

## ABOUT

### *the Authors*

**R**UTH VANDER ZEE, teacher and award-winning author, has written several other picture books, including *Erika's Story*, and



*Mississippi Morning*. When she isn't writing, Ruth is often visiting schools, speaking at conferences, and substitute teaching. Ruth lives in Miami, Florida.

**M**ARIAN SNEIDER (1934–2005), award-winning author and family therapist, wrote children's stories since she was a young



girl. She wrote professionally for newspapers and children's magazines. *Eli Remembers* was inspired by her grandson, who traveled to Eastern Europe to discover how his family lived before and during the Holocaust.

## ABOUT

### *the Illustrator*

**B**ILL FARNSWORTH is the illustrator of many award-winning books for children, including *The Flag with Fifty-six Stars* by



Susan Goldman Rubin and *Louis Sockalexis: Native American Baseball Pioneer* by Bill Wise. "My goal with my work is to paint what I love and convey that honestly." Bill lives in Venice, Florida.

## ELI REMEMBERS

Written by Ruth Vander Zee & Marian Snieder  
Illustrated by Bill Farnsworth

Hardcover ISBN: 978-0-8028-5309-7 ♦ \$18.00  
8.75" x 11.25" ♦ 32 pages ♦ Ages 8-12  
Full-color illustrations throughout  
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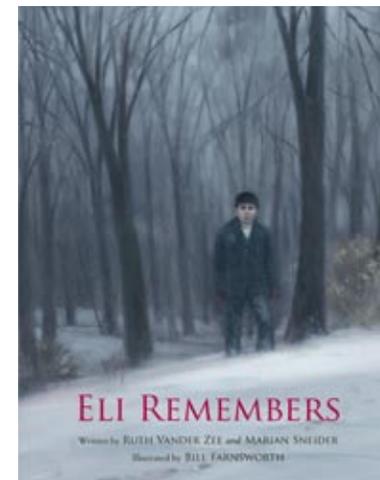
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If you have any suggestions for using *Eli Remembers* with young readers, we would be happy to hear from you.

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## ELI REMEMBERS

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Ruth Vander Zee & Marian Snieder  
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*"Why does Great-grandmother light seven candles? And why does she cry on such a happy night?" I asked.*

*My mom leaned over to me. "Eli," she said, "some things are too difficult to talk about."*

## THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

- ♦ Family relationships
- ♦ Traditions
- ♦ Jewish history
- ♦ Holocaust
- ♦ Remembering

## **VOCABULARY**

Look up the following terms in a reference book: blessing; Lithuania; Nazis; Ponar Forest; remembrance; Rosh Hashanah



## **THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE READING THE BOOK**

1. Read the title of the book and examine the illustration on the cover. What do you think this story is about? Where do you think this story takes place?

2. What is Rosh Hashanah? When is it celebrated?

3. What holidays or traditions does your family celebrate? Who celebrates with you?

4. Think about some things you do to celebrate holidays with your family. What are some of the decorations that are displayed? Do you eat special foods? What are some other traditions your family has?



## **QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON AFTER READING THE BOOK**

1. Eli celebrates Rosh Hashanah Eve with his family every year by eating a special meal. What is the importance of the honey cake?

2. Eli's great-grandmother lights seven candles and says a prayer every year. What is

the significance of the seven candles? Why is Eli confused about them?

3. What was the "secret" Eli's great-grandmother did not want to talk about? How many generations kept that secret? Why do you think his family did not talk about it with Eli?

4. Why was Eli's memorial of seven roses in the snow and his prayer in the bottom of the pit so important to his family?

5. By making a memorial and saying a prayer called the Sh'ma, Eli helped his family begin to talk about the family secret that occurred many years before. How did creating the memorial change the characters in the story? How do the authors and illustrator show this change?

6. How does Eli's story remind you of something in your own family?



## **ACTIVITIES**

1. Research the importance of Rosh Hashanah. During what time of year is it celebrated? What are the customs associated with this holiday? Share your findings with the class.

2. Eli traveled with his family to the Ponar Forest in Lithuania. On a map, locate the Ponar Forest. How close is it to the capital city of Vilnius?

3. Eli and his family are Jewish. Use library or online resources to research the Jewish religion.

Write down some of the beliefs of the Jewish religion and some of its celebrations. Share your findings with a classmate.

4. Ask a family member to share stories about his or her past. Write a summary of one of the important events your family member shares. Include photographs or a sketch of the event.

5. Use library or online resources to research how the lives of Jewish people in Europe were affected by World War II. Compare this to the hardships Jewish people faced in the United States. Record your findings in a chart to share with the class.

6. During World War II, the Nazis killed over six million Jewish people. With guidance from your teacher, use online resources to research the origins of the Nazi party and answer the following questions:

What country were the Nazis from?

Who led the Nazi party during World War II?

Which countries sympathized with Germany?

Which countries fought against Hitler and his allies?



*"...simple, direct language follows Eli's trajectory from puzzlement and ignorance to horrific realization and resolve...Eli realizes that the world is bigger than his own experience, and that each generation is entrusted with the responsibility and sacredness of memory."*

— Publishers Weekly