

Book Review: The Trees of the Dancing Goats

Author: Patrica Polacco

Illustrator: Patricia Polacco

Grade Level: 2-5

Guided Reading Level: M



Book Synopsis from Amazon:

https://www.amazon.com/Trees-Dancing-Goats-Aladdin-Picture/dp/0689838573/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2A4PPGJAPNEL8&keywords=the+trees+of+the+dancing+goats&qid=1671110906&s=books&sprifix=The+trees+of+the+%2Cstripbooks%2C164&sr=1-1

Trisha loves the eight days of Hanukkah, when her mother stays home from work, her Babushka makes delicious potato latkes, and her Grampa carves wonderful animals out of wood as gifts for Trisha and her brother. In the middle of her family's preparation for the festival of lights, Trisha visits her closest neighbors, expecting to find them decorating their house for Christmas. Instead they are all bedridden with scarlet fever. Trisha's family is one of the few who has been spared from the epidemic. It is difficult for them to enjoy their Hanukkah feast when they know that their neighbors won't be able to celebrate their holiday. Then Grampa has an inspiration: they will cut down trees, decorate them, and secretly deliver them to the neighbors, "But what can we decorate them with?" Babushka asks. Although it is a sacrifice, Trisha realizes that Grampa's carved animals are the perfect answer. Soon her living room is filled with trees -- but that is only the first miracle of many during an incredible holiday season. Based on a long cherished childhood memory, this story celebrates the miracle of true friendship.

Review Highlights...

- Features a female Jewish protagonist, Trisha.
- Features multi-generational family dynamics; Trish enjoys a daily interaction with her grandparents.
- Features connections to current events;
 - Ukraine and Russia; the family shares culture and homeland with both countries.
 - COVID; story features an illness that impacts the city/town in a very serious manner.
- Uses food to connect to friendship and community.
 - The family creates a very treasured and meaningful gift for their neighbors.
- Connects to past generations/demonstrates an appreciation/reverence for culture.
- **Picture book. (Beautiful illustrations.)**
- Universal theme: Interconnectedness; "Friendship means something especially to those who till the soil."

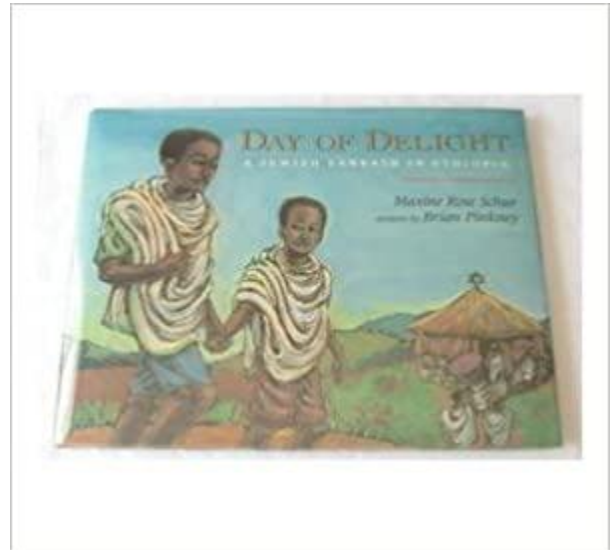
Book Review: A Day of Delight

Author: Maxine Rose Schur

Illustrator: Brian Pinkney

Grade Level: 2-5

Guided Reading Level: N



Book Synopsis from Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Day-Delight-Jewish-Sabbath-Ethiopia/dp/0803714130>

Book Synopsis from Publishers Weekly: <https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-0-8037-1413-7>

Depicts a young Ethiopian Jewish boy and his family, including their typical daily routine followed by preparation for and celebration of the Sabbath.

Laden with information, this picture book introduces a fascinating, little-known population of black Jews who live in the mountains of Ethiopia. Schur (The Circlemaker; Hannah Szenes) takes readers through the various rituals performed by each segment of the community to prepare for the Sabbath. In meticulous detail, she describes food, chores, clothing, customs and activities, peppering the text with Ethiopian words and phrases.. An author's note at the end explains the history and status of this small group, whose members call themselves Beta Israel, "Those of the House of Israel," but who are known as strangers ("falashas") to other Ethiopians. A glossary and pronunciation guide is also included. Pinkney's (see Dear Benjamin Banneker, reviewed above) signature scratchboard illustrations celebrate the African roots of the Beta Israel with affecting visual images that are startlingly at odds with more familiar depictions of more familiar Jewry.

Review Highlights...

- This story depicts the way of life for a young boy in an Ethiopian Jewish community.
- Features illustrations by renowned artist Brian Pinkney.
- Children view a familiar story with new aspects of Africa culture.
- Demonstrates the diversity of African cultures within the continent.
- Connection to immigration of the Ethiopian Jews, known as Beta Israel in the 1980s.
 - Depicts an immigration story for students to examine and relate to others.
 - Reference: <https://www.incultureparent.com/celebrating-the-jewish-sabbath-in-ethiopia/>
- Offers an opportunity to learn ethiopian vocabulary; injera, shamma, mequrab, dabo
- **Picture book. (Beautiful illustrations.)**

Information researched/reviewed/organized/created by Bridgette Blue, DEI Consultant. 2022

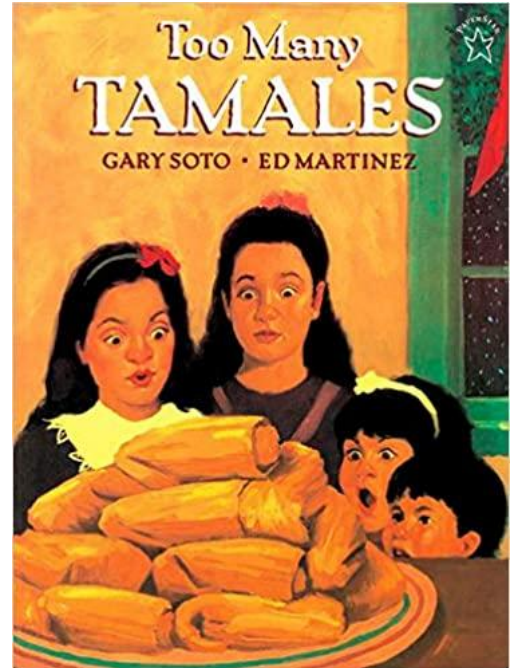
Book Review: Too Many Tamales

Author: Gary Soto

Illustrator: Ed Martinez

Grade Level: DK-2

Guided Reading Level: N



Book Synopsis from Amazon:

https://www.amazon.com/Too-Many-Tamales-Gary-Soto/dp/0698114124/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2ODS7DGWQVZXK&keywords=too+many+tamales&qid=1671111099&s=books&srefix=too+ma%2Cs&tripbooks%2C168&sr=1-1

This modern classic celebrates the tradition of tamales and family bonding at Christmas. Christmas Eve started out so perfectly for Maria. Snow had fallen and the streets glittered. Maria's favorite cousins were coming over and she got to help make the tamales for Christmas dinner. It was almost too good to be true when her mother left the kitchen for a moment and Maria got to try on her beautiful diamond ring . . . This is the story of a treasure thought to be lost in a batch of tamales; of a desperate and funny attempt by Maria and her cousins to eat their way out of trouble; and the warm way a family pulls together to make it a perfect Christmas after all.

Review Highlights...

- This story features a Mexican female protagonist, Maria.
- This story is a classic story that shows the magic of the holidays.
- Features family dynamics of Maria and her sibling and Mother; others
- Children view a story with illustrations that feature aspects of Mexican Culture.
- Features food and connections to generations and culture.
- Features children trying to solve problems.
- **Picture book. (Beautiful illustrations.)**

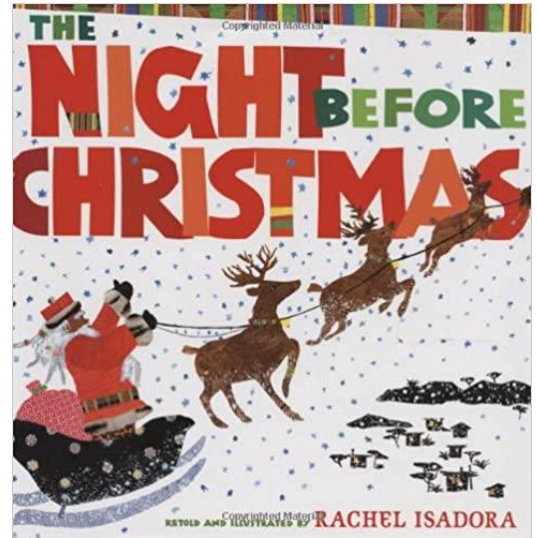
Book Review: The Night Before Christmas

Author: Rachel Isadora

Illustrator: Rachel Isadora

Grade Level: DK-2

Guided Reading Level: N



Book Synopsis from Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Night-Before-Christmas-Rachel-Isadora/dp/0399254080>

A gorgeous reimagining of the beloved Christmas poem, set in Africa. Since Clement Clarke Moore penned this Christmas classic in 1825, it has been beloved by children around the world. Now, Caldecott Honor winner Rachel Isadora sets the poem in Africa, capturing the anticipation and excitement of Christmas in her stunning collages. Children will pore over the enchanting artwork brimming with special touches like traditional African toys and a Santa who sports dreadlocks?as they chime along with the familiar rhyming text.

Review Highlights...

- This story is a remake/reimagining of the classic poem by Clement Clarke Moore.
- Children view a familiar story with new illustrations that feature aspects of Africa culture.
- Children can compare/discuss the new illustrations with ones they are familiar with.
- Offers an opportunity to appreciate the diverse look of the familiar story.
- **Picture book. (Beautiful illustrations.)**

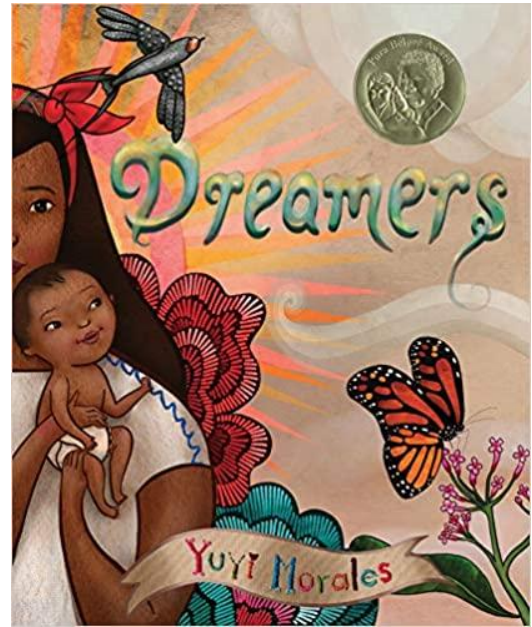
Book Review: Dreamers

Author: Yuyi Morales

Illustrator: Yuyi Morales

Grade Level: 3-5

Guided Reading Level: M



Book Synopsis from Amazon:

https://www.amazon.com/Dreamers-Yuyi-Morales/dp/0823440559/ref=sr_1_1?crid=18JSGLU28QZW&keywords=dreamers+by+yuyi+morales&qid=1671109197&s=books&srefix=Dreamers%2Cstripbooks%2C161&sr=1-1

Dreamers is a celebration of making your home with the things you always carry: your resilience, your dreams, your hopes and history. It's the story of finding your way in a new place, of navigating an unfamiliar world and finding the best parts of it. In dark times, it's a promise that you can make better tomorrows. This lovingly-illustrated picture book memoir looks at the myriad gifts migrants bring with them when they leave their homes. It's a story about family. And it's a story to remind us that we are all dreamers, bringing our own strengths wherever we roam. Beautiful and powerful at any time but given particular urgency as the status of our own Dreamers becomes uncertain, this is a story that is both topical and timeless.

Review Highlights...

- Based on a true story, written by the person who lived it.
- Features family dynamics/ Mom and baby.
- Includes beautiful illustrations that detail vividly the experience of Yuyi and her young son.
- Shows the power of books and a library; uses books to find a “home” in a new land.
- Expresses the stress of being an immigrant and navigating the nuances of American culture and norms in daily society.
- **Picture book. (Beautiful illustrations.)**
- Universal theme: 1. Finding a place to belong.

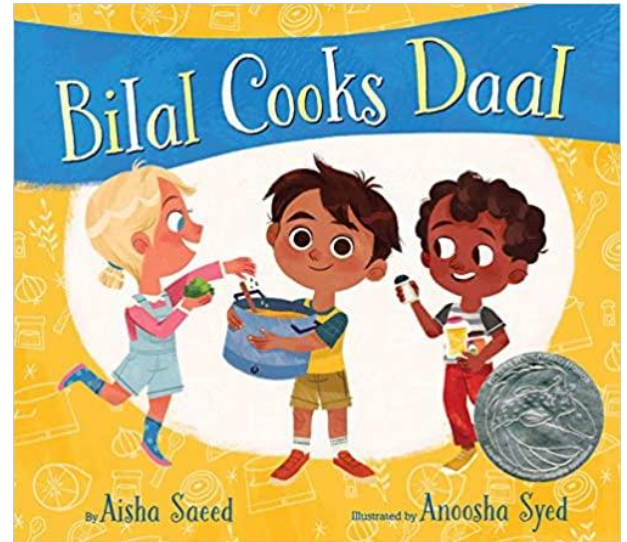
Book Review: Bilal Cooks Daal

Author: Anoosha Syed

Illustrator: Aisha Saeed

Grade Level: DK-2

Guided Reading Level: L



Book Synopsis from Amazon:

<https://www.amazon.com/Bilal-Cooks-Daal-Aisha-Saeed/dp/1534418105>

Six-year-old Bilal is excited to help his dad make his favorite food of all-time: daal! The slow-cooked lentil dish from South Asia requires lots of ingredients and a whole lot of waiting. Bilal wants to introduce his friends to daal. They've never tried it! As the day goes on, the daal continues to simmer, and more kids join Bilal and his family, waiting to try the tasty dish. And as time passes, Bilal begins to wonder: Will his friends like it as much as he does? This debut picture book by Aisha Saeed, with charming illustrations by Anoosha Syed, uses food as a means of bringing a community together to share in each other's family traditions.

Review Highlights...

- Features a Pakistani male protagonist, Bilal.
- Features family dynamics/ Dad and Bilal.
- Uses food to connect to friendship and community.
- Uses food to share culture with friends; entry point for young children.
- Uses food to connect Bilal with his Pakistani family, culture, and history.
- Connects to past generations/demonstrates an appreciation/reverence for culture.
- Features recipe for daal.
- Connections to lentils and other cultures that eat lentils.
- Positively and respectfully demonstrates the rich and dynamic Pakistani culture for young children to understand.
- **Picture book. (Beautiful illustrations.)**
- Universal theme: 1. Shows children exercising patience. 2. Community, friendship and sharing.

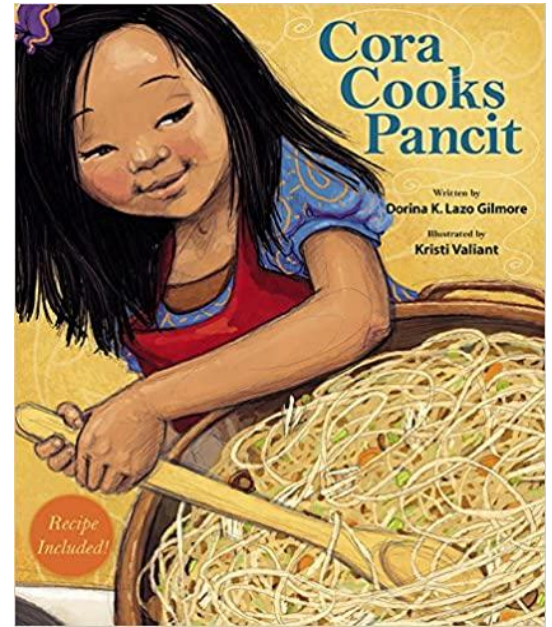
Book Review: Cora Cooks Pancit

Author: Dorina K. Lazo Gilmore

Illustrator: Krisiti Valiant

Grade Level: DK-2

Guided Reading Level: M



Book Synopsis from Amazon: https://www.amazon.com/s?k=cora+cooks+pancit&crd=360IIVQ5AEQOD&sprefix=cora+cooks%2Caps%2C367&ref=nb_sb_ss_rs-doa-p_1_10

Cora and Mama work together to cook up pancit for the family in this celebration of Filipino heritage and foods. Cora loves being in the kitchen, but she always gets stuck doing the kid jobs like licking the spoon. One day, however, when her older sisters and brother head out, Cora finally gets the chance to be Mama's assistant chef. And of all the delicious Filipino dishes that dance through Cora's head, she and Mama decide to make pancit, her favorite noodle dish. With Mama's help, Cora does the grown-up jobs like shredding the chicken and soaking the noodles (perhaps Mama won't notice if she takes a nibble of chicken or sloshes a little water on the floor). Cora even gets to stir the noodles in the pot--carefully-- while Mama supervises. When dinner is finally served, her siblings find out that Cora did all their grown-up tasks, and Cora waits anxiously to see what everyone thinks of her cooking. Dorina Lazo Gilmore's text delightfully captures the warmth between mother and daughter as they share a piece of their Filipino heritage. With bright and charming illustrations by Kristi Valiant, Cora's family comes alive as Cora herself becomes the family's newest little chef.

Review Highlights...

- Features a Filipino female protagonist, Cora.
- Features family dynamics/Mom, Dad, Cora and her older siblings.
- Uses food to connect Cora with her Filipino family and history.
- Connects to past generations/demonstrates an appreciation/reverence for culture.
 - Grandfather immigrated to the US; worked in the California farms/fields.
 - Features grandfather's recipe.
- Positively and respectfully demonstrates the rich and dynamic Filipino culture.
- **Picture book. (Beautiful illustrations.)**
- Universal theme: Cora no longer wants to be seen as a baby. She wants to do the things her older siblings do.
- Filipino/Tagalog vocabulary is introduced in the story; provided in the glossary.

Book Review: Yasmin the Explorer

Author: Saadia Faruqi

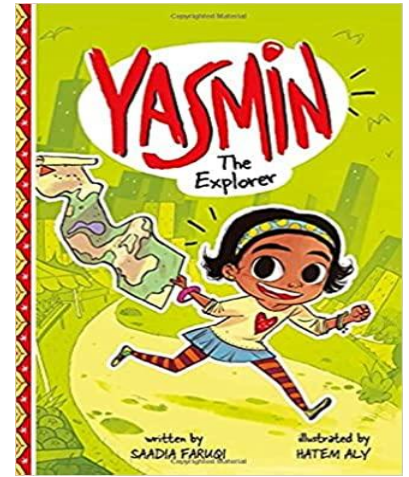
Illustrator: Hatem Aly

Grade Level: DK-2

Guided Reading Level: K

This book is a part of a series!

Book Information from



Amazon: https://www.amazon.com/Yasmin-Explorer-Saadia-Faruqi/dp/1515827321/ref=asc_df_1515827321/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=312603973638&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=10456214670262605301&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9032523&hvtargid=pla-570184165803&psc=1

Meet Yasmin!

Written by own voices author Saadi Faruqi, Yasmin and her multi-generational Pakistani American family will delight and inspire readers. Kirkus Reviews calls it “utterly satisfying.” In Yasmin the Explorer: Every explorer needs a map! Baba encourages Yasmon to make one of her own. But when Yasmin loses sight of Mama at the farmer’s market, can her map bring them back together?

- A creative and fun new series with a Pakistani American main character
- Early chapter book that features realistic and relatable scenarios for all kids
- Accessible vocabulary while also teaching words from the Urdu language
- Short chapters with a nice mix of illustrations make this perfect for emergent readers
- Subtly weaves Muslim traditions into fun, relatable stories.

Review Highlights...

- The story is an early chapter book.
- DK-2 students will enjoy the story and illustrations.
- The story features Pakistani/Urdu vocabulary for students to learn.
- Features a strong female protagonist, Yasmin gets lost and has to be strong, brave and resourceful to solve her problem.
- Features a multi-faceted, dynamic culture/society.
- Students are introduced to a Pakistani family
- Positively and respectfully illustrates the Muslim culture in everyday life.
- Universal theme: Desire for equality and the opportunity to follow one’s passion.
- The book features read-aloud discussion questions...Discuss how it feels to be lost?

Information researched/reviewed/organized/created by Bridgette Blue, DEI Consultant. 2022

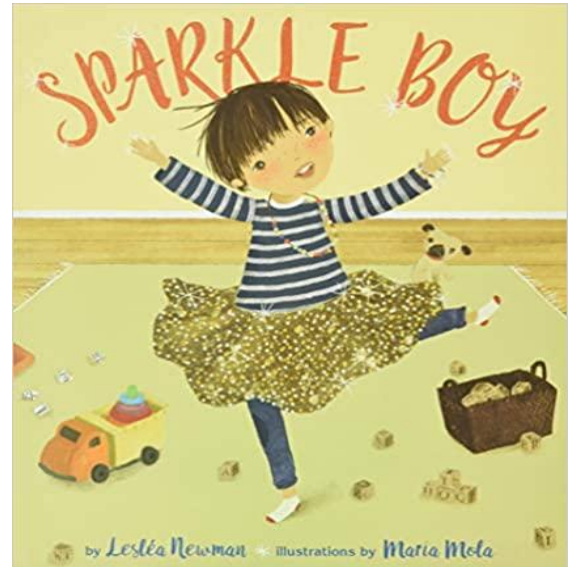
Book Review: Sparkle Boy

Author: Leslea Newman

Illustrator: Michael Austin

Grade Level: DK-3

Guided Reading Level: O



Book Information from Amazon

<https://www.amazon.com/Sparkle-Boy-Leslea-Newman/dp/1620142856>

Casey loves to play with his blocks, puzzles, and dump truck, but he also loves things that sparkle, shimmer, and glitter. When his older sister, Jessie, shows off her new shimmery skirt, Casey wants to wear a shimmery skirt too. When Jessie comes home from a party with glittery nails, Casey wants glittery nails too. And when Abuelita visits wearing an armful of sparkly bracelets, Casey gets one to wear, just like Jessie. The adults in Casey's life embrace his interests, but Jessie isn't so sure. Boys aren't supposed to wear sparkly, shimmery, glittery things. Then, when older boys at the library tease Casey for wearing "girl" things, Jessie realizes that Casey has the right to be himself and wear whatever he wants. Why can't both she and Casey love all things shimmery, glittery, and sparkly? Here is a sweet, heartwarming story about acceptance, respect, and the freedom to be yourself in a world where any gender expression should be celebrated. Sparkly things are for everyone to enjoy!

Review Highlights...

- The story features a male protagonist–Casey.
- Features a multi-faceted/multi-generation relationship..
 - Strong relationships with grandparents–Abuelita.
 - Shows the dynamic complexity of a family.
 - Shows the bond and stress of a sibling relationship.
 - Students will be able to relate to both siblings–Casey and Jessie and their feelings.
- Positively and respectfully demonstrates family connection and Hispanic culture.
- The story lends well to class discussions about...How does Jesse feel about a situation; compared with how
- Universal theme: Finding and expressing joy to be your authentic self..

Book Review: Fry Bread

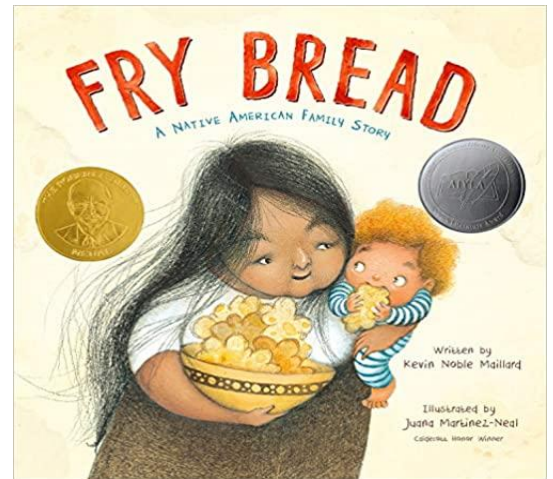
Author: Kevin Noble Maillard

Illustrator: Juana Martinez-Neal

Grade Level: DK-2

Guided Reading Level: N

Book Information from Amazon



https://www.amazon.com/Fry-Bread-Native-American-Family/dp/1626727465/ref=pd_rhf_d_dp_s_pd_cred_sccl_2_5/139-5394097-9254047?pd_rd_w=vSA9U&content-id=amzn1.sym.cce83ff1-8fc1-4533-a3f5-bf3d998f4558&pf_rd_p=cce83ff1-8fc1-4533-a3f5-bf3d998f4558&pf_rd_r=0N2JV0HEE0ZBCV6HD3AD&pd_rd_wg=VxoUp&pd_rd_r=a3aa0396-70ae-4b13-9823-89306566986b&pd_rd_i=1626727465&psc=1

Winner of the 2020 Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal

A 2020 American Indian Youth Literature Picture Book Honor Winner

"A wonderful and sweet book . . . Lovely stuff." —The New York Times Book Review

Told in lively and powerful verse by debut author Kevin Noble Maillard, *Fry Bread* is an evocative depiction of a modern Native American family, vibrantly illustrated by Pura Belpré Award winner and Caldecott Honoree Juana Martinez-Neal.

Fry bread is food.

It is warm and delicious, piled high on a plate.

Fry bread is time.

It brings families together for meals and new memories.

Fry bread is nation.

It is shared by many, from coast to coast and beyond.

Fry bread is us.

It is a celebration of old and new, traditional and modern, similarity and difference.

Review Highlights...

- A sweet book that features the Native American culture.
 - The book is written in verse.
 - Food is used to show connection to culture.
 - There is a fact page in the books about the food and culture.
 - Demonstrates joy in the characters.
 - Shows the dynamic complexity of a family.
- Positively and respectfully demonstrates the rich and dynamic Native-American culture.
- Briefly reviews historical aspects of Native Americans; can discuss with younger students.
- **Picture book. (Beautiful illustrations.)**

Book Review: Wilma's Way Home

Author: Doreen Rappaport

Illustrator: Linda Kukuk

Grade Level: 3-5

Guided Reading Level: P

Book Information from Amazon



https://www.amazon.com/Wilmas-Way-Home-Wilma-Mankiller/dp/1484747186/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1WTC0SK0T4IEB&keywords=wilma%27s+way+home+the+life+of+wilma+mankiller&qid=1670249862&s=books&sprefix=Wilma%27s+wa%2Cstripbooks%2C260&sr=1-1

This Big Words book from an award-winning author tells the courageous life story of Wilma Mankiller, the first female chief of the Cherokee Nation.

As a child in Oklahoma, Wilma Mankiller experienced the Cherokee practice of Gadugi, helping each other, even when times were hard for everyone. But in 1956, the federal government uprooted her family and moved them to California, wrenching them from their home, friends, and traditions. Separated from her community and everything she knew, Wilma felt utterly lost until she found refuge in the Indian Center in San Francisco. There, she worked to build and develop the local Native community and championed Native political activists. She took her two children to visit tribal communities in the state, and as she introduced them to the traditions of their heritage, she felt a longing for home.

Returning to Oklahoma with her daughters, Wilma took part in Cherokee government. Despite many obstacles, from resistance to female leadership to a life-threatening accident, Wilma's courageous dedication to serving her people led to her election as the first female chief of the Cherokee Nation. As leader and advocate, she reinvigorated her constituency by empowering them to identify and solve community problems.

This beautiful addition to the Big Words series will inspire future leaders to persevere in empathy and thoughtful problem-solving, reaching beyond themselves to help those around them. Moving prose by award-winning author Doreen Rappaport is interwoven with Wilma's own words in this expertly researched biography, illustrated with warmth and vivacity by Linda Kukuk.

Review Highlights...

- Powerful book that features the Native American culture
- Written in Big Word style; Native American words introduced.
- Connects to Native American history/Trail of Tears.
 - Illustrates some aspects of the emotions/stress of the people as they 'leave' their land and are forced to move to a strange place.
- Reviews way of life; students get a look into the "everyday" through a child's perspective.
- Connects to California History: Cesar Chavez/farmworks/1960's.
- Women empowerment; became first woman chief of the Cherokee Nation.
- Positively and respectfully demonstrates the rich and dynamic Native-American culture.
- Picture Book; illustrations capture the beauty and emotions of the people.
- Universal Theme: Interdependence–Gadugi; working together.

Book Review: Emmanuel's Dream

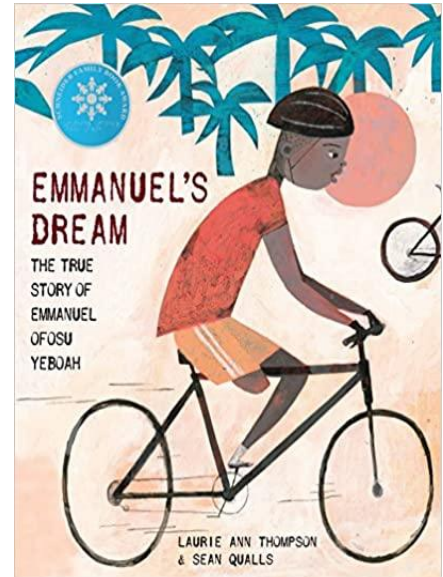
Author: Laurie Thompson

Illustrator: Sean Qualls

Grade Level: DK-4

Guided Reading Level: N

Book Information from Amazon



https://www.amazon.com/Emmanuels-Dream-Story-Emmanuel-Yeboah/dp/044981744X/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1RYNXWHY0VH45&keywords=emmanuel%27s+dream+the+true+story+of+emmanuel+ofosu+yeboah&qid=1670252186&s=books&sprefix=emmanuel%2Cstripbooks%2C289&sr=1-1

Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah's inspiring true story—which was turned into a film, *Emmanuel's Gift*, narrated by Oprah Winfrey—is nothing short of remarkable.

Born in Ghana, West Africa, with one deformed leg, he was dismissed by most people—but not by his mother, who taught him to reach for his dreams. As a boy, Emmanuel hopped to school more than two miles each way, learned to play soccer, left home at age thirteen to provide for his family, and, eventually, became a cyclist. He rode an astonishing four hundred miles across Ghana in 2001, spreading his powerful message: disability is not inability. Today, Emmanuel continues to work on behalf of the disabled.

Thompson's lyrical prose and Qualls's bold collage illustrations offer a powerful celebration of triumphing over adversity.

Includes an author's note with more information about Emmanuel's charity.

Review Highlights...

- Book features a true story from Ghana; a male protagonist.
- Illustrates the power and resilience of the human spirit.
- Illustrates how Emmanuel (disabled) brings awareness to disabled people and inspires and empowers them. “Being disabled does not mean unable.”
- Shows the power of words and perspective; “Be respectful, take care of your family, don’t ever beg. And never give up. (Words from Emmanuel’s mother.)
- The students will be able to relate to this universal story of finding your power, your purpose.
- Positively and respectfully demonstrates/illustrates Ghanaian culture.
- Features names of cities and Ghanaian words.

Book Review: The Princess and the Warrior: A Tale of Two Volcanos

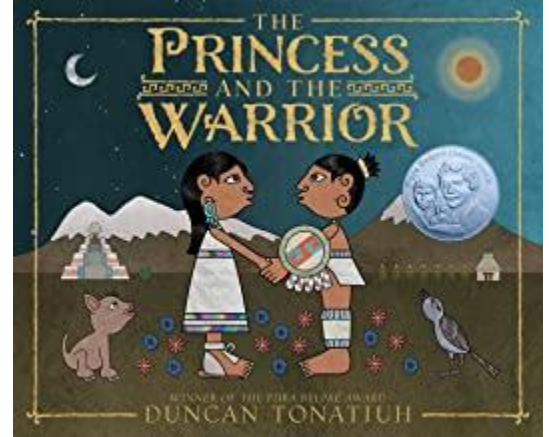
Author: Duncan Tonatiuh

Illustrator:

Grade Level: 1-4

Guided Reading Level: L

Book Information from Amazon



https://www.amazon.com/Princess-Warrior-Volcanoes-Childrens-Literature/dp/1419721305/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1MHVRKHYKWDD0&keywords=the+princess+and+the+warrior+a+tale+of+two+volcanoes&qid=1670251431&s=books&srefix=The+Princess+and+the+wa%2Cstripbooks%2C235&sr=1-1

Award-winning creator Duncan Tonatiuh brings a cherished Mexican legend to life

A Pura Belpré Illustrator Honor Book and ALA/ALSC Notable Children's Book!

Izta was the most beautiful princess in the land, and suitors traveled from far and wide to woo her. Even though she was the daughter of the emperor, Izta had no desire to marry a man of wealth and power. Instead, she fell in love with Popoca, a brave warrior who fought in her father's army—and a man who did not offer her riches but a promise to stay by her side forever.

The emperor did not want his daughter to marry a mere warrior, but he recognized Popoca's bravery. He offered Popoca a deal: If the warrior could defeat their enemy, Jaguar Claw, then the emperor would permit Popoca and Izta to wed. But Jaguar Claw had a plan to thwart the warrior. Would all be lost?

Today two majestic volcanoes—Popocatepetl and Iztaccíhuatl—stand overlooking Mexico City. They have been admired and revered for countless generations, and have formed the basis of many origin and creation myths. In *The Princess and the Warrior*, award-winning author and illustrator Duncan Tonatiuh retells one of Mexico's cherished legends.

Review Highlights...

- Book features a Mexican Folktale in a beautiful illustrated story.
- Connects to Mexican culture.
 - Includes vocabulary; milpas, flory canto, etc.
- The students will be able to relate to this universal story of how the volcanoes came to be.
- Positively and respectfully demonstrates the volcano legend from Mexican culture.