

SCENE 12 - April 11, 1944
From REMEMBERING MARGOT
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(Lights up in ANNE'S room. PETER is doing English homework. MARGOT is doing Latin. ANNE is cutting photos out of movie magazines.)

PETER

English makes no sense. Look at this: "Dick threw the ball." Threw is spelled 't-h-r-e-w.' And the next sentence is "Jane went through the door." It's pronounced the same as "threw" but it's spelled 't-h-r-o-u-g-h.' Why would you spell two words that sound exactly differently?

MARGOT

Because they have different meanings and with the spelling you can tell the difference.

PETER

It just seems like it's making extra work for me.

MARGOT

I don't think they thought of you at all when they made up the language. If you think English is hard try Latin. The word order is arbitrary, the verbs make no sense and all the nouns are gendered.

PETER

So why do it?

MARGOT

I'm trying to keep my brain alive.

ANNE

It serves you both right for waiting until Sunday to finish your homework.

MARGOT

This is for extra-credit.

ANNE

Who are you trying to impress?

MARGOT

No one. I'm doing it for fun.

ANNE

Remind me to give you lessons in what "fun" is. Look at Judy Garland. Her hair is shorter. What do you think? She does look older. Maybe I'll try that haircut when we get out.

(There is a loud crash. Sounds of footsteps. MARGOT and ANNE move next to each other in an embrace. PETER puts his finger to his lips and motions them to stay quiet.)

MARGOT

Someone's inside the warehouse.

ANNE

But it's Sunday. Nobody should be here.

PETER

Shh! Don't move.

(More noises – doors rattling, another crash... whatever makes sense.
PETER takes Anne's scissors.)

PETER

Maybe we're being robbed again. Whatever you do, whatever you hear, do not move. Do not go to check anything out. Just stay put. And quiet. Very, very quiet. Leave the door closed. No matter what happens – do not leave here until the morning when Miep arrives.

MARGOT

What do you mean, "whatever happens?"

PETER

What I said.

MARGOT

I want to go to Mother.

PETER

Not yet.

(PETER exits.)

MARGOT

I have to get out of here!

ANNE

You can't!

(MARGOT goes to the door. ANNE grabs her and they sit on the bed.)

ANNE (cont'd)

Stop!

(Another crash. The SISTERS hold each other. Then we hear a loud voice (MR. VAN PELS.)

GET OUT! OUT NOW!
MALE VOICE

Why is he yelling?
MARGOT

To scare them?
ANNE

Now they will know someone is here!
MARGOT

Margot... shh.
ANNE

(There is a moment of absolute silence. Then maybe some shouts and then footsteps. And then silence. ANNE and MARGOT are frozen. After a moment, ANNE slowly and carefully gets out of the bed and lays down on the floor putting her ear to the floor to see if she hears anything else. MARGOT looks at her questioningly – asking with her gestures if ANNE hears anything. ANNE shakes her head “no” and tries to listen some more. More silence. Then footsteps. Suddenly PETER opens the door – ANNE and MARGOT jump. PETER enters.)

They’re gone.
PETER

They’ll be back! They know someone’s here. Why did your father have to yell?
MARGOT

To scare them. We decided to not be sitting ducks while the warehouse was robbed. If any more ration coupons are stolen, we’re sunk.
PETER

Now we’re all in danger!
MARGOT

It worked. They were overturning crates. The bookcase was rattled. We can’t chance that.
PETER

They’ll go to the police.
MARGOT

PETER

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

MARGOT

This place has been compromised. We need to go somewhere else.

ANNE

Where Margot? You’re smart. Tell us, where should we go.

MARGOT

Do we just wait to be found?

PETER

We’ve been safe here for almost two years. We’ll be fine until the war ends.

MARGOT

I spent my seventeenth and eighteenth birthdays here. There is no end. How long can our helpers help? It gets harder every day. We have been inside for so long, I wonder if I can ever be outside again. Once, I relished the outdoors. Now, I think of it as death. The next time we go outside, it will be to die.

ANNE

Stop! Thinking like that will get you nowhere.

MARGOT

I am trying to face truths.

ANNE

How? By giving up on life?

MARGOT

Is this a life? Staying silent and still all day for two years? Living on cabbage? Jumping at every sound and siren that fills these rooms? And then there’s the waiting ... the endless waiting of what might be inevitable. Is this the day we are caught? I can’t stop the thoughts. Why do you think I go back to my Latin lessons everyday – the language is so complicated it pushes everything else away.

ANNE

So “veni vidi vici” is your saving grace?

MARGOT

A bit of irony there – I came, I saw, I conquered.” But what did I conquer?

PETER

You conquered your fears.

MARGOT

Not exactly. But they are pushed into a little closet somewhere for an hour.

(Police sirens are heard. PETER, MARGOT and ANNE freeze. Footsteps. We hear VOICES. MALE VOICES that are indeed the Police.)

VOICES

POLITIE! POLITIE! (*Pronounced "pohl-ih-tee."*) HALT! HALT!

MARGOT

They did go to the police!

PETER

Not enough time has passed. How could they have gone to the police and suddenly have the police here in less than five minutes? Somebody outside saw something when they were breaking down the door. I saw someone shining a flashlight through the door. That's who called the police.

VOICE

POLITIE!

(MARGOT and ANNE jump. PETER shakes his head "no" and puts a finger to his lips to keep the SISTERS quiet. There are lots of noises but most frightening of all is the rattling of the bookcase. For those in hiding, it seemed to go on forever. But the bookcase holds. Footsteps continue. THEY bang on walls, come back to the bookcase and bang on it again. Finally, satisfied that no one is inside. THEY leave. We may hear the car door slam and drive away.)

PETER

They're gone.

MARGOT

How can a world change so fast? One day you're rowing on top of a river and suddenly you're a prisoner.

ANNE

We're not!

MARGOT

We're locked in here. Sometimes I wish the end would come. Whatever it is.

PETER

When the war ends and the German lose. That's what you meant to say, right? It's Passover, Margot. And the Police passed over us. What do we say at the end of the seder? "Next year in Jerusalem." Who knows? (Beat.) I'm going to check on Mom and Dad.

ANNE

We were passed over, weren't we?

MARGOT

For now.

ANNE

(To Peter.) I'll see you soon.

(With a nod, PETER exits.)

ANNE

Do you mind? If I go?

MARGOT

How can you go after all this?

ANNE

How can I not? If what you think is true and our time is limited, I'm going to make the most of it. I know Mother disapproves. And Mrs. Van Pels thinks it's forward of me to go to his room. But it's the only private area for us and really – we just talk. And there's a window. Where you can see the sky.

MARGOT

I'm terrified of the sky – of the outside. Something inside me says, the next time you are outside it will be as a prisoner.

ANNE

Stop!

MARGOT

I want to love the sky again. I want ... to not be afraid of everything. I have tried my whole life to be obedient, to be a helper and I liked doing it. It was easy for me. But these last two years – nothing's been easy.

ANNE

Maybe we're having all the hard times in our life right now. Maybe all the best days are ahead of us.

(Beat. ANNE'S words reach MARGOT.)

MARGOT

I like that. Somehow, I feel like we're switching places today. You're the protective sister and I am the emotional child.

ANNE

Don't you dare try switching places with me? I have no intention of becoming the "reasonable" daughter. By order of birth, you are required to be the protective older sister. I still want to act out.

(ANNE brushes her hair and pinches her cheeks to try and look rosy.)

ANNE (cont'd)

How do I look?

MARGOT

Beautiful. You're always beautiful.

ANNE

Even when I drive you cuckoo?

MARGOT

Even then. You're right. That's your job as the younger sister.

ANNE

And do you remember your job?

MARGOT

To keep you safe.

ANNE

Remember that, wise-sister-of-mine.

MARGOT

My heart's still pounding.

ANNE

Mine, too. (Beat.) I'm going to stop and see Mother and Pim. You should, too. And then maybe I can salvage what's left of this evening.

MARGOT

Enjoy but Anne – don't enjoy yourself too much.

(ANNE exits. Lights out.)