

When Margot Chose Anne  
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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 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 interests at heart.” – Margot Frank

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## When Margot Chose Anne

CAST: 9-13 (11 female, 3 male); extras possible

### CAST FOR 13 (9 female, 3 male)

GUARD (female) 20's – no-nonsense but not sadistic; the guard is a “Voice” until the last scene.

MARGOT (female) 15-18 – slowly losing herself in Nazi-occupied Amsterdam

ANNE (female) 11-15 – the diarist who remains innocent of the times until she is in hiding

MARGOT'S ROWING TEAM: they are all just fun-loving, athletic teens, aware of the times but not as aware as MARGOT because they are not Jewish: GERTRUDE (15) female; has an air of the dramatic about her JACKIE (15) female – a close friend of MARGOT'S; optimist GABY (15) female; blissfully unaware of the times; a teen who wants to have fun

BELLA (20's) female – the coach of the team who is Jewish and very aware of the coming storm

BETTINA (16) female) – a spirit. Maybe even a ghost of the deceased aunt that was Margot Betti Frank's namesake? An ibbur who is trying to bring blessings to Margot? She should be similar to Margot in height, weight and coloring – as close to “twin-like” as possible. She will double as MARGOT at the end.

### MARGOT'S FRIENDS AT THE JEWISH LYCEUM – ALL ARE JEWISH

HEINZ (15) male – homework-buddy; a strong academic achiever

JAKOB (15-16) male – Margot's boyfriend; also an academic achiever; in Margot's Zionist group

WOMAN (Female) late teens, early 20's; antisemitic (very small role; easily doubled)

### IN HIDING

PETER (16-18) male – introverted, kind and more pragmatical than you might think BEP (early 20's) female – one of the “helpers” to the Frank family; fragile

### CAST FOR 9: (7 female, 2 male)

GABY

HEINZ/PETER

MARGOT

JAKOB

ANNE

BETTINI

GERTRUDE/WOMAN

BELLA/BEP

JACKIE

TIME: 1941-1945

PLACE: Amsterdam riverbank, Margot Frank's Apartment, outside Jewish Lyceum, a park, the square at the Merwedepoleine apartments, Auschwitz

The play is fluid so area staging would be preferred so the scenes can flow into each other. It would be nice if there was a tree that was seen in all the designated outside areas (riverbank, park, Merwedepoleine, Auschwitz).

SYNOPSIS: The play is a re-imagining of Margot's brief life taking into consideration new knowledge about her athleticism and likely boyfriends. Rather than the depressed, "head always in a book" snapshots we get of her from Anne's diary, there was a fun-loving, athletic teen who certainly enjoyed her carefree times with her friends. Yes, there was a very good intellect at play. She also was ambitious which fueled her studies while in hiding. She was a teen who was cognizant of the growing danger around her at an early age. This is by no means a scholarly look at Margot Frank, but I hope I captured her spirit. And I hope she doesn't mind. Margot never sought the limelight.

NOTE: Because this is a remembrance and not a documentary, don't think about recreating the authentic prison garb for the brief scene at Auschwitz. Throw a tunic over the prisoners or some other easy way of having them dressed alike. whatever you think suggests "prisoners." Similarly, Auschwitz is not realistic but done with lighting. The scenes are memories – like looking through gauze.

BETTINA could be dressed circa 1914. Or as a spirit. Or a combination. You decide.

\*FUN NOTE: Yes, there is a reference to Popeye in the script. And yes, he was popular in The Netherlands in the 1930's.

When Margot Chose Anne

**SCENE 1**

(The GUARD will always be in January 1945. We do not see the GUARD until the last scene. The Rowing Team is in September 1941)

(We start in darkness or dim light. Sounds of the river may be heard: rippling waves, oars crashing through water, birds, breezes, and finally “Voices.”)

GUARD’S VOICE

**Prisoner 68028.**

(We hear the rowing team.)

MARGOT’S VOICE

One!

JACKIE’S VOICE

TWO!

GABY’S VOICE

*THREE!*

GERTRUDE’S VOICE

**FOUR!**

BELLA’S VOICE

**You can make better time! Again!**

MARGOT’S VOICE

ONE!

JACKIE’S VOICE

TWO!

GABY’S VOICE

THREE!

GERTRUDE’S VOICE

FOU\$

BELLA'S VOICE

Better. Now change and meet me back here.

GUARD'S VOICE

**67024! STEP FORWARD!**

(Lights up on a riverbank in Amsterdam. It is late summer. A cloudless sky. The sweet smell of grass and trees in bloom is mixed with the aroma of fish. BELLA, the coach for the rowing team is waiting. GERTRUDE, JACKIE, and GABY appear in their school clothes. Their rowing clothes could be scattered about or they could have satchels where they stored the clothes to take home. They may be enjoying some fruit. BELLA and MARGOT wear Jewish stars. BETTINA is nearby. She is the past. And the future.)

BELLA

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

GERTRUDE

She's saving a frog she found in her sack. She's always saving something. She'll be here in a minute.

BELLA

Good. I can't start without her.

(MARGOT appears.)

MARGOT

Sorry. I found this tiny frog and I had to bring him to the trees where all the frogs congregate. He seemed lost.

JACKIE

Are you sure it's a "he?"

MARGOT

He was lost – so definitely a boy-frog.

GABY

How do you tell a boy-frog from a girl-frog? Do you turn it upside down like with animals?

MARGOT

Boy frogs are usually smaller because they don't carry eggs. And their warbler is bigger.  
(Giggles.)

MARGOT

What? I read. (Beat.) Science books.

GERTRUDE

You should have put him back in the river. It's so toasty today. He would have loved a swim.

MARGOT

The water was warm. I thought he should cool off.

GABY

You should have kissed him. Who knows? Maybe he would have turned into a prince!

MARGOT

My first kiss will not be with a frog!

GABY

Maybe ... with Heinz.

MARGOT

He has a girlfriend. We're just homework friends.

GABY

I'm saving my first kiss... *for tonight!*

JACKIE

*What? Who? Hans?*

GABY

Yes. He's tried before but I think tonight I will allow it.

(Squeals.)

BELLA

Can we settle down? I'd like to talk about practice. Remember practice?

GERTRUDE

You *were* amazing today, Margot!

MARGOT

All that tennis playing this summer paid off! Look at my arms! Stronger than Popeye!

JACKIE

So Popeye, where's your spinach?

MARGOT

I gave it to the frog.

BELLA

I do love a good "frog" discussion. But moving on. It was an excellent practice. You truly outdid yourselves. Which makes what I have to say doubly hard. (Beat.) This is my last practice with you. Jews are no longer permitted to participate in sporting clubs. I cannot coach you anymore. I shouldn't have done so today – but I wanted one more time. One more session with my championship team.

(JACKIE rushes to MARGOT – maybe there's even a hug.)

JACKIE

Margot!

BELLA

Yes. I am sorry to say the ban includes Margot.

(MARGOT is stunned. BETTINA appears in the background.)

GERTRUDE

Well, if that isn't the most bone-headed, dense, dumb, inane, ridiculous law/

BELLA

/Don't hold back, Gertrude. Let us know how you feel.

GERTRUDE

What did Margot ever do to anybody beside being supportive?

JACKIE (To Margot)

Are you all right?

MARGOT

I ... yes... this shouldn't be a surprise. The laws have been out for quite some time. They just weren't enforced. And we're no longer in the same schools.

BELLA

I am so sorry. I have put in a petition for a new coach and a new participant/

JACKIE

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

MARGOT

Jackie don't/

GERTRUDE

/Agreed. Let's show those Nazis what we're made of! They can't intimidate us! All in favor?

ALL

Aye!

MARGOT

Please think for a bit. There's no going back/

ALL

/AYE!

GABY

Elise will be so pleased. She may finally win her medal.

JACKIE

But she won't win the championship against us and she'll know that.

GERTRUDE

Especially if we remind her.

BELLA

I think we'll stick with good sportsmanship for now.

GERTRUDE

None of this is fair!

BELLA

No. And it may not be for quite awhile.

JACKIE

My mom says this will pass. As soon as the Nazis think they are in control of everything they won't care about enforcing all their new laws. Right now, they're just trying to please Germany.



GABY

I don't get all the new laws. Didn't we have enough laws?

MARGOT

Apparently they want different laws. The laws that made my family leave Germany.

GERTRUDE

I am now completely miserable. I don't want to say good-bye.

BELLA

We won't. Let's walk the riverbank. Take your time. There's no rush.

GABY

Well, I do have this date...

BELLA

Everyone is free to leave when they need to. I want you to remember that you are all - astonishing. Times are hard – please stay astonishing. Let's take a last stroll around the river.

GABY

Who knows? Maybe we'll be back next year.

(Beat. Nobody believes that.)

BELLA

Who knows?

(They gather their things and head off. MARGOT sees something. BETTINA?  
MARGOT shivers.)

JACKIE

Margot?

MARGOT

Just a little chill. Some clouds are moving in.

JACKIE

We were lucky to row while the sun was shining. Let's catch up. And Margot, let's not talk about the gender differences in frogs. People will think you are boy crazy.

MARGOT

That's not me. That's my sister.

(JACKIE heads out as MARGOT picks up her belongings. BETTINA and MARGOT lock eyes. MARGOT freezes. We hear the GUARD.)

GUARD'S VOICE

**Number 67024!**

## SCENE 2

(The lights change. We are in Anne's and Margot's shared bedroom. Otto Frank was very fond of his Leica and took many family photos which are about. A photo of BETTINA is displayed. ANNE has cut out photos of the Dutch Royal Family, and Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers from a magazine. Other movie stars may already adorn her wall. ANNE is trying to decide where the photos should go. MARGOT enters.)

ANNE

Margot! Finally! I need your help.

MARGOT

I'm in a rush. I'm going to try to get to the tag end of a meeting.

ANNE

This won't take long. I need to decide where to put Fred and Ginger.

MARGOT

Fred and Ginger are not important to the world, Anne. Find something better. Where's my Hebrew book?

ANNE

I just saw it ... somewhere. What do you think about the Royal Family? They're worthwhile.

MARGOT

They ran away. While we were here sewing the Star of David on all of our clothes, they escaped to London.

ANNE

You don't approve of the Royal Family?

MARGOT

I don't approve of abandonment. I'm trying to get to the Zionist meeting at the synagogue. Where are my books?

ANNE

I thought you said the meetings were too argumentative.

MARGOT

They just get rowdy when they speak of going to Palestine. But I'm beginning to see Palestine in my future. Help me find my books. Please.

ANNE

Look under the magazines. Which Ginger Rogers pose? This one? Or that? I fancy this one.

(ANNE imitates a "Ginger Rogers" dance pose.)

MARGOT

I don't see my books.

ANNE

Look under Fred. Which Ginger pose? Help me!

MARGOT

I'm already late.

ANNE

You are too grumpy today.

MARGOT

I can't row anymore. Jews are no longer permitted to do sports.

ANNE

I'm sorry.

MARGOT

It's not enough that we had to change schools. Now the Nazis are trying to keep us from doing anything outside. Sports help you stay healthy. Why wouldn't they want a healthy population?

ANNE

Let Fred and Ginger help you feel better. A dance around the room might help.

MARGOT

A dance around the room solves nothing! Why can't you see that?

ANNE

Dancing makes me happy. Do your Hebrew book make you happy?

MARGOT

My Hebrew book gives me a deeper understanding of Judaism. As of today, I can no longer row – no longer challenge myself by driving those oars into the river, no longer feel the river winds snap against my face, no longer hear the birdcalls, the frogs ... that has all been taken away. But they won't take away my faith.

ANNE

Look, silly. There are your books. Out in the open.

MARGOT

There's a lesson there. Getting riled up accomplishes nothing.

ANNE

I disagree. Sometimes a good argument makes me feel better. How did Mother and Pim have such different children?

MARGOT

They're "jellyfish-parents." Jellyfish parents let their children do what they want. Now dolphins are a bit stricter. They steer their children in a particular direction. You would not like to be a baby dolphin. Nobody can steer you in any direction. And I shouldn't get started on the sharks. Because shark parents raise killers.

ANNE

Let's not discuss fish parents. Or even my wall. Let's discuss your very empty wall which has nothing of your interests.

MARGOT

I like it that way. I don't want to pigeon-hole my interests. What works for me today, may not work tomorrow. I have to go.

ANNE

Can I at least hang up your photo of Bettina?

MARGOT

What's with your sudden interest in my wall?

ANNE

It's so quiet. Like you're keeping secrets.

MARGOT

I prefer to think of it as ripe with possibilities.

ANNE

I think Bettina belongs up there. I think she would like to be part of "Margot Betti's" wall. Look at her. You look just like her.

MARGOT

I look like Mother.

ANNE

Who looks like her sister. I wish we knew her. I think Mother still misses her.

MARGOT

I don't think you ever get over the loss of your sister.

ANNE

Look at that smile! It's just like yours. Let me check. Smile.

MARGOT

Anne! I'm missing my meeting!

(And maybe ANNE climbs into her MARGOT'S lap. She definitely tries to lift the corners of MARGOT'S mouth into a smile. MARGOT does laugh.)

ANNE

There's always the next one.

MARGOT

Stop. My lips are ticklish!

ANNE

Everything about you is ticklish! You are so sensitive!

(A small tussle and then ANNE just settles in on MARGOT'S lap.)

MARGOT

Remember Mother telling us about the fancy, dress balls her family hosted? They would have two hundred people come – all dressed in pearls and silk. Mother would dance with Bettina and everyone would waltz and twirl as if they were in the royal ballroom. Wouldn't that be fun?

MARGOT

You're never going to let go of me.

ANNE

Not today. Today we need dancing. Let's make-believe that Mother and Pim are hosting a ball tonight. And we are practicing for the dance. I'll be Fred. You're Ginger. Come on, Ginger... for your little sister? Who you would do anything for? Please...

(Beat.)

MARGOT

I'm taller. I should be Fred.

ANNE

But I like to lead.

(ANNE hums ("The Blue Danube?") and they do a waltz or spin around the room. ANNE spins MARGOT – they are both light on their feet and credible dancers. Music is heard. As THEY end and curtsy to each other, we see BETTINA in the background – also curtsying. The lights fade on ANNE and MARGOT but remain on BETTINA. MUSIC continues and in the dim light, we hear the GUARD.)

GUARD'S VOICE

Prisoner 67024!

(BETTINA steps forward.)

BLACKOUT

**SCENE 3**

October 1941

(It is a crisp autumn day at the Jewish Lyceum. It's sunny with just enough clouds to give off a chill in the shadows. You could have other students mulling about – all with Jewish stars. All have books. HEINZ is outside waiting. A moment later, MARGOT appears.)

MARGOT

Sorry. I stayed behind to ask a question.

HEINZ

I do that a lot. Are we still going to study for the science test?

(ANNE appears.)

MARGOT

We're on. See you at 4.

(HEINZ exits.)

ANNE

Heinz has dreamy eyes. Whose house are you doing your homework in today?

MARGOT

Ours. Stay away.

ANNE

Wear your green sweater. That brings out your eyes.

MARGOT

He has a girlfriend.

ANNE

You never know.

MARGOT

He has a girlfriend.

ANNE

Ready?

MARGOT

I'm going to take a walk first.

ANNE

Then I better find someone to walk home with. I hate to walk alone.

(ANNE rushes off. MARGOT starts on her walk. She is soon not near anyone with Jewish stars. She stops at a building. JACKIE enters from the school.)

JACKIE

Margot! This is a surprise.

MARGOT

It's ... a nice day. I thought I'd go for a walk.

JACKIE

It's so good to see you. Let's catch up in the park.

MARGOT

I can't. Haven't you seen the signs? "No Jews or Dogs Allowed."

JACKIE

It's all so ridiculous. I can't wait for this to end.

MARGOT

I don't see an end in sight.

(Beat.)

JACKIE

I've missed you! Are you still eating your spinach?

MARGOT

I switched to chocolate.

JACKIE

That won't build muscles.

MARGOT

It's my secret ingredient for building brain muscle.

JACKIE

I better stock up then. Because I am finding math quite a struggle. (Beat.) It's so good to talk to you!

MARGOT

It's been too long. In normal days, the skates would be in the shop to be sharpened.



JACKIE

And we'd be saving our pennies for the hot chocolate at the ice rink.

MARGOT

The best chocolate! When you go skating, have two chocolates – one for me and one for you. Of course sometimes, I could have two. You'll have to order three.

JACKIE

I will sacrifice myself to the chocolate. But only because Margot told me to. (Beat.) Tell me about your new school? Any cute boys? I just have the same old crew.

MARGOT

My class is almost all boys. We could use a few more girls.

JACKIE

Anyone special?

(MARGOT looks away.)

JACKIE (cont'd)

Oh! There is! You still can't hide anything! Come clean! Tell me. What's he like?

MARGOT

He's ... smart. He can put things into perspective with a quick observation. The only problem is – he doesn't know I exist.

JACKIE

Not possible.

MARGOT

We've never said a word to one another. Not even a "good morning." He smiled at me once. And I did try to smile back but then my eye started twitching and my lips were trembling and I had to turn away...

JACKIE

Maybe you should practice smiling in the mirror.

MARGOT

That's just goofy.

JACKIE

Rowing takes practice. Skating takes practice. Why not smiling?

MARGOT

It's been hard for me to smile these days.

JACKIE

Courage, my friend! The Germans will lose. It's just a matter of time before they are gone.

MARGOT

Or – I will be gone.

JACKIE

Stop!

MARGOT

Everything's so different. I know that times change and people change. But now thoughts about good and evil are changing, too. I want you to know that no matter what, what will always remain steady is my friendship with you. I will always have your best interests at heart.

(A moment as JACKIE processes how serious MARGOT is.)

JACKIE

I feel the same way.

MARGOT

Thank-you. I needed to say it. Sometimes you forget to say things. In these times, I want to make sure the good things get said. Especially as things seem to be getting worse. I obey laws. I try to be a good person but now people look at me as if – I'm - evil. But I haven't changed.

(JACKIE hugs MARGOT. A WOMAN passes by.)

WOMAN

What are you doing? Do you not see that Star? Stay away from her. She's nothing but trouble. All of them – trouble! They're not fit to be near us.

(WOMAN exits. BETTINA appears in the background – perhaps by a tree. MARGOT shivers.)

MARGOT

I'm sorry. This was a mistake. I shouldn't have come/

JACKIE

/No! I'm glad/

MARGOT

/I don't want to get you in trouble. I'm so sorry, Jackie. Miss you.

(MARGOT runs off.)

JACKIE

I ... miss you, too.

#### SCENE 4

(MARGOT meets HEINZ at her door and they enter MARGOT'S apartment. THEY pile up their science books and take out a pad that has some simple genetic sequencing. THEY also have colored pencils for mapping genetic sequences.)

HEINZ

Thanks for going over this with me. The thing I find difficult with the sciences is it's all rote memory. It doesn't engage our senses. With art and languages— there's sight and sound. And of course speech and sometimes – even aromas.

MARGOT

Science can produce aromas. They're not all pleasant. But art – that only engages the eyes.

HEINZ

Not true! Art lets your brain wander. If you stare at a painting long enough, it comes alive and you can breathe it in – smell the countryside or the bitter coffee. There are no absolutes. Science seems like a series of absolutes. Commit to memory and move on.

MARGOT

There are absolutely no absolutes in science. You observe and note what you see.

HEINZ

But how do you know if you are observing correctly?

MARGOT

That's why you study science. To learn to observe as scientists do. Scientists take great care to ask the question "why?" And then delve into the specifics of that question to form an answer. Sometimes the answer isn't right. So, they ask "why" again.

HEINZ

I don't see our teacher asking "why" on the test. This is what I see in order to score an A in genetics. I must know: autosomal dominant, autosomal recessive, X-linked dominant and X-linked recessive. I need to memorize those four patterns and just spit them out on the test paper. I don't need to know anything more.

MARGOT

Real science begins when you want to know more. These patterns will tell you why you have dark hair and dark eyes but your sister is a blue-eyed blonde. Why aren't you both blonde? Or both dark-haired? Especially when the dark-haired gene is the more dominant one. Why aren't you a combination of both instead of one or the other? Mendelian proved that we inherited one gene from each of our parents that decided our physical attributes. They didn't combine.

HEINZ

It's kind of cut and dry. Al though I do like that figured this out by planting snap peas.

MARGOT

Hundreds and hundreds of snap peas. Probably thousands.

HEINZ

See *that's* interesting. I'm picturing all those pea plants. But plants are not humans.

MARGOT

Which could be why it wasn't widely accepted at the time. Humans *are* a long way from snap peas. But he did make headway into our understanding of genetic patterns and how you may have two dominant genes, or two recessive genes or one of each.

HEINZ

If dark hair is the dominant gene, why isn't Evie a brunette? My father's gene would triumph over Mutti's blonde gene.

MARGOT

Your father must have one dark-haired gene *and* one blonde gene. Evie got both blonde genes.

HEINZ

So I must have a blonde gene – from my mother. But I got the dominant brunette one from my father. This is starting to make sense.

MARGOT

Here's something you can do. Draw the gene sequence that gave you dark hair and your sister blonde hair. That could be fun.

HEINZ

Playing jazz is fun. Drawing a gene sequence does not fall into the “fun” category.

(ANNE enters with some cookies.)

ANNE

Mother thought you might like a small “cookie-break.”

HEINZ

Your sister thinks I should map out a gene sequence for fun.

ANNE

My sister has peculiar notions of what is “fun.”

(ANNE and MARGOT may make faces at each other – even sticking out their tongues.  
ANNE sits.)

Can I do anything else for you? Milk? Tea? ... A spot of whiskey?

MARGOT

Anne! Really. We're working.

ANNE

You're on a cookie break.

MARGOT

We're working.

(MARGOT tries to discretely motion for ANNE to leave. ANNE doesn't move.)

MARGOT

Unless you have something to add to the Mendelian Theory of Gene Sequencing, you can go.

(ANNE gets up.)

ANNE

Fine. But the cookies stay with me.

(HEINZ and MARGOT each grab another cookie. ANNE addresses HEINZ as she starts to leave.)

ANNE (cont'd)

Let me know if you really want to do something fun. I have marbles, and dominoes, and cards/

MARGOT

Anne!

(And ANNE is gone.)

MARGOT (cont'd)

She's a busy one.

HEINZ

So is my sister. I don't mind.

MARGOT

With Anne, if you let her in the door, she takes over the room.

HEINZ

Maybe the youngest siblings are the more outgoing ones. Is there a gene sequence for personality traits?

MARGOT

Why don't you try mapping it out?

HEINZ All right. I will. It may not be scientific but it will have more color and be a lot more fun.

(HEINZ does a simple drawing of a brother and sister using colored pencils. The brother is reading or playing an instrument. The sister is standing on her head.)  
They can be simple stick figures.)

MARGOT

That doesn't look like a gene pattern.

HEINZ

Shhh. An artist is at work.

MARGOT

But you're not going for accuracy...

HEINZ

... I want to entice the eye...

MARGOT

Enticing the eye is not on the science test. I don't see one genetic pattern being drawn.

HEINZ

It's trial and error, isn't it?

(He displays his drawing.)

HEINZ

What do you think?

MARGOT

It has ... flair.

HEINZ

It is my interpretation of science meeting art.

MARGOT

Now, art is problematical to me. It's too ... subjective. One person can think a painting is amazing while someone else can say the same work is rubbish.

HEINZ

Anyone can have an opinion. But like science, the more you know, the more you can gauge its worth. Why did the artist choose a certain brushstroke? Where is the light? The shading? What catches your eye? And of course, does the artwork say anything to you?

MARGOT

You have a deeper understanding of the medium than I do.

HEINZ

I have an uncle who is an art historian. We would pore over his art books together. He helped me figure out what the artist wanted to do. And do you think the artist succeeded? (Beat.) I miss him. He's in London now.

MARGOT

I have family in London! My aunt wanted Anne and I to stay with her until the war was over but my parents didn't want us to be separated from them. Sometimes I wonder... if they chose to send us ... but it doesn't help to wonder, does it?

HEINZ

My father tried to get us all out. You can see how well that worked out. Now, nobody is going anywhere.

MARGOT

It's odd. The Nazis don't want us – they've made that clear. Because we're Jewish. But they won't let us leave. It's like they're keeping us for something that's unknown – to us anyway. And what's odder still is – there's no gene for being Jewish. Genes determine what we look like but not our belief systems. Maybe that's what the Nazis can't stand. They can't control our beliefs. They can only try to shut them down. That's what they're doing, isn't it? Shutting us down.

HEINZ

Is that a theory or observation?

MARGOT

Both. Studying art and science in these times brings up a lot of questions. And the answers are all terrifying.

HEINZ

Is it better to not know? To not question?

MARGOT

It may not be better but it would be easier.

(That possible truth gives them pause. The lights dim. As if moving through the sands of time, HEINZ picks up his books and slowly exits. BETTINA takes his place. BETTINA tries to put her hand on MARGOT but MARGOT folds her hands in her lap. We hear the guard.)



## GUARD'S VOICE

You are to pack your belongings. We are leaving Auschwitz. We leave for a new camp at 5 a.m.

## SCENE 5

December 1941

(It is late afternoon/early evening. Darkness is coming earlier. The winter clouds are moving in to stay. MARGOT and JAKOB are walking home from the Dutch Zionist Club they both belong to - Makkabi Hazair.)

## MARGOT

I've been going to these meetings for a year. I enjoy the Hebrew classes but have you noticed that the discussions have gotten - livelier?

## JAKOB

The times have gotten – livelier. Let's walk by the river. It's quiet there. We can talk. And I have an ulterior motive.

(MARGOT reacts to that as JAKOB pulls out a spoon.)

I like to dig around the riverbanks.

## MARGOT

Buried treasure.

## JAKOB

Better than treasure. I just got lucky. Look. Isn't it a beauty?

## MARGOT

It's a rock.

## JAKOB

It's a river rock. See how smooth it is? Perfect for etching.

## MARGOT

You etch?

## JAKOB

I do. That one over there looks promising.

JAKOB (cont'd)

(JAKOB again runs to check out a rock.)

Not good. It's cracked. Just as well. My mother will go off the rails if she notices me bringing any more rocks into the house.

MARGOT

Are you done?

JAKOB

Getting too dark to see anything.

MARGOT

Darkness comes quickly in December.

JAKOB

The clouds don't help.

MARGOT

The days are so short now. As if our world is shrinking.

JAKOB

Seasons offer their own solace. The world sleeps for a bit so it can be renewed and enchant us in the spring.

MARGOT

I love the optimistic outlook.

JAKOB

Don't count on that too much. I do feel better after the meetings. The discussions prop me up.

MARGOT

They're hardly discussions.

JAKOB

They do get heated. It's not a new idea but it is a hopeful one for our times.

MARGOT

I don't like it when it turns angry. As if one's opinion is the only one that counts.

JAKOB

You're a peacemaker.

MARGOT

On a good day. I can also get riled up. But it does no good. Little is accomplished and people wind up mad or hurt.

JAKOB

Which is worse? Being complacent and accepting of everything or getting riled up?

MARGOT

They both have their problems.

JAKOB

And they both have their place.

MARGOT

Do you always play both sides?

JAKOB

I'm the middle child. I was born to see both sides. And to keep both brothers from pummeling me – I have often taken both sides! But even if I am arguing for one point of view – I may secretly believe the other one is right.

MARGOT

You are a contradiction.

JAKOB

As is life. As is nature. We are at its whims. Sometimes when I am etching a drawing into a rock, I think I am in control. I am changing nature. But not really. Nature is controlling me.

MARGOT

What will you etch into this one?

JAKOB

I know what I want to attempt. "Next year in Jerusalem."

MARGOT

The seder wish.

JAKOB

A wish that has more meaning today. These meetings tell me it could happen.

(Beat.)

MARGOT

And just like that – the sun is down. My apartment is a few blocks from the bridge. See where someone put a candle in the window? That’s where I turn.

JAKOB

Someone is lighting the way for us.

MARGOT

Lighting the way. In a few more days, we will be doing that. The one week in the year when we shine our light for others.

JAKOB

I doubt we will put the menorah near a window this year. Too risky.

(Beat.)

MARGOT

We light candles. Christians light candles. We offer thanks for the ten commandments. Christians follow the ten commandments. Our faith does not contradict theirs.

JAKOB

They will beg to differ.

MARGOT

I know the historical and theological arguments. But I also know the similarities. Oh! I’m just off the courtyard. (Beat.) Thanks for the company.

JAKOB

It was a pleasure. You are ... different than any other girl I have ever known.

(She tries to smile at him but feels goofy and turns away. It is wonderfully awkward.)

You have beautiful eyes.

MARGOT

... thank-you. And you have beautiful teeth – Nose! Yes, nose! Very Romanesque. That is your profile. Kind of classic...

JAKOB

Margot. Shh. Any chance of doing homework together?

MARGOT

Well... I ... think ... I suppose ... yes.

JAKOB

Tomorrow? Or is that too soon? Think about it. We'll decide at school. Go on. I'll wait until I see you inside your door.

MARGOT

Good luck sneaking your rock inside.

JAKOB

I'm a Master Sneak.

(MARGOT starts to exit. She gives one last wave and then leaves with a spring in her step. JAKOB happily watches.)

Lights change.

(MARGOT enters her room. Ravel's "Pavane for a Dead Princess" is heard in the background. She combs her hair and studies herself. She tries a few smiles – none of which please her. She may pinch her own cheeks or take out a tube of lipstick or throw her hair up. She wants to be pretty. BETTINA is in the background watching. MARGOT doesn't see her.)

## SCENE 6

January 1942

(Lights up on MARGOT AND JAKOB studying in the dining room of MARGOT'S home. There's 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

These are all possible scenarios. I know.

(Beat.)

JAKOB

Take your time.

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. Now imagine. You are a good citizen. You raise a loving family. You go to work. But two bedrooms are empty and always will be. But still you are a good father so you continue to work to pay your bills. Then one day, you go to work and jump out of a window. 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 he didn't. He became a furniture designer – Father says his designs will be celebrated long after he is dead.

JAKOB

So he found a way to have a good life.

MARGOT

We recently received a letter. He overdosed on barbiturates. He was addicted to them for quite some time. He left a note. It said. "I am sorry. I am ill and have been for as long as I can remember. I no longer wish to 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.



(JAKOB reaches for her hand. MARGOT helps by moving it closer. ANNE enters.  
JAKOB and MARGOT quickly break apart.)

ANNE

Are you *still* working? You need a break. Let's play cards.

MARGOT

We are not done.

ANNE

You've been at it for hours!

JAKOB

And I have to go. There's that special meeting tonight.

MARGOT

If it's to about finding and hiding weapons, I think I'll pass. It's likely to be cantankerous.

JAKOB

Come. We can leave when the yelling begins.

MARGOT

I'll think about it.

ANNE

That usually means "no."

JAKOB

I know. And what about you? Are you interested in the Dutch Zionist Club?

ANNE

Do they serve cake and ice cream?

JAKOB

That costs money which nobody has.

ANNE

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

JAKOB

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

(JAKOB leaves.)

ANNE

He's been here every other day for a month. He likes you.

MARGOT

We're study partners.

ANNE

Nope. You and Heinz were study partners. You and Jakob are "Study-partner-*in-love!*"

MARGOT

Don't be silly.

ANNE

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

MARGOT

They die.

ANNE

For love!

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 heard about *Romeo and Juliet*. And Sanne told me there's a lot of smooching in it.

(Lights fade to black)

GUARD

Prisoner 67024. You look relatively healthy. You'll do. Come with me.

**SCENE 7**

February 1942

(Lights up on MARGOT'S home. It's MARGOT'S birthday.)

ANNE

Sixteen! You're almost a grown-up.

MARGOT

Almost.

ANNE

How does it feel?

MARGOT

I hate to tell you this, but I feel exactly the same as yesterday.

ANNE

Jakob didn't come.

MARGOT

I noticed.

ANNE

I wonder why.

MARGOT

These days you never know why someone decides to stay home.

ANNE

I know. I just don't like it. (Beat.) Margot ... you're sixteen. You know things that I want to know.

MARGOT

Some things.

ANNE

Now, don't get all closed-up like you sometimes do, because I need to ask you. What it's like – being a woman? You have this sort of woman's body now – is it different?

MARGOT

No. (Beat.) I don't know.

ANNE

You must know! I want to know. And I can't ask Mother because she'll just say, "Oh, Anne." And Pim has no idea what it likes to be a woman. How does it feel? Do you want to be kissed all the time? Or do grown-up things like - make a life – go to work, fund a husband? Do you think about babies?

MARGOT

I'm too young.

ANNE

I see you with Hanni's little sister. You like babies.

MARGOT

Everyone likes babies.

(We hear knocking on the door. ANNE peeks out.)

ANNE

It's JAKOB!

JAKOB

I'm sorry I missed everything. There was this wagon. And they were picking up men in the street – even boys my age and I just ran and ran and hid. For the longest time I was afraid to go home and I was afraid to come here.

MARGOT

Is it safe now?

JAKOB

Is it ever safe? I just really wanted to see you.

(He thrusts a gift into her hand.)

JAKOB (cont'd)

It looked better this morning. Before I squished it from holding it so tightly in the alleyways hiding in doorways.

MARGOT

It's – *Romeo and Juliet* –

JAKOB

In English. I thought – why not do both? Practice our English while debating the merits of *Romeo and Juliet*.

MARGOT

How did you ever find a book in English in Amsterdam?

JAKOB

You have to love booksellers – they have hidden treasures that the Nazis will never know about.

ANNE

You need some cake.

MARGOT

No! You need to go before it gets dark.

JAKOB

The courtyard is empty. I thought we could take a walk.

MARGOT

How is that safe?

JAKOB

I'm a Master Sneak, remember? The police seemed to have tired of rounding people up. No one was about when I came here. Come on... a short stroll?

(Beat.)

MARGOT

But if we see anyone...

JAKOB

I'll disappear.

(ANNE appears with MARGOT'S jacket and hat.)

ANNE

You don't get out enough.

(MARGOT puts on her outer clothing and steps outside with JAKOB.)

MARGOT

You're right. Nobody's around. It's spooky.

JAKOB

That's February. Cloudy, chilly, and spooky.

MARGOT

And bare. Anne and I have spent so much time in this square. Bicycling, playing hide-and-seek. That was a tough one. There are no good hiding places here.

JAKOB

In the bushes?

MARGOT

Too scratchy. I would make myself into a little ball, stick my head under my knees, and hope that nobody would see me. (Beat.) I was always the first one found. Where would you hide?

JAKOB

On top of the swings.

MARGOT

But everyone would see you.

JAKOB

Only if they looked up. In hide-and-seek, everyone looks down.

MARGOT

You would be hiding in plain sight.

JAKOB

I would. And maybe someday, I will. (Beat.) Herman disappeared.

MARGOT

Oh no! I am so sorry. How are your parents taking it?

JAKOB

Not well. He was to report for Labor Camp in a week and the next thing we knew, he was gone.

MARGOT

Like our French teacher.

JAKOB

Yes.

MARGOT

And Erich.

JAKOB

I want you to know .... Here. This is for you.

(JAKOB takes the river rock he found with MARGOT and gives it to her.)

MARGOT

You already gave me a present.

JAKOB

I wanted to give you this while we're alone. Keep this is safekeeping. Just in case. If I am called for Labor Camp, I won't go. And if I disappear ... it won't be because I don't want to see you.

MARGOT

You can't disappear!

JAKOB

I don't want to. But if I do it will be to fight. (Beat.) I didn't want to form any emotional attachments ... but some things are beyond what I think. The days with you help me get through these times. Keep this for me. When you have tough moments, read it.

MARGOT

"Next year in Jerusalem."

JAKOB

One of these years it will happen. I believe it. I hope we can both make it there.

(A siren is heard.)

MARGOT

Go!

(And he will. But not before he takes MARGOT'S hand. He may kiss her – ever so gently and sweetly on the lips – or the cheek. Do whatever choice is comfortable with your actors. Yes, you may eliminate the kiss. But do show true affection. We see BETTINA in the background. We hear the siren one more time. BETTINA takes MARGOT'S hand and brings her to safety. JACOB has disappeared.)

**SCENE 8**

July 1942

(MARGOT and ANNE are packing. They may occasionally put on extra clothes to see how many clothes they can take into hiding. ANNE is also taking the pictures down from her wall.)

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. None of us will be here. I wonder what he'll think when we don't answer the doorbell ... I wonder if he'll worry about 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 and work boots and 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. "Pavane for a Dead Princess may be heard. MARGOT and ANNE strip their beds.

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.

MARGOT shakes at the noise of the door slam. MARGOT is frozen. We may hear another door slam and another. They could sound like jail doors slamming. MARGOT shakes more with each one.)

BLACKOUT  
POSSIBLE INTERMISSION

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**SCENE 9**  
February 1943

(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

It's the best birthday present ever.

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

PETER

May I?

MARGOT

Come on in.

PETER

Happy Birthday!

MARGOT

Thank-you. Seventeen. The year I should be taking my exams for the university.

PETER

Next year.

MARGOT

We say that a lot, don't we? Next year.

PETER

That photo looks like you, but it's not, is it?

MARGOT

A lot of people say that. She's my aunt. Or rather – was. She died early. At sixteen. So I never knew her. Already I have outlasted her by a year.

PETER

I'm sorry.

MARGOT

I ... think about her. What she missed. What could have been. I was named after her: Margot Betti Frank. My mother still misses her.

PETER

There seems to be a special bond between siblings. I would see that on the playground. Two brothers fighting but if someone else chimed in – they'd stick up for each other. I wish I knew that.

MARGOT

There is something to be said about sharing the same blood, the same genes... There are advantages to being the eldest. As the older sister, I know something special. Something Anne will never know.

(Directed solely at ANNE.)

I remember you from the very beginning. Mother brought you home all swaddled and teeny-tiny with this gaze that said, "I trust you." And as young as I was – I told you: I will always make sure you are safe. I will never let anyone hurt you.

(MARGOT and ANNE look at each other. Then, there's a knock at the door.)

ANNE

That must be Bep. She's spending the night to celebrate Margot's birthday.

PETER

I forgot! This is a good time for me to leave. Three girls is a bit much for me.

BEP (O.S.)

May I?

ANNE

Come in!

(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. I like to 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. And – for your birthday – a Latin book!

MARGOT

Level two! Perfect. I never thought I'd get there. Thank you.

ANNE

You really think Latin is fun?

MARGOT

Not fun ... but exciting. A new way of thinking. Maybe when you're seventeen you'll want the same thing!

ANNE

May... be. (Beat.) 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.

MARGOT

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

ANNE

I agree. You are perfect with your 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

Margot's boyfriend wasn't the least bit fussy. He liked her just as she is. Even if she is odd.

BEP

I didn't know Margot had a boyfriend. You can keep quiet about some things.

MARGOT

I'll never know if he was a boyfriend or not –

ANNE

- He was –

MARGOT

We didn't have enough time together to figure things out. All around us, people were disappearing. It was as if we knew that growing close would only hurt us at the end. He disappeared in the spring. I disappeared in the summer. The population of Amsterdam must be dwindling. (Beat.) I write him letters.

BEP

I thought this place was strictly a secret/

MARGOT

/I don't mail them! I'm saving them. For later. In case we all – make it to the end of the war.

BEP

You will. Of course, you will.

ANNE

No gloomy thoughts on your birthday! Only fun things. Right, Bep? Can you put my hair up – like yours? I think it would make me look.... more alluring.

(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. (Beat.) 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

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! Or else - pillow fight!

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

### SCENE 10

February 1943 – a dream of March 1942

(It is midnight. BEP and ANNE are fast asleep. There is some rustling. MARGOT awakens. SHE sees JAKOB and moves towards him. They are outside the hiding place - lost in time.)

MARGOT

Nobody's around. It's spooky.

JAKOB

It's February. Not the best month for outdoor activities.

MARGOT

Look how bare everything is. Anne and I have spent so much time on this square. Riding bicycles, playing hide-and-seek. That was a tough one. There really is no place to hide here.

JAKOB

I would hide on the top of the swings. Nobody looks up during hide and seek.

MARGOT

You would be hiding in plain sight.

(BETTINA appears in the background. MARGOT shivers.)

(A siren is heard.)

MARGOT

We should go in.

GUARD'S VOICE

67024. **67024!**

(BETTINA grabs MARGOT'S outside hand and pulls her away. Lights change.)

MARGOT

Jakob!

(But JAKOB is gone. BETTINA is gone. MARGOT is alone.)

### SCENE 11

April 1944

(Lights up in ANNE'S room. MARGOT sits on the bed. ANNE is lying on the floor trying to listen to sounds from below. MARGOT looks at her as if to ask if she hears anything. ANNE shakes her head "no." All is quiet and tense. Finally ANNE gets up and goes to MARGOT. They huddle together. 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 someone knows that someone is here. They just don't know who. It could be a worker or it could be another burglar!

MARGOT

*Why did he have to yell?*



PETER

To scare them. It worked. They thought there was a worker here and ran.

MARGOT

But then they went to the Police to tell them we are here.

PETER

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

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. They saw movement and reported it.

(Beat.)

MARGOT

Do we just stay here like sitting ducks?

PETER

Where would we go? We've been safe here for almost two years.

MARGOT

I spent my eighteenth birthday here and Anne will soon turn fifteen. Our time here has no end. How long can our helpers help? I don't think anybody imagined we'd be here two years. It gets harder every day.

PETER

And it's about to get harder. You're not going to like it. 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

I remember our first day here. I was coming inside as Miep shut the door behind me and I thought, "This is the end of the journey. I will never get out." But we will get out. When we are arrested.

ANNE

Don't!

MARGOT

The burglars know *someone* is here. The police suspect something. They may come back. Isn't that right, Peter?

PETER

I think ... we will be fine. I'm not worried.

ANNE

Really?

PETER

Truly. It's Passover. A time of miracles.

MARGOT

It will take a miracle to get out of here safe

PETER

Maybe the miracle already happened. The police were here. They searched the place and did not find us. In a sense, they "passed over us." I take that as a sign we will survive.

MARGOT

So, we just wait.

PETER

Yes. Don't be scared. We're nearing the end of the war. Everyone is saying that.

MARGOT

Why aren't you frightened?

PETER

I decided when we came here that I would somehow make it through the war. Each day in hiding brings us closer to freedom. Each day brings me closer to a time when I will be able to lead the

PETER (cont'd)

life I want. We are so close. If we are arrested, I will be the hardest working slave laborer those hell-scrapers have ever seen.

MARGOT

I get up every morning and wonder - is this the day? The day we are discovered? How can a world change so fast? One day you're rowing on top of a river and suddenly you're a prisoner. Surrounded by devils. Shakespeare said, "Hell is empty and all the devils are here." They're everywhere.

PETER

It's not likely that the police suspect anything. They already came and found nothing. Why would they come again?

ANNE

Peter's right. The worst has already happened.

PETER

I'm going to check on my Mom and Dad.

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 shall be content with my reading and studying – and thinking of Mother, Pim and you. I'm grateful we're all together.

ANNE

I drive you cuckoo!

MARGOT

Of course you do. That's your job as younger sister. But I'm still grateful that we are going through this together.

ANNE

What is your job?

MARGOT

To keep you safe.

(MARGOT grabs a book.)

ANNE

Are you really reading *Romeo and Juliet* again?

MARGOT

Jakob made all these notes for me to think about. I like reading them over and over. I enjoy it. Go to Peter. Enjoy your time with him ... just don't enjoy yourself too much.

(ANNE exits. MARGOT takes out the river rock from JAKOB.)

MARGOT (cont'd)

"Next year in Jerusalem."

(Lights dim. We hear the GUARD.)

GUARD

Prisoner 67024! You have been chosen to work in a munitions factory. There is an extra ration of bread for our workers. As well as a warm coat. Consider it an honor. Gather your belongings.

(MARGOT pays attention. JAKOB appears far away. MARGOT smiles and holds out her hand. JAKOB holds out his hand.)

JAKOB

Hold on, Margot! Maybe this is your chance. Maybe next year we'll make it to Jerusalem.

(The lights fade to black.)

**SCENE 12**

June 1944

(Lights up on Anne reading. MARGOT enters – almost jubilant.)

MARGOT

I saw Dr. Pfeffer head for the bathroom and figured this would be a good time to spend some time with you alone. Can you believe it?

ANNE

Yes! It's not a hope anymore. No more waiting. They're here.

MARGOT

The hoping was starting to hurt.

ANNE

But not hoping is akin to dying. We're not going to die. We'll be walking out of here soon without wearing a Jewish star. Together.

MARGOT

I will row and skate...

ANNE

And flirt ...

MARGOT

And have ice cream and hot chocolate anywhere.... Think, Anne – we may be back in school in September.

ANNE

I wonder if we will be behind.

MARGOT

I bet we will be ahead of everyone else. All we have done for two years 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 others helping our friends. I like to think that someone out there is helping Bella ...

ANNE

And Jakob.

MARGOT

And Heinz and Eva and Sanne and Hello and all those we left behind.

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. I'd love to be a midwife.

ANNE

Why not a doctor? You're so brainy.

MARGOT

A midwife is more hands on. A midwife actively brings in new life to the world. I want my arms to embrace new life.

ANNE

You could do that in Amsterdam.

MARGOT

I don't know that I will ever feel completely safe in Amsterdam again. I like the idea of Palestine. But who knows if that will ever become a reality?

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's a long way 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

That's all. But.

MARGOT

It's fun to make plans. It's been so long since I dared to think of a future.

ANNE

Just think what's ahead.

MARGOT

A lifetime.

(PETER knocks at the door.)

ANNE

Come on in.

PETER

Is this a private party or can anyone join in?

ANNE

It's a celebration.

PETER

Everyone's gathered around the kitchen table. They're all laughing and making jokes. And – believe it or not – they're all making plans to see each other when this is over. We're family now. (Beat. Looking pointedly at ANNE.) Even Dr. Pfeiffer.

ANNE

But family that doesn't live together.

PETER

Not when this is over.

ANNE

Whew.

PETER

Your father has a map on the wall. We're going to track the Allies progress into Europe. They're thinking Paris will be liberated first. Our mothers are already planning their activities when they're free. They're going to soak in a hot tub for an entire day.

ANNE

Margot is going to be a midwife in Palestine.

MARGOT

And Anne will travel the world writing stories about world events.

PETER

You suddenly have made me feel horribly boring.

MARGOT?

What will you do?

PETER

Don't laugh. Compared to all of your plans, my hopes are modest. One day, I'm going to build furniture – better than the bookcases I made here!



MARGOT

They came in handy.

PETER

They were made from scrap. But one day, I'll pick out the lumber myself. Cherry wood, oak, pine, maple – different woods for different pieces. For each piece of wood, I will respect its integrity and highlight the grains. And if possible, my shop will be both indoors and outdoors. Because I know now to never take the outside for granted.

MARGOT

Outside! We're going to hear all those sounds I took for granted: frog warbles, bees buzzing, the rivers roaring as they crest in the spring.

ANNE

We have a lot of outside time to make up for. I'm never going to complain about bad weather again. I won't ever stay inside because of Mother Nature's bad moods!

(We hear the Dutch National Anthem. MARGOT and ANNE gasp.)

MARGOT

I haven't heard this in years.

ANNE

Someone is a brave broadcaster.

PETER

They're listening to the BBC. They've been playing the National Anthems of all the occupied countries. I think they're telling us that freedom is coming.

(As the anthem plays, ANNE, PETER, and MARGOT sit close together. Maybe they join hands. The anthem wafts over the teens as the lights fade to black.)

**SCENE 13**

MAY 1944

(All is dark. We hear MARGOT'S rowing friends. BETTINI is MARGOT – BETTINI does not need to change costume.)

One! BETTINI (as MARGOT)

Two! JACKIE

Three! GABY

Four! GERTRUDE

(MARGOT looks out the window and sees her friends.)

GERTRUDE  
You *were* amazing today, Margot!

BETTINI (as MARGOT)  
All that tennis playing this summer paid off! Look at my arms! Stronger than Popeye!

GABY  
So Popeye, where's your spinach?

MARGOT  
I gave it to the frog.

BELLA  
I do love a good "frog" discussion. But we need to talk about today.

JACKIE  
It was a good practice! I think we might be able to collect another championship.

MARGOT (watching)  
I miss you.

(The vision turns on itself.)

GABY  
Kiss the frog, Margot.

GERTRUDE

Yes! Kiss it!

GABY, GERTRUDE and JACKIE

Kiss it! Kiss it! Kiss it!

MARGOT

No! That's not how it was!

(The ROWING TEEM turns and exits. JACKIE stays.)

JACKIE

I've missed you! Are you still eating your spinach?

BETTINI (as MARGOT)

I switched to chocolate.

JACKIE

That won't build muscles.

BETTINI (as MARGOT)

It's my secret ingredient for building brain muscle.

JACKIE

I better stock up then. Because I am finding math quite a struggle. (Beat.) It's so good to talk to you!

(A WOMAN enters. SHE approaches JACKIE and BETTINI (as MARGOT).)

WOMAN

What are you doing? Do you not see that star? Stay away from her. She's nothing but trouble. All of them trouble.

JACKIE

I have to go. I shouldn't be with you.

(JACKIE runs off.)

BETTINI (as MARGOT) and MARGOT

JACKIE!

(JAKOB appears. We hear “Pavane for a Dead Princess.”)

JAKOB

Next year in Jerusalem. If you can find me. I’m a Master Sneak.

(JAKOB and BETTINI (as MARGOT) have a brief dance to Ravel’s music. He stops and makes a move as if he might kiss her. But he shakes his head “no.” and exits. Both MARGOT and MARGOT/BETTINI reach for him but he is gone. ANNE appears.)

ANNE

Let’s make-believe that Mother and Pim are hosting a ball tonight. And we are practicing for the dance. I’ll be Fred. You’re Ginger.

MARGOT

I have things to do!

ANNE

Come on, Ginger... for your little sister? Who you would do anything for?

MARGOT

I’m taller. I should be Fred.

ANNE

But I like to lead.

(They dance now again to the “Blue Danube” or something similar. BETTINI is in the background. MARGOT and ANNE end and curtsy to each other. BETTINI throws a “prison tunic” or “something” over MARGOT and ANNE. BETTINI steps away. The music stops. The GUARD enters. ANNE and MARGOT stand next to each other at attention.)

GUARD

Move quickly 67024 or I will find someone to take your place at the factory.

MARGOT

My sister is a hard worker. Everyone says so. Please let her come with me.

(The GUARD checks out ANNE.)

GUARD

She's covered in a rash. Scabies, I presume. No. I can't risk infecting the other workers. She will leave on the morning train with the rest of the camp. I just want you.

MARGOT

I can't.

ANNE

Yes, you can.

GUARD

Can't what? Maybe save your life?

MARGOT

Leave my sister. (To ANNE.) I choose you. I will always choose you.

GUARD

Your choice. You and your sister will be transferred to Bergen-Belsen with the others.

(The GUARD exits.)

BLACKOUT

**EPILOGUE**

February 1945

(MARGOT and ANNE remain at attention in place. The lights are dim. Everything is in shadow. As "Pavane for a Dead Princess" plays, BETTINA approaches her nieces – ANNE and MARGOT. MARGOT and ANNE turn upstage to face her. BETTINA holds out her hands. MARGOT and ANNE each take a hand. The music stops. MARGOT and ANNE kneel down. BETTINA covers them with a large sheet used as a shroud. BETTINA slowly moves down and embraces the covered sisters in a hug.)

END OF PLAY

NOTES:

1. Bettina died at age 16 from appendicitis in 1914.
2. Margot' friends have noted that Margot did have at least one boyfriend. But they have said little else – perhaps protecting Margot's privacy. Her diary may have given us more

information but of course, it was lost. Jakob is made up from bits and pieces of information regarding Margot's interests, relationship goals, and her time spent with the Zionist Club. (I don't think the Zionist Club was as cantankerous as I made it out to be but Palestine was widely discussed.) You can decide if "Jakob" lived. I'd like to think so but the reality of those times may not bear out my wish.

3. Heinz Geiringer was Margot's first study partner at the Jewish Lyceum. (And he did have a different girlfriend.) Margot did indeed tutor him in science. In return, he tutored her in art and languages. Heinz died in Mauthausen three days before liberation.
4. Peter Van Pels worked hard to stay alive. He was used as slave labor in Mauthausen and on the day it was liberated, he was in the infirmary. Peter died 3 days after liberation.
5. "Bella" is modelled after Margot's rowing coach Roos Van Gelder. There is little information on what happened to him but I believe he survived. The somewhat newly-surfaced photos of Margot and the rowing team were passed on to Van Gelder's nephew who donated them to the Anne Frank House.
6. There is no guarantee that Margot would have lived had she gone to work in the munitions factors instead of being transferred to Bergen-Belsen. But the other prisoners who worked at the factory survived.