

## Escaping Into The Night

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### About the Book

The Nazis have sent Halina and her mother to live in a ghetto. She manages to escape when the ghetto is destroyed but her mother's life is taken. Halina and Batya, her friend join other Jewish escapees who live in a secret camp in the woods. The book tells of the group's struggle to resist and survive and is based on the author's study of Tuvia Bielski and his brothers and the network of camps in the forests of Belarussia.

### Discussion Questions

1. discuss Halina's feelings about her mother before and after the liquidation of the ghetto. How do her feelings change?
2. some of the characters in the book have strong religious beliefs and others do not. Select a character who is religious and one who is not and talk about how their convictions are challenged by events they experience.
3. some people escape to the forest but chose to go back to the ghetto. Why do you think they make this decision?
4. what does Mr Moskin mean when he says that there are 'times to fight and times to pray'?
5. Halina is given advice by many people. She is often told to think of the present and not of the past. Why is this good advice? Why might it be difficult to ignore the advice?
6. what happens to Batya? How can those close to her help her to recover? Is it possible to help her to recover?
7. there is evidence from more recent genocides that what happened to Batya is not uncommon when one group wants to destroy another. Many asylum seekers in the UK have suffered in similar ways. How can their new communities help them to recover? Can they ever recover?

8. would you say that the book has a positive or a negative ending? Try to give reasons for your answer.

If your students are interested in finding out more about those who have worked to resist the Nazis and to bring them to justice then Terence Copley's *The Man Who Never Forgot; The Story Of Simon Wiesenthal* published by RMEP (2007) is worth exploring. The book narrates how Simon searched for Nazi war criminals and brought them to justice but it also tells of his search for the truth about the disappearance of Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who worked in Budapest and protected 25,000 Jews before being taken prisoner when the Russian army invaded Hungary.

Questions for discussion are contained within the text and there is no need for further examples. The dedication is worth recording here 'To the memory of those who died feeling forgotten.'