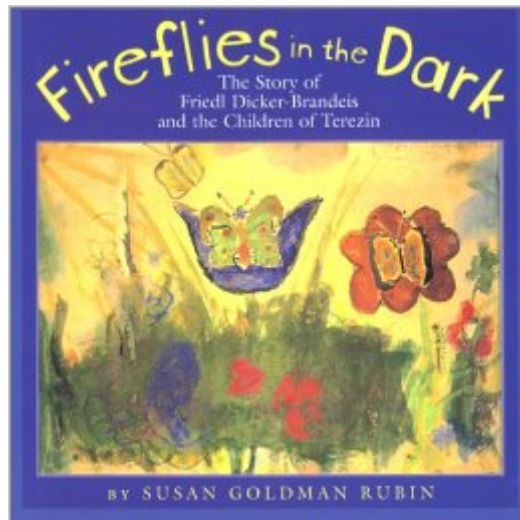


The book was found

Fireflies In The Dark: The Story Of Friedl Dicker-Brandeis And The Children Of Terezin



Synopsis

Bauhaus trained, she taught art to children in a concentration camp.

Book Information

Hardcover: 48 pages

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Age Range: 10 - 13 years

Grade Level: 5 - 8

Customer Reviews

Friedl Dicker-Brandeis was an artist of the Bauhaus who was also a Jew, sent to the Theresienstadt concentration camp and eventually executed at Auschwitz. The story, set against this bleak and oppressive history, is one of love and hope: she teaches children art and helps with "art therapy" in the camp. The importance of her choice in relentlessly pursuing a beautiful and healing expression of the spirit is revealed by the testament of a few who survived. There are numerous examples of the children's art, some of Dicker-Brandeis' art, and photographs that bring the story to life.

Interesting, informative, and moving. This is a book to read to children (ages six to nine) or to allow older children to read on their own, and of course it raises questions that will explore the very meaning of humanity.

"Fireflies in the Dark" is an amazing children's book - it covers a dark period in mankind's history, i.e. the Holocaust. This is a difficult enough subject for adults to discuss but how does one convey the story of the Holocaust to children without terrifying them? Well, "Fireflies in the Dark" manages to make this unpalatable and tragic subject accessible to young children. In this book, the story centers on the true life account of art teacher Friedl Dicker Brandeis who was shipped off to the

Terezin [known as Theresienstadt in German] Concentration Camp, a sort of 'model' camp built by the Nazis for Jews and other people they deemed undesirables during WW II. Although it was not a death camp like Dachau, Treblinka, Mauthausen and Auschwitz-Birkenau, conditions in Terezin were still deplorable with disease and starvation being rampant. When she is transported to Terezin, Ms Brandeis [accompanied by her husband] brings along mostly art supplies, as she believes there will be many children in need of an outlet for their loneliness and despair and quickly assumes a teaching position at the camp, freely giving of her services to children - mentoring them and caring for them in the darkest of times. Friedl Dicker-Brandeis is indeed a heroine of the Holocaust. Although she doesn't survive the death camp, her legacy lives on amongst the works of art by her students [both survivors of the war and those who perished] at the camp. Though only a few of her students actually survived the Nazis' horrific extermination policies, what shines through these works of art [reproduced for readers throughout the book] is the ability of art to foster hope no matter how small. It is a testament to the courage and determination of one amazing woman, and also attests to the faith and hope of children during the bleakest of times. Highly recommended for young readers.

I first heard about Friedl Dicker-Brandeis at a 2007 exhibition in Vienna titled "Austrian Art Between the Wars" - where she was honored for her remarkable ability to run art classes for children in the concentration camp at Theresienstadt (Terezin). "Fireflies" offers a glimpse of Friedl's ability to bring joy and light into the unbelievable horror of children's lives during the Holocaust.

This book is wonderful, It is a must read, Friedl Dicker-Brandeis is a heroine, and her story is amazing. One look at this book and you will be glad you bought it. Rubin did a great job choosing pictures for this book, and bringing a hard issue of WWII concentration camps to a child level. Very good at illustrating the importance of Art Therapy.

This is the story you never hear about. Friedl Dicker-Brandeis could arguably be called a founder of art therapy. She fundamentally understood art as a necessity for mental health and emotional outlet. Read this book. Think about how it would have been had she not brought along her art supplies to use and share and teach. In this way, I believe that she saved the children's lives.

Even though the story itself was impressive, the writing style was bland. I had expected to feel more emotion reading about the art produced by the children in this prison camp but my reaction was

surprisingly dry. It is a pity that the writer did not do justice to this important topic.

A compassionately written biography of an incredible woman who selflessly put the needs of the children of the Terezin (Czech) concentration camp first, her first and last thought being to help them hold on to what's good in this world in the face of unspeakable atrocities. Although this book does deal with heart-wrenching facts, the incredible faith, love and determination to not let the situation dehumanize her overshadows everything else. The children's names, and some of the survivor's stories, are included. How I wish these kinds of books were available when my girls were young. While picture books are often thought to be for children, this is a book that many adults will enjoy as well.

What makes this book wonderful and great is that it consists of the story of young children, many of whom perished in a Nazi concentration camp, yet while they lived there they produced beautiful art, pictures they drew and colored to reveal their life in that place. The tragedy of these children, and their art teacher, Friedl who showed them how to make beauty and truth in a place of despair, is heart breaking and inspiring. It persuades us that the human spirit can be so powerful that it can shine brightly even in the darkest of places.

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