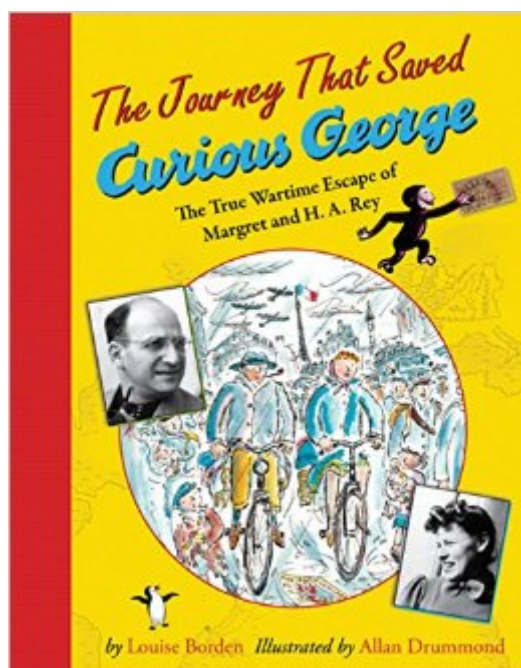


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# The Journey That Saved Curious George: The True Wartime Escape Of Margret And H.A. Rey



## Synopsis

In 1940, Hans and Margret Rey fled their Paris home as the German army advanced. They began their harrowing journey on bicycles, pedaling to Southern France with children's book manuscripts among their few possessions. Louise Borden combed primary resources, including Hans Rey's pocket diaries, to tell this dramatic true story. Archival materials introduce readers to the world of Hans and Margret Rey while Allan Drummond dramatically and colorfully illustrates their wartime trek to a new home. Follow the Reys' amazing story in this unique large format book that resembles a travel journal and includes full-color illustrations, original photos, actual ticket stubs and more. A perfect book for Curious George fans of all ages. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

Series: Curious George

Paperback: 80 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (August 16, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0547417462

ISBN-13: 978-0547417462

Product Dimensions: 0.2 x 8.8 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (64 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #57,076 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #32 in [Books > Children's Books >](#)

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Age Range: 7 - 10 years

Grade Level: 2 - 5

## Customer Reviews

Over the years, millions have followed along as Curious George learned the alphabet, went to the hospital, received a medal, and flew a kite. His most dramatic adventure, though, took place the year before his 1941 debut when his creators, Hans and Margret Rey, embarked on a journey that not only saved their lives but, in a sense, George's as well. On June 12, 1940, as the German army marched through France, the Reys left Paris, traveling on bicycles that Hans made using spare parts. For three days they pedaled, on the first leg of what was to become a months-long journey that took them to five countries. Their final destination was New York City, where they made their

new home. On a gray, rainy day the Reys left Paris with little more than the clothes on their backs, but Hans carried precious cargo in the basket strapped to his bike --- a manuscript for their children's book featuring a cheeky monkey named Fifi (later re-named George). As Louise Borden recounts, Hans and Margret were both raised Jewish in Hamburg, Germany, and their families were acquainted. In 1935, nine years after Hans had left Hamburg to settle in Rio de Janeiro, Margret too departed Germany. After working as a photographer in London, she made her way to Rio to look up Hans Rey, with whom she then began collaborating professionally and personally. After the two artists were married in August of 1935, they returned to Europe and settled in Paris. It was here that they began writing and illustrating children's books, but five years after they arrived in the French capital they were forced to undertake their journey. Paris was becoming an increasingly dangerous place --- especially so for German-born Jews --- and hours after they left, the city fell to enemy forces. Borden writes in the book's Introduction, "For many years, I was intrigued by the story of Margret and H. A. Rey's flight from Paris.... Others in the children's book field had mentioned this escape from the Nazi invasion, but no one seemed to know the details of those harrowing days. The story felt incomplete. I wanted to know more. I wanted real images. I was curious, just like the Reys' famous little monkey, George." The result of Borden's curiosity is this vibrant biography, told in picture book format. She does a fine job balancing serious aspects, including Hitler's rise to power and the changing political climate, with the whimsical, such as the fact that Hans and Margret owned two pet monkeys while living in Brazil and later shared their Paris apartment with two turtles. THE JOURNEY THAT SAVED CURIOUS GEORGE is enhanced by Allan Drummond's colorful illustrations, along with the Reys' artwork, excerpts from Hans' pocket diaries, photos, correspondence, and mementos from Hans and Margret's long journey. Readers young and old will delight in this true-life tale of Curious George's creators. --- Reviewed by Shannon McKenna

Voila! It was there! A book that I had been waiting to read. On my desk I found *The Journey That Saved Curious George: The True Wartime Escape of Margret and H. A. Rey* by Louise Borden, illustrated by Allan Drummond. Oooh, it was a nice looking book! Everyone remembers Curious George, the mischievous monkey of picture book fame. If we did not read the books as children, we read them to our children. As a parent, I grew rather tired of them. Still, I wanted to read this book about an episode in the authors' lives. Margret and H. A. Rey were living in Paris at the start of World War II, and being Jewish, were very concerned for their safety. Both had been born in Hamburg and had become a citizen of Brazil, but they had been in France for four years working on children's books. Two manuscripts were ready for publication, one about a penguin names

Whiteblack and another about a monkey named Fifi, but the European publishers no longer had paper. The couple's preparations to flee Paris became more serious when the Germans crossed through Belgium and the Netherlands. Getting all the paperwork completed was maddening. Louise Borden heard the story of the Reys' escape years ago and wanted to know more. She visited de Grummond Children's Literature Collection at the University of Southern Mississippi to find the Reys' papers, wrote to people who had known the Reys, and traveled to Paris and the towns through which the couple escaped. She enlisted Allan Drummond to illustrate the story. The result is a fine book for youth and adults. I enjoyed looking at Drummond's rich illustrations, showing the Reys on their bicycles in Paris, with people in their scarves and berets reading newspapers, crowded onto buses, carrying babies, all fleeing as Nazi planes dot the sky. Photos of the Reys, their passports, their day calendars, and other artifacts and illustrations of Curious George and Whiteblack also decorate the pages. The penguin is really cute. I should read Whiteblack the Penguin Sees the World soon.

I gave this children's biography to my husband who collects Curious George memorabilia, but everyone in the family has taken time to read it, because three generations of us have loved the work of Margret and Hans Rey. This is the interesting story of their escape from Paris on bikes just as the Nazis began to occupy the city. It's a perfect choice for a fourth or fifth grader who is learning about World War II or one who really loved Curious George as a preschooler.

This is a beautifully written, historically accurate book. If you want to spark your child's curiosity about history along with his curiosity about George, this book will do it. Adult readers will learn too. Our grandchildren love the book and ask us to read it over and over. We need more historically based books for children.

Not everyone knows that the drawings of Curious George probably saved the Reys' lives during WWII as they traveled on bicycle from Paris to Spain to escape the Nazi occupation of France. They left Paris on bicycles just days before the German tanks rolled down the streets of Paris. They were Jewish so the few times they were stopped on their way south to Spain, they would show their manuscript of their first Curious George book with the drawings of H.A. and were finally left alone to proceed on their bikes. A wonderful saga for all lovers of Curious George at a middle school reading level. How glad we are that they escaped the Nazis and were finally able to sail to Brazil and then to New York to begin to publish their wonderful Curious George series. By the way, the 1st 7 books in

the CG series are the best and anything that H.A. and Margaret Rey did is worth owning! Since their death, many others have written and illustrated Curious George books and there are now hundreds of CG books, a cartoon series but they are trash compared to the "real" thing!

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