

# MRS. F, MIEP

MRS. VAN DAAN. What? What is it? Come on. I can't stand the suspense. *(Everyone watches as Anne takes a pair of red leather high-heeled shoes from the ficelle. She slips off her shoes. Mrs. Frank helps her put on the red ones.)*

MRS. FRANK. Oh my ... Miep, where did you find them?

MR. VAN DAAN. You can't even get a slipper on the black market these days.

MRS. VAN DAAN. *(Eating her cake.)* Look. They match! Incredible. *(Taking a step, Anne totters, almost falls. They laugh, as Anne, awkward and graceful, moves around the room in her first pair of high-heeled shoes.)*

MR. FRANK. All grown up! Ready for Hollywood.

MIEP. Enjoy them, Anne. *(She starts to leave.)* And don't worry. I'll give you all a full report tomorrow.

MR. VAN DAAN. Miep. There's something I'd like you to do for me. *(Mrs. van Daan gets up.)*

MRS. VAN DAAN. *(Taking her fur coat.)* What? What are you talking about?

MR. VAN DAAN. You know what I'm talking about. *(He moves toward her.)*

MIEP. What is it?

PETER. He wants to sell her fur coat.

MRS. VAN DAAN. *(Moving away, clutching her coat. Quiet.)* No, Putti. Don't do this to me. This is my coat. I've had this coat for seventeen years. My father gave me this coat. You have no right. Don't you dare! Let go.

MR. VAN DAAN. You have to give it up.

MRS. VAN DAAN. Let go of it. Please.

MR. VAN DAAN. You can't hold on to a fur coat when people are in such desperate need of warm clothing. *(To the others.)* Besides we're broke. We've been running out of money for months. *(To his wife, gently.)* I have to sell it. *(Taking the coat from her hands, he gives it to Miep, who starts for the stairs. Mrs. Frank follows Miep down a few steps, stops. At the bottom step Miep turns back. Mrs. Frank is staring at her.)*

MIEP. *(Coming back up the stairs.)* Mrs. Frank?

MRS. FRANK. Oh Miep. I remember when a New Year was something to look forward to.

MIEP. Mrs. Frank. You mustn't give up hope.

MRS. FRANK. There's no hope to be had. I know that. I knew it the night Hitler came to power, when that voice came screaming

out of the radio. I sat there paralyzed. And now in London, what is the Dutch Queen doing? What are they all doing? They're not even *mentioning* the word Jew. The trains are still leaving. Why don't they bomb the tracks? (*Miep is silent.*) I can't talk about this with the others, Miep.

MIEP. I understand, Mrs. Frank.

MRS. FRANK. I know they're making plans, counting the days till the war is over, but I have to tell you ... I feel the end will never come. (*Pause.*) Sometimes ... sometimes I want to give myself up.

MIEP. Forgive me, Mrs. Frank, but you must try and take things a little easier. They need you. The children need you.

MRS. FRANK. I'm ashamed to feel this way. I know you and Mr. Kraler have it just as hard.

MIEP. No, Mrs. Frank. We don't.

MRS. FRANK. Thank you. For listening to me. (*At the table, Mr. Dussel studies French with Anne, Peter works on Math, Mrs. van Daan busies herself in the kitchen as her husband watches.*)

MR. DUSSEL. "*Non, non, ce n'est pas ce que tu penses.*" (*He pronounces "penses" incorrectly, rhyming with "sense."*)

ANNE. (*Correcting him.*) "*Penses,*" Mr. Dussel. "*Penses.*" From *penser*. To think. (*He puts his head in his hands.*) *Ce que vous ne faites pas beaucoup.*

MR. DUSSEL. What?

ANNE. *Ce que vous ne faites pas.*

MR. DUSSEL. You're going too fast.

ANNE. *Oui. Je sais.*

MR. DUSSEL. (*A pause. Looking up, smiling.*) *Je sais.* I know that one.

ANNE. *Bon. Continuons. La page suivante, s'il vous plait.*

MRS. VAN DAAN. I just don't understand. I would never ... never have done anything like that to you.

MR. VAN DAAN. The coat was seventeen years old, for God's sake! Those skins had definitely seen their day.

MRS. VAN DAAN. That's not the point and you know it.

MR. VAN DAAN. I know we need the money. We have no money — can you get that through your head?

PETER. Don't talk to her like that.

MRS. VAN DAAN. You've never understood. Anything.

MR. VAN DAAN. Oh God, here we go again.

MRS. VAN DAAN. That coat was the last thing. A whole world gone.

MR. VAN DAAN. Well you've still got us, haven't you?

MRS. VAN DAAN. You took the last memory of my father away.