

2017 Study Guide

The Diary of Anne Frank

adapted for the stage by
Wendy Kesselman



September 14th - October 8th

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Our Production

The Diary of Anne Frank is an impassioned drama about the years her Jewish family and four others spent hiding in a concealed storage attic from the Nazis during the Holocaust. This moving story captures the claustrophobic realities of their daily existence—their fear, their hope, their laughter, their grief. It is all about finding small moments of serenity and optimism amidst persecution.

Wendy Kesselman's powerful new adaptation lends a contemporary feel to a historical classic. Kesselman integrates newly discovered diary entries as well as survivor accounts into her storytelling. This is a new adaptation for a new generation.

Anne Frank comes to life as a lyrical and gifted young girl. She confronts her rapidly changing life and the increasing horror of the times with compelling honesty, wit, and determination.

"When I write I shake off all my cares. But I want to achieve more than that. I want to be useful and bring enjoyment to all people, even those I've never met. I want to go on living even after my death!"

– Anne Frank



Directed by Ensemble Member
Daniel Roth

The Characters

Real Life



Anne
Frank

Daughter of
Otto and Edith,
sister of Margo

Anne Frank was three and a half years younger than Margot and her personality was very different. Anne was lively- a joker- and had lots of friends before she went into hiding. She had a serious side to her, too, and revealed that aspect of her personality much more when she was in hiding.

"Anne was thirteen when she came here and fifteen when she was taken away. In those two years she went from being a child to being a young woman."

-Jo Kleiman

Our Cast



Sophie
Schulman

Guest Actor



Otto
Frank

Anne and Margot's father,
Edith's husband

Otto Frank was born on May 12, 1889 in Frankfurt am Main. He had an older brother and a younger brother and sister. His father, Michael, headed the family bank, which specialized in currency trading. The Franks were liberal Jews.

"The calm one, the children's teacher, the most logical, the one who balanced everything out. He was the leader, the one in charge. When a decision had to be made, all eyes turned to Mr. Frank."

-Miep Gies



James
Goode

Ensemble Member



Edith
Frank

Anne and Margot's mother,
Otto's wife

Edith Holländer was born in Aachen on January 16, 1900. She had two older brothers and an older sister. Her family celebrated the Jewish holidays, kept a kosher household, and were leading members of Aachen's Jewish community. Her Father owned several industrial processing plants.

"I was concerned that there was not a particularly good understanding between my wife and Anne, and I believe my wife suffered more from this than Anne. In reality, she was an excellent mother, who went to any lengths for her children..."

-Otto Frank



Elizabeth
Dowd

Ensemble Member

Margot was three years older than Anne. She's tidy, quiet, and gets good grades at school. Anne and Margot have a few fights during their time in the Secret Annex, but sometimes they got on well and talked about many things. Like Anne, she keeps a diary during the war but Margot's diary was never found.



Margot
Frank

Daughter of Otto and Edith,
sister of Anne

"Times change, people change, thoughts about good and evil change, about true and false. But what always remains fast and steady is the affection that your friends feel for you, those who always have your best interest at heart."

-Margot Frank



Morgan
McKenzie

Guest Actor



Miep
Gies

Otto's Secretary

Hermine (Miep) Gies-Santrouschitz was born in Vienna in 1909. Her parents sent her to the Netherlands after WWI to recuperate from tuberculosis and malnutrition. She liked the Netherlands so much that she stayed. In 1933 she began working as Otto Frank's secretary at Opekta, his trading company in gelling agents for making jam.

"People should never think that you have to be a very special person to help those who need you."

-Miep Gies



Amy Rene
Byrne

Guest Actor,
Education Director



Peter
van Daan

Son of Hermann and
Petronella

Peter's real name was Peter van Pels. Anne made up pseudonyms with the idea that her diary might be published. Peter was born on November 8, 1926 in Osnabrück, near the Dutch border. He had no brothers or sisters. In 1937 he immigrated to the Netherlands with his parents.

Anne's initial impression is that Peter is lazy and hypersensitive. "We die laughing about Peter, one day he has lumbago, next day he has a blue tongue and itches and so on." And "Peter has something wrong with his foot again, that softy, and it's easy to see that he is in love."



Ryan
Hagan

Guest Actor



Mr.
Kraler

Opekta Employee

Mr. Kraler's real name was Victor Kugler. He was born June 6, 1900 in Hohenelbe. His mother was a seamstress. Victor had several jobs. In 1923 he received his diploma in Dutch Business Correspondence and started working for a firm that sold pectin to jam makers. Kugler meets Otto Frank through the pectin business. In 1933, he became one of the first employees at Otto Frank's Opekta Company in Amsterdam.

"I couldn't do otherwise. I had to help them: they were my friends."

-Victor Kugler



Richard
Cannaday

Ensemble Member



Petronella
van Daan

Peter's mother,
Hermann's wife

Mrs. Van Daan's real name was Auguste van Pels. She was born on September 29, 1900 in Buer near Osnabrück, Germany. The van Pels family provided ample excitement, which was sometimes fun but there were also a lot of major arguments. Mrs. van Pels was the cook of the house. She liked discussing politics, and invariably got into arguments with her husband.

Miep Gies describes Auguste as "stylish and coquettish."



Laurie
McCants

Ensemble Member



Hermann
van Daan
Peter's father,
Petronella's husband

Hermann van Daan (real name van Pels) was one of six children. He acquired his knowledge of the butcher's trade by working in his father's business. He became the representative of his father's business in Osnabrück, Germany and began working with Otto Frank in 1938.

Miep Gies remembers him as "tall, large man" and "quite an agreeable sort, [who] had no trouble fitting into the routine" in the company.



Andrew
Hubatsek
Ensemble Member



Alfred
Dussel
Dentist,
Engaged to
Charlotte Kaletta

Alfred Dussel's real name was Fritz Pfeffer. He was born on April 30, 1889 in Giessen, Germany. His parents had a clothing store in the centre of the city. Pfeffer studied to be a dentist in Berlin where he also opened a practice. In 1926 he married Vera Bythiner and had a son, Warner. When the marriage ended in divorce, Pfeffer received custody. He sent Warner to England to keep him safe. He was never able to marry his fiancé, Charlotte Kaletta, because she was not Jewish and the Nurenberger Laws forbid it.

Of Pfeffer, Anne writes he "...is a very nice man. Of course he didn't mind sharing a room with me; to be honest, I'm not exactly delighted at having a stranger use my things, but you have to make sacrifices for a good cause, and I'm glad I can make this small one."



Eric
Wunsch
Ensemble Member

Timeline of the Holocaust

1933

January
30
Adolf Hitler appointed
Chancellor of Germany



March
22
Dachau
concentration camp
opens



April
1
Boycott of Jewish
shops and businesses



April
7
Laws for Reestablishment of the Civil Service
barred Jews from holding civil service,
university, and state positions

April
26
Gestapo established



May
10
Public burning of books written by Jews,
political dissidents, and others
not approved by the state

July
14
Law stripping East European Jewish
immigrants of German citizenship

1934

August
2

Hitler proclaims himself Führer und Reichskanzler (Leader and Reich Chancellor). Armed forces must now swear allegiance to him.

1935

May
31

Jews barred from serving in the German armed forces

September
15

Nuremberg Laws enacted. Jews are no longer considered German citizens, could not marry Aryans, or fly the German flag



March
3

Jewish doctors barred from practicing medicine in German institutions

June
17

Heinrich Himmler appointed the Chief of German Police



July
12

Sachsenhausen concentration camp opens

1936

October
25

Hitler and Mussolini form Rome-Berlin Axis



1937

July
15

Buchenwald concentration camp opens

March
13

Anschluss: all anti-Semitic decrees immediately applied in Austria

April
26

Mandatory registration of all property held by Jews inside the Reich

August
3

Italy enacts sweeping anti-Semitic laws

September
30

Munich Conference: Great Britain and France agree to German occupation of the Sudetenland, previously western Czechoslovakia

1938

October
5

Following request by Swiss authorities, Germans mark all Jewish passports with a large letter "J" to restrict Jews from immigrating to Switzerland



November
9-10

Kristallnacht
(Night of Broken Glass):
200 synagogues destroyed; 7,500 Jewish shops looted; 30,000 male Jews sent to concentration camps



November
15

All Jewish pupils expelled from German schools

1939

March 15
Germans occupy Czechoslovakia

August 23
Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed: non-aggression pact between Soviet Union and Germany

September 1
Beginning of World War II:
Germany invades Poland

October 28
First Polish ghetto established in Piotrków

November 23
Jews in German-occupied Poland forced to wear an arm band or yellow star



April 9
Germans occupy Denmark and southern Norway

May 10
Germany invades the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France

May 20
Concentration camp established at Auschwitz

1940

June 22
France surrenders



August 8
Battle of Britain begins

September 27
Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis formed

November 16
Warsaw Ghetto sealed
(ultimately contained 500,000 people)

1941

March
Adolf Eichmann appointed head of the department for Jewish affairs of the Reich Security Main Office



April
6
Germany attacks and occupies Yugoslavia and Greece

June
22
Germany invades the Soviet Union

July
31
Reinhard Heydrich appointed by Hermann Göring to implement the "Final Solution" to exterminate the Jews



December
7
Japanese attack Pearl Harbor



December
11
United States declares war on Japan and Germany

1942

March
17
Extermination begins in Belzec; 600,000 Jews murdered in less than a year

May
16
Extermination by gas begins in Sobibor killing center

July
22
Germans establish Treblinka concentration camp

1943

January
31

German 6th Army surrenders at Stalingrad

April
19

Warsaw Ghetto
revolt begins



October
14

Armed revolt in Sobibor extermination camp

March
19

Germany occupies Hungary

1944

June
6



D-Day: Allied invasion at Normandy

July
20

Group of German officers attempt to
assassinate Hitler

October
7

Revolt by inmates at Auschwitz; one
crematorium blown up

1945

January 17 Evacuation of Auschwitz; beginning of death march

April 30 Hitler commits suicide

May 8 V-E Day: Germany surrenders; end of Third Reich



August 6 The United States bombs Hiroshima, Japan



August 9 The United States bombs Nagasaki, Japan



August 15 V-J Day: Victory over Japan proclaimed.

September 2 Japan surrenders; end of World War II



Excerpts from Anne's Diary



"All college students are being asked to sign an official statement to the effect that they 'sympathize with the Germans and approve of the New Order.'" Eighty percent have decided to obey the dictates of their conscience, but the penalty will be severe. Any student refusing to sign will be sent to a German labor camp."

- May 18, 1943

"...but the minute I was alone I knew I was going to cry my eyes out. I slid to the floor in my nightgown and began by saying my prayers, very fervently. Then I drew my knees to my chest, lay my head on my arms and cried, all huddled up on the bare floor. A loud sob brought me back down to earth..."

- April 5, 1944

"It's a wonder I haven't abandoned all my ideals, they seem so absurd and impractical. Yet I cling to them because I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart. It's utterly impossible for me to build my life on a foundation of chaos, suffering and death. I see the world being slowly transformed into a wilderness, I hear the approaching thunder that, one day, will destroy us too, I feel the suffering of millions. And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too shall end, that peace and tranquility will return once more"

- July 15, 1944

Further Exploration

[Virtual 3-D tour of the Secret Annex](#)

Take a virtual tour of the small attic space that housed eight people for two years and one month

[America's Dangerously Shallow Understanding of the Holocaust](#)

An insightful article examining the way we view Hitler's atrocities in America

[The Anne Frank House Worldwide](#)

Explore exhibitions and educational projects all over the world

[Leave a comment in the AnneFrank.org Guestbook](#)

Be among the thousands that have left a comment in this digital guestbook. Comment on your feelings about the real-life events or your experience watching our play

Get Involved!

[Become an Anne Frank School!](#)

As an Anne Frank School you have two important responsibilities: keeping the memory of Anne Frank's story alive, and stimulating your pupils to think about issues such as freedom, diversity and mutual respect

[Anne Frank Center for Mutual Respect](#)

An additional resource to explore ways of helping stop racism, hatred, and bigotry
Do you think offering refugees asylum is important?

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