

## Grigory Frid

# The diary of Anne Frank

Opera monologue in two parts  
 Libretto by Grigory Frid, based on  
 the diary of Anne Frank

### SUNG TEXTS

#### PART ONE

##### 1. Overture

##### Scene I

##### 2. The Birthday

Friday, at six o'clock, I was already awake, which is understandable, because it was my birthday. Only I am not allowed to be such an early bird; so I had to contain my curiosity for another hour, but at the end of three quarters of an hour I couldn't stand it any longer. I ran into the sitting-room and started to open my presents. You, my diary, I saw you at once, you were my nicest present. Father and Mother bought me a lot of presents.

I end for today! I am so happy to have you.

##### 3. The School

The whole class is trembling with fear: the headmaster is approaching with long strides. For some time Mr Kepler, the old mathematics teacher has been annoyed with me because I chatter too much. But I managed to demonstrate that prattling is a feminine failing, and that my mother, being just as talkative as I am, if not more so, it was difficult for me to fight against heredity. Mr Kepler had a good laugh and as a joke said, "Quack, quack Madame Quack!"<sup>(1)</sup> The whole class burst out laughing!

<sup>(1)</sup> *Imitating the quacking of a duck*

##### 4. Conversation With Father

Father had often stay at home recently: it is out of the question for him to go to the office. What a painful impression it is for him to feel that he is useless! The other day, while we were taking a walk he began talking about the "hiding-place", explaining to me that it would be very hard for us to live completely cut off from the world. We do not want to fall into the hands of the Nazi's, that is why we shall leave before they "come to fetch us." Oh! I only hope that that day is still far off, very far off!

##### 5. Summoned by the Gestapo

*Wednesday, 8 July*

What a state of affair! As if the world had started turning in the opposite direction! Father had received a summons from the Gestapo. This means: the concentration camp...<sup>(1)</sup> Mother has gone to the Van Daans to decide whether we move into our hiding-place tomorrow. It is in Father's office building. The Van Daans will come with us, there will be seven of us, seven of us, seven of us.

<sup>(1)</sup> *Precipitately, incisively*

##### Scene II

##### 6. "The Hiding-Place" (The Chimes of the Westertoren)

*Saturday, 11 July*

"The Hiding Place"

Father, Mother and Margot absolutely cannot get used to the chiming of the Watertoren. On the contrary, I like it very much, I find it marvellous, especially at night. The part of the house we are occupying makes an ideal hiding place. What do the dampness and the sloping ceilings matter, in all of Holland there isn't, there just isn't a more comfortable refuge.

The silence here makes me terrible nervous, especially in the evening and at night. I constantly have the feeling that we will never, never get out of here, that they will find us and shoot us.

##### 7. The Window

I am sitting by the window and through the crack in the shutter I watch what is happening on the street. I am flabbergasted to see how people run. They seem in a terrible hurry to get where they are going and trip over their own feet. It is a working-class neighbourhood, the people all look poor and the children are so dirty. From the window there are still many interesting things to see: the automobiles, the barges, the rain... And there, everybody hidden under their umbrellas.

##### 8. They Told Me...

*Friday, 16 October*

They told me that the diaries and novels being written today should be published after the war. Imagine if I were to publish a novel, "The Hiding-Place". Everyone would believe, everyone would believe they were reading a detective story, a real detective story! Will they believe us, when the war is over, if we told, if we told them how we lived here?...

Bad news. one of the employees in the shop has realized that somebody is hiding here. How to know whether he is a reliable man?

Nobody would believe us if we told it<sup>(1)</sup>, if we told how we lived here!

<sup>(1)</sup> *almost in a murmur*

##### 9. Despair

A heavy mass is suspended above me, threatening to hurl me into the abyss. I am like a songbird with its wings clipped, fluttering, fluttering, fluttering, fluttering in its narrow cage, hurting itself against the bars in the dark. My whole being cries, "freedom, freedom! I want to breathe and to laugh!" But I know that there will be no answer. So I will go to sleep to make these hours filled with silence and anguish a little shorter.

##### 10. Memory

When I look back on my life until forty-two everything seems unreal to me. That life was the life of a completely different Anne. An entire period of my life has ended for ever. Untroubled and carefree, the schooldays will never return.

##### 11. Dream

When I was falling asleep last night I suddenly had a vision, striking in its reality, of my friend Lies. She was standing before me, her face hollow, harassed, dressed in tatters... In spite of the darkness I saw how thin she had become. Her large eyes were staring at me, filled with reproach<sup>(1)</sup>... (m) and seeming to say, "Anne, why have you abandoned me? Help me, I beg you! Get me out of this hell!..."<sup>(2)</sup> But I cannot bring her any help... I can only prey to God to protect her.

My God, sustain her, so that she comes back to us!... My Good!...<sup>(3)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> *Humming*

<sup>(2)</sup> *Becomes a cry*

<sup>(3)</sup> *Almost a whisper*

##### 12. Orchestral Interlude

**PART TWO**

**Scene III**

**13. Dialogue of the Van Daan Couple**

Today I shall tell you about one of the daily quarrels between Mrs Van Daan and her husband<sup>(1)</sup>.

"Putti, (that's what she calls him), why have the English stopped their bombings?"

"No doubt because of the bad weather."<sup>(2)</sup>

"But yesterday the weather was beautiful!"

"Oh, stop, will you stop always repeating the same thing?"

"Why can't we ever discuss anything?"

"Enough!"

"What do you mean, 'enough'?"

"Very well, I ask you to be quiet, my dear!"<sup>(3)</sup>

"I don't think the landing will take place, myself."

"Enough!"

"Why 'enough', always 'enough'?"

"Shut up, for God's sake!"<sup>(4)</sup> One day I'll lay my hands on you and you'll see stars! I can't stand your idle chatter any longer! I'll thrust your stupid drivell down your throat."<sup>(5)</sup>

The curtain falls.

I couldn't prevent myself from laughing. I literally guffawed! Mother and Father had a hard time not to laugh, too.

<sup>(1)</sup> *The whole scene needs to be played in a grotesque manner.*

<sup>(2)</sup> *Staidly*

<sup>(3)</sup> *Angrily*

<sup>(4)</sup> *He shouts*

<sup>(5)</sup> *Without modulation*

**14. The Burglars**

*Wednesday, 4 August 1943 (1)*

There has been a burglary in the shop. No door was forced. The burglar must have had a key. What if he was one of the employees of the shop and he has gone and denounced us now!

**15. Recitative**

When Peter and I perch on a box in the dust, in the midst of the odds and ends, and we sit against each other, clasping each other, when the trees start getting green, when the sun calls you, when the sky is a dazzling blue, then my desires cannot be counted.

**16. I Remember Peter...**

And at night in my bed, I think of Peter and of that timid and tender feeling that we did not yet dare to recognize: love, the happiness to come. But I no longer think about sad things, but about all the wonder that exist nearby. Beauty: nature, the sun, freedom will always remain to man... Could there be anything better in the world than to stop and look out through the skylight

of the attic without uttering a word, listening to the birds sing and feeling the sun, and to stand clasped close together in silence, clasped close together in silence.

**17. On the Russian Front**

The news from the front is sensational. The Russian offensive began yesterday. There are hundreds of prisoners. The Soviet army has reached the Polish border. With the victories won on the Russian front optimism has revived in every heart. Here, every day we wait for extraordinary news from Moscow. One can imagine the whole town shuddering under the volleys that follow one another almost without interruption. I don't know if the Russians like canon fire, which must give the impression that the front is still close by, or if, quite simply, their joy cannot express itself in any other way.

**Scene IV**

**18. The Raid**

A noise downstairs. Then nothing... Then another noise, still downstairs... Footsteps in the house... In the shop... In the Kitchen... On our staircase... We no longer dare to breathe, all you can hear are the throbs of seven hearts beating, beating. Footsteps... Footsteps... On our staircase closer, closer<sup>(1)</sup>, closer!... Somebody shakes our secret cupboard. And starts again, twice... Something falls... The footsteps going away. We are all shivering with fever. We have never felt danger so close as that night. The men of Gestapo were in front of our cupboard and yet they found nothing.

<sup>(1)</sup> *With despair*

**19. Solitude**

Fundamentally, youth experiences greater solitude than maturity. Older people have their opinions, they don't doubt, they know the road to follow in life. While for us young people it is twice as difficult to defend our ideas at a time when all ideals are splintered and collapse when people no longer believe in truth, in justice, in happiness! Ideals, dreams, radiant hope cannot awaken in us and, if they do, the terrible reality sweeps them away in one breath.

**20. Passacaglia**

It is a real miracle that I have not yet lost all hope. I watch the gradual transformation of the world into a lifeless desert, I hear the rumblings of the storm coming closer and threaten to kill us. It is as if we were living on a patch of blue sky surrounded by heavy storm-clouds. Little by little the darkness deepens, and in our

desperate efforts to escape it, we jostle each other and crush ourselves against each other. Down below, men fight, so we lift our eyes to the beyond, where peace and happiness reign. But a thick mass, impenetrable blocks our way. It comes closer, an insurmountable wall, and soon it will have annihilated us. And I have nothing left, except prayer, and I implore<sup>(1)</sup>, "Let this ring that is tightening, open and widen, that freedom may be granted us!"

<sup>(1)</sup> *Very softly, vibrant with passion*

**21. Finale**

The sun is shining, the sky is blue, very blue. The weather is magnificent. Every morning I go up into the attic to breathe the fresh air. There, from my favourite place, I can see the slender ribbon of the canals, the leafless branches of the chestnut three glistening with dew; I watch the seagulls and other birds that have glints of silver when they fly. I look through the open window from where one sees almost all of Amsterdam, the sea of roofs that stretches to the horizon. As long as all this exists, as long as I am alive and this blazing sun and this bountiful earth offer themselves to my eyes, I do not have the right to be sad! If a man is suffering, if he is alone and unhappy it is surely advisable that he leave, in order to find himself again, alone with himself, in communion with nature and with God. And I am truly convinced that nature relieves suffering, all suffering. When I look at the sky I think that all cruelties have an end, that peace and tranquillity always return to reign over the earth. While waiting for that day one must keep one's ideals intact and not lose heart! Those who give up will fall, but those who struggle will survive. I shall joyfully sacrifice myself for the future! And if God grants me life, I shall devote myself to others. Now I know that courage and joy at being alive are what counts most in the world! Wealth, fame, one can lose everything, but the peace of the soul cannot disappear for long, it awakens once again and fills us with happiness for like. While waiting for that day, without fear, let us look at the sky...