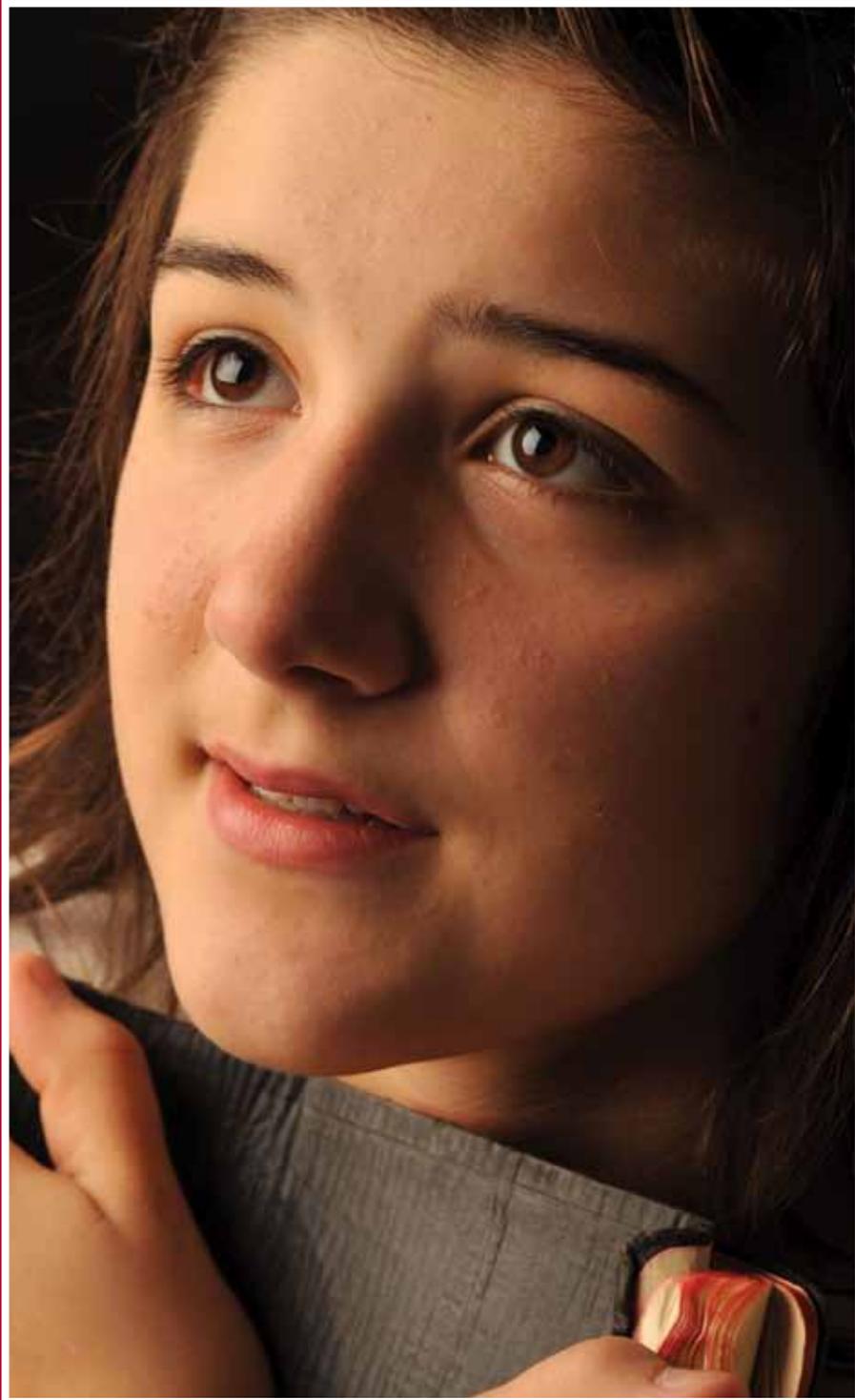




Insights

A Study Guide to the Utah Shakespearean Festival



The Diary of Anne Frank

The articles in this study guide are not meant to mirror or interpret any productions at the Utah Shakespearean Festival. They are meant, instead, to be an educational jumping-off point to understanding and enjoying the plays (in any production at any theatre) a bit more thoroughly. Therefore the stories of the plays and the interpretative articles (and even characters, at times) may differ dramatically from what is ultimately produced on the Festival's stages.

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The Diary of Anne Frank

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Synopsis: *The Diary of Anne Frank*

The play opens on July 6, 1942 in Amsterdam. Because they are Jews, the Frank and van Daan families move into hiding to avoid arrest by the Nazis. Mr. Kraler and Miep Gies, Christian business associates and trusted friends, help everyone get settled in the secret annex: Mr. and Mrs. Frank and their daughters, Margot and Anne, as well as Mr. and Mrs. van Daan and their son, Peter. The outsiders leave, assuring the two families that they will help them in hiding for as long as it takes. As the families begin to unpack, Anne tries to get acquainted with the shy Peter. Over all this are the haunting words from Anne's diary.

Months pass, and Anne's carefree nature begins to cause problems. Mrs. Van Daan thinks she is rude, Margot is becoming distant, and Peter (her only hope for a friend) is very shy. In addition, her relationship with her mother is very strained.

Next, Mr. Dussell joins them in the annex and tells them what has been happening since they went into hiding. They are relieved to hear that people believe the Franks escaped to Switzerland, but are terrified when they learn of the death camps that hundreds of Jews are sent to each day.

Soon, it is their first Hanukkah in hiding, and Anne is determined to celebrate. She has thoughtfully prepared presents for everyone. However, the good mood is broken when Mr. Van Daan and Peter start arguing. The argument is quickly ended by a crashing sound in the offices below. Fearing they will be discovered, everyone immediately quiets down. From below comes the sound of running feet. Mr. Frank goes downstairs to investigate and returns with the news that it was a thief—but everyone is now even more on edge.

Over many more months, Anne and Peter's young teenage friendship begins to blossom. They talk of all sorts of things, and they share their first kiss. Yet, tensions in general are growing in the cramped quarters. The families learn from Miep that the Allied invasion of the European continent has begun, and they are hopeful that they may soon come out of hiding. However, only a few weeks later, the Nazis arrive to take them away. Anne writes the last entry in her diary on August 1, 1944.

The play ends with the return of Mr. Frank to the abandoned hiding place. He has Anne's diary and tells the audience exactly what has happened to each of the characters.

Only Anne's words remain.

Characters: *The Diary of Anne Frank*

Otto Frank: Anne's polite and practical father, Mr. Frank is the head of the "attic family." His calmness and patience are an asset in the cramped attic and a comfort to Anne, who is very close to him.

Edith Frank: Anne's reserved and nervous mother, Mrs. Frank loves Anne, but she wishes she were more proper and polite, like her sister Margot. Because of her reserved nature, Mrs. Frank and Anne are not close.

Margot Frank: Anne's older sister, Margot is much more like her mother than Anne. She is quiet, modest, and reserved: the complete opposite of Anne.

Anne Frank: The youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank, Anne is a lively, curious girl of thirteen at the beginning of the play. She remains optimistic throughout the months they are in hiding and always makes the best of the situation she is in. As her diary reveals, she is very introspective and creative and has a vivid imagination.

Putti Van Daan: An irritable former business partner of Mr. Frank, Mr. Van Daan's family is invited to stay in the attic with the Franks. He is selfish and openly critical of others, especially Anne.

Petronella Van Daan: Mr. Van Daan's vain and finicky wife, Mr. Van Daan prizes the material things of life, including a fur coat she brought to the attic with her. These traits all make her the center of much of the conflict in the attic.

Peter Van Daan: The son of Mr. and Mrs. Van Daan, Peter is a shy, quiet teenaged boy. He soon becomes a friend and confidant for Anne, and they share first kiss together.

Jan Dussell: Difficult to get along with, Mr. Dussell joins the Franks and the Van Daans after they have been in hiding about two months.

Miep: A very well-liked, generous secretary in Mr. Frank's office, Miep helps to protect the families in hiding. Along with Mr. Kraler, she brings to the refugees food, supplies, and news from the outside world.

Mr. Kraler: A businessman who works with Miep to help protect the people in hiding, Mr. Kraler risks his life to help his friends.

The Legacy of *The Diary of Anne Frank*

By Marlo Ihler

The story of Anne Frank is one of the most well-known in literature, with most people having read it in school or having seen one of the many film, stage, or television adaptations since her diary was published in 1947. Since its first publication, it has become one of the most widely read books throughout the world. What many may not know are some of the lesser known details surrounding the writing of the diary, the story of how the diary came to be so renowned, or the background of its theatrical productions on Broadway.

Anne Frank (1929–1945) was only four years old when her family moved to Amsterdam from Germany, where Adolf Hitler had recently been appointed chancellor. In 1940 Germany invaded the Netherlands causing 24,000 Jews to go into hiding in order to preserve their lives. Anne's family went into hiding with four other individuals the day after her sister, Margot, received a call-up notice to report for deportation to a labor camp in July 1942. Only a month earlier, Anne had received the diary for her thirteenth birthday in which she later would chronicle two years of emotions, fears, and experiences of living in the hidden annex above her father's spice business.

Anne's writings, some may not know, also included short stories, fairy tales, essays, and the beginning of a novel (www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/af/htmlsite/story.html). She was meticulous in her writing, editing and reworking her diary after hearing a radio broadcast asking citizens to keep diaries as historical records. These original documents consisted of five notebooks and more than 300 loose pages, in addition to her original diary.

Otto Frank, Anne's father, was the only one of the eight inhabitants of the secret annex to survive the concentration camps, following their discovery in August 1944. Miep Gies, one of their Dutch protectors who worked on the main floor of the building, discovered Anne's diaries after their arrest and kept them safe until Otto returned after the war. He deliberated whether to publish Anne's writings, but ultimately felt it was important that others learn about their experience. The diary was published in German using Anne's chosen title, *The Secret Annex*, in June 1947, and included Anne's rewritten version plus parts of the original diary (Tom Brandt, Cheryl Ann Hornstein, and Mary Finnerty, eds., *The Diary of Anne Frank: An Educational Study Guide* [Park Square Theatre, St. Paul, Minnesota, 2007], p. 6. Found on <http://www.sainthelena.us>). Only 1,500 copies were printed but demand was so high that another edition was quickly produced. Since then, other versions and editions have been printed and it has been translated into nearly seventy languages.

In 1955, Hollywood screenwriters, Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, one of the most prolific husband-and-wife writing teams during the Golden Age of cinema, took on the monumental task of turning Anne's diary into a stage play. Having written such screenplays as *The Thin Man* (1934), *Easter Parade* (1948), *Father of the Bride* (1950), *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (1954), and *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), adapting Anne's diary was a very different story for them to write.

Goodrich and Hackett both had extensive backgrounds in the theatre. Goodrich (1890-1984) became interested in drama in college and made her Broadway debut in 1916. As an actress, she was well-trained, though she said herself: "I wasn't very good" (David L. Goodrich, *The Real Nick and Nora: Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, Writers of Stage and Screen Classics* [Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2001], p. 11).

Hackett (1900-1995) was the son of professional actors and made his stage debut at age six. As a teenager, he attended the Professional Children's School in New York City (Donald

W. McCaffrey. "Goodrich, Frances and Albert Hackett," *International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers*, 2001. Found on <http://www.encyclopedia.com>). He performed in numerous films and on stage before meeting Goodrich in 1927 while they were both actors for a Denver theatre company. Shortly thereafter they tried their hand at writing together. They married in 1931 and soon began their lifelong career as a writing team.

The process of adapting Anne Frank's personal day-to-day writings into a play with narrative shape (a distinct beginning, middle, and end) was very challenging. They worked with playwright Lillian Hellman, Garson Kanin (director of the first Broadway production), and Otto Frank on their adaptation (Brandt, p.11) They altered and selectively chose events from the diary, as well as making other adaptations. For example, they removed numerous details about the Frank family's Jewishness. Otto Frank himself was quoted as saying "It is not a Jewish book. So do not make a Jewish play out of it" (Brandt, p. 11).

First drafts of the play emphasized Anne's mischievous nature. The final version emphasized her idealism and optimism. Otto Frank felt it important that it focus on the universal elements of Anne's story. Goodrich and Hackett researched every detail and worked on the script for two years. As part of their research, they traveled to Amsterdam with Kanin to visit the attic annex, now a famous museum, with Otto Frank, who provided keen insight into events and those who hid there.

On October 5, 1955, *The Diary of Anne Frank* opened on Broadway, starring Joseph Schildkraut as Otto Frank and Susan Strasberg as Anne (<http://www.ibdb.com>). This was the pinnacle of Goodrich and Hackett's career. The play won popular and critical success, including the 1955 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and three Tony Awards, including Best Play of the 1955-56 Season. It played a total of 717 performances on Broadway before being produced throughout America and the world by professional and amateur theatres companies (Brandt, p. 12).

In 1959, Goodrich and Hackett adapted the play into a film that received critical but not popular success. In 1997, a re-adaptation of the book by Wendy Kesselman was produced on Broadway, starring Natalie Portman as Anne and directed by James Lapine. This version used passages and details published in *The Diary of a Young Girl: The Definitive Edition* (1995) that Otto Frank had removed for the first publication. These passages included references to Anne's burgeoning sexuality, candid feelings toward her mother and other inhabitants of the annex, and reflections on her Judaism and the Holocaust, topics of particular sensitivity during the 1940s and '50s. The production team of the 1997 revival "set out to tell Anne's 'real' story, to reclaim her Jewishness" and remove some of previously mentioned constraints, though they stressed they did not want to "disparage the intentions of the original production" (Brandt, p. 13).

The 1997 production was less successful critically and commercially than the original in 1955. Some agreed the modifications were necessary, but many said the new adaptation "went too far in the opposite direction . . . what the play gained in accuracy, it lost in subtlety" (Brandt, p. 14).

However the story is told, Anne Frank left a remarkable legacy through her talents as a writer and record-keeper. In fact, she is still the youngest person to reach #1 on the New York Times' Bestseller List (<http://www.imdb.com>). Her great ambition of becoming a professional writer is now realized the world over through her diary's contribution to literature, film, television, essays, and stage productions.

(Note: The Utah Shakespearean Festival is presenting the Wendy Kesselman version of The Diary of Anne Frank.)

The Diary of Anne Frank: a Life **Abbreviated**

By Lawrence Henley

History's lessons are often sobering, and many are difficult to examine. Painful the raw truth may be, but if we're to learn from tragedy and avert the same errors in the future, we must look at them squarely in the present. Carefully, and sometimes sorrowfully, we observe tragic eras and how they came to pass. Mercifully, a redeeming quality often surfaces when examining the past's cruel realities: while doing so we often uncover surprises worthy of joy and celebration. Embedded amid history's most bitter chapters are examples of amazing courage and indomitable human spirit, embodied by those who struggled to maintain dignity in the face of victimization.

In the tender, yet powerful episodic writings of Holocaust victim Anne Frank we are reminded that the best side of our nature and spirit can endure even the coarsest depths of humanity. Although written nearly seventy years ago, the power of her story fails to decay because she told it as she lived and felt it all, with honesty and simplicity. Her intelligence, innocence, and raw talent endowed her words with an uncommon poignancy inviting us into her soul, rather than allowing the stark horror of Jewish existence in the 1940s to repel us.

Anne's diary, written as she and her terrified family hid from the Nazis (June 1942 to August 1944), chronicles the daily lives of Anne Frank and her extended family, members of a race balanced precariously atop a merciless, genocidal blade. Both literature and history owe a great debt to Miep Gies, the late guardian and caretaker of the Frank and Van Daan families during their long seclusion. Gies preserved the abandoned diary, ensuring the autobiographical work would far outlive its author.

With his decision to publish the volume three years subsequent to Anne's death, Otto, her grieving father, gave his bittersweet treasure to the world. Otto Frank was the lone survivor among the eight Jews hidden in his warehouse attic. Today, *The Diary of Anne Frank* remains one of the publishing industry's most consistent sellers. Although released seven decades ago, it reappears in the top 100 bestsellers list regularly.

To broaden the reach of this remarkable story the memoir was retooled for the theatre by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett. Their 1955 Pulitzer Prize- and Tony Award-winning theatrical adaptation reincarnated the voices of the Frank family and their fellow exiles. Performed throughout the world, *The Diary of Anne Frank* has since been translated into many languages. A new adaptation of the play by Wendy Kesselman came to Broadway in 1997.

From the mid-eighteenth century until the 1930s, life for Jews in German and Austrian society had been, for the most part, comfortable and prosperous. There was also a cultural renaissance during that time, owing much to influential Jewish artists and scholars such as Felix Mendelssohn, Albert Einstein, Max Reinhardt, Franz Kafka, and Sigmund Freud. The Franks and Van Daans were typical of Jewish families in the German merchant class. Unhappily, by 1933 a sickening degree of intolerance and anti-Semitism spawned by Adolf Hitler's National Socialist movement had taken root in the Germanic republics. As fear and hate became pervasive, many proactive families were left little choice but to flee their homes, as the Franks did by leaving Frankfurt, Germany.

In the late 1930s, it was widely believed that the Dutch would remain neutral during the anticipated pan-European conflict, as they were in World War I. Thus, while many

Jews chose to cross the Atlantic to the Americas, Otto Frank opted to move his family to Amsterdam, capitol of the Netherlands.

For a time, business and life in their adopted city were quite good for the Franks and other transplanted families, but the year 1939 brought a series of invasions (“Blitzkriegs”) of weaker European neighbors by Hitler. By the spring of 1940, Amsterdam had fallen under control of the Nazis. Gradually, life for Jews throughout Nazi-dominated countries was tightly restricted: first, by the steady enactment of activity and movement restrictions; next with mandatory registration for people of Jewish descent; and lastly the affixing of garish yellow stars to outer clothing. These actions, of course, were merely precursors to the Nazi’s unthinkable “solution” to the “Jewish question.” Slowly, trains to transit and death camps began to roll, followed by the likely extermination of their Jewish riders. During this time, Jewish families residing in Europe had tough decisions to make, all with life or death implications.

When her father made the decision to send his family into hiding from the Nazis, Anne Frank was a bright, precocious thirteen-year-old. Although the limitations of race, politics and religion had significantly narrowed life’s possibilities, she would not be denied the joys, sorrows, and struggles of her flowering adolescence. She drew power from her desires, learning from a growing recognition of what she wanted out of life. Inevitably, her cloistered life in the dingy warehouse attic could not keep her from seizing a little of what the future owed her. Sadly, there would be no escape from the austere life imposed on the Franks and Van Daans. For Anne Frank, writing would be the only escape.

Despite confinement, life in the shelter provided ample inspiration for a young writer. Things were difficult, and the attic became a breeding ground for pettiness and quarreling. The air was rife with festering tensions and underlying fear, with only temporary respite provided by endless time for reading and family talk. Anne’s live-wire personality invariably brought her into conflict with others, particularly Mrs. Van Daan and Mr. Dussel, a priggish dentist who later moved in with the two families. Even young Peter Van Daan’s mouse-chasing cat, Mouschi, created uproar within the nerve-wracked apartment.

Along with the stresses, Anne also described times of joy and celebration. She wrote of Hanukkah time, when she created presents for everyone from the most meager resources. With Peter, the Van Daan’s teenage son, she experienced a taste of what love with a boy could mean to a young woman. Her relationships with her father and sister Margot grew closer, as her relationship with her mother, Edith, grew combative and aloof.

In the end, the exiles whereabouts were betrayed on a tip from an ensnared burglar, likely a disgruntled former employee of Otto’s factory. Local police turned the inhabitants of the annex over to the Nazis for deportation. Like most Holocaust families, the Franks and Van Daans were separated by sex and age. Transported to camps of unfathomable squalor, each resident was discarded into Nazi concentration camps, like human rubbish.

With one exception, the Franks and Van Daans all perished, dispersed and isolated from one another. Otto Frank witnessed Mr. Van Daan being led to the gas chamber at Auschwitz, and Edith Frank died at the women’s camp there. Mrs. Van Daan expired at Buchenwald, while her son Peter expired at Matthausen following a death march in front of retreating Nazis. Ironically, both died on the very day that their camps were liberated by the Allies. Mr. Dussel died at Neuengamme. Margot and Anne Frank both died of typhoid fever at the Bergen-Belsen camp, first sister Margot and then Anne: alone, naked, with her head shaved.

Only Otto survived the year following expulsion from the annex, returning to Amsterdam to live with Miep and her husband after a futile search for his vanquished family. By the time he returned to Holland, faint hope that his children remained alive still existed. Sadly, a letter of inquiry returned by a nurse in Rotterdam confirmed that both girls had lapsed in the squalid conditions at Bergen-Belsen. At that deep moment of despair in his office, Miep handed Mr. Frank the diary he had given Anne in their last moments before moving into seclusion.

Because Anne's diary was all that remained of his family, it provided Mr. Frank with a modicum of comfort and was his only satisfaction aside from his work. Continually astonished by his daughter's musings and her vibrant style of writing, he would remark to Miep "Who would have imagined what went on in that little mind?" In time, Otto shared a few excerpts with an acquaintance with publishing contacts and was subsequently persuaded at length to share the diary in book form. First published locally, and then internationally, the book engendered phenomenal interest upon release. Today, *The Diary of Anne Frank* stands as one of the most read works of literature to come out of the World War II era.

Although Anne Frank's promise (and that of countless others like her) was removed from this world prematurely, through her writings her spirit has been immortalized and set free.