

SCENE 5 – December 1941
From REMEMBERING MARGOT
By Claudia Haas
Claudiahaas12@gmail.com

(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.

(MARGOT retrieves a letter.)

You can read it.

JAKOB

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

MARGOT

He was addicted to barbiturates. He just had to take a few more... he knew what would happen. I don't think he ever got over the loss of his family.

JAKOB

You don't know that.

MARGOT

I know that if I lost my family, the pain would never leave.

JAKOB

So, you are understanding of suicide.

MARGOT

Yes and no. If Uncle Leon hadn't killed himself, would Aunt Nanette have made a life for herself and little Jean-Michel? Would Jean not get addicted to pain killers? When pain spirals out of control, how do you stop future pain? I think about what happens if you lose your family. Even if

MARGOT (cont'd)

you did everything in your power to save them, are you then justified to kill yourself? Or are you condemned to live a life of sorrow?

JAKOB

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

MARGOT

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

JAKOB

She was thirteen.

MARGOT

Old enough to concoct a crazy plan of sleep potions.

JAKOB

You're making me think.

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

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

MARGOT

If it's about the weekly fight about Palestine, I'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.)