

Drama Vocabulary

- ✓ **Act:** large division of a play ²
- ✓ **Scene:** smaller division of an act ^{1.3} all same place
- ✓ **Stage instructions:** instructions (usually in *italics*) on ^{time} what actors should do in the play including information about
 - props
 - costumes
 - how to move
 - how to speak

italics
~~read~~ do!

Scene 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 belfry¹ of a church tower, the Westertoren, whose carillon² 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.

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 black-out curtains.³ In the main room there is a sink, a gas ring for cooking and a woodburning stove for warmth.

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.

stage
directions
stage looks
sounds

Stage
looks/
appearance

four

when after ww2

The curtain rises on an empty stage. It is late afternoon,
November 1945.

The rooms are dusty, the curtains in rags. Chairs and tables are overturned.

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.

He stands looking slowly around, making a supreme effort at self-control. He is weak, ill. His clothes are threadbare.

After a second he drops his rucksack⁴ 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.

From the street below we hear the sound of a barrel organ⁵ 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

Character
• appearance
• actions

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.

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.]

MIEP. Are you all right, Mr. Frank?

MR. FRANK. [Quickly controlling himself] Yes, Miep, yes.

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?

MR. FRANK. I've come to say good-bye . . . I'm leaving here, Miep.

MIEP. What do you mean? Where are you going? Where?

MR. FRANK. I don't know yet. I haven't decided.

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 . . .

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 . . .

MIEP. No. No. It wasn't suffering. You can't say we suffered. *[As she speaks, she straightens a chair which is overturned.]*

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.]*

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.

MR. FRANK. Burn them. *[He opens his rucksack to put the glove in it.]*

MIEP. But, Mr. Frank, there are letters, notes . . .

Stage
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MR. FRANK. Burn them. *[He opens his rucksack to put the glove in it.]*

MIEP. But, Mr. Frank, there are letters, notes . . .

MR. FRANK. Burn them. All of them.

MIEP. Burn this? *[She hands him a paper-bound notebook.]*

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 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."

[As MR. FRANK reads on, another voice joins his, as if coming from the air. It is ANNE'S VOICE.]

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,⁶ followed by the arrival of the Germans. Then things got very bad for the Jews."

[MR. FRANK'S VOICE dies out. ANNE'S VOICE continues alone. The lights dim slowly to darkness. The curtain falls on the scene.]

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.⁷ 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 street-car, 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

6. **capitulation** (ke pich' ə lă' shən) *n.* surrender

7. **yellow stars** Stars of David, which are six-pointed stars that are symbols of Judaism. The Nazis ordered all Jews to wear them sewn to their clothing so that Jews could be easily identified.

Flashback?

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 . . .

[During the last lines the curtain rises on the scene. The lights dim on.
ANNE'S VOICE *fades out.*]