

Remembering Margot

“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

SYNOPSIS: The play is an imagining of Margot'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 good intellect at play, a studious, obedient child. But there were also the carefree times, the teenage angst, and the hopes and dreams of who she would be when she grew up. Young Margot always took care to be kind but it wasn't until she went into hiding that a true depression set in. Before hiding, life was ripe with possibilities until Auschwitz – where she had to make a choice between life or staying with her sister.

RUNNING TIME: 35 minutes

CAST (LARGE): 13 (11 female, 2 male)

9 (with doubling, 7 female, 2 male)

BETTINA (female) 16; Margot's aunt as a child in Prologue and later a protective spirit.

Margot's middle name was "Betti" in honor of her aunt.

EDITH (female) 14; Margot's mother as a child (in Prologue).

GUARD (female) 18-20; no-nonsense but not sadistic.

MARGOT (female) 15-18; bookworm, peacemaker, outdoor enthusiast.

GERTRUDE (female) 15; part of the rowing team, can be dramatic.

JACKIE (female) 15; part of the rowing team, kind, close friend to Margot. Optimist.

GABY (female) 15; part of the rowing team, a bit oblivious to the times, fun-loving.

BELLA (female) 19-20; rowing team coach; a realist.

ANNE (female) 12-15; Margot's spirited younger sister; posthumously a famous diarist.

BEP (female) 18; Sweet, one of the youngest helpers in the secret annex.

JANNY (female) 17; Margot's friend from the past, realist.

JAKOB* (male) 15-16; Margot's first boyfriend; spirited and determined.

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

*FOR MALE VOICE, USE JAKOB OR RECORDING

CAST (WITH DOUBLING): 9 (7 female, 2 male)

BETTINA

GERTRUDE

BELLA/GUARD

GABY/JANNY

JACKIE/BEP

MARGOT

ANNE/EDITH

JAKOB/MALE VOICE

PETER

REMEMBERING MARGOT

TIME: Prologue – 1914.

Scenes: 1941-1945

Epilogue: Auschwitz/Bergen-Belsen 1945

PLACE: Episodic scenes: Riverbank in Amsterdam, Frank's apartment in Amsterdam, apartment courtyard, Secret Annex, Auschwitz/Bergen-Belsen

Use area staging with suggestive pieces instead of formal sets so the play can flow.

DESIGN NOTES: This is a remembrance and not a documentary. As such, don't think about creating authentic prison garb for Auschwitz or Edwardian dress for Prologue. A simple top, long skirt and ribbons for the prologue. Skirts/pants, blouses/shirts for the 1940's scenes. An ill-fitted tunic or sack for Auschwitz. As this is memory, think about viewing the play through gauze.

DIALOGUE NOTE: //s indicate overlapping dialogue.

REMEMBERING MARGOT

Prologue – Spring 1914

(Lights up on EDITH and BETTINA in their shared bedroom. They are dressed simply for those Edwardian times. BETTINA should be in something light colored and simple that she will be in for the remainder of the play.)

EDITH

I'm sorry about the party. You're sixteen – you should have had a ball. Why do countries have to go to war?

BETTINA

I don't mind a bit. I was worried Mother and Father were going to try and make a match between me and Ezra and I am not ready. There's still so much to explore. I want to see the world – especially Paris.

EDITH

Father says we're invading France. They probably wouldn't welcome German visitors.

BETTINA

People believe this will be a quick war – maybe done by 1915. And then I will be seventeen and you will be fifteen and we could explore Paris together.

EDITH

I like staying close to home. I like feeling safe. The war scares me. If we can invade other countries, then other countries can invade us. Mother says that we each have a guardian angel and if we pray to them, they will send those prayers to the heavens. I like that idea.

BETTINA

I like it, also. I don't know if it's true. I do know that I would do everything in my power to keep you safe. I'll fight off anyone who tries to harm you.

EDITH

You sound like a soldier.

BETTINA

Mother says I have a fighter's heart – ready to dive into an argument no matter what the cost. (Beat.) I think she prays for me a lot.

EDITH

She prays for all of us.

BETTINA

True. But you are her easy child. You obey. I question.

EDITH

It's easier to obey.

BETTINA

Both ways have their merits. We can learn a lot from each other. Look out the window.

EDITH

It's a starry night.

BETTINA

Let's go outside and visit them. When I see the night sky, I think anything is possible.

(EDITH starts to exit. Lights dim. We hear the GUARD from the future. BETTINA freezes.)

GUARD'S VOICE

Prisoner 67024. Step forward!

(BETTINA is shaken.)

EDITH

Bettina? What is it?

BETTINA

I ... nothing. Come on. The stars await.

(EDITH and BETTINA exit. Lights fade to black.)

SCENE 1 – October 1941

(Sounds of oars in the river may be heard. Wind sounds, bird sounds – suggestions of 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.

(Lights up on a riverbank in Amsterdam. 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 appear. Their rowing clothes could be scattered about or they carry satchels. They may be enjoying some fruit. BELLA wears a Jewish star. When MARGOT appears, she will also be wearing the Jewish star.)

BELLA

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

GERTRUDE

She's saving a frog she found in her sack. She's always saving something.

(MARGOT enters.)

MARGOT

Sorry. I found this tiny frog and I had to bring him to the trees where all the frogs congregate. He was 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 already tried twice and I turned away. But tonight – I will allow it.

(Squeals.)

BELLA

Kissing can be a fun sport but let's focus on rowing. I need to talk about today.

JACKIE

You were amazing, Margot.

MARGOT

All that tennis we did in the 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. We are well-situated for the upcoming competitions. Which makes what I need to say difficult. I received a notice. It states: “As of October 1941, Jews may not be members of associations or sporting clubs with non-Jewish members.” As such, this is my last time with you. I shouldn't have done so today but I wanted one more time with my championship team.

JACKIE

Margot!

BELLA

Yes, I am sorry. The ban also includes Margot.

(MARGOT is stunned.)

GERTRUDE

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

JACKIE

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

GERTRUDE

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

BELLA

I agree and I'm 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?

GABY, GERTRUDE, JACKIE

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 say good-bye.

BELLA

Then don't. Take a walk by the river. Talk about your schools, your families, your hopes. 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 want. I want you to remember that you are all astonishing. Stay astonishing.

(A group hug with BELLA and BELLA exits.)

GABY

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

(A beat. Nobody believes that. More hugs. GABY and GERTRUDE exit. MARGOT is quiet. BETTINA appears. MARGOT shivers.)

JACKIE

Margot?

MARGOT

A storm is coming.

JACKIE

It's just some clouds.

BETTINA

I'll help you.

(MARGOT hears her. JACKIE does not.)

MARGOT

I need to figure it out.

BETTINA

I'm here.

MARGOT

I know.

JACKIE

What did you say?

MARGOT

Just thinking out loud.

JACKIE

Shall we just sit for a while and catch up?

MARGOT

I would love to but I think for right now – I need to go. My Hebrew class starts soon and I'd like to be there. I told them I would be absent until rowing is done and now – it's done.

JACKIE

Just because we can't row together doesn't mean, we can't visit. When can we get together?

MARGOT

Check with your parents.

JACKIE

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

MARGOT

Times are changing. Check with your parents. (Beat.) I need to go.

(JACKIE and MARGOT hug good-bye and JACKIE exits. Lights darken In the dimming light we hear the GUARD.)

GUARD

Prisoner 67024! Step forward!

(MARGOT gasps and looks at BETTINA. BETTINA takes MARGOT'S hand and steps forward. The two stand at attention as the lights go to black.)

SCENE 2 – 30 minutes later

(Lights up in Margot's and Anne's shared bedroom. Photos are everywhere – including one of BETTINA. ANNE has cut out pictures from magazines of the Dutch Royal Family, Fred Astaire, and Ginger Rogers. Photos of other movie stars may be on the wall. ANNE is trying to decide where to put her new photos. MARGOT enters.)

ANNE

Margot! I need your help.

MARGOT

Not now. I'm late for class.

ANNE

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

MARGOT

Fred and Ginger are not important right this minute. Getting to class is. Where are my books?

ANNE

I saw them ... somewhere. What do you think of the Royal Family? They're important.

MARGOT

They sort of ran away, didn't they? 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. Where is my Hebrew book?

ANNE

Try under Fred. You are grumpy.

MARGOT

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

ANNE

I'm sorry.

MARGOT

It's not enough that we had to change schools, Father cannot run his business, and we can't leave the country – now – the Nazis are robbing us of the outside. I saw a new sign in the park today. "No Jews or Dogs Allowed."

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 table.)

Ouch!

(SHE picks up the books and finds her Hebrew book.)

And here it is. Under everything.

ANNE

Your book just bit you! It was in the open all along – just hiding in plain sight.

MARGOT

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

ANNE

The class is almost over. Stay here and help me. You should put Aunt Bettina on your wall.

MARGOT

Funny you should mention her. I thought of her today – and when I thought of her – I saw her. I even fancied I heard her.

ANNE

Was she a ghost? She must have been a ghost.

MARGOT

No. More like a faraway vision – like a ray of sun hitting your cheek. It was comforting.

ANNE

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

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

MARGOT

My lips are ticklish.

ANNE

Everything about you is ticklish. You're so sensitive.

(MARGOT tickles ANNE and they tussle and squeal. BETTINA appears in the background and blows them a kiss as the lights fade.)

SCENE 3 – December, late afternoon, 1941

(There's a growing darkness as winter approaches. It's chilly. MARGOT and JAKOB are walking home from Hebrew class. They are near the riverbank. JAKOB has a stick that he moves through the "brush" as they walk.)

MARGOT

If we had a ball, we could play stickball.

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

MARGOT (cont'd)

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 get it.

(THEY go searching.)

JAKOB

I'm usually pretty amazing with stickball. I never could stand still 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. (Beat.) I remember seeing you at the rink.

MARGOT

You ... noticed?

JAKOB

Yes.

MARGOT

I loved it. I had a sport for every season. Thank goodness for these classes or I'd have little to do. I love learning Hebrew. I could do without the discussions afterwards.

JAKOB

I don't know. Lively discussions for lively times.

(JAKOB finds the ball.)

JAKOB (cont'd)

Found it. Let's walk along the river. It's quieter so we can talk. And I have an ulterior motive.

(JAKOB pulls out a spoon.)

MARGOT

A spoon and a ball. You do carry a lot around.

JAKOB

I like to dig around riverbanks.

MARGOT

Buried treasure?

JAKOB

Better. River rock. Whoa! And look at that. I just got lucky. Look how smooth it is – perfect for etching. Now that big rock sticking out of the water looks promising.

MARGOT

You'll get wet and catch cold.

JAKOB

It won't be the first time. But it looks cracked. Just as well. My mother will go off the rails if she sees me bringing more rocks into the house. It's getting too dark to see anything else.

MARGOT

Darkness comes fast in December. 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 season is one of rest. The world sleeps so it can 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. I found the perfect rock, the best walking companion, and the class discussions energize me.

MARGOT

They're hardly discussions.

JAKOB

They're hope. It doesn't hurt to try and figure out how to resist the occupation.

MARGOT

Resisting is useless.

JAKOB

Resisting is never useless. In order to make something happen, you need to dream it first.

MARGOT

Do you think we will ever be free again?

JAKOB

Yes, and I intend to be here when it happens.

MARGOT

There's too much anger in the discussions. It makes me uncomfortable..

JAKOB

You're a peacemaker. But 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

I'm the middle child. I had better see both sides or I will always have one brother pummeling me. Even if I argue one point of view, I may believe the opposite.

MARGOT

You are a contradiction.

JAKOB

As is life. As is nature. We are at its whims. When I am etching a drawing onto a rock I think, "I am in control of you. I am changing nature." Is it true? Probably not. But I make my mark.

MARGOT

What will you etch into this one?

JAKOB

"Next year in Jerusalem."

MARGOT

The seder wish.

JAKOB

Or “May 1942 bring freedom.”

MARGOT

I like that. Thank-you for walking me home. I’m just around the bend. See the candle in that building? That’s where I turn.

JAKOB

Someone is lighting the way for us.

MARGOT

We should be doing that. It’s almost Hanukkah. The time of year when we light the way for others.

JAKOB

I doubt we’ll see many menorahs in windows this year.

MARGOT

I can make it the rest of the way alone. Everything’s lit. Thanks for the company.

JAKOB

You’re welcome. You are ... different than any girl I’ve ever met. Those knowing eyes... they’re beautiful.

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

JAKOB (cont’d)

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

MARGOT

I should check... but I think... probably...

JAKOB

I’ll wait until your inside the door.

MARGOT

Good luck sneaking the rock into your house.

JAKOB

No worries. I’m a “Master Sneak.”

(MARGOT exits giving one last wave as the lights go down.)

SCENE 4 – February 16, 1942

(Lights up in MARGOT'S home. It is her birthday.)

ANNE

Did you have a good birthday?

MARGOT

I did, thank-you. You all made it so special.

ANNE

No one from the rowing club came this year.

MARGOT

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

ANNE

And no Jakob. He's always here.

MARGOT

I'm sure I'll see him... sometime.

(Beat.)

ANNE

Sixteen! What's it like now that you're a woman? You sort of have this woman's body and everything. Is it different?

MARGOT

Anne! No. I don't know. It's hard to talk about.

ANNE

Come on. I can't ask Mother because she'll just say, "Oh, Anne." And Pim has no idea. Who's going to tell me these things if you won't? Just tell me about kissing. I think about it a lot. Mainly with Peter. Not with Hello. Even though I think Peter doesn't want to kiss me but Hello does. Do I have to wait until I am sixteen to be kissed?

MARGOT

Oh, 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 off the street – and I thought – I look old enough to be a man so I just ran and hid. I was afraid to go home and afraid to come here.

MARGOT

It's probably not safe. You should go home.

JAKOB

I wanted to see you.

(HE puts a gift into her hand.)

Happy Birthday. It looked better this morning. Before I squashed it by holding it tightly for hours.

MARGOT

Romeo and Juliet.

JAKOB

In English. I thought it would be a good way to practice our English.

MARGOT

How did you find a book in English in Amsterdam?

JAKOB

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

MARGOT

Thank you. Now, you need to get home before curfew.

JAKOB

Yes, Mother. But ... the courtyard is empty. I thought we could take a walk.

MARGOT

It's not safe.

JAKOB

I'm a Master Sneak, remember? No one's about – I checked. Come on... a short stroll?

(ANNE appears with 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. No one's about. It's spooky.

JAKOB

Not true. There's a starry sky looking down on us.

MARGOT

We've spent so much time together the last few months and...

JAKOB

It's been fun, right? Illuminating? Delightful? Is that what you want to say?

MARGOT

All of that and... I want to know more about you. What did you want to be when you grew up – before all these “interesting times” happened?

JAKOB

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

MARGOT

It was my first guess.

JAKOB

You have good intuition. Now I am thinking I would like to teach. What about you? You excel at everything.

MARGOT

Maybe nursing.

JAKOB

I can see that. A teacher and a nurse is a good combination.

(Police sirens.)

JAKOB (cont'd)

Get down!

(And they quickly crouch down and are very still. The sirens pass.)

You just got your first lesson in being a Master Sneak. You get an “A” as usual. (Beat.) I need to tell you something. There’s this group of resistors. They provide new identities, hide Jews... I can’t tell you much about it. These days it’s not good to know too much. (Beat.) I may join them.

MARGOT

That’s 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. (Beat.) In case I disappear. I made up my mind. If I am called up, I won’t go to Labor Camp. And I won’t be stuffed in a wagon. I want you to know that if the time comes that you don’t hear from me, don’t think the worst. Do not think I don’t want to see you. Believe that I am somewhere safe. Resisting. Keep this for me. Read it. Hold it. Have faith in it.

MARGOT

“Freedom in 1942.” Do you believe that?

JAKOB

It’s only February. There are ten more months to go before it is 1942. Freedom next year is possible. Maybe it won’t happen until 1943, but it will happen. And when it does, our families will share the seder table. Hold on to that hope. Promise?

MARGOT

Promise. (Beat.) It’s probably curfew. You had better go.

(There is a brief affectionate gesture between them. BETTINA appears in the background. MARGOT watches as JAKOB exits. MARGOT lifts her hand to wave good-bye and stays frozen. JAKOB is gone. BETTINA approaches MARGOT and lifts

her hand to beckon MARGOT to come in. MARGOT reaches to BETTINA. BETTINA turns to go inside and MARGOT follows her in.)

Scene 5 – July 1942

(ANNE and MARGOT are packing.)

ANNE

Curlers? Check. Royal Family? Yes. Fred and Ginger. Definitely. Now, which clothes?

MARGOT

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

ANNE

That's silly. 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 and it will be just like we're at home. Pim says it's probably just for two months. The war will end sometime in September 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'm glad my birthday was last month and I don't have to celebrate it in hiding.

MARGOT

Maybe your fourteenth birthday will be in hiding.

ANNE

That's eleven months away. The weather report in your head is always so cloudy. Who knows? Maybe we'll be home in August.

MARGOT

Don't count on it. That's three weeks away.

ANNE

Hello is coming in a few hours to go for walk with me. I wonder what he'll think when no one answers the door. I wonder if he'll worry or maybe he will think we really have gone to Switzerland or maybe/

MARGOT

/Shh Anne. Don't chatter so much.

(A beat as they close up their satchels.)

ANNE

It's strange that they would call up Pim. Isn't he too old for labor camp? Although he is smart. Maybe the Germans think he could be of some help. 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. And if they don't get me – they will arrest the entire family. You're losing your home because of me. You should be enjoying summer and I've ruined your life.

ANNE

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

MARGOT

I'm so sorry.

(The lights dim. ANNE and MARGOT put on coats and take one last look at their room and exit. Lights change and we see MARGOT walk into a new room. It is the "hiding room" – with a bed and a small desk where we will be in for the remainder of the play. MARGOT looks around. A door slams. MARGOT freezes. We hear the GUARD'S voice.)

GUARD'S VOICE

PRISONER 67024!

(We hear another door slam – it may sound like the slamming of a jail cell. BETTINA enters the room where MARGOT is frozen.)

GUARD 'S VOICE (cont'd)

67024. Step forward.

(MARGOT does so – obedient as always. Then she sinks to the floor. BETTINA kneels next to her.)

MARGOT

I can't...

BETTINA

I will help you.

I can't/ MARGOT

/Shh. BETTINA

/Cope. MARGOT

(BLACKOUT.)

SCENE 6 – February 16, 1943

(Lights up on ANNE'S room in hiding (the room we just left). ANNE is sharing a room with Fritz Pfeiffer. There are photos on the wall. ANNE and MARGOT are in the room. BEP knocks at the door.)

May I? BEP (O.S.)

Come in. ANNE

(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 about sleeping over at our secret place?

BEP
Of course not. I could be in as much trouble as you for helping to hide you. 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 here and we are having a sleepover just like in the olden days! It will be such fun. And maybe you can get Margot out of the dumps.

MARGOT

I am not in the dumps!

ANNE

You are! You kept to yourself all day – reading, studying, pushing your food but not eating it. Birthdays are supposed to be fun.

MARGOT

I'm sorry that I don't find anything fun about turning sixteen hiding from the world. We've been here since July and now it is February – almost eight long months here without any sign of getting out soon.

BEP

Happily, I brought some “fun” things for you, Margot. First – a movie magazine for Anne.

ANNE

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

Why is news from Hollywood important to you?

ANNE

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

MARGOT

People will talk about the war.

ANNE

We are living the war. We won'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 are you against being entertained?

MARGOT

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

BEP

Let's nip this conversation in the bud. Margot, I have the weekly for you with all the latest international news. And – tada! – a new Latin book for your birthday.

MARGOT

Level two! It's perfect. Thank-you. For this and for everything you do. I'm excited to open it.

ANNE

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

MARGOT

It's a new way of thinking. It reminds me of trying to stretch my brain trying to learn Hebrew. Someday, I'll be able to read Ovid and Cicero in the original Latin.

ANNE

And then you could learn Greek!

MARGOT

I could, couldn't I? That would be extra special.

ANNE

I was kidding. Bep, tell us about real things. Have you gone on another date with Bertus?

BEP

I have.

ANNE

And...

BEP

He's – a good man. 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 a boyfriend tell you how to wear your hair. Hair is very personal. I know.

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 you had a boyfriend, Margot. You do keep quiet about some things.

MARGOT

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

ANNE

A lot. He was over all the time and he brought you presents. He was smitten. I know all the signs.

BEP

I want to know more about him. Come on, Margot. Come clean.

MARGOT

There's not much to say. We didn't have enough time to figure things out. All around us, people were disappearing. He disappeared in April. I disappeared in July. The population of Amsterdam must be dwindling.

ANNE

No more gloomy thoughts. It's your birthday! Let's make-believe everything is normal and we're at home. I know – let's do our hair as if we were going to a ball and wanted to look – absolutely ravishing. Can you do my hair like this?

(ANNE shows BEP a picture of BETTINA.)

BEP

Oh she's pretty. Who is she?

ANNE

Our Aunt Bettina.

BEP

She looks like Margot. Where does she live? Is she somewhere safe?

MARGOT

I wouldn't exactly call it safe. She died when she was sixteen.

BEP

I'm so sorry.

ANNE

Sometimes Margot sees her.

BEP

Now, that's interesting.

MARGOT

I – feel her presence. I think Mother does, too. That's why she doesn't want the photo in her room. It makes her too sad.

ANNE

No more "sad" talk. Can you brush out my hair and maybe put some of it up?

BEP

I brought extra hairpins.

(BEP starts brushing ANNE'S hair. MARGOT plays with her own hair.)

ANNE

Bep... do you let Bertus kiss you?

MARGOT

Anne!

ANNE

How can you find things out if you don't ask questions?

BEP

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

ANNE

Is it soft or itchy? Do your lips burn? Or is everything soggy? 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? Tell me or I'm going to tickle it out of you.

MARGOT

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 7 – April 11, 1944

(Lights up in ANNE'S room. PETER is doing English homework; MARGOT is doing her Latin. ANNE is cutting photos out of magazines.)

PETER

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

MARGOT

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

PETER

It just seems like it's extra work.

ANNE

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

MARGOT

I did my homework. This is for extra credit.

ANNE

Who are you trying to impress?

MARGOT

No one. I'm just doing it for fun.

(There is a loud crash. Footsteps. MARGOT and ANNE move next to each other and embrace. PETER puts his fingers to his lips motioning them to stay quiet.)

MARGOT (cont'd)

Someone's inside the warehouse.

ANNE

But it's Sunday. Nobody should be here.

PETER

Shh! Don't move.

(More noises, door rattling, maybe another crash. PETER takes ANNE'S scissors.)

PETER (cont'd)

Maybe we're being robbed again. Do not move from here. Do not go to check anything. Leave the door closed. No matter what happens, do not leave here until Miep arrives in the morning.

(PETER exits.)

MARGOT

I have to get out of here!

(MARGOT starts to go to the door. ANNE holds her back.)

ANNE

Stop!

(Another crash. Then we hear a loud voice (Mr. Van Pels.)

MALE VOICE

GET OUT! NOW!

MARGOT

Why is he yelling? Now someone will know we are here.

(ANNE puts her hand over MARGOT'S mouth. There is a moment of silence. Maybe footsteps. After a moment, ANNE slowly gets off the bed and lays down on the floor. She puts her ear to the floor to see if she hears anything. Suddenly, PETER enters. The SISTERS jump.)

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 being robbed. The last time the thieves made off with all of our food coupons. These two were overturning crates and rattling the bookcase. It was too chancy to let them stay.

MARGOT

They're probably going 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 have to go somewhere else.

ANNE

Where Margot? You're smart. Where shall we go?

PETER

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

MARGOT

In 1943, I spent my seventeenth birthday in these four small rooms. A few months ago, I turned eighteen in these same little rooms. There is no end in sight. I used to yearn for the outdoors. Now I think the next time we go outside - it will be to die.

ANNE

Stop! Thinking like that will get us nowhere.

MARGOT

We have to face the truth. Is this a life? Staying silent for days on end for almost two years? Living on cabbage? Jumping every time we hear a new sound? And then there's the waiting. Is this the day we are caught? Why do you think I go over my Latin every day? It's so complicated it pushes my fears away. But only for a short time. The terrors always return.

(Police sirens are heard. MARGOT, ANNE, and PETER freeze. The sirens fade away.)

PETER

They're not coming here.

MARGOT

Yet. Eventually, they will find us.

PETER

We'll be fine. We're going to make it, Margot.

(Beat. Does anyone believe this?)

PETER

I'm going to help your fathers check out the warehouse.

(PETER exits.)

MARGOT

I'm going to check on Mother. She must be rattled.

(ANNE nods. MARGOT gives her a hug. She steps outside the doorway and tries to breathe. BETTINA appears.)

MARGOT

I can't. I wish I could just go to sleep and never wake up.

BETTINA

You're needed.

MARGOT

I just take up space.

BETTINA

You're needed.

(Blackout.)

SCENE 8 – Evening of June 6, 1944

(Maybe we hear the sounds of the radio announcing D-Day. Your choice. Lights up.
ANNE is writing in her diary. MARGOT enters – jubilant.)

MARGOT

Can you believe it?

ANNE

I know. It's not hope anymore. The Americans are here.

MARGOT

They're in France. They're coming to free us. We'll be walking out of here soon. Together. Without wearing a Jewish star. Who knows? We may be back in school by September.

ANNE

I wonder if we'll be behind.

MARGOT

I bet we'll be ahead of everyone. All we've done for two years is study. I did miss my university exams so I will be a year behind everyone. But I won't gripe. I never expected to see freedom.

ANNE

I wonder if things will be hard on the outside. We don't know where any of our friends are. I've had some dreadful nightmares about them.

MARGOT

Now who's being gloomy? Look at all the help we've 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 over.

(They may have a hug and a shriek – letting off a little steam – but now it's for happiness.)

What will you do when you're free?

MARGOT

Take a long, hot bath. Wash away all my gloomy thoughts. What about you?

ANNE

Run and yell and skip and laugh loudly and eat ice cream until I am sick!

MARGOT

Are you still thinking of publishing your diary?

ANNE

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

MARGOT

Hide it! It's so personal.

ANNE

Are you thinking of Jakob?

MARGOT

And others. I do wonder if Jakob and I will be the same people together that we were two years ago.

ANNE

Probably not.

MARGOT

That's reassuring.

ANNE

I mean, even if we spent the last two years on the outside, we still would have changed. We have gone from childhood to almost adults. So of course we're different. But we still carry who we were inside us. So the affection could still be there. What did you used to say? "Times change, people change but what will always remain fast and steady is the affection that your friends feel for you."

MARGOT

You actually remember something I said!

ANNE

What nobody realizes about me is that I can chatter and pay attention at the same time. Maybe you and Jakob will have grown differently but your earlier affection will stay the same.

MARGOT

If/

ANNE

/Don't think that. He's still with us.

(PETER knocks at the door.)

ANNE

Come 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. Do you have any plans?

ANNE

Margot is going to take a bath.

PETER

A worthy plan.

MARGOT

And Anne is going to go outside and scream.

PETER

I may join her.

ANNE

I guess the first step will be going back to school.

PETER

My parents would like that. I'm not much for taking classes. When I'm done with schooling, I want to work with my hands.

MARGOT

You can build more bookcases!

PETER

But better than the ones I made here. They were all from scrap. One day, I'll pick out the lumber myself. A table made from cherry wood, bookcases from oak – different woods for different pieces. I do like working with my hands.

MARGOT

It's a beautiful dream.

PETER

Thanks. Be sure to tell that to my father.

(We hear the Dutch National Anthem. The three 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 everyone that freedom is coming.

(The anthem plays. The three teens listen together and let it waft over them. Maybe they hold hands. Maybe BETTINA appears in the background and blows them a kiss as the lights fade to black.)

SCENE 9 – September, 1944, Auschwitz

(Lights up on a bare stage. JANNY, MARGOT and ANNE are at Auschwitz wearing ill-fitted tunics and a scarf over their heads. Maybe a horn blows. JANNY approaches MARGOT and ANNE.)

JANNY

Margot! It is you. I'd know those eyes anywhere.

MARGOT

Janny! How long have you been here?

JANNY

A few weeks – maybe a month. It's hard to tell. When did you arrive?

MARGOT

We left Westerbork on September third – so we've just been here a few days. Why were we asked to stay here and not report to work? Do you know anything?

JANNY

There's talk that they're dismantling the camp and sending everyone somewhere else. The Russians are getting closer. Maybe they want to send us to work at a munitions factory. Let's hope so. I hear you get more food and warmer clothes if you are selected.

(The GUARD enters. BETTINA is in the background.)

GUARD

Prisoner 63211. Step forward.

(JANNY does so. The GUARD circles her.)

GUARD (cont'd)

Strong. Fairly healthy. Eyes clear. Skin clear. You'll do. You're to be transported to Liebau Labor Camp to work in a munitions factory. Pack your bags. The train leaves in an hour. Prisoner 67024. Step Forward!

(MARGOT steps forward.)

GUARD (cont'd)

Thin. Eyes clear. Skin clear. You can do the work. Pack your bags for transfer to Liebau. Prisoner 67023!

(ANNE steps forward.)

Very skinny. But that's to be expected. Eyes somewhat clear. Skin – not good. Covered in a rash. You won't do. Dismissed. You will be transferred to Bergen Belsen tomorrow morning. As for you two, meet me back here in thirty minutes.

MARGOT

My sister is a good worker. Ask anyone. And she has a cheerful temperament. She never complains.

GUARD

She's covered in a rash. Probably scabies. She'll infect the other factory workers. She will be transported to Bergen Belsen. I only want the two of you.

MARGOT

I can't. I won't leave my sister.

JANNY

There may not be another opportunity.

BETTINA

Go to Liebau. Leave this wretched place.

MARGOT

You want me to leave Anne here alone?

ANNE

I won't be alone. You know I always make friends. Go!

JANNY

She's right.

BETTINA

Go. I'll stay here and watch over Anne.

MARGOT

No! I will watch over Anne.

ANNE

Margot?

MARGOT

It's a promise I made to myself long ago.

(ANNE and MARGOT look at each other.)

I'm staying.

GUARD

Your choice. You and your sister will be transferred to Bergen Belsen tomorrow morning. Prisoner 63211, pack quickly and meet me back here in thirty minutes. Dismissed.

(GUARD exits. JANNY, MARGOT and ANNE hug and part ways.)

Blackout

EPILOGUE – February 1945 – Bergen Belsen

(The lights are dim. There could be music. MARGOT and ANNE are still frozen but holding hands and now in Bergen-Belsen. BETTINA is upstage of them. BETTINA holds out her hands and MARGOT and ANNE turn upstage and move to take one of BETTINA'S hand. They exit as we hear MARGOT'S voice.)

MARGOT'S VOICE

“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 interest at heart.” Your friend, Margot Frank.

(The stage is now bare as we go to blackout.)

END OF PLAY (Notes follow.)

NOTES ON REMEMBERING MARGOT

1. Music and directions are suggestions and not prescriptive.
2. Bettina died at age 16 in 1914 – possibly from appendicitis.
3. Margot did have at least one boyfriend. Anne mentions this a few times in her letters to family in Switzerland. Jakob is an imagining taken from Margot's letter to Anne while in hiding in which she talked about what she needed from a boyfriend.
4. Peter Van Pels worked hard to stay alive. He was used as slave labor in a sub camp of Mauthausen. When the camp was liberated, Peter was sick 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 had been chosen to work in the Liebau Labor Camp and turned it down to stay with Anne. "Janny" and all those who went to Liebau survived.
6. "Bella" is modelled after rowing coach Roos Van Gelder. The newly surfaced photos of Margot with her rowing team and enjoying the friendship of the team were passed on to Van Gelder's nephew who donated them to the Anne Frank house.

