

# MR. & MRS. VD

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.

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?