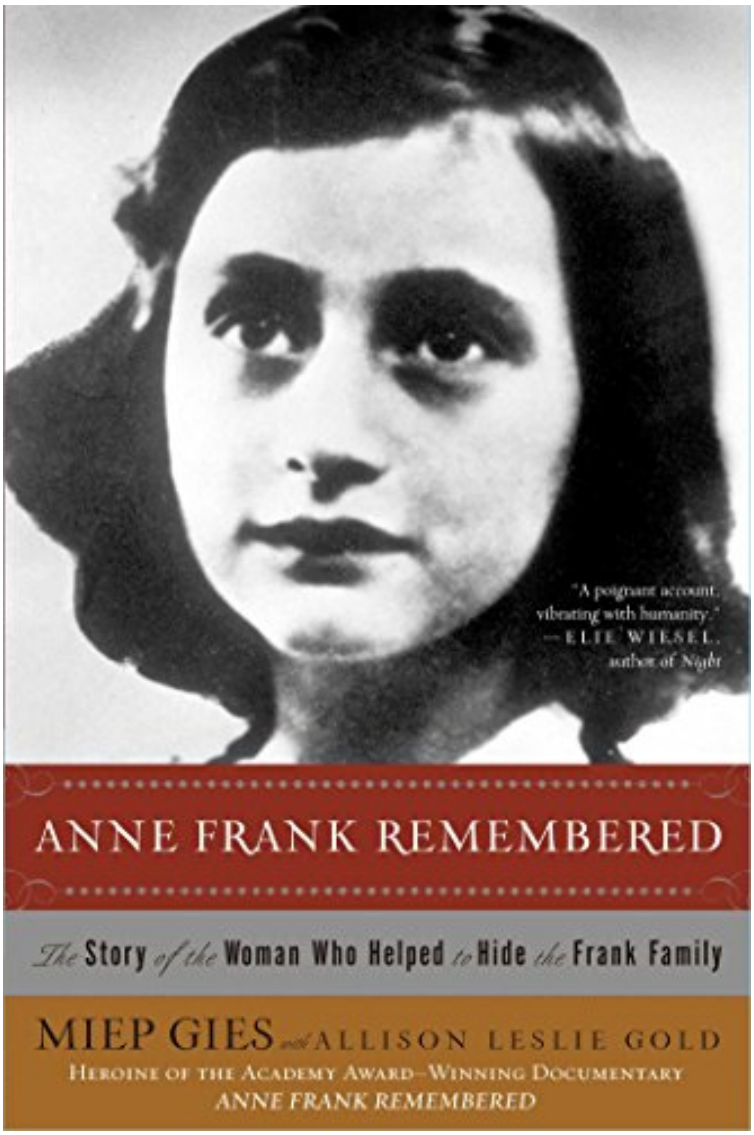
Anne Frank Remembered: The Story of the Woman Who Helped to Hide the Frank Family (English Edition)



Par Miep Gies
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[Free read ebook] Anne Frank Remembered: The Story of the Woman Who Helped to Hide the Frank Family (English Edition)

Par Miep Gies : Anne Frank Remembered: The Story of the Woman Who Helped to Hide the Frank Family (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Anne Frank Remembered: The Story of the Woman Who Helped to Hide the Frank Family (English Edition):

Description : Description du produit She found the diary and brought the world a message of love and hope. It seems as if we are never far from Miep's thoughts....Yours, Anne For the millions moved by Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl, here at last is Miep's own astonishing story. For more than two years, Miep Gies and her husband helped hide the Franks from the Nazis. Like thousands of unsung heroes of the Holocaust, they risked their lives each day to bring food, news, and emotional support to the victims. From her own remarkable childhood as a World War I refugee to the moment she places a small, red-orange, checkered diary -- Anne's legacy -- in Otto Frank's hands, Miep Gies remembers her days with simple

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Our quarter was a quiet area of South Amsterdam known as the River Quarter because the streets were named after Dutch and other European rivers whose lower courses flowed through the Netherlands to the sea, like the Rhine, the Maas, the Jeker. In fact, the Amstel flowed practically into our own backyards.This section had been built up during the 1920s and early '30s when large, progressive corporations had built great blocks of apartments for their members with the help of government loans. We were all quite proud of this forward-looking treatment of ordinary working people: comfortable housing, indoor plumbing, tree-filled gardens in the rear of each block. Other big blocks were built entirely by private firms.Actually, our quarter wasn't altogether quiet. Almost always, lively children filled the air with shouts and laughter; if they weren't playing games, they were whistling upward to call their friends out to play. A friendship included a one-of-a-kind tune whistled loudly to call the friend and identify who was downstairs. Children were always in each other's company, charging off in little packs to the Amstelpark swimming pool, or perhaps speaking in singsong as they walked to and from school in bunches. Dutch children, like their parents, learned faithfulness in friendship very young, and would just as quickly turn implacable if any wrong was done to a friend.Gaaspstraat was much like all the other streets, filled with a great five-story block of apartments. There were doorways up and down the street leading to steep stairways. The buildings were constructed of dark brown brick with sloping orange roofs. There were windows both front and back, all wood-trimmed and painted white, each window with a different white lace curtain, and never without flowers or plants.Our backyard was filled with elm trees. Across the way was a little grassy playground, and on the other side of the playground was a Roman Catholic church whose ringing bells punctuated the day and sent birds flying against the sky: sparrows; pigeons, which were kept on the roofs; gulls. Always gulls.Our quarter was bordered on the east by the Amstel, with boats going back and forth, and on the north by the stately Zuideramstellaan Boulevard, where streetcar number 8 ran, and poplars grew on either side, in straight rows. Zuideramstellaan met Scheldestraat, one of the neighborhood shopping streets filled with shops, cafes, and open flower stalls with cans of bright, fresh flowers.But Amsterdam was not my native city. I had been born in Vienna, Austria, in 1909. When I was five years old, the First World War began. We children had no way of knowing that the war had begun, except that one day we heard soldiers marching in the streets. I remember feeling great excitement, and I ran out alone to take a look. I was aware of uniforms, equipment, and many emotional displays between people. To get a better look, I ran between the marching men and horses. A man from the fire brigade grabbed me, hoisted me into his arms, and carried me home, as I craned my neck to see more.In Vienna, there were old buildings, not in good condition, built around central courtyards and broken up into many apartments filled with working people. We lived in one of these dark apartments. The man from the fire brigade returned me to my anxious mother and left. My mother told me gravely, "There are soldiers in the streets. It's not safe. Don't go out there."I didn't understand, but I did as I was told. Everyone was acting so strangely. As I was so young, I remember very little about those days, except that two uncles who lived with us had to go to war, and much was made of this.Both uncles returned safely, and by that time one had married. Neither one came back to live with us, so by the time the war ended I lived with just Mother, Father, and Grandmother.I was not the strongest child, and because of the serious food shortages during the war, I had become undernourished and sick. I was a small child to begin with, and seemed to be wasting away, rather than growing normally. My legs were sticks dominated by bony kneecaps. My teeth were soft. When I was ten years old, my parents had another child; another daughter. Now there was even less food for us all. My condition was worsening, and my parents were told that something had to be done or I would die.Because of a program that had been set up by foreign working people for hungry Austrian children, a plan was devised that might rescue me from my fate. I was to be sent

with other Austrian workers' children to the faraway country called the Netherlands to be fed and revitalized.It was winter -- always bitter in Vienna -- December of 1920, and I was bundled up in whatever my parents could find and taken to the cavernous Vienna railway station. There we waited long, tiring hours, during which we were joined by many other sickly children. Doctors looked me over, probing and examining my thin, weak body. Although I was eleven, I looked much younger. My long, fine dark blond hair was held back with a large piece of cotton cloth tied into a big puffed bow. A card was hung around my neck. On it was printed a strange name, the name of people I had never met.The train was filled with many children like me, all with cards around their necks. Suddenly, the faces of my parents were no longer in sight anywhere and the train had begun to move. All the children were scared and apprehensive about what was to become of us. Some were crying. Most of us had never even been outside our streets, certainly never outside Vienna. I felt too weak to observe much, but found the chugging motion of the train made me sleepy. I slept and woke. The trip went on and on and on.It was pitch-black, the middle of the night, when the train stopped and we were shaken awake and led off the train. The sign beside the still-steaming train said Leiden.Speaking to us in a totally foreign language, people took us into a large, high-ceilinged room and sat us on hard-backed wooden chairs. All the children were in long rows, side by side. My feet didn't reach the floor. I felt very, very sleepy.Opposite the exhausted, sick children crowded a group of adults. Suddenly, these adults came at us in a swarm and began to fumble with our cards, reading off the names. We were helpless to resist the looming forms and fumbling hands.A man, not very big but very strong-looking, read my tag. "Ja," he said firmly, and took my hand in his, helping me down from the chair. He led me away. I was not afraid and went with him willingly.We walked through a town, past buildings that had very different shapes from those of Viennese buildings I had seen. The moon was shining down, creamy, luminous. It was clear weather. The shining moonlight made it possible to see. I was intently looking for where we were going.I saw that we were walking away from the town. There were no more houses; there were trees. The man had begun to whistle. I became angry. He must be a farmer, I thought. He must be whistling for his dog to come. I was desperately frightened of big dogs. My heart sank.However, we kept on walking and no dog came, and suddenly more houses appeared. We came to a door. It opened and we went upstairs. A woman with an angular face and soft eyes stood there. I looked into the house, past a stairway landing, and saw heads of many children staring down at me. The woman took me by the hand into another room and gave me a glass of frothy milk. Then she guided me up the stairs.All the children were gone. The woman took me into a small room. It contained two beds. In one bed was a gift my age. The woman took off all my layers of clothes, removed the bow from my hair, and put me between the covers in the center of the other bed. Warmth enfolded me. My eyelids dropped shut. Immediately, I was asleep.I will never forget that journey.The next morning the same woman came to the room, dressed me in clean clothes, and took me downstairs. There at the big table sat the strong man, the girl my age from the bedroom, and four boys of all different ages; all the faces that had stared at me the night before now looked curiously at me from around the table. I understood nothing of what they said and they understood nothing of what I said, until the oldest boy, who was studying to be a teacher, began to use the bits of German he had learned in school to translate simple things for me. He became my interpreter.Despite the language problem, all the children were kind to me. Kindness, in my depleted condition, was very important to me. It was medicine as much as the bread, the marmalade, the good Dutch milk and butter and cheese, the toasty temperature of the warm rooms. And, ahhh, the little chocolate flakes known as "hailstones" and other chocolate bits called "little mice" they taught me to put on thickly buttered bread -- treats I'd never imagined before.After several weeks, some of my strength began to return. All the children were in school, including the eldest, my interpreter. Everyone believed that the quickest way for a child to learn the Dutch language was to go to a Dutch school. So the man took me again by the hand to the local school and had a long talk with the school's director. The director said, "Have her come to our school."In Vienna, I had been in the Fifth Class, but here in Leiden I was put back into the Third Class. When the director brought me into the strange class, explaining in Dutch to the children who I was, they all wanted to help me; so many hands reached out to guide me that I didn't know which one to grab first. The children all adopted me. There is a children's story in which a little child in a wooden cradle is washed away by a flood and is floating on the raging waters, in danger of sinking, when a cat leaps onto the cradle and jumps from side to side of it, keeping the cradle afloat until it touches solid ground again and the child is safe. I was the child, and all these Dutch people in my life were the cats.By the end of January, I could understand and speak a few words of Dutch.By spring I was the best in the class.My Stay in Holland was to have been for three months, but I was still weak by that time and the doctors

extended it another three months, and then another. Quickly, this family began to absorb me. They started to consider me one of them. The boys would say, "We have two sisters."The man I was beginning to think of as my adoptive father was a supervisor of workers in a coal company in Leiden. Despite five children of his own, this man and his wife, although not well off by any means, took the attitude that where seven could eat, so could eight, and so they slowly revitalized their little hungry child from Vienna. At first, they called me by my proper name, Hemline, but as the ice between us melted, they found the name too formal and began calling me by an affectionate Dutch nickname, Miep.I took to Dutch life quite naturally. Gezellig, or coziness, is the Dutch theme. I learned to ride a bicycle, to butter my bread sandwiches on two sides. I was taught a love of classical music by these people, and that it was my duty to be politically aware and read the newspaper each evening, later discussing what I'd read.I failed miserably in one area of Dutch life. When the winter became cold enough for the water of the canals to freeze, the Nieuwenhuises bundled me up with the other children and took us to the frozen canal. It was a festive atmosphere: stalls selling hot chocolate and hot anise milk; whole families skating together, one behind the next, their arms hooked to a long pole to swing themselves around; the horizon always fiat and luminous, the winter sun reddish.They strapped a pair of wooden skates with curling blades to my shoes with leather thongs, and pushed me out onto the frozen surface. Seeing my panic, they pushed a wooden chair out onto the ice and instructed me to push the chair ahead of me. My misery must have shown, because shortly I was helped to the side of the canal. Frozen and miserable, I fought to untie the knotted, wet thongs without my gloves. The knots wouldn't budge as my fingers grew more and more frozen. My rage and misery mounted, and I vowed to myself never again to go anywhere near the ice. I've kept that vow.When I was thirteen, the whole family moved to South Amsterdam, to the quarter where all the streets are named for rivers. Even though this quarter was at the very edge of the City of Amsterdam and bordered on the Amstel River, with green pastureland and black-and-white cows grazing, we were living in the city. I loved city life. I particularly delighted in Amsterdam's electric streetcars and canals and bridges and sluices, birds, cats, speeding bicycles, bright flower stalls and herring stands, antiquities, gabled canal houses, concert halls, movie theaters, and political clubs.In 1925, when I was sixteen, the Nieuwenhuises took me back to Vienna to see my blood relatives. I was surprised at the beauty of Vienna, and felt strange with these now-unfamiliar people. As the visit drew to a close, my anxiety mounted about my departure. But my natural mother spoke frankly to my adoptive parents. "It's better if Hermine goes back to Amsterdam with you. She has become Dutch. I think that she would not be happy if she stayed now in Vienna." My knots untied and I felt great relief.I did not want to hurt my natural family's feelings, and I was still young and needed their consent. But I wanted desperately to return to the Netherlands. My sensibilities were Dutch, the quality of my feelings also Dutch.During my late teens, some of my heartiness turned inward. I became staunchly independent and began to read and think about philosophy. I read Spinoza and Henri Bergson. I began to fill notebooks with my most private thoughts, jotting endlessly. I did all this in secret, for myself only, not for discussion. I had a deep longing for an understanding of life.Then, as forcefully as it had assaulted me, the passion for notebook-keeping lifted. I felt suddenly embarrassed, self-conscious, fearful that someone would chance upon these very private thoughts. In one purge I tore all my writings in two and threw them away, never again to write in this way. At eighteen, I left school and went to work in an office. Although I continued to be a staunchly private and independent woman, my zest for life turned outward again.In 1931, at twenty-two, I returned again to Vienna to see my parents. This time I was a grown woman and traveled alone. Having been employed for some time, I had corresponded regularly with them and had sent money whenever I could. It was a good visit, but this time no mention was made of the possibility of my returning to Austria. I was now Dutch through and through. The hungry little eleven-year-old Viennese girl with the tag tied around her neck and a bow in her hair had faded away entirely. I was now a robust young Dutch woman.Because during my visits to Vienna none of us had thought to have any change made in my passport, on paper I was still an Austrian citizen. But when I bade farewell to my mother, father, and sister in Austria, I did so with a clarity about my identity. I knew I would continue to write and send money regularly, that I would periodically visit them and bring my children to see them when that time came, but that Holland would be my home forever.From Publishers WeeklyGies, now 78, recalls how during WW II she, her husband and some of her coworkers sheltered her boss Otto Frank, his family and several other Jews in a secret annex of their Amsterdam office building. Unfortunately, California freelance writer Gold's lackluster rendition contrasts sharply with the spirited, penetrating journal kept by Anne Frank, which Gies secreted from the Nazis and which later was published as Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl. In Gold's

disappointing retelling, Gies proves to be an intensely private person and frugal with words, many of whose observations are hindsights ("I knew that . . . Anne's diary had become her life") or dwell on externals like Anne's blossoming figure. Nevertheless, Gies's sincerity, humility and courage emerge from this simple testimony and will not fail to inspire readers. Photos not seen by PW. Major ad/promo; first serial to Family Circle; Literary Guild main selection; Reader's Digest Condensed Books selection.