

The Brave Cyclist:

The True Story of a Holocaust Hero



Literature Guides

Author:
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Illustrator:
Chiara Fedele

Awards

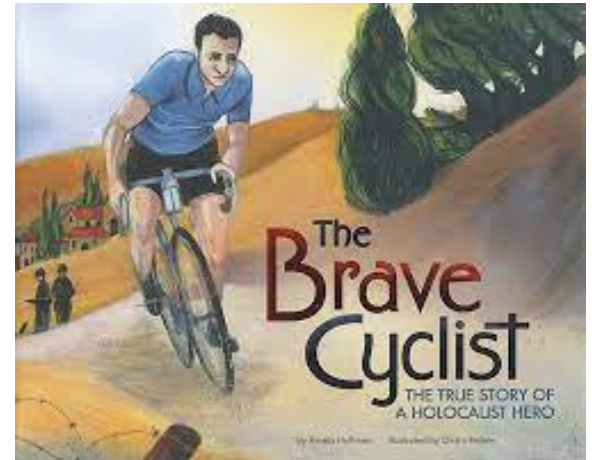
Junior Library Guild Selection, 2019

Vocabulary

courier, cargo, sacrifice

Reviews

[Jewish Book Council Review](#)



Summary

Gino Bartali, two-time winner of the Tour de France, risked his life by smuggling false identification cards in his bicycle to protect Jews during World War II.

FAIR Standard

DV.3-5.8 I can discuss specific people from history who drew power from their humanity, culture, and ideals to fight racism and intolerance.

Discussion

1. "The faces of innocent people in the photographs he smuggled reminded Gino that his mission was worthy of any sacrifice." Why do you think seeing people's faces made a difference to Gino?
2. Were Gino's bike missions for the cardinal as difficult and daring as his other racing competitions? Why or why not?
3. Benito Mussolini declared himself Il Duce, "The Leader" – and "anyone daring to disagree with him risked severe punishment." What do you think about this kind of leader? How do you think the Italian people felt about him?

Discussion

4. In the Afterword, we learn that Gino Bartali often refused interviews and preferred not to share much about his actions during World War II, saying, “I don’t want to appear to be a hero.” What do you think makes someone a hero? Do you think Gino is a hero?

5. Even though Gino was a weak and sickly child, he became a talented, strong athlete and helped to save others’ lives. When have you shown perseverance when something was challenging? What is a skill or talent you have that could help others?

Activities

1. The illustrator, Chiara Fedele, is from Italy and showed the country’s lush landscapes throughout the pictures. Create a map showing the 110-mile route Gino took from Florence to Assisi, Italy. Using the resources below, choose some special places from the story to draw on your map.

- [Ponte a Ema](#)
- [The Arno River](#)
- [The Grand Synagogue](#)
- [The Cardinal's office](#)
- [The Bargello](#)

Challenge option: Can you find additional meaningful places to add to your map?

2. During World War II, many people had to hide their feelings, their belongings, or themselves to stay safe or protect others. Gino removed his bicycle seat to hide identification cards in his bike frame. Draw or create a small model bicycle with secret flaps. Under each hidden flap, write down a sentence describing how different people might have felt at important moments in the story.

The Jewish people in Italy

Gino Bartali

Cardinal Dalla Costa

Gino’s parents

Luigi and Trento Brizi, the printers