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Dramatic Publishing

Anne Frank & Me



70-minute version

Drama by Cherie Bennett
Story by Cherie Bennett with Jeff Gottesfeld

Anne Frank & Me

70-minute version

“Remarkable. As heartbreaking as it is ingenious.” —*The Tennessean*

“A triumph.” —*New Times*, Kansas City

“Packs a fresh, solid punch. The audience was swept up into the story.” —*Sun Newspapers*

“A masterpiece.” —*The Observer*, Nashville

Comedy/Drama. By Cherie Bennett. Story by Cherie Bennett with Jeff Gottesfeld. *Cast: 4m., 6w. (expandable).* This multiple national award-winning American classic, which was a hit in New York, is about the awakening of a modern teen Holocaust denier. Nicole Burns doubts the truth and cares even less, but ultimately comes face to face with the hell of the Holocaust, and—in an extraordinary sequence—meets Anne Frank on a cattle car to Auschwitz. We start out with Nicole in today’s teen world of MTV. Hip-hop dancing, unfinished homework assignments, and young love are all transported with her to Nazi-occupied Paris, 1942 to 1944, and then are brought forward again to the light and hope of the present. *Simple set. Approximate running time: 70 minutes. Code: A67.*

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ph: 800-448-7469



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ANNE FRANK & ME

A play for multigenerational audiences—

(70-Minute Version)

By

CHERIE BENNETT

With

JEFF GOTTFELD

The writing of this play was supported by the first
Sholom Aleichem Playwriting Commission,
Shalom Theatre, Nashville, Tennessee



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(ANNE FRANK & ME
70-Minute Version)

ISBN: 978-1-58342-678-4

**For my grandfather, Joseph Ozur,
former National Patriotic Instructor, Jewish War
Veterans, who taught me,
and for his family, who died. I remember—**

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Anne Frank & Me premiered on April 29, 1996, at the Shalom Theatre, Jewish Community Center of Nashville, Tennessee, under the direction of Cherie Bennett. Jeff Gottesfeld, Esq., and Shalom Theatre, producers.

CAST

Nicole Burns/Nicole Bernhardt	Melissa Burnett
Little Bit/Liz-Bette	Cara Himmelfarb
Mimi	Jennie Smith
Suzanne	Kate Pride
Chrissy/Christina	Sarah Fuchs
David	Andy Delicata
David's sister	Amanda Lane
Scott	Zack Kopels
Jason	Yoni Limor
Lisa	Rachel Levy
Hope	Sarah Norris
Eydie.....	Jennifer Worden
Sean/Storm trooper	Addison Pate
Jack/Jacques	Jack Chambers
Mary Burns.....	Becky Cahen
John Urkin/Jean Bernhardt	David Winton
Renée Zooms/Renée Bernhardt	Layne Sasser
Anne Frank	Amy Lane
Choreography	Pam Atha
“Rock” Hatikva	Sam Lorber, Stacy Worthington, Doug Shawe
Stage Manager	Nancy Dorfman
Lights	Chip Weinstein
Producers	Bryan Cahen, Jeff Gottesfeld
Crew	Pat Lydon, Melissa Williams, Becky Haas

Note: This large-cast production added roles in order to involve additional young people.

ANNE FRANK & ME

(70-Minute Version)

Although ten cast members are indicated, the show can be produced with more actors by adding additional teens, depending on the needs of the producer, as indicated here. In all cases, teen and pre-teen roles may be played by adults who look young, or by teens. Doubling suggestions are indicated here.

NICOLE BURNS / NICOLE BERNHARDT.....	14-16
LITTLE BIT BURNS / LIZ-BETTE BERNHARDT	10-12
MIMI BAKER / MIMI POULIN	14-16
SUZANNE LEE / SUZANNE LEBEAU	14
Recommended double for ANNE FRANK	
CHRISSY GULLET / CHRISTINA GOULET.....	14
Possible double for MARY BURNS	
ANNE FRANK.....	15
Possible double for MARY BURNS	
JACK POLIN / JACQUES POULIN	14-16
DAVID BERG / DAVID GINSBERG	14-16
RENÉE B. ZOOMS / RENÉE BERNHARDT	40-50
JOHN URKIN / JEAN BERNHARDT	40-55
JASON.....	14
MARY BURNS.....	35-45
Possible double for ANNE FRANK	

TIME AND PLACE

In the present: a middle-class American suburb.

In the past: Nazi-occupied Paris, 1942-1944.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

- A study guide has been created for teachers and leaders of school, church, synagogue, and other youth groups who attend a performance. Contact the publisher for more information.
- Historical notes and a note on accuracy appear at the end of the playbook.
- Pre-show Music, Intermission Lobby Display, and Set: pre-show music should be current rock and rap music played loud, as should be all music during Act I scene changes. Otherwise, all scene change and intermission music should be Maurice Chevalier, Edith Piaf, etc.—French music popular during the Second World War. During the play, photos, posters, and Nazi propaganda from Occupied Paris could be unveiled in the lobby for the audience to view as they exit. Although there are many different scenes and settings for this play, the sets may be simple and suggestive, using rehearsal blocks for multiple purposes and moveable/reversible pieces to indicate changes in time and space.
- “Hatikva” (“The Hope”) is Israel’s national anthem, formerly a Zionist song which is based on a Czech folk melody incorporated by the composer Smetana in his famous *The Moldau*.
- Approximate running time without intermission: 70 minutes.

SCENES

Act One:

Scene 1. The Burns home in the suburbs, the present

Scene 2. Nicole's 9th-grade English class, the present

Montage..... David's, Jack's, Nicole's homes, the present

Scene 3. The school dance, the present
The Bernhards' apartment, Paris, 1942

INTERMISSION

Act Two:

Scene 1. The Bernhards' apartment, Paris, July 1942

Scene 2. Nicole's diary, Paris, August 1942
The Bernhards' apartment, Paris, Feb. 1943

Scene 3. The Bernhards' apartment, Paris, Dec. 1943

Scene 4. The Bernhards' apartment, Paris, Apr. 1944

INTERMISSION

Act Three:

Scene 1. In hiding, Paris, June, 1944

Scene 2. In hiding, Paris, July, 1944

Scene 3. On a transport across Europe, Aug. 1944

Scene 4. On a transport across Europe, Sept. 1944
Auschwitz, Sept. 1944

A hospital room in the suburbs, the present

ACT ONE

Scene One

PRE-SET: Early evening, the middle-class suburban home of NICOLE BURNS. Center stage we see NICOLE's incredibly messy bedroom. The bed is unmade, the bedspread looks like an American flag. Clothes strewn everywhere. Posters and photos of rock and hip-hop groups line the walls and the bulletin board. A copy of The Diary of Anne Frank lays open on her dresser, along with a messy pile of school books falling out of a backpack. To the right we can see the corner of a connecting bedroom belonging to NICOLE's little sister, LITTLE BIT. In contrast it is perfectly neat, with a series of papers marked A+ with gold stars neatly pinned to a bulletin board. School books are perfectly aligned on the desk. The only thing on the wall is a poster advertising a symphony concert.

AT RISE: LIGHTS UP on both bedrooms. In the center room we see NICOLE BURNS, age 14, average in every way but somehow very appealing, her hair in a messy ponytail, dressed in baggy old sweats. She wears a Walkman and listens to rock music that we can't hear, but clearly she's going over choreography to this unheard music. She's a terrific dancer. In the room stage right is LITTLE BIT BURNS, age 10. She is perfectly groomed down to the last color-coordinated barrette. She stands in front of a music stand and plays the same piece

on her violin—the “Hatikva” melody from The Moldau, over and over in awful, squeaky tones.

NICOLE does more energetic choreography—to us it appears she’s doing it to “Hatikva.” The awful violin playing makes it impossible for NICOLE to concentrate on her dancing. Finally she can’t take it anymore.

NICOLE (*yelling to her sister in the next room*). Hel-lo!

You wanna give it a rest in there? I’m trying to practice!

LITTLE BIT (*without missing a beat of her practice, yelling back*). So am I!

(Exasperated, NICOLE turns the Walkman up louder, but as she executes a move, the earphones fall off. She goes over to their shared wall, hammers it with her fist.)

NICOLE (*yelling*). Knock it off, I mean it!

(LITTLE BIT responds by moving closer to their shared wall; the music is even louder.)

NICOLE (*cont’d, yelling*). My trio has to dance in front of the entire ninth grade on Saturday, you know! (*More droning violin.*) You are a total brat, Little Bit!

(LITTLE BIT marches into the hall with her violin under her arm. She comes to NICOLE’s doorway.)

LITTLE BIT. Little Bit is a baby name. Now that I’m ten, call me Elizabeth.

NICOLE (*pops the tape out of her Walkman and snaps it into a tape deck. She presses rewind*). What is that stupid thing, anyhow?

LITTLE BIT. My recital piece.

NICOLE I've got a great idea. Go downstairs and play it for Mom. She gave birth to you—she deserves the torture.

(Defiantly, LITTLE BIT starts playing the violin again. SUZANNE LEE runs in. She is 14, extremely pretty and feminine, soft-spoken, wears jeans and a nice sweater. She carries a dance bag over her shoulder. She is LITTLE BIT's idol.)

SUZANNE. Hey, wuzzup? Isn't Mimi here yet? *(She pulls off her skirt. She has dance clothes underneath.)*

LITTLE BIT *(sweetly, to SUZANNE)*. How do you get your hair so perfect?

NICOLE. You were just leaving, remember?

LITTLE BIT *(nasty, to her sister)*. No, I wasn't. You told me to leave, but that doesn't mean I was actually leaving. *(Sweetly, to SUZANNE.)* I love your sweater, Suzanne.

SUZANNE *(doing stretching exercises)*. Thanks. *(To NICOLE.)* I hope we can get this routine down quick because I've got tons of homework to finish.

LITTLE BIT. I always do all my homework first thing. It's all color coordinated. Math: blue notebook, blue pencil. History: Red notebook, red pen. Science—

NICOLE. Shut-up.

SUZANNE *(notices The Diary of Anne Frank lying open on the desk. She picks it up)*. Did you finish reading this yet for English?

NICOLE. No.

LITTLE BIT. What is it?

SUZANNE. *The Diary of Anne Frank*. She was a Jewish girl in Holland during World War II. She and her family hid in an attic for two years so they wouldn't go to the gas chambers.

LITTLE BIT. My father says there weren't really gas chambers. Not where people were actually killed.

SUZANNE. But they killed gay people and Communists, and gypsies, and six million Jews!

LITTLE BIT. My father says that's a really inflated figure. A lot of people just died of natural causes but it all gets blamed on the Nazis.

SUZANNE (to NICOLE). You don't agree with him, do you?

NICOLE (*shrugging*). My dad just gets bugged about things he says he can't prove scientifically. I swear, I'm ready to kick Mimi out of the trio, I don't care if she is my best friend. You know Bazooms is going to test us on that book tomorrow—

LITTLE BIT. You call your teacher *Bazooms*??

NICOLE. It's her name. Renée Zooms, middle initial B.

SUZANNE. I sort of like her.

NICOLE. Bazooms?? She gave me a D on my last paper!

SUZANNE. So what grade did you deserve?

LITTLE BIT (*reaching for The Diary of Anne Frank*). D. Because she never studies. We had a test today on *The Wizard of Oz*. Know what grade I got? A. You could make better use of your time if you'd study while you're waiting. That's what *I'd* do.

NICOLE. One of us is definitely adopted. Look, we're gonna start now, and you can only stay if you promise to shut up.

(*LITTLE BIT makes an ostentatious gesture of zipping her lips shut and throwing away the key. NICOLE counts them off, she and SUZANNE begin a hot dance routine. LITTLE BIT picks up The Diary of Anne Frank.*)

NICOLE. You missed that double turn thing—

SUZANNE. Oh, you're right, sorry—

NICOLE. That's okay, I'll show you the move. (*She demonstrates the dance move for SUZANNE, explaining as she goes.*)

LITTLE BIT. Wow, listen to this! (*Reading aloud.*) "...We are shut up here, shut away from the world, in fear and anxiety, especially just lately. Why, then, should we who love each other remain apart? Why should we wait until we've reached a suitable age? Why should we bother?"

NICOLE. Lemme see that. (*She grabs the book.*)

SUZANNE (*eagerly looking over NICOLE's shoulder*). I didn't get to that part yet.

NICOLE (*reading avidly*). Me, either. Do you think they actually Do It??

LITTLE BIT. Euuwww! That's disgusting! (*Trying to see the book.*) Let me see!

SUZANNE. Having sex isn't disgusting—

NICOLE. Unless it's your parents.

(ALL THREE shudder at the thought. LITTLE BIT grabs the book, looking for dirty parts. NICOLE explains the dance move to SUZANNE, as MIMI BAKER rushes into the room. She is attractive in an off-beat way, a motor-mouth whirlwind of energy.)

MIMI. Oh-my-God, oh-my-God, I can't believe you're wearing that!!

NICOLE. What? We're dancing, what else would I wear?

MIMI. Something that makes you look better than day-old dog meat. You have exactly two minutes to get incredibly gorgeous. (*She runs over to NICOLE's dresser and pulls out clothes, flinging them around.*)

NICOLE. Hel-lo! We're rehearsing here and you're really late!

MIMI. The opportunity of your life is about to come knocking on *that* door. Arranged by *moi*. No, no, don't thank me, I am but a bumper car in the amusement park of love—

NICOLE. Sometimes I really worry about your mental health.

MIMI (*holding a sexy shirt up to NICOLE*). Nah, screams of trying too hard.

NICOLE. What are you doing??

MIMI. I told you! Getting you ready for Jack!!

NICOLE. Jack? Jack Polin? You can't mean Jack Polin—

MIMI (*still searching through clothes*). The boy you love from afar, the boy who never gives you the time of day—ah, perfect! Put it on! (*She thrusts a plain mini-dress at NICOLE.*)

NICOLE. Jack Polin is coming over to my house??!!

MIMI. I just said that. (*All in one breath.*) I ran into him and his buds on the way here. So he goes 'wuzzup' and I go 'not much, I'm going over to Nicole's for dance practice for the thing on Saturday' and he goes 'oh yeah, you and Nicole and that new girl are in that dance trio, right?' and I go 'right' and he goes 'so, maybe we'll stop over' so I go 'cool' and I casually get back on my bike and pump my legs over here like a bat out of hell because as your best friend it is my duty to warn you not to look like dog meat!

NICOLE (*calling from the bathroom*). Do you think this means he actually likes me?

MIMI (*calling back*). Of course he likes you, you idiot, he's coming over to your house!

NICOLE (*calling from the bathroom*). Act cool! My hair is disgusting!

MARY BURNS (*offstage*). Nicole! Some friends of yours are here!

NICOLE (*calling frantically*). I'm not ready! Tell them to wait downstairs!

LITTLE BIT (*runs into the hallway and yells down to her mother*). She says send them right up!

(*MIMI and SUZANNE run around frantically, flinging the mess wherever they can hide it, quickly making the bed, etc.*)

MIMI. You brat!

SUZANNE (*calling*). They're here, Nicole!

MIMI (*calling*). They're on their way up!

NICOLE (*calling, frantic*). No! I'm not ready! They can't!

(*We hear the voices of young GUYS approaching, talking about sports.*)

MIMI (*hisses*). Get out here, they're here!! And act cool!

(*Just as two GUYS enter, MIMI and SUZANNE throw the last thing under the bed and assume positions of exaggerated cool. The guys are JACK POLIN—blonde, cute, confident, clearly the leader, and JASON, a cut-up. JASON is JACK's shadow and Greek chorus. NICOLE saunters in from the bathroom.*)

JACK. Hey.

JASON. Hey.

NICOLE, MIMI & SUZANNE. Hey.

JACK. Wuzzup?

JASON. Wuzzup?

NICOLE (*utterly casual*). Not much. We're just...hanging.

LITTLE BIT. My name's Elizabeth. I'm extremely mature for my age.

(NICOLE marches over to her. When she does we—and everyone on stage—can see that she has inadvertently tucked the entire back of her dress into her pantyhose, revealing her baggy white cotton panties. No one has the nerve to say anything. Even MIMI and SUZANNE just stand there, mortified.)

NICOLE. You were just leaving, right Little Bit? *(She opens the door for LITTLE BIT.)*

LITTLE BIT *(sees NICOLE from behind)*. WOO-WOO! I see London, I see France! I see Nicole's—

MIMI *(running over to NICOLE and LITTLE BIT)*. Bye, bye, Little Twit! She's a great kid, huh? Yes, sir-ee, a great kid. *(As she speaks, she quickly pulls NICOLE's dress out of her panties, pushes LITTLE BIT out the door. Now NICOLE is too mortified to open her mouth.)* So... *(A long moment.)* We've really been working on this dance thing for Saturday...

SUZANNE. Nicole choreographed it. Right Nicole? *(NICOLE is too mortified to speak.)*

MIMI. Right! She's been studying dance forever, right, Nicole? *(NICOLE still can't talk.)* Right! But she's not stuck up about it. Not at all. She's just like, you know...regular, right Nicole? *(More awkward silence.)*

NICOLE. Okay, that's it! I can't stand it anymore! I know when I came out of the bathroom I had my dress tucked into my underwear, okay? What am I supposed to do, crawl in a hole and die!? Slit my wrists? Kill myself? Just tell me what you want me to do!!! *(A beat of silence.)*

JASON. Wear bikini panties!

(ALL GIRLS yell at him at once: "You sleaze ball," "You are so immature," "Grow up," "Get a life," etc. There is a KNOCK on the door, and NICOLE's mom, MARY

BURNS, sticks her head in. She is an attractive, easy-going woman in her late thirties).

MARY (to NICOLE). Hi. I just wanted to tell you that dinner's almost ready. I made tons of sauce—your friends are welcome to stay.

NICOLE. You want to stay? It's spaghetti.

JACK. Nah, I haven't even started reading that *Anne Frank* thing yet, I gotta book.

MARY (*sounding a bit disturbed*). Is that what you kids were assigned? Do you realize that it might not have been written by Anne Frank?

JACK. Woah, you mean it's a fake?

MARY. No one knows for sure. But in the fifties a Jewish man named Meyer Levin sued the writers of the movie version, claiming they'd stolen his work. And he won.

SUZANNE (*doubtful*). Are you sure?

MARY. My husband is kind of a nut about historical accuracy.

MIMI. But my grandfather fought in World War II. He said the Germans killed, like, thousands of Jews—

SUZANNE. Not thousands, *millions!*

MARY. I'm sure your grandfather is a great guy, Mimi. But it's kind of like fishing stories—you know, the fish get bigger and bigger each time the story is told. Anyway, if you kids change your mind, just let me know. I make a mean spaghetti dinner. (*She exits.*)

JACK. Your mom's great.

NICOLE. Yeah, she's pretty cool.

MIMI. I just can't believe what she said is true, though.

SUZANNE. Me, either. Back in New Jersey I have a lot of Jewish friends, and they always said that—

NICOLE. My mom doesn't lie.

MIMI. Neither does my gr—

LITTLE BIT (*knocks, then opens door*). Jack's mom is downstairs. She told me to tell him the baby just pooped and she's out of diapers so he'd better get his butt in gear.

JACK. Man, I can't wait until I get my driver's license.

JASON. Yeah.

JACK. So, I gotta motor. Hey, maybe the six of us can, like, hang out Saturday night.

LITTLE BIT. Seven!

NICOLE (*utterly blasé*). If I'm not too busy, it would be, as the French say, *très magnifique*!

JASON. Hey, you're bilingual!

LITTLE BIT (*indignant*). She is not, she only likes boys!

NICOLE. That's *bisexual*, Little Bit.

LITTLE BIT. Euwwwwww!

JASON.* Hey, I read about this girl who was quadra-sexual. She'd do anything with anyone for a quarter!

* Alternate line for JASON: You are so clueless, you probably think MCI is a rap artist!

LITTLE BIT. Euwwwwww!!

(*ALL GIRLS yell at him: "You are so immature," "Get a life," "You sleaze ball," "Grow up," "You're disgusting," etc.*)

JACK. We're outta here. Later.

JASON. Later.

MIMI & SUZANNE. Later.

NICOLE (*utterly nonchalant*). Later. Whatever.

(*The GUYS exit.*)

NICOLE (*devastated*). He hates me!! I ruined everything!

LITTLE BIT. Oh, who cares. He wasn't even cute. Now, there's a *really* cute boy at my school. He likes me, too. His name is—

NICOLE. Shut-up!! (*She pushes the on button on the tape deck, and loud hip-hop music fills the room. She goes after LITTLE BIT.*)

LITTLE BIT (*screaming*). Mom-mee!!

(*They chase around, EVERYONE yells at once, LIGHTS FADE. MUSIC STAYS UP through scene change.*)

Scene Two

AT RISE: *The next day. LIGHTS UP on a typical classroom. Eighth-grade students sit or stand around:(DAVID BERG—thin, smart, easy to underestimate, CHRISSY GULLET—attractive, mouthy, bigoted, JASON—doing what kids do when the teacher isn't in the room.) A few seats are empty.*

JASON (*totally out of it, wearing sunglasses*). Woah, I am totally torked, dude. I was out all night partying.

CHRISSY. On a school night?

JASON. Woah, am I in *school*??

CHRISSY (*looking in a compact mirror*). That's so funny I forgot to—oh, my gosh. A zit. I'm getting a humungous zit.

DAVID. We all really needed to know that, Chrissy.

JASON. Hey, me and Polin partied at Nicole Burns' house last night.

CHRISSY. No way! He's totally in love with Heather!

JACK (*enters*). Wuzzup?

JASON. Wuzzup?