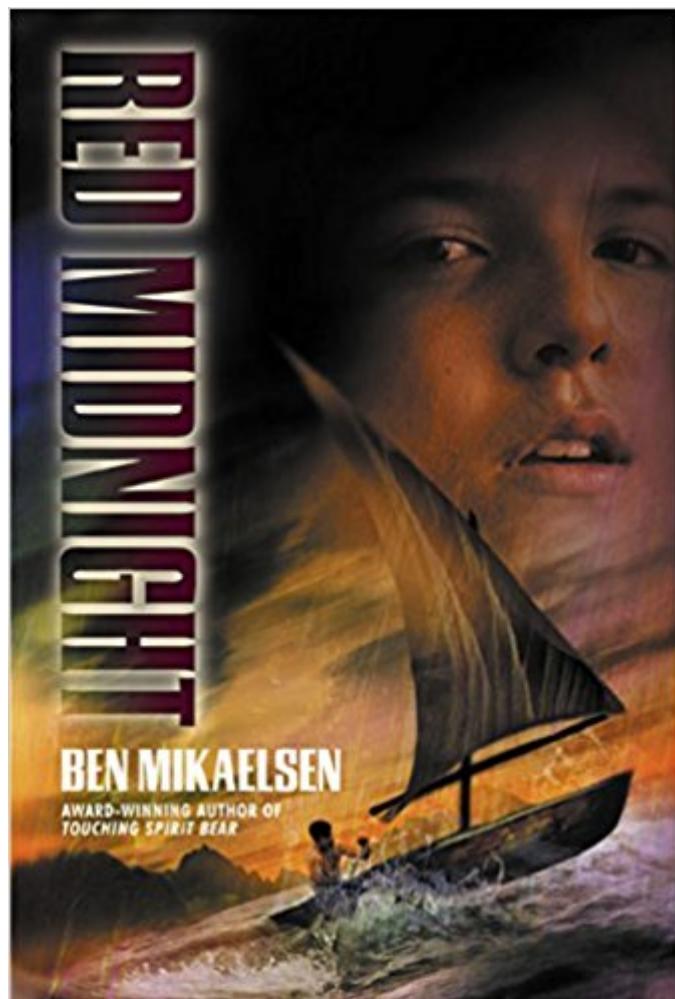


The book was found

Red Midnight



Synopsis

When guerrilla soldiers strike Santiago's village, they destroy everything in their path -- including his home and family. Santiago and his four-year-old sister escape, running for their lives. But the only way they can be truly safe is to leave Guatemala behind forever. So Santiago and Angelina set sail in a sea kayak their Uncle Ramos built while dreaming of his own escape. Sailing through narrow channels guarded by soldiers, shark-infested waters, and days of painful heat and raging storms, Santiago and Angelina face an almost impossible voyage hundreds of miles across the open ocean, heading for the hope of a new life in the United States.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 690 (What's this?)

Paperback: 224 pages

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Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.4 x 7.6 inches

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 32 customer reviews

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 5-9-When soldiers burn his Guatemalan village and kill his family, 12-year-old Santiago escapes with his 4-year-old sister, Angelina. Following the instructions of his dying uncle, he makes his way to Lake Izabal, where he takes his uncle's small sailing canoe and begins a terrifying journey north and across the Gulf of Mexico to Florida. The siblings face starvation and dehydration; lack of sleep; strong sun, wind, and waves; and their own fears and sorrows to win their game of Staying Alive. The present-tense narrative suggests the speech of someone whose first language is not English, and Santiago's first-person account makes the adventure even more immediate. The

opening scene is memorable, as the burning of the village turns the night sky red. However, the necessary flashback to explain how a mountain boy learned rudimentary sailing and the almost unbelievable details of the children's trip between their village and their uncle's home give readers pause, rather than pulling them into the suspense of the story. At times, the anger in the author's message almost overwhelms the action. "The rich have no conscience," their uncle's friend says. The first Americans they encounter call them "stinking boat people" and tell them to go away from their private beach club. In an afterword, the author explains that the soldiers who massacred villagers were armed by the U.S. government as part of our fight against communism. Thus, we share the blame for such atrocities. In spite of the heavy-handed message, readers who persevere through the first third of the book will be rewarded with a terrific survival story. Kathleen Isaacs, Edmund Burke School, Washington, DC Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Ã¢ "Fans who expect a gripping tale of overcoming dangers, will not be disappointed."Ã¢ •
(Kirkus Reviews)Ã¢ "A terrific survival story."Ã¢ • (School Library Journal)

I read this book along with my grandson as a required 7th grade read. A eye opening account of the trials and dangers other young people in the world face and a look at strength that youngsters can possess. Plenty of adventure and danger to keep a 12 year old boy reading.

This book is engaging and should hold the attention of young teens. Set in rural Guatemala in the 1980s, the first chapter opens with the massacre of an entire village of indigenous people. Our main character/narrator and his 4-year-old sister are the only survivors. While it is realistic to have them escape, I'm not sure how realistic it is to think a 12-year-old and his 4-year-old sister could then sail from Guatemala to Florida. In the author's defense, he uses some flashback scenes to explain the uniqueness of the boat. (The 12-year-old has at least some experience on the boat, and it was actually designed for long-distance ocean sailing, even though it was small.) And as the story unfolds, the author also includes an adult who travels with them for the first day and coaches the 12-year-old in more sailing skills. Still, it's quite a reach to think this would actually happen. It is difficult to find stories of war refugees that are appropriate for young adolescents. Most attempts either whitewash the suffering (probably to keep it less graphic) or they tell far too many details (probably to be true to actual events). I find both extremes to be problematic. For my classroom, I feel this book has a good balance of the two. Twenty-seven years ago, I was working with

Guatemalan and Salvadoran refugees. I guarantee the author is sparing us from major horrific details in describing the event. In my opinion, the author presents sufficient information about the massacre to help students understand the severity of the situation without the unnecessary sensational details. And while the massacre was by Guatemalan soldiers, there is certainly no glorification of the rebels whose earlier visit to the village probably led to the massacre. I'm not sure why the entire book - written from the perspective of the 12-year-old boy - is written with no contractions. It sounds rather stilted at times. I don't know 12-year-olds (from the U.S. or from Guatemala) who speak so formally! I found that a bit annoying. In general, I would not recommend this book for children who are younger than 11 or 12, and would not recommend it for students who are extremely sensitive to accounts of violence. And the fact that this novel is based on actual violent events makes the violent images more upsetting for some readers. Overall, the story is suspenseful, adventurous, and ends in a hopeful way. Although the U.S. government supported (with training, supplies, and money) the Guatemalan military during this late period of the Cold War, Guatemala has thankfully returned to a more peaceful existence now. In the epilogue, the author states that he hopes future generations can learn from stories like this and not be so quick to support military actions in complicated situations.

It's a pretty lit book if I do say so myself. So yeah read it people for a story

I loved this book it is so out done. I will always remember this book because it will make me think of all of the positive things in life, I love this book and I'm going to be telling all my friends about it. And even some of my teachers because I know that they will love this book

Good story of the tough human spirit....

This is a beautifully written story of a boy with amazing courage. Santiago faces tragedy and danger with determination and sensitivity, as he cares for his young sister and gets them through a tragic ordeal.

The writing was vivid. As the children were on the ocean the writing moved with every wave and glided with every calm day. This is a beautiful story.

Excellent book. Very well written and highly recommend reading it.

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