

Luigi and the Barefoot Races

Dan Paley

Illustrated by Aaron Boyd

Hardcover, \$16.95

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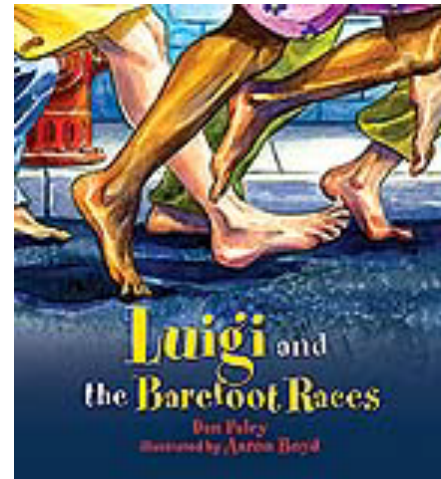
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9 x 10, 32 pages, color illustrations

Children / Tall-Tales; Grades 1-5



Summary

On Regent Street in Philadelphia, Luigi is the king of the barefoot racers! But when he agrees to race a mysterious challenger from another neighborhood, he unwittingly becomes an instant underdog. On race day the challenger strikes fear into Luigi, but he keeps his word and wins the race.

Luigi and the Barefoot Races will lead to discussions about

- Tall tales
- Being an underdog
- Keeping your word and why it is important
- Urban culture
- Friendly competition vs. over competitiveness
- Barefoot running movement

Before You Read

Background

Luigi and the Barefoot Races will serve in introducing students and children to the concept of tall tales. Author Dan Paley insists his story is based on true accounts, but can a boy no matter how fast he is really beat a dog in a race? Contents featured in the back

of the book will provide an overview of what a tall tale is and lead to an activity in creating one's own tall tale. The book also provides a basis for discussing competition between kids, such as the idea of friendly competitiveness vs. racing someone only for the sake of winning. It can be useful to explain to kids that winning is not as important as keeping your word and doing the best that they can do, even if they only get second place sometimes. *Luigi and the Barefoot Races* may also encourage thinking about running for important causes, just for fun, or health benefits.

Access Prior Knowledge

- Have you ever competed against someone that you were afraid of?
- Discuss what a tall tale means

After You Read

Activity

Invent a Tall Tale

Objective: To have children grasp the concept of a tall tale more effectively by creating one of their own. Encourages creativity and writing and group work.

- Break into groups and brainstorm the best adventures you have shared with friends or family.
- Then pick an “unlikely” kid to be the hero of that adventure and have him or her participate in an unbelievable event.
- Make the story as vivid as possible and give it a happy ending.
- Write the story and illustrate it.

Celebrate the “Underdog”—Site and Design a Statue

Objective: Cities and towns are full of monuments that tell stories to honor their heroes. This activity encourages children to learn about the importance of monuments and thinking about underdogs.

- Explore your community and learn about its monuments. Imagine a place in your community where a statue to honor a local underdog might be welcome.
- Design a monument to your chosen underdog for display in your community. If statues of Paul Bunyan have an axe, and Molly Pitcher had pitcher, what would your statue need?

For Further Discussion

- Why might running in races be important? Special causes, fun, health benefits?
- Do you think running barefoot is safe? Why or why not?

Internet Resources

You may find the following Internet resources helpful as your students continue to explore the topic of the book.

American Folklore

An online resource of hundreds of tall tales and folk stories, including cross cultural genres

<http://americanfolklore.net/folklore/tall-tales/>

Back on My Feet

A Philadelphia based organization that uses running to create self-sufficiency in the lives of those experiencing homelessness

<http://www.backonmyfeet.org>