



Hiding Places: A Father and His Sons Retrace Their Family's Escape from the Holocaust

Daniel Asa Rose

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In this bold and innovative memoir, part travel narrative, part spiritual quest, prize-winning author Daniel Asa Rose describes the remarkable journey in which he and his two young sons retraced their relatives' escape from Antwerp during the Second World War and also embraced, with ample amounts of wit and irreverence, the Jewish heritage that had pained and mystified him. In the wake of his divorce, Rose searches for something that will repair the damage done to his splintered family. He and the boys need to be connected to something larger than themselves; they need inoculation against evil. Rose wants to reclaim their roots and plant them deep; to resolve their dislocation so that they might all be, if not at peace, at least "in context." But ultimately, the trip is about finding out why he wants to take the trip, and, as with all important journeys, this is achieved in ways the travelers could not have predicted. As they wind through the Belgian and French countryside in search of the barn lofts and wine cellars where their relatives once hid, Rose presents razor-sharp reminiscences of the hiding places he himself used as a boy in the WASP town of Rowayton, Connecticut. The author, whose own Jewishness was largely invisible and conflicted during his childhood, beautifully conjures up his angry, impassioned struggle to find a sense of self. Through ingenious detective work and serendipitous encounters, he and the boys scout out the family hiding places, including a brothel frequented by Goring and an unknown synagogue in Paris that managed to stay open through the war, until memoir and modern-day quest converge in the shattering conclusion: father and sons are lost amidst the faded swastikas of a desolate transit camp in southern France where horrors unfolded half a century before. For all the searing pathos, however, "Hiding Places" is essentially a book of victory. The old Belgian aunts and uncles survived by their luck and their wits; they outfoxed Hitler. And throwing themselves into the quest, Rose and his sons triumph, too. In this luminous and large-hearted odyssey, Rose introduces the Holocaust and its lessons to a new generation and, in the process, heals his childhood wounds in a way that will resonate with all readers, Jew and non-Jew alike, who are interested in their own hidden places.

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