

KEEPER OF THE DIARY

by
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The following is based on actual events.

263 Prinsengracht, Amsterdam, Netherlands

*August 4, 1944.
10:14 a.m.*

INT. BEDROOM, SECRET ANNEX, OPEKTA JAM FACTORY -- MORNING

ANNELIES MARIE FRANK, 15, sits and stares out the grimy windowpane at the pale wash of morning light. Skeletal branches of an chestnut tree dappled against the ruddy, grungy brickwork, a small atrium courtyard of ramshackle prewar townhouses, soot-flecked.

Light washes in across her, silhouetting her, pressing her shadow over the jumbled, worn-out bed sheets, two cramped little mattresses on bare metal frames. The faintest wistful smile upon her lips. She absently fusses with her long hair. Pencil, paper laid out across her lap.

INT. STAIRWAY, OPEKTA JAM FACTORY -- SAME TIME

Scuffed-up black shoes **HAMMER** up the flaking, chewed-up wooden steps, scarred plaster walls exposing naked grungy brickwork. Narrow-nosed FN 1922 .17mm **PISTOLS** drawn. Four husky **MEN** in threadbare suits, tense, panting, clambering up the stairs. **NAZI SWASTIKAS**, crimson **ARM-BANDS** on their arms.

INT. MAIN OFFICE, OPEKTA JAM FACTORY -- SAME TIME

Eckstein cigarette jammed between her fingers, mostly ash, nails chipped-up, worn down to the quick, **MIEP GIES**, 35, short brown hair, exhaustion pitting her shadowed eyes, gazes down at a rumpled, weather-worn ledger book. Narrow columns jammed with chicken-scratch writing, numbers in **RED INK**.

Chattering typewriters fill the muggy little office. **BEP VOSKUIJL**, 25, pert, narrow-shouldered, hunched over her Underwood Standard Portable. **JOHANNES KLEIMAN**, 48, pitched back in his weather-beaten wooden office chair, on the **PHONE**. His listless gaze falling upon Miep through the sunlight.

Miep, unaware of him, her glassy eyes fixed on the tiny torn scrap of **PAPER** wedged beneath the chewed-up corner of the ledger book. **SHOPPING LIST** scrawled in hasty, dull pencil. *Brown beans, navy beans, potatoes, veg soup.* Tacked on at the end in a child's leaning cursive: *chocolates.*

Miep, a fractional tug of a smile flickering.

INT. HALLWAY, OPEKTA JAM FACTORY -- SAME TIME

Pushing down the narrow, weakly-lit hallway, grungy old lathed walls, linoleum floors, **KARL SILBERBAUER**, 33, pinch-nosed, pressed Gestapo S.S. Sergeant's **UNIFORM**, motions to **GEZINUS GRINGHUIS**, 55, yellowed skin, thinning hair, liver spots, toward the cramped **OFFICE DOOR** to the right. Pushing toward the **BACK OFFICE** with the other **THREE PLAINCLOTHES GRÜNE POLIZEI DUTCH POLICEMEN**.

Gringhuis, .17mm **PISTOL** drawn, sweating through his threadbare jacket, draws a breath. Grips the scratched-up **DOORKNOB**. Glances down the hall as Silberbauer and the **OTHER DUTCHMEN** surround the back **OFFICE DOOR**.

Gringhuis steels himself. TWISTS the DOORKNOB. Pushing in -

INT. MAIN OFFICE, OPEKTA JAM FACTORY -- CONTINUOUS

- to the soupy, muggy warmth, sun streaming through the grimy windows, Kleiman, his back to the door, phone pinned with his shoulder, scribbling something in a book. Bep, fingers CHATTERING on her Underwood typewriter. Movement in the corner of her eye. Glances over. Lurches. STOPS TYPING.

Miep looks over at the sudden SILENCE. Freezes. Eyes locked on Gringhuis, filling the doorway in his shabby suit. Finger wrapped around the TRIGGER of the PISTOL. TREMBLING slightly. Kleiman, noticing the women's gazes, twists in his chair.

GRINGHUIS

(in German)

Don't move. Just sit quietly.

Miep pushes down a dry swallow. Ash flicking from her cigarette. Eyes dragging to the petrified, rigid Bep, her fingers still poised over the Underwood. She meets Miep's gaze. Miep, DREAD in her eyes.

INT. PETER'S BEDROOM, SECRET ANNEX -- SAME TIME

OTTO FRANK, 55, kind-faced, gaunt, cradles a steaming cup of weak tea. Vapor blossoming into his face. He gazes at the yellowed, creased PHOTOGRAPH jammed partly beneath the weather-worn mattress, narrow, bedsheets tangled, overhung by overstuffed bookshelves nailed to the walls. The smiling black-and-white FACE of his daughter, Anne Frank. He drags his attention to -

- PETER VAN PELS, 17, hunched at the cramped desk beside him, lanky knees smashed up beneath its chewed-up wooden frame. Textbooks leafed open, gawky elbows pinning a rumpled paper covered in smudged pencil script, messy handwriting.

OTTO FRANK

One "b," Peter. One "b" in "double."

Peter, mid-dictation, cut off, squints back down at the rumpled page. Weak light spilling over him from the hanging lamp. Stairs jutting down through the middle of the room.

Peter picks up a worn-down nub of a pencil. Scratches out a word midway through the column. Otto, watching his studied focus, intent determination, a slight tug of a smile. Oblivious to the soft SQUEAK of the stairs, gentle footsteps.

Otto gives a start as the door abruptly WRENCHES OPEN. Peter twists in his seat. Freezes. Elbow catching the pencil. It rolls off the desk. Clatters to the floor.

Silberbauer, FN 1922 .17mm PISTOL drawn. Peter, breath catching in his throat, terror flashing in his eyes, glances at Otto. Otto pushes down a swallow. Raises his hands.

INT. MAIN OFFICE, OPEKTA JAM FACTORY -- SHORTLY LATER

Miep draws to the window, face puffy, eyes streaked with tears. She peers out through the gritty glass, clasping the simple silver pendant around her neck.

Down on the cobblestone street, a canvas-covered green Opel THREE-TON TRUCK has been backed up onto the sidewalk.

Otto Frank stands apart from his huddled family, Peter and the Van Pelses. Watching them, his shoulders slumped, a broken man, as one by one they are roughly shoved up over the metal tailgate, into the yawning dark maw of the back of the truck.

Warehouse manager **WILLHELM VAN MAAREN**, 49, conferring with Gringhuis, nodding, gesturing toward the factory.

Otto turns, flicks the slightest glance upward. Toward the office windows. Toward Miep. She draws a ragged breath. Blanches under his gaze. The slight, pale figure of Anne Frank climbing unsteadily into the truck behind him.

Silberbauer steps forward, **BARKS** at Otto in German. Otto nods, turns. Obedient. Grips the metal rails and hoists himself up onto the metal tailgate.

Miep, trembling, face crumpling as she watches him haltingly disappear into the dark of the truck. She draws back from the window, presses a hand to her mouth. Turns away, eyes stinging. Wipes the tears that escape with her knuckles.

Catches the gaze of Bep, across the room, telephones ringing, typewriters abandoned, coffee cups gone cold, cigarette still issuing a twist of smoke from the ashtray. Their world turned upside-down.

INT. FILE ROOM, SECRET ANNEX ENTRYWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Miep stands in a wash of weak morning light. Papers strewn in flurries across the floor. Squat wooden **BOOKCASE**, formerly wedged beneath a rumpled map of Belgium against the wall, now pulled away to expose the **HIDDEN DOOR** and **STAIRCASE** to the Secret Annex behind it. Gaping dark stillness beyond.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, SECRET ANNEX -- MOMENTS LATER

Miep, clenching her hands, mouth pressed into a taut line to choke back the sobs, steps gingerly into the room. Sheets, blankets wrenched off the twin dirty mattresses, left in clumps on the floor. Wooden dressers, drawers yanked out, clothes tossed and strewn in jumbles.

Smashed glass twinkles hazily beneath the tattered curtains on the two narrow windows at the far end of the room. Miep steps forward. Shoes **CRUNCHING** over rumpled papers, broken-spined books dumped carelessly among piles of **PHOTOGRAPHS**, an abandoned leather belt, shoes.

Bep draws to the doorway. Red-eyed, quivering. Watches in silence as Miep draws to the center of the wreckage. She bends. Drags aside a jumble of crumpled papers, a Hebrew prayer book. Shimmies out the small, cloth-bound red checkered DIARY left behind among all of the relics, junk.

Miep rises. Holding it. Stares down at it through tear-blurred eyes.

BLACK.

INT. BARBARA ZIMMERMAN'S OFFICE, DOUBLEDAY & CO. -- DAY

Hard fluorescent. Washing, sallow, over stark beige plaster walls. Bookshelf. Laden with MANUSCRIPTS. Loose-leaf, bound together with rubber bands, metal clamps. **BARBARA ZIMMERMAN**, 23, bookish, mousy, attractive, thick black glasses, hair combed back, crisp white blouse, wool skirt, hunches at the cluttered oak desk. Filling the middle of the room. IBM Model 01 electric TYPEWRITER. Telephone. Manuscript open in front of her. Her concentration on the smearing typescript -

- nagged by the slight FLICKER of the fluorescent overhead strip. She glances up at it. Distracted. It sputters back at her. She presses her attention back to the page. Eyes dragging across it. Glances back at the flickering light.

SUPER: "November 8, 1950. New York City."

She slouches back. Rolling, padded office chair wheezing beneath her. Flips the manuscript shut. Regards it. Smudged TITLE, *Dunkirk: The Miracle That Saved England*. She lifts it, impulsively places it into the wire metal OUTBOX. Masking tape LABEL peeling from the side: "LOG & DISCARD."

She drags her glasses off. Rubs at her bleary eyes. Twists in her mewling chair. Crisp New York afternoon SUNLIGHT slashing in around the meager, narrow corners of the pull-down SHADE. She cuts a glance at the crinkled Marlboro CIGARETTE PACKAGE resting on the edge of the desk. A reward not yet earned.

She twists in the chair. Reaches for the wire-frame INBOX beside the OUTBOX. Stack of rumpled MANILA ENVELOPES slouching between its ribbed walls. Beaten-up. Battered by the Postal Service. She drags the next one in front of her.

Affixes her tired eyes upon the hand-written address. "*Editor, Doubleday & Company.*" She draws a breath. Steeling herself. Grabs the tarnished silver LETTER OPENER from beside the IBM typewriter. Shimmies the envelope open. Fresh MANUSCRIPT jammed inside.

Eyes sticking for a moment on the DISCARDED MANUSCRIPT, *Dunkirk*, in the OUTBOX. She drags her attention back. Wiggles out the NEW ONE.

INT. KATZ'S DELICATESSAN -- DAY

Murky fishbowl of smoke, babbling voices, laughter, clattering dishes. Barbara sits at a small table by the window, by herself. Matzo-ball soup, smeary glass of water, no ice. Glasses reflecting back the rumpled MANUSCRIPT she is reading. Cigarette twisting smoke from the plastic ashtray beside her. She is absorbed. Draws back. Nagging at her.

INT. BARBARA ZIMMERMAN'S OFFICE, DOUBLEDAY & CO. -- DAY

Barbara draws into the fluorescent cave of a room. Purse slung over her shoulder. Hair ruffled slightly. New Manuscript tucked under her arm. Her eyes instantly flicking to the OUTBOX. "LOG & DISCARD." Emptied now. She grimaces. Flicker of guilt. She hesitates. Debating.

Sets the NEW MANUSCRIPT on the desk, rumpled, ruffled, beside the typewriter. Slouches her purse into the cracked leather-padded office chair. Drawing away.

INT. MAILROOM, DOUBLEDAY & CO. -- AFTERNOON

Metal-framed shelves. Floor to ceiling. Airless warmth. Mail crates, stacked side by side. Every shelf filled. Brimming with manila envelopes, clumps, spilling burlap sacks, of crinkled letters, envelopes.

Barbara, embarrassed, pushes through the dented metal door. Draws up short. Timid. Unaccustomed to being down here. Squints at the looming jam-packed SHELVES. Gives a START as -

JASON EPSTEIN, 22, crouched beside a metal mail CART, flipping through meticulously-organized envelopes, pushes to his feet. She presses a hand to her mouth. Taken by surprise.

JASON EPSTEIN

Sorry, I didn't mean to startle you.

She pushes a smile at him. Jason, pleasantly surprised to see her down here. Watches her as her eyes rake around the stale room. Overwhelmed. Daunting rows upon rows of shelves, crates overflowing with bulging envelopes.

JASON EPSTEIN (CONT'D)

Is there something I can help you with?

She flicks a glance at him. Awkward, slightly, in his eagerness.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

I discarded a manuscript this morning.
I think I may have been too hasty.

Jason, a tug of a shy smile. Turns. Instinctively knows this labyrinth. Nods toward a fresh JUMBLED PILE of envelopes in a crate on a second CART.

JASON EPSTEIN

It would be in there if it was from
this morning.

Barbara nods, grateful. Steps toward the CART. Flicks a glance at him. Slurry of jumbled envelopes and pouches. He registers her consternation. Smirks. Slides one last envelope into place. Twists away from his own cart.

JASON EPSTEIN (CONT'D)

Here, let me help you with that.

Eyes sticking on her. He draws to the chipped-up metal cart. Pries his attention away from her. Straining to focus. Expertly flips through the wash of unorganized, rumpled MANUSCRIPTS.

She watches him work. Dexterous, confident. He flicks a glance at her. She avoids his gaze. Awkward, slightly. Eyes fixing on the MANUSCRIPTS in the crate on the LOWER SHELF of the CART.

Rumpled black-and-white PHOTOGRAPH paper-clipped to the title page of a smashed MANUSCRIPT. Discarded. Corner of a youthful girl's FACE. Barbara, etch of a frown. Eyes sticking on it.

JASON EPSTEIN (CONT'D)

Was it this one?

She drags her attention back to him. Smash-edged MANUSCRIPT in hand. *Bravest Marine of Them All*. She shakes her head.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

It was called "*Dunkirk. The Miracle that Saved England.*"

Jason nods, flips back through the other rumpled SUBMISSIONS in the crate. Barbara, distracted. Eyes gravitating back to the PHOTOGRAPH. Drawn somehow to it.

She stoops. Thumbing back the stacked ENVELOPES jammed on top of the PHOTOGRAPH. Masking tape label: "*DONALD BLACK - LOG & DISCARD.*" She shimmies out the MANUSCRIPT attached to the PHOTOGRAPH. Eyes sticking again on the -

FACE of the YOUNG GIRL. Beaming. Wide. Innocent. Something haunting about her. Junior Editors' REPORTS stapled to the title page. All PASSES. She peels it back -

"*THE DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL BY ANNE FRANK.*"

Barbara blinks. Peels back the title page. Eyes dragging over the smeary TYPESCRIPT, paragraphs, prose. Darting from word to word. Flicker of a frown. She flips it closed again. Skewered once more by the beaming GIRL'S FACE. *Anne Frank*.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)

Where did this one come from?

Jason tosses a glance over his shoulder. Squints.

JASON EPSTEIN

I have no idea.

CUT TO:

EXT. RUSSIAN CAMP, WOODS, POLAND -- MORNING

IVAN MARTYNUSHKIN, 21, shucks open a tin of canned pickled cabbage and peers down at it, flecked and gummy and mostly-eaten. He reaches in with a filthy finger, scoops his way along the ridged inner wall of the tin. Jams it into his mouth, sucks it clean.

SUPER: "January 27, 1945. Oswiecim, Poland."

He digs back into the tin, scraping and clawing for every last fleck and morsel. Flicks a glance at the **RUSSIAN CORPORAL**, 18, soggy chestnut uniform, cross-legged on a slick wet stone, shivering, watching him. FIRE snapping and popping and sputtering, a sprinkle of sleet, frozen rain.

Ivan licks his teeth. Jams the tin back into the ragged burlap gunnysack pinned between his boots. Tips his head back for a moment. Flecks of snow fluttering down between the fat, icy raindrops. His cheeks flushed pink with the cold.

EXT. WOODS, POLAND -- LATE MORNING

Crunching through the snow. Ivan, huffing, sweating in his thick canvas uniform, soggy fur at the collar flecked with ice and frozen rain, draws up short. Breath hazing at his face. He swipes it away. Squints out into the sprawling **BLEAK WHITE EXPANSE** of the landscape ahead. Tosses a glance back -

- over his shoulder, naked birch trees huddled against the frigid cold. Narrow column of **RUSSIAN RIFLEMEN**, sodden and ragged and exhausted, hunched on mangey-coated **PONIES**, clopping and rattling, canteens clanking, rifles smacking against their flanks.

Ivan holds up a hand. The Corporal, first up behind him, grasps the reins of his **HORSE**. Tugs. White knuckled. Nervous. Horse rearing back. Snorting. Sputtering. Stumbling to a halt. The other **MOUNTED MEN** behind him following suit as -

- Ivan twists forward again. Eyes sticking on the **SMUDGE** of **DIRTY BLACK** smearing up into the charcoal-gray sky ahead. Furrowed berm of tufted snow, pockmarked by jutting rocks, a brittle, frozen birch sapling, masking the **SOURCE**.

Ivan, steam huffing, holds his breath. Listens. The **CLANKING**, **SHUFFLING** dying down behind him. Muffled **SILENCE** blanketing across him, the other **MEN**. Chilly breeze wafting through the skeletal forest behind them. Droplets spitting from the branches. The Corporal trembles. Strains to muffle a **SNEEZE**.

Ivan, senses on high alert. Eyes fixed on the SMOKE in the sky.

EXT. AUSCHWITZ CONCENTRATION CAMP -- LATE MORNING

Dreamlike, dragging smear of weathered, sooty brick. Pitted black windows, empty, yawning from vacant, gutted walls. Barbed-wire fences, snarled. Muddy troughed, rutted roads, train tracks. Ivan, on HORSEBACK, gripping the weather-beaten wooden stock of his Simonov RIFLE, stares.

Haunted. Anxious. Breaths coming in shallow bursts. Eyes darting across the low BARRACKS BUILDINGS, clustered and vacant, doorways hanging open through the mesh fences.

Soot-blackened CHIMNEYS, leaning, scarred and blasted and half-demolished. Haze of smoke still curling from a gutted brick OUTBUILDING set back from them. Ivan tugs on the reins of his HORSE. Slowing. Squints. Not understanding.

Piled, smoldering clumps of CLOTHES, singed, soggy.

CORPORAL (O.S.)

Kapitan.

Ivan jerks. Twists back. Corporal, a few horse-steps behind him, shivering and trembling, white as a sheet, petrified. Nearly drops his own RIFLE. Pins it with an elbow. Lifts a shaking FINGER to POINT. Ivan follows his gaze -

Pale SHAPES melting into view in the DOORWAY of the hunched one-story brick STRUCTURE up ahead to the right. TWO of them hobbling, shuffling out into the dirty slush and snow.

Ivan blinks. Wipes at his smeary eyes. Freezing rain droplets clotting his vision. Mixing with flecks of ASH. Squints. Filthy gray-striped shirts hanging off bony shoulders like coat hangers. The other MEN on HORSEBACK behind him hefting their RIFLES. CLACKING MAGAZINES, loading SHELLS. Cursing under their breaths.

Ivan frowns. Holds up a hand. HALTING the MEN behind him. Eyes fixed on the hobbling SHAPES in the doorway. He drags his gaze to the wrought-iron SIGN arching the barbed GATEWAY:

"ARBEIT MACHT FREI"

Corporal, haunted eyes fixed on the gaunt, emaciated SHAPES. Petrified. Hands gripping his RIFLE.

CORPORAL (CONT'D)

Kapitan.

Ivan drags his eyes back to the DOORWAY. A skeletal **MAN**, a CHILD, 8, skull almost larger than its pitiful, starved body.

CORPORAL (CONT'D)

What is this place?

CUT TO:

INT. PASSENGER TRAIN CAR [MOVING] -- EVENING

Jolted, jostled, carriage rattling around him, a hazy babble of Dutch, German, Russian, the **same Man**, 56, sits. Turned slightly toward the window. His murky eyes fixed on the soot-caked buildings dragging by. Craggy brickwork, wrought-iron balconies, smashed-out windows, blackened and scorched.

SUPER: "June 3, 1945. Amsterdam, Netherlands."

His gaze sticks on a portly WOMAN leaning out a third-floor window, reaching to drag in a flapping gray-white sheet from the clothesline stretched to the building across the narrow alley from her. Streets strewn with trash, singed clumps of once-scarlet TAPESTRIES left to molder, NAZI SWASTIKAS blackened and smeared and all but scoured away.

He gives a start, glances forward. Every seat JAMMED with JABBERING, filthy, emaciated MEN and WOMEN, bony CHILDREN shouting to each other. Everything a foggy blear. The train shuddering, jostling, slowing.

He grasps with dirty fingers the grimy striped CLOTH BAG in his lap. Shoeless, barefoot, his skin blackened. His kneecaps jutting through the canvas fabric of his trousers. He is dwarfed in his grungy shirt, swimming in it. Collarbones like coat hangers, pitted cheeks. Eyes sunken in his skull.

INT. PLATFORM, STATION AMSTERDAM CENTRAAL -- EVENING

Hazy tumult, chaos of babbling voices, jostling PEOPLE. Clinging to their meager beat-up canvas satchels, valises. Children screaming, stumbling, staggering. The MAN bends, catches the flailing, skinny hand of a GIRL, 8, as she trips, nearly takes a spill to the floor. She shyly looks back up him. Wriggles away. Dashes off between the churning feet.

He shudders forward, clutching the striped CLOTH BAG, his only worldly possession. Wall to wall PEOPLE, confused, clamoring, trying to find each other. A WOMAN, 32, screaming in tears about something. He watches her. Drags himself onward. Train schedules, reader-boards.

A **WOMAN** in a GRAY DRESS, RED CROSS stitched to her breast, SNAGS the Man as he squirms his way through the seething crowd. Her CLIPBOARD covered with scrawled names, pages curled back, several deep. Blonde, 24, tired, energy she manufactures from some inner well of good. Shouts to be heard.

RED CROSS WOMAN

(in Dutch)

Name? What is your name?

He clears his throat. Strains to speak. Parched, exhausted -

OTTO FRANK

Otto Frank.

His voice is lost in the JABBERING CHAOS. MAN behind him SHOUTING to another WOMAN through the thick, churning crowd. She shimmies closer. Cups her hand to her ear.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

OTTO FRANK.

She nods. Draws back. Fumbles with a worn-down pencil. Flashes him a smile. Turning toward the Man beside him. He catches her by the arm.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

Margot Frank? Anna Frank?

She squints down. Eyes flicking over the smeared, penciled names. She fumbles with the next page up, peeling back. Meets his eyes again. SHAKES her head. He nods his thanks. Pulls back.

EXT. SIDEWALK, AMSTERDAM -- NIGHT

His filthy bare feet slap the rounded, weathered cobblestones. He walks with a shambling, hobbling limp. Tattered trouser legs dangling, ragged, at his bare ankles. His shirt dwarfs him. Hangs off of him like a canvas tent. He is hunched. Rawboned. Emaciated.

Otto stares up at the passing buildings. Slate-gray sky giving way already to the sooty smear of dusk. Impassive windows reflecting back, mirrorlike, down at him. He watches the guttural diesel Opel TRUCKS, passing Mercedes-Benz sedans. He drags his gaze out to the sloshing churning CANALS, flecked with goose feathers, clumped trash. The city he used to know.

INT. STAIRWELL, APARTMENT BUILDING -- NIGHT

Otto climbs the steep, narrow stairs with measured paces. Breath wheezing in and out of him. He perspires through his filthy shirt. He clutches the CLOTH BAG and huffs and turns to shimmy his way up past a descending BOY, 14, who twists to stare back up at him. Unsettled by this wraith.

INT. HALLWAY, APARTMENT BUILDING -- MOMENTS LATER

He draws to the door and stands and lifts his hand, holds it, trembling slightly. Draws a breath. He KNOCKS on the door. He stands, flecks of perspiration dewing his temples, sinewy neck. He glances down the hallway. An ARGUING COUPLE rounds the stairs and claps their way down and keeps arguing.

He turns back to the door. He hesitates. Lifts his hand. RAPS again on the chipped-up wood. He waits. Listens. Muffled WOMAN'S VOICE on the other side. Not happy.

Thumping footsteps, heavy, stamping closer.

A CLACK as the dead bolt is turned. Knob twisting. Door abruptly jolting OPEN. Warm light spilling out. Threadbare rug, slivered bookcase, photographs in frames, clogs piled in a wicker basket. Filling the doorway -

Miep Gies, flushed in the face, wrapped in a worn-out sleeping gown, hair disheveled, in the midst of an ARGUMENT, holding a smeary water glass. Her eyes settle on Otto. She sees him. Absorbs.

The water glass slides out of her hand and SMASHES to the floor at her feet. Color draining from her face. He flinches at the shattering glass. Takes a haltering half-step back.

Miep SURGES out, pushing the door wider. She grasps him by both hands, SQUEEZES. Then, cannot help herself. ENVELOPS him in a tight embrace.

He totters backward. Weak. Air smashed out of him. Staggeres and struggles to catch his footing. Eyes all at once stinging. She is squeezing him. Holding him.

JAN GIES, her husband, draws to the corridor behind her, blinking and angry at the breaking glass, their argument cut short. He sees Otto. Stares. Looking at a ghost.

Miep, sobs heaving, wracking through her body, clings to Otto. He lifts a hesitant, tentative hand. Places it on her back. He gazes at Jan. Self-conscious. Door across the hallway juddering open, a NEIGHBOR, chubby, mustached, squinting blearily out at the commotion.

Miep draws back, face streaming with tears. She drags in a ragged breath. The sight of his gaunt face, almost inhuman.

MIEP GIES

Is it you?

He manages to nod.

OTTO FRANK

It's me. Yes. It is me.

He flinches as she cups his face in her hands. Touch of this type unfamiliar. He stands rigidly. She releases him. His probing, wondering eyes.

MIEP GIES

We spent that entire summer, after they released us, attempting to locate you.

OTTO FRANK

Have you heard anything of the girls?

Miep draws back. Shakes her head. Eyes watery, red. He nods.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

Edith is not coming back. Neither
are the Van Pelses or Dr. Pfeffer.
But I have great hope for Margot and
Anna.

She embraces him again. Wrapping her arms around his gaunt
body once more. Pulling him to her. He stands, brittle. Gently
hugs her back.

MIEP GIES

I saved as many of their things as I
could.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM, GIES APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Otto tugs open scratched-up metal clasps, fumbles with the
threadbare length of rope that binds them shut. His hands
are shaking. He gazes down into the wooden Opekta Jam CRATE
and his breath catches in his throat. Margot's weather-worn
hairbrush. Rumpled school papers, scrawled with her
handwriting. Anne's shoes. Red checkered DIARY wedged into
the bottom. He looks upon it and is shaken, cannot move.

He grips the sides of the crate. Steadies himself. He glances
to Miep, watching him, hands clasped before her. She looks
away, uncomfortable. All at once aware she is an intruder in
this private moment.

He steps back, disoriented. Narrow twin beds, weak light
spilling from the dusty desk lamp over a scuffed-up leather
blotter. Drapes hanging from the windows. Narrow fireplace.
His striped cloth sack, ragged and filthy, resting on the
other bed.

He squeezes his eyes shut. Drags them open. Bleary exhaustion,
numbness, loss. Miep steps forward to steady him. Stops
herself. She glances to Jan, lingering in the doorway,
watching, uncertain how to treat this once-close friend,
returned a stranger.

He catches his breath. He musters a weak smile for them.

OTTO FRANK

Thank you. I should rest.

Miep nods vigorously. She does not move for a moment. He
totters his way to the bed. Catches himself, pushes a hand
against the wool-blanketed mattress to prop himself up,
springs softly wheezing beneath his meager weight. Miep takes
a faltering step toward him. Restrains herself. He turns,
shaking. His eyes stick on the Opekta crate.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

I would like to go back. In the
morning. To the Annex.

She glances at Jan again. He is motionless, impassive. Otto, lowering himself onto the creaking mattress, drags pained eyes, yearning, needing, onto Miep.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

It is the first place they would go.

She hesitates. Glances at Jan again. Nods.

MIEP GIES

Of course. Of course, Otto. We will go in the morning.

She takes a step toward him. She reaches out, places a hand on his shoulder. He blanches at the touch. Looks up at her. Her face, bleary, soft, pained, gazing down on him. She has aged in this time, too. Hardship weighing.

MIEP GIES (CONT'D)

Rest. We will find them.

He manages a flicker of a smile. Nods. She reflects it back at him. Withdraws to the door. Looks back one last time. This shadow of a man.

CUT TO:

INT. PASSENGER TRAIN [MOVING] -- DAY

THE WOMAN, 18, hunches in the beat-up wicker seat. Fusses absently with the sleeve of her hand-knit wool sweater. Train car rattling around her. Hubbub of bleary voices. CHILD laughing somewhere. She flicks a glance at the -

- small rucksack smashed into the compartment by her feet. Weather-worn. Stitched up and patched in several places. Bulging at its zippers. She drags her emerald-green eyes back to the window. Wedge of complete blackness, train tunnel, pushing back a smeary reflection of her hawkish face, hollowed eyes. Etched with worry.

Darkness all at once GIVING WAY to LIGHT. Dragging PLATFORM smearing by outside. JAMMED with TRAVELERS. Clumped sea-green Samsonite luggage. KIDS laughing, dashing between their parents. The Woman twists in her seat. Presses her face to the smeary glass. Peering out. Flickering excitement.

INT. PLATFORM CONCOURSE, PENNSYLVANIA STATION -- DAY

Jostled, elbowed, she shimmies her way out the narrow door. Platform muggy, besieged with sweaty TRAVELERS, families, businessmen in wool Brooks Brothers suits, leather briefcases, fedoras. She slows. Her attention pulled upward -

Hazy summer light leaching down through the arching steel frame latticework of the glass canopy, 150ft overhead. Murky babble of VOICES cradled by the majestic, arching dome. Pink granite, travertine walls. A crystal palace.

The Woman stares. Enthralled. JOSTLED, sidestepped by a Wall Street BANKER, 42, pasty, annoyed. Men, women, surging around her. She drags her attention back. Shimmies her way forward. Tug of a smile lingering on her lips. Disbelief. Wonder.

ALICE MCGRATH (O.S.)

Zimm! Zimmerman!

She flicks a glance upward. Leaning over the rail of the grated passenger concourse at the top of the stairs, **ALICE MCGRATH**, 23, fiery Irish redhead, grinning ear to ear. The Woman, a younger **Barbara Zimmerman**, breaks into a reciprocal smile. Alice laughing, waving. Excitement infectious.

INT. BARBARA'S BEDROOM, WEST VILLAGE APARTMENT -- AFTERNOON

Barbara stands at the window. Brown muggy summer bathing in across her rumpled sweater, short black hair. Her eyes, thick black glasses, settled on the forested Art Deco skyscrapers, brick brownstones, clumped rooftop water tanks, Chrysler Building, Empire State. Manhattan.

She is overwhelmed. Flattened by the sheer size and breadth of the city. Bare plaster walls, hardwood floor, shoebox bedroom spreading, hollow, empty, at her back.

ALICE MCGRATH (O.S.)

It's a long way up but at least you'll keep your figure.

Barbara gives a start. Twists from the window. Framed in the doorway, Alice, smirking at her. She steps into the room. Footsteps echoing on the naked plaster walls, uneven hardwood floor.

ALICE MCGRATH (CONT'D)

I have a secret. It's bubbly and it comes in a bottle.

Barbara, a flicker of a coy smile. Throws one last glance out the window. Difficult to pull herself away from the view.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

I should unpack.

Alice snorts. Eyes flicking to the lone rucksack slouched in the middle of the naked room. Single anemic Cattleya orchid in a chipped-up clay pot.

ALICE MCGRATH

That'll take you all of five minutes.

Barbara, a self-conscious smile. Stoops to tug at the tinkling zipper.

ALICE MCGRATH (CONT'D)
 We'll get you fixed up with some
 furniture in no time. I know a guy.
 As long as you don't mind pastels.

Alice watches her, smile fading. Barbara, fixed on a framed PHOTOGRAPH wedged in her backpack - *her SISTER in a lacy wedding dress. Handsome GROOM, 24, at her side. Pressed in among the long train of BRIDESMAIDS - Barbara at 17, mousy, lost in the shadow of the others. Their PARENTS beaming proudly at her sister.*

Alice, a flicker of a momentary shadow. Uncertain whether she should say anything. Unable not to -

ALICE MCGRATH (CONT'D)
 Your mother telephoned.

Barbara looks sharply up. Alice presses her lips together.

ALICE MCGRATH (CONT'D)
 She just wanted to know where you
 were.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN
 Did you tell her?

ALICE MCGRATH
 My mother did.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN
 How did my father take it?

ALICE MCGRATH
 I don't know.

Barbara skewers her with a look. Alice, uncomfortable.

ALICE MCGRATH (CONT'D)
 He was apoplectic.

Barbara blanches. Returns her attention to shimmying open the rucksack. Clothes, hastily-packed, smashed inside.

ALICE MCGRATH (CONT'D)
 Anyway, I just thought you should
 know. But enough of that. We should
 be celebrating.

Alice draws back. Wheezing floorboards echoing against the naked plaster walls.

ALICE MCGRATH (CONT'D)
 I'll get us some glasses.

Barbara, a tug of a smile in spite of herself.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

I probably shouldn't. The interview is first thing in the morning. And I still need to register for class.

ALICE MCGRATH

You've got your whole life to work and study. You're only eighteen and free in New York City once.

Alice flashes her a grin.

ALICE MCGRATH (CONT'D)

Besides, it's too late. I already opened it.

CUT TO:

INT. 1939 MORRIS EIGHT SERIES 3 SEDAN [MOVING] -- DAY

Otto gazes out the smeary window, slate-gray sky, hollow in his glassy eyes. Weathered brickwork, soot-smearred butcher shop sliding by. Narrow townhouses, walls chipped and pock-marked with bullet holes.

He stiffens in his seat. Green warehouse doors coming into view. *263 Prinsengracht*. Faded Opekta Jam sign hanging from rusty nails. Sun-bleached and peeling.

He draws back from the window. In the passenger seat, Miep glances back at him. Jolting and shuddering to a halt on the cobblestones. He soaks it in.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, SECRET ANNEX, OPEKTA JAM FACTORY -- DAY

Otto stands, immobile. His eyes, glazed and murky and lost, take in the slivered hard sunlight piercing the worn holes and tatters in the yellowed curtains. Washing across the flaking green painted woodwork. Wallpaper blistered and bulging with water damage, faded and weathered by time.

The bed is gone, dresser absent, a shadow where it stood against the wall. Otto stoops and picks up a tattered sweater left in a clump on the floor. Dust blossoming into the air. He lets it drop. He turns, eyes raking across the rumpled map of Normandy still tacked up to the wall, pushpins tracking the Allied invasion, frozen in time.

His gaze sticks on the smudged chalk markings hashing the doorframe like a climbing ladder. Margot and Anne's heights as they grew in this place. He draws a ragged breath.

INT. BEDROOM, SECRET ANNEX, OPEKTA JAM FACTORY -- DAY

He picks his way into the middle of Anne's tiny room. Draws to a halt. Turns in a slow circle. Eyes raking across the yellowed PHOTOGRAPHS of Greta Garbo, Ginger Rogers.

Colorful *Het Beursspel* board game, *Cinema & Theater Magazine*, rumpled photograph of Dame Libelle, a fashion magazine.

Her bed, too, is gone. Desk where she sat taken away. Otto reaches out and snares a trailing black strand of hair caught, coiled, on a flake of paint curling from the doorway. He purses his lips. Abundantly apparent that no one has been back here. Rooms frozen in time.

INT. FILE ROOM, SECRET ANNEX ENTRYWAY -- DAY

Otto emerges from the cramped, hunched door into the hard pale morning light falling in through the grimy windows. He turns, instinct, automatic. Carefully shuffles the bookcase shut to conceal the door. Miep draws up short as he turns back. He holds a rumpled PHOTOGRAPH of Margot and Anne, a nub of a pencil in his hands. Gnawed and pockmarked. Peter's, from the morning they were taken.

He stares at the pencil, turns it over in his hands. Runs his thumbs across the indentations, the marks of Peter's teeth. He looks up. Miep watching him.

OTTO FRANK

The last words he spoke to me were
"I'll make it."

He looks back at the sad little bookshelf. Shut-up, stagnant, stale tomb closed away behind it. He places the pencil on the shelf. Gazes at Anne in the PHOTOGRAPH.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

She will be heartbroken.

He is weighed down all at once by grief. Loss. Exhaustion. He summons his energy. Focuses on Miep.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

We should leave.

He affords one last glance back at the bookshelf. Sunlight catching in his eyes. He shambles forward. Joining Miep.

INT. OTTO'S OFFICE, OPEKTA JAM FACTORY -- DAY

Otto draws up short in the doorway of the office. Bright morning sunlight streaming through the two windows across a cataclysm of clumped paperwork, manila file-folders, three-ring binders. Underwood typewriter, telephone buried. Ashtray filled with smashed cigarette butts, flecked with ash.

He takes it all in. Miep draws up behind him. Sees it through his eyes. Displeasure etching her face.

MIEP GIES

Van Maaren ran it all while they
were gone - Mr. Kleiman and Mr.

(MORE)

MIEP GIES (CONT'D)

Kugler. Mr. Kleiman has been working
to put things back in order.

He gazes at the tired, rusty metal Opekta Jam sign propped
against the wall. Crates filled with more yellowing files.
Miep hesitates. She glances at him. Impulsive, welling up
out of her.

MIEP GIES (CONT'D)

It was him. They think. It was Van
Maaren who informed them about you.
They have him at Levantkade.

Otto does not look at her. He stares at the hard puddling
sunlight on the bare wood floor. The clumped files. The little
office, fading wallpaper, cracked plaster, yellowed with
age. He draws away from the door.

OTTO FRANK

Margot and Anna are all that matter
to me now.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM, WEST VILLAGE APARTMENT -- MORNING

Barbara stands before the cramped porcelain sink. Checkered
bathroom tiles crisscrossing the floor, walls. Cast-iron
bathtub, tarnished brass feet. She leans in toward the narrow
mirror. Grimaces, grabs up a towel. Wipes the smudged lipstick
at the corner of her mouth. Draws back. Assesses herself.
Straining to appear like an adult. An etch of dissatisfaction.
She wills it away. Squares her shoulders.

INT. TYPING POOL, DOUBLEDAY & CO. -- AFTERNOON

Barbara sits, ramrod-straight, alone, at her desk. Head
wrapped in bulky IBM headphones. Fingers chattering on the
Model 01 electric typewriter. Pressed white blouse, hair
combed severely back. A fierce focus in her gaze. Hammering
through the work. She reaches reflexively. Takes a pull from
the Marlboro cigarette burning in the plastic ashtray beside
a small stack of COLLEGE TEXTBOOKS. Small reward for another
PAGE completed.

Flicks a glance across the clustered metal desks, wire-frame
inboxes, file cabinets. Flicker of a frown. Eyes sticking on -

- the TWO DOZEN other TYPING GIRLS. Blouses, skirts. Drawn
to the line of windows across the opposite wall of the room.
Muggy sunlight streaming in. Barbara reaches to the wax
cylinder Dictaphone on her desk. Flips the switch on the
side.

Stopping the playback. Drags the headphones from her ears.
Becoming aware of the -

ROARING CROWD

- eddying in through the open windows. She squints. Lays the headphones atop a rumpled manila file folder. Pushes to her feet.

Wends her way across the room, weaving between the clumped desks, abandoned ringing telephones, cigarettes twisting smoke from ash trays. Draws into the murky warmth of the windows, sidles up alongside the TWENTY other TYPING GIRLS. Her breath catching in her throat. Through the WINDOW -

- below, spreading out in a churning, seething ocean, tens of THOUSANDS of PEOPLE. Unbridled jubilation filling the streets. Ticker tape, confetti fluttering in a blizzard.

SUPER: "August 15, 1945. Victory Over Japan Day."

Barbara stares, floored by the sight of it. **EMILY**, a blonde TYPIST, 19, willowy, sobbing in joy. Overwhelmed.

TYPIST EMILY

Look at all the Marines.

CORA, hard-edged, brunette, beside her. Squinting downward.

TYPIST CORA

We should be down there with them.

Barbara, transfixed. Numbed by the grandeur of it. Twists back as -

DONALD BLACK (O.S.)

Go on, go celebrate, girls.

- **DONALD BLACK**, 47, Editor, tie loosened, Oxford shirt unbuttoned, flabby face already flushed with whiskey, smirks. The TYPING GIRLS eagerly drawing back. Hustling to collect their purses. Barbara registers them. Breaking off in CHATTERING pairs and groups. She stirs.

Jason Epstein, freshly arrived with the chipped-up metal mail cart, jammed with rumpled manila envelopes, stopped short in the doorway by the scrambling girls. Eyes sticking on the new girl, all by herself -

- Barbara, as she draws her gaze back to her desk. The roaring tumult at her back. Unfinished work. Flick of a glance at the other departing TYPISTS as she peels away from the window.

Donald draws to the smoggy glass. Gazes down upon the churning CROWD outside. Tosses a hazy glance back as Barbara drags her chair back. Picking up her headphones.

DONALD BLACK (CONT'D)

Go on, sweetheart.

She draws up short. Glances over at him, self-conscious. Had not wanted to be noticed.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN
I should finish these dictations.

DONALD BLACK
They can't be that important.

She looks back down at the typewriter. Uncertain. Half-transcribed letter curling out over the metal IBM case.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN
He marked them "urgent."

DONALD BLACK
He sent them to the typing pool.

He pushes away from the window. Condescending smirk.

DONALD BLACK (CONT'D)
Go. Enjoy yourself. Make some lonely sailor happy to be home.

Jason Epstein, in the doorway, flinches. Barbara, stung.

INT. CHUMLEY'S SPEAKEASY, WEST VILLAGE -- EVENING

Barbara hunches on a chewed-up mahogany barstool. Ensnared in a babble of boisterous VOICES, sweaty warmth, cigarette smoke. Straw strewn on the sticky hardwood floor.

Jostled by a WOMAN, 24, peach-colored summer dress, blonde locks slightly tangled, flushed in the face from the empty Heineken, bottle a froth of suds, LAUGHING at something the scrawny YOUNG MAN, 26, is telling her. Oblivious to Barbara.

Barbara, eyes catching on Alice, pink-cheeked, LAUGHING, surrounded by a CIRCLE of YOUNG MEN in crisp ARMY UNIFORMS, NAVY WHITES, hair combed beneath their caps. Riveted by her. Alice, the blossoming flower of the party, reveling in the attention. She tosses a glance in Barbara's direction. Motions for Barbara to join them.

Barbara, self-conscious, turns abruptly back. Reaches for her sweating bottle of Heineken, untouched. Cocktail napkin clinging to it as she lifts it to her lips. Drinks. MAN, 32, rumpled seersucker suit, tossing a glance at her. He grins. SAYS something to her. Has to SHOUT over the DIN. She musters a flicker of a smile back at him. Looks away.

Catches her own EYES in the foggy MIRROR behind the jumbled bar. Awkward. Etch of melancholy. Hunched against the crowd. Surrounded on all sides by teeming jubilation. Very much conscious of how out of place, alone, she is in this crowd.

CUT TO:

INT. BAKERY COUNTER, STATION AMSTERDAM CENTRAAL -- DAY

Otto leans across the smudged glass of the baker's counter. Loud DUTCH WOMEN waiting with tickets, a BOY, 4, stretching from his mother's hand to peer in at the loaves of sweet breads, *zeeuwse bolus* pastries flecked with cinnamon, brown sugar. Otto shows the portly BAKER, 61, grizzled, the rumpled PHOTOGRAPH of Margot and Anne. The Baker squints, shakes his head.

Otto nods. Turns. Shuffles toward the Women. Shows it to them. Two of them ignore him. The third flicks a fleeting glance at the PHOTOGRAPH, shakes her head. Disdain toward this returned stranger.

He nods to himself. Shambles toward the door. Exhaustion beginning to weigh on his stooped shoulders. The Boy stares after him. Lifts a hand to wave. His mother tugs him sharply back. Admonishing.

EXT. NEWSSTAND, AMSTERDAM -- DAY

He hunches beneath the rippling awning of a newsstand. Sun washing down across his tattered coat. He squints at the taped-up newspaper columns, LISTS of returned REFUGEES. Names in smeary newsprint. Runs his thumb down the column of names.

Draws a breath. Steps back. Wrestles out the rumpled PHOTOGRAPH of Margot and Anne to show to the NEWSSTAND PROPRIETOR, 42. He squints at Otto, the picture. Shakes his head.

INT. RED CROSS OFFICE -- DAY

Otto pushes and jostles his way into the muggy warmth of the office, jammed with other anxious MEN in tattered, ragged coats, WOMEN, gaunt-faced, tangled hair, mildewed shawls draped around their shoulders. Tear-streaked CHILDREN snuffling, bawling through the babble.

He squints through the haze toward the folding wooden tables at the front of the room. RED CROSS WOMEN in fraying gray uniforms and matching caps straining to hear over the SHOUTING BABBLE of the room, leafing through ledgers, checking names.

Otto, jolted, exhaustion weighing, hobbles out of line. Drawing to the long, rumpled lists tacked up on the cracked plaster walls. He squints at the smeary typewritten names. Shuffles to the next column, shouldered by a BURLY MAN, 66, with thinning hair, jowly cheeks, hooded eyes. Otto squints. Skimming his way down the column. Eyes sticking on TWO NAMES.

Annelies Marie Frank (X)

Margot Betti Frank (X)

He stares at their names. The X SIGNS beside each of them. He is motionless.

The Burly Man shuffles around him, jostles him. Otto staggers. Catches himself against the wall. He is trembling. Face pallid, drained of color.

He turns, pasty, foggy-eyed. Pushes, shimmies his way urgently back through the jumbled sweaty MEN and WOMEN calling out, straining to be heard over the BABBLE. Otto draws to the folding table. Catches himself against the edge of it. Jolting the PORTLY WOMAN, 31, behind the desk. She squints up at him through smudged glasses.

OTTO FRANK

Who was it who gave the information about Margot and Anna Frank? What was his name?

EXT. TOWNHOUSE, LAREN NEIGHBORHOOD -- AFTERNOON

Otto waits on the doorstep. Raps again on the green door. Paint chips flaking, leprous, flittering to the cement stoop. He squints upward toward the sheet-metal sky as a light drizzle begins to fall gently across his face, the shoulders of his jacket. He clasps his hands in front of him, taut, anxious. He raps on the door again, brisk, sharp. He draws back. Squints across the impassive windows, reflecting back the clattering street cars, guttural diesel delivery truck, plumes of black exhaust.

His eyes stick on the faintest movement beyond the reflection. Lace sash settling back into place. He reaches, raps on the door another time. A CLACK from the other side. Deadbolt drawing back. The door shudders, drags open.

LIN BRILLESLIJPER, 33, her own face somber, gaunt, shadowed and hollowed, wool shawl draped around her narrow shoulders, squints out at him in the pale afternoon glare. Darkness swallowing the entryway behind her. She looks upon him with a taut-faced, somber certainty. She knows why he is here. She gently pushes the door wider for him to come in. He does not move for a moment. Frozen by the admission in her silence.

INT. KITCHEN, BRILLESLIJPER TOWNHOUSE -- AFTERNOON

Otto sits, hollow and numb, at her kitchen table. She sits across from him with a steaming cup of tea. She cradles it for warmth. Her eyes rove around the small room, grungy porcelain kitchen tiles, banged-up cupboards, cabinets, countertop empty save for a canister of Pickwick tea. He gazes at the pale sunlight shafting in through the dirty window over the sink. She follows his eyes. Settles on the puddle of brightness on the bare tile floor.

LIN BRILLESLIJPER

I had a kitchen that I loved in Watergraafsmeer. I had painted all the cabinets red.

She pushes out a breath. Picks up her teacup, blows at the steam. She takes a sip. She sets it back in the saucer. Pain in her eyes, loss of her own. She regards him. He is silent. Motionless. Shell of a man.

LIN BRILLESLIJPER (CONT'D)

During the nights, they would hold each other for warmth. Margot would sing lullabies. "*Mieke, hou je vast, "Papegaaaitje leef je nog?"*" I can still hear her little voice.

Faintest ghost of a sad smile at her lips.

LIN BRILLESLIJPER (CONT'D)

Later, when she became too weak, it was Anna who would sing to her. They always had each other.

He drags his gaze to her.

LIN BRILLESLIJPER (CONT'D)

Margot was hopeful that they would see you again. Anna, she was certain of it.

She avoids his eyes, fiddles with the dangling chain of the tea ball at the edge of her saucer.

LIN BRILLESLIJPER (CONT'D)

They both came down with typhus. At the end. But they were still together.

She drags her eyes to meet his. Grief weighing upon her, swelling up out of her all at once, irrepressible, the memory revived. Her eyes watery, stinging with tears.

LIN BRILLESLIJPER (CONT'D)

They looked like frozen little birds when we found them.

She reaches out, impulsively, and tries to take his hands. He draws back. He pushes back from the table, wooden chair legs grunting on the tile. Pale, gutted, hollow, his tea untouched, he grasps the table, stiffly pushes to his feet. His hand, flat against the surface, trembles. He looks ill. Falters. Catches himself. Lin watches him in agony.

LIN BRILLESLIJPER (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry, Otto. I'm so sorry. They were beautiful girls.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM, GIES APARTMENT -- EVENING

Otto hunches at the foot of his bed. Does not register the gentle tap at his door. It pushes open. Drawing into the weak light from the lamp between the beds, Miep draws up short. Stares at him. A broken man.

He drags his foggy gaze up to her. He has no words. She is at a loss.

She steps to the bed. Reaches out to place a hand on his shoulder. He flinches at the touch. Shies away from it. Unwanted. Unable to process, feel anything. His smeary eyes land on the Opekta crate, Anne's DIARY beside it.

OTTO FRANK

I want you to take those things away
and destroy them.

Miep stares at him. Twists to regard the crate. Grief flickering across her face. She looks back to him. Strains to maintain her composure.

MIEP GIES

Perhaps in the morning, once you
have had a chance -

OTTO FRANK

Take them away.

She jolts, draws back. Startled. He squints up at her with burning venom, loss, pain. Her lips tremble, tears beginning to sting at her eyes. He is gutted. Empty.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

Everything. Everything is lost.

Miep, unraveling, twists away from him. Clogs clacking on the hardwood floor. Hefts the Opekta crate into her arms. Notices the checkered diary on the bed. Fumbles with the crate, grabs the diary off the bed, balances it on top of the crate. Twists back. Her eyes catch on Otto.

She stumbles. Diary flipping off the top of the crate to CLAP to the floor. He flinches. Miep grimaces, struggles to pick it up. Hurries from the room. His eyes settle on the empty patch of floor where the diary landed. Anger rising.

INT. WAREHOUSE HOLDING AREA, LEVANTKADE CAMP -- DAY

Otto pushes through the babbling noise, dingy darkness broken by weak light bulbs strung up on naked wires, dirty orange light washing down across the ragged DUTCH MEN, clumps of straw that are their grungy bunks. Tin canteens, scattered chicken bones gnawed to the gristle. RAGGED DUTCHMAN, 24, glimpsing Otto, hobbles to his feet, SHOUTING after him.

SUPER: *"Levantkade Detention Camp. Amsterdam, Netherlands."*

Otto, smeary-eyed, weighted down with exhaustion, fury, grief, staggers away from him. He squints at the haze of grubby faces, resentful eyes tracking him, distrusting. Anger, venom, loss, pushing him forward. He draws to the end of the section, cordoned off with fraying rope. Turns back.

Drags his eyes across the MEN barking at each other, slapping each other around among the straw. Shouting after him.

Eyes sticking on a MAN hunched against one of the gnawed-up wooden pillars, his back partially turned to Otto. Filthy white work shirt, jumbled graying hair, head resting against the rotting plank. Rage flickering up in his eyes, Otto surges toward the MAN. Trips on the slumped sleeping BODY of another MAN. Stumbles. Regains his balance, heaves his way to the Man.

The man JOLTS, gives a startled grunt as Otto GRASPS him by the shoulders, hauling him, dragging, stumbling up, SLAMMING him back against the pillar. He coughs, feebly tries to shield himself. Squints back at Otto, grungy, thick-faced. **Willhelm Van Maaren**, now 50, *the Opekta Jam warehouse manager*.

OTTO FRANK

How could you. *How could you?*

Otto SLAMS him against the pillar. Van Maaren staggers. Pushes at Otto, tries to shove him away. Otto a brick wall of boiling rage, grief, welling over. SLAPS Van Maaren across the face. He staggers. Otto grabs him SLAMS him back against the wooden pillar.

Grasps his shoulders, ragged shirt, holds him up, pinning him. Draws back. Hand clenched into a trembling fist. Van Maaren tries to lift a feeble hand, shield himself.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

They are all gone. Because of you.

VAN MAAREN

I did nothing.

OTTO FRANK

My girls. My little girls.

VAN MAAREN

I swear. I told them nothing.

Otto, eyes burning, penetrating, skewering Van Maaren. Loss gutting him, riving him from inside. Resolve faltering.

HANDS seize Otto from behind. Two DUTCH GUARDS, clubs drawn, dragging him back. His feet give out. He stumbles, staggers. Strains to regain his footing. Heaves toward Van Maaren.

The Guards WRENCH him back. SMACKING his legs, his back, with their CLUBS. Otto stumbles. Coughing. CLUBBED across the side of the face. Ears all at once ringing. He is wrenched back. Van Maaren stares after him. Otto, stumbling, a shuddering sob wrenching through him as the guards YANK him, drag him through the JEERING PRISONERS. Shouting. Babbling fishbowl of tumult smearing by around him.

EXT. SIDEWALK, PLANTAGEKADE CANAL -- NIGHT

Otto stumbles, staggers, smears his way, loose footing, ambling gait. Eyes hazed, fogged. Grasps a half-drunk brown bottle of Bols Genever GIN. Trips on the cobblestone street. Regains his footing. Dimly aware of the lights burning in windows, townhouses, shimmering off the black water of the CANAL, dashing against the fishing boats, barnacled pilings.

Otto trips again on the uneven curb. Drops the bottle. It SHATTERS on the cobblestones. He stares down at the scattered broken glass, spreading puddle of gin. He sways. Shudder wracking its way through him. Twists back toward the WATER.

Hazy-eyed, breathing shallowly. He edges toward the canal. Feet dragging, Jan's borrowed shoes now sticky with gin. He shambles to a halt. Gazes out across the water. He reaches into his pocket. Hands shaking as he wrestles out the wrinkled PHOTOGRAPH of Margot and Anne. He stares at it in the dark. *Margot, studious in her spectacles. Anne's bright smiling face, dark hair ruffled by the wind around her ears.*

He holds it out over the water. Breeze gusting up from the water. He loses his grasp. Lurches forward. Snaps the PHOTOGRAPH back from the wind. Loses his footing. Stumbles. Catches himself. Just short of falling in. He stares down at the water, dashing, playing against the rotting pilings.

He gazes back out, hopelessness weighing. Eyes catching on the splash of warm light washing out from the arched brickwork, stained glass windows, of the *Nederlands-Israëlietische Hoofdsynagoge* SYNAGOGUE across the canal from him. He stares at it, ragged.

INT. SANCTUARY, DUTCH CENTRAL SYNAGOGUE -- NIGHT

Otto slurs his way inside, draws to a halt in the dimness. Shallow breaths coming in gin-flavored bursts. He squints with hazy eyes, takes in the weather-beaten *bimah* altar, flickering candles on a tarnished gold menorah beside it. Sputtering *ner tamid* eternal flame hanging over the Aron Kodesh Torah Ark.

He draws a ragged breath. Hobbles forward. Grasps the back of the banged-up wooden bench, guides himself with it. Limping as he steps around the side. Draws up. Summoning energy. Shuffles into the aisle. Drops heavily onto the bench. He clasps his knees with his hands.

Gazes forward. Bleary-eyed. Head swimming in a murk of alcohol and grief. He draws a breath, sniffs. Shuts his eyes. He tries to pray. Lips moving silently. He trails off. Drags open his eyes. Slumps back into his seat. He becomes aware of a MAN at the opposite end of the bench. Watching him.

The Man pushes to his feet. Wood wheezing beneath him. Turns. Begins to shuffle out of the aisle. His gaze raking back across Otto. He stops short. Squinting. Otto turns forward.

Aware of the man's eyes upon him. Shuffling footsteps drawing closer. The man coming toward him. Draws up beside him.

Otto looks up at him. **JACOB SOETENDORPSTRAAT**, 31. Head covered in a *kippah*, clasping *Tehillim*, the Book of Psalms. He is a RABBI. He reaches into his coat breast pocket. Drags out a white handkerchief. Offers it to Otto. Otto squints at him. He nods at Otto's feet.

RABBI JACOB

You are bleeding.

Otto looks down. His wool socks, threadbare trouser cuffs flecked with shards of broken brown glass, spattered droplets of gin, blood. Otto shifts his legs, tries to hide his feet.

OTTO FRANK

It is fine.

RABBI JACOB

They will become infected.

Otto gives a gruff nod, turns forward. The Rabbi lingers. Otto flicks a glance back up at him. The handkerchief.

OTTO FRANK

I am all right. Thank you.

RABBI JACOB

Forgive me for saying so. But you do not look like you are all right.

Otto looks forward again. Eyes stinging, burning. Bleary. He squeezes them shut. Drags in a ragged breath. He startles at the wheeze of the old wood, shifting weight, as the Rabbi lowers himself onto the bench beside him. They sit in silence.

The Rabbi folds the handkerchief, places it gently on his own knee. He gazes across the other empty benches, the flickering candles. Hollowed brick alcoves, cracked stones.

RABBI JACOB (CONT'D)

Had they known to bomb this place, I imagine they would have. We concealed it as a school. A miracle, really, that anything of us survived.

The Rabbi regards Otto, his eyes still shut. His gaze sticks on Otto's exposed arm, jutting from the sleeve of his wool jacket. Barest blurry hint of black numbers, lettering TATTOOED into his flesh. *B-9174*.

RABBI JACOB (CONT'D)

You are a survivor then.

Otto drags open his eyes. He sees where the Rabbi is looking. He fumbles, drags the cuff of his jacket sleeve back down, covering the TATTOO. The Rabbi, focused on him now.

RABBI JACOB (CONT'D)

What you have seen, what you carry with you, is all the more precious.

OTTO FRANK

You have no idea what I carry with me.

RABBI JACOB

It is our legacy. Ours to pass on, to bear witness, for future generations -

OTTO FRANK

My daughters are dead. I have no family. I have nothing to pass on.

The Rabbi shuts his mouth. He notices Otto's hands, quivering. Ropey veins protruding from his neck. The Rabbi, dry-mouthed, pushes down a swallow.

RABBI JACOB

Alav HaShalom. May they rest in peace.

OTTO FRANK

I should have died. Everything I loved was taken away from me and I did not die. Why? For what purpose would I be spared when they were not?

Otto reaches. Grasps the back of the bench in front of him. Pushes, heaving to his feet. He winces, glass shards digging into his flesh. He stumbles. Sits heavily back down. Huffing. He grits his teeth. Avoids the Rabbi's eyes.

RABBI JACOB

What were their names?

OTTO FRANK

Margot and Annaleis. Anna.

He breaks. Name sticking in his throat. He looks away.

RABBI JACOB

They are beautiful names. Thank you for sharing them with me. That, perhaps, is purpose enough.

He places his hands on his knees, pushes to his feet. Lays the handkerchief gently on the bench beside Otto.

RABBI JACOB (CONT'D)

For your feet.

He shuffles away. Otto stares after him. Eyes dragging to the handkerchief. Left in a neat, folded square.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM, GIES APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Otto shambles into the room, smearing against the peeling wallpaper, ragged handkerchief wrapped around his ankle, spotted with blood. He braces himself against the wall. Pushes forward. Exhaustion dragging at him. He heaves his way to the bed, grasps the metal-railed frame to support himself. Limpers his way around and finally drops heavily onto the mattress.

He sits. Glances at the smoldering fire in the small hearth, embers reduced to mostly ash. Dawn light washing in through the hazy window. He drags tired eyes back toward the lamp, nightstand. Sticking on the second bed. Opekta CRATE, red-checked DIARY atop it, brought back into the room. He stares at it. Too tired to process, absorb, move.

MIEP GIES (O.S.)

I could not make myself destroy them.

He gives a start. Looks to the doorway. She stands, rumpled, ensconced in a sleeping gown and a threadbare sweater, hair tangled from sleep.

MIEP GIES (CONT'D)

It felt like I was destroying their memories. Their lives.

Her eyes, stuck on the Opekta crate, drag to Otto. She takes in his appearance, filthy clothes, bruises turning to angry welts on his face, neck, arms. Blood-spotted legs.

MIEP GIES (CONT'D)

What happened to you?

He draws a ragged breath. Shakes his head.

OTTO FRANK

It is nothing.

She opens her mouth to say more. Closes it. Senses he should not be pushed. She steps into the room, to the fire. Picks up the iron poker from the hook by the hearth, and jabs and stirs the embers, coaxing a few sputtering flames out of them. He watches her, glassy-eyed, listless.

She draws back. Regards him. Bundles her sweater more tightly around herself. Withdrawing to the doorway. Hesitates.

MIEP GIES

I'll put some tea on.

He nods. She lingers another moment. Then ducks out. He sits for a moment, fire snapping and popping in the hearth. He stares across the small room at the Opekta crate. He shuts his eyes. Exhaustion blanketing him.

He plants his knuckles to the mattress, labors and pushes himself to his feet. Winces, glass, wounded feet, sore, hobbling him. He limps his way painfully across, draws to the second bed. Stares down at the crate, DIARY. Scraps of paper peeking from its edges. Loop of her handwriting.

He is wracked with a shuddering, uncontrollable sob. Boiling over. He SHOVES the Opekta crate. Sends it TOPPLING to the floor. The DIARY tumbles, SLAPS to the bare hardwood. Loose pages, a rumpled tongue of PHOTOGRAPHS, taken at a PHOTO BOOTH, sliding out. Anne's young, smiling face staring up at him.

He stands, stricken. Fire flickering, crackling, lapping his face in warm yellow-orange. He reaches with trembling hands, fumbles with the LOOSE PAGE, PHOTOGRAPHS. Picks them up. Stares down at them. Eyes moist. Firelight playing in them, reflected back. He holds them, shaking. Blurry eyes dragging over her looping cursive handwriting. READING Anne's DIARY for the first time. "*Dear Kitty...*"

CUT TO:

INT. BARBARA'S BEDROOM, WEST VILLAGE APARTMENT -- MORNING

Barbara lies awake. Morning light swelling in through the simple white sash. Small desk pushed against the window. Bookshelves now crowding the walls. Jammed with Gertrude Stein, Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*. Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*. Rumpled copy of *Jane Eyre*, yellowed pages fanned open, on the small, banged-up bedside table. COLLEGE TEXTBOOKS on literary theory, criticism. William Strunk's *The Elements of Style*.

The potted orchid wilting slightly. Shriveled. Barbara, distant gaze fixed on the slightly-faded PHOTOGRAPH set back on her desk in a pearl-white frame - *her SISTER and GROOM at their wedding. Barbara, 17, pushed back among the bridesmaids.*

Barbara stirs, squints blearily at the small brass-edged General Electric alarm CLOCK propped on the nightstand. 6:41AM. Becoming aware of the muffled clap of kitchen cupboards. Clattering dishes. Sizzling. Bluish haze of bacon smoke seeping in.

She frowns. Drags back the snarled sheet.

INT. KITCHEN, WEST VILLAGE APARTMENT -- MOMENTS LATER

Barbara draws to the mouth of the hallway. Peers in through the open kitchen doorway. Freezes.

Cramped room lashed with bright muggy sunlight, captured in the bluish smoke hanging in the air. Skillet snapping, popping at the stove. **DEAN CONWAY**, 21, handsome, hair smashed with sleep, rumpled white undershorts, shirt, stands with a spatula. Eyes vacant, glassy. Tormented.

He stirs. Draws his focus back to the stove. Reaches to push the sizzling bacon with the spatula. Floorboard wheezing beneath Barbara, wrapped in her rumpled sleeping gown. He gives a start. Glances sharply over at her. Squints.

DEAN CONWAY

Who are you?

She blinks. Taken aback.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

I live here.

He glances at the sizzling skillet. Down at himself. Self-conscious all at once. Embarrassed. Flustered.

DEAN CONWAY

Excuse me, ma'am. Alice didn't tell me she had a sister.

Barbara drags her gaze to the sticky wine glasses left out on the cramped kitchen table from last night. Understanding. Flicker of a scowl. Uncomfortable, alone with this stranger.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

We're not. We're just friends. We grew up together.

She shifts under his gaze. Tries to avoid it, deflect his attention.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)

Your breakfast is burning.

He looks back at the skillet. Grimaces. Casts around for the greasy plate perched on the countertop. Reaches to grab it up. Plucking hot pieces of bacon from the skillet. She watches him. As stilted, caught off-guard, as she is.

He switches off the gas-flame burner. Wipes his hands on a grungy dishtowel. Awkward. Extends a hand -

DEAN CONWAY

Dean Conway.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

Barbara. Zimmerman.

He draws back. Assessing the greasy skillet, smashed paper towels, soaked dishrag. Aware of her gaze upon him.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)

There are more dishtowels in the cupboard with the cups.

He flashes her a sheepish smile. Begins gathering dishes.

DEAN CONWAY

Sorry for the mess. I just got in last night. We met at Chumley's.

Her eyes linger on him as he neatly stacks the plates, sets them into the cast-iron sink. An orderly discipline to him.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

You're a soldier, then.

He stiffens, glances back at her. Follows her eyes to the TATTOO, triangular, yellow, blue, red, thunderbolt in the center, exposed beneath his sleeve.

DEAN CONWAY

Eleventh Armored Division. Normandy, Belgium, and Austria.

She meets his gaze, shyly. He turns back, brittle. Wiggles charring toast out of a smudged silver Proctor toaster. She glances back down the hall. Alice's bedroom door still shut.

He lifts the dented coffee pot. Pours a steaming ribbon of coffee into two china cups. Lifts one. Offers it to her.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

You must get tired of people asking you what it was like.

He presses a taut line of a smile at her.

DEAN CONWAY

I get tired of the people who ask but don't really want to know.

She takes the coffee from him. Cradles it with her hands. Irked slightly by the presumption.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

I want to know.

He tugs open a cupboard. Reaching down another cup. Tosses a glance back at her.

DEAN CONWAY

No you don't.

Places it on the table. Lifts the coffee pot to pour. Glances down the hallway toward Alice's door.

DEAN CONWAY (CONT'D)

You want to hear what she wants to hear. How we all went over there, we looked evil in the eye, and we destroyed it with our bare hands, and now we're back to drink and celebrate.

He avoids her eyes. Turns to the sink and switches on the tap. Grabs up the dishrag. She regards him. He grimaces.

DEAN CONWAY (CONT'D)
Sorry. That was out of line.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN
I was supposed to be married.

He glances sharply back at her. Taken off-guard.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)
My sister was last spring, then me this year. We had it all planned out. Like a storybook. He was the son of my father's business partner. He's - pleasant. A gentleman. Quite wealthy. I could have lived a very comfortable life as a housewife, just like my sister.

He looks over his shoulder at her. Eyes capturing the streaming sunlight. She takes a sip of coffee.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)
I called it off the week before. I couldn't go through with it.

She meets his eyes.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)
I don't want to be comfortable. I want to make a difference.

She holds his gaze.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)
I want to know what it was like.

He shuts off the tap. Stands, rigid. His back to her.

DEAN CONWAY
It will haunt me for the rest of my life.

He draws a breath. Stares into the streaming sunlight.

DEAN CONWAY (CONT'D)
We were so goddamn scared. The only thing that kept us going was the knowledge that if we quit, it would follow us home. What we saw in Mauthausen, the camps, those poor tortured people, we would see here in America. And that was - unthinkable.

He meets Barbara's gaze with desperate eyes.

DEAN CONWAY (CONT'D)

I was seventeen when I went over there. Every day I wished I hadn't.

She blinks. Taken off-guard. Hunkered against the counter, he looks young. A vulnerable boy. Lost. They both JOLT as -

- Alice's bedroom door mewls open. Alice drawing out, hair tousled, wrapped in a bedsheet. Stops short, seeing them.

ALICE MCGRATH

Well. It looks like I'm the last one to the party.

Dean abruptly shifts. Twists away. Mask of false brightness in the smile he beams at Alice. Lifts the third coffee cup.

DEAN CONWAY

After all that wine, I thought I'd cook us up some breakfast.

ALICE MCGRATH

Such a gentleman.

He flicks a glance at Barbara as he steps past her. Eyes raking away. Tormented. Alice kisses him. Oblivious.

Barbara, moved.

CUT TO:

INT. OTTO'S OFFICE, OPEKTA JAM FACTORY -- DAY

Otto sits at his desk. Pale autumn light leaching through the smeary windowpane, rain lashing against it in hard, speckling whips and spattered droplets. He pins the DIARY open with one hand. Glasses reflecting back her spidery scrawl. Steam twisting gently from a teacup. Wax paper open around a half-eaten brown-bread-and-cheese sandwich, milky half-pint of buttermilk in a bottle.

He is riveted to the page. Mouth tugged in a slight smile. His eyes, focused, darting across her words. Eager. His face flushed out, less pallid. He is more alive now. He pauses, pinning the DIARY open. Gropes around for the FOUNTAIN PEN left by the blotter on his desk. Drags over a spiral-bound black notebook, opens it to a page of his own chicken-scratch.

He pushes the nib against the paper. Grimaces. Shakes ink into it. Glances back at the DIARY page. Scrawls into his own notebook, COPYING over a passage from Anne:

"It's a wonder I haven't abandoned all my ideals, they seem so absurd and impractical. Yet I cling to them because I still believe, in spite of everything..."

He loses his grip on the page. Grimaces. Pins it down again. Squints, eyes darting, excited, over her words.

Resumes COPYING:

"...that people are truly good at heart."

He grasps for the BLOTTER. Lays the fountain pen down. Carefully presses the blotter against his writing. Dries it. Drags the blotter back. Reads it over. Brightness flickering in his eyes. He rereads the passage in the DIARY. Marveling at it. He sits back. Pages flipping shut. He wedges the tip of the pen into them, pinning his place.

He peels his glasses off. Eyes soaking in the puddled afternoon light, streaming rain down the windowpane. Lifted. Inspired by his daughter's words. Becoming aware of a fuzzy, droning VOICE from down the hall, a RADIO on.

He blinks, shakes himself. Lost in another world. He gathers the wax paper of his lunch. Lifts one last chunk of cheese sandwich into his mouth. Drags open a drawer, gently places the DIARY into it, sliding it shut.

Reaches for his work binders, account ledgers, mostly RED INK. A half-typed letter jutting from the Underwood typewriter on the desk. Chewing, he slows. Listening to the RADIO VOICE.

JAN ROMEIN (BBC RADIO NEWS)
*...we have witnessed the degradation
of the human spirit. The worst crime
of that abominable spirit...*

Otto, an etch of a frown. Braces himself against the desk. Pushes back, chair legs grinding on the bare hardwood floor.

INT. MAIN OFFICE, OPEKTA JAM FACTORY -- MOMENTS LATER

Otto draws into the doorway. Pale light puddling across Miep, desk besieged in stacks of accounting ledgers, papers clipped together, chattering at her Underwood typewriter. Lucky Strike cigarette jammed into the ashtray, flecked with ash, butts. Bep Voskuijl, 26 now, seated at the other desk, flipping through a manila file-folder, drawer dragged open at her knee. Fuzzy VOICE issuing from the Volksempfänger RADIO beside her.

JAN ROMEIN (BBC RADIO NEWS)
*...the destruction of life and talent,
only because of a senseless desire
to destroy.*

Miep drags the rumpled page from her typewriter. Absently grabs for her cigarette. Eyes sticking on Otto in the doorway. He gazes at the RADIO. Expression clouded. Joy, warmth from reading the DIARY now leached away. Miep flicks a glance at the RADIO, Bep, oblivious, squinting at a rumpled carbon-paper invoice in her folder.

JAN ROMEIN (BBC RADIO NEWS) (CONT'D)

*No matter in what form inhumanity
may lay traps for us, we will fall
into them...*

MIEP GIES

Bep. Could you turn that off please.

Bep, distracted, glances up. Eyes sticking on Otto. Flustered, she reaches, carbon-paper invoice sliding out of her lap, fluttering to the floor as she snaps OFF the RADIO. Flushing slightly in the cheeks.

BEP VOSKUIJL

Sorry, Mr. Frank. I didn't realize
it was loud enough to disturb you.

He shakes himself. Troubled etch creasing his forehead. Drags his gaze to Bep as she reaches, fumbles to retrieve the paper. Miep watches him, cigarette clamped between her fingers, poised over the ashtray. He drags his gaze back to the RADIO.

OTTO FRANK

Do you share that man's views?

Bep, skewered, flicks a glance at Miep. Uncertain of herself.

BEP VOSKUIJL

I don't believe in everything that
he says. But I think he makes some
interesting points.

He regards her. Miep watching him.

OTTO FRANK

You believe the Germans are evil?

Bep is confused by the question. Not even a question.

BEP VOSKUIJL

After what you went through, don't
you?

Miep flicks a hard glance at her. Bep absorbs it, swallows. Did not mean to speak out of turn. Cheeks flushed. Otto, her words hanging in the air, gazes at the puddle of pale light on the floor, rippling from the rain outside.

OTTO FRANK

A few of them, yes. The rest, I do
not know. Complacent, perhaps.
Willfully ignorant. Afraid, certainly.
But to see evil in all of them is to
risk seeing evil in everyone.

He drags his gaze up to her, meets her troubled eyes.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

I, of course, was born in Frankfurt.

BEP VOSKUIJL

I didn't mean -

OTTO FRANK

We have more in common with them
than not.

Bep glances at Miep again. Uncomfortable to be having this conversation. Miep watches only Otto. Bep shifts in her seat. Hand pinning the carbon paper invoice to her lap. He becomes aware of the effect he is having on her. Antagonizing her.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

You may turn it back on. I did not
mean to intercede.

He pushes away from the scratched-up doorframe. Turning. Bep, embarrassed, explanation surging up out of her.

BEP VOSKUIJL

He means well.

Otto stops short. Looks back at her. Bep, cheeks burning, no retreating now. Miep's skewering gaze upon her.

BEP VOSKUIJL (CONT'D)

He has nothing but sympathy for what
you - for what we all went through.
He is hosting a symposium on Thursday.
I was going to go. If you wanted to
join me. You could hear more of what
he believes.

MIEP GIES

Bep.

Bep cringes. Aware she is overstepping. Otto regards her. Dry-mouthed now, but she persists.

BEP VOSKUIJL

He is becoming quite popular.

He drags his gaze to Miep. She stares back at him. Bep, the flustered youth in their midst. The voice of the future.

OTTO FRANK

Is he.

INT. CINEMA HOUSE, THEATER TUSCHINSKI -- NIGHT

Otto stands smashed against the wall by the SWEATY, JEERING CROWD, jamming the aisles, folding seats, on their feet to see over each other.

He can barely make out, beyond the LANKY MAN in front of him, the WOMAN, 20, beside him, the wash of cigarette-murked spotlight bathing **JAN ROMEIN**, 53, long-faced, rumpled grungy suit, perspiring, stirred-up, energized by the kinetic fervor, anxious agitation of the crowd.

JAN ROMEIN

We are still just as far away from
this kind of democracy as we were
before the war. We have won nothing.

He BARKS out at them, fire in his eyes. Relishing the effect he is having on them. His acolytes, followers. Otto watches not Romein but the YOUNG MEN, WOMEN, shoulder-to-shoulder, soaked in sweat, in the cinema seats.

JAN ROMEIN (CONT'D)

We have lost the battle against the
beast in man. We have lost because
we have not been able to substitute
something positive for it. And that
is why we will lose again.

Spittle-flecked mouths, veins standing out in their necks as they SHOUT, nod. Venomous. Eager to be stirred, enlivened. Bep, among them, transfixed. Otto watches her. Unsettled. She surges forward in her seat. SHOUTING with the others.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM, GIES APARTMENT -- DAWN

Otto sits in a wash of pale morning light, hunched at the tiny, cramped desk. Murky gray rain streaming down the grungy glass. Anne's PAPERS are laid out all around him, the DIARY, his own spiral-bound notebook. Wrapped in a weather-worn bathrobe, rings beneath his eyes. He has not slept. He scribbles with a dull-nibbed pen into his notebook. Pins the loose page on the leather blotter, squints at her cursive scrawl.

He copies over the passage, nib dragging on the paper. He halts at the end of it. Eyes sticking on the words he has just written. *"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."*

He peels off his glasses. Eyes, bleary, unfocused, settling on the streaming rain, silvery sky outside. Rumpled bed behind him, covers turned back. Opekta crate still resting on the other bed. Cramped little room holding him in. He pushes out a breath. Reaching a decision.

INT. OTTO'S OFFICE, OPEKTA JAM FACTORY -- MORNING

Freshly showered, hair combed neatly back, eyes still shadowed with sleeplessness but a flickering fire within them, Otto tugs the canvas dust cover off of the Underwood TYPEWRITER. DIARY, loose-leaf pages, bound together with rubber bands, placed in the middle of the desk. He tugs the typewriter toward him. Leans, squints into its machinery. Glances up as -

Miep draws into the doorway, small wooden tray, steaming teacup, ceramic pot, a plate of fresh strawberries. He musters a flicker of a smile for her, distracted, fumbling with the bail-bar, rollers. She draws to his desk with the tray, teacup chattering, lifts it gently down, places it between his stacked papers, chewed-up leather ledgers, spiral-bound notebook, leather address book. Notices his fretting.

MIEP GIES

Is there something I can help you with?

He finally pries it loose. Reaches, drags a clean, fresh sheet of paper off of a neat stack by the wooden inbox. Knobs it into the typewriter.

OTTO FRANK

Do you know an address where I can reach the journalist? Jan Romein.

She draws up short. Taken off-guard. She regards him. He is absent to it, reaches, drags the DIARY out from the sheaf of loose-leaf papers. Squints through his glasses at the typewriter. Becomes aware of her gaze. Stares up at her. She shakes herself. Registers the question.

MIEP GIES

Bep knows his wife. Annie Verschoor.

He nods. Curt. Businesslike. She draws back. Tucking the wooden tray under her arm. She watches him. Focused, fixed, flipping open the DIARY, pinning it with his elbow as he poises his hands over the Underwood's keys.

MIEP GIES (CONT'D)

Are you sure it is wise to engage with him? He seems so - easily provoked.

He flicks a glance up at her. Returns his penetrating gaze to the page clamped in the Underwood.

OTTO FRANK

The loudest and angriest voice is not the only one that should be heard.

He returns his focus to the typewriter. DRILLS out the first LINE of TEXT at the top of the blank page: *Het Achterhuis, Dagboekbrieven 14 Juni 1942 - 1 Augustus 1944. [The Annex: Diary Notes Jun 14, 1942 - August 1, 1944]*. He drags his burning eyes back to the DIARY. SNAPS out, one letter at a time - *by Annaleis Frank*. Strikes the carriage return twice.

His fingers HAMMERING across the page, beginning to transcribe the DIARY. Miep, drawing back to the door, gazes at him. Sun washing in around him like a cloak. His face, his eyes more alive than he has been since his return. She allows herself a flickering ghost of a smile.

Her friend, the man, Otto Frank, beginning to come back.

CUT TO:

INT. DONALD BLACK'S OFFICE, DOUBLEDAY & CO. -- DAY

Barbara draws to the open doorway. Arms loaded down with two bulging manila file-folders, fresh transcriptions. Muggy sunlight washing in through the twin vast windowpanes.

Shearing across the mahogany desk, awash in jumbled paperwork, rumpled MANUSCRIPTS. Twin towering bookshelves jammed with leather-spined volumes. Dusty PHOTOGRAPHS in frames. American flag in a wooden stand. Pacing through the soupy sunlight, cigarette smoke -

- Donald Black, pacing, telephone stretched to his ear, incensed. Brown suit rumpled, hair disheveled slightly.

DONALD BLACK
(into the telephone)
I don't care who your father is.
It's a paperback edition of a treatise
on appeasement.

He draws up short. Seeing Barbara. Grimaces. Gestures for her to come in, leave the dictations on the desk. She steps into the hazy room. Donald draws to the window. Glowers out.

DONALD BLACK (CONT'D)
(into the telephone)
Jack, that's what we're offering.

She places the two fresh file folders into his wire-frame INBOX. Draws back. Hesitates. Watching him.

He pushes out a smoky breath. Turns back. Eyes sticking on Barbara, still lingering in the doorway.

DONALD BLACK (CONT'D)
(into the telephone)
I have to go. Think about it.

He shakes his head. Claps the receiver into its cradle. Squints at Barbara. Distracted.

DONALD BLACK (CONT'D)
Was there something I needed to sign?

Barbara, caught on the spot.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN
No...

She balks under his hard stare. Summons her courage.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)

I had hoped we might revisit the possibility of my taking an editorial position.

He regards her, implacable. She swallows.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)

I saw the listing for the opening in the break room.

He snorts, smoke streaming from his nostrils. Leans in over the desk to stub out his cigarette.

DONALD BLACK

You think you're better than the typing pool.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

I have a background in literature. I feel I could make a difference.

He scowls at her. Filled with scorn. Drags back his chair.

DONALD BLACK

You typing girls. You've been here what, less than a year?

He sits heavily. Cushion wheezing beneath him. Assesses her.

DONALD BLACK (CONT'D)

What's a pretty face like yours doing in an office anyway? Surely you've had offers to settle down.

Barbara flushes. Needled. Perseveres.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

I met a soldier. A month ago, after the Victory parade. I think his story is important. A true firsthand account of the wartime experience.

DONALD BLACK

He got back a month ago and he's already written his memoirs?

She swallows, caught out.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

I thought perhaps we could help him through the process.

DONALD BLACK

You want me to assign an editor to a manuscript that doesn't even exist.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

I am prepared to work alone. On my own time. I'm quite accustomed to it.

Donald rakes his glasses off. Rubs at his bleary eyes. Mountains of crumpled papers. He gropes, reflexive, for the Marlboro package. Flicks an irritated glance at her. Pushes out a weary breath.

DONALD BLACK

Are you prepared to face the other girls' resentment?

Barbara blanches. Steeling herself.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

If need be.

He regards her. A black sheep yearning for a purpose.

DONALD BLACK

If you find me something that we publish, you may edit it. Under supervision.

Barbara, swelling with excitement.

DONALD BLACK (CONT'D)

Any lapse in your other work, and you can show yourself the door. You're not getting paid to be a book scout.

She hardens. Enthusiasm blunted. He is already reaching for the top file folder in his INBOX. Scowls, impatient, at her.

DONALD BLACK (CONT'D)

Something else, sweetheart?

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

Only...it would be helpful to have an office of my own.

He fixes her with a hard stare. Galled by her nerve.

INT. BARBARA ZIMMERMAN'S OFFICE, DOUBLEDAY & CO. -- LATER

Barbara stands in the office doorway. Gazes in at the blank gray area carpeting, naked plaster walls. Empty oak desk. Bookcase, shelves dusty, bare. Weak afternoon light leaching through the single small window. Musty curtains. A single black-and-white photograph triptych, *Ellis Island, Statue of Liberty, Empire State Building*, frame dusty, propped against the wall, left behind by the previous editor.

In spite of its humble cheerlessness, Barbara, a flicker of a smile, steps in. Cardboard box of her belongings in her arms. Potted orchid protruding through the open flaps.

She sets it down on the corner of the desk. Draws back. Turning slowly to take in the room. Pride, satisfaction, swelling.

Finally, a space, an office, of her own.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN, GIES APARTMENT -- MORNING

Otto pushes out into the splintered morning light. Hair combed back, color returning to his cheeks. He winces at the glare of it off the ceramic kitchen tiles. Streaming in through a soup of blue cigarette smoke. Eyes finding the sticky plate, glaze of *applestroop* syrup left spattered across it, bread crumbs, crumpled napkin where Jan ate.

Miep, hunched against the counter, preoccupied, perturbed, cigarette twisting smoke from between her fingers, still dressed in a rumpled, disheveled bathrobe, looks up at the wheeze of his delicate weight on the floorboards. Her eyes find his as he draws up short in the doorway. Senses something wrong. Uncertain what to make of her. Her breakfast plate, his place setting untouched. NEWSPAPER folded beside it.

MIEP GIES

He wrote about her. About the diary.

Otto stares at her. Eyes raking to the NEWSPAPER. He is caught up short, unprepared. He takes a faltering step forward. Faced with the prospect of a stranger writing about Anne.

SHORTLY LATER:

He sits at the table. Plate, toasted bread, small pot of *appelstroop* untouched. Steam twisting from his teacup. His hands shake slightly, NEWSPAPER spread open, enveloping him. She watches him as he reads. Seated across from him. Anxious. She takes a pull from her cigarette. His eyes drag across the smeary typescript:

"...apparently inconsequential diary by a child embodies all the hideousness of fascism."

He draws a ragged breath. Unable to read on. His hands quivering. He lowers the newspaper, folds it in on itself. Miep, riveted to him, awash in a cloud of smoke.

MIEP GIES (CONT'D)

He calls her "lucid." "Intelligent."
"A natural - " what was it he said?

He scowls at the rumpled fold of NEWSPAPER, the article.

OTTO FRANK

"The way she died is unimportant."
(MORE)

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

More important is that this young life was willfully cut off by a system of irrational cruelty." That is what he says. "We too easily forgive, or at least forget, which ultimately means the same thing."

He dumps the newspaper on the table with a SLAP. Miep cringes.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

He has missed the point altogether. She believed in humanity unreservedly. In hope.

Otto glowers across the uneaten bread, scattered fruit, cold breakfast meats. Teacup untouched. His bright spirits doused.

INT. PASSENGER STREETCAR TROLLEY [MOVING] -- MORNING

Jolting, jostling on the chipped-up green wooden bench seat, Otto gazes out the grime-hazed windows. Eyes smoldering, flickering with anger, indignation. Miep, smashed into the seat beside him, shuddering against him, glances at him. Worried. His cold, hard stare.

MIEP GIES

You are picking a fight with a man who wants a war.

OTTO FRANK

He used her. To make a point. She is propaganda to him.

MIEP GIES

He has the newspaper behind him.

OTTO FRANK

And so that is it? I should be silent?

He rakes burning eyes on her.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

"How she died is unimportant." Anna's death is "unimportant" to him. He is taking her precious words and using them to feed his own hateful agenda.

She looks away. Draws a breath. Summoning the courage to speak her mind.

MIEP GIES

Have you thought about publishing it?

He twists to stare at her.

MIEP GIES (CONT'D)

He said himself he read it in one sitting. He said it was exceptional.

OTTO FRANK

It is her diary. It is private.

MIEP GIES

If people could see - if they could read her words...

OTTO FRANK

These were her personal thoughts.

MIEP GIES

Right now all they know is what he told them.

The trolley SHUDDERS, drawing to a HALT. Otto gathers his rain-flecked briefcase, jacket. Troubled.

MIEP GIES (CONT'D)

She was important, Otto. To you. To me. To us. Her story is important.

OTTO FRANK

So is her privacy.

Miep, taken aback by his terseness. He stands. Flustered, she grabs for her purse, her damp jacket. Pushes to her feet as well. She cannot help herself -

MIEP GIES

She always dreamed of being a writer.

He falters. Meets her gaze. Conflicted.

INT. OTTO'S OFFICE, OPEKTA JAM FACTORY -- LATE MORNING

Otto, woolen vest, suit, stands at the window. Silvery light leaching in through the foggy glass, cloaking him in a hazy gray glow. His faraway gaze, listless, untrained, sticks on the wet cobblestones, canals below. Flock of babbling, ambling SCHOOLCHILDREN, huddled under umbrellas, galoshes splashing through murky, dirty puddles, shuffle their way to school. He watches them. Tracks them across the street. Until they dip out of view.

Ragged jobless MEN agitating in a soup kitchen line across the canal. Filthy-clothed, many barefoot, hungry.

Otto gazes at them. Pushes out a breath. Turns toward the desk. Stacked with cracked leather binders, bound, rumped papers. He flips open the spiral-bound notebook into which he has copied passages of the DIARY. Tracing his way down the rumped page until he draws to one: *"I don't think of all the misery, but of the beauty that still remains."*

He flicks a glance at the DIARY beside the Underwood typewriter. The NEWSPAPER folded in his chair. Jobless, homeless men shouting, barking at each other outside.

He reaches, lifts the NEWSPAPER out of the chair. DUMPS it in the dented metal TRASH CAN beside the desk. Sits heavily into the wheezing chair. Drags the Underwood typewriter toward him. Grabs a fresh sheet of blank paper from the neat stack beside his inbox. Feeds it, twisting the roller-knobs, into the Underwood.

He opens the DIARY. His eyes catching on her lilted, spidery scrawl. Flicker of a smile in spite of himself. She gives him courage. He draws a breath, pushes it out. Pins the DIARY open with a ceramic jar of Opekta jam. Turns his attention to the page in the typewriter. SNAPPING out one letter at a time. *Het Achterhuis*. [The Annex]. Transcribing a fresh copy. To send out.

CUT TO:

INT. BARBARA'S OFFICE, DOUBLEDAY & CO. -- DAY [WEEKS LATER]

Barbara hunches at the empty oak desk. Bookcase now jumbled with a few stacks of loose-leaf MANUSCRIPTS. The potted orchid, neglected, petals curling, bunched back among a jumble of unwashed COFFEE MUGS, framed PHOTOGRAPHS of her PARENTS.

Barbara holds the black enamel TELEPHONE to her ear. Pinches the bridge of her nose.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN
(into the telephone)
Akron, Ohio. The name is Dean Conway.

Flicks a glance up at Jason Epstein as he timidly ducks into the office with a fresh stack of MANUSCRIPTS. Barbara squints at them as he deposits them on the edge of her desk. Intra-office buck slip paper-clipped to the TITLE PAGE of the TOP ONE - *"All passes. Not what we are looking for. DB."*

She scowls. Draws back, listening to the telephone -

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)
(into the telephone)
Conway. That's right. Yes, I can hold.

She takes a breath. Slouches back in the wheezing wooden desk chair. Tosses a glance at Jason as he draws back. He lingers. Shyly watches her. Trying to muster the courage to speak to her, but she is on the phone.

She registers his presence. Meets his gaze at last. He flushes. Confronted. Self-conscious all at once. Flashes her a smile. Awkwardly, hastily withdraws. She watches him go. Slightest flicker of a smirk.

Twists to peer out through the smeary glass. Ghostly shadow of the Empire State Building, glistening in the sunlight. Her smile fading. Her eyes dragging across the -

- sagging SHELVES of the bookcase. Sparse MANUSCRIPTS, rumpled, smashed at the corners. Bustling chatter of typewriters, ringing telephones leaching in through the doorway. A whole new flock of YOUNGER TYPING GIRLS already working their way up. Her time is running out.

She stiffens, refocuses.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)
 (into the telephone)
 I've already tried that number. Nobody answered.

She pushes out a weary breath. Getting nowhere.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)
 (into the telephone)
 Conway. Dean. He returned two months ago.

She blinks. Listening. Paralyzed, left speechless, by what she is hearing. She swallows. Flustered. Strains to speak.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)
 (into the telephone)
 When was this?

INT. KITCHEN, WEST VILLAGE APARTMENT -- EVENING

Barbara sits in the dark at the cramped kitchen table. Narrow rib of light from the hallway cutting across the empty stove top, jumbled counter. Puddle of burgundy MERLOT in a hazy glass. Half-empty bottle planted beside it. Her gaze vacant, removed. Stirring at the GRUNT of a KEY in the door.

Shuddering open. Bustling, flecked with rainwater, fumbling with a whispering umbrella, squelching boots, raincoat, Alice shimmies her way in. Grimaces, cloth bag of GROCERIES filling her arms. Elbows the door shut. Stumbling forward. Stops short at the threshold of the kitchen. Eyes sticking on Barbara. The bottle of MERLOT.

ALICE MCGRATH
 And I thought I had a bad day.

Tug of a smirk. Huffing, winded from the climb up. She shimmies into the cramped room. Wet boots squelching on the floor tile. Slouches the grocery bag onto the counter. She draws back. Barbara, still unmoved. Flicker of concern.

ALICE MCGRATH (CONT'D)
 Well what happened?

Barbara finally stirs. Drags her attention to Alice. Strains to focus through wine-fogged eyes.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN
I tried to reach Dean Conway.

Alice, flicker of a knowing smile.

ALICE MCGRATH
Let me guess: his sweetheart doesn't want him working with some gorgeous young editor in New York City.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN
He shot himself.

Alice, draws up short. Derailed. Twists back. Barbara, hollowed, gutted. Alice, momentary ghost of a smile. Certain it must be a joke. Fading away.

ALICE MCGRATH
What do you mean?

Barbara meets her gaze.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN
He told me he was scared. Over there.
He told me he wished he'd never enlisted.

Alice grips the edge of the counter. Emotion washing over her. Barbara slouches back in her chair. Numb, still.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)
He was twenty-one.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM, GIES APARTMENT -- MORNING

Otto leans in over the ceramic sink basin. Daubs pomade from the beat-up red Royal Crown tin on the edge. Slicking his hair back, combing it into place. He squints. Grabs up a pair of tweezers. Flinches as he tugs at an errant gray hair. Draws back. Regards his reflection. Dapper suit jacket, tie knotted around his neck. He draws a breath. Nervous.

INT. KITCHEN, GIES APARTMENT -- MORNING

He leafs through his beat-up leather portfolio. Plate scattered with toast crumbs, flecked with powdered sugar. Otto swipes at it, wiping it from the rumpled papers that he shimmies into place in the portfolio. Pushes back from the table. Rises. Smoothing down his rumpled pants, tugging at the cuffs of his shirt.

Jan, already rinsing the breakfast dishes in the sink. Miep draws up before Otto.

She reaches, wipes scattered crumbs from his tie. He glances down, chagrined. Straightens it. Squares his shoulders. Draws a breath. Meets her eye. Anxious. Excited. Jan glances over at them.

MIEP GIES

You will do her proud.

INT. DE NEVE'S OFFICE, UITGEVERIJ CONTACT PUBLISHERS -- DAY

Otto gazes at the wash of hard afternoon paleness spilling in through the window, hollowing out the tall oak bookshelves on either side. Blue with murky cigarette smoke. Leather-bound volumes jamming the shelves, narrow red-striped spines, Uitgeverij Contact logo embossed at the bottoms. Otto, enthusiasm gutted from him, dull, glassy-eyed.

OTTO FRANK

You want me to pay you to publish it.

He drags his weary, tired gaze to **F.E.A. BATTEN**, 33, tall, lanky, shabby trousers, ill-fitting Oxford shirt on his beanpole frame. Leaning, propped, against the vast mahogany desk, stacked with piles of papers, loose-leaf manuscripts, buried Chestnuttti typewriter, telephone. Looming bookcases, jammed with more volumes behind it. Batten glances at -

G.P. DE NEVE, 58, fleshy, pasty, filling the high-backed leather chair behind the desk. Cigar jammed between his knuckles. Eyes torridly semi-focused on Otto.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

I have no money. I have nothing.

F.E.A. BATTEN

She is obviously quite talented. She is a brilliant little girl, really. She makes such insightful observations. We were most impressed with Jan Romein's assessment of the piece.

OTTO FRANK

Jan Romein completely missed the point of it.

F.E.A. BATTEN

He urged us to publish it, in fact.

Otto, taken aback. Uncertain where this is going. Batten draws a breath. Flicks a glance at de Neve. Smoke curling from his cigar. Gazing placidly at the shaft of silvery blue sunlight falling in through the window. Bored by this meeting. Batten, left to pick up the slack.

F.E.A. BATTEN (CONT'D)

We simply feel like the primary market for this book might be a little too - specialized. Girls' lives of course being primarily of most interest to other little girls.

OTTO FRANK

The perseverance of the human spirit is of interest to everyone.

DE NEVE

Mathematically, it is a pass for us.

De Neve wearily lifts his cigar, takes a long pull from it. Sits forward in his mewling leather chair. Sets the cigar in the crenelated lip of a ceramic ashtray. Smoke streams out of his nostrils. He settles his tired walrus gaze on Otto.

DE NEVE (CONT'D)

If you are willing to alter the mathematics, we are willing to reconsider our determination.

Otto stares at him. His daughter's life reduced to such a cold calculation. He is stung. Strains to hold his temper.

OTTO FRANK

Her story is important.

DE NEVE

Yes. Well. Importance does not sell the way it used to.

INT. KITCHEN, GIES APARTMENT -- LATE MORNING

Otto pushes into the kitchen, disheveled, jacket freshly damped with drizzle, speckling his hair, unkempt. He expels a breath. Dragging the door shut behind him. He stands, dripping, sniffs. He steps forward, shoes squelching. Weak-dishwater light falling, pale and silvery, across the empty sink, dish rack loaded with neat stacks of plates, glasses.

MIEP GIES (O.S.)

How did it go?

He gives a start. Turns. Miep stands by the counter at the opposite doorway. Beyond her, Jan Gies, hunched at the dining room table, looks up, surrounded by papers, file folders.

Otto, gaze sticking on the bottle of Moet & Chandon champagne nestled beside the refrigerator. Trio of foggy champagne flutes. Miep registers his countenance. Presses her lips together. Stepping forward to mask the bottle.

MIEP GIES (CONT'D)

We will find someone else then.

Jan sits back in his chair. Lays down his fountain pen. Otto draws a ragged breath. Leans to place the beat-up leather portfolio on the empty table. Miep draws over to him. Reaches to place a hand on the damp shoulder of his jacket. Stops herself. He gives a weary shake of the head.

OTTO FRANK

There are no others. Everyone else rejected it. Out of twenty, they were the only ones who showed any interest. As it turns out, all they wanted was money.

She does not know what to say to that. He avoids her gaze. Reaches to refasten the buttons of his jacket. Flicks a glance at the clacking wall clock.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

We should go to the office.

He squares his shoulders. Hesitates. Eyes sticking on the afternoon paleness leaching in through the window. Bleak and hard. She watches him, concerned. His grief renewed.

MIEP GIES

How much did they want?

He flicks a glance at her. Shakes himself. Reaches to retrieve the leather portfolio.

MIEP GIES (CONT'D)

Otto. How much?

OTTO FRANK

Two thousand five hundred guilders.

She blanches at the number. He senses it. An enormous sum. She steels herself, strains to find hope.

MIEP GIES

I could talk to Jan. I could see how much we might be able to spare. Perhaps we could speak to the bank -

OTTO FRANK

I cannot accept your money. Not after everything you have given me.

MIEP GIES

It would be a gift. It would bring me pleasure.

OTTO FRANK

No.

She silences herself. Watches him as he lifts the leather portfolio from the table, tucks it under his arm. Turns, wet shoes squelching on the tiled floor.

MIEP GIES

I have seen you. The way this has
given you purpose these last months.
I do not want to see you lose that.

He meets her gaze. Vacant and hollow. Flickering fire from
before all but extinguished. He forces a flat smile for her.

OTTO FRANK

We should go. Or we will have no
business left to run.

INT. OTTO'S OFFICE, OPEKTA JAM FACTORY -- AFTERNOON

Otto gazes out at the silvery sunlight. Shadow engulfing the
room at his back. Desk overwhelmed with jumbled paperwork,
flaking leather accounting ledgers, shipping manifests. Boxy
Phillips RADIO murmuring softly beside the Underwood
typewriter, besieged in crumpled envelopes, unopened mail. He
watches a small robin flit among the skeletal branches of
the chestnut tree. Flicker of a smile at his lips. Fading.

BBC RADIO NEWS (V.O.)

*...the Nuremberg Indictments make
clear the sinister master plan by
which the Nazis sought world
domination. They recite for history
to remember the long list of
brutalities and atrocities which
blacken the record of this
generation...*

Ribbon of blue smoke twisting from a cigarette between his
fingers. He lifts it to his lips. Takes a long pull. Pushes
out a hazy breath. Lets it fall away. Stares gloomily out at
the courtyard.

Framed in the doorway, unnoticed by Otto, Jan Gies watches
him. Black Opekta Jam binder tucked under his arm. Eyes stuck
on Otto's narrow, solitary silhouette. Slumped shoulders.
Concerned.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM, GIES APARTMENT -- LATE NIGHT

Blackness. Otto switches on the desk lamp. Weak warm light
dimly washing his face, hollowed and pitted, shadowed,
sleepless. Rumpled white undershirt, hair smashed. He stares
at the small desk. Flaking leather blotter. DIARY placed
atop the rubber-banded loose-leaf manuscripts. He sits.
Watching it. Tormented. He summons his energy. Pushes off
the wheezing mattress. Hefts to his feet.

Shuffles across the bare hardwood floor. Around the foot of
the narrow bed. Draws up to the chewed-up wooden desk chair.
Drags it back with a soft grunt of wood on wood. He stares
at the DIARY. Steps around the chair. Braces himself to the
desk and lowers himself into it.

He gazes down at it, coarse red-checked cloth, frayed and worn through at the corners. Curling ruffled pages beneath it. He reaches out. Drags it toward him. He hesitates, his hand on it. Window over the desk a wedge of black. Steamed slightly against the chilly middle of the night.

Deep shadows, exhaustion beneath his eyes. He pushes out a weary breath. Cannot help himself. Flips the diary open. He squints down at it in the weak lamplight. Peels back the first few pages, thumbs his way deeper into it. Her spidery scrawled handwriting flitting, dancing before him. Taped-in PHOTOGRAPH of Anne and Margot on the beach, black-and-white smiles grinning out at him.

Otto, faintest flicker of a smile upon his lips. He pauses, page pinned open. Drawn, inexorably, back in. *"Dear Kitty, I asked myself this morning whether you don't sometimes feel rather like a cow who has had to chew over all the old pieces of news again and again."* He smirks, in spite of himself. Delighted by the sheer playfulness of the image.

He draws a ragged breath. Eyes stinging. Begins to flip the diary shut. Catches it. Eyes sticking on another passage. *"I know I can write but it remains to be seen whether I really have talent. I don't want to have lived in vain like most people. I want to be useful or bring enjoyment to all people, even those I've never met. I want to go on living even after my death."*

He stares at her words. Dark room looming around him. Rain lashing against the black void of the window. Light glinting in the burning moistness of his eyes. Determination stirred.

INT. LOUNGE, DIKKER & THIJES RESTAURANT -- DAY

Otto sits and watches the rain stream down the canted window. Buttery pale afternoon light. He clasps the chewed-up leather portfolio in his lap. Weather-worn shoes damp from outside, the shoulders of his shabby jacket soaked. He twists in the red padded chair. Flicks a glance at his wristwatch. Elbows propped on the upholstered arms of the chair, he gently taps the leather face of the portfolio. This task, distasteful.

He arrives at a decision. Bracing to push to his feet. He draws up short as, wingtip shoes clapping, bustling, late, winded, flecked with drizzle from outside, **ELIAN AKKERMAN**, 58, impeccable suit, flushed in the cheeks, top hat speckled with rain water, pushes through the front door. Shoes squelching on the marble. He grins, gives a wave.

ELIAN AKKERMAN

Otto. My god, it is actually you.

INT. DINING AREA, DIKKER & THIJES RESTAURANT -- SHORTLY LATER

Otto sits by the vast window. Framed in gray-white paleness. Leaching in across the starched white tablecloth. Conscious of his scuffed-up shoes, shabby jacket.

Silverware sparkling in the afternoon light, immaculate.
Bowl of *creme de volaille* chicken soup sprinkled with chives,
buttery skin untouched.

Across from him, linen napkin tucked into the collar of his
shirt, Elian chews, licks at his teeth, sawing into his *cote
de boeuf* rib-eye steak, *ris de veau* lamb pancreas sweetbreads
clumped in a fried greasy pile beside his smeary wine glass.

ELIAN AKKERMAN

It has all just begun to come back.
Rotterdam is a wasteland still. Have
you seen it?

Otto stirs. Attempts to focus. Mind elsewhere. Squints through
the haze of murky blue cigarette smoke. Elian, prizing another
morsel of steak from the bone, flicks a glance at him. Becomes
distracted, lifts a hand to signal the **WAITER**, 44, immaculate
suit, pushing a cart with a platter of oysters on ice.

ELIAN AKKERMAN (CONT'D)

I was of course devastated to hear
about your family. You have my
sincerest sympathies.

OTTO FRANK

Thank you.

Otto strains. Prepares to speak what is on his mind, but
must then halt as the Waiter draws over, leans in, white-
gloved, refills Elian's wine glass from a bottle of Chateau
Fortia Syrah. He draws back, replaces the bottle. Elian, a
tug of a smile at him, reaches for the stem of his glass.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

I have a question that I must ask
you. Regarding an account.

Elian pauses. Fixes him with a wine-fogged gaze.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

Before the occupation, I had amassed
a certain sum in savings.

Elian draws a disappointed breath. So this is why they are
here.

ELIAN AKKERMAN

You are aware of course that Dresder
was dissolved with the fall of Berlin.

OTTO FRANK

My account was with Handelstrust.

ELIAN AKKERMAN

They were subsidiaries.

Elian lifts the wine glass. Inhales its earthy scent. Drinks from it. Otto watches him as he swallows. Allows it to wash over him. Flicker of guilt, annoyance, under Otto's gaze.

OTTO FRANK

It would mean a great deal to me to recover this money.

ELIAN AKKERMAN

It is outside of my control. The bank has closed.

Elian pushes out a breath. Replaces the wine glass by his plate. He sits back. Assesses Otto. They are friends. This is money. He dabs at his mouth with his linen napkin.

ELIAN AKKERMAN (CONT'D)

If you would like to discuss a personal loan -

OTTO FRANK

I do not wish to borrow anyone's money. I want what is mine.

ELIAN AKKERMAN

Yes. Well. I am afraid it is gone.

Otto SLAMS his fist to the table. Silverware, glasses jumping. The DUTCH WOMAN, 66, dusty lavender dress, at the next table, glances sharply over, alarmed. Elian stares at Otto, frozen.

OTTO FRANK

"Human greatness does not lie in wealth or power, but in character and goodness." She was fourteen when she wrote that. My daughter. I wish that you could have known her better. I think she could have had a great impact on the world.

He shakes his head. Eyes burning. Braces to push back from the table.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

I am sorry to have spoiled your lunch.

Elian, taken off-guard by his abruptness, aware their friendship is crumbling, reaches out. Catches his arm.

ELIAN AKKERMAN

Otto. Let me give you some money.

OTTO FRANK

I did not come here for your money.

ELIAN AKKERMAN

Perhaps not. But you need it.

INT. 1939 MORRIS EIGHT SERIES 3 SEDAN [MOVING] -- DAY

Otto hunches in the steamed-up cabin. Rain streaming, sluicing down the windshield, wipers dashing back and forth as fast as they can. He is glassy-eyed, dull, distant. Wool-shouldered jacket, felt fedora, soaked through from the rain. Vacant mind elsewhere. Miep draws them to a jolting, shuddering halt at an intersection. Glances over at him.

MIEP GIES

And so. Did they actually serve oysters?

He stirs. Drags his gaze, attention, toward her. Focuses. Flicker of a smile at her quiet eagerness, curiosity.

OTTO FRANK

And champagne. Monmousseau. Crémant de Loire.

She shakes her head. Marveling. His smile fades slightly. Clouding as he drags his gaze back outward.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

He gave me five hundred guilders out of pity.

She flicks a glance at him. He avoids it.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

I took it.

Otto, ashamed that this is what he has come to. She looks forward again, troubled. Through the hazed windshield, the traffic advancing. She grasps the gearshift, lurches them ahead.

MIEP GIES

Jan and I can probably manage two hundred.

He allows her a flicker of a sad smile. Eyes still trained outward. Raking across the weathered brickwork, murky gutters, choked with rushing brown water.

OTTO FRANK

Keep it. It will still be barely a quarter of what they asked.

He draws a weary breath.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

I will convince them to accept five hundred. Or nothing.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, UITGEVERIJ CONTACT PUBLISHERS -- DAY

Weary afternoon light shafts in across the smooth marble wall. Otto squints, half-blinded by it, hard and bright, streaming through the arched old windowpanes, cloaking F.E.A. Batten, silhouetting him across the weathered, scuffed-up oak conference table.

F.E.A. BATTEN

I fear there has been some sort of misunderstanding.

He draws a breath, plucks at the fraying seams of his wool jacket sleeves. Does not enjoy this meeting. Otto regards him with a hard, penetrating stare.

F.E.A. BATTEN (CONT'D)

The sum we require is not a fabrication. It is derived from the cost of production for a book that frankly we do not believe will sell adequately to defray it.

He flicks a glance at Otto. Face bathed in the pale puddle of sunlight. Scowling at him. Batten, shifting in his chair.

F.E.A. BATTEN (CONT'D)

We are a publisher, Mr. Frank. Not a financial institution. We cannot afford to take risks. Now more than ever. Since the war, the market has collapsed and it has failed to return. Frankly, many still see books as luxuries.

OTTO FRANK

Have you read it?

Batten pushes out a breath. Feels he is getting nowhere.

F.E.A. BATTEN

It is not a question of quality. We simply believe it is not a book that will sell.

He feels Otto's gaze upon him. Impossible to escape.

F.E.A. BATTEN (CONT'D)

My wife has read it three times. But her taste does not reflect that of Holland.

OTTO FRANK

When you listen to the radio, when you open the newspaper, what do you see? Hatred. Grief. "How do we punish the ones who have wronged us?"

(MORE)

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

In her diary, there is only hope. Love. Beauty. She was locked in a prison for more than two years and she still believed that a kind and gentle spirit was the sharpest weapon of all.

He shields his eyes. Stares directly at Batten. Beseeching, appealing with every fiber of his being.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

I am a father who is asking you as one man to another. I have no more money than what I have offered you. I want only to let the world see her for who she was. To understand her and through her understand all of them, all of us, who went through what we went through, and who came through it and are searching for reasons to continue every day, when it is easier to look back in sorrow and decide it is not worth it. What must I do, Mr. Batten? Tell me. I will do anything. But I will not accept a "no" from you.

Batten, uncomfortable, shifts in his chair. Flicks a glance toward the sun falling in through the windows. Irked. Moved.

F.E.A. BATTEN

In the letter that you sent with the manuscript, you stated that you had, in the past, served as an accountant at a bank for ten years.

OTTO FRANK

Eleven.

F.E.A. BATTEN

Our auditor never returned from the war. Perhaps you could take up the position. Wages garnished, of course.

OTTO FRANK

Toward the publication of the book.

Batten, a brusque nod. Otto, overwhelmed.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

Yes. Yes, of course, then. Yes. We have a deal.

Spirit surging, bubbling up.

F.E.A. BATTEN
Contingent, of course, on some minor
editorial changes.

Otto, blinded, still reeling, strains to focus. Squints at
Batten, silhouetted in the brightness.

OTTO FRANK
What changes?

INT. KITCHEN, GIES APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Flickering candle dancing, warm yellow-orange light sputtering
across the wash of typewritten pages, scribbled red ink.
Otto sits back in his chair, peels off his glasses. Pushes
out a breath. Gazes across the table at Miep, hunched at the
opposite end, sticky dinner bowl puddled with *stammppot* lentil
stew, chunks of smoked sausage, kale. Reading another page
of the manuscript. She glances up as -

- Jan Gies leans in, shadow-eyed, tired, lifts away her dirty
bowl, smeary water glass. She presses a smile at him. Looks
back across at Otto. He glances up at her. Flattened.

OTTO FRANK
He wants to discard a full third of
the manuscript.

Jan sets the plates into the sink. Grabs for a threadbare
dishrag, switches on the tap. Miep glances at him. Looks
back across at Otto. Despair settling back over him.

MIEP GIES
People will know her story. Her voice.

OTTO FRANK
It is not her voice.

He looks back down at the blocks of typescript. Large portions
crossed out in red ink. Riddled with margin notes.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)
She speaks of menstruation, and it
is somehow "pornographic?" This is
what she felt. Who she was.

Miep draws a breath. Flicks a troubled glance up at Jan as
he leans back in to collect the platter of smoked sausages.

MIEP GIES
Let me do that.

She pushes back from the table, chair grunting on the tile
floor. Draws to her feet. Reaches, collects the *stampot*
dish. Draws back. Pauses. Cannot help herself.

MIEP GIES (CONT'D)

They have committed to publishing her diary. No one else even wanted to meet with you.

Jan flicks a glance at his wife. She is going too far. She registers his etch of a frown. Persists.

MIEP GIES (CONT'D)

If you must scale back on your work at Opekta, we can certainly manage for a couple of weeks.

He remains unconvinced.

MIEP GIES (CONT'D)

Otto. What other option do you have?

INT. DE NEVE'S OFFICE, UITGEVERIJ CONTACT PUBLISHERS -- DAY

Otto stands at the window. Bathed in muted morning light. Gloom settling over him. Clouding his gaze. He draws a breath.

OTTO FRANK

I had hoped to discuss the changes.

He twists from the glass, rain lashing against it. Murk of cigar smoke hanging over De Neve's desk. Avalanches of loose paperwork, manuscripts rubber-banded, typewriter, telephone, immersed in ruffled envelopes, leather address books. De Neve, irked, flicks a glance up from the steamed French press he is fumbling with. Blossom of murky coffee from the sieve.

DE NEVE

There is nothing to discuss.

De Neve decants a steaming ribbon of coffee into a bone-china coffee cup. Warmth gushing out of it. He sits back in his leather chair. Drags weary eyes to Otto.

DE NEVE (CONT'D)

Whether we hemorrhage money and gain a debtor or hemorrhage money and gain an auditor, we are still hemorrhaging money. I am opposed to it.

He pushes out a smoky breath.

OTTO FRANK

An offer was made in good faith.

DE NEVE

So you accept the offer.

Otto regards him. Aware of what is being asked. Hesitates.

OTTO FRANK

Yes. I accept.

DE NEVE

Then you will do whatever Mr. Batten asks of you. You are in his hands now.

INT. FILING ROOM, UITGEVERIJ CONTACT PUBLISHERS -- AFTERNOON

Weak morning paleness shafts in through a narrow window. Washing across stacks upon stacks of bulging cardboard boxes, swollen, strained at the seams. Bookcase lurking in the darkness, shelves jammed with curling yellowed papers.

As Batten switches on the single naked light bulb hanging from the center of the room, the dim light exposes -

- the beat-up little desk, lacquer chipped and worn away, pushed against the wall. Surface covered over with dusty stacks of leather-bound ledgers, three-ring binders exuding more crumpled papers, receipts, shipping manifests. Water damage soaked into the mushy ceiling pile, stale wallpaper. Paint peeling, leprous. Dusty typewriter missing its ribbon, several of its keys.

Otto takes it in from the doorway beside Batten, warm light washing in from the hallway behind them.

F.E.A. BATTEN

We will find you a functioning typewriter, of course. You are welcome to move anything that you wish.

Otto shuffles forward into the room. Takes in the cramped walls, flaking ceiling. Meager shaft of natural light.

OTTO FRANK

Which are the accounting files?

Batten flicks a glance at him. Not understanding.

F.E.A. BATTEN

All of them.

Otto blinks. Face unreadable. Calculating. Lifts his tired leather briefcase. Sets it on the edge of the desk.

OTTO FRANK

Perhaps I could make some tea, then. It seems I will be here a while.

CUT TO:

INT. BARBARA ZIMMERMAN'S OFFICE, DOUBLEDAY & CO. -- DAY

Barbara, eyes shadowed, gaze haunted, etched with weariness, aged somehow by the unexpected loss of Dean Conway.

Hunched at the cramped desk. Besieged with MANUSCRIPTS, piles divvied out, sorted. Buck slips paper-clipped to most of them. "PASS - DB." Empty coffee mugs, abandoned. Framed portrait PHOTOGRAPH of her MOTHER & FATHER as a young couple, nearly buried.

Barbara, intensely focused. Fixed on an open MANUSCRIPT, *Valley of No Return!* Frustration, fatigue weighing.

Fluorescent light, hard, sallow, washing the beige plaster walls. Bookcase, banged-up wooden shelves now JAMMED with other MANUSCRIPTS. Pages rumpled, smashed. Small navy blue sofa moved in to one corner, subsumed in PAPERS. She gives a start -

FRANK PRICE (O.S.)

You should try opening your shade.

FRANK PRICE, 46, thinning brown hair, kind-faced, gazes upon her from the doorway. He nods at the wilting ORCHID. Desiccated. Shriveled petals strewn the desk. Narrow rib of crisp sunlight stifled by the window shade.

FRANK PRICE (CONT'D)

They need natural light.

He steps in. Extends a hand.

FRANK PRICE (CONT'D)

Frank Price.

Barbara, flustered, fumbles for a PENCIL. Jams it into the open MANUSCRIPT to hold the page. Rises to shake his hand.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

Barbara. Zimmerman. It's a pleasure, sir.

Price, tug of a smirk as he draws back. Takes her in. Rumpled blouse. Thick glasses. Flicks a glance toward the window.

FRANK PRICE

This used to be my office. Half a lifetime ago.

Barbara, uncertain what to say to that. He turns. Floorboards creaking beneath him. Gaze raking across the bookshelf. Manuscripts, spines neatly labeled in black marker.

FRANK PRICE (CONT'D)

You have a predilection for stories about the war.

He glances back at her. Still poised behind her desk. Self-conscious, she flicks a glance at *Valley of No Return!*

FRANK PRICE (CONT'D)

Did you have a brother who served?

She stiffens. Avoids his gaze.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN
I knew someone, once, who had.

He draws back from the bookshelf. Turning to take her in. She looks back down at the MANUSCRIPT. Deflated. Flips it shut.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)
Nothing I have read captures the
experience.

He studies her. Loss, grief, weighing upon her. Rakes his gaze toward the streaming afternoon sunlight. Puddled, hard and shearing, on the hardwood floor.

FRANK PRICE
Perhaps it's better to look ahead.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN
Ten years from now, all of these
will be forgotten.

She plucks a lit cigarette, mostly ash, out of the crenelated ashtray. Takes a pull from it.

Price, watching her, faintest ghost of a bittersweet smile.

FRANK PRICE
There are worse things than a little
light entertainment.

She at last drags her attention to him.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN
These are cartoons. What is the point?

FRANK PRICE
Must there be a point?

She squints at him through her thick glasses.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN
If there is no point then why are we
all here? Why bother with any of
this?

He is amused, slightly. Her headstrong conviction. Smile fading. He glances back toward the door. Draws a breath.

FRANK PRICE
I came to tell you that Donald Black
is arranging to have you fired by
the end of the year.

Barbara, caught up short, stares at him. Blind-sided.

FRANK PRICE (CONT'D)

Evidently you convinced him that your work here would not impinge upon your obligations to the typing pool.

Barbara, reeling. Tosses a glance at the piled MANUSCRIPTS. Buck slips clipped to the title pages, all PASSES.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

He never wanted me here to begin with. Everything I recommend he gives to his secretary, and she passes on it for him.

He is weary all at once. Resigned to the way the world works.

FRANK PRICE

At any rate, I thought it only fair that you should know.

He meets her gaze. She has put everything into this job. He dislikes it as much as she does.

FRANK PRICE (CONT'D)

You are searching for something that will change minds. Alter perspectives. It frightens him.

He pushes away from the doorframe. Halts himself.

FRANK PRICE (CONT'D)

I hope that you find it.

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, UITGEVERIJ CONTACT -- DAY [WEEKS LATER]

Otto draws into the stagnant staleness of the room. Curtains pulled back, morning light streaming in to puddle, hard and sheering, on the marble walls and floor. Splintering across the scratched-up wooden conference table. He hesitates in the doorway. Eyes sticking on -

- the BOOK at the edge of the table. Murky brown dust jacket wrapped crisply around it. He takes a hesitant step forward. Draws to the table. Grips the back of the chair in front of him as his eyes find the TITLE. *Het Achterhuis [The Annex]*. Across the top in bold blue lettering. *Anne Frank*.

SUPER: "June 25, 1947."

He draws a ragged breath. Lump in his throat. He takes a shuffling step forward. Knee pushing against the back of the chair. Reaches. Places a trembling hand atop the book. Palm leaving a blossom of moistness on the cover. He pries at it. Peeling it open. Crisp title page placed opposite a smiling black-and-white PHOTOGRAPH of Anne.

He presses a hand over his mouth. Eyes stinging. Welling. He is trembling all over. He stares down at her smiling face. His little girl. Her dream realized. In print.

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE, DAALMANS BOOKSHOP -- DAY [WEEKS LATER]

Otto stands at the dusty windowpane. Sallow light cutting in through ribbed Venetian blinds. He gazes down upon narrow aisles of bookcases, shelves jammed with leather-spined volumes, flaking dust jackets. Unsold stacks of German author Gottfried Benn's *Ausgewählte Gedichte*, Third Reich poetry.

Piles of yellowed periodicals in messy stacks. MAN, 41, in a shabby wool suit, flipping idly through a copy of Ferdinand Bordewijk's *Blokken*.

MATTHIJS DAALMANS (O.S.)

Mr. Batten attempted to explain it to me. I must admit I had some difficulty understanding.

Otto drags his gaze from the window. Hunched in the weak glow of a Gispen table lamp, sequestered behind mounds of paperwork, fraying volumes in need of mending, dusty glass-encased Shakespeare first edition, leather binding buckling, **MATTHIJS DAALMANS**, 46, narrow-faced, nebbish, fusses with a brass Spanish cigar cutter. He grimaces. Flicks a glance up.

MATTHIJS DAALMANS (CONT'D)

It is a book by a child - written for adults?

OTTO FRANK

It is for everyone.

Daalmans, etch of a frown, a brusque nod. Brow furrowed. Does not understand. He slices the cigar. Flecks of loose tobacco scattering his papers. He lifts it to his nose. Inhales. Tug of a smile in spite of himself. He re-focuses on Otto. Gaze clouding.

MATTHIJS DAALMANS

Forgive me, Mr. Frank. It must mean a great deal to you, as her father.

He tosses a glance at the crisp copy of Anne's *Het Achterhuis* sandwiched between a pre-release copy of Simon van het Reve's *De Avonden*, fresh translation of Franz Kafka's *Amerika*.

MATTHIJS DAALMANS (CONT'D)

As a bookseller, however, you must see my dilemma. Do I place her with Hans Christian Andersen or Sigmund Freud?

OTTO FRANK

You could place her in the front window.

Daalmans, a tug of a smirk, reaches for the Ronson Touch Tip lighter, black enamel, wedged between crumpled manuscripts.

MATTHIJS DAALMANS

It is too dry for children and too childish for adults. I am sorry.

INT. KITCHEN, GIES APARTMENT -- AFTERNOON

Otto draws into the kitchen. Sun falls in through the window above the sink. Puddles, hard and glaring, on the tiled floor. Miep, laying out a plate of sliced bread, butter in a dish, flicks a glance up at him. Slows. Apprehensive. An ENVELOPE wedged beneath the edge of his plate, beside the napkin.

He draws to the table. Places a hand on the back of the chair, drags it back. His eyes stick on the ENVELOPE. He regards it. Reaches. Shimmies it out. *Uitgeverij Contact*. The publisher. He stares at the masthead. Stiffly lowers himself into the chair. Grabs up the butter knife beside his plate, wedges the blade beneath the flap, and pries it open.

Miep watches him. Anxious. He fidgets out the folded piece of paper inside. Presses it flat, thumbs his glasses up the bridge of his nose. Squints. Reads it a second time. Miep, lingering, watching. He pushes out a breath. Sits back in his wheezing chair. Meets her eyes across the table.

OTTO FRANK

We have sold forty-seven copies.

She hesitates, uncertain whether or not this is good news.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

The print run was fifteen hundred.

He peels off his glasses. Blearily stares at the creased letter. Torn-open envelope beside it. He reaches, nudges his butter knife back into place. Her gaze falls, tepid, on the plate of bread. Smoked sausage snapping, popping in a skillet on the stove. Air sucked out of the room. He draws a long breath. Meets her gaze. What is there to say.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

I suppose that he warned us.

She flicks a glance at the skillet. Draws back, grabbing up a fork from the greasy stove top to tend to it.

MIEP GIES

Once people read it, word will spread.

OTTO FRANK

That is the problem. No one is reading it.

She draws back. Letting the sausages cook. She regards him through the haze of blue smoke, shafting sunlight.

He sits, shoulders slumped. Disillusioned.

MIEP GIES

They will.

INT. READING ROOM, TONEN BOOKSHOP -- EVENING

Otto stands and gazes out through the glass, tender silvery-blue dusk leaching from the sky. Streetcar rattling by below. Warm orange light spilling from a scattering of windows across the cobblestone street. Footsteps wheezing across the floorboards behind him. He twists from the window.

ELENA ADELHEID, 52, kind, drawing up to the table at his back. Stacked copies of *Het Achterhuis*, crisp, untouched. Two dozen lacquered wooden chairs arranged to fill the room. Face the table. Teapot long since gone cold. Cups set out, untouched. Nobody has come to meet the father of the author.

ELENA ADELHEID

We were going to close.

She avoids his gaze. Flicks a glance at him. His eyes stick on the untouched stacks of books. He affords her a weary smile. Nods. Peels away from the window.

Steps to the table. Hardwood floor creaking beneath him. Reaches down to the battered cracked leather TRUNK hidden behind the threadbare white tablecloth across the table. Drags it out. Fumbles with the brass clasps. Opens it. More COPIES of *Het Achterhuis* packed inside. He gazes at them.

Rises. Reaches to lift the top five copies off of the stack on the table. Gently places them into the trunk. He nudges them squarely into place so that they cannot move. Hand lingering for a moment upon them. Reassuring her.

Elena watches him. Glances toward the gaping emptiness of the room. Flicker of pity. Otto lifts another stack of books off the table.

ELENA ADELHEID (CONT'D)

I would like to buy one.

He pauses, hefting the books down into the trunk. Flicks a glance at her. She clasps her hands before her. Presses a strained smile at him. Under his gaze, she does not know where to look. Turns her attention to the BOOKS.

ELENA ADELHEID (CONT'D)

She was such a beautiful girl.

OTTO FRANK

Yes. She was.

ELENA ADELHEID

I will place a few copies in the window. If you would like.

He is aware that he is being pitied. She has no hope of selling them. He forces a smile for her anyway.

OTTO FRANK

Thank you.

INT. OTTO'S OFFICE, OPEKTA JAM FACTORY -- DAY [DAYS LATER]

Otto stares, a deadness to his eyes, at a column of smeary numbers. Draws a weary breath, flips shut the manila folder. Carefully winds closed the fastening string. Lifts it from the desk, overcrowded with stacked binders, leather accounting ledgers, unopened envelopes, overwhelming neglected work. He pushes back from the desk. Rises from the chair, shuffles to the dented, scratched-up metal filing cabinets pushed against the wall.

He presses the manila folder into a hanging file jammed with other folders, smashed receipts, shipping orders. He stands, gazes down at them. Twists back, takes in the desk. His eyes sticking on the windowpane.

Light captured in the faint silvery drizzle clinging to the glass. Beyond it, just jutting above the slippery tile rooftops, the bony sticklike branches of the chestnut tree, painted with a speckling of red and yellow leaves. He gazes at them. Flicker of a smile.

He sits back in the chair. Reaches. Shimmies out, jammed between the overflowing wooden inbox and the Underwood typewriter, his own weathered copy of *Het Achterhuis*. Flips it open. Twisting in his chair. Pale sunlight washing in across the pages. He thumbs his way through it. Searching.

Slows. Frown etching his brow. He flips back several pages. Forward again. Draws to a paragraph. Squints at the typescript. He turns back toward the desk. Reaches. Wiggles out the original red-checkered DIARY sandwiched between a bundle of rubber-banded papers, clipped-together files.

He lays it out atop the open hardcover BOOK. Carefully peeling back the cloth cover. He hesitates, arrested once more by the sight of her cursive scrawl. He peels back page after page, careful with the thin stationery. Meticulously thumbing his way through it until he draws to a halt. Eyes dragging across the passage:

"The two of us looked out at the blue sky, the bare chestnut tree glistening with dew, the seagulls and other birds glinting with silver as they swooped through the air, and we were so moved and entranced that we couldn't speak."

Flicker of a smile at his lips. The vividness of the image. Crisp. Clear. He drags the DIARY back. Squints at the smeary typescript in the published BOOK. Gives a start as -

- Bep draws up short in the doorway. Startled to see him at his desk. Her arms filled with more bulging manila files.

BEP VOSKUIJL

Mr. Frank. Please excuse me. I was not aware that you were coming in today.

He gives her a brusque nod. Preoccupied. Returns his attention to *Het Achterhuis*. Runs his finger across the typewritten page. The entire passage ABSENT.

Bep places two of the manila files atop his wooden inbox. Meekly withdraws to the door. Hesitates. Peering back at him. Hunched in his chair, two books laid open in his lap. She turns as -

- Miep approaches, heels clacking down the hall. Bep flashes her a shy smile. Ducks away. Miep drawing into the doorway. Takes in Otto. Stacked binders, ledgers, loose-leaf paperwork heaping his desk. Pale murky sunlight glinting off his glasses. He has turned away, peers out the window, eyes settled on the branches of the chestnut tree.

MIEP GIES

Otto.

He glances back. Stirred.

MIEP GIES (CONT'D)

I wonder if we might have lunch together.

INT. CAFÉ 'T HOEKJE -- DAY

Otto hunches, damp, flushed with warmth. Wool coat speckled with drizzle, shucked off, draped over the metal chair behind him. Pale light leaching through the steamed glass beside him. Sliced bread, small bowl of oily egg salad, beets, cups of tea. He is immersed in the fishbowl of babbling voices, laughter, clattering cutlery, plates, knives.

Miep sits across from him. Spreading *farmersalade* vegetable spread with her knife on a hunk of bread.

OTTO FRANK

Fifty thousand words, they eliminated.

He shakes his head. Teacup untouched. Cigarette twisting to ash. He pushes out a breath that fogs the glass beside him.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

I allowed them to edit her out of her own diary.

He becomes aware of her eyes upon him. Realizes her silence. Eyes shadowed, perpetual etch of a frown creasing his brow. He draws a breath. Strains to recover his composure.

MIEP GIES

I had hoped we might discuss returning your energy and focus to the office.

He picks up his own knife. Separates a small hunk of cheese from the wedge on his plate. Troubled. Frown deepening.

MIEP GIES (CONT'D)

Business has begun to pick up. Orders are resuming. It would be useful to have you back in a full-time capacity.

OTTO FRANK

I should have found another publisher.

Miep, face tightening.

MIEP GIES

Otto. There were no other publishers.

He flicks a glance at her, looks away. Squints against the hard, silvery afternoon. Not wanting to accept it.

MIEP GIES (CONT'D)

You must move on from this. You are allowing it to consume you.

She leans forward. Intent on capturing his attention.

MIEP GIES (CONT'D)

You have succeeded. Her work is all over Holland. She would be proud. She would want you to be happy.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM, GIES APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Otto sits awake. Carved out in dim lamplight, the twin beds, sheets rumpled. He hunches at the cramped little desk. Bathrobe, hair disheveled. He has not slept. Laid out around him, loose-leaf manuscript pages. Marked up with red ink. *Het Achterhuis* wedged beside the red-checkered cloth DIARY, the subsequent second notebook that she filled.

He reaches for a cigarette, propped in the ashtray. Takes a long draw from it. Eyes sticking on the Opekta crate, jammed rumpled PHOTOGRAPHS, papers. Otto, an etch of a frown, reaches. Tugs a NEWSPAPER CLIPPING from among the messy pile. Cut out, highlighted by Anne, from March 30, 1944:

"...Gerrit Bolkenstein, Dutch Minister for Education, Art, and Science told a delegation from the United States and Great Britain, 'History cannot be written on the basis of official decisions and documents alone. What we really need are ordinary documents--a diary, letters from a worker in Germany, a collection of sermons given by a parson or a priest.'"

He stares at the smudged typescript. Carefully cut out, underlined. Drags his gaze back to the DIARY. Paragraphs, entire passages struck out in RED INK. Meddlesome notes scrawled in the margins.

Otto, dogged by them. Galvanized. He turns. Reaches for the Underwood Standard Portable typewriter, brought home from the office. Hefts it, drags it toward him. Casts around.

Replaces the cigarette in the ashtray. Drags back the small wooden drawer at his knee. Lifts out a half-depleted ream of stationery, enclosed in its waxy packaging. Places it on the desk beside him. Shimmies out a sheet. Reaches, knobs it into the typewriter carriage.

He glances at the marked-up manuscript. Pecks out, one letter at a time, *Het Achterhuis*. Reaches for the cigarette. Presses it between his lips. Draws in another pull. Gazes down at the typewriter with weary, fogged eyes. He looks past it. *Het Achterhuis*, the book, wedged to the back of the desk.

Eyes sticking on the rumpled NEWSPAPER CLIPPING. "...a delegation from the United States and Great Britain..."

He drags his eyes back to the typewriter. Reaches, releases the typewriter carriage, drags it backward. Repositions the ribbon over the same spot. He smacks the "X" key. Again, again, again. XXXXXXXXXXXXX. Masking the original title. He stares at it. Cigarette still clamped between his lips. He pulls at it, pushes out a smoky breath.

His eyes settle back on the original cloth-bound DIARY. He rakes his gaze back to the typewriter. Stabs the carriage return. Repositions the carriage. Keys snapping as he pecks out, one letter at a time, a new title in English: *THE DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL BY ANNE FRANK*. He stares at it. Flickering in his eyes, a swell of renewed hope. Life.

CUT TO:

INT. BARBARA ZIMMERMAN'S OFFICE, DOUBLEDAY & CO. -- DAY

Barbara hunches at the cluttered oak desk. Manuscript open in front of her. *Dunkirk: The Miracle that Saved England*. Her concentration on the smearing typescript -

- nagged by the slight FLICKER of the fluorescent overhead strip. She glances up at it. Distracted. It sputters back at her. She presses her attention back to the page. Eyes dragging across it. Glances back at the flickering light.

She slouches back. Rolling, padded office chair wheezing beneath her. Flips the manuscript shut. Regards it. Defeated. Lifts it, impulsively places it into the wire metal OUTBOX. Masking tape LABEL peeling from the side: "LOG & DISCARD."

INT. KATZ'S DELICATESSAN -- DAY

Murky haze of smoke, babbling voices, laughter, clattering dishes. Barbara sits at a small table by the window, by herself. Matzo-ball soup, smeary glass of water, no ice. Glasses reflecting back the fresh MANUSCRIPT she is reading.

Her attention catching, for a moment, on the TABLE by the next window. A swell of LAUGHTER from the huddle of YOUNG TYPIST GIRLS, 19, leaning in to examine the ENGAGEMENT RING that another TYPIST GIRL, 21, pert, black-haired, is showing them. Chattering to each other. Eager. Flushed in the face.

Barbara watches them. Hunched at her own table, by herself. They are impossibly young. A new generation. She is aware in this moment that time is passing her by.

She squints back down at the smudged TYPESCRIPPT laid out in front of her. Irked. Distracted now. Dissatisfied. At last, she draws back. Nagging at her.

INT. MAILROOM, DOUBLEDAY & CO. -- AFTERNOON

Sallow fluorescent. Windowless aisles of metal bookcases weighed down by MAIL CRATES. Jammed with rumpled ENVELOPES, MANUSCRIPTS. Jason Epstein, hunched alongside the banged-up metal MAIL CART, flips back through rumpled, unsorted SUBMISSIONS in the crate.

JASON EPSTEIN

Was it this one?

Barbara, standing behind him, distracted, drags her attention to the MANUSCRIPT in his hand. *Bravest Marine of Them All*. She winces at the tacky cover page. Shakes her head.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

It was called "*Dunkirk. The Miracle that Saved England.*"

She grimaces. The title dubious, hokey, even as she says it. She watches Jason as he nods, turns back. Drags her eyes to the LOWER SHELF of the CART. The futility of it all weighing upon her. These towering shelves, carts, piles of envelopes, all REJECTIONS.

She blinks. Eyes sticking on something. Stares at it. Then stoops. Peeling back the stacked ENVELOPES jammed in the CRATE on the lower shelf. Exposing the PHOTOGRAPH that has captured her attention.

Masking tape label: "*DONALD BLACK - LOG & DISCARD.*" She shimmies out the MANUSCRIPT attached to the PHOTOGRAPH. Eyes catching again on the -

FACE of the YOUNG GIRL. Beaming. Wide. Innocent. Something haunting about her. Junior Editors' REPORTS stapled to the title page. All PASSES. She peels it back -

"THE DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL BY ANNE FRANK."

Barabra blinks. Peels back the title page. Eyes dragging over the smeary TYPESCRIPT, paragraphs, prose. Darting from word to word. Slowing. Unable to simply skim it. She flips it closed again. Skewered once more by the beaming GIRL'S FACE. *Anne Frank.*

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)

Where did this one come from?

Jason tosses a glance over his shoulder. Squints.

JASON EPSTEIN

I have no idea.

CUT TO:

INT. RECEPTION, LITTLE BROWN & COMPANY [LONDON] -- AFTERNOON

Otto stands at the window. Glazed in leaching afternoon sunlight. He gazes out through the arched, rippling glass. Zinc rooftops, jutting dormers, wrought-iron balconies spilling off in a jumble of ruddy stonework. Big Ben spearing the skyline far off. He is transfixed. London. Turns, startled -

NED BRADFORD (O.S.)

Mr. Frank?

Dapper, soft-edged, jovial, rakish hair, **NED BRADFORD**, 32, simple Oxford shirt, jacket, emerges from the narrow wooden door. Plush carpet padded oak benches filling the foyer. He smiles. Extends a hand to Otto.

NED BRADFORD (CONT'D)

Ned Bradford.

INT. BRADFORD'S OFFICE, LITTLE BROWN & COMPANY -- AFTERNOON

Otto sits in a high-backed green felt chair. Cavernous room filled with looming mahogany bookshelves, leather-spined volumes reaching to the arcing ceilings. Hearth, marble stained with soot, ash, yawning between him and Bradford, hunched forward in the second high-backed chair. Bradford cradles a snifter of cognac. Swirls it in his hands.

NED BRADFORD

I have met with some resistance from the senior editors in Boston. I am still waiting on a final opinion from Mr. Sullivan.

He lifts the glass to his nose. Draws in a breath. Flicker of a smile at his lips. He sits back into the cradle of the chair. Crosses one leg over the other. Regards Otto. Stiff, out of place here. His own snifter, untouched, clasped uncertainly in his hands.

NED BRADFORD (CONT'D)

The American market, you see, has less appetite for stories of occupation. Their experience of the war was different.

Bradford lifts the snifter to his lips. Takes a small sip. Blossoming nutty warmth. He draws his gaze to the arched windows, hung with heavy green curtains.

NED BRADFORD (CONT'D)

Having lived in London both before and after, I of course, have a different perspective. I used to watch the bombs fall from that window over there, during the Blitz.

He drags his attention back to Otto. Swallows back the bitter memory. Re-focuses.

NED BRADFORD (CONT'D)

I must tell you, too, there were some questions of its authenticity.

Otto, caught off-guard. Squints.

OTTO FRANK

I do not understand.

Bradford regards him. Assessing him.

NED BRADFORD

Stylistically, it is quite advanced for a girl of fourteen. Mr. Sullivan voiced some concern. Are you able to prove that she wrote it herself?

OTTO FRANK

I have the original diaries. In her handwriting.

Bradford nods, to himself. Considering. Flicker of a smile. Replaces his foot on the floor and sits forward in his chair. Brandy snifter outstretched.

NED BRADFORD

I think it is a marvelous achievement.

Otto, still catching up. Taps their glasses together. A toast. He strains to understand what is being said. Hope surging. He raises the glass to his lips. Drinks. Coughs slightly, unaccustomed. Bradford, a tug of a smile, sits back.

NED BRADFORD (CONT'D)

It will of course have to be reduced in length.

Otto, head swimming, buttery warmth blossoming from the cognac, abruptly hobbled. Hope, elation deflating.

OTTO FRANK
Reduced in what manner?

INT. KITCHEN, GIES APARTMENT -- MORNING [TWO DAYS LATER]

Otto sits beside the yellowed curtains. Ribbed light piercing between them. Paleness washing in, haze of cigarette smoke hanging in the air. He cradles a steaming teacup. Gaze faraway. Lost in memory. Faintest tug of a sad smile at his lips. He shakes himself. Draws a breath. He peers at a pair of rusty kitchen scissors on the table. Newly-opened package of Pickwick Tea beside them. From the doorway -

- Miep draws to an abrupt halt. Otto turns in his chair, framed in the silvery puddle of light. She is caught off-guard. Unaware he had returned. Otto looks back down at the scissors, turns them over in his hands.

OTTO FRANK
We used to cut the girls' hair with these. Margot abhorred it. Anna considered it a game.

He is lost in the memory for a moment. Shakes himself once more. Turns back toward Miep. The room a small cave around them. Otto, lost. Uncertain why he is even here.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)
In a certain way it was a very happy time. To live in such close contact with the ones that I loved. To speak to Edith about the girls and about future plans, to help the children with their studies. It would never have been possible in a normal life. Outside of the war.

Otto, a tug of a sad smile. Places the rusty scissors back on the table. Hand lingering on them. Reluctant to let go.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)
They find her most human moments and most striking observations tiresome and irrelevant. They do not see her as a girl. She is merely a statistic.

He at last drags his hand back. The light catches the tarnished metal.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)
I fear I must ask you a favor.

She steps forward from the shadowed doorway. Tired floor tile wheezing beneath her.

MIEP GIES
Anything, Otto. Of course.

He grimaces. Detests that he must ask what he must.

OTTO FRANK
At one time you offered me a sum of money as a loan. I am afraid I may need to accept it.

He does not look at her. Aware of the surprise washing across her face. She recovers. Moves to begin lifting down breakfast dishes from the cupboard.

MIEP GIES
Of course. I will talk to Jan.

He hunches in the pale light. Hollowness pitting his shadowed eyes. Gaunt once more. She tosses a worried glance at him.

MIEP GIES (CONT'D)
Are you all right?

He is exhausted.

OTTO FRANK
The man who will make the decision at Little, Brown lives in Boston.

He blanches. Aware of her instant disapproval. Objection swelling within her.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)
I have heard nothing from any of the others. If there is any possibility that I can persuade him, I must try.

She sets the plates down heavily on the table. Draws back, regards him: Hunched, vulnerable. Waiting to be castigated. She does not have it in her all at once.

MIEP GIES
You know, I remember the first time that I met her. You had brought her to the office. She was wearing these - white ankle socks, that drooped around her thin ankles, and she had the brightest electric gray-green eyes I had ever seen. I remember the fascination with which she stared at my shiny black typewriter. And so I held her little fingers to the keys and pressed them. How her eyes flashed when they jumped up and printed black letters on the page. I thought to myself, now here is the kind of child I would like to have someday.

She smiles to herself. Lost, for a moment, in the memory.
Drags her attention back to him. Hunched at the table.

MIEP GIES (CONT'D)

If you go to Boston and the answer
is still no, what then?

OTTO FRANK

Will I abandon the cause, do you
mean?

He rakes his gaze to her. Moist eyes catching the light.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

How can I abandon her? I am her
father. They took her from me, yes,
but I am her father still. I will
always be her father. Will I abandon
her? No. I cannot say that I will. I
cannot say that. I will never say
that. She was my little girl, and
she is still my little girl, and she
will be my little girl until the day
that I die. So if I must keep fighting
for her and fighting for her, if it
drains me of my every last whit of
energy and of what little life I may
have left, if that is what is required
of me, as her father, then so be it.
There is no greater joy. Anna and
Margot were everything to me. They
always were, and they always will
be.

Miep, stricken. Paralyzed.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

I do not know what I will do if the
answer is no.

JAN GIES (O.S.)

You will have the money that you
need.

Miep, rived with emotion, gives a start. Jan Gies has drawn
silently to the threshold. Hallway consumed in shadow.

JAN GIES (CONT'D)

Go to Boston. Tell her story to
America. Make them understand.

Otto, deeply affected. Lump in his throat. Looks up at him.
Gratitude swimming in his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. PASSENGER COMPARTMENT, R.M.S. QUEEN ELIZABETH -- DAY

Otto peers through the smeary porthole. Glazed, fogged with speckled saltwater droplets. Woodwork blistered with water damage. Banged-up crown molding. Rusted metal clasps. He watches the churning gray waves, studded with whitecaps. Eyes sticking on the rambling shoreline. Docks, barnacle-clotted pilings, piers. Ruddy-faced brownstones. Custom House Tower spearing, gray, stoic, beyond them. Foreign land.

He draws back. Rumpled flannel pajamas. Hair disheveled. Freezing. Cramped bunk strewn with rumpled blankets. The tiny room hollowed out by a single dim lamp bolted to the scratched-up wooden nightstand. He draws a breath. Flickering trepidation. All at once so close. Leather valise still yawning open. Clothes hanging in the closet. The ship's HORN blares through the thrumming, shuddering deck.

Announcing their arrival to Boston.

INT. RECEPTION, LITTLE BROWN & COMPANY [BOSTON] -- AFTERNOON

Otto stands at the narrow window. Rain lashing against the glass. Half-frozen, ice tickering, bursts of wind rattling it in its frame. He is flushed. Too warm in his wool suit jacket. Flecked with melted snowflakes. Hair stringy, hastily recombbed with his fingers. Oak bookcases jammed with leather-spined volumes. James Hilton's *Goodbye Mr. Chips*. James Norman Hall's *Mutiny on the Bounty*. Older, perfectly-preserved volumes by Benjamin Franklin, George Washington.

SUPER: *"November 21, 1950. Boston, Massachusetts."*

Between two high-backed, padded chairs, polished wooden-cabinet Philco RADIO, murky orange dial illuminated, softly droning at his back.

W.T.A.O. RADIO NEWS (V.O.)

...Shirley Temple announced her retirement from show business today, to the considerable shock and protest of her fans. The former child starlet told CBS reporters, quote, "I'm so happy. I've found a whole new world with my husband and my children. I have everything I want now."

He pries himself away from the window. Three YOUNG EXECUTIVES, 27, ties loosened, Oxford shirts unbuttoned, LAUGHING, emerge from gushing warmth, paneled wooden conference room door. Leather briefcases tucked under their arms, CHATTERING between each other. Shrugging into woolen coats. Patent-leather shoes clapping on marble.

ELAINE, 25, pencil skirt, emerges after them. Her cheeks blushed pink with warmth, gin. Champagne. Thanksgiving week. Lips still flickering with a smile.

ELAINE

Mr. Frank, he's ready for you.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, LITTLE BROWN & COMPANY -- AFTERNOON

Otto steps into the stagnant warmth of the room. Vast mahogany conference table smeary with spilled champagne. Scattered with smashed napkins. Plates, half-eaten corned-beef sandwiches abandoned, empty Moet & Chandon bottles sweating. Papers scattering the place settings. Easel at the head of the room, canvas pre-release mockup cover art. Prancing red stallion. Blaring yellow letters. *The Catcher in the Rye*.

Silver platters crowding the credenza along the wall. Deli ham, clumped cottage cheese. Jell-O, flabby, melting, studded with strawberries. Celery, olives. **CHARLES SULLIVAN**, 43, dapper, disheveled slightly, watery gin-and-tonic gone mostly flat in a smudged lowball glass. Picking up scattered papers. Tosses a glance back at Otto.

CHARLES SULLIVAN

Otto Frank.

He twists, extends a hand. Otto, caught off-guard by his directness, takes it. Charles shakes, brisk, abrupt.

CHARLES SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

Charles Sullivan.

Otto stands. Unsure where, or if, to sit. Charles grimaces, drags a smeary typewritten contract from a soggy ringlet on the tabletop. He glances back at Otto.

CHARLES SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

Sit anywhere.

Otto, eyes raking across the chairs. Left jumbled, disorganized. Vacated. Napkins left strewn several of them. Not at all what he was expecting. Sullivan reshuffles the paperwork. Pushes out a breath. Dumps it in another chair.

He retrieves his gin-and-tonic from the table. Squints through the foggy glass. Grimaces. Mostly water. Casts around for a bottle. Tosses a glance at Otto as he draws to the credenza.

CHARLES SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

They tell me you came over from
Holland.

OTTO FRANK

Amsterdam. Yes.

CHARLES SULLIVAN

We saw pictures, of course, during
the war. The devastation.

Sullivan sloshes generous pours of Gordon's gin into his smeary lowball, a second glass for Otto.

CHARLES SULLIVAN (CONT'D)
Ned Bradford tells me half of London
is still rubble.

He offers Otto a glass. Otto, no choice, accepts it.

CHARLES SULLIVAN (CONT'D)
I hear that you met with him.

OTTO FRANK
Mr. Bradford was quite enthusiastic
about the Diary.

CHARLES SULLIVAN
And so here you are.

Otto meets his gaze. Sullivan lifts his glass. A toast. He
takes a sizable swallow of gin. Gestures at the chairs.

CHARLES SULLIVAN (CONT'D)
Sit. Please.

Otto sits. Sullivan does as well. Takes another drink. Settles
appraising eyes on Otto.

CHARLES SULLIVAN (CONT'D)
It's a remarkable book. Reading it,
I felt transported to that miserable
Annex.

Otto blanches slightly. Gin glass sweating in his hands.

CHARLES SULLIVAN (CONT'D)
I simply wonder if that is what
readers want.

Sullivan, slight flicker of a smirk, takes in the festooned
room with a gesture.

CHARLES SULLIVAN (CONT'D)
Americans, as you can see, are in
good spirits. It is an optimistic
time. We saw evil, and we sent our
boys over, and they fought it and
they vanquished it, and they won.
They have come home. They want to
enjoy themselves. Be heroes. Not
return to purgatory.

OTTO FRANK
Small acts of heroism took place
every day during the occupation.
Even if they did not capture
headlines.

Sullivan, smirk hardening. Sits forward in his chair.

CHARLES SULLIVAN

And so we arrive at the agenda of the enterprise.

Otto, genuinely perplexed.

OTTO FRANK

There was no agenda. It was not written as a manuscript, after the fact. She did not believe anyone outside of herself would ever read it.

Sullivan skewers Otto with a hard, penetrating stare. Otto stares back at him, confused.

CHARLES SULLIVAN

The cadence, the diction, the insights. They seem rather more those of a father than a little girl. Wouldn't you say?

OTTO FRANK

My only role in the process was to transcribe it.

He unzips the leather portfolio. Wiggles out the DIARY.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

These are her original notebooks. In her handwriting. See for yourself.

CHARLES SULLIVAN

And so. If these are the girl's notebooks, where is the girl?

Otto stares at him. Appalled.

OTTO FRANK

She is dead.

Sullivan, blind-sided. Words hanging in the air.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

My daughter is dead.

He pushes out a ragged breath. Trembling. Unexpectedly overtaken by the profound, inescapable reality of it.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

I am sorry you found no meaning in her account of her life.

He pushes back from the table. Gathers the notebooks.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

I will show myself out.

INT. BEDROOM, BOSTON GATEWAY HOTEL -- EVENING

Otto sits in dusky stillness. Weak light, falling fast, spilling in through the window. Washing through the smeary, steamed glass, frost. Flaking windowsill, brittle, yellowed windowshade. Wallpaper peeling. Wood footers, crown molding, scratched-up and worn. Inky shadows puddling in the corners of the room. Smearing out across the weather-beaten carpet.

He peels off his glasses. Peers toward the window. Bleary haze of fluttering snowflakes flitting idly by. Newspapers slumped on the banged-up end table beside the sash. *"Snowfall Brings City to Virtual Standstill."* *"66 Die in Wyoming Plane Crash."* *"Communist Troops From North Korea Invade US-Sponsored South Area."* He gazes foggily at the headlines. Defeat pitting his glassy eyes. The world has moved on.

LATER:

Otto sits at the cramped writing desk. Window now a black wedge, steamed opaque. Dim lamp switched on beside the bed. Washing yellowed warmth across the room. He drags the nib of his pen, scribbling out a TELEGRAM on a faded Western Union card. *No from L,B. Nothing from Doubleday. Home soon. Otto.*

He draws back. Regards his own smudged handwriting.

Eyes sticking on *Doubleday*.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTRYWAY, WEST VILLAGE APARTMENT -- DAWN

Alice, hair disheveled, last night's rumpled red cocktail dress, lipstick smudged, eyes hazed with an early-morning hangover, pushes in through the front door. Heels clapping on the bare hardwood floor. She stumbles. Drops her KEYS with a loud CLATTER.

Winces. Bends to collect them. Drawing up, she pushes the door shut as softly as she can. Twists back -

- leans guiltily to the mouth of the hall. Squints. Eyes sticking on the narrow sliver of light already leaking out from beneath Barbara's bedroom door.

INT. BARBARA'S BEDROOM, WEST VILLAGE APARTMENT -- DAWN

Barbara hunches at the desk in a puddle of weak morning light. Eyes bleary. Shadowed. Darting across the final SENTENCES of typescript on the last page of the MANUSCRIPT. Drawing to a halt. Eyes fixed on the last words of the final entry, dated August 1, 1944:

"Finally I twist my heart round again, so that the bad is on the outside and the good is on the inside - I do this to protect myself - as I keep on trying to find a way of becoming

what I would so like to be, and I could be, if there weren't any Nazis living in the world. Yours, Anne M. Frank."

She blinks. Sits back in the wooden chair. Rocked. Emotionally spent. Unable, for a moment, to move. She pushes out a ragged breath. Gaze settling on the framed PHOTOGRAPH of *her sister's wedding, her beaming parents, the happy family*, sequestered among the piled papers cluttering the desk.

She becomes aware of the crisp autumn light washing in through the window. Morning. Bed covers neatly tucked away, untouched. She has not slept. Hair disheveled. Sleeping gown hastily thrown on, now rumpled.

She peels off her glasses. Eyes, hazy, fogged, distant, settling on the PHOTOGRAPH of Anne, shy smile, mischievous eyes. Junior editors' REPORT stapled through the cover page. All three PASSES.

She stares at them. Drags her eyes toward the hard, shearing morning light. Potted orchid, brought home, catching the sun in a peach-colored glow.

INT. OFFICE BULLPEN, DOUBLEDAY & CO. -- AFTERNOON

Heels clacking, wending her way through the metal desks, chattering IBM TYPEWRITERS, ringing telephones, TYPING GIRLS, headphones plugged into Dictaphone machines, Barbara draws up at the desk of Cora, blonde, now 24, formerly a fellow TYPING GIRL.

TELEPHONE pressed to her ear. Wire-frame INBOX, OUTBOX planted at the edge of her desk. Manila envelopes sandwiched beside a slurry of loose papers, IBM Typewriter, enamel ashtray.

Barbara, manuscript tucked under her arm, eyes fixed on the frosted glass office door. Hard black stenciled lettering, *Donald Black, Editor*. Cora, scribbling a note on a carbon paper call slip replaces the telephone in its cradle.

Barbara, ignored, clears her throat.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

Is he in?

Cora tosses a glance at her. Resentful. Shimmying a bulging file out of the cabinet.

CORA

He's not available, I'm sorry.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

I have something for him.

Cora draws back from the file cabinet. Manila folder in hand. Settles a hard, icy, penetrating gaze on Barbara.

CORA
He's asked not to be disturbed.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN
Until when?

CORA
Until after the holiday.

Cora flips open the manila folder, peels back the cover page. Groping for a pencil. Knees the file cabinet shut.

Barbara pushes the rumpled MANUSCRIPT at her. Fresh COVER LETTER affixed to the top.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN
Please see that he gets this. It's important.

Cora pushes a flat line of a smile at her.

CORA
I'll certainly do what I can, *Ms. Zimmerman.*

Barbara, hardening. Draws back. Gaze dragging to his DOOR.

INT. DONALD BLACK'S OFFICE, DOUBLEDAY & CO. -- CONTINUOUS

Donald Black, hunched at the mahogany desk. Tie undone, Oxford shirt unbuttoned, sleeves rolled up. Rumpled PAPERS besieging the IBM TYPEWRITER. Smearly high-ball glass, mostly empty puddle of scotch. He JOLTS, looks abruptly up as -

- Barbara pushes in through the door. Cora shoving to her feet behind her. Manila folder fluttering, spilling papers across the floor beneath her desk. Donald looks to Cora.

DONALD BLACK
What is the meaning of this?

CORA
I'm sorry, Mr. Black, she just barged right past me.

Barbara pushes the MANUSCRIPT at him.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN
You asked me to bring you something that we can publish. I have found it.

He regards her. Eyes flicking to the accordion of smashed, dog-eared pages. He twists in his chair. Reaches to take it from her. Flipping back the top sheets, stapled letters. Halting on the JUNIOR EDITORS' REPORTS. He scowls.

DONALD BLACK

My editors have passed on this already.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

Your editors are wrong.

He looks sharply up at her. Flicker of a condescending smile. She balks for a moment under the force of his gaze. Slouches back in his chair. Assesses her. Reaches for the smudged glass of scotch.

DONALD BLACK

You have better judgment than two Harvard graduates and an Oxford Rhodes Scholar?

She summons her courage, steels herself.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

I have a better perspective on the material.

He throws back the last of the whiskey.

DONALD BLACK

Well thank God we have you then. What would Doubleday do without the visionary insights of Barbara Zimmerman?

Barbara, flushing. Cora, a smug, steely presence in the doorway behind her.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

If you read it and you feel that I am wrong then you may have my letter of resignation on Monday morning.

He meets her gaze. Smirks. Dumps the DIARY MANUSCRIPT into the overflowing wire-frame INBOX beside the telephone.

DONALD BLACK

You may as well spend the weekend packing up your desk.

INT. RECEPTION, DOUBLEDAY & CO. -- AFTERNOON

Otto stands at the vast steamed window. Gazes outward. Snowflakes swirling, fluttering in a curtain across the rambling trenched infinity of Manhattan. Penn Station, spire of the Chrysler Building spearing at the winter sky. Pill-shaped Checker Model A3 TAXI CABS honking, troughing through the snow already slushing the street far below. Bustling umbrellas, New Yorkers scurrying through the blizzard.

He flicks a glance back at **DAWN**, 23, the receptionist, elegant, blonde, perfect ruby lips, on the TELEPHONE.

Dwarfed by her walnut desk, wire-frame inbox and outbox jammed with courier envelopes, loosely-bound manuscripts. Woodgrain walls washed by the brittle winter light. Two gray-linen Danish sofas facing each other. Glass-topped coffee table neatly arrayed with red-and-white Publisher's Weekly, grinning BRUNETTE WOMAN on the black-and-white cover of Life Magazine, "*UCLA Homecoming Queen Allyn Smith.*"

He glances at the George Nelson metal starburst WALL CLOCK on the woodgrain wall. TELEPHONE ringing again. Dawn, besieged, scoops it up, listens, looks over as a second telephone RINGS. He pushes out a breath. Turns back.

Eyes sticking on the Doubleday Catalogue laid out on the glass coffee table. He stoops, picks it up. Leafs it open. Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles*. Isaac Asimov's *Pebble in the Sky*. Donald Black's PHOTOGRAPH in black-and-white.

DAWN (O.S.)

Mr. Frank?

He looks up. She is cupping the telephone.

DAWN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Mr. Black will need to reschedule your appointment. He sends his regrets.

Otto pushes out a breath. Flips the catalogue shut. Replaces it on the stack of magazines. Draws toward her desk.

OTTO FRANK

What time would better suit him?

DAWN

His office suggested the week of January 8th.

He is caught off-guard. Reeling.

OTTO FRANK

I must return to Boston on Monday. Is there no possibility that he could perhaps make time tomorrow?

DAWN

The office is closed tomorrow.

He peers at her through fogged glasses. Not understanding.

OTTO FRANK

It is Thursday.

DAWN

It's Thanksgiving.

Exhaustion weighing. Futility. He peels off his glasses.

OTTO FRANK

Has he even read the manuscript?

She fixes him with an appraising stare. Eyes sticking on his ragged wool coat. Trousers worn at the knees. Shabby shoes.

DAWN

Did he request it?

INT. ELEVATOR, DOUBLEDAY & CO. -- MOMENTS LATER

Airless warmth. Cramped. Woodgrain walls splashed with sallow fluorescent light. Otto stands, hollowed. Exhausted. OPERATOR, 67, white-haired, creased black skin, immaculate tasseled uniform, his back turned to Otto, consummately silent, weary eyes resting on the brass Otis Elevator plaque. Reaching to drag the inner scissor gate shut. Halts as -

Jason Epstein, flushed in the face, slightly disheveled, narrowly slips inside. **WALTER I. BRADBURY**, 35, thick glasses, ducking in behind him. Nods to the Operator as he pulls the rattling gate shut.

Elevator descending. Bradbury gazes upward at the cast iron floor indicator, arrow gradually dragging downward. Pushes out a breath. Frowns. Cocks his neck. Kink in it. Rakes his fingers through his hair. Crackling gold wrapper, Jason, fumbling with a Sen-Sen breath mint, red package jammed into his tweed coat pocket.

Bradbury smirks. Jason self-conscious. Wiggles the mint out. Pushes it into his mouth. Balls the wrapper back into his coat pocket. Bradbury, smile flickering at his lips. Unscrews the cap of a small steel hip flask. Takes a sizable pull. Winces. Swallows it down. Offers it to Jason. Jason shakes his head.

WALTER I. BRADBURY

Live a little, kid. She never comes to these things anyway.

Jason flushes. Fidgets. Fumbling with his tie. Bradbury tosses a glance at Otto. Takes another swig from his flask. Sneers. Watching Jason fix his cufflinks.

WALTER I. BRADBURY (CONT'D)

Wait 'til he starts in about Asimov and the champagne's already run out.

Jason snorts. Otto, registering. Drags his gaze up.

INT. LOBBY FOYER, DOUBLEDAY & CO. -- MOMENTS LATER

Otto draws up to the window. Glazed with steam, dappled ice on the outside. Wrapping himself in his threadbare woolen coat as he stares out across the slushy street. Icy rain tickering against the glass. Eyes sticking on the bustling shapes of -

- Jason and Bradbury as they kick their way through the sleet and gathering snow toward the warm wash of orange light, steamed windows of the Hotel Pennsylvania, across West 32nd Street.

INT. DINING ROOM, CAFE ROUGE, HOTEL PENNSYLVANIA -- NIGHT

Otto draws into the cavernous, swimming warmth. Instantly overwhelmed. Haze of babbling voices, laughter. Flickering candlelight. White satin dresses, Brooks Brothers suits, dapper hair combed. Limestone walls, terra cotta tiles. Marble columns overhung by an antique wood-beam ceiling. Windows glazed with steam. Elegant white tablecloths, wine glasses, Dom Perignon champagne bottles iced in silver buckets.

Lilting string quartet set up beneath the alcove-cradled fountain. Glistening ice sculpture, carved in the shape of the canted anchor and dolphin, Doubleday's colophon.

Otto, glasses steamed, flushed in the face, woolen jacket flecked at the shoulders with melting ice, absorbs. Jason Epstein, Bradbury shimmying their way toward the bar.

MAITRE'D (O.S.)

Are you a guest of the party, sir?

He gives a start, turns. **MAITRE'D**, 46, thinning hair combed severely back. Mustache trimmed to a pencil line. Immaculate white starched tuxedo.

OTTO FRANK

I was looking for Mr. Donald Black.

The Maitre'd flicks a glance up and down him. Underdressed.

MAITRE'D

And you are?

OTTO FRANK

Otto Frank.

MAITRE'D

Right this way, Mr. Frank.

The Maitre'd rounds on his heels. Ducking officiously around a **YOUNG MAN** and **WOMAN** cradling foie gras canapés. Otto shuffling after him. Immersed all at once in -

Blossoming warmth, laughter, clattering silver cutlery. Plates puddled with buttery shirred eggs, oily chicken livers. Pearls, sweating gin fizz cocktails. Wending toward a -

- large round **TABLE** bathed in flickering candlelight. Flushed in the face, tie loosened, shirt unbuttoned, Donald Black, hunched over the greasy remnants of a tenderloin steak. Pan-fried Potatoes O'Brien. His **WIFE**, 28, a young slip of a girl, beside him, emerald dress, buzzed with gin. Frank Price, half a chicken picked mostly clean.

His WIFE, 47, thick-framed, sweet-faced, plucking at a crab-meat salad.

Otto, aware all at once of his appearance. The impropriety of being here. Maitre'd turning to him -

MAITRE'D (CONT'D)

Mr. Black, may I present Mr. Otto Frank.

Donald, reaching for the gummy gravy boat, nearly upsetting his Wife's sweating Rob Roy. Flicks a glance at Otto. Squints.

DONALD BLACK

I'm sorry, do we know each other?

Eyes of everyone at the table settling on him.

OTTO FRANK

I am afraid that we do not.

Donald draws back. Fixing Otto with a whiskey-fogged gaze.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

In truth, I do not entirely know why I have come here.

He settles his glassy gaze on the table. Grease-puddled plates. Sagging all at once beneath the futility of it.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

My daughter kept a diary during the occupation, in Amsterdam. I am fairly certain that you have rejected it.

Donald, souring. The Maitre'd, mortified, turns hastily back.

MAITRE'D

Mr. Black, my sincerest apologies, I assumed -

Otto, faraway now. A certain peace in the surrender.

OTTO FRANK

I had come here in the hope that I might convince you to reconsider. But I fear that I do not have the heart for it. To hear one more time how beautifully, utterly irrelevant her life was.

He pushes out a breath. Resigned.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

I suppose that I must accept what so many have tried to impress upon me: that the world does not care about one girl who died among millions.

Donald cuts a glance at the Maitre'd. The Maitre'd snaps to attention. Reaches. Takes Otto by the arm.

MAITRE'D

Mr. Frank, I must ask you to leave.

Otto stirs. Drags his focus back. Flicker of a sad smile.

OTTO FRANK

Yes. Of course.

He turns. Halts himself. The table still frozen. Silent. He rakes his eyes back to them.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

It was suggested to me once that there is a burden upon those of us who survived - to share the names and lives of those who did not. So that the world would know and would appreciate what had been lost. Not by us as Jews or by us as the Dutch or as Europeans. But as the human race. A life is lost in Auschwitz, a life is lost in New York City. Neither is more tragic than the other. What we have lost, you, also, have lost. My daughter's name was Anne Frank. I came here to share her with you. I have found, in fact, that doing so has been no burden at all. It has kept her alive.

He draws a ragged breath. Now utterly spent.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)

I am sorry to have interrupted your dinner.

Frank Price, gaze lingering upon him. Captivated.

INT. OFFICE BULLPEN, DOUBLEDAY & CO. -- LATE NIGHT

Blackness. Flickering, sputtering to life, fluorescent overhead lights washing, dully on. Paleness spilling down across jumbled metal desks, pushed together. IBM typewriters sheathed in vinyl dust covers. Telephones, slouching stacks of manila file folders. Desk fans, idle, lifeless. Desk chairs neatly pushed in. The office closed for the holiday weekend.

Frank Price, tuxedo shirt unbuttoned at the collar, bowtie undone, dangling loosely, peers across the room. Eyes settling on the frosted glass, STENCILED office door. *Donald Black, Editor.*

INT. DONALD BLACK'S OFFICE, DOUBLEDAY & CO. -- MOMENTS LATER

Price stands in the open doorway. Foggy fluorescent spilling in. Washing across two towering BOOKCASES, shelves bowing, jammed with MANUSCRIPTS, leather-bound books, loose papers. Dusty American flag, hazy old black-and-white PHOTOGRAPHS in frames. Price, his back to them, flipping through the jumbled pile of MANUSCRIPTS jammed in Donald Black's wire-frame INBOX.

He shuffles to the OUTBOX, "LOG & DISCARD," beside it. Flips past two heaping MANUSCRIPTS, loosely bound, weary dog-eared pages. Draws up short. Burrows his way between them. Wiggles out the MANUSCRIPT. Rumpled title page stapled with a COVER LETTER, smashed, peeling back to reveal the junior editors' REPORTS, all PASSES, beneath it. Wrinkled, creased PHOTOGRAPH. Anne. Haunting innocent smile. Life in her eyes.

He squints. Hefts it over into the wash of pale fluorescent. Presses flat the COVER LETTER stapled to the top. Eyes darting down the page. *"From: Barbara Zimmerman. Recommend strongly reconsider...a work that must be published...the voice of a lost generation."* He blinks. Pries back her letter. The junior editors' PASSES. The PHOTOGRAPH staring up at him. Beneath it, the title page.

"THE DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL BY ANNE FRANK."

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT PORCH, ZIMMERMAN HOME [WESTON, MASS.] -- NIGHT

Barbara stands, bathed in the pale glow of the porch light. Warm yellow-orange light leaking from the lace curtains, steamed windows. Patched-up rucksack slung over one shoulder, woolen winter coat bundled around her, she waits anxiously. Frigid wind swirling snowflakes, frozen rain, in across the doormat, aluminum box for the milkman. Jolting as -

- the crisp red front door pulls abruptly open. **HAROLD ZIMMERMAN**, 57, gray cardigan sweater, ironed slacks, halo of gray-white hair ruffled slightly, wine, dinner-table joke lingering in his eyes, draws up short. Blindsided.

Behind him, the plaster-walled corridor, curling staircase, wood-paneled dining room spilling warmth through the open doorway. Clattering plates, laughter, voices, a glimpse of her **MOTHER**, 52, in a flowery house dress, passing around a greasy plate of potatoes. Her **SISTER**, 27, face aglow beside her **HUSBAND**, 30, LAUGHING at a **COUSIN**, 7 holding up a forkful of stuffing. Thanksgiving dinner.

Barbara, emotion welling, overwhelmed, drops the stitched-up rucksack on the slatted wooden porch. Surges forward. Enveloping her father in a tight embrace. He stands for a moment. Caught off-guard. She clings to him. Eyes all at once moist.

Thawing, he sways forward. Hugs her back. Holds her. The two of them rocking back from the doorway.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM, SUNSHINE HOTEL [NEW YORK CITY] -- MORNING

Otto drags awake. Hard November sunlight in his eyes. Cutting through the shade pulled down over the grimy window. Razored brightness cutting across buckled floorboards, shabby armchair, worn through, bursting with stuffing. Banged-up bed. Murky, unclean sheets.

SUPER: "Monday."

He winces, brightness in his eyes. Pushes onto his back. Exhaustion weighing upon him. Rumpled flannel pajamas twisted, clinging to him. He gazes up at the ceiling. Sopping brown stains, water damage blistering the flaking paint, plaster. He lies for a moment. SOUNDS of the STREET below, honking taxi cabs, banging trash cans, shouting voices, leaking in through the window.

He pushes out a breath. Steaming in the frigid cold. Elbows his way up to a sitting position. Weary, fogged eyes, a glassy deadness to them, falling upon the cracked leather VALISE. Slouched in the armchair. Zipped up. Already packed. Leather PORTFOLIO, the MANUSCRIPT, resting on the chewed-up end table beside it. Eyes sticking on it. Etch of pain. Loss. Guilt.

He has failed her.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE BULLPEN, DOUBLEDAY & CO. -- MORNING

Hard, harsh fluorescent. Chattering typewriters, ringing telephones, bleary smear of secretaries' VOICES, metal file cabinet drawers, shuffling papers. Frank Price, rumpled, face flushed from the cold outside, overcoat, fedora flecked with melting ice, snowflakes, wending his way in. Tormented eyes falling on -

- Barbara, weary, just arriving, eyes shadowed with the anticipation, uncertainty, of facing Donald Black. Lifting her purse onto her desk. Manila envelopes jammed under one arm. Reaching to sift through the fresh slouching pile of them waiting in the wire-frame inbox.

FRANK PRICE

Zimmerman.

Barbara, squinting through her glasses at the top submission. Flicks a sharp glance up. Disoriented. Price cocks his head.

FRANK PRICE (CONT'D)

Walk with me.

INT. CORRIDOR, DOUBLEDAY & CO. -- MOMENTS LATER

Wingtip shoes snapping, squelching wetly on the tiled floor, Price, keeping his pace, eyes dragging over the wood-paneled walls, framed PORTRAITS of Herman Melville, Frank Nelson Doubleday, Doubleday & Co. co-founder Samuel McClure. Elegant mahogany OFFICE DOORS.

FRANK PRICE

You've been with us, what, three years?

Barbara, fumbling, caught off-guard, envelopes still tucked under her arm. Uncertain whether she is in trouble.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

Four years and three months. This past August.

Price nods to Walter I. Bradbury, hung-over, rumpled, ducking into the frosted-glass door of the men's room. Twists back.

Pushes a rumpled MANUSCRIPT at Barbara. Flustered, she takes it. Eyes sticking on the title page. She slows. *THE DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL*.

FRANK PRICE

I imagine that looks familiar to you.

She falters. Dread welling. He rakes a glance at her.

FRANK PRICE (CONT'D)

You did recommend it?

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

I did, Mr. Price.

FRANK PRICE

It was submitted to Donald Black.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

I stumbled upon it. In the mailroom. I couldn't put it down.

She steels herself. Expecting the worst.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)

Has he spoken to you about it?

He flicks a glance over his shoulder. Unreadable. Slowing. Double doors, oak paneled ahead of them.

FRANK PRICE

You are aware that all three of Mr. Black's junior editors rejected it.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

Yes. I am aware of that.

He draws at last to a halt. Rounding on her. She shifts. Nervous. Envelopes slipping under her arm. She reseats them. Blanches. His piercing eyes upon her.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)

I felt it was a voice that I had never heard before. And one that needs to be heard.

He stares levelly at her. She affords him a timid glance. Chagrined. Flushing in the face. Poised to be fired.

FRANK PRICE

I happen to agree with you.

Barbara, blind-sided. He resumes walking. Toward the double doors. She hastens after him. Trying to keep up.

FRANK PRICE (CONT'D)

I'm late for a meeting with Donald Black and Nelson Doubleday. You are the reason that I am late.

She chokes. Nearly trips.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

I'm sorry. I - don't understand.

He draws up to the doors. Rounds on her once more. Skewering her with a hard, penetrating stare.

FRANK PRICE

Do you believe in this manuscript?

She gulps. Summons her courage.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

I do. With all my heart.

Price, the faintest tug of a smile. Pride.

FRANK PRICE

Good. Now you must fight for it.

He reaches. Grasps the polished brass doorknob. Twists. Tugs it open. Barbara, reeling, no choice but to follow him in.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, DOUBLEDAY & CO. -- MOMENTS LATER

Murky haze of cigarette smoke. Glazed by cold November morning light. Falling in across polished oak-panel walls. Mahogany bookcases. Each shelf neatly filled with leather-bound Doubleday hardcover first editions. Melville's *Moby Dick*. Rudyard Kipling. Vladimir Nabokov's *Bend Sinister*.

Hunched at the polished conference table, **NELSON DOUBLEDAY**, 61, hawklike, suit jacket shucked off, vest, tie, bristling mustache, glasses, his messy hair catching the buttery morning light. Cigarette twisting blue smoke between his fingers.

Donald Black, slouched in the chair beside him, pasty, jowly, pressing at the dog-eared corner of a budget document. Twists in his wheezing chair to glance back as Frank Price steps into the room. Pale sunlight glinting in his glasses. Barbara, stiff, mortified, at his heels.

Donald, a tug of a smirk. Eyes raking over Frank.

DONALD BLACK

He lives and breathes after all.

Price pushes a flat smile at him. Donald, twisting back, tosses a sneer at Doubleday.

DONALD BLACK (CONT'D)

I told Nelson we had likely lost you to the chocolate cream pie.

NELSON DOUBLEDAY

Morning, Frank.

FRANK PRICE

Good morning.

Donald, steely gaze settling on Barbara. Hardening.

DONALD BLACK

You can just leave the letter on my desk, sweetheart.

Price, dragging back a high-backed leather chair. Glances back at her.

FRANK PRICE

Actually, I asked Ms. Zimmerman to join us this morning.

Donald, skewers her with a glare. Doubleday squints through his glasses at the meeting agenda. Perplexed.

NELSON DOUBLEDAY

Have we need for a typist?

FRANK PRICE

We had an unexpected guest at the party on Wednesday night.

He drags his gaze to Donald. Buttery brightness streaming in around him. Donald scowls at him.

FRANK PRICE (CONT'D)

He made quite an impassioned argument for a manuscript that he had submitted on behalf of his daughter.

DONALD BLACK

It was an embarrassment.

FRANK PRICE

I was sufficiently intrigued to seek out the manuscript. Only to find as it happens that Ms. Zimmerman had recommended it.

Donald rakes his burning eyes back to Barbara. Livid.

DONALD BLACK

You went behind my back.

She stands rooted, skewered. Doubleday squints at her. Not understanding.

FRANK PRICE

She made such a convincing argument that I was compelled to read it over the holiday.

He twists in his chair.

FRANK PRICE (CONT'D)

I thought it only fair to allow her to explain her position to us.

Barbara rooted to the spot. Speechless. Donald, seething. Rakes a glance at Doubleday.

DONALD BLACK

It is a treatise on women's issues. A book for women. It bored me to tears.

Barbara is stung. Goaded. Lurching all at once out of her -

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

It's not just for women.

Donald squints back at her.

DONALD BLACK

The author is a fourteen-year-old girl.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

A book that is authored by a woman does not have to appeal only to women. I have read plenty of books written by men.

Doubleday grunts.

NELSON DOUBLEDAY

I should hope that you have. Last I was aware, we are not in the habit of retaining editors unfamiliar with the literary canon.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

This book belongs in the literary canon.

Donald snorts, reaches for his cigarette. Scornful.

DONALD BLACK

I fear her emotions may be getting the better of her.

Barbara takes a step forward. Prodded. Spurned by this prig.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

There is no doubt in my mind that this will be the most important book to come out of the War.

Donald, lifting his cigarette, nearly chokes.

DONALD BLACK

What does a woman know about war?

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

How to survive it.

Doubleday, poised, also, to curtail this carnival, arrested. Intrigued. Donald tosses a glance at him. Impatient.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)

A woman knows how to bear witness to atrocity and emerge with a deeper understanding, not of despair but of the good that evil evokes in good people. A woman knows that to change the world is not a matter simply of defeating an opponent, but of supplanting his malevolence with beauty and forgiveness and acceptance.

Donald scoffs, pushes out a smoky breath.

DONALD BLACK

These are girlish fantasies.

Barbara, bristling, defiant.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

At fourteen, this girl understood that her life was not defined by
(MORE)

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)

what happened to her or what other people told her that she was worth but by what she did with her time and how she affected everyone around her. She has inspired me. She has shown me a new way of seeing the world. If we do not consider that worth publishing, then I would suggest we are not worthy of considering ourselves stewards of literature.

Price, watching her, pride flickering in his eyes.

Doubleday, impassive. Expressionless. Eyes shifting from her to the crumpled MANUSCRIPT. Lingered. Drags his gaze to Price.

NELSON DOUBLEDAY

You've read the book?

FRANK PRICE

I have.

NELSON DOUBLEDAY

And you share Ms. Zimmerman's assessment?

Price flicks a glance back up at her. Flushed in the face.

FRANK PRICE

I do.

Doubleday regards him. Barbara. The MANUSCRIPT. Donald, incredulous that it is even being considered.

DONALD BLACK

Mark my words. If we were to publish this book, it would sell exactly three copies in the world: hers, the girl's, and her father's.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

The girl perished. In Bergen-Belsen. So did her sister. Her mother, in Auschwitz.

Donald, sneer hardening slightly. Barbara, eyes settled on the MANUSCRIPT.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)

That diary is all that remains of them.

Doubleday watches her. Her eyes glinting, moist, reflecting back the morning light. He drags his gaze to Price.

Price watches him. Doubleday, considering.

NELSON DOUBLEDAY
 (to Frank Price)
 You backed a costly failure for us.
 You backed two, in fact.

Price does not deny it. Donald's smug gaze settling back on him.

NELSON DOUBLEDAY (CONT'D)
 When my father started this company
 in 1897, he used to say: One failure
 is an aberration. Two is a pattern.
 Three is cause for a change in
 strategy.

Price meets his gaze again. Doubleday holds it.

NELSON DOUBLEDAY (CONT'D)
 You are willing to stake your career
 on this manuscript.

Barbara, flickering alarm. Not how she intended for this to go.

FRANK PRICE
 I am.

Understanding between both men. What is on the line.

NELSON DOUBLEDAY
 Then we will try your strategy for a
 third time.

He drags his gaze up to Barbara. She stands, light-headed.

NELSON DOUBLEDAY (CONT'D)
 Congratulations, Ms. Zimmerman. You
 have a book to edit.

Barbara, reeling. Price smiles at her. Warm. Genuine. Donald, stewing, shakes his head.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN
 Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Doubleday.
 Mr. Price. I don't - quite know what
 to say.

NELSON DOUBLEDAY
 You may start by contacting the father
 to make a formal offer.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN
 Yes. Of course. Yes. I'll do that.
 Thank you.

CUT TO:

INT. 1950 CHECKER A3 TAXICAB -- MORNING

Otto gazes with dull, vacant eyes out through the window. Dirty slush, clumped snow. Umbrellas, New Yorkers, splashing by in soaked boots, trenchcoats. A GIRL, 8, yellow rubber galoshes, skipping her way from one frozen puddle to another. Ragged HOMELESS WOMAN, 76, white-haired, wrapped in a filthy tarpaulin, dragging a rattling metal cart. Sleet flecking her leathery face. Ignored by the bustling FAMILIES around her.

Otto watches her. Sorrow welling. Hardship endured everywhere. Suffering. Indifference. He draws back from the window. Eyes of the DRIVER fixed on him in the hazy rear-view MIRROR. Awaiting instruction. Nowhere left to go.

OTTO FRANK
Pennsylvania Station, please.

He twists, peers back out the foggy rear windshield. Trench of high-rises cutting away, infinite. Chevrolet, Ford Custom Deluxe coupe, Checker cabs HONKING. Eyes catching on -

- the red jacket, cap of the HOTEL BELLBOY as he dashes out into the rain. Frantically casts up and down the street. Waves. Calling out. Otto, taken-aback. Turns forward in his seat.

OTTO FRANK (CONT'D)
Wait.

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, DOUBLEDAY & CO. -- LATER / DAY

Otto stands at the window. Crisp November sunlight washing in across him. Hard-edged. He gazes out. Eyes distant, hollowed. Reflecting back the narrow spire of the Empire State Building. Street below sheathed in ice and snow. Expression unreadable. Frown etching his brow. Behind him, hands clasped, uncertain -

- Barbara stands beside a high-backed leather chair. Tense. Watches him. Framed in the slashing sunlight. Hunched slightly. Tired. Burdened.

Barbara, tormented, unable to hold it in any longer.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN
Have you already promised it to
another publisher?

Otto stirs. Drags his gaze from the soupy midday glare. He turns. Shuffling. Drags weary eyes at last to her. Taut-faced. Earnest. Barbara, spurred by his silence.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)

We were born only ten months apart -
she and I. Did you know that?

He gazes at her. Taken off-guard.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)

I felt, when I read her diary, that
I had gained a friend. One much
brighter than I.

Barbara, a flicker of a rueful smile. Otto, rooted with
emotion. She avoids his gaze.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)

Even now, it does not seem as though
she is gone. She is alive in the
pages of that book. All I have to do
to visit her is open it and start
reading.

He expels a ragged breath. Moist eyes flickering. Welling up
out of him. She meets his gaze at last.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)

Your daughter's work is luminous. It
is a testament to all that is good
in the human spirit. You must let us
publish it. It would be a travesty
for it to be locked away in a drawer.
It must be published. For the good
of everyone.

Otto, thick-voiced. Trembling. Lump in his throat. Strains
to speak.

OTTO FRANK

You will publish it in its entirety?
You will not let them harm her?

She smiles. Her own eyes stinging. Understands.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

I will guard her words with my life.
I promise you.

He surges forward. Hugs her. She totters backward. Enveloped
in emotion. He clings to her. Tears welling in his eyes.
Weight at last lifting.

OTTO FRANK

Thank you.

She wraps her arms around him. Hugs him back.

CUT TO:

INT. MAIN OFFICE, OPEKTA JAM FACTORY -- AFTERNOON

Miep hunches at her desk, flipping through carbon-paper invoices. Haze of cigarette smoke. Chattering typewriters. Telephones ringing. Shuffling files. Bep, pregnant now, arms loaded down with crumpled envelopes, invoices, letters, shuffles through the stack. Presses a TELEGRAM card at Miep.

Miep, squinting through her glasses at a column of numbers, flicks a glance up. Etch of a frown. Eyes sticking on it. She reaches. Drags it toward her. Reads it.

"DOUBLEDAY TO PUBLISH DIARY IN AMERICA. OTTO."

Miep stares. Overcome with a tide of emotion. Flicker of a smile even as her eyes well with stinging tears. She sits back in her wheezing chair. Smile spreading. Warmth, happiness, washing over her.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOURTH [PARK] AVE., STRAND BOOKSTORE [NEW YORK] -- DAY

Otto stands at the broad plate window. TRAFFIC surging around him. Muggy warmth. NEW YORKERS brusquely slipping back and forth. He is fleshier, slightly, in the face. Eased, relaxed. Eyes no longer shadowed. He gazes past his own smeary reflection. Through the window at -

- ANNE FRANK. Her FACE, PHOTOGRAPH beaming from a DOZEN copies of *The Diary of a Young Girl*, positioned on a large mahogany table by the front entrance.

SUPER: "June 16, 1952."

A MAN, 36, blond, crisp white polo shirt, stands reading a copy. His DAUGHTER, 13, skinny, dark brown hair, bright green eyes, beside him, reading another copy. DOZENS of other PEOPLE crowding the store. All reading copies of the DIARY. More jostling in the LINE that stretches out the smudged glass door, pushing away down the BLOCK. Half the world has come out to read her words.

INT. SECOND FLOOR BALCONY, STRAND BOOKSTORE -- CONTINUOUS

Barbara stands at the banister overlooking the sales floor. Yellow sun dress, warmth flushing her face. Sunlight streaming through the hazy windows, washing across the HUBBUB of CUSTOMERS jamming the tiny bookshop floor. Turns as -

- Jason Epstein, rumpled Oxford shirt loosened at the collar, draws up beside her. Flicks a timid glance at her. Peers down. Awed by the size of the crowd.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

They're sending couriers to Garden City for more copies. They've sold out already.

JASON EPSTEIN

You must be so proud.

Barbara, slight flicker of a frown at that.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

I'm proud of her.

JASON EPSTEIN

It couldn't have happened without you.

She looks over at him. Touched by that. Surprised. He offers her a shy smile.

JASON EPSTEIN (CONT'D)

Congratulations, Ms. Zimmerman.

She stares at him, moved. He flushes, looks back down at the crowd. She continues to watch him.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN

Barbara.

He flicks a bashful glance back at her.

BARBARA ZIMMERMAN (CONT'D)

Call me Barbara.

He smiles in spite of himself. Does not look away.

EXT. FOURTH [PARK] AVE., STRAND BOOKSTORE -- CONTINUOUS

Otto, at the window, deeply, profoundly moved. Eyes dragging back to his own reflection. Ghost of FOURTH AVENUE, churning Checker taxicabs, diesel buses, smearing by behind him. Crisscrossing pedestrians. He flicks one last glance at the churning PEOPLE inside the bookstore. Anne's face everywhere.

He draws away. Squints upward. Across the ruddy towers of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. PEDESTRIANS bustling all around him. Hard summer sunlight glinting in the windows high overhead. Crisp blue sky. Sun piercing through wispy clouds. Life. Everywhere.

Otto takes it in. Absorbing it. Smiles. Unreserved. Unburdened. Smiles the way Anne would have smiled if she stood here with him. Seeing it through her eyes.

This grand, beautiful place.

CUT TO BLACK.

POSTSCRIPT: *First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt wrote the introduction to the first edition of Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl. She deemed it, "One of the wisest and most moving commentaries on war and its impact on human beings that I have ever read."*

*

POSTSCRIPT: The initial print run of 5,000 copies sold out hours after hitting shelves. A second printing of 15,000 sold out within a day. It would go on to sell more than 35 million copies in 67 languages, becoming the most successful autobiography of all time.

*

POSTSCRIPT: The publication of Anne Frank's Diary launched Barbara Zimmerman's career. She went on to co-found The New York Review of Books, where she remained an editor for 43 years. She married Jason Epstein in 1953.

*

POSTSCRIPT: Miep Gies lived to the age of 100. She passed away in 2010, survived by her son, Paul, daughter-in-law, Lucie, and three grandchildren.

*

POSTSCRIPT: Otto Frank married former neighbor Elfriede Geiringer in 1953. He dedicated his life to fighting those who challenged the authenticity of the diary and deniers of the Holocaust. He died in 1980 at the age of 91.

*

POSTSCRIPT: The factory at 263 Prinsengracht where Anne and her family took refuge still stands today, and is visited by more than one million people every year.

*

"Of the multitude who throughout history have spoken for human dignity in times of great suffering and loss, no voice is more compelling than that of Anne Frank."

- John F. Kennedy



Otto, Anne, Edith, and Margot Frank



Miep Gies

Jan Gies

Anne's Diary



Anne writing at her desk, "Dear Kitty..."



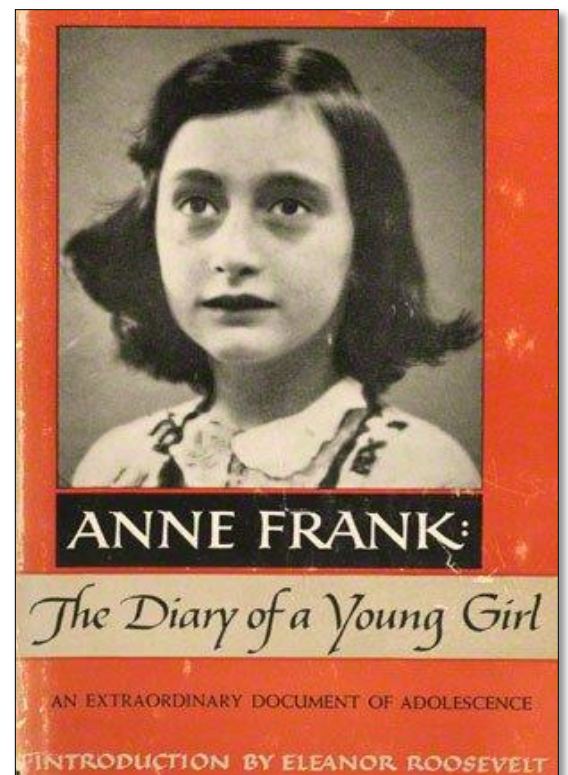
Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp (Germany)



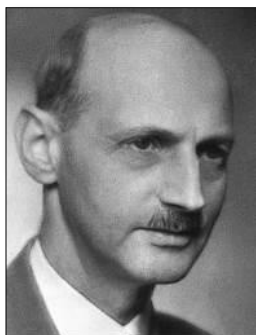
Jason Epstein & Barbara Zimmerman



Barbara Zimmerman Epstein (circa 1970)



Doubleday's First Edition of the Diary (1952)



Otto Frank (circa 1950)

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