

Rescuing Anne's Diary

*In the following excerpt from *Anne Frank Remembered* by Miep Gies with Alison Leslie Gold, Miep describes finding Anne's diary in the Secret Annexe.*

We all went to the bookcase and turned it away from the door leading to the hiding place. The door was locked but otherwise undisturbed. Fortunately, I'd kept a duplicate key, which I went and got. We opened the door and went into the hiding place.

Right away, from the door, I saw that the place had been ransacked.¹ Drawers were open, things strewn all over the floor.

Everywhere objects were overturned. My eyes took in a scene of terrible pillage.²

Then I walked into Mr. and Mrs. Frank's bedroom. On the floor, amidst the chaos of papers and books, my eye lit on the little red-orange checkered, cloth-bound diary that Anne had received from her father on her thirteenth birthday. I pointed it out to Elli. Obeying my gesture, she leaned down and picked it up for me, putting it into my hands. I remembered how happy Anne had been to receive this little book to write her private thoughts in. I knew how precious her diary was to Anne. My eyes scanned the rubble for more of Anne's writings, and I saw the old accounting books and many more writing papers that Elli and I had given to her when she had run out of pages in the checkered diary. Elli was still very scared, and looked to me for direction. I told Elli, "Help me pick up all Anne's writings."

Quickly, we gathered up handfuls of pages in Anne's scrawling handwriting. My heart beat in fear that the Austrian would return and catch us among the now-captured "Jewish possessions." Henk had gathered up

books in his arms, including the library books and Dr. Dussel's Spanish books. He was giving me a look to hurry. Van Matto was standing uncomfortably by the doorway. My arms and Elli's arms were filled with papers. Henk started down the stairs. Quickly, Van Matto hurried after him. Elli followed too, looking very young and very scared. I was the last, with the key in my hand.

As I was about to leave, I passed through the bathroom. My eye caught sight of Anne's soft beige combing shawl, with the colored roses and other small figures, hanging on the clothes rack. Even though my arms were filled with papers, I reached out and grabbed the shawl with my fingers. I still don't know why.

Trying not to drop anything, I bent to lock the door to the hiding place and returned to the office.

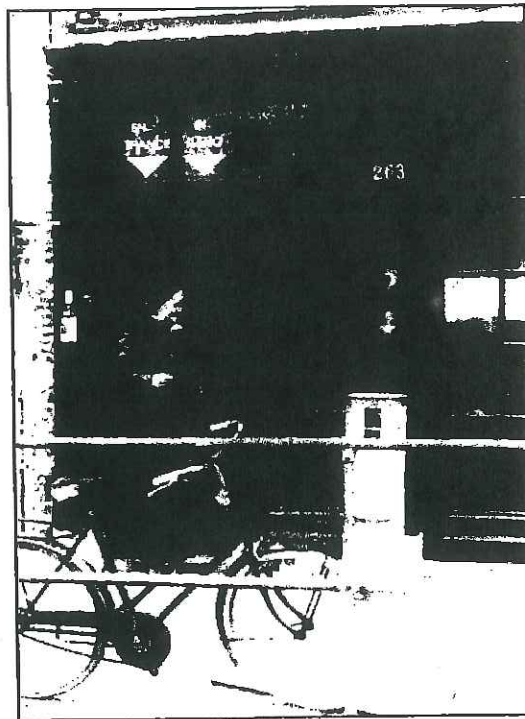
There Elli and I stood facing each other, both loaded down with papers. Elli said to me,

"You're older; you must decide what to do."

I opened the bottom drawer of my desk and began to pile in the diary, the old accounting books, and the papers. "Yes," I told Elli, "I will keep everything." I took the papers she was holding and continued filling the drawer. "I'll keep everything safe for Anne until she comes back."

¹ ransacked: searched and overturned

² pillage: destruction



Outside the Anne Frank Huis (house)

Bettmann