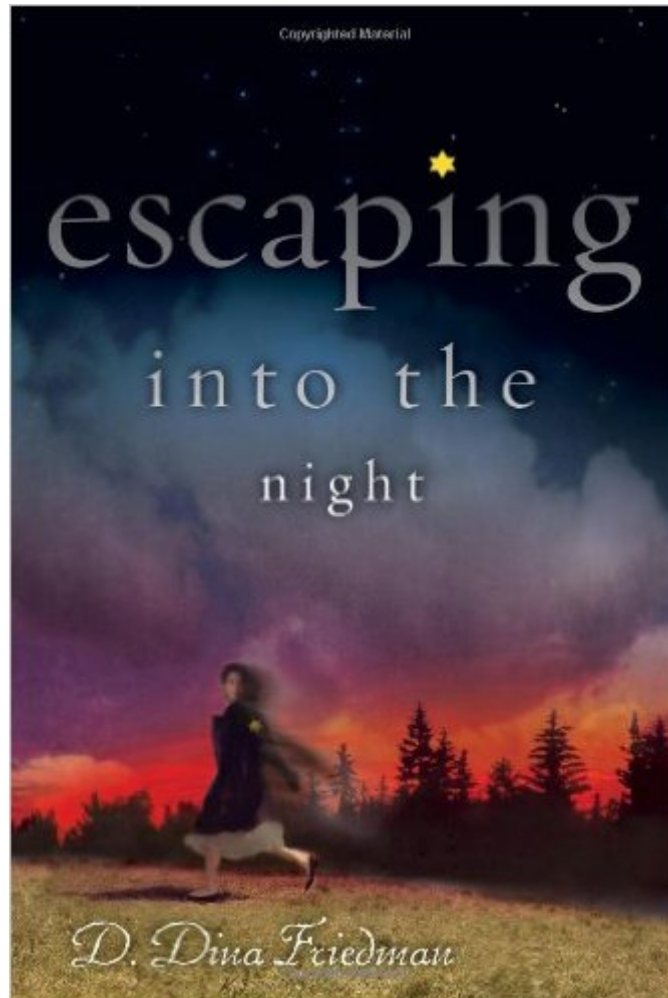


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# Escaping Into The Night



## Synopsis

Halina Rudowski is on the run. When the Polish ghetto where she lives is evacuated, she narrowly escapes, but her mother is not as lucky. Along with her friend Batya, Halina makes her way to a secret encampment in the woods where Jews survive by living underground. As the group struggles for food, handles infighting, and attempts to protect themselves from the advancing Germans, Halina must face the reality of life without her mother. Based on historical events, this gripping tale sheds light on a little-known aspect of the Holocaust: the underground forest encampments that saved several thousand Jews from the Nazis. In telling the story of one girl's survival, *Escaping into the Night* marks the arrival of a remarkable new voice in fiction.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 208 pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers (February 1, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1416902589

ISBN-13: 978-1416902584

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.8 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (9 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,793,497 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #261 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Holocaust](#)

Age Range: 10 - 14 years

Grade Level: 5 - 9

## Customer Reviews

Writing a review of a children's Holocaust book is surprisingly difficult. For one thing, you're dealing with a genre that's inherently dark. If you're the author of a Holocaust title, how do you balance an evil time period with enough hope to keep child readers interested, while still staying true to the events in all their horror? You do the best you can and then some dim bulb reviewer comes along and projects their own interpretation of past events they have no firsthand knowledge of onto your work. So as a reviewer of children's books I have to gauge whether or not a given title concerning the Jewish people during WWII is respectful enough, honest enough, and kid-friendly enough to recommend. This is probably why I don't read that many Holocaust books in general. Now earlier this year I found myself utterly charmed by Jennifer Roy's remarkable, "Yellow Star", and the pump

(as it were) was primed. Good thing too. "Escaping Into the Night" is a gritty, no holds barred account of the Jewish encampments of western Belorussia and the guerrilla fighting that went on there. It's also a coming of age tale involving a girl, her transformation from child to woman, and how she comes to redefine what "family" means. Halina Rudowski's mother always said she worried too much. Even though mother and child were sent to live in a Polish ghetto at the start of WWII, Mrs. Rudowski refuses to give up the niceties of life. Then she's unceremoniously gunned down after work one day, leaving her only child alone in a dangerous world. Aided by people within the ghetto, Halina, her friend Batya, and a boy named Reuven escape to the Bielski encampment hidden deep in the Belorussia forests.

Halina Rudowski lives in the ghetto with her mother. They share their cramped quarters with a religious family. When her mother and others do not come back from work, Halina is forced to deal with her absence and escape from the ghetto to save her own life. Her mother's boyfriend helps Halina and several other ghetto residents escape through tunnels from the ghetto through to sewer pipes that lead to the countryside. They hide during the day and walk during the night, eventually meeting up with a large partisan group that lives in the woods. Halina and her friends grow closer as they face danger and the elements. When they need to escape from the advancing German army, Halina summons all her strength, carries her injured friend, and eventually joins the rests of the partisans with the Russian army. Ms. Friedman based this work of historical fiction on accounts of the Bielski partisans, who hid in the forests of Belorussia during World War II. The book captures many aspects of the Holocaust quite well: the separation of family and their not knowing what happened to each other; the questioning of faith in God after enduring tragedy and atrocities; and living under the constant threat of danger. Halina is a young girl who must grow up quickly, and her longing for her mother, her cat, and to be able to sing out loudly add dimension to this likable character. Batya is a religious girl, and when she is forced to eat bacon in order to survive, the reader gets an example of the cruelty of the Nazis and the lengths to which they went to make the Jews suffer. While there are graphic description of shootings and violence, the focus of the story is Halina's and her friends' survival.

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