Book Review

Title: The Journey That Saved Curious George: The True Wartime Escape of Margret and H.A. Rey
Author: Louise Borden
Illustrator: Allan Drummond
Reviewer: Tessa McMillan
Publisher: Houghton Mifflin
Publication Year: 2005
ISBN: 9780618339242
Number of Pages: 72
Interest Level: Primary, Intermediate, Young Adult
Rating: Outstanding

Review

Many years ago, two Jewish artists from Germany met in Brazil, started a business, fell in love, and got married. The Brazilians could not pronounce their German names, so the couple shortened them to H.A. and Margret Rey. While honeymooning in Europe, the Reys decided to stay in Paris so H.A. could pursue a career as a children’s book author and illustrator. During this time, H.A. started developing stories about a curious little monkey, influenced by the many monkeys he saw in Brazil. But Hitler’s forces delayed H.A.’s plans for the little monkey until he and Margret could safely escape Europe.

Written and structured in the simple style of the Curious George stories, Borden unveils the tale of this amazing duo who endured much to bring about a priceless picture book story. Along with Borden’s concise text, Drummond’s watercolor illustrations capture the Rey’s hope and perseverance as they carefully made their escape from Europe. Included in the book are maps showing their travels, H.A.’s daily agenda entries, Margret’s photographs, original manuscripts for Curious George, and early concept art for several of H.A.’s children’s books. Unlike the Curious George books, this is not a story for very young readers. However, The Journey That Saved Curious George is a rich resource for older elementary readers who grew up enjoying the mischievous escapades of a curious little monkey.