Aristides de Sousa Mendes
Hero of the Holocaust

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Translated from Portuguese by Della Peretti
IN 1943, AT THE SOUP KITCHEN OF THE LISBON JEWISH COMMUNITY...

BUT YOU ARE SPEAKING PORTUGUESE. YOUR DINING ROOM IS INSIDE THERE ON THE LEFT, THIS ONE IS JUST FOR REFUGEES!

WE ARE ALL REFUGEES!

HE WAS THE CONSUL IN BORDEAUX. HE ISSUED VISAS TO MORE THAN 30,000 PEOPLE THREATENED BY THE NAZIS. THEY WERE THEN ABLE TO PASS THROUGH LISBON TO FIND SAFETY IN AMERICA. HE WAS PUNISHED FOR DISOBEDIENCE TO THE ORDERS OF HIS GOVERNMENT, AND NOW HE AND HIS ENTIRE FAMILY LIVE IN POVERTY.

BUT WHO WAS ARISTIDES DE SOUSA MENDES, ANYWAY?

IN 1890, IN CABANAS DE VIRIATO, TWIN BOYS PLAY IN THE GARDEN OF THEIR PARENTS' ESTATE. THEY ARE NAMED ARISTIDES AND CESAR DE SOUSA MENDES.

LOOK ARISTIDES, THE PIGS ARE EATING THE BRAID!

AUNTIE, WHO'S THAT MAN?

I'LL TELL YOU, ISAAC. HE IS A PORTUGUESE DIPLOMAT WHO SAVED THE LIVES OF MANY PEOPLE, BOTH JEWS AND OTHER REFUGEES, FROM THE WAR. HIS NAME IS ARISTIDES DE SOUSA MENDES.

JOSE DE SOUSA MENDES, THE FATHER OF THESE BOYS, WHO ARE NOW FIVE YEARS OLD, WAS A JUDGE IN COIMBRA. HE WAS A CONSERVATIVE CATHOLIC MONARCHIST, RESPECTED BY EVERYONE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE WHERE THEY LIVED.

GOD BLESS YOU, JUDGE. HOW ARE THE BOYS?

THE FATHER OF THE TWINS PRACTICED HIS PROFESSION WITH DEEP KINDNESS AND A STRONG SENSE OF JUSTICE.

HERE IS MY VERDICT! I HOPE THAT THE ACCUSED WILL THINK ABOUT HIS CRIME DURING HIS INCARCERATION. I WILL PERSONALLY SUPERVISE HIS REHABILITATION.

GOD BE WITH YOU, JOAQUIM PERÔDIO. THE CHILDREN ARE WELL AS YOU CAN SEE. THANK YOU!

YOUR HONOR, I DO NOT ACCEPT SOME LITTLE TOKENS FOR HAVING ISSUED A FAIR VERDICT.

I TOLD YOU I DON'T ACCEPT GIFTS! KEEP THESE THINGS FOR YOUR CHILDREN, I WAS COMING DOWN HERE.
THE YOUNG ARISTIDES AND CÉSAR ATTENDED PRIMARY SCHOOL IN MANAUS.

I LOVE GEOGRAPHY, WHAT ABOUT YOU, ARISTIDES?

I'D LIKE TO TRAVEL ABROAD.

OUR TWINS ARE ALREADY HOME FROM SCHOOL.

AND YOU, JOSÉ PAULO, DON'T RUN AND GO WASH YOUR HANDS! EVERYONE TO THE TABLE!

PAPA, MAMA, I WAS WAITING FOR MY BROTHERS!

MRS. ANGELINA, DINNER IS SERVED.

IN 1907, THE SOUSA MENDES TWINS GRADUATED WITH LAW DEGREES.

YOU HAD BETTER GRADES THAN I DID, ARISTIDES, CONGRATULATIONS!

ONE DIPLOMA FOR BOTH TWINS WOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH! THEY ARE SO ALIKE, HA HA!

NORMALY YOU'RE THE BETTER STUDENT, WE BOTH GOT PRESTIGIOUS DEGREES!

NOW WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO WITH OUR FUTURE, CÉSAR? WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I WANT TO BE A DIPLOMAT. WEREN'T YOU THE ONE WHO WANTED TO GO ABROAD? THIS IS OUR OPPORTUNITY.

IT SEEMED AS THOUGH THE TWO YOUNG MEN WERE GOING TO PURSUE A CAREER IN LAW LIKE THEIR FATHER, WHEN...

IN THE MEANWHILE, ARISTIDES FELL IN LOVE WITH HIS PATERNAL FIRST COUSIN.

WILL YOU MARRY ME, ANGELINA?

YES, I LOVE YOU VERY MUCH.

THE TWINS ENROLL AT THE UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA.

EVERYTHING IN COIMBRA FASCINATES ME. THIS UNIVERSITY REPRESENTS THE BEST OF EUROPEAN CULTURE.

IT WAS FOUNDED AT THE SAME TIME AS THE ONES IN OXFORD, BOLOGNA AND PARIS. I AM PROUD TO BE STUDYING HERE.
José Ruy was born in 1930 in Amadora, Portugal. He studied graphic arts at Antonio Arroio School under Rodrigues Alves and received further training at Belas Artes. He started writing and drawing at age 14 and has published around 80 volumes throughout his career, including around 50 in comic format. He has contributed to numerous newspapers and magazines and edited and directed the second series of the well-known Portuguese children's newspaper, O Mosquito. His work has been exhibited in many countries of Europe as well as in China, Japan and Brazil. In his native city, a school and a street are named after him.