

Anne/Peter

out of the radio. I sat there paralyzed. And now in London, what is the Dutch Queen doing? What are they all doing? They're not even mentioning the word Jew. The trains are still leaving. Why don't they bomb the tracks? (*Miep is silent.*) I can't talk about this with the others, Miep.

MIEP. I understand, Mrs. Frank.

MRS. FRANK. I know they're making plans, counting the days till the war is over, but I have to tell you ... I feel the end will never come. (*Pause.*) Sometimes ... sometimes I want to give myself up. MIEP. Forgive me, Mrs. Frank, but you must try and take things a little easier. They need you. The children need you.

MRS. FRANK. I'm ashamed to feel this way. I know you and Mr. Kraler have it just as hard.

MIEP. No, Mrs. Frank. We don't.

MRS. FRANK. Thank you. For listening to me. (*At the table, Mr. Dussel studies French with Anne, Peter works on Math, Mrs. van Daan busies herself in the kitchen as her husband watches.*)

MR. DUSSEL. "Non, non, ce n'est pas ce que tu penses." (*He pronounces "penses" incorrectly, rhyming with "sense."*)

ANNE. (*Correcting him.*) "Penses," Mr. Dussel. "Penses." From penser. To think. (*He puts his head in his hands.*) *Ce que vous ne faites pas beaucoup.*

MR. DUSSEL. What?

ANNE. *Ce que vous ne faites pas.*

MR. DUSSEL. You're going too fast.

ANNE. Oui. Je sais.

MR. DUSSEL. (*A pause. Looking up, smiling.*) *Je sais.* I know that one. ANNE. *Bon. Continuons. La page suivante, s'il vous plait.*

MRS. VAN DAAN. I just don't understand. I would never ... never have done anything like that to you.

MR. VAN DAAN. The coat was seventeen years old, for God's sake! Those skins had definitely seen their day.

MRS. VAN DAAN. That's not the point and you know it.

MR. VAN DAAN. I know we need the money. We have no money — can you get that through your head?

PETER. Don't talk to her like that.

MRS. VAN DAAN. You've never understood. Anything.

MR. VAN DAAN. Oh God, here we go again.

MRS. VAN DAAN. That coat was the last thing. A whole world gone.

MR. VAN DAAN. Well you've still got us, haven't you?

MRS. VAN DAAN. You took the last memory of my father away.

MR. VAN DAAN. (*Rising, banging the table.*) Do we have to hear about your father again? If you hadn't been so attached to your father, your coat, the apartment with all our goddamned possessions, we'd be in America by now!

PETER. It's not her fault.

MRS. VAN DAAN. Oh please. It was you too, you know. You didn't want to —

MR. VAN DAAN. I only stayed because of you! Believe me, I knew which way the wind was blowing.

MRS. VAN DAAN. Oh. Sure. You always know everything.

PETER. Mother. Please. Stop.

MR. VAN DAAN. Your mother will never listen.

ANNE. (*Coming over to Mrs. van Daan. Quiet.*) If I could just say one thing.

MRS. VAN DAAN. No, you cannot! You say too much already and it's none of your business anyway. (*Anne retreats to her room in tears.*)

PETER. You shouldn't have said that, Mother.

MRS. VAN DAAN. (*Choked.*) What?

PETER. You hurt her feelings.

MRS. VAN DAAN. Oh. Well. I apologize. All right? I apologize — to everyone! (*She goes into the W.C., slamming the door behind her. Peter picks up Anne's cake and goes to her room.*)

PETER. You left this.

ANNE. (*Hiding her tears.*) Thank you. (*Peter starts to leave, turns back, stands there awkwardly.*)

PETER. I ... I'm sorry for what happened in there. I wish I could have said something. But they make me feel so ... I can't stand it when they ... Sometimes I wish I didn't belong to them at all! I just hope I never turn out like them.

ANNE. You won't. I know it.

PETER. Like him. What if I'm like him?

ANNE. You're not. Believe me.

PETER. All I can say is if it wasn't for you ... I mean ... You ... (*Blurring it out.*) You're always a big help to me.

ANNE. I am? How?

PETER. When you're cheerful it ... well ... it keeps me from being depressed. (*Mr. Dussel opens the door, looks from Peter to Anne, backs out.*)

ANNE. I'm not always so cheerful, you know ... inside.

PETER. Really?

ANNE. It's hard. If you want to cry or something. There's nowhere to go.

PETER. It's easier for me, I guess. When there's a fight ... you know, with my parents ... I just duck into my room.

ANNE. You're lucky you have a room of your own.

PETER. Well, at least you can talk to your parents.

ANNE. Not really. I never discuss anything serious with Mother. She just doesn't understand. I can talk about everything with Father

... except Mother. I don't think you can really ... really be intimate with someone if they hold something back, do you?

PETER. I think your father's terrific.

ANNE. He likes you too.

PETER. *(Looking up quickly, blushing.)* You think so?

ANNE. I can tell from the little things he says. *(She pauses.)* It's funny, isn't it?

PETER. What?

ANNE. Well, we've been living here for almost a year and a half and this ... this is the first time we've really talked.

PETER. I know what you mean.

ANNE. You know something, Peter?

PETER. What?

ANNE. I ... I've never really had a friend. Someone I could truly confide in. *(She is still, looking at him. He smiles.)*

PETER. Me neither. *(A moment. Suddenly.)* Smile for me.

ANNE. Why?

PETER. You have dimples when you smile.

ANNE. Dimples — the only mark of beauty I possess.

PETER. That's not true. You're pretty.

ANNE. Me? *(Peter nods.)*

PETER. Yes. *(Quiet.)* You. *(Anne looks down. A pause. She looks up, a dazzling smile. Moments pass. They smile at each other. Still looking at her, Peter starts to go, almost trips, catches himself, leaves. Anne continues to smile. Chopin's Nocturne A-flat major, Op. 32, No. 2 begins over the BBC dinner concert, as lights brightens on Anne joyously dancing around the table in the main room. Lost in a blissful reverie, she is unseen by the others, who are getting ready for supper. But even they seem transformed by Anne's happiness, as the simple household activities — setting the table, the worn tablecloth ballooning out as it is put down, bringing in the plates, laying the silverware — all become a kind of ritual.)*

ANNE. *(Directly to us.)* The sun is shining, the sky a deep blue, there's

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a magnificent breeze, and I'm longing — so longing — for everything! I walk from room to room, breathe through the crack in the window frame, feel my heart beating as if to say, "Can't you fulfill this longing at last?" I long for every boy, and to Peter I want to shout, "Say something, don't just smile at me all the time, touch me, so I can get that delicious feeling inside." I feel spring within me, I feel spring awakening, I feel it in my entire body and soul. I'm utterly confused, don't know what to read, to write, to do. I only know ... I am longing ... *(Anne joins them as they sit down at the table. Mrs. Frank and Mrs. van Daan serve a supper of kale and potatoes.)*

MR. VAN DAAN. What is it tonight?

MRS. VAN DAAN. Don't ask.

MR. VAN DAAN. I have to. I have to be prepared.

MR. DUSSEL. My God, I can't eat this again! Pickles, kale, and rotten potatoes — every night for weeks now.

MR. VAN DAAN. Something wrong, Mr. Dussel? You try cooking for a change, instead of insulting my wife.

MR. FRANK. I think you prepared the kale very well, Mrs. van Daan. I don't know how you do it.

MRS. VAN DAAN. Mr. Frank. Always the soul of politeness.

MR. FRANK. Every night another miracle. *(Mr. Dussel hastily gets up from the table, lurches toward the W.C.)*

MR. VAN DAAN. Careful, Mr. Dussel! We don't want to clog the pipes like last week.

MRS. VAN DAAN. Putti, please.

MRS. FRANK. You're not eating, Margot. *(Margot is still.)* Eat. You have to eat.

MARGOT. I'm not hungry.

MR. VAN DAAN. If she doesn't want it, Peter will eat it.

MR. FRANK. Come, Margot. Just take a bite.

MARGOT. *(Giving Peter her plate.)* I can't. I just can't.

MRS. VAN DAAN. She eats like a bird. Look at her. Every day a smaller bird. Margot, I'm doing the best I can.

MARGOT. I'm sorry, Mrs. van Daan. I just —

MRS. VAN DAAN. Anne's eating. Peter's eating.

MARGOT. How do you do it, Anne?

ANNE. I pretend it's delicious, don't look at it, and before I know it, it's gone.

MR. FRANK. Very wise, Anneke.

PETER. I eat because I'm hungry. *(Silence. Anne laughs — a tender*