

UCI Human Rights  
Summer Internship

# LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL

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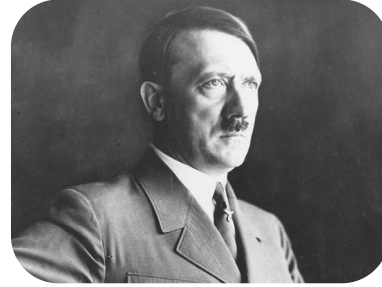
## Brief Summary

Guido Orefice was a young man living in Italy, whose dream was to open a bookstore. He begins his journey as a waiter, when he meets a teacher by the name of Dora. He instantly falls for her, and they have a child named Giosue. The movie skips ahead to a much darker time towards the end of the Holocaust in World War II. Taken into a Nazi Labor camp, Guido tries to shield his son from the horrors of the camp by creating a game, whereby the first to get 1,000 points wins the ultimate award, a tank.



# Historical Context

- Takes place in Tuscany, Italy in 1939
  - Beginning of WWII
- Benito Mussolini: Fascist dictator of Italy
- As facism grew, anti-semitism did as well
  - Nazi Eugenics influenced Italian treatment of Jewish people
    - Kristallnacht in Germany
  - Jewish families were relocated in Italy to labor camps in German occupied territories
- Concentration camps (Auschwitz, Treblinka)
- Zyklon-B gas utilized to commit genocide



# What is the angle that the movie looks at human rights? What is the context?

Many scenes in the movie can be related to human rights

- Prison vs Quarantine
- Shower time
- Brainwash-Adolf Hitler's education

## Angle:

- The struggles of survival faced in the concentration camp comes from the perspective of a Jewish-Italian man

## Context:

- Holocaust/World War II
- Nazi concentration camps



# Think critically about the language of film and the messages with regard to human rights.

## The language of film in *Life is Beautiful*:

- First segment of the film: a slice of life
- Creates an attachment to the characters
- A bond between the protagonist and the audience
- The consequences/implications begin to affect the viewer in a more personal manner

## The message:

- Personal connections change our views on human rights violations
- Pathos vs. Ethos
- The difference between subjective and objective decisions; not mutually exclusive
- Stories can't be reduced to statistics

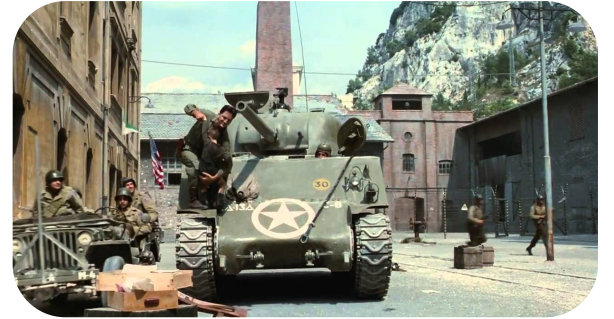
# What is the message of this movie? Do you agree?

- Preservation of Innocence
  - Healthy, mature exposure to major issues in children
  - Developmental stage, Mental Health
- Hope as a necessity in times of cruelty
  - Insight into beauty, love, and life
- These messages can be seen elsewhere
  - Rwandan Genocide, Human Trafficking, Syrian War



# Did you learn anything from this movie?

- Life is what you make it seem
  - Perception is powerful
    - Theme = life is beautiful because you have the power to make it seem that way
  - Ex) Guido translating the Nazi instructions, making up fake scenarios like the train having no seats, and the point system for the “game.”
- Even in the most horrific situations, love will always fuel resilience
  - Guido loved his son so much that he stuck with his positive/comedic mindset to shield him
    - Ex) first half compared to last half of film
  - Survival instinct → Guido was able to uniquely disguise the reality of the Holocaust



# Describe two images or scenes from the film that stand out in your mind.

- **Work in the Factory (Anvils)**

- Disregard for human life/dehumanization
- Lack of dignity and rights
- Subjection to torture and servitude
- Irony: The men are carrying metal that will be used to make weapons



- **Hiding of Giosue Orefice**

- Preservation of innocence
- Ultimate sacrifice for life
- Ingenuity promotes “survival of the fittest”
- Significance of the “fight or flight” reaction in times of critical conflict





# Symbolism

- Tank
  - Symbolic of hope, new beginnings, and unity
- Riddles
  - Symbolic of the Nazi's twisted way of thinking
- Humor
  - Symbolic of paternal devotion
- Schopenhauer Method
  - Symbolic of will and determination

