



Izzy's Fire: Finding Humanity In The Holocaust

Nancy Wright Beasley

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Izzy's Fire: Finding Humanity in the Holocaust tells the harrowing yet hope-filled true story of five Lithuanian Jewish families during the Holocaust who escaped Kovno Ghetto and were ultimately hidden -- and saved -- by a Catholic farm family. All 13 Jews ended up living in a 9'x12'x4' underground hole as World War II raged around them. Some lived underground for about seven months.

Beasley draws from personal interviews, research and numerous memoirs, including extensive memoirs from Israel "Izzy" Ipson, who helped his family escape from Kovno Ghetto, one of the most notorious killing fields for Jews in Lithuania. The Ippes, as they were known then, relocated to Richmond following their liberation and later changed their name to Ipson. The story has been re-created at the Virginia Holocaust Museum in Richmond, Virginia.

Dr. Michael Berenbaum, project director of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (1988-1993) and author of *The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as Told in the United States Memorial Holocaust Museum*, says, "Izzy's Fire is filled with the passion of one woman determined to do justice to the story of another woman who lived in hiding throughout the war years. The war has soul. One feels the intensity of the struggle to survive. One senses the decency of those who were ready to rescue and the evil that haunted a mother and father and their young child in the dangerous world they lived. Nancy Wright Beasley has told a powerful story with dignified restraint. She has given voice to an underreported side of the Holocaust – life in hiding."

Adriana Trigiani, author of the best selling Big Stone Gap trilogy, offered early praise for the book. According to Trigiani, "Nancy is a passionate, dedicated writer who has written a searing story, sure to capture readers with Izzy's Fire. She proves herself to be a storyteller who uses firsthand accounts and research with equal resolve."

Izzy's Fire, which encompasses Virginia Standards of Learning at a variety of levels, will be taught as a pilot project in several eighth grade language arts classes in some Virginia public schools during the 2004-05 school term.



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