



0. PARENTAL ANGUISH and a KIDNAPPING - Story Preface

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This image, from "[Bologna Welcome](#)," depicts what once was the layout of Bologna's Jewish quarter (also called the ghetto). Beginning in 1556, the Papal State ordered Jewish people to live in a specific area of the city. They lived in this crowded part of town until 1569 when—again upon order of the Papal State—they were completely expelled for the first time. Entrances into the Jewish part of town were opened in the morning and were sealed at dusk.

When Jews were allowed back to live and work in Bologna, in 1586, they stayed in the city until they were expelled again in 1593 (when around 900 people were forced to leave). Thereafter, for more than 200 years, no Jew was allowed to live or work in Bologna. After Jews were allowed to return to Bologna, the Mortara family resided there.

Despite the pleas of his parents, and the intercession of leading Jews in Bologna, Edgardo Mortara was taken from his parents. He was never returned to them.

Instead, this six-year-old child was taken to [Rome](#) where he would be taught in the ways of the Catholic Church. His new home - at least for a short time - was the House of the Catechumens where Jews learned the catechism of the Church.

Edgardo's parents tried everything to persuade the Inquisitor - and later [Pope Pius IX](#) - to let their son return home. Nothing worked.

Reluctantly, religious leaders in charge of the young lad allowed Edgardo to see his father who had [traveled to Rome](#). But on the day his distraught mother, Marianna, came for a visit, she was not even allowed to see, or speak to, her son. Edgardo had been taken to Alatri, fifty miles from [Rome](#), in an effort to hide him from his parents.

Undaunted, the Mortaras went to [Alatri](#). What wouldn't a mother do to fight for her child?

While in that Italian town, Momolo tracked his son down to a church where Edgardo was assisting the priest with Mass. Waiting outside, Momolo thought he could at least see his son. The rector's brother, however, recognized Momolo. When Edgardo left the church, he was whisked out the opposite side.

The Mortaras' trip to Alatri had been in vain.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/PARENTAL-ANGUISH-and-a-KIDNAPPING-Kidnapping-of-Edgardo-Mortara>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/PARENTAL-ANGUISH-and-a-KIDNAPPING-Kidnapping-of-Edgaro-Mortara>

Media Stream



Map Depicting Rome

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