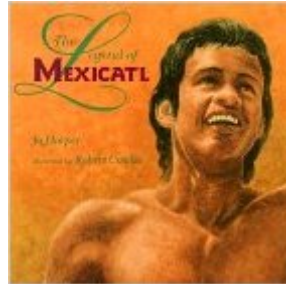




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The Legend Of Mexicatl



Synopsis

Growing up under the blistering sun of the desert, the boy Mexicatl can hardly imagine being chosen to lead his people - until he has a vision. One day the Morning Star tells him to search for "a place of harmony" and reveals the sacred image of the eagle and snake. Only after Mexicatl learns the hard lessons of leadership do his people prosper. Richly illustrated, this is an enchanting story of faith and wisdom, drawn from ancient Aztec history.

Book Information

Hardcover: 40 pages

Publisher: Turtle Books; 1st edition (January 13, 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1890515051

ISBN-13: 978-1890515058

Product Dimensions: 10.7 x 10.7 x 0.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds

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Age Range: 4 and up

Grade Level: Preschool and up

Customer Reviews

The story of a young man destined to be a leader of his people is also the story of the founding of Mexico. A young boy who lives "under the blazing desert sun" is called Mexicatl, after the mescal plant used to make his cradle. The strong child is told that the Morning Star will speak to one who will rise up among their people and resettle them. One day in the desert, the young man hears his name. A voice calls him to a mountaintop where he sees the vision of a cactus and an eagle. He leads some of his people to a new land. He reigns, but does not contribute to the good of the community until his mother offers her advice: "You have set yourself above the people. This is not the way of harmony." Lesson learned, Mexicatl changes his ways and the people prosper. A note describes the Mexican legend's history. The illustrator chooses to make the scenes very simple: the realistic depiction of a young man against a background of color that is the stylized landscape;

uncluttered vistas and several portraits of Mexicatlw with movie-star good looks at various ages. The overall effect is to enhance the legend with timeless pictures of strength and beauty. There is food for thought in Harper's recasting of the legend, which locates the humanity at the center of true leadership. (Picture book/folklore. 5-8) -- Copyright ©1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Houston's own Jo Harper tells, with clarity and empathy, the story of how the people of Mexico got their name, their flag, and their capital city. Young Mexicatlw learns, after a harsh lesson, the difference between being a good leader and a poor leader as he guides a group of followers from the desert [some believe the Aztecs came from as far north as Utah] to a lake surrounded by mountains. They founded the city of Tenochtitlan where Mexico City now stands. -- Jane P. Marshall, Houston Chronicle, June 22, 1998

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