

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 friend Frijde in a letter to Otto Frank.

“Times change, people change, thoughts about good and evil change, about true and false. But what will always remain 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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## Remembering Margot

CAST: 8-15 (11 females; 3 males; 1 male or female)

BETTINA: (female) 16; Margot's aunt as a child who died at age 16. After the prologue she is spiritual? An ibbur? A ghost? You can decide. Margot's middle name was "Betti" in honor of her aunt.

\*EDITH: (female) 14; Margot's mother as a child.

GUARD (female, 20's, no-nonsense but not sadistic; the GUARD is a "Voice" until the last scene (could double as EDITH)

MARGOT (female) 15-18; has a serious intellect but is also "sporty" and loves the outdoors  
(Could double as EDITH)

\*GERTRUDE (female) 15; on Margot's rowing team; can be dramatic

JACKIE (female) 15; Margot's closest friend on the rowing team; optimist

\*GABY (female) 15; on Margot's rowing team; fun-loving, a bit oblivious to the times

\*BELLA (female) 22; Coach for Margot's rowing team

ANNE (female) 12-15; Margot's spirited younger sister

HEINZ (male) 15; Margot's study partner; boyfriend to Janny

JANNY (female) 15; Margot's friend at the Jewish Lyceum; girlfriend of Heinz

JAKOB (male) 15-16; Margot's first "crush;" spirited and determined

\*WOMAN or MAN (female) 18-22; woman on the street who likes disapproving of everything  
(Double with MIEP'S VOICE)

\*MIEP (female) 24; one of the helpers – she can just be a voice

PETER (male) 16-18; likes to work with his hands; good-hearted

BEP (female) 22; one of the helpers; relates well with Margot and Anne

TWO MALE VOICES: Use recording or cast

The roles with a star (\*) indicate small roles and are easily be doubled. EDITH, GUARD, WOMAN and MIEP are easily doubled unless you want a large cast.

CAST FOR 8: 6 female, 2 male

GABY/JANNY

HEINZ/PETER/MALE VOICES

MARGOT/EDITH

JAKOB/MALE VOICES

ANNE

GERTRUDE/WOMAN/GUARD

JACKIE/MIEP VOICE/BEP

BETTINA/BELLA (for BELLA'S VOICE Scene 1,

Can use any female voice.)

## Remembering Margot

TIME: Prologue 1914 – A bedroom in BETTINA’S and EDITH’S home

PLACE: 1941-1944 Episodic Scenes: Amsterdam. Riverbank, Frank’s apartment in Amsterdam; street scenes, courtyard in the Merwedepleine Apartments, the Secret Annex

EPILOGUE: 1945 Auschwitz (suggest with lighting)

Use area staging with suggestive pieces instead of formal sets for the scenes so they can flow.

SYNOPSIS: NOTE: Because this is a remembrance and not a documentary, don’t think about creating authentic prison garb for Auschwitz. An ill-fitting tunic or sack will do. Similarly for BETTINA and EDITH at the beginning – you don’t need to put them in Edwardian dress. A simple light-colored top and skirt with a ribbon for a belt will do. The Prologue is a memory and think of it as looking through gauze.

FUN NOTE: Yes, there’s a fun reference to Popeye in the script. Popeye was popular in The Netherlands in the 1930’s and early 1940’s.

## Remembering Margot

## PROLOGUE – Spring 1914

(Lights up on two sisters. They are doing their hair for a party. EDITH is 14. BETTINA is 16.)

EDITH

Put my hair up like yours. I want to look grown up.

BETTINA

It looks so lovely down. The time for being a grown-up is later.

EDITH

I look childish. Please put mine up. With the sparkly pins.

BETTINA

I'll put some sparkly pins in your hair but you're not putting it up until you are sixteen. Don't rush time.

EDITH

Will you dance with Ezra?

BETTINA

If he comes.

EDITH

He'll come. Mother says he's sweet on you. I wonder if they want to make a match. Mother and Father were engaged at one of Grandma's parties.

BETTINA

Bite your tongue! I may be old enough to put my hair up but sixteen is too young to be married. I hope to explore the world a bit more.

EDITH

I wonder if anyone will ask me to dance. Bettina, *you* will dance with me, won't you. So I don't look too lonely in a corner.

BETTINA

Absolutely. The first waltz will be yours.

(BETTINA approaches EDITH.)

May I?

(And BETTINA waltzes Edith around the room perhaps humming a waltz. The lights fade to black.)

SCENE 1 – September 1941

(Sounds of oars in the river may be heard. Wind sounds. Bird sounds – something suggesting rowing in the river. We hear the voices of the rowing team in the dark.)

MARGOT'S VOICE

One!

JACKIE'S VOICE

TWO!

GABY'S VOICE

*THREE!*

GERTRUDE'S VOICE

**FOUR!**

BELLA'S VOICE

FASTER!

MARGOT'S VOICE

ONE!

JACKIE'S VOICE

TWO!

GABY'S VOICE

THREE!

GERTRUDE'S VOICE

FOUR!

BELLA'S VOICE

Better! Now change and meet me back here.

(Beat.)

GUARD'S VOICE

Prisoner 67024, step forward. **67024!**

(Lights up on a riverbank in Amsterdam. It is September. A cloudless sky. The sweet smell of grass is mixed with the aroma of fish. BELLA is waiting to be joined by the rowing team. JACKIE, GABY, and GERTRUDE

quickly appear. Their rowing clothes could be scattered about or they carry satchels containing them. They may be enjoying some fruit. BELLA wears a Jewish star. When MARGOT appears, she will also have one.)

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.

(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?

MARGOT

Boy-frogs are smaller because they don't carry eggs. And their warbler is bigger.

(Giggles.)

MARGOT (cont'd)

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

GERTRUDE

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

MARGOT

The water is so warm, he would have jumped out.

GABY

Did you kiss him? If you kissed him, maybe he would have turned into a prince!

MARGOT

My first kiss will not be with a frog!

GABY

Maybe ... with Heinz.

MARGOT

Heinz is sweet on Janny. It's obvious when we all do homework together. They spend way too much time smiling at each other.

GABY

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

GERTRUDE

What? Who? *Hans?*

GABY

Yes. He's tried twice and I turned away. But I think tonight I will allow it.

(Squeals.)

BELLA

Let's settle down and get back to rowing. I'd like to talk about today.

JACKIE

You were amazing, Margot!

MARGOT

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

GABY

So Popeye, where's your spinach? I need some.

MARGOT

I gave it to the frog.

BELLA

I do love a good frog discussion but we need to move on. It was an excellent practice. You outdid yourselves. Which makes what I have to say double hard. (Beat.) This is my last time 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

Margot!

BELLA

Yes. I am sorry but the ban also includes Margot.

(MARGOT is stunned. BETTINA appears in the background. BETTINA is both the past and the future. MARGOT sees BETTINA. BETTINA nods at MARGOT, maybe BETTINA puts her hand on her heart – something reassuring.)

GERTRUDE

If that isn't the most bone-headed, dense, dumb, ridiculous law!

JACKIE

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

GERTRUDE

What did Margot ever do except be supportive and an amazing rower?

BELLA (To MARGOT)

Are you all right?

MARGOT

(Staring at BETTINA.)

Yes, I will be fine.

(BETTINA nods and smiles at MARGOT.)

The laws have been out for some time now. They just started enforcing them this summer. We're not even at the same school anymore.

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/

GERTRUDE

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

ALL

Aye!

MARGOT

This is all very kind. But think this through. There's no going back/

ALL

/AYE!



GABY

Elise will be pleased. She may finally win a medal.

GERTRUDE

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

GABY

Especially if we remind her.

BELLA

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

GERTRUDE

None of this is fair!

BELLA

No. And it won't be for 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 their petty laws.

GABY

I don't get it. Didn't Amsterdam have enough laws? How many laws are too many laws?

MARGOT

The Nazis want different laws. The same laws that made my family leave Germany years ago.

GERTRUDE

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

BELLA

Then don't. Talk a walk by the river. Talk about your school, your family, your friends. Spend the afternoon as if these were normal times and we just had the best rowing practice ever – because we did.

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. Stay – astonishing.

GABY

Who knows? Maybe we'll all be back together next year?

(Beat. Nobody believes that.)

BELLA

Who knows?

(They gather their things, wave good-bye. BELLA, GABY and GERTRUDE exit. MARGOT shivers)

JACKIE

Margot?

MARGOT

Just a little chill. The clouds are moving in.

JACKIE

We were lucky to row when the sun was shining. Let's catch up.

MARGOT

I would love to but I think right now, I need to go. There's a Zionist meeting at the synagogue and I am thinking I'd like to be there. I told them I would be absent until after rowing was done. And now – it's done.

JACKIE

Go next week. Stay here with me and let's do nothing together.

MARGOT

I think right now – I need the meeting. I hope you understand.

JACKIE

I do. But just because we can't row together doesn't mean we can't visit. When will I see you?

MARGOT

After school. I'll come by and we'll catch up then.

(JACKIE and MARGOT hug good-bye. JACKIE exits. MARGOT exits separately. Lights dim. BETTINA is still there. We hear the GUARD'S VOICE in the dark.)

GUARD

Prisoner 67024!

(BETTINA shakes her head "no" and runs off.)

SCENE 2 – 30 Minutes later

(Lights up in MARGOT'S and ANNE'S shared bedroom. Family photos are everywhere. A photo of BETTINA is displayed. ANNE has cut out pictures from a magazine of the

Dutch Royal Family, Fred Astaire, and Ginger Rogers. ANNE is deciding where to hang them on her wall. Photos of other movie stars may also be hung up. MARGOT enters.)

ANNE

Margot! Finally! I need your help.

MARGOT

Not now. I'm trying to get to 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 right now. My books are. Where are they?

ANNE

I saw them ... somewhere. How about the Royal Family? They're always important.

MARGOT

They ran away. While the Nazis were devising new laws against the Jews, the Royal Family hopped over to London. But can we go to London? No. We're Jewish.

ANNE

You don't approve of the royal family?

MARGOT

I don't approve of abandoning your people. And I'm trying to get to the Zionist meeting at the synagogue but I need my Hebrew book.

ANNE

I thought you said the meetings were too argumentative.

MARGOT

They just get rowdy when they speak of going to Palestine. Not everyone agrees. But I'm starting to think Palestine may be in my future. Help me find my books.

ANNE

Look under the magazines. Look at Ginger. That will cheer you up. I like this pose.

(ANNE does a dance pose.)

MARGOT

I don't see my books.

ANNE

Try under Fred.

MARGOT

It's getting late.

ANNE

You are grumpy.

MARGOT

The rowing team disbanded. Jews can no longer do sports.

ANNE

I'm sorry.

MARGOT

It's not enough that we had to change schools, Father can't run his business, we can't leave the country – now – we're being robbed of the outside. No skating, no beaches, no parks, no rowing.

ANNE

Let Fred and Ginger cheer you up. Let's take a dance around the room.

MARGOT

That solves nothing!

ANNE

It makes me happy. Does your Hebrew book make you happy?

MARGOT

It gives me a sense of belonging somewhere.

(MARGOT kicks something by the bed or a table.)

Ouch!

ANNE

And your book just bit you. It was out in the open all along. Hiding in plain sight.

MARGOT

Serves me right for getting all riled up. Getting mad accomplishes nothing.

ANNE

A good argument makes me feel better. I love to rail and complain and clear the air with nothing hanging in the air waiting to be said.

MARGOT

Some things are better left unsaid.

ANNE

If I kept things inside, I'd explode. How did Mother and Pim have such different children?

MARGOT

They're "jellyfish parents." Jellyfish let their children do what they want. Dolphins are a bit stricter. They steer their children in a particular direction. You would not like being raised by dolphins. Nobody can steer you anywhere. And don't get me started on the sharks. Because shark parents raise killers.

ANNE

Why are we discussing fish parents? We need to discuss my wall. It's much more important. Or your wall – let's discuss why your wall is empty.

MARGOT

I like it that way. I don't want to pigeon-hole my interests. Suppose you change your mind tomorrow and don't think Fred and Ginger should be the center of attention?

ANNE

Then I'd change it!

MARGOT

I have to go.

ANNE

Can I at least hang up the photo of Bettina on your wall? She's so lonely in that corner. Mother won't display her in the living room or dining room. Poor Bettina. She must feel all alone always in the background.

MARGOT

I saw her today. Or I thought I did.

ANNE

Was she a ghost?

MARGOT

No. It's hard to explain. It was like a vision far off.

ANNE

Was it scary? Did she touch you with icy hands like this?

MARGOT

No. Nothing like that. It was – comforting. She smiled at me.

ANNE

Her smile is just like yours. When you smile. Let me check. Smile.

MARGOT

*Stop!* It's getting so late! I'm missing my meeting.

(ANNE sits MARGOT down and climbs in her lap. She tries to lift the corners of MARGOT'S mouth into a smile. MARGOT does smile.)

ANNE

You can go to the next meeting.

MARGOT

My lips are ticklish.

ANNE

Everything about you is ticklish. You are so sensitive.

(A small tussle and ANNE settles into MARGOT'S lap.)

ANNE

Remember Mother telling us about the fancy, dress balls her family hosted? They would have two hundred people come! Two hundred! That's more than our entire school. Everyone would be 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

I'm not going to make my meeting, am I?

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.

MARGOT

I should be Fred. I'm taller.

ANNE

But I like to lead.

(ANNE hums (*The Blue Danube?*")) and they do a waltz or a spin around the room jumping over books and magazines. They are light on their feet and credible dancers. In the background, we spy BETTINA – maybe dancing or swaying. MARGOT stops and looks around.)

ANNE (cont'd)

What is it?

MARGOT

I just felt a cool breeze.

ANNE

But we're inside.

MARGOT

I know.

ANNE

It must be the dancing. Dancing makes you open yourself to everything.

(ANNE twirls MARGOT one more time and they curtsey. BETTINA curtsies in the background. The lights fade on MARGOT and ANNE but stay on BETTINA for a moment as we hear a VOICE in the fading light.)

GUARD

**Prisoner 67024! Step forward.**

(Lights out.)

SCENE 3 – October 1941

(It's a crisp autumn day outside the Jewish Lyceum. You could have other students about with their books – all sporting a Jewish star. HEINZ and JANNY are outside waiting. MARGOT appears.)

MARGOT

Sorry. I stayed to ask a question.

JANNY

Of course you did.

HEINZ

I'm always doing that. I think I drive the teachers crazy. Are we still up for doing our homework together?

JANNY

You know I am. I need some of your braininess to rub off on me.

MARGOT

I just want to take a walk first. Clear the air from being stuck inside all day.

(HEINZ and JANNY exit. ANNE appears.)

ANNE

Heinz has dreamy eyes.

MARGOT

Janny seems to think so.

ANNE

Are they a couple?

MARGOT

They're ... trying. It's hard to be alone anywhere when you can't actually go anywhere. Except to your homes. Where your parents are watching you.

ANNE

So they do homework at our house.

MARGOT

You make it sound like they're trying to get away with something.

ANNE

And you know what? I approve. Let's go.

MARGOT

I'm going to take a walk first. I need some air.

ANNE

Then I better race ahead and find someone to walk with. I hate to walk alone.

(ANNE rushes off. MARGOT starts on her walk. She is soon not near anyone with Jewish stars She sees JACKIE on the street.)

JACKIE

Margot! I've been hoping to see you.

MARGOT

It's been too long.

JACKIE

I know! Let's catch up. We can go into the park.

MARGOT

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

JACKIE

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

MARGOT

I think it will get worse before it gets better.



JACKIE

Let's go to the bridge. There's usually someplace to sit there. And there are no signs saying "No Jews allowed on bridges."

MARGOT

Yet.

JACKIE

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

MARGOT

I switched to chocolate.

JACKIE

That won't build muscles.

MARGOT

My theory is it will build brain-muscles plus it makes me feel so good.

JACKIE

I'd better stock up on some then because I am finding math a challenge. I miss doing homework with you. It's so good to see you!

MARGOT

In normal times, we'd already have our skates in the shop to be sharpened in time for ice skating season.

JACKIE

And we'd be saving our pennies for the hot chocolate treat after.

MARGOT

With extra cream. When you go skating, have two hot chocolates. One for you and one for me. And mine has to have the extra cream.

JACKIE

I will sacrifice myself and have two hot chocolates.

MARGOT

Promise?

(They find seating near a bridge – it could be a bench or a rock – or the ground.)

JACKIE

This is a good place to talk. Not many people around. Let's play "Fortune Daisy" like we used to.

MARGOT

But it's not "daisy season."

JACKIE

I know. But I have flowers – see?

(JACKIE grabs some colored pencils from her sash of school supplies.  
I'll just grab a bunch – make them like a bouquet and here you go!)

Better than daisies – they're all colors.

MARGOT

You go first. What do you want to know?

(JACKIE scoops up some pencils – six of them and starts.)

JACKIE

"What will I wear to my wedding? Silk?"

(JACKIE drops a pencil.)

MARGOT

Satin?

(JACKIE drops a second pencil.)

JACKIE

Calico?

(She drops a third pencil.)

MARGOT

A sack?

(She drops a fourth pencil.)

JACKIE

Whew! I wouldn't look good in a sack! Silk?"

(She drops a fifth pencil.)

Satin!"

I'm happy with satin. But I really hope to wear silk.

MARGOT

It's just a game.

JACKIE

I know but sometimes these games can tell you things. Your turn.

MARGOT

I don't know what to ask.

(JACKIE scoops up eight pencils and arranges them in a bouquet.)

JACKIE

"Where will Margot live when she's grown up? A mansion? (1<sup>st</sup> pencil.)

(As with JACKIE'S question, a pencil will be dropped after each answer until the last one IS the answer.)

MARGOT

An apartment?

(2<sup>nd</sup> pencil drops.)

JACKIE

A boat?

(3<sup>rd</sup> pencil. Drops.)

MARGOT

A shack?

(4<sup>th</sup> pencil drops.)

JACKIE

A mansion?

(5<sup>th</sup> pencil drops. Beat. MARGOT sees where this is going and knows her answer.)

JACKIE (cont'd)

An apartment?

(6<sup>th</sup> pencil drops.)

A boat?

(7<sup>th</sup> pencil drops.)

A shack?

(MARGOT just stares. JACKIE hastily puts the pencils away.)

MARGOT

It's possible. If the Nazis have their way.

JACKIE

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

MARGOT

They're so ... strong ... overpowering. They scare me.

JACKIE

Stop!

MARGOT

Everything's so different. I know times change and people change. But now – even thoughts about good and evil are changing, too. I came here today because 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.

(JACKIE stops to process this.)

You know how sometimes you forget to say things – the good things? I wanted to make sure I said this to you. Especially as things get worse.

(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 – vermin! They're not fit to be near us.

(WOMAN exits. BETTINA appears in the background.)

MARGOT

I'm sorry. I don't want to get you in trouble. I miss you.

(MARGOT runs off. BETTINA looks at JACKIE. BETTINA motions to JACKIE to follow MARGOT but JACKIE can't see BETTINA)

JACKIE

MARGOT! (Beat.) I miss you, too.

(JACKIE exits. The light holds on BETTINA for a moment and then fade.)

SCENE 4 – Later that afternoon

(MARGOT, HEINZ and JANNY are seated at a table playing cards – Crazy Eights.)

HEINZ

Ha! Have a seven! Almost out.

MARGOT

You can't be! I have too many left. And now I have to take more.

JANNY

And BAM! Two "eights" and I'm out.

MARGOT

Why do you always have so many "eights?"

JANNY

Because no one at this table knows how to shuffle properly. Points.

HEINZ

Nine.

MARGOT

Twenty-four. I guess I'm not lucky today.

JANNY

This is a game of skill my friend.

MARGOT and HEINZ

Luck!

HEINZ

You always get a lot of "eights."

JANNY

I hoard them at the beginning. I'll pick up cards and if I have an "eight," I save them for the end. I don't squander them like you two do. From the first deal, I assess, I plan and I wait to see what comes. Skill.

(ANNE enters with a plate of cookies.)

ANNE

Mother thought you might want a cookie break after studying so hard. But what do I see? Are the hard-working students playing cards? If you're playing cards you do not need a cookie break. Now, I have been doing my homework, so I get all the cookies.

MARGOT

We spent thirty minutes on genetics.

HEINZ

Margot explained to us all that through the miracle of thousands of sugar snap peas, there is a reason why I have brown eyes but my sister has blue eyes.

ANNE

Fascinating. I'm still keeping the cookies.

(The "students" may make a play for the cookies, but ANNE is quick and they don't get any. HEINZ gets up and approaches ANNE or rather ... the cookies.)

HEINZ

And I did my spiel on how art isn't totally subjective ... and how you can approach it asking yourself, "What did the artist want to tell the viewer?" Why is the light "here" and not "there?"

(And as he acts this out, he tries to grab a cookie. It doesn't work.)

ANNE

Nice try. Janny, do you want to tell me how hard you worked this afternoon?

JANNY

I don't have to work hard. I'm a card sharp.

(ANNE may squeeze on the chair with her.)

ANNE

Now, that's interesting.

(Hands JANNY a cookie.)

ANNE (cont'd)

Do you play poker? Because I really want to learn that game. All the actors in Hollywood look so dreamy when they play poker.

JANNY

You'd be terrible at poker. You have a rubber face – you'd give yourself away. You know who would be really good at poker? Your sister.

MARGOT

You saw how bad I am at Crazy Eight's.

JANNY

You have that serene look. No matter what cards you were dealt – you would keep that look. Nobody would ever know if you had a good hand or a bad hand. You'd be really good at bluffing.

ANNE

Naturally. Margot's good at everything.

MARGOT

Not everything. I always lose at Crazy Eights. And as the loser of the game, I feel like I deserve a cookie.

ANNE

Winners get cookies.

JANNY

That's true. So I...

(Snatching the plate of cookies.)

... get the cookies!

ANNE

Sneak!

JANNY

And unlike some youngster who will remain nameless, I will share my winnings.

(MARGOT and HEINZ get cookies. Nothing is left.)

ANNE

My cookies!

MARGOT

You were supposed to share them.

ANNE

Just having a little fun. Remember fun? Or is there a new law saying, "Jews may no longer have fun."

JANNY

We're lucky there isn't a law saying, "Jews may no longer eat cookies."

HEINZ

Or "Jews may no longer play a musical instrument." Or is that already a law?

JANNY

Watch. One of these days the Nazis will outlaw cards.

ANNE

They'll never know what we do ... behind closed curtains.

JANNY

Ha! They'll confiscate them just like they took our radios.

ANNE

I wonder what they'll take away next.

MARGOT

Us. They'll take away us.

HEINZ

We shouldn't talk like this.

JANNY

Who's to know?

HEINZ

Every time we discuss the Nazis, my heart beats faster and I get so anxious, I can't calm down.

MARGOT

I'm the same way. I don't know how to stop it. So I read.

HEINZ

I try to stop it with music. Or reading, like you. I just try to fill my head with other things so that the scary thoughts don't have room.

MARGOT

Does that work?

HEINZ

Sometimes. I've been told I am too sensitive about things but I don't know how to stop that either.

JANNY

Don't! That's one of the things I love about you.

(MARGOT and ANNE share a smile – must be nice to be in love.)



JANNY (cont'd)

Let's not get all down in the dumps about the new laws. We're in school. We're eating cookies and uh oh... the time. It's more important that I follow my parent's laws than the Nazis. Which is that dinner is served at 6 p.m. in my house and I had better not be late. Or else...

HEINZ

I'll walk you home.

JANNY

I like that plan. Thanks for the help with the homework. It was a good afternoon. Let's focus on that. And tell your mother the cookies were perfect.

(Amid "good-byes," HEINZ and JANNY exit. MARGOT piles up any books or homework and puts away the cards. BETTINA appears. BETTINA smiles as she sees MARGOT having a good time. MARGOT smiles to herself.)

ANNE

What is that secret smile about?

MARGOT

It *was* a good afternoon. Janny's right. I need to remember the good. And ... they're kind of sweet together, aren't they? Time to set the table for dinner.

(BETTINA exits. The SISTERS exit to set the table. tThe lights fade to black.)

SCENE 5 – December late afternoon, 1941

(It's a late December afternoon. Darkness comes earlier. Winter clouds are moving in to stay. MARGOT and JAKOB are walking home from the Zionist Club they belong to (Makkabi Hazair.) JAKOB has a stick that he moves through "the brush" as they walk.)

MARGOT

You need a ball to chase with that stick.

JAKOB

I'm actually pretty amazing with stickball. It's because I never could stand still. I always needed to be chasing something. And now that it's chilly, I just want to flex my muscles and run everywhere.

MARGOT

I love the winter air. It keeps you awake and on your toes. I don't even mind not being able to take the streetcar anymore. The time outside is how I rejuvenate myself.

JAKOB

You used to skate a lot in the winter. I remember seeing you at the rink.

MARGOT  
You ... noticed?

JAKOB  
Yes.

MARGOT  
It was my winter activity. I had a sport for every season. Thank goodness for these meetings or I'd have little to do all winter. I love the Hebrew classes but you have you noticed the discussions have gotten livelier?

JAKOB  
We are living in "lively" times. Let's walk closer to 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.)

MARGOT  
You carry spoons on your walks?

JAKOB  
I like to dig around the riverbanks.

MARGOT  
Buried treasure.

JAKOB  
Better. River rock. Whoa! And look at that. I just got lucky. It's a beauty. So smooth – perfect for etching.

MARGOT  
You – etch?

JAKOB  
I do. That one in the water looks promising.

MARGOT  
You'll get wet!

JAKOB  
It won't be the first time. Not a good one – it looks cracked. Just as well. My mother will go off the rails if she sees me bringing more rocks into the house.

MARGOT

See anything else?

JAKOB

Getting too dark to see anything.

MARGOT

Darkness comes quickly in December. Our outside time is dwindling. Not that it matters. We're barely allowed to be anywhere outside anymore.

JAKOB

The clouds don't help.

MARGOT

The days are so short – it's like the sky is shrinking. Just as our world is shrinking.

JAKOB

We have to appreciate all the seasons. This is the season of rest. The world sleeps so it can be renewed and enchant us in the spring.

MARGOT

I love the optimism.

JAKOB

It's rare for me these days. I must be feeling good right now – the discussions after class energize me *and* I found the perfect rock.

MARGOT

They're hardly discussions.

JAKOB

They do get heated. Palestine is not a new idea but it is a hopeful one for these times.

MARGOT

Do you think it will ever be a reality?

JAKOB

I honestly don't know. But I want to be there if it does happen.

MARGOT

I don't like it when everyone gets angry.

JAKOB

You're a peacemaker.

MARGOT

I can get riled up but it does no good. Nothing is accomplished.

JAKOB

I think anger can fuel change.

MARGOT

Or do the opposite. It can make people dig in their heels and refuse to go forward.

JAKOB

Both have their problems. And both have their place.

MARGOT

Do you always play both sides?

JAKOB

Always. I'm the middle child. I had better see both sides or I will always have one brother who is ready to pummel me. Even when I'm arguing for one point of view – I may secretly believe the opposite.

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, "Aha! I am in control of you. I am changing nature." But not really. Nature controls me and what I can do.

MARGOT

What will you etch into this one?

JAKOB

I know what I want to write. "Next Year in Jerusalem."

MARGOT

The seder wish.

JAKOB

I wish that is growing in meaning.

(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’ll be doing that. The one time of the year when we light the way for others.

JAKOB

I doubt we’ll put a menorah in the window this year. Too risky.

MARGOT

I know. And it makes me sad. As if the Nazis are also taking Chanukah from us. I’m just off the courtyard. Thanks for the company.

JAKOB

It was a pleasure. You are – different than any other girl I’ve known. Your eyes – filled with sorrow and hope joining together. They’re beautiful.

(MARGOT is stunned. She tries to smile but feels goofy. She turns away. It’s wonderfully awkward.)

MARGOT

... thank ... you. And you.. have beautiful teeth .... Nose! Yes! Nose. Very Romanesque. Classic...

JAKOB

Shh. Any chance of seeing you tomorrow? We can ... do homework.

MARGOT

I should check ... but I suppose... yes.

JAKOB

I’ll wait here until you’re inside the door.

MARGOT

Good luck sneaking your rock into the house.

JAKOB

No worries. I’m a Master Sneak.

(MARGOT exits giving one last room and goes to her room. LIGHTS change to inside. Ravel’s “Pavane for a Dead Princess may be heard. MARGOT combs her hair and studies herself. She tries a few smiles and none of them work for her. She throws her hair up and looks in the mirror. She wants to be pretty. In the mirror, she spies BETTINA in the background. MARGOT turns around. BETTINA smiles at her – maybe even blows a kiss and turns and exits. Music fades out. Lights out.)

## SCENE 6 – A Few Weeks Later in December

(Lights up on MARGOT and JAKOB studying in the dining room of the FRANK home. An active discussion is 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 the home.

JAKOB

They didn’t sacrifice themselves for love. The play is about violence and the harm it does,

MARGOT

They had a choice.

JAKOB

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

MARGOT

They could have run away together.

JAKOB

That was the plan.

MARGOT

It didn’t work. So not the best plan.

JAKOB

Plans don’t always work. How many people made plans to escape the Nazi occupation and could not get out?

MARGOT

But they didn’t kill themselves.

JAKOB

You know better than that.

MARGOT

We’re getting off track. The question is, was it moral to do what Romeo and Juliet did? According to Jewish law, it’s wrong.

JAKOB

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

MARGOT

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

JAKOB

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

MARGOT

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

JAKOB

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 could be considered sacred. They had to die to restore the peace.

MARGOT

But they didn't kill themselves to restore peace. They died to get out of a tricky situation. What if they told the truth and presented themselves to their parents as a united front?

JAKOB

Would those parents have listened? They had preconceived notions about each other. Just like some people have preconceived notions about us as Jews. In the end, peace was restored.

MARGOT

And how long did the peace last? What happened later to the Capulets and Montagues after the loss of their children?

JAKOB

The epilogue tells us that the Capulets and Montagues finally made amends.

MARGOT

Grief has a long arm. If I was to write a sequel to *Romeo and Juliet*, maybe I would have Lord Capulet realize his part in his daughter's death and kill himself. Then, I'd have Lady Capulet go mad with grief and the Montagues could/

JAKOB

/Wait. Stop. Where is all this coming from?

MARGOT

They are all possible scenarios. (Beat.) I know.

JAKOB

Take your time.

MARGOT

My father's uncle had three sons. Everyone very close. They were French. We remained close even during World War One when we were on opposite sides. Uncle Leon lost his two eldest sons on a battlefield in 1911. The youngest was still at home. Now imagine. You are a good citizen. You go to work. You contribute to society but two bedrooms are empty and always will be. One day you go to work ... and the world crashes into you and you jump out of a window. Aunt Nanette couldn't cope with all the losses. She was put into an asylum where she remained for the rest of her life. The only one left from a family of five was little Jean-Michel.

(MARGOT retrieves a letter.)

You can read it.

JAKOB

"I am sorry. I am ill and I have been as long as I can remember. I no longer wish to live with the pain."

MARGOT

He was addicted to barbiturates. He just had to take a few more... he knew what would happen. I don't think he ever got over the 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, you are understanding of suicide.

MARGOT

Yes and no. If Uncle Leon hadn't killed himself, would Aunt Nanette not have had a breakdown and been able to stay home and raise Jean-Michel? Would Jean have not become an addict? When pain spirals out of control, how do you stop future pain? I think about these things. I think about what happens if you lose your family. Even if you did everything in your power to save them, are you then justified to kill yourself? Or are you condemned to live a life of sorrow?



JAKOB

There are other choices. You could choose to live wildly and brightly. Choose to live a life that is wholly your own and thumb your nose at what the world says you must do.

MARGOT

Aha! Got you! Juliet could have made that decision when she woke up in the tomb. She could have run away and let her light burn brightly in the world.

JAKOB

She was thirteen.

MARGOT

Old enough to concoct a crazy plan of sleep potions.

JAKOB

You're making me think.

(JAKOB reaches for her hand. She lets him. She smiles at him and it is not goofy.)

I like that. (Beat.) You haven't been to any meetings this week. Maybe tomorrow?

MARGOT

If it's about the weekly fight about Palestine, I think I'll pass. It'll be the same arguments about "the old ways" and "the new ways."

JAKOB

We can leave when the yelling begins.

MARGOT

I'll think about it.

JAKOB

That usually means "no."

MARGOT

You are getting to know me too well.

JAKOB

Which is a bright spot in my life right now. I better run before your parents feel obligated to ask me over for dinner. Again.

MARGOT

They like you.

JAKOB

They're good people. Who have a special daughter.

(Maybe close to a kiss – but no, not yet. Maybe JAKOB kisses his fingers and lightly touches her lips. Or something else that is affectionate but not intimate.)

JAKOB (cont'd)

See you tomorrow.

(JAKOB takes his books and exits. BETTINA appears. Maybe she blows a kiss to Margot who in turn, touches her lips or blows JAKOB a kiss after he leaves. The lights fade to black.)

SCENE 7 – February 16, 1942

(Lights up on MARGOT'S home. It is Margot's birthday. JANNY and HEINZ are getting ready to leave.)

MARGOT

Thank you for coming. And thank you so much for my gifts. I love the books.

HEINZ

The cake was delicious. It's hard to get sugar these days. Your mother did an amazing job.

JANNY

No Jakob?

MARGOT

He said he'd be here but these days, you never know what can happen.

JANNY

You're worried?

MARGOT

A bit.

HEINZ

I'm sure everything's fine. He can be delayed because of a hundred things.

JANNY

He could be on a food line for his mother.

HEINZ

Or – found a stray kitten.

MARGOT

More likely a stray rock.

JANNY

Not sure what that means!

MARGOT

It's just silliness. Go! Before curfew.

JANNY

We're just across the courtyard!

MARGOT

If you go now, you could have some time alone with each other.

JANNY

I like that idea. Come on, Heinz. We'll take a short walk and ... talk.

(And they wave good-bye and exit. ANNE enters.)

ANNE

Did you have a good birthday?

MARGOT

I did.

ANNE

No one from the rowing club came this year.

MARGOT

Jackie sent her condolences. Neighbors talk when they see a non-Jew go into a Jewish home. I understand.

ANNE

I don't.

MARGOT

We have to understand. I want to keep what friends I have left.

ANNE

No Jakob.

MARGOT

No.

(Beat.)

ANNE

Sixteen! Almost a grown-up!

MARGOT

Almost.

ANNE

How does it feel?

MARGOT

It feels exactly the same as yesterday.

ANNE

But you must know things. Things I want to know. Like ... what's it like? Being a woman? You sort of have this woman's body now – is it different?

MARGOT

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

ANNE

You must know. I can't ask Mother because she'll just say, "Oh, Anne." And Pim has no idea. Who's going to talk about these things if you won't? Do you want to be kissed all the time? Do you think about babies?

MARGOT

I'm too young.

ANNE

I've seen you with Hanne's little sister. You like babies.

MARGOT

Everyone likes babies.

(There's a knock on the door. ANNE opens it.)

ANNE

It's Jakob!

JAKOB

I'm sorry I'm so late. There was this wagon. And they were picking up men in the street – and I thought – I look old enough to be a man so I just ran and hid in an alley. I was afraid to go home and afraid to come here.

MARGOT

Is it even safe now? You should have gone home.

JAKOB

Is it ever safe? I wanted to see you.

(He puts a gift in her hand.)

JAKOB (cont'd)

It looked better this morning. Before I squished it by holding it tightly for hours.

MARGOT

Romeo and Juliet.

JAKOB

In English. I thought – why not do both? Practice our English while discussing the ethics of Romeo and Juliet's actions.

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 get home before curfew.

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 up people. No one was about when I came here. Come on ... a short stroll?

(ANNE appears with a hat a jacket for MARGOT.)

ANNE

You don't get out enough.

MARGOT

But if we see anyone...

JAKOB

I'll disappear.

(MARGOT and JAKOB exit into the courtyard.)

MARGOT

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

JAKOB

Look up.

MARGOT

Stars.

JAKOB

Courtesy of the blackout. It's rare to have no clouds and no lights.

MARGOT

So – be grateful for the blackout?

JAKOB

Be grateful for a starry sky.

MARGOT

Anne and I have spent so much time on this square. Bicycling. Hide-and-seek. Tag! We'd run after each other for hours -

(And as quick as a blink, JAKOB tags her and runs.)

JAKOB

Tag! You're it! Try and catch me.

(MARGOT laughs and runs after him. JAKOB runs her in a circle and they laugh and play. As JAKOB heads in another direction, MARGOT takes a shortcut and jumps in front of him and tags him.)

MARGOT

You're it!

JAKOB

You came out of nowhere!

MARGOT

Ha! I could run through this courtyard blindfolded – that's how well I know it.

JAKOB

There's another side to Margot I never knew about – a cheater!

MARGOT

I'm hardly a cheater. I just take advantage of knowledge that I may have that my adversary doesn't know about. Let's find a place to sit. Clouds are hiding the moon. It's too dark to play anymore. I want to know more about you. Not your opinions on Romeo And Juliet, but real things.

JAKOB

Such as.....

MARGOT

What do you want to be when you grow up? A butcher? A Baker? A Candlestick maker?

(Somewhere in this dialogue they find a place to sit.)

JAKOB

I used to think about being a rabbi. Does that surprise you?

MARGOT

It would have been my first guess.

JAKOB

A woman of good intuition. But these days, I think I would like to be a simple teacher.

MARGOT

History?

JAKOB

How'd you know?

MARGOT

It makes sense.

JAKOB

And what about you? You are so good at everything. The world is wide open for you.

MARGOT

Maybe nursing.

JAKOB

I can see that.

(Police Sirens.)

JAKOB

Get down.

(And they crouch down and are very still but the sirens pass.)

JAKOB

You just got your first lesson in being a “Master Sneak.” You passed. It’s what I did all day.  
(Beat.) If necessary, I will do it for as long as it takes. I ...

(Beat.)

MARGOT

I think you want to tell me something.

JAKON

There’s this group ... of resistors. They provide new identities, hide Jews – I don’t want to tell you much about it. These days, it’s not good to know too much. I may join them.

MARGOT

It sounds terribly dangerous.

JAKOB

It’s no more dangerous than walking across the city trying to wish my girlfriend a happy birthday.

MARGOT

Girlfriend?

JAKOB

Aren’t you?

MARGOT

You never said it.

JAKOB

And you never said “boyfriend.” Today, I decided things needed to be said. In case ... I disappear. I made up my mind. If I am called up, I won’t go to a labor camp. And I won’t be stuffed into a wagon. I have to settle things with my family first but I want you to know that if the time comes that you don’t hear from me, don’t think the worse. And do not think I don’t want to see you.

MARGOT

I wouldn’t!

JAKOB

You know you would!



MARGOT

Maybe for a minute.

JAKOB

I want you to know that I will be safe ... somewhere. Resisting.

MARGOT

You could die.

JAKOB

I could die anyway. Keep this for me. When times are tough, take it out. Read it. Hold it. Believe it.

MARGOT

Your stone. "Next year in Jerusalem." You should hold on to it. For luck.

JAKOB

I want you to keep it safe for me. One of these years, it will happen. One of these years, there will be a seder in Jerusalem. Someday, we will have a seder in Jerusalem.

MARGOT

I will be there. (Beat.) It's probably curfew. You had better go.

JAKOB

I know.

(There is a brief affectionate gesture between them. BETTINA appears in the background. JAKOB exits. BETTINA gestures for MARGOT to follow her inside. As if in a trance – MARGOT exits into her home. Blackout.)

#### SCENE 8 – early April 1942

(Lights up on the courtyard. Rain is heard. HEINZ, JANNY, JAKOB and MARGOT come running on, covering their heads from the rain. Maybe the more sensible ones (MARGOT, HEINZ) have an umbrella.) They are laughing and squealing. School is out, they are young and there's still time to flirt and play and hang out.)

JANNY

Is there a rain dance to make the rain go away?

(JANNY does some incongruous dance moves.)

JAKOB

It wouldn't work in Amsterdam.

But it did. It stopped.

MARGOT

I am amazing.

JANNY

Yes, you are.

HEINZ

I like the rain and what it brings.

MARGOT

(She sings a little bit of April Showers – very jazzy and upbeat.)\*

“Though April showers may come your way...

(JANNY joins in.)

MARGOT and JANNY

“They bring the flowers that bloom in May.

(HEINZ does a solo.)

HEINZ

“So if it’s raining, have no regrets  
Because it isn’t raining rain you know,  
It’s raining violets.”

(ALL point to JAKOB who doesn’t know the songs. HE shrugs his shoulders.  
HE does take a stick to use to drum the beat.)

ALL except JAKOB

“And where you see clouds upon the hills  
You soon will see crowds of daffodils.”

(THEY point at MARGOT who finishes.)

MARGOT

“So, keep on looking for a bluebird  
And list’ning for his song  
Whenever April showers come along.”

(MARGOT holds the last note. All drum and clap at the end. MARGOT may bow.)

(\*Public Domain Sheet music can be found here:

<https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1055&context=mmb-yp>

Ignore “slow with expression.” Bing Crosby has an upbeat version.

Other song alternatives that would be known to the teens and in public domain:

“When the Red Red Robin...”

“Bye-Bye Blackbird.”

Al Jolson and jazzy pop hits were very popular in Europe.)

JAKOB (To MARGOT)

You re full of surprises.

MARGOT

Heinz is the real musician. I just like to play. When we still had a radio, Father would play all the pop hits and we’d all dance around the apartment.

HEINZ

Playtimes is over. Where do we do our homework? There’s a lot of mathematics – not my favorite.

JANNY

But no French. Not since Frau Guilder disappeared. I wonder what happened there.

JAKOB

Get used to the disappearances My guess is so many teachers and students will be gone next year, the Jewish Lyceum will have to lose.

JANNY

What do you know?

JAKOB

Nothing.

MARGOT

And if you did, you wouldn’t tell.

JAKOB

Probably not.

MARGOT

We can always go back to my place. I’m sure Mother has cookies waiting.

HEINZ

We’re always there. I feel like we take advantage of your family. Let’s go to my place. Evie might be there with friends so it might be a bit noisy – but I do have the piano and we can always take a music break.

JAKOB

I vote, “yes!”

(Air raid sirens.)

JANNY

There go our plans. We need to get to the shelter.

JAKOB

Jews aren’t allowed in them.

JANNY

I can’t keep track of all the laws.

JAKOB

Just assume if there’s any place to go, we’re not allowed.

JANNY

We’re allowed in my home. It’s right over there on the first floor and we have a heavy dining room table to hide under. Better run.

(And THEY run off.)

SCENE 9 – July 6, 1942

(ANNE is packing. She is taking pictures down from her walls. She has a list.)

ANNE

Curlers? Check. Royal Family? Yes. Fred and Ginger? Definitely. All of my clothes? Or some of my clothes? All of them.

(MARGOT enters.)

MARGOT

You’re taking too much. We’re supposed to make it look like we are on an outing.

ANNE

That’s ridiculous. It’s pouring rain. Who goes on an outing in the pouring rain?

MARGOT

Jews going into hiding.

ANNE

Even in hiding, one should try to look one’s best. I bet Mrs. Van Pels will dress for dinner. And I have to take all my pictures. I’ll tape them on the wall of our new bedroom and it will be just like

ANNE (cont'd)

we're at home. Pim says it's probably for about two months and then the war will end and everything will be normal again.

MARGOT

I think it will be longer than two months.

ANNE

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

MARGOT

Maybe your fourteenth year.

ANNE

Don't be so gloomy. It won't be that long. Hello is coming in a few hours to go for a walk with me. I wonder what he'll think when no one answers the doorbell. I wonder if he'll worry or think that we are really in Switzerland or that maybe/

MARGOT

/Anne. Shh. Don't chatter so much.

(A beat as they close their satchels.)

ANNE

It's strange that they would call up Pim. Isn't he too old for labor camp? Although he is smart and maybe the Germans think he can help them in some way. But why would Pim 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 heavy 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. I am so sorry. You're losing your time in the world because of me. You should be in school and outside playing and I've ruined your life.

ANNE

Shh. It will be an adventure. You'll see.

MARGOT

I'm so sorry. So sorry.

(The lights dim. "Pavane for a Dead Princess:" may be heard. The SISTERS put on their coats and take one last look at their room. The lights go black for a moment. Footsteps. A new room. A heavy door slam. And a female voice – MIEP.)

MIEP'S VOICE

This is the room you will share with Anne.

(Lights up as MARGOT enters a new room. MARGOT freezes.)

MIEP'S VOICE

I'll leave you to make yourself at home. The others will be here shortly.

(We hear a door close. MARGOT reacts. And then another door slam Which affects MARGOT even more. They sound like jail doors Slamming. Blackout.)

GUARD'S VOICE

67024! Come closer!

POSSIBLE INTERMISSION

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SCENE 10 – February 26, 1943

(Lights up on ANNE's room in hiding. She now shares a room with Fritz Pfeiffer. ANNE In writing at her desk. MARGOT knocks and enters.)

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 peers in.)

PETER

May I?

MARGOT

Come on in.

(PETER enters with a makeshift small bookcase he has put together.)

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

Well ... what do you think? It's made out of scrap and I pulled tons of nails from it so there are holes but it's sturdy and it will hold your books.

MARGOT

For me?

PETER

I thought you needed your own. You do have a lot of books.

ANNE

I have a lot of books. And I have to share my bookcase with Dr. Pfeiffer which isn't fair.

MARGOT

I share mine with Pim and Mother!

ANNE

But at least you're related to them!

MARGOT

What does that have to do with sharing a bookcase?

ANNE

Just making a point.

MARGOT

It's *my* birthday!

PETER

(Taking the bookcase back.)

On the other hand.... I could use an extra bookcase/

MARGOT

/No! It's perfect. I love it and thank-you. I have so little that is separate from my parents. And you really did a fine job. Especially considering what you had to work with.

PETER

The scrap lumber was just sitting in the warehouse. No use letting it go to waste.

ANNE

I'd like mine painted.

PETER

Excuse me, but are you hiring me to create one for you?

ANNE

My birthday's in June. Maybe you should start now.

PETER

I'll have to give this a think. (Beat.) I don't paint wood.

MARGOT

Even if you did, where would you get the paint?

ANNE

Why is everything so difficult these days?

PETER

There's an obvious answer.

MARGOT

Thank-you, Peter. It was very thoughtful of you.

PETER

You could put your picture of your aunt on it. That would make it personal.

MARGOT

Except Mother doesn't want the picture in her room.

PETER

I thought she was her sister.

MARGOT

She was. Aunt Bettina. She never made it past age 16. I don't think Mother wants a daily reminder of her loss.



ANNE

Margot sometimes sees her.

PETER

You see ghosts?

MARGOT

I had – I don't know – visions – small snapshots outside the corner of my eye. But that was in Amsterdam when everything was going topsy turvy. I wish she had grown up. It's so many years later and Mother's still grieves for her.

PETER

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

MARGOT

There is something special about sharing the same genes. And a great advantage to being the eldest. I know something special – something Anne will never know.

(Directed at Anne.)

I remember you from the very beginning. Mother brought you home all teeny-tiny, swaddled in blankets. You had this gaze that said, "I trust you." And as young as I was – I told you – I will always take care of you. I will always make sure you are safe.

ANNE

You're just getting sentimental because it's your birthday. Tomorrow you will go back to being "Margot, the sister that ignores me."

MARGOT

I don't!

ANNE

You totally roll your eyes when I talk at dinner.

MARGOT

Because you totally say things to get reactions out of people – and not great ones at that.

PETER

On the other hand, maybe being an only child is a good thing.

(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 exit. Three girls are a bit much for me.

BEP (O.S.)

May I?

ANNE

Come in.

(BEP enters. PETER exits. There's an awkward greeting.)

BEP

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

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. And now you're really here! It will be such fun. And maybe you can get Margot out of the dumps.

MARGOT

I am not in the dumps!

ANNE

You certainly are! Always keeping to yourself. Reading, studying. Pushing your food but not eating it. You used to be much more fun.

MARGOT

I am sorry that I do not find anything "fun" about our situation.

BEP

Happily, I brought some fun things for you! First: a movie magazine for Anne.

ANNE

I don't know how you manage it but thank-you, thank-you! I'd know nothing about the outside world if it wasn't for you. Look! Cary Grant in a top hat. Now that's class.

MARGOT

I can't think why Hollywood news is of any importance to you.

ANNE

One day we will get out of here and we will need to have conversations about things. I need to keep up.

MARGOT

People will probably be talking about the war.

ANNE

We are living the war. I don't want to talk about it. Look Margot, Jane Eyre was made into a movie. You loved that book. Wouldn't it be fun to see the movie? Or is having fun beneath you?

MARGOT

Is that how you talk to your sister on her birthday?

BEP

My, my. Let's nip this conversation in the bud, shall we? I have the weekly for Margot with all the latest international news. Your father wants to read it when you're done. And – tada! A Latin Book for your birthday!

MARGOT

It's perfect. Level Two. I never thought I'd get there – but I did. Thank you.

ANNE

I can't imagine finding a Latin Book – fun.

MARGOT

It's – exciting. A new way of thinking. Someday I'll be able to read poetry in the original Latin.

ANNE

And then you could learn Greek!

MARGOT

I could, couldn't I? How special would that be?

ANNE

I was kidding!

MARGOT

I wasn't! I am going to put my Latin book in my new bookcase and treasure both.

BEP

Now, that's an ... interesting bookcase.

MARGOT

Peter made it from scrap and I shall treasure it forever.

BEP

As you should.

ANNE

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

BEP

I have.

ANNE

And?

BEP

He's a good man. Well-dressed. Very polite to my parents but sometimes I think he wants to remake me. Yesterday, he told me I should wear my hair up because I would look more sophisticated.

(As Bertus.)

"Really, dear Bep. You look like a school child with your hair down. It's time to move on from that look."

ANNE

Let me see your hair up.

(BEP throws her hair up.)

Now down again.

(BEP brushes her hair down.)

The answer is – you look stunning both ways and don't let any boyfriend tell you how to wear your hair. Hair is very personal. I know.

MARGOT

I agree. If he wants to change one tiny bit of you, he's not worth your time.

BEP

I was thinking he was getting fussy. We'll see. We're not serious.

ANNE

Margot's boyfriend was never fussy about how she looked. Of course, she always looked perfect.

BEP

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

MARGOT

He was – is – special. We ... studied together.

ANNE

He was over all the time and he brought you presents. He was smitten with you. I know. I've had a few boyfriends – I know all the signs.

BEP

That you do. Margot, talk for a change. Tell me about him.

MARGOT

We really didn't have enough time to figure things out. All around us, people were disappearing. He was worried that if we grew too close, I would get hurt. But we grew closer anyway... until ... he disappeared in April. I disappeared in the summer. The population of Amsterdam must be dwindling. (Beat.) I write him letters.

BEP

I thought this place was a secret.

MARGOT

It is! I don't mail them. I don't even know where he is. I am saving them. For later. In case we all make it to the end of the war.

BEP

You will.

ANNE

No more gloomy thoughts. It's your birthday! I'm sorry if I was grouchy. Only fun things now – that aren't in Latin. Let's do our hair – as if we were going to a ball and wanted to look absolutely ravishing.

BEP

I brought extra hairpins.

ANNE

Bep, can you comb my hair out?

(BEP does so as MARGOT combs hers and plays with piling it on top of her head.)

MARGOT

We could use a haircut.

ANNE

Short hair is so limiting. Let's see what we can do with our longer hair. (Beat as they settle down.) 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 anything while I'm hidden away from the world. And Margot won't tell me anything.

MARGOT

I think it's good to be a little mysterious.

BEP

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

ANNE

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

MARGOT

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 there's a small pillow fight between all three as lights fade to black.)

SCENE 11

February 16, 1943 – A Dream of April 1942

(It is almost midnight. BEP and ANNE are asleep. MARGOT hears rustling and awakens. She is terrified but then JAKOB appears and she moves towards him.)

THEY are “outside of time and place.” The lights stay dim. It is a dream. “Pavane for a Dead Princess” is heard. MARGOT and JAKOB move to each other and slowly do a very simple dance. MARGOT stops the dance.)

JAKOB

Am I doing the steps wrong?

MARGOT

Just a brief chill.

JAKOB

This spring has been a combination of cool winds and warm breezes - all mixed up. It’s as if it wants to mimic our world.

(A moment as they gaze at each other.)

Margot ...

MARGOT

You’re going away.

JAKOB

Yes. It’s time. I’ll be back – when this is all over. And we’ll dance – truly dance together. As a couple.

(THEY are interrupted by the GUARD’S VOICE.)

GUARD’S VOICE

Prisoner 67024. Come with me.

(JAKOB and MARGOT may reach for each other as the music fades and the lights go to black.)

SCENE 12

December 21, 1943

(ANNE, MARGOT and PETER are in ANNE’S room. They just celebrated the first night of Chanukah.)

PETER

That was so thoughtful of Miep and Jan to bring treats for Chanukah.

ANNE

Especially as it keeps Dr. Pfeiffer in the kitchen and away from our room.

MARGOT

I wonder if we will ever have a real Chanukah again. A menorah in the window... a week of lighting the way for others...

ANNE

Margot! Don't get all sad today!

MARGOT

I'm just stating/

ANNE

/What you always state! That we are all miserable. I won't have it. Not tonight.

PETER

I did miss the brisket. My father does a beautifully spiced brisket. And just when you think the spice will get to you, you find dried apricots and prunes for sweetness.

ANNE

Can we escape our memories and enjoy tonight?

(All sigh remembering Chanukahs from the past. Anne puts a scarf or something over her arm. She becomes a "server extraordinaire" of a magical restaurant. She hands out two pieces of paper as menus. She'll use "something" – a book, a paper holder as a tray.)

ANNE

Come on, you two. Be seated. We have a special Chanukah menu. A delectable beef brisket. It's just coming out of the oven. It's delicately spiced and rubbed with rosemary.

PETER

Oh that's too bad. I love it when it's surrounded by thyme.

ANNE

And – poof! I just added the thyme. Magical briskets can be anything. I can smell the thyme coming from the kitchen. Can you?

MARGOT

I am ready for a slice.

PETER

May I have extra prunes and apricots?

ANNE

But of course! And a few sauteed tulip bulbs.

MARGOT and PETER

Tulip bulbs?



ANNE

Yes. They're all the rage in Amsterdam now. All the restaurants that matter are serving them.

MARGOT

Is that true?

ANNE

Miep says there are a lot of food shortages and the lines for food grow longer every day. People are making soup from tulip bulbs.

MARGOT

We should be grateful that we have all that cabbage.

PETER

We should be grateful that Miep still finds us food.

MARGOT

She's a Chanukah miracle.

ANNE

We are moving away from our special Chanukah dinner. What would you like with the brisket and tulip bulbs?

MARGOT

Some latkes. Extra-crunchy please.

ANNE

Would you like your usual serving of twelve of them!

MARGOT

I only ate twelve that one year.

ANNE

You wolfed them down.

MARGOT

I was growing.

PETER

Can you really eat twelve lakes?

MARGOT

It was just that one time. Anne, Peter doesn't have to know all my secrets.

PETER

I love that you have “latke secrets.” And I am relieved to hear you’re not perfect.

ANNE

After dinner, we have a platter of sufganiyot (*pronounced “soof-gay-nee”*) stuffed with the berry jam my grandmother made. Margot, would you like twelve of those?

MARGOT

I may want twelve but I can only fit in one.

PETER

I’ll eat twelve!

MARGOT

Eleven. I still get one.

ANNE

Ten. I also get one.

PETER

Since when does the staff get to eat the food?

ANNE

It’s Chanukah. Everyone partakes.

PETER

This may be my last Chanukah.

MARGOT

Now who’s getting all gloomy? I thought today was about miracles and surviving.

PETER

I intend to survive – out of spite if nothing else. But I don’t know if I will practice Judaism when this is over. I’ve spent my entire life being bullied because of my religion. I don’t know what being Jewish has done for me or for any of us.

MARGOT

It’s a grounding. A belonging. Warmth when the chills come.

PETER

I admit to loving the holidays. I love a good brisket.

MARGOT

You’re conflicted.

PETER

My brain makes me think too much. And my stomach says, “Feed me brisket and latkes.”

ANNE

I think you can have brisket and latkes without being Jewish.

PETER

It feels like cheating. But who knows how any of us will feel when this is over.

MARGOT

Or if we will even be here.

ANNE

*Margot!*

MARGOT

*Sorry!* It slipped out.

ANNE

Shh. It’s Chanukah, remember. The first day of the miracle.

MARGOT

We’ve been here eighteen months. That’s – what – about five-hundred and forty days? Maybe today is the “Five Hundred and Forty-First” day of the miracle. The miracle that we’re still here.

(ANNE, PETER and MARGOT hold hands in friendship as the lights fade to black.  
OPTIONAL: Away from the action we could see BETTINA light a Menorah as the lights fade. For a moment, all we see is the glow of the first candle (and the helper candle – the Shamash in the middle. Maybe MARGOT glances up and sees her again.)

SCENE 13

April 11, 1944

(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

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

Don't move!

MARGOT

(Going to the door.)  
I can't stay/

ANNE

(Grabbing her.)  
/You have no choice.

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

MALE VOICE

GET OUT! OUT NOW!

MARGOT

Why is he yelling?

ANNE

To scare them?

MARGOT

Now they will know someone is here!

ANNE

Margot... shh.

(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.)

PETER

They're gone.

MARGOT

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

PETER

To scare them. We decided to not be sitting ducks while the warehouse was robbed.

MARGOT

A risky decision. Now we're all in danger!

PETER

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

MARGOT

They'll go to the police.

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. Think, Margot. You're smart. 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. Someone shone a flashlight through the door. They 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, that seemed to go on forever. But the bookcase holds. Footsteps continue. THEY bang on walls, come back to the bookcase and bang on it. 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 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.

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.

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

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

But 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. We see BETTINA in the background. BETTINA comes and sits next to MARGOT.)

Bettina? Are you here? I feel like you're nearby wanting to comfort me. Help me.

(MARGOT stands up.)

I need all the help I can get.

(MARGOT exits. Lights hold on BETTINA for a second and go to black. We hear the GUARD.)

GUARD

Prisoner 67024! You have been chosen to work in a munitions factory. You will pack your bags and leave immediately.

SCENE 14 – Evening of June 6, 1944

(Lights up on ANNE reading. BETTINA is in the background. She may have a cape or a coat that she will put on during the scene. It looks like MARGOT is safe and doesn't need BETTINA anymore. MARGOT enters - jubilant.)

MARGOT

I saw Dr. Pfeiffer in deep discussion with Pim and thought this would be a good time to spend some time with you. *Can you believe it?*

ANNE

I know! It's not a hope anymore. No more waiting. They're finally here.

MARGOT

The Allies are on the continent. They're coming. They're coming to free us. The hope 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. Together. Without wearing a Jewish star.

MARGOT

I will row and skate – I must be way out of shape.

ANNE

You can do morning exercises with Dr. Pfeiffer.

MARGOT

I'm not that out of shape. Just skinny.

ANNE

We're all skinny. But I'm not so skinny that I won't be able to flirt!

MARGOT

There's ice cream and hot chocolate waiting for us. Think Anne... we may be back in school in September.

ANNE

I wonder if we will be behind.

MARGOT

I bet we'll be ahead of everyone. All we have done for two years is study. Of course, I missed my university exams so officially, I will be one year behind in school. But I won't gripe. I never expected that we would see freedom. And now, we will be allowed to be in the parks! We will be allowed to be everywhere!

ANNE

I wonder if things will be harder than we think 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 two years? Surely, there are others helping our friends. I like to think that somewhere there are people helping Janny...

ANNE

And Jakob. And Hello.

MARGOT

And Heinz and Eva and Sanne 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.) Do you still dream of moving to Palestine?

MARGOT

Yes. I'd love to be a midwife.

ANNE

You always say that but you can aim higher you know. 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 if I'll ever feel truly safe in Amsterdam again. I like the idea of emigrating to Palestine. But I don't know if that will ever be a reality.

ANNE

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

MARGOT

It won't be for many years, silly. First – I need to get my degree. It's a long time away. And listen to you! You want to go further away – all the way to Hollywood.

ANNE

Really! That was my thirteen-year-old dream. I have grown since then. I've always said that I want to travel the world and I still do. Hollywood was the fun dream. I still want to see scads of films! But after writing for two years, I think I would like to continue that journey. I wonder about being a journalist.

MARGOT

Do you still want to publish the diary?

ANNE

I do. I have a lot of work to do on it. Some of my earlier entries are pretty childish. But I think it may be of interest to other young people. We'll see. What will you do with your diary?

MARGOT

Hide it!

ANNE

You may change your mind when you see me traveling the world to show off my diary.

MARGOT

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

ANNE

I am definitely a person of contradiction. First things first. We have to finish our education and of course we have two years of smooching to catch up on.

MARGOT

Ha! What about Peter?

ANNE

He's sweet. But.

MARGOT

But?

ANNE

That's all. But.

MARGOT

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

ANNE

Just think what's ahead.

MARGOT

Everything.

(PETER knocks at the door.)

ANNE

Come on in.

PETER

Is this a private party or can anyone join?

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 – making plans to see each other when the war is over. We're family now. (Looking at Anne.) Even Dr. Pfeiffer.

ANNE

But family that doesn't live together.

PETER

Not when this is over.

ANNE

Whew.

PETER

Your father already 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 lunches and outings. But first, they're going to soak in a hot tub for a full day.

ANNE

Margot is going to be a midwife in Palestine.

PETER

*You* should be a doctor.

ANNE

That's what I said!

MARGOT

And Anne will travel the globe writing about world events.

PETER

You have just made me feel horribly boring.

MARGOT

What will you do?

PETER

Don't laugh. Compared to all of you, my plans 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 later, 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. But I won't paint it. I'll let the wood speak for itself. And if possible, my shop will be both indoors and outdoors because I know never to take the outside for granted again.

MARGOT

Outside! An outside that's safe. An outside of tulips and roses and dahlias. A rushing river. A sky that goes on forever. We're going to hear all those sounds I took for granted: frog warbles, bees buzzing, and the rivers roaring as they crest in the spring. An outside that means life – not death.

ANNE

I'm never going to complain about bad weather again. I won't ever stay inside just because Mother Nature is in a bad mood.

(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 trying to tell us that freedom is coming.

(As the Anthem plays, PETER, MARGOT, and ANNE sit close together. Maybe they join hands. BETTINA is satisfied that all is well. She may blow a kiss to the teens and wave good-bye. The Anthem wafts over the teens as the lights fade to black.)

Scene 15 – October 30, Auschwitz

(Lights up on Auschwitz. JANNY, MARGOT, and ANNE are at attention. BETTINA is in the background. ALL are at attention and waiting. You could have extra prisoners. Have scarves around the women's heads as if they were bald. Burlap or potato sacks over the prisoners. You do not need to recreate the authentic prison garb. The scene is about MARGOT'S choice.)

JANNY

Margot? It's you. I'd know these eyes anywhere.

MARGOT

Janny! How long have you been here?

JANNY

I think one month. It's hard to tell time.

MARGOT

Do you know where your family is?

JANNY

No.

MARGOT

Mother's in the hospital. I don't know if my father is alive. Why are we here? Do you know anything?

JANNY

There are signs that they are dismantling the camp and sending everyone somewhere else. The Russians are getting closer. I've heard the shooting.

MARGOT

If everyone's going, what were we selected for? Maybe I don't want to know.

JANNY

I'm not positive but word is going around that they need people for the munitions factory in another camp. And those that are chosen to work there get another ration of bread and some actual warm clothes that are not filled with lice.

MARGOT

Do you think that could be us?

JANNY

I don't know that I would bet on it but it's a possibility.

MARGOT

Did you hear, Anne? We may be chosen as workers. With extra food. (Beat.) Anne?

ANNE

I heard. I'm ready to work.

MARGOT

I know you are. If we are chosen, we can do it.

(GUARD enters.)

GUARD

Prisoner 83211. Step forward.



(JANNY does so. GUARD circles her.)

GUARD (cont'd)

Strong. Fairly healthy. You'll do. You're going to be transferred to Liebau Labor Camp to work in a munitions factory. You will get one extra meal ration, some warmer clothes and work boots. When you're dismissed, you are to pack your bags immediately. The train leaves tonight. Prisoner 67024! Step Forward!

(MARGOT steps forward.)

A little thin but still healthy. You are also to pack your bags for transfer to Liebau. Prisoner 67023!

(ANNE steps forward.)

GUARD (cont'd)

Very skinny. The skin is not good. Too bad. You are dismissed. You two are to meet me back here in 30 minutes.

MARGOT

My sister is a very hard worker. Ask anyone. They are all impressed with her ability to work hard and keep a cheerful temperament.

GUARD

She's covered in a rash. Scabies, I presume. No. I can't risk infecting the factory workers. She will leave to go to Bergen-Belsen with the transport tomorrow. I only want the two of you.

MARGOT

I can't.

JANNY

Don't be a fool. This is your chance. Don't count on another one.

MARGOT

I won't leave Anne.

ANNE

I'll be fine. You know I can always find someone to be with. I'm good at that.

MARGOT

I want to care for you. I can get you through this. We've been through everything together. We've been lucky so far.

JANNY

Don't count on luck, Margot. Remember? Assess the situation and plan. This is your chance to do the same.

MARGOT

Anne and I have made it this far together. It's just a little bit longer. We'll be fine.

ANNE

Go! I don't want you to stay.

MARGOT

I don't care what you want. I remember the first time I laid eyes on you and I felt this overwhelming need to care for you. That's never gone away. We're stronger together.

JANNY

Would you bet on that?

MARGOT

I'd bet all my cookies if I had any.

(MARGOT looks at the GUARD.)

MARGOT

I won't leave my sister.

GUARD

Your choice. You and your sister you will be transferred to Bergen-Belsen tomorrow at dawn.

(To Janny.)

Pack quickly and meet me back here. Dismissed.

(GUARD exits.)

(JANNY and MARGOT hug and part ways. ANNE and MARGOT exit, BETTINA gently bows her head as they go past her.)

BLACKOUT

EPILOGUE

February, 1945, Bergen-Belsen

(MARGOT and ANNE are still in prison garb and standing at attention. The lights are dim. As "Pavane for a Dead Princess" plays, BETTINA approaches her nieces. MARGOT and ANNE turn upstage. They kneel down and slowly join together as one. BETTINA covers them with a sheet used as a shroud. The music stops. BETTINA kneels by them and embraces her NIECES in a hug.)

END OF PLAY

## NOTES

1. Bettina (Margot's aunt and namesake) died at age 16 from appendicitis in 1914.
2. Margot did have at least one boyfriend. Anne noted that in her letters to her family in Switzerland. She also talked about her own boyfriends. Jakob is an imagining taken from Margot's letter to Anne while in hiding where she described what she needed in a boyfriend. Did Margot's real boyfriend live and go to Palestine? I'd like to think so. We would know so much more if Margot's diary survived.
3. Heinz Geiringer was Margot's first study partner at the Jewish Lyceum. Margot tutored him in Science and Heinz tutored Margot in art. Heinz died in Mauthausen just days before liberation. (Told to me by Eva Schloss, Heinz's sister.)
4. Peter Van Pels worked hard to stay alive. He was used as slave labor in Mauthausen (as was Heinz). When Mauthausen was liberated, Peter was in the infirmary. He died three days after liberation.
5. Janny is modelled after Bloome Evers-Emden – one of Margot's friends at the Jewish Lyceum. It was Bloome who recalled that Margot was chosen to work in the Liebau Labor Camp and turned it down to stay with her sister. "Janny" and all those chosen to for work at Liebau survived.
6. "Bella" is modelled after rowing coach Roos Van Gelder. There is little information on what happened to him but I believe he survived. The newly-surfaced photos of Margot's rowing team were passed on to Van Gelder's nephew who donated them to the Anne Frank House.

SCENE 11