Home and Travel

By Margaret Mead



Anthropologist Margaret Mead on a field trip in New Guinea

1 The need to define who you are by the place in which you live remains **intact**, even when that place is defined by a single object, like the small blue vase that used to mean home to one of my friends, the daughter of a widowed trained nurse who continually moved from one place to another. The Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert in Africa often build no walls when they camp in the desert. They simply hollow out a small space in the sand. But then they bend a slender young tree into an arch to make a doorway, an entrance to a **dwelling** as protected from invasion as the walled **estates** of the wealthy are or as Makati[1] in Manila is, where watchmen guard the rich against the poor.

2 I realized how few things are needed to make a "home" when I took my seven-year-old daughter on her first sea voyage. The ship — a **converted** troop ship — was crowded with over a thousand students. They were bunked below where the troops had slept, while Cathy and I shared one cabin with six other members of the staff. Cathy climbed into her upper berth, opened the little packages that had been given to her as going-away presents, and arranged them in a circle around her. Then she leaned over the side of the berth and said, "Now I am ready to see the ship."

3 Home, I learned, can be anywhere you make it. Home is also the place to which you come back again and again. The really **poignant** parting is the one that may be forever.

4 In all my years of **fieldwork**, each place where I have lived has become home. Each small object I have brought with me, each arrangement on a shelf of tin cans holding beads or salt for trade or crayons for the children becomes the **mark** of home. When it is **dismantled** on the last morning — a morning that is marked by the greed of those who have little and hope for a share of whatever is left behind, as well as by the **grief** of feeling that someone is leaving forever — on that morning I weep. I, too, know that this departure, unlike my **forays** from home as a child, is likely to be forever.

---

[1] ***Makati:*** a district in metropolitan Manila; the financial center of the Philippines

A Main Ideas

Check (✓) the statements that best express the main ideas in the reading. Discuss your answers with a partner.

- ☐ **1.** Making a home is a way of marking off your private space.
- ☐ **2.** A home has to have a defense system.
- ☐ **3.** A home can be temporary.
- ☐ **4.** A home is a happy place.
- ☐ **5.** A very simple thing can symbolize home.

LIVEWORKSHEETS