

The Diary of Anne Frank, Act I

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BACKGROUND

Anne Frank was a young Jewish girl living in Amsterdam during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands in World War II. Fearing for their lives, the Frank family was forced into hiding. The diary that Anne kept during their time in hiding is one of the most famous and heartbreaking pieces of literature from the Holocaust. Anne's diary gained recognition both for its historical significance and for her incredible talent as a writer and storyteller. Tragically, Anne died in a concentration camp just weeks before it was liberated by British soldiers. The play you will read was based on her life and diary.

SCAN FOR
MULTIMEDIA 

NOTES

Characters

Anne Frank

Otto Frank

Edith Frank

Margot Frank

Miep Gies

Mr. Kraler

Mr. Dussel

Peter Van Daan

Mrs. Van Daan

Mr. Van Daan

1. **carillon** (KAR uh lon) *n.* set of bells, each producing one note of the scale.

2. **blackout curtains** dark curtains that conceal all lights that might be visible to bombers from the air.

CLOSE READ

ANNOTATE: Mark details in paragraphs 1–5 that describe the dimensions, or sizes, of the various rooms.

QUESTION: Why do the playwrights note these details of the setting?

CONCLUDE: What is the effect of these details?

3. **barrel organ** mechanical musical instrument often played by street musicians in past decades.

Act I

Scene 1

- 1 *[The scene remains the same throughout the play. It is the top floor of a warehouse and office building in Amsterdam, Holland. The sharply peaked roof of the building is outlined against a sea of other rooftops, stretching away into the distance. Nearby is the belfry of a church tower, the Westertoren, whose carillon¹ rings out the hours. Occasionally faint sounds float up from below: the voices of children playing in the street, the tramp of marching feet, a boat whistle from the canal.]*
- 2 *The three rooms of the top floor and a small attic space above are exposed to our view. The largest of the rooms is in the center, with two small rooms, slightly raised, on either side. On the right is a bathroom, out of sight. A narrow steep flight of stairs at the back leads up to the attic. The rooms are sparsely furnished with a few chairs, cots, a table or two. The windows are painted over, or covered with makeshift blackout curtains.² In the main room there is a sink, a gas ring for cooking and a woodburning stove for warmth.*
- 3 *The room on the left is hardly more than a closet. There is a skylight in the sloping ceiling. Directly under this room is a small steep stairwell, with steps leading down to a door. This is the only entrance from the building below. When the door is opened we see that it has been concealed on the outer side by a bookcase attached to it.*
- 4 *The curtain rises on an empty stage. It is late afternoon, November 1945.*
- 5 *The rooms are dusty, the curtains in rags. Chairs and tables are overturned.*
- 6 *The door at the foot of the small stairwell swings open. Mr. Frank comes up the steps into view. He is a gentle, cultured European in his middle years. There is still a trace of a German accent in his speech.*
- 7 *He stands looking slowly around, making a supreme effort at self-control. He is weak, ill. His clothes are threadbare.*
- 8 *After a second he drops his rucksack on the couch and moves slowly about. He opens the door to one of the smaller rooms, and then abruptly closes it again, turning away. He goes to the window at the back, looking off at the Westertoren as its carillon strikes the hour of six, then he moves restlessly on.*
- 9 *From the street below we hear the sound of a barrel organ³ and children’s voices at play. There is a many-colored scarf hanging from a nail. Mr. Frank takes it, putting it around his neck. As he starts back for his rucksack, his eye is caught by something lying on the floor. It is a woman’s white glove. He holds it in his hand and suddenly all of his self-control is gone. He breaks down, crying.*

- 10 *We hear footsteps on the stairs. Miep Gies comes up, looking for Mr. Frank. Miep is a Dutch girl of about twenty-two. She wears a coat and hat, ready to go home. She is pregnant. Her attitude toward Mr. Frank is protective, compassionate.]*
- 11 **Miep.** Are you all right, Mr. Frank?
- 12 **Mr. Frank.** [*Quickly controlling himself*] Yes, Miep, yes.
- 13 **Miep.** Everyone in the office has gone home . . . It's after six. [*Then pleading*] Don't stay up here, Mr. Frank. What's the use of torturing yourself like this?
- 14 **Mr. Frank.** I've come to say good-bye . . . I'm leaving here, Miep.
- 15 **Miep.** What do you mean? Where are you going? Where?
- 16 **Mr. Frank.** I don't know yet. I haven't decided.
- 17 **Miep.** Mr. Frank, you can't leave here! This is your home! Amsterdam is your home. Your business is here, waiting for you . . . You're needed here . . . Now that the war is over, there are things that . . .
- 18 **Mr. Frank.** I can't stay in Amsterdam, Miep. It has too many memories for me. Everywhere there's something . . . the house we lived in . . . the school . . . that street organ playing out there . . . I'm not the person you used to know, Miep. I'm a bitter old man. [*Breaking off*] Forgive me. I shouldn't speak to you like this . . . after all that you did for us . . . the suffering . . .
- 19 **Miep.** No. No. It wasn't suffering. You can't say we suffered. [*As she speaks, she straightens a chair which is overturned.*]
- 20 **Mr. Frank.** I know what you went through, you and Mr. Kraler. I'll remember it as long as I live. [*He gives one last look around.*] Come, Miep. [*He starts for the steps, then remembers his rucksack, going back to get it.*]
- 21 **Miep.** [*Hurrying up to a cupboard*] Mr. Frank, did you see? There are some of your papers here. [*She brings a bundle of papers to him.*] We found them in a heap of rubbish on the floor after . . . after you left.
- 22 **Mr. Frank.** Burn them. [*He opens his rucksack to put the glove in it.*]
- 23 **Miep.** But, Mr. Frank, there are letters, notes . . .
- 24 **Mr. Frank.** Burn them. All of them.
- 25 **Miep.** Burn *this*? [*She hands him a paperbound notebook.*]
- 26 **Mr. Frank.** [*Quietly*] Anne's diary. [*He opens the diary and begins to read.*] "Monday, the sixth of July, nineteen forty-two." [*To Miep*] Nineteen forty-two. Is it possible, Miep? . . . Only three years ago. [*As he continues his reading, he sits down*

4. **capitulation** (kuh pihch uh LAY shuhn) *n.* surrender.

5. **yellow stars** Stars of David, the six-pointed stars that are symbols of Judaism. The Nazis ordered all Jews to wear them on their clothing.

6. **portly** (PAWRT lee) *adj.* large and heavy.

on the couch.] “Dear Diary, since you and I are going to be great friends, I will start by telling you about myself. My name is Anne Frank. I am thirteen years old. I was born in Germany the twelfth of June, nineteen twenty-nine. As my family is Jewish, we emigrated to Holland when Hitler came to power.”

27 [As Mr. Frank reads on, another voice joins his, as if coming from the air. It is Anne’s Voice.]

28 **Mr. Frank and Anne.** “My father started a business, importing spice and herbs. Things went well for us until nineteen forty. Then the war came, and the Dutch capitulation,⁴ followed by the arrival of the Germans. Then things got very bad for the Jews.”

29 [Mr. Frank’s Voice *dies out*. Anne’s Voice *continues alone*. The lights dim slowly to darkness. The curtain falls on the scene.]

30 **Anne’s Voice.** You could not do this and you could not do that. They forced Father out of his business. We had to wear yellow stars.⁵ I had to turn in my bike. I couldn’t go to a Dutch school any more. I couldn’t go to the movies, or ride in an automobile, or even on a streetcar, and a million other things. But somehow we children still managed to have fun. Yesterday Father told me we were going into hiding. Where, he wouldn’t say. At five o’clock this morning Mother woke me and told me to hurry and get dressed. I was to put on as many clothes as I could. It would look too suspicious if we walked along carrying suitcases. It wasn’t until we were on our way that I learned where we were going. Our hiding place was to be upstairs in the building where Father used to have his business. Three other people were coming in with us . . . the Van Daans and their son Peter . . . Father knew the Van Daans but we had never met them . . .

31 [During the last lines the curtain rises on the scene. The lights dim on. Anne’s Voice *fades out*.]



Scene 2

1 [It is early morning, July 1942. The rooms are bare, as before, but they are now clean and orderly.]

2 Mr. Van Daan, a tall portly⁶ man in his late forties, is in the main room, pacing up and down, nervously smoking a cigarette. His clothes and overcoat are expensive and well cut.

- 3 Mrs. Van Daan sits on the couch, clutching her possessions, a hatbox, bags, etc. She is a pretty woman in her early forties. She wears a fur coat over her other clothes.
- 4 Peter Van Daan is standing at the window of the room on the right, looking down at the street below. He is a shy, awkward boy of sixteen. He wears a cap, a raincoat, and long Dutch trousers, like “plus fours.”⁷ At his feet is a black case, a carrier for his cat.
- 5 The yellow Star of David is conspicuous on all of their clothes.]
- 6 **Mrs. Van Daan.** [Rising, nervous, excited] Something’s happened to them! I know it!
- 7 **Mr. Van Daan.** Now, Kerli!
- 8 **Mrs. Van Daan.** Mr. Frank said they’d be here at seven o’clock. He said . . .
- 9 **Mr. Van Daan.** They have two miles to walk. You can’t expect . . .
- 10 **Mrs. Van Daan.** They’ve been picked up. That’s what’s happened. They’ve been taken . . .
- 11 [Mr. Van Daan indicates that he hears someone coming.]
- 12 **Mr. Van Daan.** You see?
- 13 [Peter takes up his carrier and his schoolbag, etc., and goes into the main room as Mr. Frank comes up the stairwell from below. Mr. Frank looks much younger now. His movements are brisk, his manner confident. He wears an overcoat and carries his hat and a small cardboard box. He crosses to the Van Daans, shaking hands with each of them.]

NOTES

7. **plus fours** *n.* short pants worn for active sports.

CLOSE READ

ANNOTATE: In paragraphs 6–10, mark punctuation that suggests the characters are anxious or being interrupted.

QUESTION: Why might the playwrights have used these punctuation marks?

CONCLUDE: What **mood**, or feeling, does this punctuation help convey?



Anne in happier times, out for a stroll with her family and friends.

NOTES

8. **Green Police** Dutch Gestapo, or Nazi police, who wore green uniforms and were known for their brutality. Those in danger of being arrested or deported feared the Gestapo, especially because of their practice of raiding houses to round up victims in the middle of the night—when people are most confused and vulnerable.
9. **mercurial** (muhr KYUR ee uhl) *adj.* quick or changeable in behavior.
10. **ration** (RASH uhn) **books** books of stamps given to ensure the equal distribution of scarce items, such as meat or gasoline, in times of shortage.
- 14 **Mr. Frank.** Mrs. Van Daan, Mr. Van Daan, Peter. [*Then, in explanation of their lateness*] There were too many of the Green Police⁸ on the streets . . . we had to take the long way around.
- 15 [*Up the steps come Margot Frank, Mrs. Frank, Miep (not pregnant now) and Mr. Kraler. All of them carry bags, packages, and so forth. The Star of David is conspicuous on all of the Franks' clothing. Margot is eighteen, beautiful, quiet, shy. Mrs. Frank is a young mother, gently bred, reserved. She, like Mr. Frank, has a slight German accent. Mr. Kraler is a Dutchman, dependable, kindly.*]
- 16 *As Mr. Kraler and Miep go upstage to put down their parcels, Mrs. Frank turns back to call Anne.]*
- 17 **Mrs. Frank.** Anne?
- 18 [*Anne comes running up the stairs. She is thirteen, quick in her movements, interested in everything, mercurial⁹ in her emotions. She wears a cape, long wool socks and carries a schoolbag.*]
- 19 **Mr. Frank.** [*Introducing them*] My wife, Edith. Mr. and Mrs. Van Daan [*Mrs. Frank hurries over, shaking hands with them.*] . . . their son, Peter . . . my daughters, Margot and Anne.
- 20 [*Anne gives a polite little curtsy as she shakes Mr. Van Daan's hand. Then she immediately starts off on a tour of investigation of her new home, going upstairs to the attic room.*]
- 21 *Miep and Mr. Kraler are putting the various things they have brought on the shelves.]*
- 22 **Mr. Kraler.** I'm sorry there is still so much confusion.
- 23 **Mr. Frank.** Please. Don't think of it. After all, we'll have plenty of leisure to arrange everything ourselves.
- 24 **Miep.** [*To Mrs. Frank*] We put the stores of food you sent in here. Your drugs are here . . . soap, linen here.
- 25 **Mrs. Frank.** Thank you, Miep.
- 26 **Miep.** I made up the beds . . . the way Mr. Frank and Mr. Kraler said. [*She starts out.*] Forgive me. I have to hurry. I've got to go to the other side of town to get some ration books¹⁰ for you.
- 27 **Mrs. Van Daan.** Ration books? If they see our names on ration books, they'll know we're here.
- 28 **Mr. Kraler.** There isn't anything . . .
- 29 **Miep.** Don't worry. Your names won't be on them. [*As she hurries out*] I'll be up later.
- 30 **Mr. Frank.** Thank you, Miep.

- 31 **Mrs. Frank.** [To Mr. Kraler] It's illegal, then, the ration books? We've never done anything illegal.
- 32 **Mr. Frank.** We won't be living here exactly according to regulations.
- 33 [As Mr. Kraler reassures Mrs. Frank, he takes various small things, such as matches, soap, etc., from his pockets, handing them to her.]
- 34 **Mr. Kraler.** This isn't the black market,¹¹ Mrs. Frank. This is what we call the white market . . . helping all of the hundreds and hundreds who are hiding out in Amsterdam.
- 35 [The carillon is heard playing the quarter-hour before eight. Mr. Kraler looks at his watch. Anne stops at the window as she comes down the stairs.]
- 36 **Anne.** It's the Westertoren!
- 37 **Mr. Kraler.** I must go. I must be out of here and downstairs in the office before the workmen get here. [He starts for the stairs leading out.] Miep or I, or both of us, will be up each day to bring you food and news and find out what your needs are. Tomorrow I'll get you a better bolt for the door at the foot of the stairs. It needs a bolt that you can throw yourself and open only at our signal. [To Mr. Frank] Oh . . . You'll tell them about the noise?
- 38 **Mr. Frank.** I'll tell them.
- 39 **Mr. Kraler.** Good-bye then for the moment. I'll come up again, after the workmen leave.
- 40 **Mr. Frank.** Good-bye, Mr. Kraler.
- 41 **Mrs. Frank.** [Shaking his hand] How can we thank you?
- 42 [The others murmur their good-byes.]
- 43 **Mr. Kraler.** I never thought I'd live to see the day when a man like Mr. Frank would have to go into hiding. When you think—
- 44 [He breaks off, going out. Mr. Frank follows him down the steps, bolting the door after him. In the interval before he returns, Peter goes over to Margot, shaking hands with her. As Mr. Frank comes back up the steps, Mrs. Frank questions him *anxiously*.]
- 45 **Mrs. Frank.** What did he mean, about the noise?
- 46 **Mr. Frank.** First let us take off some of these clothes.
- 47 [They all start to take off garment after garment. On each of their coats, sweaters, blouses, suits, dresses, is another yellow Star of David. Mr. and Mrs. Frank are underdressed quite simply.]

11. **black market** illegal way of buying scarce items.

anxiously (ANGK shuhs lee) *adv.* in a nervous or worried way

CLOSE READ

ANNOTATE: In paragraph 54, mark the sound that causes the characters to feel afraid.

QUESTION: Why do the playwrights include this detail?

CONCLUDE: How does this detail clarify the characters' situation?

12. **w.c.** water closet; bathroom.

tension (TEHN shuhn)
n. nervous, worried, or excited condition that makes relaxation impossible

The others wear several things: sweaters, extra dresses, bathrobes, aprons, nightgowns, etc.]

- 48 **Mr. Van Daan.** It's a wonder we weren't arrested, walking along the streets . . . Petronella with a fur coat in July . . . and that cat of Peter's crying all the way.
- 49 **Anne.** [*As she is removing a pair of panties*] A cat?
- 50 **Mrs. Frank.** [*Shocked*] Anne, please!
- 51 **Anne.** It's alright. I've got on three more.
- 52 [*She pulls off two more. Finally, as they have all removed their surplus clothes, they look to Mr. Frank, waiting for him to speak.*]
- 53 **Mr. Frank.** Now. About the noise. While the men are in the building below, we must have complete quiet. Every sound can be heard down there, not only in the workrooms, but in the offices too. The men come at about eight-thirty, and leave at about five-thirty. So, to be perfectly safe, from eight in the morning until six in the evening we must move only when it is necessary, and then in stockinged feet. We must not speak above a whisper. We must not run any water. We cannot use the sink, or even, forgive me, the w.c.¹² The pipes go down through the workrooms. It would be heard. No trash . . .
- 54 [*Mr. Frank stops abruptly as he hears the sound of marching feet from the street below. Everyone is motionless, paralyzed with fear. Mr. Frank goes quietly into the room on the right to look down out of the window. Anne runs after him, peering out with him. The tramping feet pass without stopping. The **tension** is relieved. Mr. Frank, followed by Anne, returns to the main room and resumes his instructions to the group.*] . . . No trash must ever be thrown out which might reveal that someone is living up here . . . not even a potato paring. We must burn everything in the stove at night. This is the way we must live until it is over, if we are to survive.
- 55 [*There is silence for a second.*]
- 56 **Mrs. Frank.** Until it is over.
- 57 **Mr. Frank.** [*Reassuringly*] After six we can move about . . . we can talk and laugh and have our supper and read and play games . . . just as we would at home. [*He looks at his watch.*] And now I think it would be wise if we all went to our rooms, and were settled before eight o'clock. Mrs. Van Daan, you and your husband will be upstairs. I regret that there's no place up there for Peter. But he will be here, near us. This will be our common room, where we'll meet to talk and eat and read, like one family.