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A Hidden Jewish Child From Belgium: Survival, Scars And Healing



Synopsis

Francine Lazarus survived WWII in Belgium hidden with strangers, isolated from her family, and moved from place to place. She witnessed murder and was often injured herself. With her father murdered in Auschwitz, her story continues post-war with the young Francine, neglected and abused by her family, being sent into foster care. At 13 she was sent to work and forced to abandon education. Like most child Survivors, she was told to forget about her war experiences. After an involuntary migration to Australia, her life began to improve. She created a loving family and, in middle age, earned a bachelor's and master's degrees. However, this testimony is much more than a chronicle of Francine's life. Plagued by secrecy, guilt, and shame, she explains how silence affected her life, and the events that prompted her to share her story. The book is particularly valuable because Francine relates her memories, emotions and introspection to the existing literature on Hidden Children. The research on her life, family and their history (including books, papers, archives, and museum documents) is interspersed throughout the book, offering a detailed portrayal of her situation. This description by a Survivor of her reconstruction and self-healing process is rare in existing literature. Furthermore, her immigration, part of the recovery process, is a fascinating and under-researched topic, which allows for a unique insight into post-war expatriation. The issue of reconstruction is what makes this book a considerable addition to current literature. It fills the gap between the intimacy of individual memoirs and the past ten years' academic research conducted on elderly hidden Jewish children by historians, psychologists, and other professionals.

[Subject: Memoir, Holocaust Studies, Psychology, Immigration, Jewish Studies]

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