Remembering Margot Scene

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CAST: 2 (1 male, 1 female)

Margot (age 16) studious

Jakob (age 16) also studious

(Lights up on MARGOT AND JAKOB studying in the dining room of MARGOT’S home. There an active discussion happening. It is October 1941 in Amsterdam.)

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 up 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 monologue.

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.

JAKOB

So he found a way to have a good life.

MARGOT

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. If anyone of the Frank sisters gets well-known, it will be Anne.

JAKOB

Your chatty, little boy-crazy sister?

MARGOT

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