from
The Last Seven Months of Anne Frank
Interview with Hannah Elisabeth Pick-Goslar
Willy Lindwer

Mr. Frank’s factory, Opekta, produced a substance for making jam. My mother always got the old packages as a gift. Soon after school let out, my mother sent me to the Franks’ house to get the scale because she wanted to make jam. It was a beautiful day.

I went as usual to the Franks’ house and rang and rang and rang, but no one opened the door. I didn’t know why no one answered. I rang again, and finally, Mr. Goudsmit, a tenant, opened the door.

“What do you want? What have you come for?” he asked in astonishment.

“I’ve come to borrow the scale.”

“Don’t you know that the entire Frank family has gone to Switzerland?”

FOCUS ON FORM
An interview is a meeting in which one person asks another about his or her thoughts, feelings, insights, or experiences. In this interview, which was conducted for a television documentary about Anne Frank, the questions asked by Willy Lindwer have been omitted. Only Pick-Goslar’s answers are printed.

INTERVIEW
On the basis of the photograph and what you’ve read so far, what do you think might be the relationship between Hannah and Anne?
I didn’t know anything about it. “Why?” I asked. He didn’t know either. This was a bolt out of the blue. Why had they gone to Switzerland? The only connection the Frank family had with Switzerland was that Otto Frank’s mother lived there. But later it appeared that, in fact, the family had always reckoned that it would get worse for Jews. They had been preparing for a whole year to go into hiding. We didn’t know anything about this. You can’t talk about something like that. Because if anyone talked, then the whole affair would go amiss.

I believe that Anne was the first girlfriend that I lost. It was, of course, very frightening, but we began to get used to the idea. When I went back to school after the summer, fewer children came to class every day.

We stayed in Amsterdam all full year longer, until June 20, 1942, and all this time things were getting worse and worse. Jews had to wear a yellow star. We had an Ausweis (an identification card), with a large “J” on it—-for Jew. People were stopped on the street: “May I see your Ausweis?” If you were Jewish, you were taken away and you never returned home. And a mother waiting for her child would ask herself: Where is my child? Have they taken her away? 

So far, my family had been lucky insofar as we were able to buy South American citizenship through an uncle in Switzerland. We were expatriates. That’s why it was

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A Dutch Jewish star with the word Jood (Jew) on it

A household identification card (Ausweis) that identified families as Jewish
possible. We got passports from Paraguay. Laughing, my father said, "You'd better know something about Paraguay in case they ask." So I learned the name of the capital, Asunción. I didn't know anything else, but no one ever asked me anything.

Because of these passports we could still go out for a while longer without trembling in fear, but you never knew what would happen tomorrow...

So we continued to live, with little to eat and with a great deal of fear, but at least we were at home. In October, my mother died during childbirth. The baby was born dead. That was in Anne's diary. Someone told Anne that our baby had died, but not that my mother had died too. They probably didn't have the heart to tell her.

Everything went along fine until June 20, 1943, when there was the big roundup in Amsterdam-South. On that day, the Germans started something new. At five o'clock in the morning while everyone was asleep they blocked off all the southern part of Amsterdam. They went from door to door, rang, and asked: "Do Jews live here?" "Yes."

"You have fifteen minutes; take a backpack, put a few things in it, and get outside quickly."

That was our neighborhood, so we had to pack too. A passport no longer helped. We had a quarter of an hour, and we had to go with them...

So we were taken to Westerbork. My father ended up in a very large barracks. My sister and I were put in an orphanage, where, they said, there was more to eat. My father had known the director of the orphanage when he was in Germany. My little sister wasn't there very long. She became seriously ill and had to have operations on both ears. She was in the hospital for almost the entire time that we were in Westerbork.

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SYNTHESIZE

Reread lines 58–85. What strategies did Jews living openly use to survive? What hardships did they endure?
On February 15, 1944, we were transported to Bergen-Belsen. When we arrived, our clothes weren’t taken away and families weren’t separated. My father and my sister stayed with me. We slept in different places, but we could see each other every evening. The trip took—I don’t remember precisely—two or three days to get to Bergen-Belsen.

In Bergen-Belsen, it was very cold in the winter. We soon found that out. Because we had been arrested in June we hadn’t thought about winter clothes. Especially me, a young girl, who had to do her own packing. But what I had brought, I kept.

My sister had a large bandage on her head because she had had surgery on her ears in Westerbork. The first day we arrived in Bergen-Belsen, I got jaundice. The policy of the Germans was: whoever got sick had to go to the hospital; otherwise, all the others could be infected. I didn’t know what to do with my little sister. My father was confined in another barracks and I couldn’t take her to him. He also had to work, so that wouldn’t have worked out.

So there I was and didn’t know what to do. This situation showed me that there were very special people in that camp. I told an old lady that I was at my wits’ end: “Tomorrow morning, I have to go to the hospital and my little sister is sick.”

Two hours later, a woman came, who said, “My name is Abrahams. Mrs. Lange told me that you were here and that you don’t know what to do with your sister. I have seven children; give her to me; then we’ll just have one more little child with us.”

And that’s how it worked out. The next morning her daughter, who seemed to be about my age, came and took the little girl with her. Meanwhile, my father was able to visit me. We were together with that family until the end. To this day we have stayed on friendly terms with them.

One day, we looked in the direction where there hadn’t been any barracks and saw that tents had suddenly appeared there. Then a barbed-wire fence was built through the middle of the camp and filled with straw so that we couldn’t see the other side. But we were, of course, very close to each other, because the camp wasn’t large. All those people from the tents were taken to the barracks on the other side. In spite of the German guards on the high watchtowers, we tried to make contact.

One of my acquaintances, an *r* woman, came up to me one day. “Do you know, there are some Dutch people there. I spoke to Mrs. Van Daan.” The woman had known her from before, and she told me that Anne was there. She knew that I knew Anne.

“Go over to the barbed-wire fence and try to talk to her.” And, of course, I did. In the evening, I stood by the barbed-wire fence and began to call out. And quite by chance Mrs. Van Daan was there again. I asked her, “Could you call Anne?” She said, “Yes, yes, wait a minute, I’ll go to get Anne. I can’t get Margot; she is very, very ill and is in bed.”
But naturally I was much more interested in Anne, and I waited there a few minutes in the dark.

Anne came to the barbed-wire fence—I couldn't see her. The fence and the straw were between us. There wasn't much light. Maybe I saw her shadow. It wasn't the same Anne. She was a broken girl. I probably was, too, but it was so terrible. She immediately began to cry, and she told me, "I don't have any parents anymore."

I remember that with absolute certainty. That was terribly sad, because she couldn't have known anything else. She thought that her father had been gassed right away. But Mr. Frank looked very young and healthy, and of course the Germans didn't know how old everybody was, who they wanted to gas, but selected them on the basis of their appearance. Someone who looked healthy had to work, but another who might even be younger, but who was sick or looked bad, went directly to the gas chamber.

I always think, if Anne had known that her father was still alive, she...
might have had more strength to survive, because she died very shortly before the end—only a few days before [liberation]. But maybe it was all predestined.

So we stood there, two young girls, and we cried. I told her about my mother. She hadn’t known that; she only knew that the baby had died. And I told her about my little sister. I told her that my father was in the hospital. He died two weeks later; he was already very sick. She told me that Margot was seriously ill and she told me about going into hiding because I was, of course, extremely curious.

“But what are you doing here? You were supposed to be in Switzerland, weren’t you?” And then she told me what had happened. That they didn’t go to Switzerland at all and why they had said that; so that everyone should think that they had gone to her grandmother’s.

Then she said, “We don’t have anything at all to eat here, almost nothing, and we are cold; we don’t have any clothes and I’ve gotten very thin and they shaved my hair.” That was terrible for her. She had always been very proud of her hair. It may have grown back a bit in the meantime, but it certainly wasn’t the long hair she’d had before, which she playfully curled around her fingers. It was much worse for them than for us. I said, “They didn’t take away our clothes.” That was our first meeting.

Then for the first time—we had already been in the camp for more than a year; we arrived in February 1944, and this was February 1945—we received a very small Red Cross package: my sister, my father, and I.

A very small package, the size of a book, with knäckebröd (Scandinavian crackers), and a few cookies. Yo imagine how little that was. My son always says, “But Mama, that was something really very special.” But in those days we really collected everything, half a cookie, a sock, a glove—anything that gave a little warmth or something to eat. My friends also gave me something for Anne. I certainly couldn’t have thrown a large package over the barbed-wire fence; not that I had one but that wouldn’t have been possible at all.

We agreed to try to meet the next evening at eight o’clock—I believe I still had a watch. And, in fact, I succeeded in throwing the package over.

But I heard her screaming, and I called out, “What happened?” And Anne answered, “Oh, the woman standing next to me caught it and she won’t give it back to me.”

Then she began to scream, “I’ll try again but I don’t know if I’ll be able to.” We arranged to meet again, two or three days later, and I was actually able to throw over another package. She caught it; that was the main thing.

After these three or four meetings at the barbed-wire fence in Bergen-Belsen, I didn’t see her again, because the people in Anne’s camp were transferred to another section in Bergen-Belsen. That happened around the end of February.

That was the last time I saw Anne alive and spoke to her.
Dear Kitty,

As I've written you many times before, moods have a tendency to affect us quite a bit here, and in my case it's been getting worse lately. "Himmelhoch jauchzend, zu Tode betrübt" certainly applies to me. I'm "on top of the world" when I think of how fortunate we are and compare myself to other Jewish children, and "in the depths of despair" when, for example, Mrs. Kleiman comes by and talks about Jopie's hockey club, canoe trips, school plays and afternoon teas with friends.

I don't think I'm jealous of Jopie, but I long to have a really good time for once and to laugh so hard it hurts. We're stuck in this house like lepers, especially during winter and the Christmas and New Year's holidays. Actually, I shouldn't even be writing this, since it makes me seem so ungrateful, but I can't keep everything to myself, so I'll repeat what I said at the beginning: "Paper is more patient than people."

Whenever someone comes in from outside, with the wind in their clothes and the cold on their cheeks, I feel like burying my head under the blankets to keep from thinking, "When will we be allowed to breathe fresh air again?" I can't do that—on the contrary, I have to hold my head up high and put a bold face on things, but the thoughts keep coming anyway. Not just once, but over and over.

Believe me, if you've been shut up for a year and a half, it can get to be too much for you sometimes. But feelings can't be ignored, no matter how unjust or ungrateful they seem. I long to ride a bike, dance, whistle, look at the world, feel young and know that I'm free, and yet I can't let it show. Just imagine what would happen if all eight of us were to feel sorry for ourselves or walk around with the discontent clearly visible on our faces. Where would that get us? . . .

Yours, Anne

1. "Himmelhoch jauchzend, zu Tode betrübt": A famous line from Goethe: "On top of the world, or in the depths of despair."
Excerpt from

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl

Anne Frank’s diary was first published in 1947 at the insistence of her father, Otto Frank. Mr. Frank was the only member of his family to survive the nightmare of the Holocaust. The book is a testament to the conditions and impacts of the Nazi occupation.

Although many diaries eventually emerged from this period, Anne Frank’s came first, and few others are as comprehensive or as emotionally compelling as her story.

Anne’s ability to both capture day-to-day reality and describe her internal experience makes her diary so remarkable. One thing that stands out in this, and many other excerpts, is the optimism that Anne maintains during her dire situation. Her hope demonstrates the human ability to grow, change, and survive despite severe desperation. Readers of Anne’s diary will always find glimmers of hope in the ordinary strength of the human will.
Thursday, November 19, 1942

Dearest Kitty,

Just as we thought, Mr. Dussel is a very nice man. Of course he didn't mind sharing a room with me; to be honest, I'm not exactly delighted at having a stranger use my things, but you have to make sacrifices for a good cause, and I'm glad I can make this small one. "If we can save even one of our friends, the rest doesn't matter," said father, and he's absolutely right.

The first day Mr. Dussel was here, he asked me all sorts of questions—for example, what time the cleaning lady comes to the office, how we've arranged to use the washroom and when we're allowed to go to the toilet. You may laugh, but these things aren't so easy in a hiding place. During the daytime we can't make any noise that might be heard downstairs, and when someone else is there, like the cleaning lady, we have to be extra careful. I patiently explained all this to Mr. Dussel, but I was surprised to see how slow he is to catch on. He asks everything twice and still can't remember what you've told him.

Maybe he's just confused by the sudden change and he'll get over it. Otherwise, everything is going fine.

Mr. Dussel told us much about the outside world we've missed for so long. He had sad news. Countless friends and acquaintances have been taken off to a dreadful fate. Night after night, green and gray military vehicles cruise the streets. They knock on every door, asking whether any Jews live there. If so, the whole family is immediately taken away. If not, they proceed to the next house. It's impossible to escape their clutches unless you go into hiding. They often go around with lists, knocking only on those doors where they know there's a big haul to be made. They frequently offer a bounty, so much per head. It's like the slave hunts of the olden days. I don't mean to make light of this; it's much too tragic for that. In the evenings when it's dark, I often see long lines of good, innocent people, accompanied by crying children, walking on and on, ordered about by a handful of men who bully and beat them until they nearly drop. No one is spared. The sick, the elderly, children, babies and pregnant women—all are marched to their death.

We're so fortunate here, away from the turmoil. We wouldn't have to give a moment's thought to all this suffering if it weren't for the fact that we're so worried about those we hold dear, whom we can no longer help. I feel wicked sleeping in a warm bed, while somewhere out there my dearest friends are dropping from exhaustion or being knocked to the ground.

I get frightened myself when I think of close friends who are now at the mercy of the cruelest monsters ever to stalk the earth.

And all because they're Jews.
**Synthesize**

Reading a play, a diary, or book about a topic can teach you a great deal. However, you can seldom get a complete picture from any one source. To fully understand something, you have to synthesize, or connect fact, details, and ideas, from different sources in order to form new ideas about the topic.

Directions: Use the chart to record what you’ve already learned from the play and from Anne’s diary entry. Then, fill in the rest of the chart with information from the newspaper article, the interview, and the movie.

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<th>The Diary of Anne Frank &amp; Anne’s December 1943 diary entry</th>
<th>Life for a Jewish family hiding in Amsterdam</th>
<th>Life for a Jewish family living openly in Amsterdam</th>
<th>Life in a German concentration camp</th>
<th>Impressions of Anne Frank</th>
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Anne Frank: The Whole Story

movie