

ANNE, PETER 1

MR. VAN DAAN. (*Rising, banging the table.*) Do we have to hear about your father again? If you hadn't been so attached to your father, your coat, the apartment with all our goddamned possessions, we'd be in America by now!

PETER. It's not her fault.

MRS. VAN DAAN. Oh please. It was you too, you know. You didn't want to —

MR. VAN DAAN. I only stayed because of you! Believe me, I knew which way the wind was blowing.

MRS. VAN DAAN. Oh. Sure. You always know everything.

PETER. Mother. Please. Stop.

MR. VAN DAAN. Your mother will never listen.

ANNE. (*Coming over to Mrs. van Daan. Quiet.*) If I could just say one thing.

MRS. VAN DAAN. No, you cannot! You say too much already and it's none of your business anyway. (*Anne retreats to her room in tears.*)

PETER. You shouldn't have said that, Mother.

MRS. VAN DAAN. (*Choked.*) What?

PETER. You hurt her feelings.

MRS. VAN DAAN. Oh. Well. I apologize. All right? I apologize — to everyone! (*She goes into the W.C., slamming the door behind her. Peter picks up Anne's cake and goes to her room.*)

PETER. You left this.

ANNE. (*Hiding her tears.*) Thank you. (*Peter starts to leave, turns back, stands there awkwardly.*)

PETER. I ... I'm sorry for what happened in there. I wish I could have said something. But they make me feel so ... I can't stand it when they ... Sometimes I wish I didn't belong to them at all! I just hope I never turn out like them.

ANNE. You won't. I know it.

PETER. Like him. What if I'm like him?

ANNE. You're not. Believe me.

PETER. All I can say is if it wasn't for you ... I mean ... You ... (*Blurting it out.*) You're always a big help to me.

ANNE. I am? How?

PETER. When you're cheerful it ... well ... it keeps me from being depressed. (*Mr. Dussel opens the door, looks from Peter to Anne, backs out.*)

ANNE. I'm not always so cheerful, you know ... inside.

PETER. Really?

ANNE. It's hard. If you want to cry or something. There's nowhere to go.

PETER. It's easier for me, I guess. When there's a fight ... you know, with my parents ... I just duck into my room.

ANNE. You're lucky you have a room of your own.

PETER. Well, at least you can talk to your parents.

ANNE. Not really. I never discuss anything serious with Mother. She just doesn't understand. I can talk about everything with Father ... except Mother. I don't think you can really ... really be intimate with someone if they hold something back, do you?

PETER. I think your father's terrific.

ANNE. He likes you too.

PETER. *(Looking up quickly, blushing.)* You think so?

ANNE. I can tell from the little things he says. *(She pauses.)* It's funny, isn't it?

PETER. What?

ANNE. Well, we've been living here for almost a year and a half and this ... this is the first time we've really talked.

PETER. I know what you mean.

ANNE. You know something, Peter?

PETER. What?

ANNE. I ... I've never really had a friend. Someone I could truly confide in. *(She is still, looking at him. He smiles.)*

PETER. Me neither. *(A moment. Suddenly.)* Smile for me.

ANNE. Why?

PETER. You have dimples when you smile.

ANNE. Dimples — the only mark of beauty I possess.

PETER. That's not true. You're pretty.

ANNE. Me? *(Peter nods.)*

~~PETER. Yes. *(Quiet.)* You. *(Anne looks down. A pause. She looks up, a dazzling smile. Moments pass. They smile at each other. Still looking at her, Peter starts to go, almost trips, catches himself, leaves. Anne continues to smile. Chopin's Nocturne A-flat major, Op. 32, No. 2 begins over the BBC dinner concert, as light brightens on Anne joyously dancing around the table in the main room. Lost in a blissful reverie, she is unseen by the others, who are getting ready for supper. But even they seem transformed by Anne's happiness, as the simple household activities — setting the table, the worn tablecloth ballooning out as it is put down, bringing in the plates, laying the silverware — all become a kind of ritual.)*~~

~~ANNE. *(Directly to us.)* The sun is shining, the sky a deep blue, there's~~