

***The Man From the Other Side*, by Uri Orlev. New York: Puffin Books, 1995.**

**Story Summary:** This book is based on the true experiences of a Polish journalist, now dead, whom Uri Orlev met in Israel when they were both adults. Marek, his mother, and stepfather are a family living outside the Warsaw Ghetto in Poland. When Marek turns fourteen, his stepfather tells him of his smuggling operations, which provides food and sometimes weapons to Jews in the ghetto, and includes him in the illegal activity. When Marek's mother discovers that Marek has joined two young thugs to steal from a ghetto escapee, she reveals the true identity of his father, who is Jewish. Marek's remorse leads him to befriend another escapee and find him shelter. When the Jews in the ghetto erupt into battle against the Nazis, Marek's new friend insists on returning to fight. Marek accompanies him and engages in battle until his stepfather rescues him and several Jews.

**Objectives:** Students should be able to:

- give examples of courage and heroism demonstrated by people who resisted the Nazis;
- explain the reasons and motivations that caused certain people to take a stand or help others in need;
- consider the moral conflicts and factors involved in taking a stand; and
- explain how those in the ghetto, though limited in their resources, fought for their freedom.

**Suggested Topics for Discussion:**

- Discuss Marek's relationship with his stepfather. Describe what it is like in the beginning and how their relationship changes throughout the story. Explain the reasons for these changes.
- Explain why Marek wanted to help his stepfather smuggle food into the Jewish ghetto. How and why did his feelings change during his first trip into the sewers?
- When Marek shaved the Jew he was faced with great peer pressure. Describe a time when you have felt pressured to do something that you knew was wrong. What does Marek do to make up for his actions?
- Think about the different characters in the story. Explain what makes each of them unique.
- Describe Marek's reaction when he discovers the true identity of his real father. How does this news change Marek?
- Explain how Pan Josek had different effects on the characters in the story.
- If the people in the Warsaw Ghetto knew they were outnumbered and lacked sufficient arms, why do you think they went ahead with the uprising? Explain why you agree or disagree with their decision.
- Explain how Marek reacted to Pan Josek's death. Would you have done what he did? Why or why not?
- Would you consider Marek to be a hero? Explain. If you don't consider Marek to be a hero, than who were the heroes in the story and why?
- Tell why Marek decided to let Antony adopt him. Explain what this adoption meant to both of them.

- On page 2 Marek shares his apprehension about telling his story. After reading this book, why do you think Marek was so afraid to have people know about his life? If you could say something to Marek today, what would it be and why?

### **Suggested Activities:**

- Write a character sketch describing one of the characters in the story. Each one has a unique personality developed in the story.
- Write a research paper about the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Be sure to include information such as how they acquired arms and intelligence, and the uprising's effect on the ghetto's inhabitants and the Nazi government.
- Divide the class into small groups and assign each group one of the profiles included in *Rescue: The Story of How Gentiles Saved Jews*. Then have the small groups create a display and a presentation for the rest of the class about the people they studied.
- View the video *Courage to Care*. Then design posters that promote the ideas in the video. Display the posters in the classroom or halls.
- Research what has become of the area where the Warsaw Ghetto was located and if anything remains as a symbol of what occurred there.

### **Related Resources:**

- Benchley, N. (1974). *Bright Candles: A Novel of the Danish Resistance*. New York: Harper.
- Bishop, C. (1988). *Twenty and Ten*. New York: Puffin.
- Dillon, E. (1992). *Children of Bach*. New York: Scribner.
- Drucker, M. (1993). *Jacob's Rescue: A Holocaust Story*. New York: Dell.
- Drucker, O. (1992). *Kindertransport*. New York: Henry Holt & Company.
- Fry, V. (1968). *Assignment Rescue: An Autobiography*. New York: Scholastic.
- Hallie, P. (1985). *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Linnea, S. (1993). *Raoul Wallenberg: The Man Who Stopped Death*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society.
- Meed, Vladka. (1993). *On Both Sides of the Wall*. Washington D.C.: USHMM.
- Morpugo, M. (1991). *Waiting for Anya*. New York: Viking.
- Petit, J. (1993). *A Place to Hide: True Stories of Holocaust Rescue*. New York: Scholastic, Inc.
- Petit, J. (1995). *A Time To Fight Back: True Stories of Children's Resistance During World War 2*. London: Macmillan.
- Prager, A. (1980). *World War II Resistance Stories*. New York: Dell.
- Ten Boom, C. (1971). *The Hiding Place*. New York: Bantam.
- Vinke, H. (1984). *The Short Life of Sophie Scholl*. New York: Harper & Row.