

Teacher's Guide

All the Stars Denied

Written by Guadalupe García McCall

About the Book

Genre: Historical Fiction

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Interest Level: Grades 7-12

Guided Reading Level: Y

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:
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Lexile™ Measure: N/A

*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

Themes: Discrimination, Dreams & Aspirations, Families, History, Immigration, Latino/Hispanic/Mexican Interest, Mexico, Overcoming Obstacles, Refugees, Respect/Citizenship, United States History

Resources on the web:
leeandlow.com/books/all-the-stars-denied

SYNOPSIS

In the heart of the Great Depression, Rancho Las Moras, like everywhere else in Texas, is gripped by the drought of the Dust Bowl, and resentment is building among white farmers against Mexican Americans. All around town, signs go up proclaiming "No Dogs or Mexicans" and "No Mexicans Allowed."

When Estrella organizes a protest against the treatment of tejanos in their town of Monteseco, Texas, her whole family becomes a target of "repatriation" efforts to send Mexicans "back to Mexico"—whether they were ever Mexican citizens or not. Dumped across the border and separated from half her family, Estrella must figure out a way to survive and care for her mother and baby brother. How can she reunite with her father and grandparents and convince her country of birth that she deserves to return home?

In a companion novel to her critically acclaimed *Shame the Stars*, Guadalupe García McCall tackles the hidden history of the United States and its first mass deportation event that swept up hundreds of thousands of Mexican American citizens during the Great Depression.

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.

BACKGROUND

About Eco-poetry

Eco-poetry is a form derived from what used to be known as pastoral or nature poems. Eco-poetics is the study or creation of poems that explore the natural world, including the nature of humans. At its best, this seemingly simple form urges the reader to think critically about the layered meaning within the context of the poem. Eco-poetry has been around for many years and has been used by renowned poets from all over the world, including Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Pablo Neruda, Langston Hughes, Ernesto Cardenal, and many others. Many modern eco-poets use the form to bring attention to environmental and ecological issues. In this book, the main character, Estrella, experiments with the form used by her favorite poets.

Author's Note from Guadalupe García McCall

While I was researching the injustices inflicted upon mexicanos and Mexican Americans in the summer of 1915, a period known as La Matanza, for my first historical novel, *Shame the Stars*, I stumbled upon the topic of repatriation (a gentle euphemism for "deportation"). I am referring specifically to the deportation of mexicanos in the 1930s.

Although the subject matter was unrelated to La Matanza and I should have moved on to other sources, I couldn't stop myself. I sat at my desk and read in awe about the deportation of over one million mexicanos—six hundred thousand of them American citizens—and I knew immediately that I had a sequel on my hands. I knew that this was the struggle that would befall the next generation of the del Toro family in Monteseo, Texas.

The topic of deportation of undocumented immigrants in America is nothing new. Those of us who live on the border between Mexico and the United States have heard about the issues surrounding immigration and deportation all our lives. But this remains a highly controversial subject, one mired in the social and political issues that surround it. The raids, roundups, and removal of mexicanos conducted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in recent years have divided many people in this troubled region—so much so that I, like many teachers in Texas, have had classrooms with several empty desks, because parents were afraid to send their children to school. Raids, roundups, and unconstitutional deportations: None of this is new. What is also not new, but what I find completely unacceptable, is the fact that most Americans still do not know that we've done this many times before.

The US government has a history of systemic deportation of "Mexicans" in our country. In the 1950s, the Eisenhower administration brought about "Operation Wetback," and the George W. Bush administration in the 2000s began yet another wave of deportation that has flowed through time—targeting, rounding up, and sending mexicanos back to Mexico well into the present day.

It is important to me as a Mexican American author to write about repatriation, because the majority of American students sitting in classrooms today are unaware that most of the mexicanos who were repatriated in the 1930s were in fact US citizens, born and raised in this country. Many of these deported US citizens did not even speak Spanish. They weren't allowed to speak their native tongue

in American schools. To do so meant a lashing. However, the government did not care that these "Mexicans" were US citizens who considered themselves American.

How did these Mexican US citizens fare in Mexico, a country they did not know—did not recognize as their own? They were lost. They were forgotten. They were destitute. The living conditions in Mexico were horrendous. There are accounts of people being harassed, persecuted, herded like cattle, and made to sleep on the ground among thousands of other repatriates while waiting for a train to take them into the interior of Mexico. Some who had reached their destination, an empty patch of land afforded them by the Mexican government, slept huddled under a tree with their children before they were able to build a shelter for their families.

Starvation, deprivation, disillusionment—these were the things that awaited more than a million mexicanos in Mexico in the 1930s. What was most frustrating to them was the knowledge that they had been forced to leave homes outfitted with all the amenities they had worked so hard to obtain to go live like animals in open fields or rat-infested ghettos in "the land of their forefathers."

Although I did a lot of research on the subject of repatriation during the 1930s, I had to find ways of incorporating those facts, and that's where the art of fictionalizing historical events came into play. I took inspiration from the books and articles I read as well as first-person interviews on YouTube. The small mention of two thousand repatriates huddled together in the winter of 1931 in a corral behind the customs house in Ciudad Juárez in Francisco E. Balderrama's 2006 book, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s*, outraged me, and I knew that the incident needed to become a scene in my novel. But I had no details of that occurrence, so I had to put myself in that position, envision the environment, create the scenes, give voice to the characters as best I could. I had to recreate it if I was going to bring the injustice of it all to light.

Throughout the creative process, I asked myself some hard questions. What is important here? Why do I need to depict this or that incident? And at the heart of it all was my need to tell the truth intertwined with my frustration at the inhumane treatment of mexicanos and the demoralization of an entire group of people—mi gente. The YouTube video, "Deportation of Mexican Americans During the 1930s," uploaded by the California-Mexico Studies Center, in which a woman explains how she and her family were ordered to walk on trays of disinfectant before entering Mexico (so that they would not infect the cattle) appalled me, and I knew I had to find a way of weaving that deplorable act into my novel too.

I think the circumstances surrounding the repatriation of mexicanos in the 1930s need to be shared with readers, especially young readers in schools, because they do not know about this part of our

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American heritage. Like La Matanza, the repatriation of mexicanos in the 1930s is not in our American social studies books.

My hope is that teachers will look upon this companion to *Shame the Stars* as a means to open up more conversations into topics that are important and relevant in our society. Deportation, then and now, must be discussed in schools. Students need to inform themselves as to the issues that affect their peers, their neighbors, and their homeland. To remain ignorant of the inequalities of the past is to learn nothing from our mistakes and to perpetuate the cycle of injustices. I hope this book opens up minds and hearts. I hope this book helps us fight prejudice and social inequality. I hope this book helps us heal and become whole.

Author Guadalupe García McCall's Recommended Reading and Additional Resources

Books:

Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez. *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s*. Revised ed. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006.

Vicki L. Ruiz. *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Fernando Saúl Alanís Enciso. *They Should Stay There: The Story of Mexican Migration and Repatriation During the Great Depression* (Latin America in Translation/en Traducción). Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

Online:

Francisco Balderrama, "America's Forgotten History of Mexican-American 'Repatriation,'" interview by Terry Gross, *Fresh Air*, NPR, September 10, 2015: npr.org/2015/09/10/439114563/americas-forgotten-history-of-mexican-american-repatriation

Robert R. McKay, "Mexican Americans and Repatriation," *Handbook of Texas Online*. Texas State Historical Association: tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/pqmyk

Araceli Cruz, "Mexican Repatriation During the Great Depression, Explained," *Teen Vogue*, August 30, 2017: teenvogue.com/story/mexican-repatriationduring-the-great-depression-explained

Videos on YouTube:

Democracy Now!. "Decade of Betrayal: How the U.S. Expelled Over a Half Million U.S. Citizens to Mexico in 1930s," February 28, 2017: youtube.com/watch?v=g9V7QDgW9mo

"Deportation of Mexican Americans During the 1930s," interviews uploaded by the California-Mexico Studies Center (CaliforniaMexicoCtr): youtube.com/watch?v=UE9DbivsjkE

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

- Ask students to write down and discuss what they already know about the Great Depression. What caused it? What impacts did it have on the average person in the United States? This may necessitate a short research project before reading the book, depending on the level of expertise in the classroom.
- Ask students to discuss what causes ethnic strife in the United States. How can tough economic times make these issues even worse?
- Ask students to reflect upon times in United States history when particular groups have been singled out for discrimination. What caused this to happen? What happened as a result?

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1; Craft & Structure, Strand 5; and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

- Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, author and illustrators' dedications, and illustrations.
- What is the significance of the title, cover illustration, and caption? What do you think you will be reading about?
- Read the jacket inset—what will you be reading about? How does it match with the book cover?
- Read the author bio—why do you think she chose to write this book? Would you consider her qualified to write this story?
- Eco-poetry—have students read the paragraph explaining this type of poetry. Perhaps show students an example or two from some of the listed authors. As students will encounter these poems throughout the book, it would be beneficial to discuss this first.

Point out that this book contains Spanish words and phrases. Ask students why a book might be written this way. Why does it matter what language an author uses? How does a language change how a story is told or who hears it? What should you do when coming across an unfamiliar word? Show students the glossary in the back of the book and have them peruse it. Suggest that they can

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turn to this whenever they come across an unfamiliar word in Spanish. Also note that not all words will be found in the glossary. Students can keep a running log in their reading journals of new words found and their meanings.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- **Coming of Age:** How does Estrella change over the course of the story?
- **Discrimination:** Why must Estrella attend a different school, live in another part of town, or be barred from certain establishments? What other types of discrimination does Estrella experience? Why?
- **Great Depression:** How does the economic struggle change how the community interacts with each other?
- **Identity:** What does it mean to be American?

Encourage students to consider why the author, Guadalupe García McCall, would want to share this story with young people.

VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below. Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word. (Many of the Spanish words can be found in the book glossary, but there are also some that are not included. Students could be encouraged to create a log of these words—they will not be listed here.)

Content Specific

Repatriated, (stock) market crash, Anglo, Mexicano, Texas Rangers, civil disobedience, activists, justice/injustice, commissioner, undocumented/papers, roundup, ordinances, illegal alien, citizen/citizenship, prejudice, deported, telegram, city council, suffrage, Salt March, picket, treason, migration, Communist, embassy, customs, dysentery, industrialization, want ads, Americanized, scarlet fever

Academic

Depression, immigrant, phlegm, embrace, congregation, sass, nursemaid, ashamed, sacrifice, wallop, rebellion, weathered, imp, harmonize, levitate, recital, fervent, verdict, pragmatic, industrious, spectacles, blues, progressive, transformative, smattering, populated, congested, offspring, primitive, feral, haven, feasible, aroma, stratosphere, enrich, commotion, pandemonium, irritation, predicament, frigid, rhythmic, inconspicuously, refuge, deputy, lingered, appalled, squatter, neglected, desperation, instinctively, elongating, veering, minor, morals, ethics, indiscriminately, mauled, burdensome, tumultuous, perplexed, scathing, chronicle, monopolized, engrossed, multitude, conspicuous, descent, deliberation, vehemence, discourse, exasperated, endanger, slogan, solidarity, passive, harass, intimidated, laceration, prominent, vulnerable, uprising, overwrought, dismissive, mandate, frailty, animosity, intolerance, validate, illuminate, lurk, stalked, pallor, hallucinating, quivering, transparent, mortified, jostled, otherworldly, inhumanity, scrutinized, spheres, profusely, abomination, corral, communal, wailing, destitute, intermittently, allotment, prosper, aimlessly, abandon, disheveled, measly, desiccated, loitering, substantial, orphan, several, nuisance, overwhelm, despicable, rummage, disgrace, dispersed, scurrying, anxiety, anticipation, circumstances, acquaintance, soothing, consequence, debilitating, exotic, spiraled, resurrection, dormant, revitalize, relic, parcel, vendor, illiterate, provision, luxurious, convent, dejected, application, affluent, disposition, abduction, glistened, eke, arthritis, frivolous, salve, shenanigans, excruciating, mortgage, upheaval, obnoxious, conversed, deplorable, corrupted, economize, imperative, dreary, malodorous, diagnosis, blanched, ominous, ordeal, devastate, resilient, circulating, affectionate, wickedness, frayed, gregarious, despair, devoured, perception, wretched, patrons, scraggly, unscathed, apprehension, transcend, concocted, meander, dissipated, trial and tribulation, guttural, malnourishment, reconvene

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite textual evidence with their answers.**

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

Chapters 1-6

1. Should Estrella feel lucky to be at Las Moras? What are her complaints? How do they compare with her mother's lecture on events in the country? (Have you ever felt this way in a conversation with adults in your life?)
2. On page 15, what is the significance of Mr. Hernandez's class roster? What is happening?
3. What are the differences between the "white" school and the "Mexican" school? Why?
4. What are the students not allowed to sing? Why?
5. How can singing a song be an example of civil disobedience?
6. What are roundups? What is happening? Describe what is happening to the people.
7. Why is Cecelia's situation so dire? What would you do if you were Estrella?
8. What are the methods that some in the town use to help protect people from the roundups?
9. On p. 36, why is Estrella considered Anglo by many people? Is this a benefit or hindrance to her? Why?
10. Who are the Rangers? What did they do?
11. How was the "other" side of town different from Estrella's? How do these signs make you feel? Can you think of a connection to other events in the USA? (Think Civil Rights Movement.)
12. What are the ways that these illegal deportations can be fought? What will Estrella and her family do? Do you think any of these strategies will work?
13. Who are the Damas de Dios? What is their role? What happened to them?
14. What is the significance of the spider and the moth? What do they represent?
15. "Mexicanos weren't allowed government aid. That was just for white folks." Why?
16. What was discussed during the meeting at Las Moras? Make a list from the chapter to include issues, solutions, and actions.
17. What is the importance of the lost birth certificates?

18. What is the importance of Nina Pinkerton and Donna McKinney being at the meeting?
19. "Taxation without representation," says Hilario Torres on page 57. Who is not being represented in this law? What is the evidence to support that there is no representation?
20. Reflect: why is it important to have representation in government? Is the government in the US representative of all its people?
21. Why does Estrella become upset over the proposal to meet with the city council in a month? What does she propose as an alternative?
22. How does Estrella's father react? Why?
23. Predict: what do you think Estrella will do? What would YOU do?
24. Besides the deportations, why else are Estrella and her friends upset? How are they being treated?
25. The students are planning on making protest signs. What would you write on yours?
26. The students walk in protest through the town. What is the importance of Nina Pinkerton joining with them?
27. What happened when the students entered into "Anglo territory"? How did people react?
28. Why did the protestors decide to stop in front of Louie's Hotel & Restaurant?
29. How does Louie Chambers defend his actions?
30. Why does Estrella state that the protestors need to be passive? What does this mean?
31. What do the police do upon arrival? Which side do they take?
32. React to the events on page 75. Why do you feel this way?
33. Predict: what do you think will happen next?

Chapters 7-14

1. What is going to be the reaction of the town council during the meeting? How do you know?
2. Sheriff Caceres is described as an ally, but how is his power limited in helping stop the deportations?
3. Outline the arguments of both sides during the meeting.
4. Reflect on Councilman Jones' statements during the meeting on pp. 86-87.
5. Predict: what do you think will happen next?
6. What/who do you think caused the fire? Why?
7. What happened when Estrella and her family made it out of the house?
8. "...[Y]ou are under arrest for violating county ordinances and conspiracy to commit treason"—this is the official reason given for the arrests. Do you agree or disagree with this official statement?

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9. "Fear roared and crackled and burst into flames in our ears, and we knew the future was burning down..." Explain the symbolism.
10. "After all, this is your fault, isn't it?" is a quote from p. 107. Do you agree? Should Estrella feel responsible for these events?
11. Where do you think the men are taking Estrella and her mother and brother?
12. What is the importance of not having their "papers" when deported into Mexico?
13. Why did Estrella not fight back against the guards or just run away?
14. What is the impact of the disinfectant on Estrella's psyche?
15. How does the separation of Estrella's father make their predicament worse?
16. What is the importance of the forged papers? Of what is the family being accused? Why?
17. What is happening to Wicho?
18. Describe the repatriation camp.
19. What are the major concerns for Estrella and her family while in this camp?
20. Why are the people being held in the camp?
21. Describe the conditions in the camp.
22. What is the impact of Mamá's fight with Amparo on Estrella?
23. Why is the family trying to send a telegram?
24. What is the plan for Estrella to get more food?
25. What happened to Amparo? How does this change Estrella's opinion of her? Do you think it is enough to excuse Amparo's actions?
26. How did the internees escape the camp?
27. Did the plan to obtain more food work?
28. What did Amparo do? Does this change your thinking of her from question 61?

Chapters 15-23

1. How does Estrella describe her hunger? What is your reaction?
2. What is the status of Wicho's health?
3. Where is Estrella's father, Joaquín? What happened?

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4. How does the family's situation change once in Mexico City?
5. What is the new plan to find Estrella's father?
6. Where do Estrella and her mother work to earn money to find her father? Describe the conditions.
7. What job is Mamá trying to obtain? What is the importance of this new job?
8. Why can Tomás not obtain the birth certificates?
9. How do Estrella and her mother leave the laundry job?
10. Why is Estrella worried about her Uncle Tomás?
11. How does Mamá get her new job?
12. Why does Estrella need to go back to the embassy? Was she successful?
13. How does Estrella attempt to find her father? Is she successful?
14. What happened to Joaquín?
15. Do you think Estrella and Mamá will find Joaquín? What do you think will happen if they do?
16. Why can't Estrella visit with her brother in the hospital?
17. What is the impact of these events on Mamá? How do their roles reverse?
18. What is the impact of Christmas?
19. What is the importance of the Rio Grande River? How does it factor into the family's plans?
20. How does Estrella find her father?
21. What happens when they first find him? Is this what you expected to happen?
22. What is the plan to get back home?
23. What are the potential dangers in the plan to get back home?
24. Did Joaquín make it across the border? How?
25. Does the plan work?
26. What happened to Las Moras? Why?
27. What is the best hope for success at this point for the family to make it home?
28. How are Uncle Tomás and Señor Alberto Luna planning to finally bring the family home?
29. Outline Luna's argument to the judge.
30. What happened to Wicho during the trial?
31. What diagnosis does the young doctor give for Wicho?
32. Do you think that Wicho's health issues and Estrella's short speech impact the decision of the judge?

33. What issues are still left to be resolved at the end of the story?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. Return to the book cover. What do the title and illustration mean to you after reading the book?
2. How does Estrella change throughout the book? How does her growth relate to living up to the legacy of her abuela?
3. The story suggests that the sheriff's office makes some illegal choices: raiding their house illegally, destroying their legal documents, and labeling them communists. Why are Estrella and her family targeted like this? Why are they such a threat?
4. When Estrella and her mother get to Mexico, they are surrounded by other families who were forced to immigrate. Some speak a combination of English and Spanish, but some speak no Spanish at all, having been born in America. What are the challenges of being moved from one culture to another? How did people in Mexico receive them?
5. How does this story connect with other events in history? In what other countries/time periods have people been treated in similar ways? Has this happened during other times in the United States? What were the implications and effects?
6. What do you think happens after the last page in the story? What would you do if you were Estrella?
7. What role does race play throughout this novel? Why do you think the mexicanos were deported in the first place?
8. What role does gender play in this story? Are there similar issues today? Why or why not?
9. What role does the Great Depression play in the deportations? Why would this type of event be more likely to happen during times of economic crisis?
10. Read the Author's Note at the end of the book. What questions do you have? What do you want to know more about? Why?

Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. **Suggest that students respond in reader's response journals, essays, or oral discussion.** You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. What is the one most important idea you took from this book?

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2. What do you think about Estrella as a person? With what actions and decisions do you agree or disagree? What would you have done differently if you were her?
3. If you could interview the author, Guadalupe García McCall, what questions would you ask her? Why?
4. Does this story make you think of any books, movies, television shows, songs, etc. with similar issues/messages? How so?
5. What is an example of a modern-day injustice in the world or your country? How can young people fight against injustices today? What can *you* do? What are some changes you can enact in your school or immediate community?
6. Do you think something like this could happen in the United States today? In other countries? Why?
7. As a citizen, what lessons do you think this story has for your country? Why would it be important for political leaders to read this book?
8. Reflect on the journal entry and class roster found on page 15. What should the role of teachers be during these types of events? What would you do as a teacher?
9. What does it mean to be an American? What do you think of when you hear the word "American"? Describe your response, either in prose or a drawing.

ELL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about Estrella's character and how they would describe how she changed over the course of the novel.
5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

Social and Emotional Learning

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4-6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 6)

Social and emotional learning involves being aware of and regulating emotions for healthy development. In addition to understanding one's own feelings, strong socio-emotional development allows individuals to develop empathy for others and to establish and maintain relationships.

Use the following prompts to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of this book.

1. Estrella says she is "so devastated—so humiliated" by her father's dismissal of her in the meeting. Explore why she is so hurt. Have you ever had an experience when you felt dismissed by your parents? What did you think of Estrella's reaction? She says that "as mad as I was, it didn't feel right to talk ugly about my parents"—do you think this is a mature response? What keeps us from making the mature choice sometimes?
2. Which poem in the story best reveals Estrella's emotions? Explain what emotion is being expressed. How does it achieve that emotion?
3. How did Estrella and her family deal with discrimination? What did you learn about dealing with being treated unfairly by reading about Estrella's experience?
4. On page 202, Estrella and her mom are being bullied by their new boss, the laundress. Despite feeling angry and wanting to run away, Estrella has to find a way to cope with the woman's abuse. Have you ever found yourself in a similar situation? How did you react?

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

English/Language Arts

- **Create a reflection journal like Estrella and her father.** Keep bits of observations, poetry, feelings, and thoughts over the course of the book. Encourage students to add illustrations and drawings when appropriate. Students can do this in reaction to their own world, or they could be assigned another character in the story and creatively record their perspective instead (Mama, Papa, or Wicho).
- **Study eco-poetry.** Annotate a few poems from the book. Think about how the images in the poem relate to the feelings and mood revealed in the story. For example, explore the poem, "Before the Creek" at the beginning of Chapter 1. Discuss the role of nature through personification ("Smiling florets"), alliteration ("seduces spring"), and foreshadowing ("the crabgrass dies"), and make predictions about the world students are about to encounter in the story. Use an excerpt from page 52 and ask students what mood is being foreshadowed here. Have the students complete Estrella's poem about the spider and the moth for her. Students can begin by illustrating the scene, then assigning words to it.
- Explore the allusion on p. 20 to famous writer Henry David Thoreau. Thoreau is both a nature writer and a political writer. Have students research the transcendentalist movement, a political movement that stressed self-reliance and a unity with nature in order to achieve peace in humanity. Give the students an excerpt from Thoreau's *Walden*: "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life. . . ." Discuss what this quote means and why an allusion to it ends Chapter 2. What does it mean to live deliberately? To live strategically? Why does the Depression and the political climate make this difficult? Have the students create a poem about living deliberately in their own lives.
- **Consider how the poems reflect the story.** Compare the prose version of the grackles on page 24 to the poetic form of it that introduces Chapter 3. Do they convey the same mood? Which one is more effective? What is Estrella saying about the relationship between Mexican Americans and white Americans? What is being foreshadowed? Explore how the poems, and their titles, mirror the feelings in each of the chapters they introduce. (For example, "Across the Road," "In Spite of Winter," "From the Garden"). Note that while they are contained in the holding pens, Estrella shifts away from nature poems and her poems change style ("Processing," "The Things They Carried") to reveal a despair and break from her eco-poetry. Students can discuss whether this can also be symbolic, as Estrella has been ripped away from the land that had anchored her.

- **Have students comment on language.** Students can use a T-chart to record and explain interesting language that they find in the story. The teacher can also pre-selected textual evidence that contains excerpts which model how details contain deeper meaning in the story. Examples include:
 - allusions ("And the rocket's red glare," page 16, "glanced up at the spines of books by Walt Whitman, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Emily Dickinson," page 28),
 - figurative language ("Fear roared and crackled and burst into flames in our ears, and we knew the future was burning down, collapsing before us, devouring our home and our livelihood," page 101)
 - foreshadowing ("A herd of cows moved away from the creek through the blurry rain in slow progression. They knew better than to panic. Their migration was temporary," page 111).
- **Reacting to Symbolism.** On pages 105-106, Estrella describes the view from the window as she and her mom are taken from their home. Read this out loud. Have students draw the scene using the sensory details ("its white wings . . . echoed in the dark . . . something small and white . . . a ghostly figure . . . her white-veiled head swiveled"). What is Estrella thinking? What is her fear? Why is she seeing this image outside of her car window? How does it relate to La Llorona? In response to this, students can draft a poem to add to Estrella's journal, or students can write a response about how they once felt scared or powerless like she does, using sensory details to bring their moment to life.
- **Consider how the letters reveal coming of age.** Estrella writes letters to her dead grandmother. Why does she choose to write to her? Read through the letter that ends Chapter 3. What emotion is she conveying through her figurative language? What is the significance of this letter? How does this reference to the title reinforce that the inciting incident just occurred in the story? Explore how the letters to her grandmother throughout the book mirror her coming of age. Go back and discuss how Estrella's voice changes over the course of the book. Compare her first letter to her last. Does she succeed in living up to her namesake?
- **Consider the role of journalistic writing.** Although the newspapers that precede chapters 7 and 9 are incomplete, from whose perspective are they told? How do you know? Have students complete the articles from the Mexican American perspective and from the opposing perspective. Students can also choose a part from the story where they can create a newspaper front page that reflects not just one story, but advertisements, editorials, and historical details that bring that chapter to life.
- **Make connections to today.** Have students read about the immigration debate today. Students can pull newspaper articles and then write the sequel. What happens next? Have students write an eco-poem and a short chapter that takes place in the future. What is the universal lesson? What is the message the student feels is most important to convey about immigration today? Have students refer to the Library of Congress's newspaper archives website to find articles from the time period as well (<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>).

Social Studies/Geography

- **Chart the geography from *All the Stars Denied*.** Students can track the movements of Estrella and her family on a classroom map using pins, sticky notes, etc. by pulling textual evidence and then researching those regions. This will give students a better idea of how far the family had to travel, the conditions they encountered in their attempted crossing, as well as the lengths the government went to remove the family.
- **Research the Great Depression.** Before beginning the story, students should conduct a small research project into the Great Depression. The focus of this activity should be on considering how this economic event impacted different types of people and regions. This can be as simple as a web quest, or the teacher can provide a partially-filled-in outline containing causes, key people, and programs. A good resource with articles and videos can be found at <https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression>. After researching, students can track allusions to the Great Depression that they find in the book, and discuss how this affected the people in the story. The first page of the story contains two references to the crash, so this can easily be modeled as the class begins reading.
- **Making Historical Connections.** The class can be split into five groups who then research and make connections between this story and the following historical people/events: Jewish Holocaust, Japanese-American Internment, Gandhi's freedom movements (such as the Non-cooperation Movement, the Salt March, or the Quit India movement), the Civil Rights Movement, and the American Suffragist movement. Groups can make presentations that teach the class about their topic as well as how it relates to the story. Groups can create posters with images that evoke moments from the book and demonstrate connections with their group topics. Students could then conduct a gallery walk and record their reactions in reading journals.
- **Exploring Civil Disobedience.** Students can research the tenets of civil disobedience and non-violent resistance (pages 20 and 71) in order to develop a class definition for these terms. Students should then compare their understanding to the actions of Estrella in the book. This would provide the necessary framework to truly discuss the effectiveness of this method in the story and in the real world. This would be a good opportunity to discuss other examples of civil disobedience in history. Personal connections can also be made here as students can debate which issues they currently feel passionately about, and which ones would they be willing to exercise civil disobedience in an effort to bring about change. Consult PBS's lesson plans on civil disobedience for more information and resources about teaching in the classroom (<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/classroom/civil-disobedience-and-social-change/civil-disobedience-and-social-change-lesson-activities/>) (<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/lessons-plans/what-is-the-role-of-civil-disobedience-today/>)
- **Recognizing Segregation.** In Chapter 2, there is a depiction of the differences between white and non-white schools. On pages 70-71 there is a description of the segregated town and the Anglo-only establishments. Students should conduct research into the "separate but equal" policies in US history, as well as the motivations behind them. Students can then discuss: Does segregation still exist? Are there still educational disparities within the United States? What about socio-economic disparities? Is this segregation? Consult the Center for

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Public Education's resources on school segregation historically and today (<http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/research/segregation-then-now>).

- **Connecting to current events.** While students may be unaware of the repatriation in the story, many students have probably heard of the current immigration debate. Students can research current policies and conduct a debate on immigration and deportations in the United States.
- **Evaluating the source.** Using the "For Further Reading" section at the end of the book, students can explore the resources and reflect on what they have found. Students could use a simple T-chart to display what they find in the resources versus what was used in the book. Afterward, ask the students to choose what they would have included in the book after perusing these resources.

Art, Media & Music

- **Visualizing: Santa Muerte**, described on page 105-106, is a somewhat controversial folk art figure. Students can create art that reflects the folk art component as found in resources such as: <https://www.afsnet.org/news/367930/Texas-Folklife-Presents-La-Santa-Muerte-A-Folk-Saint-in-Texas.htm>
- **Protest signs through history.** There are many articles on the art of protest signage (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/08/t-magazine/tania-bruguera-protest-sign-art.html>) that can be tied to the students' efforts to create the right signs for their protest on page 66. Students can review signs from history and then create signs for issues of their choice using the methods they've studied.
- **Create a comic book.** Students can choose a favorite scene from the book and draw it in either one panel or a comic book format.
- **Create a Superhero.** Students can turn Estrella into a superhero, taking care to think about her facial expression, stance, accessories, clothing, and super powers. (<http://www.heromachine.com/heromachine-3-lab/>) is an easy-to-use free online resource for those students who do not want to hand draw her). Why did students choose particular artistic conventions? How did they want to display Estrella as a superhero?
- **Drawing Poetry.** Students can illustrate one of the poems in the book, creating artwork that reflects the sensory details, emotions, and imagery communicated in the verse.
- **Sketching Characters.** Students can choose to draw a portrait or a caricature that depicts one of the main characters in the book. Direct students to use specific textual evidence and explain how this evidence led to the choices made in their drawing.
- **Create a Playlist.** Students can create "Estrella's playlist" by choosing current-day favorites that share the same emotion or mood expressed at different points in the story. Students should match a piece of textual evidence from the story to a piece of textual evidence in their song and then explain the connection.
- **Protest Music.** On page 20, Natalia begs to sing the blues. Why would the blues be specifically mentioned? How might that genre reflect how the students are feeling? How are the

All the Stars Denied

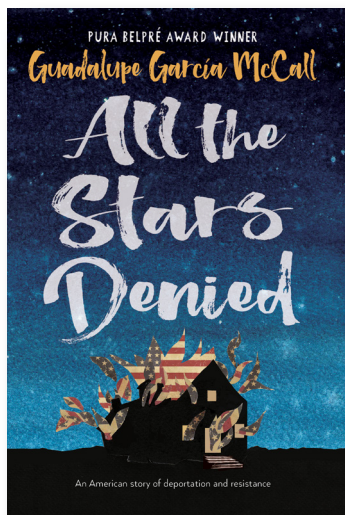
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blues used as a protest? Students can also research songs that have been used in protest movements past and present and connect their emotions to the ones found in the book.

- **Estrella's Song.** Students can create an original piece of music that they feel represents Estrella. They can explain its significance and present it to the class.

School-Home Connection

- **Connecting with family history.** Students can be encouraged to speak with family members about tough times when the family had to come together to overcome obstacles. Students can ask if their family ever had difficulty with economics, discrimination, war, etc.
- **Interview a family member about the history of their family.** Have them talk about their country/countries of origin. Why is it important to understand your family history? Why is it important to know the different parts of the world where your family is from? If a student does not know their family history, suggest they interview someone about the history of your town or city.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Guadalupe García McCall was born in Mexico and moved to Texas as a young girl, keeping close ties with family on both sides of the border. Trained in theater arts and English, she is now an assistant professor of English at George Fox University in Oregon. Her poems for adults have appeared in more than twenty literary journals. McCall's debut YA novel, *Under the Mesquite*, won the Pura Belpré Award and was named a Morris Award finalist. You can find her online at guadalupegarciamccall.com.

REVIEWS

VERDICT "An intense and enlightening historical fiction title that's highly recommended for all libraries." –*School Library Journal*, **starred review**

"Through Estrella's eloquent letters to her late grandmother and insightful poetry written in her journal, the sorrow and hardship of the ordeal is brought to light in a unique voice." –*Booklist*

"Enhanced by excerpts from Estrella's journal, teens will get lost in the pages of this story and truly feel for the injustice the community faced during this often forgotten chapter of American history. An incredibly relevant story, now more than ever." –*Kirkus Reviews*

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