

Remembering Margot  
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“I think it’s wonderful what you are doing for Anne, but I think it’s a pity that nothing is mentioned anymore about Margot. She is also worthy of being mentioned.” – Margot Frank’s close friend Frijde in a letter to Otto Frank.

“Times change, people change, thoughts about good and evil change, about true and false. But what always remains fast and steady is the affection that your friends feel for you, those who always have your best interest at heart.” – Margot Frank

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Running Time: 35 minutes approximate

CAST: 8-13 (Extras possible) (Doubling below)

For cast of 8: 2 males, 6 females

For cast of 13: 3 males (includes Radio Announcer), 10 females

**CAST BREAKDOWN:**

BBC Radio Announcer: Male, British Voice (can be pre-recorded)

Margot Frank (female) ages 15-19

Anne Frank (female) ages 12-15

**MARGOT'S ROWING TEAM**

Gertrude (15) (female)

Jackie (15) female

Gaby (15) (female)

Bella (21) (female)

Jakob (16-18) friend; possible beau of Margot's

Peter (16-18)

Bep (23) (female) fragile; one of the "helpers" to the Frank Family in hiding

Guard (20's) female

Sylvie (18) female, Prisoner 67222; frail

Rachel (17) female, Prisoner number 68028; fairly strong given the circumstances

VOICES (female) divide among the cast

DOUBLING for 8: (2 males, 6 females)

Announcer (or record it), Jakob (male)

Margot (female)

Anne (female)

Gertrude, Sylvie (female)

Jackie, Rachel (female)

Gaby, Bep (female)

Bella, Guard (female)

Peter (male)

TIME: 1941-1945

PLACE: Amsterdam apartment of Margot Frank; Secret Annex; one scene in Auschwitz

The play is episodic. Use a minimum of furniture placed in acting areas so the scenes can move swiftly.

**SYNOPSIS:** New photos that have emerged of Margot show an athletic, energetic teen laughing with friends and brimming with the joy of life. Margot skied, skated, swam, played tennis and was on a rowing team that placed first in competition. Anne was delicate and prevented from doing too much strenuous activity (much to her dismay) because she easily got sick.

It has been noted that Margot had at least one boyfriend. Anne's diary paints a picture of a quiet – almost silent young girl who could engage only in books and not with people. Miep Gies noted that from the moment the door closed on the Secret Annex, Margot started withdrawing. She became quieter and quieter with a growing depression. Anne's observations of her sister were not incorrect but they were noted during a time of growing terror for Margot. Three years older than Anne, Margot was always much more aware of the threat to her life and the precariousness of life. There was a point in the camps when Margot had a chance to save herself. Her selfless decision shows us a teen who stood by her values no matter what the consequences were.

One million children's voices were silenced during the Holocaust.

**NOTE:** This play is a re-imagining of Margot's brief life based on newly-surfaced photos of her. Rather than the depressed, "head always in a book" snapshot of Margot, the photos show an athletic, fun-loving teen enjoying the company of friends. It is always noted that she was a brilliant pupil which tells us that there was a very good intellect at play. So while the play is by no means a scholarly look at the life of Margot Frank, I hope I captured her spirit. And maybe moved her out of the shadow of her famous sister just a bit. I hope she doesn't mind. Margot never sought the limelight.

## Remembering Margot

## SCENE 1

September 1941

## ANNOUNCER

September 10, 1941. The Royal Air Force has begun daytime bombing in Northern France. In the United States, Sara Roosevelt, mother of President Franklin D. Roosevelt has died. Great Britain has sent condolences to the President. There is a new Nazi regulation that was issued today. It states that starting on September 19, all Jews of the Reich will be required to wear a yellow Star of David badge.

(In the dark we now hear BELLA'S VOICE.)

BELLA

Time, girls! You need to make better time! Again!

(We hear MARGOT'S rowing team shouting their seat number as they row.)

GERTRUDE

One!

JACKIE

Two!

GABY

Three!

MARGOT

Four!

BELLA

Faster! Margot, end with a hard, straight push!

GERTRUDE

ONE!

JACKIE

TWO!

GABY

THREE!

MARGOT

FOUR!

BELLA

Even faster!

(VOICES fade as they go faster. Lights up.)

Lights up along a river. BELLA, the coach is waiting. The girls on the rowing team – GERTRUDE, JACKIE, and GABY, are enjoying some fruit. It is September 1941.

BELLA

Where's Margot? She's usually the first one ready.

GERTRUDE

She's saving a frog she found in her sack. She'll be right here.

(MARGOT appears.)

BELLA

All is well?

MARGOT

I am sorry. I found this little frog and I had just had to bring him down to the little trees where all the frogs congregate. He seemed lost.

GERTRUDE

Are you sure it's a "he?"

MARGOT

He was lost. Definitely a boy-frog.

JACKIE

Or maybe you're just boy-crazy.

MARGOT

No, that's my sister.

GABY

How do you tell the difference between a girl-frog and a boy-frog? Do you just turn it upside down like with animals.

MARGOT

Boy frogs are smaller. Because they don't carry eggs. But they chirp more so their warbler is bigger.

(Giggles.)

What? I read. (Beat.) Science. Lots of science books.

BELLA

Since we are the Society for the Advancement of Water Sports and *not* the Advancement of the Gender of Frogs, can we go over today's session? I will say that I am very impressed with the arm strength of Margot and Jackie. It has grown by leaps and bounds since last summer and we were all pretty good last summer.

GERTRUDE

First place medal! We were superb!

(Self-congratulatory cheers.)

JACKIE

It's all that tennis playing. We have strong muscles.

BELLA

That you do. But I have it on good authority that Elise's team is going all out to get a medal. They're not pleased we got one two years in a row. They're chasing us and if we get complacent, we'll lose ground. We can't rest on our laurels. We only have a few weeks until school starts again, so use that time to get some more tennis games in. And if you make it to the beach, go for some long swims. It's good for the breathing. That's it. Go home. Stay rested. And healthy.

(Lights change as we hear everyone's good-byes. The scene switches to ANNE'S and MARGOT'S bedroom. ANNE is hanging up a magazine photo of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. She has a wall of famous people – Hollywood stars and Dutch royalty. MARGOT enters.)

ANNE

Margot! Finally! I need your help.

MARGOT

I'm tired.

ANNE

It will just take a minute. Help me put this up.

MARGOT

My arms are sore. I'm just going to write in my diary a bit.

ANNE

Your arms always sore! Tennis Rowing! Swimming! I can't see how you can possibly write with your pathetic, sore arms.

MARGOT

I'm building muscles. In my fingers.

ANNE

At least help me decide where to put these.

MARGOT

They should be separate from the Royal Family. After all, Fred and Ginger are American.

ANNE

I wonder who is more famous? Ginger Rogers or Queen Wilhelmina?

MARGOT

It depends on what country you live in.

ANNE

I would adore being famous.

MARGOT

I think it would be horrid. Everyone poking their nose into your business and writing things about you that should be private.

ANNE

But everyone would love you!

MARGOT

Everyone important to me already loves me.

ANNE

But wouldn't it be fun to have people admire you instead of always criticizing what you do and say?

MARGOT

I think our "critics" are trying to help us figure out how to live peacefully in the world. Mother and Father mean well.

ANNE

Easy for you to say. Nobody criticizes you.

MARGOT

I like the photo here. And then you could put up a photo of yourself and make-believe you are famous!

ANNE

That would be a lie. No. I shall wait until I am truly famous before I paste my photo on the wall.

MARGOT

What will you be famous for?

ANNE

It's hard to say. I don't think it will be for my beauty. Although I think my hair is very pretty. When I curl it properly. And I'm told my eyes are charming. But I expect my fame will be from a talent – like being on the stage. Or in film – it would be fun to go to Hollywood and see what happens. Wouldn't you love to go to Hollywood?

MARGOT

I'd rather go to Palestine.

ANNE

They don't make films in Palestine.

MARGOT

But it is our ancient homeland. It's a place where we can be accepted.

ANNE

When the war ends, we'll be accepted everywhere. Just like we used to be.

MARGOT

Were we ever accepted?

ANNE

We went to school – with everyone. There were no Jewish laws. As soon as the Nazis lose, we'll be back in our old schools. I can hardly wait.

MARGOT

The Jewish Lyceum is just as special as our old schools.

ANNE

I want that to be true. But I'm not sure. You know how popular I was at the Montessori school? And now I'm starting all over and so far I don't have a best friend. Maybe they think I talk too much. Do you think I talk too much? Or maybe ... they don't find me funny! Or maybe they are all into sports like you.

MARGOT

You could join a sport. Rowing is fun.

ANNE

I would *love* to. But you know how Mother goes on about me being “delicate” She won't even let me swim at the beach!

MARGOT

Luckily, there is no swimming at school so you don't have to worry about it.



ANNE

Says the perfect sister who is good at everything.

MARGOT

Hardly. I cannot do what you do. I can't go into a room of people I don't know and start telling stories and asking questions. I get all tongue-tied.

ANNE

But that's easy!

MARGOT

For you! Book learning is easy for me. People-learning is hard.

ANNE

Don't you want to learn everything you can about other people?

MARGOT

The things I am most curious about, I find out in books. Sometimes people scare me.

ANNE

How did Mother and Pim have such different children?

MARGOT

Maybe they thought the family would be boring if we were all the same.

ANNE

Speaking of boring, why do you wear the same thing to school all the time?

MARGOT

I don't.

ANNE

Blue sweater. Brown or black skirt.

MARGOT

Sometimes I wear the blue skirt.

ANNE

You never wear your new green sweater.

MARGOT

I don't want it to get dirty.

ANNE

You never get dirty!

MARGOT

I get inky hands from writing so much.

ANNE

Tomorrow you're going to wear your green sweater. It makes your eyes shiny. And you'll stick out more.

MARGOT

I don't want to stick out.

ANNE

Yes, you do. Barbara told Susanne who told Hannah that someone already has a crush on you.

MARGOT

Who?

ANNE

I'm sworn to secrecy!

MARGOT

ANNE!

(Lights change. We are back by the river with BELLA, GERTRUDE, JACKIE, and GABY. MARGOT comes running on. She is wearing the green sweater. It is still September 1941.)

BELLA

Stay here, girls! We need to meet. Nobody change yet. I know you're anxious to get out of your school clothes but I have some news I need to share right away. There is some new information coming from the government that we need to discuss. I'll start with me. (Beat.) I regret to say that I can no longer be your coach.

(Reactions.)

I know and I'll miss all of you. But there's nothing to be done. Jews are no longer permitted to participate in sporting clubs. And Jews may no longer associate with Gentiles.

JACKIE

Margot!

BELLA

Yes, I am sorry to say this includes Margot. I wish I didn't have to break it to you like this. I have put in a petition to find the rest of you a new coach. And there is no shortage of young girls who want to join this winning team. So you will go on as planned. Just without Margot and me.

GABY

Margot? Are you all right?

MARGOT

I am ... fine. Yes, fine. This shouldn't be a surprise. We're not in the same schools anymore. The laws have been out for quite some time. We've just been waiting for them to be enforced.

BELLA

Thanks for being so understanding. I will arrange for a new participant and you will meet with your new coach next week.

JACKIE

No. If Margot doesn't row, I don't row.

GABY

Agreed. She is the backbone of the team.

MARGOT

You don't need/

GERTRUDE

All in favor, say "aye."

ALL BUT MARGOT and BELLA

AYE!

MARGOT

Wait! Are you sure? Because there's no going back once you've made your choice.

ALL BUT MARGOT and BELLA

Aye!

BELLA

Elise will be very pleased you know. She may finally win her medal.

GERTRUDE

But she won't win it against us. And she'll know that.

MARGOT

There's still time to change your mind.

JACKIE

Not going to.

BELLA

I will miss you all so much.

GERTRUDE

It's probably just for a year. Things will go back to normal. Eventually. That's what my mom says.

GABY

No good-byes. Let's have some ice cream and just enjoy being together until the war is over. There's one shop that still sells to Jews. Let's buy from them before they're forced to close down.

(The ROWING TEAM exits as the lights fade to black).

SCENE 2

January 1942

ANNOUNCER

January 17, 1942. The British cargo ship, Cyclops was torpedoed by a German submarine and sunk off the coast of Nova Scotia. Japan declared war on the Netherlands. American actress, Carole Lombard, died in a TWA airplane crash. To end our news brief on a lighter note, American movie stars Mickey Rooney and Ava Gardner tied the knot in California last week. Who knows? Maybe this marriage will last.

(Lights up on MARGOT AND JAKOB studying in the dining room of MARGOT'S home. There an active discussion happening.)

MARGOT

Our faith says "no." We are not allowed to sacrifice ourselves for love. Our bodies are from God and only God can call them home.

JAKOB

I don't think they sacrificed themselves for love. The play is about violence and the harm it does.

MARGOT

But they had a choice.

JAKOB

Did they see that? She was already married. How could she marry Paris?

MARGOT

They could have run away together.

JAKOB

That was the plan!

MARGOT

Which didn't work.

JAKOB

Plans don't always work. How many people have made plans to escape the Nazi occupation and can't get out?

MARGOT

But when they can't escape, they don't kill themselves.

JAKOB

Don't be so sure.

MARGOT

We're getting off track. The question is the morality of what Romeo and Juliet did. According to Jewish law, it was wrong.

JAKOB

They were a product of their times. Lord Capulet threatened his daughter with violence if she didn't obey him. Really, the play is not about the ethics of taking your life. The play is what happens when you are confronted with violence. Sometimes violence begets violence.

MARGOT

Still, she woke up in the tomb. Alive. She had a choice and she chose to die. I don't think sacrificing yourself is ever the answer.

JAKOB

All through history, people have performed sacrifices to restore a right or to right a wrong. Jews have done it for thousands of years.

MARGOT

Sacrificing a lamb is not the same as taking a human life.

JAKOB

Yet Abraham was willing to slay his son.

MARGOT

It was a test. In the end, he didn't.

JAKOB

The point is – he would have. Part of the word "sacrifice" is based on "sacred." What they did was sacred. I will withhold judgment on the two lovers. They had to die to restore peace.

MARGOT

But they did not know that they would bring peace. And how long did the peace last? And what happened to the Montagues and the Capulets one month after the children died?

JAKOB

Shakespeare showed us in the epilogue that the Capulets and the Montagues would finally make amends.

MARGOT

But Shakespeare neglected to show us the long arm of grief. Maybe a month after the play ends, Lord Capulet realized his part in his daughter's death and killed himself. Maybe Lady Capulet went mad with grief and wound up in an insane asylum. Maybe The Montagues/

JAKOB

/where are these thoughts coming from? I don't think this was Shakespeare's intent when he wrote the play.

MARGOT

Still these are all possible scenarios. I know.

(Beat.)

JAKOB

I'm waiting.

MARGOT

My father's uncle had three sons. We were all very close until we found ourselves on opposite sides during the Great War. They were French. Uncle Leon lost two of his sons on the battlefield in 1911. The youngest was still at home. Uncle Leon went to work, paid his bills, cared for his wife and child and two months later jumped out of a window and killed himself. (Beat.) Aunt Nanette couldn't cope and was put away in an asylum. The only one left from that family of five was little Jean-Michel.

JAKOB

I'm sorry. I hope he built a life for himself.

MARGOT

He did and didn't. He became a furniture designer – Father says he put his mark on design history. But he stumbled through life addicted to barbiturates. Last March, he overdosed on them. He left a note stating that he was ill and could no longer live with the pain. I think the pain stems from the early loss of his family.

JAKOB

You don't know that.

MARGOT

I know that if I lost my family, the pain would never leave.

JAKOB

So – actually you are understanding of suicide.

MARGOT

Yes – but I still don't accept that as an answer. I think that the pain it causes spirals out of control leaving devastation in its wake. I think you have to bear the pain until God comes for you.

JAKOB

I would love to have this conversation with Shakespeare. But I will admit ...having it with you is pretty special. You have a way of looking at the world that is both traditional and unique. Who knows? Maybe you will make your mark on the world someday and people will come to you for answers.

MARGOT

That sounds absolutely – horrible. I want a quiet life. Besides, Anne has decided she wants to be famous. One famous Frank sister is enough.

JAKOB

Your chatty, little boy-crazy sister?

MARGOT

Don't underestimate her. She's young but fearless.

(ANNE enters.)

ANNE

Are you *still* working? Come on, Jakob – play some checkers with me.

MARGOT

We are not done.

ANNE

You've been at it for hours!

JAKOB

And I have to go. There's a meeting of the Zionist Society later. You should both come.

MARGOT

I have gone. There's a lot of yelling.

JAKOB

True. Politics can bring out the screaming in people. But there's also some thoughtful discussion of a new state. Come and then leave when the yelling begins.

MARGOT

I'll think about it.

And what about you? JAKOB

Do they serve cake and ice cream? ANNE

That costs money which nobody has. JAKOB

Then it's not for me. If I am going to go somewhere where people are being serious, I need treats. ANNE

Another time. See you in school. Think about our discussion, Margot. And how sacrificing yourself can be sacred. JAKOB

(JAKOB leaves.)

I think he likes you. ANNE

He likes everyone. MARGOT

But he likes you – in the kissing way. ANNE

We're study partners. MARGOT

"Study-partner-in-love!" ANNE

Don't be silly. MARGOT

And – you're studying *Romeo and Juliet* which is so romantic. ANNE

They die. MARGOT

For love! ANNE



MARGOT

Still – they die.

ANNE

After they do a lot of smooching! You and Jakob need to do a lot of smooching.

MARGOT

Anne!

ANNE

I've read Romeo and Juliet. Well some of it – and there's a lot of smooching in it.

(Lights fade to black)

SCENE 3

July 1942

ANNOUNCER

July 6, 1942. In the Atlantic, the Germans lost three submarines due to the action of the Allies. We have disturbing news that there was a mass arrents of Jews in Paris. Nobody knows what the charges are and nobody knows where they were taken. Driving for pleasure is now banned in Britain. In America, British-born movie star, Cary Grant, married heiress Barbara Hutton in California.

(MARGOT and ANNE are packing. They may occasionally put on extra clothes to see how many clothes they can take into hiding.)

ANNE

I have to take my curlers. Even in hiding, one should always try to look one's best. I bet Mrs. Van Pels will still dress for dinner.

MARGOT

We can't take too much. We need to make it look like we're going on an outing.

ANNE

There are things I absolutely need to have. Curlers ... and my postcards of course. I'll tape them on the walls of our bedroom and it will be just like we're at home. Pim says it's probably for two months and then the war will end and we'll be back home and everything will go back to normal.

MARGOT

I think it will be longer than two months.

ANNE

It will be strange, won't it? Living with other people? I am so glad I already had my birthday party and won't be celebrating turning thirteen in hiding.

MARGOT

Maybe your fourteenth year...

ANNE

Don't be gloomy. It won't be that long. Hello is coming in a few hours to go for a walk. I wonder what he'll think when we don't answer the doorbell ... I wonder if he'll guess what happened or think that we really are in Switzerland or that maybe/

MARGOT

/Anne! Shhh. Don't chatter so much.

(A beat or two as the sisters continue to pack.)

ANNE

It's strange that they would call up Pim. Isn't he too old for labor camp? Although he is smart and perhaps he could help the Germans with their business. But why would Pim want to help them/

MARGOT

/Anne! They didn't call up Pim. They wanted me. The notice was for me. I am supposed to report in ten days to the main train station with work pants, work boots, and heavy sweaters in a small bag. Nothing else.

(Beat.)

ANNE

Margot?

MARGOT

They want me. For labor. And if they don't get me – they will arrest the entire family. (Beat.) I am so sorry. You're losing your time in the world because of me. You should be in school and outside playing and/

ANNE

/shh. It will be an adventure. You'll see.

(MARGOT turns away to pack. The lights dim. Music may be heard.  
MARGOT and ANNE strip their beds.

You could make take them to another part of the stage for their "bedroom in hiding" or they may journey back to the same bedroom – now more austere and stripped of anything that looks like home.

They gather a satchel, put on coats, take one last look at their room and exit.  
The lights go to black for a moment. We hear a heavy door slam.

LIGHTS up on MARGOT in her new bedroom. Already she is turning into a shell of her former self. MARGOT (like EDITH) did not think she would ever make it outside again. MARGOT just stands there unable to move.

We hear movement outside and a door opens and closes. MARGOT shakes with each noise. ANNE enters.)

ANNE

We're all here now! It's sort of like a pensione, isn't it? Only pensiones have sheets. Let's get the sheets on the bed and a proper blanket and then we can jump under the blanket together and tell secrets. Goodness, I'm so wet. I had better not jump into any bed until I am dry! Although I was happy for the rain because nobody was on the street so there was little chance of being caught. I'm going to put my movie stars on the wall by my bed. Would you like the Royal Family? Or some of the postcards? It might make everything seem cheerier. Mrs. Van Pels is bringing us a cake next week. She told Mother we cannot get used to such extravagant foods but we should celebrate all of us coming together to form a new family.

MARGOT

I was rather fond of my old family and how things were.

ANNE

I agree. But now – we have a brother – and a cat! They wouldn't let me bring Moortje but somehow they let Peter bring his cat.

MARGOT

Maybe it's because you have a sister and Peter doesn't have a sibling. (Beat.) Or maybe you would prefer Moortje over me.

ANNE

You are the silliest sister there ever was. Of course I prefer you. And I hope if you ever have to make a choice that involves me, I hope you will choose me.

MARGOT

I will always choose you.

ANNE

Even if I drive you crazy?

MARGOT

Even then.

ANNE

Now that *that* is settled, we need to start making this room look like a home.

MARGOT

It will never be home.

ANNE

Not with that attitude. Come on, Margot. Just think of all the time you will have to read and study and clean and do all those proper things you love to do.

MARGOT

I do like other things!

ANNE

And if could put a skating rink or a tennis court in here, I would do it.

MARGOT

It's just as well. Sports are too noisy and when the workers come here on Monday, we shall have to stay very, very still and as quiet as a mouse. Can you do that?

ANNE

How can you doubt that?

(Lights fade to black.)

SCENE 4

May 1943

ANNOUNCER

May 30, 1943. It has been confirmed that over 800 British Empire soldiers have died when German bombers sunk the troopships, Erinpura, north of Benghazi. Tunis and Bizerte were liberated by the Allied troops on May 7. The former first lady of the United States, Helen Taft, died peacefully in her sleep. She was the widow of Howard Taft who served as the President from 1909-1913.

(LIGHTS up on ANNE'S room which she now shares with Fritz Pfeffer. ANNE is Writing at her desk. MARGOT knocks.)

MARGOT

It's almost time.

ANNE

I know. I am beside myself with excitement. A sleepover! Just like the old days.

MARGOT

For one night.

ANNE

I'll take it!

(There's a knock at the door. PETER peeks in.)

PETER

May I?

MARGOT

You're looking tired.

PETER

English is hard. And your father is a task-master.

ANNE

He loves tutoring you. He loves tutoring everyone!

PETER

My father – well, he's just not a teacher. He yells.

ANNE

We know.

MARGOT

Anne!

ANNE

And your mother talks constantly!

MARGOT

*Anne!*

PETER

It's fine. We're just different. That happens in families, right?

ANNE

Maybe you're so quiet because when you were little you never could get a word in! Your parents talked too much.

MARGOT

Or maybe he just doesn't like chatter.

ANNE

Do you mind chatter?

PETER

I – just don't have the gift for it.

ANNE

That's what Margot always says. I like – to fill spaces. Mother and Father are so quiet. And so is Margot! I bet the Frank Family was the quietest family on earth until I came along.

MARGOT

You did liven things up a bit.

ANNE

So – are we like our parents or not like them?

PETER

Both. I don't have the keen nose my father has for spices. One whiff and he can identify any spice. And he knows what goes together and what doesn't.

MARGOT

Which is why he makes the best sausages.

PETER

But we both like projects. He likes to oversee business deals and concoct meat recipes and he takes the time to do it right. I think he likes solving problems. And I like projects – things that you cannot finish in one hour. Things that take time and care. I like to build bookcases and cabinets. One day, maybe I will build my own home.

ANNE

I like stories and writings and good honest feelings on paper. And then playing with the words. Making them funnier or sweeter or – dare I say – not so polite?

PETER (to MARGOT)

What makes you happy?

ANNE

School work!

PETER

Religion?

MARGOT

Physical freedom and emotional freedom. I love the idea of twirling on ice on nothing but a sharp blade. Or hurling myself down a mountain on two slats strapped to my boots. Or reading a book and letting my mind wander through ideas.

ANNE

Interesting that we all like activities you can do alone.

MARGOT

I did love being part of a team. When I was rowing, the four of us would breathe as one person. We functioned as one even though we were four bodies.

ANNE

It'll happen again.

MARGOT

Will it?

(Knock at the door.)

ANNE

That must be Bep. She's spending the night.

PETER

Another girl? I think this is a good time for me to return to my room!

BEP (O.S.)

May I?

ANNE

Come in!

PETER

So that's why Dr. Pfeffer is sleeping on the living room floor. Three girls would be a bit much for him

(BEP enters. PETER exits – awkward greeting.)

BEP

Sorry I'm late. It was hard to get out of the house. All my brothers and sisters were questioning me.

MARGOT

You didn't tell them.

BEP

I told them I was spending the night at Hannah's.

ANNE

Your friend from Secretarial School.

BEP

You do pay attention.

ANNE

I live vicariously through you all year. What should we do first? Hair?

BEP

First things first. A movie magazine for Anne.

ANNE

I don't know how you manage it but thank-you from the bottom of my heart. It's good that I stay current on these things. I'd never know about the latest movies and all the stuff that's actually fun in the world.

BEP

And the weekly for Margot. Your father is hoping to read it after you.

MARGOT

Thank-you. Like Anne, I like to stay ... current.

ANNE

So tell us about life outside these doors. Have you gone on another date with Bertus?

BEP

Yes. He is a good man – although sometimes I think he wants to remake me. Yesterday, he told me I should wear my hair up all the time because it makes me look more mature.

ANNE

If he wants to change one iota of you then he is not worth your time.

MARGOT

Anne!

ANNE

Seriously. Bep is perfect with her hair up or down and it is not up to a boyfriend to decide which is correct.

BEP

He's a good man. Just a bit fussy.

ANNE

Then you need to find someone with less fuss!

BEP

We all have our little oddities, don't we?

ANNE

I don't! (Beat. Silence.) Do I?



BEP and MARGOT

Yes!

ANNE

Can you put my hair up – like yours? I think it would make me look.... older

BEP

We'll all be old soon enough. That's what my mother always says. Hold still while I brush it out.

(BEP will do ANNE'S hair while MARGOT pins her own hair up.)

MARGOT

We could use a haircut.

ANNE

I'm not letting mother near my hair. She just likes to chop it off. You should see our childhood photos. We look a fright.

MARGOT

We were cute.

BEP

You're still cute.

ANNE

Bep ... do you let Bertus kiss you?

MARGOT

Anne!

ANNE

What? I just want to know what it's like. Goodness knows, I won't find out while I'm hidden away from the world. And you won't tell me anything.

MARGOT

I think it's good to be a little mysterious. What do you think?

BEP

I agree. All the movie stars have a bit of mystery about them.

ANNE

That's just in photographs. I bet when they get together, they tell each other everything.

BEP

If someone was to talk about kissing... what would you want to know?

ANNE

Is it soft or itchy? Do your lips burn? Do they turn bright red like when you blush? Do your teeth collide? What happens if you accidentally bite someone?

MARGOT

Oh Anne! You don't bite when you're kissing!

ANNE

How do you know? Margot? Margot! I'm going to tickle it out of you?

(A bit of a tickle tussle.)

MARGOT

No. Stop! My lips are sealed!

ANNE

Are they sealed when you kiss? Tell me. (Beat.) I bet you tell your diary.

BEP

Margot also has a diary?

ANNE

But nobody knows what's in it. I bet it has all her secrets.

MARGOT

It does not. I'm very careful.

ANNE

But what do you write in it if you don't want to tell your secrets?

MARGOT

I write... about the world. What I am discovering as I grow up. I wonder what my place in the world will be. Later. I want to be a helper. Like Bep.

ANNE

That's just like you. You're even an extra-good person in your diary. You're too good, Margot.

MARGOT

If I was too good, I wouldn't have to work at it. Believe it or not, sometimes it's a challenge.

BEP

Speaking of good, here're the results of your shorthand test.

ANNE

Did you get another "A?"

BEP

Yes.

ANNE

So predictable.

MARGOT

I may as well learn new skills. We've been here almost a year with no end in sight. What else is there to do?

ANNE

Pillow fight!

(And a small pillow fight as the lights fade to black.)

SCENE 5

December 1943

ANNOUNCER

December 31, 1943: American news journalist, Edward R. Murrow, delivered a speech detailing a Berlin bombing raid. He stated, "Men die in the sky while others are roasted alive in their cellars. Berlin was not a pretty sight. In about 35 minutes, it was hit with three times the amount of stuff that ever came down on London by one long blitz.

On December 22, beloved children's author Beatrix Potter died of leukemia. Her Peter Rabbit stories are well known by every British child. We offer her family our sincerest condolences.

To the people of Europe, the day of reckoning is coming for the Nazis. Do not get complacent; there will be many hard-fought battles. But 1944 may be the victory year if we allow nothing to divert us from our main objective. Happy New Year.

(Lights up on MARGOT, PETER and ANNE.)

MARGOT

The cake from Miep and Bep did say, "Peace in 1944."

ANNE

It was identical to the cake last year that said, "Peace 1943."

PETER

The Germans cannot fight forever.

MARGOT

Neither can the Allies. And how long can our helpers continue? It has to be getting more dangerous for them.

ANNE

Margot... don't think about/

MARGOT

/what else do we have time for in here – but to think? And worry. And read. And what goes through my head over and over is the words of Heinrich Heine, “Where they burn books, they will also burn people.” You heard Mr. Murrow. People are already burning – in the skies and on the ground.

PETER

And you heard what the announcer said. The day of reckoning is coming for the Nazis. We've made it this far. We're going to get out. And when we do, I am going to spend the day in a park – walking, running, maybe even climb a tree!

ANNE

I will join you in the park. What a treat to breathe in fresh air. Imagine feeling the wind in your hair again? Or the sun on your face?

MARGOT

I'm going to take the longest bath anyone every took. I am going to let the months in hiding slide off my skin. I am going to soak so long, you will think I am a raisin!

ANNE

But first, you have to come to the park with us. All of us. Even the pesky adults. After all, we're family.

MARGOT

We are, aren't we? One big family of eight who do nothing but quarrel.

PETER

In my experience, that's what families do.

ANNE

And then they make up.

MARGOT

I wonder what will happen when we're out of here. Will we still see each other or have we had enough of each other to last a lifetime?

PETER

I vote for “seeing each other.”

ANNE

But in small doses.

MARGOT

It will be interesting. We know so much about each other. Things we probably shouldn't know.

ANNE

It's hard to keep secrets when we're all cooped up together. But I keep secrets and I only tell Kitty.

PETER

You don't tell Margot?

ANNE

I don't tell anyone. And I daresay, Margot is the same way.

MARGOT

I don't know that I have secrets. I do have thoughts. Thoughts that are best kept to myself.

PETER

I always wished for a brother or a sister. Growing up was ...

ANNE

Quiet?

PETER

Hardly. You've met my mother and father. But sort of lonely. I spent more time with my cat than with other children. I was ... awkward.

ANNE

Just a little.

MARGOT

Anne!

PETER

It's true. But being in here with all of you – I have learned that we all have our – challenges. I'm like Margot – I never speak my mind.

ANNE

And I speak it too much.

PETER

Sometimes.

MARGOT

You never know, do you? We make assumptions about others. But we never really know.

ANNE

Goodness we are getting so serious, aren't we? It's New Year's Eve – a time for hoping. I have some news. Something I've been thinking about. And it's about the future so appropriate for the night. I have decided that when the war is over, I will become a Dutch citizen. The Dutch have been very good to us and I don't think of myself as German. What do you think?

MARGOT

It's a lovely idea.

PETER

Join the club. I was born here so already am one.

ANNE

Crank up the radio. It's midnight. They will be playing the anthem.

(They turn on the radio. We hear part of the Dutch National Anthem as  
The lights fade to black.)

SCENE 6

April 1944

ANNOUNCER

April 12: 1944. Soviet forces have entered Romania. The Royal Air Force dropped an unprecedented 3,600 tons of bomb in one raid on Germany, France, and Belgium. For the first time, the Royal Air Force made raids on Romania. The war is intensifying.

(Lights up on MARGOT and ANNE huddled together. There is no movement – not even a twitch. They are terrified. After a few moments, PETER enters.)

PETER

They're gone.

MARGOT

They rattled the bookcase.

PETER

But it didn't open and they looked no further.

ANNE

Does this have to do with yesterday's burglary?

PETER

Definitely. The burglars heard Father yell, "Police" so they know someone is here.

MARGOT

So they told the police.

PETER

I doubt it was them. Can you imagine? “Excuse me Officer, but when we were robbing a warehouse we heard someone in the building.”

ANNE

I wish your father hadn’t yelled.

PETER

He was trying to scare them. And they did leave.

MARGOT

So who called the police?

PETER

Your father thinks it was that couple that shone a flashlight through the window when the burglars were here. There’s more. Mr. Kugler doesn’t want any of us downstairs at night anymore. If anyone sees one small movement while we’re down there, we’re done for.

ANNE

But we’re on top of each other as it is!

(PETER makes a move to comfort ANNE who quickly gestures “not in front of MARGOT.” Peter backs away.)

MARGOT

In July, it will be two years that we have been hidden in these walls. I remember coming inside as Miep shut the door behind me and I thought, “This is the end of the journey for me. I will never get out.” But we will get out, won’t we? When we are arrested.

ANNE

Don’t/

MARGOT

The burglars know *someone* is here. The police suspect something. They may come back. And all we can do is wait. It’s so hard – to get up every morning and not know if this is the day. The day we are discovered. How can a world change so fast? One day you’re ice skating and suddenly you’re a prisoner. Surrounded by devils. Shakespeare said, “Hell is empty and all the devils are here.” They surround us.

ANNE

But they’re not in here. In here, you are surrounded by love. By care. And every day that passes takes us further away from being discovered. We can be assured that it is less and less likely that the police suspect anything. They already came and found nothing. Why would they come again?

MARGOT

I don't know! I just feel like there's something hanging over us and it's slowly coming down and one day – it will cover us. There will be no escape.

PETER

I think ... I'd better go.

ANNE

I'll ... see you soon.

(With a nod, PETER exits.)

ANNE (cont'd)

Do you mind? If I go?

MARGOT

To Peter? Not at all.

ANNE

Mrs. Van Pels thinks it's very forward of me to go to his room. But it's the only private area for us. And we really – just talk.

MARGOT

I'm happy for you. A bit sad for me but glad that there is someone in these walls that makes you happy.

ANNE

I wish there was someone for you.

MARGOT

For now, I am content with my reading and studying. And you.

ANNE

I drive you cuckoo!

MARGOT

Of course you do. It's your job as younger sister.

ANNE

What is your job?

MARGOT

To keep you safe. And Anne, don't enjoy yourself too much.

(ANNE exits. MARGOT opens a book and closes it.)



Lights fade.

SCENE 7  
June 1944

ANNOUNCER

June 7, 1944: All the news today is centered around Operation Overlord. It began yesterday as 160,000 Allied Troops landed on the beaches of Normandy. This may finally be it. The true beginning of the end. Allies have been dominating the air and the seas and now we have boots on the ground. There will be more battles to come but it looks like 1944 will indeed be the year that victory comes.

(Lights up on Anne reading in bed. MARGOT enters.)

MARGOT

I hope I'm not intruding. I saw Dr. Pfeffer head for the bathroom and figured this would be a good time to spend some time with you alone. The news has my head swirling.

ANNE

It's been such a good day. Everyone is in a good mood for a change. Feeling better?

MARGOT

Sometimes. But then I'm afraid to hope because hoping hurts.

ANNE

But not hoping is akin to dying. I'm not ready.

MARGOT

I don't think I am either. Although I've certainly thought about it. Think, Anne – we may be back in school in September.

ANNE

I wonder if we will be behind.

MARGOT

I expect that we will be ahead of everyone else. They have had time to play. All we ever do is study. I missed my university exams so officially, I will be one year behind in school. But I shouldn't gripe. I never expected that we would see freedom.

ANNE

Some things will be hard on the outside. We don't know where any of our friends are. I have had some dreadful nightmares about them.

MARGOT

Now, who's getting gloomy? Look at all the help we have had for almost two years. Surely, there are many others helping our friends.

ANNE

You're right. We must keep our best thoughts in the coming weeks until this is finally over. (Beat.) Are you still thinking of moving to Palestine?

MARGOT

Yes.

ANNE

But what will I do without you? Who knows me better than you?

MARGOT

It's won't be for many years, silly. First, I need to get my degree. Then I need to apply for a visa. It will be years away. What about you? Do you still dream of Hollywood?

ANNE

That's the fun dream. But after writing in my diary for two years, I think I would like to continue that. Maybe be a journalist. Who knows? Maybe I'll travel the globe covering stories.

MARGOT

You're worried about me moving to Palestine while you are making plans to travel the world?

ANNE

I am definitely a person of contradiction. And just as you said – none of that will happen for many years. Do you see yourself married?

MARGOT

I do. But later. After I'm settled.

ANNE

We shouldn't marry too early. We have two years of smooching with many boyfriends to make up for.

MARGOT

Ha! What about Peter?

ANNE

He's sweet. But.

MARGOT

But?

ANNE

But.

MARGOT

It's fun to make plans. It's been so long since I dared to think of a future. (Beat.) Sweet dreams, Anne.

ANNE

Good night.

(MARGOT exits. Lights fade to black.)

SCENE 8

December 1944

ANNOUNCER

December 15, 1944. Allied planes have been bombing Prague. Athens was liberated from the Germans by allied forces. The German Occupiers have reduced the bread rations in the Netherlands to 2 pounds per person, per week. With all the other rationing, it is feared that the Dutch are in the midst of a famine. Iwo Jima suffered heavy losses from U.S. air forces in the Pacific war.

Noted in passing, is Glenn Miller, American bandleader, age 40. His plane crashed over the English Channel and all are presumed dead.

January 17, 1945. The British Fourteenth Army captured Gangaw, Burma. U.S. warplanes sank forty Japanese ships at Cam Ranh Bay. The Soviets captured Warsaw.

(Lights dimly up on a GUARD. (Behind her is MARGOT, ANNE, SYLVIE and RACHEL. The prisoners stand at attention and don't move.)

GUARD

Everyone who is able will be moved out of Birkenau into another camp tomorrow. I was asked to find four strong women to work in a munitions factory in Germany. This is a great honor and You will be treated to an extra ration of bread at the end of the day and some warmer clothing. Prisoners 67024 and 68028, step forward.

(MARGOT and RACHEL do so.)

You will do. Come with me. The rest of you must return to the barracks. You will have an early start tomorrow.

MARGOT

Can you take another look at my sister? She is a hard worker. Ask anyone.

GUARD

This one? She is covered in a rash. Most likely scabies. It is very contagious. I cannot risk an outbreak at the factory. She stays.

MARGOT

Then... I must stay.

RACHEL

Don't be a fool. You might make it through this.

MARGOT

There's no guarantee.

RACHEL

We'll help each other.

MARGOT

But who will help my sister?

SYLVIE

I will.

ANNE

Go. I'll be fine.

GUARD

It's your choice. Don't make a foolish one.

MARGOT

I choose my sister.

(MARGOT holds ANNE in a hug.)

GUARD

Very well. Back to the barracks. Your train leaves at 5:30 a.m. Come with me, Number 68028. I'll find you a dress for work and a jacket.

(GUARD and RACHEL exit. MARGOT and ANNE remain in a hug.)

ANNOUNCER

January 18, 1945. The Germans evacuated Auschwitz-Birkenau.

January 27, 1945. Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated by Soviet Soldiers. Only 7,500 prisoners remained.

## SYLVIE

I don't know when it was. We shared a tent at Bergen Belsen. They were always huddled together in bed. I tried to make them comfortable – cold compresses for their fever. Giving them some water to sip. I couldn't do anything more.

(MARGOT and ANNE turn upstage. MARGOT walks upstage and turns around and holds out her hand to ANNE. THEY freeze.)

## VOICE 1

Margot was just radiant. It was those eyes.

## VOICE 2

She had no idea. She knew she was smart.

## VOICE 1

We all knew she was smart.

## VOICE 2

Athletic. The best at everything. Yet she was modest.

## VOICE 1

You could trust her. She'd never betray your confidence.

## VOICE 3

She was protective of Anne from the day Anne was born.

## VOICE 4

They were always together at the camps. Always.

## VOICE 3

There was a bit of a squabble. Should they stay in the tents or see if there was room in the barracks?

## VOICE 4

People died every day. We knew that. There might be an extra bunker.

## VOICE 3

They decided to try the barracks. They left together.

## VOICE 4

Always together.

(ANNE walks upstage and takes MARGOT'S hand. THEY exit – together.)

SYLVIE

And one day, when I went to check on them, they weren't there anymore.

END OF PLAY