endure the blow, I will draw my way and I will swallow my tears. I just want to see a result, I just want to have encouragement, even once, from someone who loves me.

Do not judge me harshly, but be sure to see me as just a creature that sometimes feels that the glass is overflowing.

Yours, Anna