

***Sky: A True Story of Resistance During World War II*, by Hanneke Ippisch. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.**

Story Summary: This memoir retells the author's experiences as a child growing up in Holland and her decision as a teenager to join the Dutch Resistance. This group of brave men and women risked their lives to aid Jews in escaping Nazi persecution and death. Ippisch began her work in the resistance by escorting Jews to safety and later by finding safe meeting places for key members of the underground to discuss their plans. It was during one of these meetings that Ippisch and her colleagues were discovered and arrested. Ippisch was sent to a German prison, where she endured inhuman conditions and was interrogated about her involvement in the organization. During these interrogations she refused to reveal any information that would help the Germans. In telling her own story, Ippisch shares not only her own moral courage, but also the strength of the exiled Dutch government, and the resilience of thousands of ordinary people in Holland during the war. Perhaps the most moving aspect of *Sky* is the fact that Ippisch comes across as an ordinary person, and not someone with extraordinary strength or courage. Ippisch was simply doing what she believed was right. But it is interesting to note that in the memoir's epilogue, she also reflects on the moral problems inherent in what she and other members of the resistance did such as breaking laws, stealing, and even murdering, all for the good of "the cause." Rather than justifying these acts, Ippisch identifies them as problematic and encourages readers not to take lightly the cost of doing what is right.

Objectives: Students should be able to:

- give examples of the courage and heroism of people who resisted the Nazis;
- understand and explain the reasons and motivations that caused certain people to take a stand;
- realize his or her own ability to work for justice and make a difference in one's own society and culture;
- think critically about the moral conflicts involved in taking a stand; and
- analyze and explain the factors that led the governments and citizens of some occupied countries to continue to resist the Nazis throughout the war.

Suggested Topics for Discussion:

- How would you define the word "resist" or "resistance?" How did you come to that conclusion?
- What would you consider to be Ippisch's first act of resistance? Explain.
- Tell why you think the author joined the underground.
- Why do you think Hanneke did not ask her father about his involvement in the underground?
- Explain why you think Ippisch chose to place "Story of Martin" so early in the book, rather than in the chapters that take place after the war was over. What does the story teach? How did you reach that conclusion?
- Why does Hanneke carry the large amount of money in plain view, rather than hidden? Explain.
- Tell which chapter was most important in the telling of her story and why.
- "Nothing that is normal in peacetime is normal in war, but all the horrible happenings during wartime become normal eventually." Tell what Ippisch was trying to say about war in this statement.
- Discuss the ideas brought up in the chapter called "Why." Which moral dilemmas is Ippisch struggling with? Do you believe it is okay to steal or kill for the "good of the cause?" Explain.

- Why do you think Ippisch decided to end the book the way she did? What was the significance of including the description of her life in Montana in 1996?
- Explain how this book is enhanced or weakened by the use of documents and photos. Why do you think Ippisch chose to include them?

Suggested Activities:

- Place a large piece of butcher-block paper vertically on a wall and create a chart listing the author's acts of resistance starting from the beginning of the book to the end. Write her first act of resistance at the top and progress down the paper. Once this is finished discuss as a class how her involvement changed and what the consequences of her actions were.
- Research the culture, economy, and political system of Holland prior to World War II. Then consider the factors in the country's history and politics that might have contributed to its determination in resisting the Nazis.
- Write a poem based on the photo found on page 95.
- Create a map of Holland showing the location of the places mentioned in the story.
- Design a diorama from a shoebox based on one of the scenes of chapters in the book.
- Write an essay explaining the author's use of the sky as an image. Site specific instances of the author's use of references to the sky.
- In a written or visual format compare the events occurring in Holland from Ippisch and Anne Frank's points of view.

Related Resources:

- Benchley, N. (1974). *Bright Candles: A Novel of the Danish Resistance*. New York: Harper.
- Bishop, C. (1988). *Twenty and Ten*. New York: Puffin.
- Dillon, E. (1992). *Children of Bach*. New York: Scribner.
- Drucker, M. (1993). *Jacob's Rescue: A Holocaust Story*. New York: Dell.
- Drucker, O. (1992). *Kindertransport*. New York: Henry Holt & Company.
- Fry, V. (1968). *Assignment Rescue: An Autobiography*. New York: Scholastic.
- Hallie, P. (1985). *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Linnea, S. (1993). *Raoul Wallenberg: The Man Who Stopped Death*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society.
- Mompugo, M. (1991). *Waiting for Anya*. New York: Viking.
- Petit, J. (1993). *A Place to Hide: True Stories of Holocaust Rescue*. New York: Scholastic, Inc.
- Petit, J. (1995). *A Time To Fight Back: True Stories of Children's Resistance During World War 2*. London: Macmillan.
- Prager, A. (1980). *World War II Resistance Stories*. New York: Dell.
- Ten Boom, C. (1971). *The Hiding Place*. New York: Bantam.

