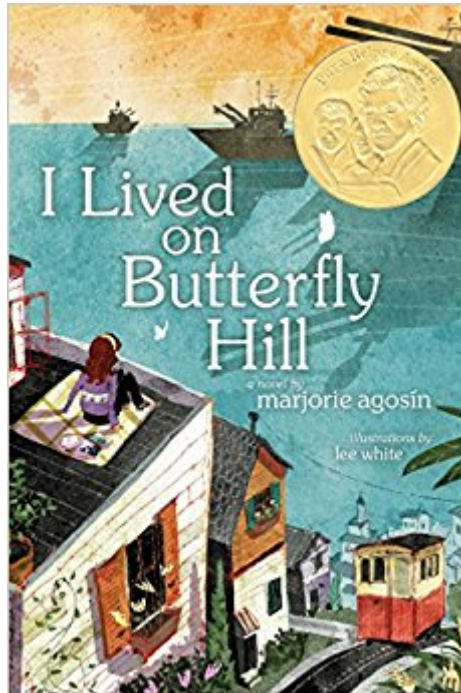




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I Lived On Butterfly Hill



Synopsis

An eleven-year-old's world is upended by political turmoil in this "lyrically ambitious tale of exile and reunification" (>) from an award-winning poet, based on true events in Chile. Celeste Marconi is a dreamer. She lives peacefully among friends and neighbors and family in the idyllic town of Valparaíso, Chile until one day when warships are spotted in the harbor and schoolmates start disappearing from class without a word. Celeste doesn't quite know what is happening, but one thing is clear: no one is safe, not anymore. The country has been taken over by a government that declares artists, protestors, and anyone who helps the needy to be considered "subversive" and dangerous to Chile's future. So Celeste's parents—her educated, generous, kind parents—must go into hiding before they, too, "disappear." Before they do, however, they send Celeste to America to protect her. As Celeste adapts to her new life in Maine, she never stops dreaming of Chile. But even after democracy is restored to her home country, questions remain: Will her parents reemerge from hiding? Will she ever be truly safe again? Accented with interior artwork, steeped in the history of Pinochet's catastrophic takeover of Chile, and based on many true events, this multicultural ode to the power of revolution, words, and love is both indelibly brave and heartwrenchingly graceful.

Book Information

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Age Range: 10 - 14 years

Customer Reviews

Gr 5—Celeste is a sixth-grader living in Valparaíso, Chile. Her life is idyllic, full of a loving, multigenerational family, a home she finds inspiring, and good friends. Things take a drastic turn when Valparaíso starts being affected by what Celeste's parents call "earthquakes of the soul"—the country falls under the grip of a ruthless dictator who is determined to eliminate dissent. Friends start disappearing, and Celeste's parents, who are seen as subversives for their work helping the disadvantaged, go into hiding. Celeste is sent to live with her aunt in the United States, where she struggles to acclimate, and to understand the larger picture of what is happening at home. Agosín has woven a historical story that draws on her own life experiences, with themes of exile, the quest for justice, and the power of the written word to preserve history. The story mirrors, but does not directly reference, the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet and its accompanying turmoil. The language is poetic and full of imagery and, while the book is long, it moves at a smooth pace. Occasional illustrations reflect the mood of each phase of the story. This is Agosín's first book for a younger audience, and she has managed to capture the wide-eyed curiosity and confusion of her narrator. Given its length and weighty themes, this book is best suited for serious readers. —Jenna Lanterman, formerly at The Calhoun School and Mary McDowell Friends School, New York City --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Starred Review Observant, curious 11-year-old dreamer Celeste Marconi wants to be a writer when she grows up. She embraces everything about her peaceful, magical harbor city of Valparaíso, Chile, from the pelicans who greet her every morning to the colors and flowers of the gardens. But when small things start to change—neighbors and classmates begin to disappear, and military ships crowd the harbor—she knows trouble of some kind is on the horizon. Words like subversive and dictatorship are whispered in conversation. Books are burned. Artists, educators, and those believing in equality for all are removed from society. No one feels safe. During the government takeover, Celeste's parents—gentle and compassionate doctors who care for the poor—go into hiding and send her to live in America with her aunt. Like her Jewish grandmother who escaped Austria just before the Holocaust, Celeste learns to cope with exile, never allowing her homeland to fade from her heart. Agosín, an award-winning author, lived a similar multicultural, multigenerational story set around the Pinochet coup in the 1970s, and she writes of it with beauty and grace, telling a compelling tale that both

enchants and haunts. Illustrations unseen. Grades 5-8. --Jeanne Fredriksen --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

I read this magical, poignant novel shortly after returning from six months in Chile. It transported me back to Valparaiso and to the dark period in Chile's history when Socialist President Salvador Allende was overthrown by a military coup and replaced by a dictator. Although written as historical fiction and told through the eyes of 11-year-old Celeste Marconi whose parents are "subversives", the reader is brought into both the political climate of the time and its very real and painful ramifications for daily life. The book's lyrically woven themes of identity and membership, exile and return, love and loss make it a compelling read. I purchased it for two of my nieces, age 13 and 14, for their birthdays and am looking forward to talking with them about it soon. As a former teacher and education consultant, I would highly recommend this book for both Language Arts/English and Social Studies/History classrooms. Once again Marjorie Agosin does not disappoint and I hope she continues to experiment with this genre.

I have this book on a list of choices for books to read for an 8th grade unit on Latin America. The students who have read it have refused to give it back to me because they want to read it again! Captures the enchantment of Chile as well as the brutality of the government.

I chose this book because I grew up in Chile and while reading the book I was transported to the time and places that I was so familiar with. The events that are depicted in the book are real but the time frame is not, but nevertheless it created this amazing story that many people in Chile went through this time of political uncertainty. Since it is a children's book (middle school age) and as an educator I would recommend for Social Studies, Foreign Language teachers to have their students read this book so they can become aware and accepting of immigrants to the United States. Also to learn what really happened during 1970 and late 1980 in this beautiful and strong country.

An exceptional book. WHY don't they have 4.5 stars? I can't wait to send this book to girls in 6-8th grade. But as an adult, I learned so much about Chile and the trauma of overthrowing and assassinating a beloved president. The book has wonderful magic--the best kind--it's real. Capturing the zest for life of the age group is itself masterful, but to create a delightful character like Celeste is an artist's gift to every reader.

An excellent middle grade novel on one girl's experience with the dictatorship in Chile. It's written in first-person, and takes places between the ages of 11-13. I loved how the author managed to tell a difficult story from the eyes of a child, never sugar-coating the experience but leaving out the violence and torture that was part of that time period.

This book was amazing! The journey that Celeste takes is gripping and truly moving. You learn that peace can return once trauma and disturbance occurs. Celeste experiences a huge change in her life, moving away from Chile and is placed in an American school. She shows that we can all adapt if we choose to.

Recommend for tweens & adults curious about Chile. Very engaging and gives a great cultural overview. Not overly USA centric.

The book gives a picture of the country of Chile and the difficulties suffered by the people from a young adult's point of view.

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