

# Impressions from play the diary of anne frank



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

From a technical aspect, *The Diary of Anne Frank* was superb. The set design captured the sheer simplicity with which the Franks and van Pelts had to live, all the while adding to the intimacy between the actors and the audience. That no real partitions separated the bedrooms from each other or from the general “common room”—what Mr. Frank termed the dining room—emphasized the utter lack of privacy which Mrs. Frank so keenly observed in the first act. Most obviously, the excerpts from Anne’s diary that were painted on the floor and walls added an artistic element to an otherwise minimalist set. It was also meaningful that the sole entrance to the theater was the bookcase; this contributed to the realism of the show for the audience.

With regards to the content of the show, each of the characters was sufficiently developed. Mr. Frank quickly emerged as the voice of reason within the group. His character foil, Mr. van Daan, exhibited an impulsive, ill-tempered nature throughout the show, particularly in his “quarrel” with his wife in the first act, as well as in his failed attempt to sneak bread in the second act. His equally erratic counterpart, Mrs. van Daan, openly flirts with Mr. Frank because her personality and her husband’s are noticeably discordant. Peter van Daan, though ostensibly irritable, is clandestinely shy, unlike his outspoken father. Margot Frank is reserved, graceful, and remarkably intelligent for her age. Likewise, Mrs. Frank keeps to herself. Most of her dialogue in the play focuses on reprimanding spontaneous Anne and helping her be more mature. Mr. Dussel is the introverted, fretful outcast of the group, owing partly to his late entrance into the Secret Annex, well after a group dynamic was established. Miep Gies is the group’s optimistic

connection to the outside world. Her altruism is apparent in her unequivocal dedication to helping the Franks and van Daans despite the obvious threat this poses to her own safety. Mr. Kraler, on the other hand, has some qualms about helping the group, as his worrisome nature suggests. Lastly, Anne is very thoughtful and “dignified” in her own right—contrary to her mother’s beliefs. She is unapologetically honest, particularly in her aversion from her mother. She undergoes perhaps the most drastic change of all the characters between the first and second acts, though she never complains of the dismal circumstances of life in the annex.

It is also important to note that each character had an outlet, a way in which he or she dealt with the pain and discomfort of a marginalized, uncertain life in hiding. Anne, obviously, has her diary. In the second act, she even recounted to Peter that she hoped to make a career out of her writing. We see, therefore, that her diary served as a distraction from the present and offered her a daily glimpse into the more promising future. Mr. Frank explained to Anne, “Now, every time I read my Dickens, it takes me into another world. And, in that world, I am free.” Mrs. Frank keeps her mind off of her present misfortune by repeatedly trying to instill politeness and respect in Anne. She does this with the assumption that, when they are rescued from the annex and from hiding, these skills will serve Anne well. That is, she assumes there will be a future in which Anne will benefit from these lessons. Mrs. Frank lectures Anne significantly more in the first act than in the second act; this might be attributed to her noticeable loss of hope (in the second act) for rescue and the end of the Third Reich. Even without her confession to Miep that she “feels the end will never come”,

Mrs. Frank makes it clear that she is very reluctant to believe she and her family will live to see the future and the rest of their lives. Considering this, it follows that she would helplessly give up scolding Anne. Mrs. van Daan had her fur coat as a reminder of the luxurious life that once was. After her husband gave it to Miep to sell, Mrs. van Daan lamented, " Oh, Putti, that was the last thing! A whole world—gone." Mr. van Daan had his cigarettes, then a mark of living the high life. He also frequently longed for " Berkhof's cream cakes", a treat from which " rotten kale and potatoes" were a stark aberration. Margot and Mr. Dussel led private lives, somewhat aloof from the rest of the group, Mr. Dussel even " spending most of [his] life in [the WC]", which was the only place in the entire Secret Annex where solitude was possible. Peter, somewhat introverted himself, spent a sizeable amount of time in the attic with his cat, Mouschi, as opposed to joining the others downstairs.