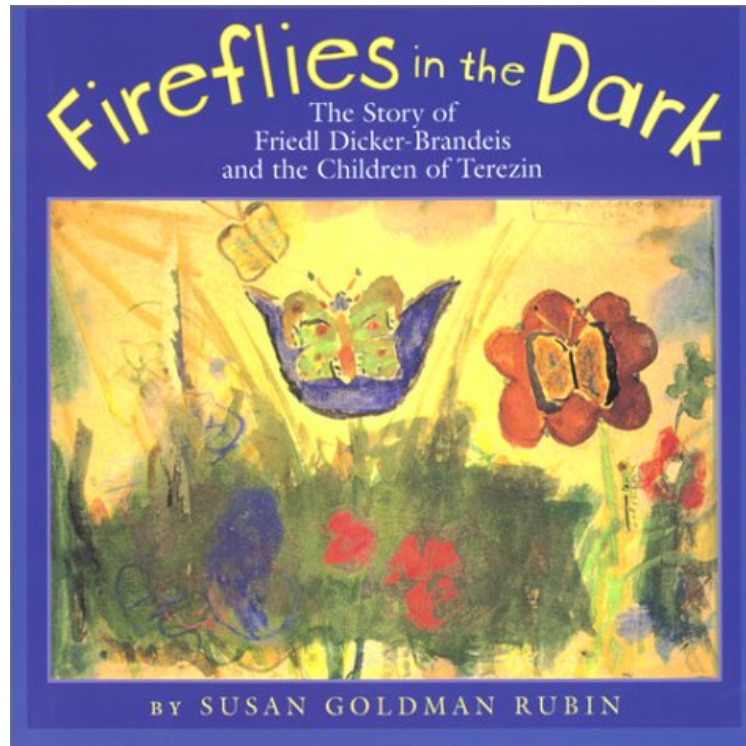


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## Fireflies in the Dark: The Story of Friedl Dicker-Brandeis and the Children of Terezin

*Susan Goldman Rubin*

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**Susan Goldman Rubin : Fireflies in the Dark: The Story of Friedl Dicker-Brandeis and the Children of Terezin** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fireflies in the Dark: The Story of Friedl Dicker-Brandeis and the Children of Terezin:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The Power of the Human Spirit By Ruth T 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. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is the story you never hear about. Friedl ... By Colt 45 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. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. But the kids still hope! By robbed14 This would be so much sweeter if it weren't for the circumstances. It is so sad.

In December 1942 Friedl Dicker-Brandeis packed her suitcase for the last time. What did she fill it with? Art supplies.

Brushes, paints, and paper were her luggage when she was forced by Nazi soldiers to move to the Terezin concentration camp. An artist and art instructor, Freidl used her limited supplies to bring a world of beauty and fantasy to children in the camp most of whom would die tragically at Auschwitz. This story reveals how flashes of kindness can bring joy and relief like fireflies in the dark. The story is enhanced with photographs and reproductions of the amazing artwork completed by Freidl Dicker-Brandeis, her students, and her colleagues during their time at Terezin.

From Publishers Weekly Rubin briefly profiles Dicker-Brandeis, a Bauhaus-trained art therapist who brought art supplies with her when she was deported from Prague to the Terezin concentration camp and then gave art lessons to the children there. "The children's paintings, crisply reproduced in color and briefly analyzed, and their poems are poignant testimony of a tragic history," noted PW. Ages 8-12. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From School Library Journal Grade 5-8-A profoundly moving testimonial to the resilience of the human spirit under intolerable conditions. Sent to the Terezin concentration camp (perhaps more widely known under its German name, Theresienstadt), art teacher Dicker-Brandeis packed art supplies in her luggage rather than personal items. Here, in a poignant narrative, is a record of her wonderful influence over hundreds of doomed youngsters, terrified by the separation from their families. Her teaching ability and artistic talents were instrumental in providing an island of sanity in a horrific situation, and in giving an outlet to the children's emotions. Lavishly illustrated with artworks by the Terezin children (preserved in two suitcases in a barracks attic), the book is a chronicle of light in the blackest of hours, and of a despicable period in human history. A list of references—books, videocassettes, recordings, and Web sites (many readily usable by young people)—is included. Elegant in appearance, devastating in content, almost overwhelming in its quiet intensity, this book is a shining augmentation to the literature of the Holocaust. Patricia Manning, formerly at Eastchester Public Library, NY Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist "Of the 15,000 children who passed through Terezin, only 100 survived. But their artwork and writings live on as testimony to their lives and spirits." This heartbreaking picture book tells the children's story by focusing on their remarkable art teacher, Friedl Dicker-Brandeis, a Jewish artist from Czechoslovakia, who took art supplies and books with her to the concentration camp and ran secret classes for the children. She and nearly all her pupils perished at Auschwitz, but after the war, 5,000 of the children's drawings, paintings, and collages were discovered hidden in two suitcases. The pictures are now exhibited around the world, and many of them are beautifully reproduced on the pages of this book. Some of the work is naive in style; some is sophisticated. There are portraits, self-portraits, and pictures that show horrific camp conditions and dreams of home (for example, a family Passover supper). The facts, including the dates, in the brief captions make you return to the pictures ("Robert Bondy painted empty landscapes over and over again with his village in the distance"). Rubin interviewed several survivors, and she integrates their personal testimonies with the history of the camp. This is an excellent book to use across the curriculum in Holocaust studies, in art, history, and literature classes with middle-grade and older readers. Rubin's detailed references and sources include books, documentary films and videos, and Web sites to help students who want to know more. There's no sensationalism here. Everything is distanced, but the sense of loss is overwhelming. Hazel Rochman Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved