

## *The Power of Children: Making a Difference*

### **Script for Anne Frank: *The Longest Night***

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**Context:** This scene takes place in the Secret Annex in Amsterdam at Otto Frank's company in the spring of 1944. Miep Gies is returning from shopping for food and supplies for those in hiding and brings them to the Annex while the workers are on a lunch break.

**Character Description:** Miep Gies worked at Otto Frank's secretary at the Opetka company. Miep went out daily to get food and supplies for the people hiding in the annex.

**Materials/Props:** a grocery or 1940s era shopping bag of supplies kale, potatoes, sausage, books, a *Cinema and Theatre* magazine, a letter, etc., a photo of Miep Gies for follow-up discussion

#### **PROGRAM/ACTIVITY SCRIPT:**

*In order to present visitors with the opportunity to feel the constant sense of anxiety and anticipation that the residents of the Annex felt, Miep Gies will speak to the audience as if they are the Franks, Van Pels, and Fritz Pfeffer.*

*(Miep Gies enters, carrying a bag of supplies. She rushes to the front of the room.)*

I'm so sorry I'm late. I'm sure you were very worried, but I had a run-in with the German guard—literally. As usual, I was carrying quite a load on my bike. I was just about to make a turn when a motorcycle with a sidecar, carrying two German soldiers, barreled around the corner and collided with my bicycle—I had to jump off before I fell off! Then, something boiled over inside of me. You all know that it's unlike me to lose my temper, but I did. I looked right at them and said, "You cruel, contemptible, wicked men!" I couldn't stop myself; I was a woman possessed. The words just flew out of my mouth. I had no concern for consequences, even though I know that people have been *shot* for less . . .

. . . but the Germans just laughed at me and rode off, and I realized that the engine on their motorbike was so loud that they hadn't heard a word I said.

Oh—at that moment a streetcar had come by and the passengers saw the whole thing. And do you know what they did? They saluted me! (*laughs in release*)

Oh, Anne, I knew you'd laugh! But I also know that I've caused concern. Don't worry, Mr. Frank, you may trust that I will never again let my tongue get away from me. After all, if I were arrested who would take care of all of you here in hiding? I know that if anything happens to me, you will all suffer. I vow that I won't let that happen . . . I won't let you down ever. See, I've brought supplies.

(*Unloads kale and potatoes from her grocery bag.*)

I'm sorry. I couldn't find any soap to buy. Nor any coffee for you Mrs. Frank, not even the bad imitation kind. There wasn't any butter either, or thread to mend your socks, or any bread. So it's mostly kale greens, again. I did manage to get some potatoes, but they have several rotten spots that you'll have to slice out. It's getting harder and harder to find decent food. I went to eight different shops today and this was the best I could do. And I'm afraid it's going to get worse.

This morning I got some most distressing news. Our friend, the kind greengrocer from the vegetable shop on the Leliegracht has been arrested. He was hiding two Jews. The Nazis found out. They came to his store and dragged him away. His wife was quite distraught—she doesn't know what they'll do to him, but she expects the worst.

Here's the last of it. (*Finishes unloading a small sausage.*) It may not be a feast—but it's enough to keep you healthy and that is the important thing. For you know we can't risk any of you getting anything worse than a cold; after all, I can't bring any of you to a doctor. . . .

(*Removes a few books*) I did manage to get some new books for you. Ah...how nice to see you smile. I thought these would please. I know how important it is for your minds to escape from these rooms. I imagine it would be horribly difficult for those on the outside to know just how much reading means to you all in here. But I understand.

(*As she mentions, each book, she sits them on the table*) So, for you Mr. Frank, a book of Latin. Mrs. Van Pels, I've found a wonderful biography of Mozart for you. Mr. Van Pels, here's a Knauers Encyclopedia for you to look things up in. For Peter, the woodworking guide you requested. For our "students"—Mrs. Frank, Margot, and Dr. Pfeffer—the latest installments in your correspondence courses. And also, Herr Doctor, a letter from your fiancé; she looks well, and sends her love.

And for you, young Anne, a *Cinema and Theatre* magazine, a book of mythology, and some blank pads for you to write in. I noticed you'd already filled your diary and all the other notebooks and were writing on scraps of paper. That won't do. I want to make sure that when the war is over and your dream of becoming a famous writer comes true, you have all the details of your time here in hiding well documented. And when they read about how you were brave, they too may find strength when things are bleak and scary. I promise Anne, if you keep writing, I'll find a way to keep bringing you books.

*(Suddenly puts her fingers to her lips to signal quiet and listens.)*

Ssshhhhh. . . *(after a moment)* Oh, I'm sorry if I alarmed you. I thought I heard one of the workmen coming back from lunch. I fear, due to our newest employee, I must ask you to try to be even quieter during the day. We don't want him running to the Germans to get his reward for turning you in.

Also, in the evenings, you must be more careful. Since there is less and less to buy, there are more and more break-ins. What sad times we live in when a thief is safe and a Jew is not.

I don't mean to frighten you, but people in hiding are being caught all the time because they've become sloppy and careless. From now on, you must stay up here, behind the bookcase no matter what. No more trips downstairs to the office. No more looking out the windows. No more listening to the radio.

I'm so sorry for all of this. I don't know how the eight of you do it, day after day . . . night after night.

I must confess, the single night I spent here in the Annex was one of the longest of my life. Lying on Anne's hard little bed with my feet hanging off the end, I could hear every sound—every single creak of the floor . . . every squeak of the bedsprings . . . every gust of wind outside. Even the gunfire and the explosions, which we have heard for so long, seemed so much worse—I could have sworn they were getting closer and closer. I felt so helpless . . . I never closed my eyes.

You are all so brave. Please just try to stay strong until the Allies come . . . it must be soon.

The Nazi raids have dragged away nearly all the Jews from the city now. Just last Sunday the Germans staged a huge round-up in the River Quarter. Truck after truck of police went riding by. All through the neighborhood we could hear the shrill whistles, boots stomping up steps, rifles pounding against doors, and Germans yelling, "Open up. Be quick! Be quick!" All day long sad-looking people wearing the yellow Star of David,

carrying knapsacks and suitcases were marched down the streets to the cattle cars. They went right past our window. The sight was so terrible that I couldn't look.

*(Looks to a clock.)* Oh, our visits seem to get shorter and shorter. I must go. The workmen will be returning from their lunches soon.

*(Sneezes.)* Don't worry, Mr. Frank. I'll keep this cold at bay. I know how important it is for me to stay well. Anne put it best when she said, "If Miep is in danger, we all are in danger."

Anne, I'm afraid I won't be able to go into the attic to look at the Chestnut tree with you today. But you'll have to tell me about every new bud when I come back this evening. It should almost be blooming now and you describe it so beautifully.

I'll try to bring a little treat. . . perhaps a raisin bread, if I can find one. And of course, I'll get all the news I can for you. Until then, I give you my love, and remember, shhhhhhh . . . quiet. Back to work, goodbye.

*(Smiles and exits.)*

#### SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- **How many of you knew about Anne and her diary before seeing our exhibit today? And where did you learn about her?**
- **Do any of you who have read Anne's diary remember Miep, or have you heard of her before? Miep's name is not as famous as Anne's, but her part in Anne's story is very important. What was Miep's role in the Frank's lives?**
- **What risks did Miep take in order to protect the Franks?**
- This *(hold up a photo of Miep Gies)* is a picture of Miep, and she just passed away in 2010, just shy of her 101 birthday! **Based on her actions in this story, would you call her a hero?** Miep however insists that she not be called this—she didn't want anyone to think that she has something extra inside of her that gave her a unique ability to take the risks and make the sacrifices she did for the Franks. She believed that she was an ordinary person, who made decisions based on the same courage that resides in all of us. **What would you like to say about Miep's statement?**