

Remembering Margot
By Claudia Haas
Claudiahaas12@gmail.com

“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

Copyright September 15, 2022
All rights reserved

Remembering Margot

SYNOPSIS: The play is an imagining of Margot Frank's brief life taking into consideration newly published photos showing her love of sports, the outdoors, and her enjoyment of her friends. Yes, there was a very good intellect at play but there was also the carefree times, the typical teenage growing pains, and the hopes and dreams of what she would be when she grew up. Until Bergen Belsen – where she had to make a choice between life or staying with her sister.

Running Time: 35 – 40 minutes

CAST: 8-11 (11 females; 2 males)

BETTINA: (female) 16; Margot's aunt as a child who died at age 16. After the prologue she is spiritual? A ghost? You can decide. Margot's middle name was "Betti" in honor of her aunt. **BETTI** appears when Margot needs strength. She also serves as a protector of her niece.

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

GUARD (female, 20's, no-nonsense but not sadistic; the **GUARD** is in 1945 and is viewed only in the background 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

JANNY (female) 15; Margot's friend

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

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

VOICES:

MIEP (female) 24

TWO MALE VOICES: Use recording or cast

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

CAST FOR 8: 6 female, 2 male

GABY/JANNY

PETER/MALE VOICES

MARGOT/EDITH

JAKOB/MALE VOICES

ANNE

GERTRUDE/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.

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.)

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.)

(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 wear a star.)

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

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 doubly 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. She is both past and present. BETTINA puts her hand over her heart in support of MARGOT. MARGOT does feel something and is at first startled then comforted and possibly puts her hand over her own heart. MARGOT shakes herself and BETTINA disappears.)

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

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.

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 a while.

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.

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

It's nothing. 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 should 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 to attend 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

We'll meet after school. But check with your parents first.

JACKIE

I don't need to check with my parents about meeting friends.

MARGOT

Things are changing. (Beat.) I have to go.

(JACKIE and MARGOT hug good-bye. JACKIE exits. MARGOT exits separately. Lights fade to black.)

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. I don't see my books anywhere.

ANNE

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

(ANNE does a dance pose.)

I don't see my books.

MARGOT

Try under Fred.

ANNE

It's getting late.

MARGOT

You are grumpy.

ANNE

A bit. (Beat.) The rowing team disbanded. Jews can no longer do sports.

MARGOT

I'm sorry.

ANNE

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. I saw a new sign in the park on the way home. "No Jews or Dogs allowed."

MARGOT

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

ANNE

That solves nothing!

MARGOT

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

ANNE

It gives me a sense of belonging somewhere.

MARGOT

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

Ouch!

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

ANNE

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

MARGOT

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

Funny you should mention that. I thought of her today. And when I thought of her, she seemed to appear.

ANNE

Was she a ghost?

MARGOT

No. It's hard to explain. It was like a faraway vision - like a ray of sun hitting your cheek. A little odd but comforting at the same time.

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. *You* 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 – approving - maybe dancing or swaying. MARGOT stops and looks around.)

ANNE (cont'd)

What is it?

MARGOT

I just felt a warm breeze. Almost like a hug.

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. Lights out.)

SCENE 3 – 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

If you had a ball, we could play stickball.

(Right on cue, JAKOB produces a ball. MARGOT grabs a stick from the brush and they "play." There are a couple of volleys and MARGOT whacks the ball into the brush near the river.)

MARGOT

Oh no? Is it lost? I didn't mean to whack it so hard!

JAKOB

Ha! You are deceptively competitive "Miss Margot with the Muscles." I'll find it.

MARGOT

I lost it. I'll find it.

(They go searching.)

JAKOB

I'm usually pretty amazing with stickball. I better practice more if I am going to play with you. I never could stand still for very long.

MARGOT

I love being active in the winter. 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 enjoy the Hebrew classes but you have you noticed the discussions have gotten livelier?

JAKOB

We are living in "lively" times.

(JAKOB produces the ball.)

JAKOB (cont'd)

Found it! 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

Spoons and balls. You do carry a lot around.

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. 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. 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

Usually. I can get riled up but it does no good.

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

A wish that is growing in meaning.

MARGOT

And just like that, the sun is down. My apartment is one block from here. 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 at the same time. They're ... beautiful.

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

JAKOB (cont'd)

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

MARGOT

I should check ... but I suppose... alright ...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 wave at JAKOB as the lights go down.)

SCENE 4 – 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 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 was 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.

He became 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

I'm sorry. You're making me rethink things. 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'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. MARGOT blows JAKOB a kiss after he leaves. The lights fade to black.)

SCENE 5 – February 16, 1942

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

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

And no Jakob.

MARGOT

No.

(Beat.)

ANNE

Sixteen! Almost a grown-up! 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?

MARGOT

ANNE!

(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

I wanted to see you.

(He puts a gift in her hand.)

JAKOB (cont'd)

It looked better this morning. Before I squashed 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.

MARGOT

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 are gone. They must have gotten 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-peek. Tag! We'd run after each other for hours. Let's find a place to sit. 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?

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. Of history. 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 ... need to tell you something. (Beat.) There’s this group ... of resisters. 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 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 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! I want you to know that I will be safe ... somewhere. Resisting. 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.

(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 6 – July 6, 1942

(ANNE and MARGOT are packing.)

ANNE

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

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 should take all my pictures. I'll tape them on the wall of our new bedroom and it will be just like 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

Don't be gloomy! But 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

The weather report in your head is always cloudy. 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.

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 change for a moment. There could be a walk. Footsteps up stairs. A new room. A heavy door slam. And we see or hear 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. The GUARD appears above – somewhere.)

GUARD

PRISONER 67024!

(BETTINA rushes on. The GUARD holds out her arm and uses her hand as a "stop" sign. BETTINA freezes. The GUARD looks at BETTINA as if to say, "she's mine now.")

GUARD

67024! Step forward!

(MARGOT sinks to the floor or the bed. BLACKOUT.)

POSSIBLE INTERMISSION

SCENE 7 – February 26, 1943

(Lights up on ANNE's room in hiding. She now shares a room with Fritz Pfeiffer. ANNE and MARGOT are in the room. BEP knocks on the door.)

BEP (O.S.)

May I?

ANNE

Come in.

(BEP enters.)

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.

ANNE

You didn't tell them you were sleeping over at our secret place?

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. 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 never eating it. You used to be more fun. Not a lot of fun mind you, because/

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.

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 entertaining to see the movie? Or do you refuse to let yourself be entertained by anything?

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

BEP

I have.

ANNE

And?

BEP

He's a good man. I think. Well-dressed. Polite. 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.

ANNE

You should never 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

There's not much to say. We 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

MARGOT (cont'd)

closer anyway... until ... he disappeared in April. I disappeared in the summer. The population of Amsterdam must be dwindling.

ANNE

No more gloomy thoughts. It's your birthday! I'm sorry if I was grouchy. Only happy 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

Can you comb my hair out? Bep ... do you let Bertus kiss you?

MARGOT

Anne!

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.

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 8 - 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 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.

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.

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

MARGOT

Someone’s inside the warehouse.

ANNE

But it’s Sunday. Nobody should be here.

PETER

Shh! Don’t move.

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

PETER

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

MARGOT

I want to go to Mother.

PETER

Not yet.

(PETER exits.)

MARGOT

I have to get out of here!

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

ANNE (cont'd)

Stop!

(Another crash. Then we hear a loud voice (MR. VAN PELS.)

MALE VOICE

GET OUT! OUT NOW!

MARGOT

Why is he yelling? Now someone will know we are 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. Silence. Suddenly PETER opens 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

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.

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? 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. Is this a life? Staying silent all day for two years? Living on cabbage? Jumping at every sound that fills these rooms? And then there's the waiting. Is this the day we are caught? Why do you think I go back to my Latin everyday – the language is so complicated it pushes everything else away.

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

VOICES

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

MARGOT

They did go to the police!

PETER

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

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

PETER

They’re gone.

MARGOT

They’ll be back.

(Blackout.)

SCENE 9 – Evening of June 6, 1944

(Lights up on ANNE. MARGOT enters - jubilant.)

MARGOT

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.

ANNE

We’ll be walking out of here soon. Together. Without wearing a Jewish star.

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’ve done for two years is study. Of course, I missed my university exams so I will be one year behind in school. But I won’t gripe. I never expected to see freedom. And now, 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.

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. 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

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. 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 mysterious thoughts. 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.

(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. 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.

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

Compared to all of you, my plans are modest. One day, I'm going to build furniture – better than the bookcases I made here. They were 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. I do like working with my hands.

MARGOT

It's a worthy, beautiful dream.

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

MARGOT

I haven't heard this in years.

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. The Anthem wafts over the teens as the lights fade to black.)

Scene 10 – October 30, Auschwitz

(Lights up on Auschwitz. JANNY, MARGOT, and ANNE are at attention. BETTINA is in the background. 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

Why are we here? Do you know anything?

JANNY

There's talk that they are dismantling the camp and sending everyone somewhere else. The Russians are getting closer. Word is going around that they need people for the munitions factory in another camp. Those that are chosen to work there get another ration of bread and some warm clothes that are not filled with lice.

(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, a coat, and work boots. Pack your bags immediately. The train leaves tonight. Prisoner 67024! Step Forward!

(MARGOT steps forward.)

Thin – but healthy. You are also to pack your bags for transfer to Liebau. Prisoner 67023!

(ANNE steps forward.)

GUARD (cont'd)

Too skinny. The skin is not good. You won't do. You are dismissed. You two are to meet me back here in 30 minutes.

MARGOT

My sister is a good worker. Ask anyone. And she has 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. 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 move upstage and remain frozen.)

BLACKOUT

EPILOGUE

February, 1945, Bergen-Belsen

(MARGOT and ANNE are still frozen but now in Bergen-Belsen. The lights are dim. The sisters join hands. There could be music. BETTINA enters and approaches her nieces. SHE stands above them and takes each of their hands. MARGOT and ANNE kneel on the ground 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. Music and stage directions are optional.
2. Bettina (Margot's aunt and namesake) died at age 16 from appendicitis in 1914.
3. 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.
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