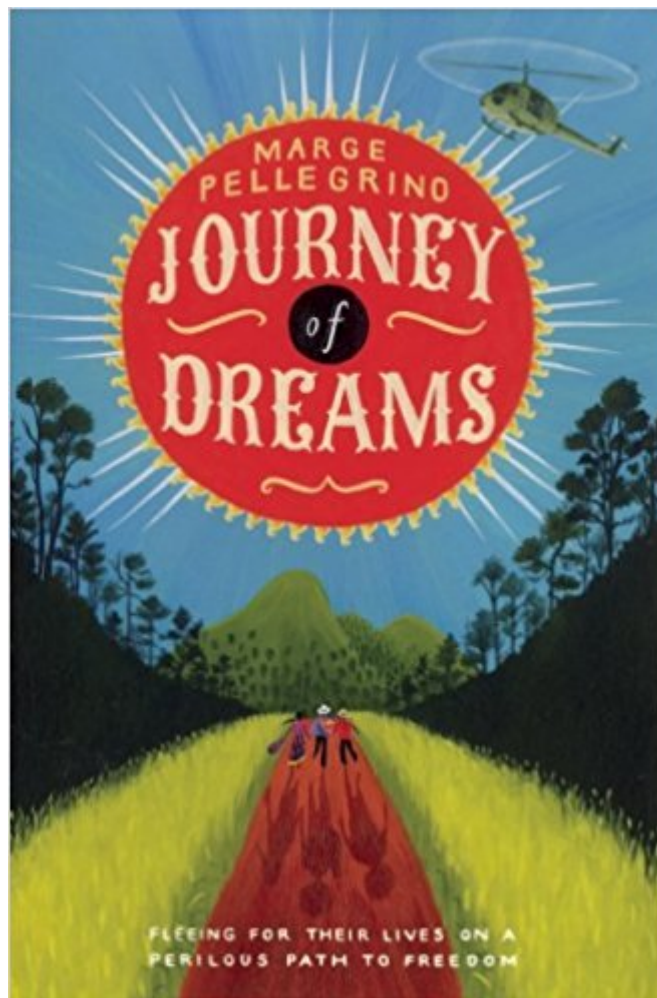


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Journey Of Dreams



Synopsis

For the peaceful highlanders of Guatemala, life has become a nightmare. Helicopters slash like machetes through the once-quiet air. Soldiers patrol the streets, hunting down suspected guerillas. Villagers mysteriously disappear and children are recruited as soldiers. Tomasa's family is growing increasingly desperate, especially after Mama goes into hiding with Tomasa's oldest brother. Finally, after their house is razed to the ground and the villagers massacred, Tomasa, Manuelito, and baby Maria set off with Papa on a perilous journey to find Mama and Carlos, only to discover that where one journey ends, another begins. This gripping novel tells the story of how Tomasa's family survives the Guatemalan army's brutal regime and how, in the midst of tragedy, their love and loyalty; and Papa's storytelling; keeps them going on their harrowing journey as refugees to the United States. Mirrored in the tapestries of Tomasa's dreams, the dramatic events of the Guatemalan army's "scorched earth" campaign of the 1980s are tempered with hope and the generosity of the human spirit.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 5 • Fleeing their burned village in the Guatemalan highlands, 13-year-old Tomasa, her two brothers, and her storytelling father make their way first to the capital and then north to Mexico City and across another border to Arizona. They reunite with her mother and another brother, who are safe thanks to the Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s. Artistic Tomasa loves to sketch and to re-create her world in her weaving and embroidery. Through her narrative, readers can envision her family and village life as well as the sights of her journey from the

mountains to the cities and north to America. This well-paced first-person account is full of suspenseful moments, but also psychologically convincing as the author shows Tomasa consciously burying her own emotions while her younger brother, Manuel, adopts another woman in place of the mother who left him behind to save her 14-year-old from the army. Although Tomasa's journey takes a year, the pace moves along quickly. Still, there is room to recount Guatemalan folktales and show many details of village life as well as the refugee experience. A short background explanation, a glossary, and a map complete this harrowing but ultimately hopeful immigration story based on the author's work with refugees. --Kathleen Isaacs, Children's Literature Specialist, Pasadena, MD Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

An involving read, strong in the celebration of Mayan-inflected folklore and culture. --Financial Times "Pellegrino's great achievement resides in the authenticity of Tomasa's voice as a Mayan girl. This novel will captivate both Latin American survivors of civil war and their peers. Outstanding." (glossary of Spanish and quiche, map) (Historical fiction. YA) --Kirkus A modern-day Underground Railroad is the stirring drama narrated by Mayan Tomasa, 13, who in the early 1980s is forced with her family to flee the military burning and slaughter of her mountain village in Guatemala and seek refuge across the border. True to her anguished viewpoint, her present-tense narrative tells of her desperate journey with the coyote guides, those who help and those who betray the fugitives as they cross desert, river, and mountains, and make it to Mexico City and then finally to the Sanctuary Movement in the U.S. Based on author Pellegrino's work with displaced refugees, the personal story is rooted in authentic detail of oppression, escape, and hope. The "dreams" may sometimes be too much: every episode ends with a magical realism connection rooted in Tomasa's culture. More than the local color, readers will be held by the escape adventure, and even more by the searing family drama of separation and the climax of reunion, the kindness and courage that fight the cruelty. --Hazel Rochman --Booklist Fleeing their burned village in the Guatemalan highlands, 13-year-old Tomasa, her two brothers, and her storytelling father make their way first to the capital and then north to Mexico City and across another border to Arizona. They reunite with her mother and another brother, who are safe thanks to the Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s. Artistic Tomasa loves to sketch and to re-create her world in her weaving and embroidery. Through her narrative, readers can envision her family and village life as well as the sights of her journey from the mountains to the cities and north to America. This well-paced first-person account is full of suspenseful moments, but also psychologically convincing as the author shows Tomasa

consciously burying her own emotions while her younger brother, Manuel, adopts another woman in place of the mother who left him behind to save her 14-year-old from the army. Although Tomasa's journey takes a year, the pace moves along quickly. Still, there is room to recount Guatemalan folktales and show many details of village life as well as the refugee experience. A short background explanation, a glossary, and a map complete this harrowing but ultimately hopeful immigration story based on the author's work with refugees.-Kathleen Isaacs, Children's Literature Specialist, Pasadena, MD --School Library Journal

Pellegrino illustrates an authentic story of a family during the armed conflict in Guatemala. Tomasa, a thirteen year old girl, flees with her two brothers and father from military destruction in the Guatemalan highlands in the 1980s. They travel through Guatemala to Mexico City and across the border into Arizona, where Tomasa's mother and oldest brother await them. Tomasa's journey gives you a taste of a Guatemalan highland culture through the folktales her father tells every night, the words used in Quich'Ã© (an American Indian language of the Mayan family), and Tomasa's weavings. This is a heart felt journey of a young girl trying to stay positive and optimistic for her younger brothers, while burying her own emotions after seeing her mountain village in flames.

A wonderful book for preteens and teens about Guatemala and immigration to the U.S. I enjoyed reading it myself.

This book is written by a friend of mine. She brings the characters to life and when it was over I didn't want it to end. Easy to read the story flows right along and I hope she writes a sequel! A heartfelt story of a family's search for a better life!

Journey of Dreams is a work of historical fiction which takes place in 1984-85. During that time the Guatemalan government destroyed 440 villages using a slash and burn campaign. More than one million families were displaced and 200,000 people fled Guatemala. Human rights volunteers and religious leaders found safe havens for some of the exiled. It became known as the Sanctuary Movement. These volunteers funneled them to safety and helped them to gain political asylum. In this book Tomasa is a thirteen year old Mayan girl born in the highlands. She embodies the experiences of many of these refugees. Her story reflects the courage of many like herself and reveals the rich tapestry of her culture. At the beginning of the story Tomasa and her family live in a small village. They farm on their land; the women sell native clothing and crafts at the local market.

But lately, the rebel soldiers have been forcing young boys to join the army. They mercilessly wipe out the opposition. One day Tomasa's mother tells her son Carlos that government planes are spraying harmful chemicals. They are overheard and must flee the village to survive. Conditions continue to deteriorate. Many local villagers have been placed in model villages, which are nothing more than concentration camps. Papa is determined to escape with the family. Soldiers suspect them; they are forced to return. Soon after soldiers come to burn their village. Their grandmother dies trying to escape. They hide and make their way slowly on foot to the capital city. From there they will try to cross into Mexico. Every night as they cower in the fields, Papa tells them a native story, while every night Tomasa has haunting nightmares. Papa must find work while Tomasa, her brother Manuel and baby sister, Maria hide. They are afraid of everyone. It takes three tries to cross the border to Mexico. They almost lose their lives on the river and are endangered by the soldiers shooting at them and the coyotes who take their money to protect them. Finally, as they arrive in Mexico, the friends in the Sanctuary Movement attempt to protect them. Manuel despairs of ever finding his mother and adopts Juana, another refugee as his protector. Their goal is to reach Phoenix, Arizona in the United States and to locate their mother and brother. Every move is fraught with danger. They fear moving around in the daytime. Will they ever find a measure of safety and become a family again?

This is Tomasa's story and how she and what's left of her family must try to escape from the Guatemalan army. They must journey far, sometimes retracing their steps, when things go awry. They must hide who they are and be careful who they trust. Their father tells them stories to help them get to sleep after hard days of many miles. All they want is the quiet refuge of the United States and a reunion with the others of their family. I really appreciated this book and am very glad I signed up to receive it. I wouldn't normally pick up a book like this because I can't really relate to it. Most of us have never had to endure genocide or border crossings, that fear mixed with the glint of hope. This was a beautiful story with rich storytelling and heartfelt moments. Everything seemed so real and the images were vivid in my mind, much like Tomasa's woven huipil blouses. I think this would be a great novel to read along with a Central American unit in school, or if you are interested in Guatemalan culture and their hardships. This is a great book about refugees and how much different people's lives are in other parts of the world. This is a novel of bravery and dreams and a passion for freedom that drives them through. If you get a chance definitely pick up this book. If you are a teacher this is a must read for you. Marge Pellegrino wove a beautiful story in this novel. First Line: "Thwap, thwap, thwap. The high green branches of the pine trees shiver in the wind from the

dark green machine whirring above us."Favorite Line:"Where did the green go?' Maria asks."

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