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LANGUIN ACTIVE READING

LEVEL 3

Stories of Courage

Clare Gray



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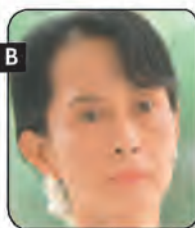
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What's the book about?

- 1 This book is about brave people. Who do you know who is/was very brave? Make notes on two people in the box. Then tell another student about them.

Name	Brave Act(s)
1	
2	

- 2 Match each of the pictures (A–D) with a sentence below.



- This person is still fighting for Burma's freedom today.
- This young American lost an arm in a terrible accident.
- This famous runner won gold medals for Cuba.
- This person wanted to protect the trees around the Amazon from big business.

1.2 What happens first?

Look at the title of Story 1, the words below it, and the pictures in the story. Are these sentences about Ana Quirot true (✓) or not (X)? What do you think?

- Ana will become the fastest woman in Cuba.
- Ana will win an Olympic gold medal.
- Ana will have an accident.
- Ana will go to the hospital.
- Ana will lose a leg.

Running for her Life

Ana woke up. Fidel Castro was by her bedside. "I will run again," she told him. Then her eyes closed.

Ana Fidelia Quirot was born in a small town in the east of Cuba. She was a happy child and from an early age she loved running. Sports were important to her family and they were important to Cuba, too. The Cuban government wanted to produce the best doctors, the smartest teachers, and the strongest sports players in the world. There were special government schools for intelligent young scientists and for children who were good at sports.

By the time she was ten years old Ana could run very fast. Soon she was winning races—often without shoes! She wanted someone from a government sports school to see her. Ana knew that only Cuba's best students were chosen. So she practiced hard every day. At last she heard the news that she was waiting for. At thirteen she had a place at a government sports school. "If I work hard," she thought, "I can be the fastest girl in Cuba."

The other children at Ana's new school were tall and strong. But Ana's body was changing. She stopped growing taller and started growing fatter. She felt heavier too, so she practiced less often. Ana's future did not seem bright and exciting to her now.

But when Ana's school asked her to leave, she thought very carefully. She realized that she loved her school and her life there. It was her dream and she did not want to lose it. Luckily, Blas Beato, one of Cuba's most famous running teachers, knew about Ana. She was heavy, but she was strong and fast. Beato could see that. "Try the 400-meter race," he said. "I think you can be the best."

It was not easy, but with Beato's help, Ana quickly became thinner. She pushed her body hard, and began winning races at school again. Soon she was the fastest girl in Cuba at 400 and 800 meters. Her mind became stronger, too. She learned to fight against pain and to believe in her dreams.

Ana finished school and practiced harder and longer every day. In 1987 she won two gold **medals** at the Pan American Games* in Indianapolis, in the US, and in 1989 she won *all* of her 800-meter races. Ana was very proud to run for her country. Now her name was famous around the world.

* Pan American (Pan Am) Games: the biggest and most important sports games for North, South, and Central American countries. They happen every four years.

medal /'medl/ (n) a flat piece of metal, used as a prize



Four years after her double gold medal success in Indianapolis, Ana was ready to run again in the Pan Am Games. These races were very important to Ana because the Pan Am Games were coming to Cuba. She was Cuba's most famous runner—and her country was watching her.

Ana's races were fast and exciting. She ran faster than the other runners in the 400- and 800-meter races—two more gold medals! Ana looked up at the crowd. Thousands of happy Cubans were calling her name and smiling. Ana turned and walked slowly toward her country's president, Fidel Castro. Then she took one of her medals and placed it around Castro's neck. It was her way of saying “thank you” to Cuba, her country. She felt proud of the past and excited about the future. But early the next year, Ana's dreams were destroyed before they started.



On January 23, 1993, Ana was washing some clothes. She was washing in the Cuban way, in a large bowl on top of a stove. She carefully added a little **alcohol** to the washing to make the clothes fresh and bright. But some alcohol fell onto the stove. In seconds, fire covered Ana's body. She moved away from the stove and tried to pull her sweater off, but the fire quickly reached her skin. Ana's body burned with heat and pain. She fell heavily to the floor.

alcohol /'ælkə,həl, -həl/ (n) *alcohol* is used for cleaning.



Stories of Courage

Clare Gray

American English

Original

Some people refuse to give in to terrible personal problems. Some courageously put their own lives in danger as they fight for others. The eight true stories in this book show us how brave men and women can be. They help us all to find new strength.

Number of words (excluding activities): 9,451

Series Editors: Jocelyn Potter and Andy Hopkins

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3

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Stories of Courage

Clare Gray

Level 3
1200 headwords
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