



Triplets of Belleville
(France, 2003, in French with very little dialogue/no subtitles)
Director: Sylvain Chomet
Study Guide

Synopsis

Adopted by his grandmother, Madame Souza, Champion is a lonely little boy. Noticing that this lad is never happier than on a bicycle, Madame Souza puts him through a rigorous training process. Years go by and Champion becomes worthy of his name. Now he's ready to enter the world-famous cycling race, the Tour de France. However during this cycling contest two mysterious men in black kidnap Champion. Madame Souza and her faithful dog Bruno set out to rescue him. Their quest takes them across the ocean to a giant Megalopolis called Belleville where they encounter the renowned *Triplets of Belleville*, three eccentric female music-hall stars from the 30's who decide to take Madame Souza and Bruno under their wing. Thanks to Bruno's brilliant sense of smell, the brave duo is soon on to Champion's trail. But will they succeed in beating the devilish plans of the evil French mafia?

Themes In the Film

French Culture
Animation, Satire
Jacques Tati
Tour De France

Study Questions

- What are some of the characteristics that are stereotypes of the French?
- What are some characters that you know about from French history and culture?
- What do you imagine the French think of Americans? What are their stereotypical images of us?

Classroom Exercise

The film contains several dream sequences by the family pet dog, Bruno. Have the students write what they imagine their pet might dream about.

Discussion Questions

- There is very little dialogue in the film. In your opinion, did that help or hinder the narrative?
- Did you recognize any stereotypes of the French in the film? If so, what were they?

- The director uses animation similar to caricatures found in satirical comics. What are some of the over-exaggerations the film employs about human characteristics?
- The heroes in the story are not your typical storybook variety. Did you feel sympathetic towards them or relate to them in any way? Do you ever see your grandmother in a heroic light? If so, what is it about your grandmother (or other person in your life) that makes them heroic to you?