

# Anne Frank Scene Breakdown

## Act I scene i

- We see the ending of the play before it even begins.
- Otto Frank has survived the Holocaust and returns to the attic where he and his family spent two years in hiding.
- Miep Gies meets him there and gives him the diary.
- The stage directions give us the idea that things have been neglected and a large amount of time has passed.
- Otto is old, weary, and heartbroken. We get the idea that something terrible has happened.
- Miep hands him Anne's diary and Otto begins to read it aloud before Anne's voice takes over.

## Act I scene ii

- The three members of the Van Daan family—Mrs. Van Daan, Mr. Van Daan, and Peter Van Daan—are waiting for the Frank family to arrive.
- Mrs. Van Daan worries that something has happened to them, while Mr. Van Daan reassures her that they have had to walk two miles, lugging suitcases.
- At last the Franks arrive and introductions are made. Mrs. Edith Frank, Otto Frank, Margot Frank, and Anne Frank—they all shake hands with Mr. and Mrs. Van Daan and Peter.
- Peter has brought his pet cat Mouschi with him.
- Miep and Mr. Kraler explain that they have made up the apartments in the Secret Annex the best they could and will go and get the group some ration books.
- Mr. Kraler explains that he and Miep will be delivering the illegal food to the Annex each day and will bring the news and other things the group might need.
- Mr. Frank explains that during the day the group must be silent. The workmen come from eight-thirty to five-thirty so they might be able to hear any sounds.
- The group must move silently without shoes on and refrain from using the bathroom or running water.
- They must burn their trash in the stove at night.
- After six, the group can talk, play games, and have supper.
- The room assignments are given out, and the family room or common room is designated as a place to gather and talk.
- The Van Daans tell Mr. Frank that they are extremely grateful for his kindness.
- Peter and Anne get better acquainted. Anne tells him she misses her own cat that she had to leave behind.
- Peter rips off his Star of David, but Anne says she can't bring herself to burn it.

- Anne tells her father she will think of the Annex as a peculiar summer boarding house.
- Anne opens a box with pictures of the movie stars she had in her room. Her father also gives her a diary as a present.
- Mr. Frank warns Anne that she must never go beyond the door to the Secret Annex that leads to her father's office.
- He tells her that, although they are contained in the Annex, she is free to think and dream because no one can put a lock on your mind.
- At eight o'clock, the family has to be silent. Anne and Peter feed Mouschi some milk, then Anne begins writing in her diary.
- We hear Anne's voice over the stage action as she explains what is happening in the Annex on a daily basis.

#### Act I scene iii

- Mr. Dussel, a Jewish dentist, has been "called up" by the Nazis—asked to surrender himself and go quietly away to a death camp.
- Miep's boyfriend tells her this and Mr. Kraler asks Mr. Frank if the group in the attic will take Dussel in.
- Mr. Kraler is extremely grateful to the group, but he soon proves to be a fussy old guy who has no kids or family.
- He shares a room with Anne (probably not a great idea) and immediately can't stand her.
- We learn that the people in the attic are near to starving, surviving on the food rations that would be allowed for three people, when there are in fact eight sharing them.
- It's beans for dinner, breakfast, and everything in between.
- Still, Mrs. Frank continues preparing and setting the table just like a regular lifestyle.
- Anne's prankster methods make her seem really young and silly.
- She steals Peter's shoes, makes fun of Mr. Van Daan, and even spills milk on Mrs. Van Daan's expensive fur coat. There's a definite divide between body and mind going on here.
- All the same, we can see the strain it's putting on our heroine as well as the rest of the crew trapped in the annex.

#### Act I scene iv

- One night, Anne wakes up everyone in the attic with her screams.
- She's had a nightmare about the Nazis coming to take her away.

- It seems totally normal to us that her fears would manifest in this way, but everyone in the attic short of her parents seems more than a little annoyed by this.
- Mr. Dussel even locks himself in the bathroom; he's so angry.
- We see Anne's parents concerned and helpless for their young daughter who has to deal with the ugly realities of war and death.
- They are afraid for her as well as for themselves.
- Anne's request for her father's comfort after the nightmare, rather than her mother's, provides more fuel for a conflict that appears to be escalating.
- Mrs. Frank's feelings are extremely hurt, and Anne knows this but can't figure out how to make things work with her mom.

#### Act I scene v

- Our little Anneke shows up at Hanukah as the only person who's thought about giving to others. Mrs. Frank comments that there will be no gift-giving this year, but Anne's already made super-cute gifts for everyone out of little odds and ends and her own creativity: a crossword puzzle book for Margot (re-used of course), a paper ball and string for Mouschi, cigarettes for Mr. Van Daan, shampoo for Mrs. Van Daan, IOUs for Mrs. Frank, earplugs for Dussel, and a muffler (scarf) for Mr. Frank.
- There's some discussion by Mr. Van Daan about getting rid of Peter's cat. Peter swears he'll leave if the cat has to leave, but Mrs. Van Daan quickly says no one is going anywhere.
- While the residents go back and forth between remorse and thankfulness for their situation, including a heavy decision as to whether they should sing the Hanukah celebration song, a big noise from downstairs occurs.
- Peter tries to help, but knocks over a chair making a gigantic noise and everyone panics (especially Mrs. Van Daan). Even Anne faints.
- Mr. Frank gallantly agrees to check it out.
- He returns, saying a thief broke in and stole some money and a radio.
- The group is terrified that the thief will tell on them, but there isn't anywhere to go and no place else to hide.
- Instead, the scene ends with the group again returning to faith and they begrudgingly sing the Hanukah celebration song, which ironically reflects their current situation very well.

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#### Act II scene i

- The new year dawns and Miep and Mr. Kraler come bearing a cake.
- The residents get so jazzed up about the cake that it brings tears to our eyes.

- They fight like children about who should cut the cake fairly.
- We see the greed in Mr. Van Daan, and it's not a pretty sight.
- Besides trying to finagle the biggest piece of cake for himself, he asks Miep to sell Mrs. Van Daan's fur coat.
- Mr. Van Daan who wants to sell the memento for cigarettes.
- When Mr. Kraler tries to tell Mr. Frank some important information in private, it's actually Margot who goes ballistic.
- She wants to know it firsthand, and Mr. Frank agrees that Kraler should tell everyone what he knows.
- Kraler relates that there is a man who works at the business who keeps asking about the Franks, and whether Kraler knows their whereabouts.
- He keeps staring at the bookcase that hides the door to the secret annex.
- Then he asks for a raise; it's clearly blackmail.
- People start having hysterics, but it's the faithful Mr. Frank who makes the logical decision to pay the man half. Even if it's bribery, there's nothing they can do but sit and wait to see what happens.
- Kraler agrees and leaves the room.
- Anne fires off a storm of repressed anger about being a teenager trapped in the war.
- She blames the grownups for her problems and explodes on her mother.
- But after slamming the door and forgetting her cake, she discovers an unlikely ally in Peter.
- He is totally in awe of her massive demonstration of "sticking it to the man" and joins in her ranting about their situation.
- Peter then says she can come to his room whenever she wants to talk about things. Hmm... do we detect a friendship forming? Or is it something more?
- In this scene, we get some more sporadic information from Anne.
- Mr. Kraler is in the hospital with some ulcers (we wonder what gave him that?) and American forces have landed in Italy.
- The food rations have been cut even further and everyone is starving.
- The scene ends with Anne not yearning for the war to be over, but simply to have someone to really talk to.

#### Act II scene ii

- All dressed up and no place to go—that's the awkward way that this scene three starts.
- Anne's in her bathroom, getting dolled up to go on a date with Peter... er, to his room.

- If we think about it, how incredibly hard must it have been to walk past Peter's parents and her own and go to Peter's room and shut the door. Yikes. We wouldn't want to take that walk of shame.
- But Anne in her infinite courage, takes it all on her shoulders. She's excited to be sharing something new and different, something grownup, something... normal.
- Even Margot admits that she's a little bit jealous—not of Peter, but that Anne has something "to live for." (We're not gonna lie; we get a little weepy-eyed at that.)
- Anne and Peter's "talk" in his room has all the classic drama of an oldies romance movie.
- It's super-cute to see them connecting on a deeper level than, "Pass the milk please."
- But we are left wondering if their budding romance is simply one of proximity. Anne's conversations are extremely sensitive and spiritual. Peter's goals are much more grounded than hers and he seems like the square peg to Anne's round hole. Still, they talk the cutesy-wutesy stuff of young love, asking each other if they've ever kissed anyone else and if they'll forget each other when they come out of hiding.
- Peter freaks about Anne possibly being prevented from seeing him again by the parents, and Anne soothes him by basically saying, "not a chance."
- At which time we feel like Peter's sort of the wimpy one in this relationship until he grabs Anne by the arms and pecks her on the cheek—aww!

### Act II scene iii

- Someone's been sneaking food, and we know it's a rat of a different size. If you didn't like the Van Daans before, you really don't like them now. Mr. Van Daan's been pilfering food from the storage box and stuffing his own face.
- This leads the even-tempered Mrs. Frank to go postal. She flips out in a "righteous rage" and demands that Mr. Van Daan hit the road. We almost agree with her.
- But, if Mr. Van Daan goes outside, he'll surely die.
- Mr. Frank tries to soothe everyone by saying Mr. Van Daan won't steal again. He appeals to Mrs. Frank's sense of goodness and logic. Mr. Van Daan will die if the group kicks him out.
- He reminds the group, "We don't need the Nazis to destroy us. We're destroying ourselves" (89). It's a harsh, sad realization to come to.
- The group continues to argue, Anne and Margot calling for their mother to come to her senses, while Mr. Dussel is only too happy to get rid of the Van Daans because there will be more food for himself with them gone.

- He begins to count potatoes in a greedy fashion, re-proportioning them in an almost gleeful way.
- The craziness is interrupted by the arrival of Miep, who tells them joyous news about [D-Day](#), the invasion of France by the Allied forces.
- The group goes from crazed insanity to jubilant in about ten seconds. There is great rejoicing.
- Mr. Van Daan however, is feeling totally guilty and Mrs. Frank regains her composure by forgiving him.
- Perhaps the most interesting part of the forgiveness is Anne's realization how she has treated her mother, "Look at me, the way I've treated Mother... so mean and horrid to her" (2.3.93).
- The good times are fleeting however, as the Gestapo have found the stolen radio and Mr. Dussel is sure they will trace it back to the group in the annex.
- Anne says the group is totally depressed, "Everyone is low. Even poor Pim can't raise their spirits."
- But another shining example of morality comes into play here. Anne miraculously still has something to believe in: "I have often been downcast myself, but never in despair. I can shake off everything if I write" (2.3.94).

#### Act II scene iv

- The tension is so high in this scene that we can almost snap it in half.
- The frenetic dialogue of the crazed annex residents and the consistent ringing of the telephone tell us just how scared the families were that this could be the end.
- Miep is MIA and no one has come to work in the building below, even though it's a normal Friday.
- The hysterics climax with Mrs. Van Daan totally freaking out and saying that she'll kill herself, which of course is followed by an argument between she and Mr. Van Daan.
- But then, it is contrasted with Peter and Anne, peacefully gazing together at the sky. In what is almost a religious experience, they reflect on their time in the annex and how difficult it has been.
- Anne's words are poetic as she tells Peter how her imagination has saved her from going crazy. Peter's response shows his down-to-earth character as he gets mad at the hopelessness of their situation.
- Anne puts him to shame as she tells him about the goodness of the world: "When I think of all that's out there... the trees... and flowers... and seagulls... when I think of the dearness of you, Peter... and the goodness of the people we know... Mr. Kraler, Miep, Dirk, the vegetable man, all risking their lives for us every day... When

I think of these good things, I'm not afraid anymore... I find myself, and God" (2.4.97).

- We're left in awe of how one person can be that at peace with her situation.
- Anne's faith in the world continues to her most famous line in her diary "I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are really good at heart" (2.4.98). There aren't many of us who could say that, given the same situation.
- Anne and Peter watch the sunset, but are interrupted by the harshness of reality. The group has been found out.
- The stage directions relay the rest of the story as the realization that they are going to be arrested dawns on each of the characters.
- The soldiers break down the annex door and allow the residents five minutes to pack their clothing. They aren't allowed to take anything else.
- Anne's voice closes the scene as she asks Miep to keep her diary safe for her.

#### Act II scene v

- The gut-wrenching tale of what happened after Otto Frank and the others were arrested and sent to concentration camps is almost unbearable.
- However, Mr. Frank relays that Anne was simply happy to be outside after being locked up for two years.
- Miep and Mr. Kraler do their best in an extremely sad and awkward moment.
- Miep tells him that the office thief was the one who sold them out.
- She had been out to the country to get food, and when she returned, they'd already been captured.
- She pours coffee and listens sadly as Otto relays what had happened after the capture.
- Sent first to a camp in Holland and then to Auschwitz in Poland, the family was then separated in September.
- Anne, her sister, and her mother were sent to Bergen-Belsen where Otto later learned from survivors who had known them that they had perished.
- The Van Daans and Dussel met the same fate.
- Otto was the only one rescued by the Allied forces who swept through France and other parts of Europe, but they came too late to save the rest of his family.
- Anne's famous line re-echoes at the very end of the scene, and Otto voices what most of the audience members are feeling by the end—that a very special person's life was taken too early. Her belief in the goodness of people, even through a horrific time, is something to be admired,