

## Essie: The True Story of a Teenage Fighter in the Bielski Partisans

Essie Shor, Andrea Zakin



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**Essie: The True Story of a Teenage Fighter in the Bielski Partisans** Essie Shor, Andrea Zakin Some Jews in the Holocaust fought back! This is the story of one of them. Living in the forest through bitter winter stalking and being stalked Essie s life in the Bielski Partisan camp is full of danger, adventure, and intrigue. Essie Shor was just 16 when the Nazis invaded her town, Novogrudek (then a part of Poland, now in Belarus) and killed 4000 Jews on a single day, including her mother and all her brothers and sisters. The 700 who remained, including Essie and her father, were herded into prison-like conditions in the ghetto the Nazis established. But Essie escaped at night through a hole in the fence, and became one of the first 25 Jews to join her cousins, the Bielski Brothers, in an encampment that would eventually save 1200 Jews. Living in the forest, we no longer felt like cattle, as we had in the ghetto. However, we had to move constantly. There were German soldiers looking for us everywhere, and sometimes villagers living nearby would tell them where we were. Once, we had to leave in a hurry when the Nazis discovered the hoof prints of our cows in the snow. This was a different kind of fear. We went from being caged to being hunted. And to being a hunter. Essie became a teenage Partisan, a guerilla fighter in the resistance. More than 60 years later, Essie still remembers those two years fighting for the freedom of her people. Now, as more people learn about the Bielski Partisans by watching the movie, Defiance, she shares her dramatic story at last.

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