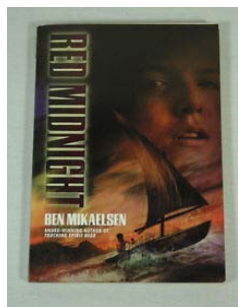




Book Reviews

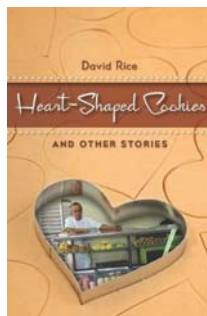


Red Midnight

Written by Ben Mikaelson.
HarperCollins Publisher,
2002, 224 pages, ISBN
978-0380805617

Reviewed by Astrid Chio, 8th Grade, ELAR,
Spring Branch ISD, Houston, TX.

During a time of political conflict in Guatemala, Santiago, age 12, and his baby sister, Angelina, age 4, must flee after guerrilla soldiers viciously murder their family and destroy their village. They are able to escape towards their uncle's home where he tells them to take his canoe and head to the United States. Santiago and Angelina begin their journey towards the United States carrying little supplies. The journey they take proves to be difficult facing many dangerous situations, but Santiago is determined to keep him and his baby sister alive. Ben Mikaelson writes a fictional story filled with adventure and emotional situations that will keep middle school and older readers hooked throughout the story. The descriptions he uses will help readers be part of the adventure. In a time when people are seeking refuge from political unrest and close-minded societies, readers will surely understand the desire to escape to a place where people are treated more humanely. A place where you can have a better life. A place where you can live without fear. A place where your dreams can come true.



Heart-Shaped Cookies

Written by David Rice.
Bilingual Press, 2011, 152
pages, ISBN
978-1-931010-79-5

Reviewed by Gloria Carter, 9th and 12th
English I and IV, Trinity ISD, Trinity, TX.

“For show and tell, I took a bomb to school. My fourth-grade teacher said we could bring anything we wanted, and it was just lying around the garage for years doing nothing but rusting” (Rice, 2011, p.119). David Rice relates how taking a malfunctioning bomb to school produced unexpectedly humorous results while evoking a serious response from readers connected to the consequences of war.

Drawing on a cast of unforgettable characters and events, successful author Rice entertains readers by threading humor throughout vignettes presented in flash fiction, short story, and play formats. Readers will be engaged, but his writing may especially appeal to young adult males—a sometimes-difficult population of readers to capture. Although Rice represents his Mexican cultural background in his stories, he addresses many serious themes confronting young people today, such as the fallout of a divorce, unreasonable parental expectations, making moral choices, and facing the death of loved ones.