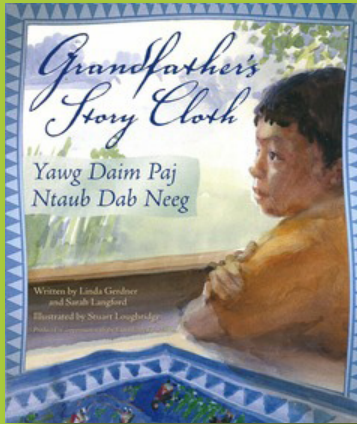


TEACHER'S GUIDE



LEE & LOW BOOKS

Grandfather's Story Cloth

written by Linda Gerdner and Sarah Langford

illustrated by Stuart Loughridge

About the Book

Genre: Realistic Fiction

***Reading Level:** Grades 2–3

Interest Level: Grades K–4

Guided Reading Level: M

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points: 3.4/0.5

Lexile™ Measure: 520L

*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

Themes: Family Life (Grandparents), Intergenerational Relationships, Story Cloths/ Story Quilts, Diseases (Dementia/ Alzheimer's), Hmong Interest, Laos Interest, Immigration, Memory, Asian/Asian American Interest, Empathy/Compassion, War, History, Kindness/Caring

SYNOPSIS

Chersheng's grandfather is beginning to forget things: little things like turning off the water faucet and big things like Chersheng's name. Sometimes he even forgets that he is in America now. Chersheng feels sad and helpless when he learns that Grandfather has Alzheimer's disease, but then Chersheng's mother presents him with a story cloth stitched by Grandfather himself, embroidered in the Hmong tradition.

Through the story cloth, Grandfather's memories of his life in Laos come alive. And inspired by Grandfather's tales about his life before the war forced him to immigrate to America, Chersheng comes up with a plan to capture his family's new life with his own art project. This way, they can all remember that their love is stronger than Alzheimer's disease, no matter in which country they live.

Author Linda Gerdner's heartwarming story addresses the increasing number of children who live with elderly grandparents with dementia. This volume, presented bilingually in English and Hmong, allows children and their loved ones not only to gain a compassionate understanding of Alzheimer's disease, but also to share in the simplest act of pleasure and love – that of reading together.

Awards and honors for *Grandfather's Story Cloth* include:

- **Notable Social Studies Trade Book**, National Council for the Social Studies
- **Mom's Choice Award**
- **Moonbeam Children's Book Award, Silver Medal**
- **"Choices,"** Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC)



BACKGROUND

About Alzheimer's disease from the author: In *Grandfather's Story Cloth*, Chersheng's grandfather suffers from dementia, a term that means a decline in intellectual and social abilities. While dementia may be caused by many different diseases, Alzheimer's disease is the most frequent cause. Alzheimer's disease gradually destroys brain cells, preventing the brain from working as it once did. A person with the disease becomes forgetful and has difficulty understanding and reasoning. The disease also progressively affects the person's judgment, ability to communicate, and daily activities. These symptoms often make the person feel confused and afraid. However, the course of the disease and the symptoms often vary with the individual. The cause of Alzheimer's disease is not fully understood. While advanced age is a risk factor, not everyone who becomes old develops this disease.

There are currently no medicines to cure Alzheimer's disease, but some are able to slow the symptoms. Friends and family can also help to improve the person's well-being and quality of life. For example, in Alzheimer's disease long-term memory remains surprisingly intact even though short-term memory is severely impaired. Memories that are most likely to be preserved are those that had special significance to the person. In this book, Chersheng uses a story cloth to stimulate Grandfather's long-term memory to enhance communication and understanding between them.

About Hmong and story cloths from the author: In ancient times, a tribe of people called the Hmong lived in China. During the 19th century, oppressed by the Han Dynasty, many of the Hmong migrated to remote areas of Laos, Vietnam, and Thailand in an effort to maintain their cultural identity. Those migrating to Laos lived in the highlands where they farmed, planted rice fields, hunted, and raised chickens and pigs.

During the Vietnam War, the Laotian Hmong were widely recruited by both the Communist Pathet Lao and the United States (U.S.) Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Those serving the U.S. effort monitored transportation routes, gathered intelligence information for the CIA, and rescued U.S. pilots who had been shot down by the communists. When the communists took control of Laos in 1975, the Hmong who had served the U.S. were forced to flee Laos or suffer severe

punishment or death. Many escaped by crossing the Mekong River so they could live in refugee camps in Thailand. It was in these camps that they remained until resettlement opportunities became available in other countries. Those choosing to settle in the U.S. began arriving as early as 1975.

While living in refugee camps, Hmong women began using their superior needlework skills to develop a new form of textile art referred to as story cloths. During this time of confinement, men joined the women in making story cloths as well. To make a story cloth, a square or rectangular piece of fabric is selected, and images are drawn onto the fabric. Long satin stitches of multi-colored threads are used to fill the images. Delicate stitches are then added to apply detail. The cloth is often finished with a border of triangles. Images often depict village life, cultural celebrations, war, and escape to refugee camps. The sale of these story cloths provided refugees with money to buy needed supplies.



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.

Content Specific

Alzheimer's disease, story cloth, guardianship, Laos, Thailand, refugee camp, barrack house, Braille

Academic

wandered, trimming, bitter, installed, sturdy, ripe, harvest, moisture, unfolded, faucet, refugee, bumpy, wobbled, rooster, treasure, knotted, sacrificed, impressed, homesick, collage, tend (the garden), slurped, complicated, husk

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

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

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

1. Take a look at the front and back covers. Take a picture walk. Ask students to make a prediction. Do you think this book will be fiction or nonfiction? What makes you think so? What clues do the author and illustrator give to help you know whether this book will be fiction or nonfiction?
2. What do you know about the Hmong people, culture, and history?
3. What are some ways we can collect and keep memories alive? What are the advantages and disadvantages of storing our memories in journals, photographs, story cloths, and songs (and so on)? How do you and your family preserve your memories or family history?
4. What do you know about sewing? What do you know about story cloths or story quilts? What are some cultures that create quilts, story quilts, or story cloths? How do story cloths capture history and memory? Why might someone make a story cloth rather than create a song or write the memory down on paper?
5. What kinds of activities can a child do with his/her grandparent? What kinds of activities do you do with your grandparent or a grandparent-figure? What interests do you share? What do you do when you visit your grandparents or other older adults? What are some ways grandparents share memories and history with young people?
6. What do you know about Alzheimer's disease?
7. Why do you think I chose this book for us to read today?

Exploring the Book

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

Talk about the title of the book. Ask students what they think the title, *Grandfather's Story Cloth*, means. Then ask them what they think this book will most likely be about and who the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?



Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, author's dedication, illustrations, and background information. Have students study the full story cloth on the pages 16–17 spread and page 31. Point out the dual language presentation of the story in both English and Hmong. Introduce the story to students with the author's dedication.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

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

Have students read to find out what a story cloth is, how the Hmong people share their culture and history, and how Chersheng helps his grandfather with remembering and coping with Alzheimer's disease. Encourage students to consider why the authors, Linda Gerdner and Sarah Langford, would want to share this story with young people.

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 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)

1. How does the Chersheng feel when Grandfather calls him “Fong”?
2. How does Chersheng help Grandfather remember his experiences in Laos?
3. Why is Grandfather collecting branches?
4. Why is Grandfather burying his silver bar in the backyard? What does he think that will achieve?
5. Why does Grandfather leave Laos?

6. What dangers does Grandfather face in Laos?
7. How do Chersheng and Tou learn about Laos and their family history?
8. Why does Tou say Grandfather is “useless”?
9. What kinds of memories does Grandfather forget? What memories is he most likely to remember?
10. How does Grandfather feel about being in America?
11. How does Chersheng help Grandfather remember his time in Laos?
12. What is the significance of the story cloth Chersheng makes?
13. Why does Chersheng's mother give the family story cloth to Chersheng?
14. What purpose does the family story cloth serve?
15. What are some things Chersheng can do with Grandfather despite Grandfather's Alzheimer's disease?

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. How is Chersheng modeling for his younger brother Tou how to be caregiver for those in need?
2. Describe Chersheng's relationship with Grandfather. How is this relationship similar to and different from your relationship with your grandparent(s)?
3. Compare how Chersheng and Tou feel about and react to Grandfather's confusion and memory loss.
4. Why is the story cloth important?
5. Why are many of the Hmong people considered refugees?
6. Why do you think Chersheng worked so hard to connect to Grandfather?
7. Why does Grandfather live with Chersheng's family? Explore the economic, cultural, safety, and



“The English and Hmong texts face paintings that express the many moods of the characters. . . . A strong family story about difficult social issues relevant to today’s society.”

–*School Library Journal*

“The text smoothly weaves Grandfather’s history into the contemporary tale, which shows how Alzheimer’s disease affects the whole family.”

–*Booklist*

“Most Outstanding Health and Safety Children’s Book; Gold Medal Winner 2009 Grandfather’s Story Cloth is a recipient of the prestigious Mom’s Choice Award.”

–*Mom’s Choice Awards*

other reasons why Chersheng’s family would have Grandfather live with them.

8. Why does Chersheng’s family care for Grandfather even though he does not always remember them? What is the message about the value of family? Do Chersheng and his parents have a responsibility to care for Grandfather because Grandfather cared for them when they were young? Why or why not?
9. Describe the relationship between Chersheng’s mother and Grandfather.
10. How does the family work together to care for Grandfather?
11. What is the value in collecting an individual and family’s memories?
12. Compare Grandfather’s life in Laos to his life in America. How does his life change?
13. What can Chersheng do to help Tou change his mind about Grandfather?
14. Why are story cloths a good way to communicate information and remember history? How else might families or communities communicate or pass down history to one another?
15. Have students discuss the role grandparents play in children’s lives. How does this story connect to your experiences with your own grandparent(s)?
16. Compare Chersheng’s family to your own family. How are the two families similar and different?

17. Have students brainstorm what might happen after the end of the story.

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. Imagine you are Chersheng and want to show Tou how to treat and think of Grandfather. Write a letter to Tou explaining why Grandfather is not “stupid” or “useless,” and how Tou can help Grandfather. What are some ways Tou can communicate and bond with Grandfather?
2. Describe a time you demonstrated patience or kindness towards a family member.
3. What can you learn about family diversity and family structures from this book?
4. Describe a family tradition you share at home (e.g. on holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas, going to the park on weekends, making a special meal or recipe, etc.).
5. Does your family have a special item that helps you remember family history? How is this item special or important to your family? Who has guardianship over it? What memory or history does this item have associated with it? Items could include



photographs, scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, clothing, award medals, and so on.

- Chersheng gains a greater understanding of his family history and cultural heritage while living in the same house as Grandfather. Describe an experience that helped you better understand something about yourself or your family.

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.

- 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.
- Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
- Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
 - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
 - 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.
- Have students give a short talk about what they admire about one of the characters in the story. Alternatively, students can describe what they admire about their grandparent or grandparent-figure in their families.
- 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.

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

Writing

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

- In a paragraph, describe the advantages and disadvantages of having a grandparent living with his/her grandchildren. What are the benefits for a family with a grandparent living in the home or nearby? What might be some challenges for a family with a grandparent living in the home?
- Encourage students to make a booklet about their family: What makes your family unique? What activities do you do or interests do you share with one member in your family? Describe a time you spent with a family member in your life and why that memory is special to you.
- Have students create a Venn diagram of Chersheng's and their own family. Then in two paragraphs, ask students to compare how the Chersheng's family is similar to and different from their own family.
- Ask students to write a letter to their grandparent or grandparent-figure in their life. Review the structure and tone of a friendly letter. Students should describe what they admire about this person and include questions to learn more about them.



- Ask students to reflect on ways their school involves and celebrates grandparents and extended family. What could their school do to recognize the diversity of families and family structures? In a letter to their principal or in a letter to the editor to their school newspaper, encourage students to present ways that foster family and community pride at school.

English Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 1)

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

- Read another story about textiles, including: *Maya's Blanket / La manta de Maya* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2886>), *Abuela's Weave* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2886>), *The Secret to Freedom* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2448>), and *Good Fortune in a Wrapping Cloth* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2887>). Have a class discussion and then follow up with students in individual essays with students arguing whether textiles are art, a tool for communication, both, or something else.
- Share another story about a child's relationship with a grandparent who has Alzheimer's disease: *Singing with Momma Lou* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2450>). In pairs, have students compare how the characters in both books react to their grandparent's Alzheimer's disease. As a whole group, have students create a list of ways young people can help their grandparents who have Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia (or ways young people can help the family members who look after their grandparents).

Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 5 and 6, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)

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

- Share a map of Asia and have students trace the migration of the Hmong people from China to other Southeast Asian countries and to the United States. Students can make a timeline displaying the migration of the Hmong people. Read another book about Hmong history and culture, including *Dia's Story Cloth* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2385>), *Nine-in-One, Grr! Grr!* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2805>), and *Jouanah: A Hmong Cinderella* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2863>).
- Have students research Laos, from where most Hmong in the United States come. Create a chart with space for students to answer: What is the capital? What is the climate? Which countries share its borders? What significant river runs through Laos? What challenges might Laos face being a landlocked country?

Science

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3)

Help students learn more about Alzheimer's disease. The Alzheimer's Association has a four part video series for children along with ideas on how to engage parents (http://www.alz.org/living_with_alzheimers_just_for_kids_and_teens.asp). You may wish to determine how much students already know about the disease with a KWL chart (know-want to know-learned). Have students write down questions they have about Alzheimer's disease and help them research answers to their questions.

School-Home Connection

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 5 and 6)

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

- Encourage students to draw a family portrait of their own families. Ask for volunteers to share their pictures with the group and name the people shown. Alternatively, have your students bring in a copy of a family photograph to share with the class. Students can write about these photographs and post them in the classroom.



2. Ask students to interview family members to determine their own heritage, and encourage students to think about how their heritage is reflected in their daily lives. How does it influence the language(s) you speak? The foods you eat? The holidays you celebrate? and so on. Have students write a short essay about what they found out and how their family background makes them special and unique.
3. Encourage students to create a family tree of their own families including extended family members and anyone they identify as being a part of their family.

ART/MEDIA

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strand 1 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 5)
(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 2 and 3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 5, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strand 7)

Support students in creating a story cloth along with a true narrative about their family history.

1. Ask students to interview their parents or caregivers about their family's history. If students do not have access to learning about their family history, students can also write a true narrative about their life story.
2. Have students use their notes to sketch out the story they want to tell about their family or own life.
3. Show examples of other quilts and textiles. Point out the colorful patterns in the borders. Encourage students to design their own patterns—a design that is repeated over and over again.
4. Provide markers, paint, construction paper, magazine pictures, and other materials for students to construct their story cloths.
5. Students should prepare a written description explaining the story cloth: What events do they include and why? What is the significance of the materials they choose to illustrate these events?
6. Post the story cloths along with the student artist's descriptions in the classroom or hallway for others to admire. Consider organizing a "gallery show."

Additional titles to teach about and celebrate grandparents:

Grandfather Counts written by Andrea Cheng, illustrated by Ange Zheng

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2399>

Goldfish and the Chrysanthemums written by Andrea Cheng, illustrated by Michelle Chang

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2398>

Sunday Shopping written by Sally Derby, illustrated by Shadra Stickland

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2883>

Seaside Dream written by Janet Bates, illustrated by Lambert Davis

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2722>

Singing with Momma Lou written by Linda Jacobs Altman, illustrated by Larry Johnson

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2450>

A Morning with Grandpa written by Sylvia Liu, illustrated by Christina Forshay

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2923>

Chachaji's Cup written by Uma Krishnaswami, illustrated by Soumya Sitaraman

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2774>

Maya's Blanket/La manta de Maya written by Monica Brown, illustrated by David Diaz

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2886>

Tashi and the Tibetan Flower Cure by Naomi Rose

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2758>

Abuela's Weave written by Omar S. Casteñeda, illustrated by Enrique O. Sanchez

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2350>

Babu's Song written by Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen, illustrated by Aaron Boyd

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2357>

The Falling Flowers written by Jennifer B. Reed, illustrated by Dick Cole

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2890>



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Linda Gerdner was born in Iowa and is a registered nurse. She is dedicated to helping persons with Alzheimer's disease and the family members who care for them. Although *Grandfather's Story Cloth* is her first children's book, she has published extensively in professional journals and received international and national awards for these contributions. Gerdner has traveled to northern Laos where she visited three Hmong villages in the rural province of Xieng Khouang. The bonds and friendships established with members of the Hmong American community have enriched her life and expanded her world.

Sarah Langford was a student at Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing at the time of publication. She is especially interested in the health care needs of immigrants and refugees living in the United States. She has a long-standing interest in children's literature and enjoyed the opportunity to combine her talent in this area with her nursing focus. *Grandfather's Story Cloth* is her first children's book.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Stuart Loughridge lives and works in St. Paul, Minnesota. Most of his waking hours are spent in his studio, drawing, painting, printmaking, and filling the bird feeder. This is his first children's book. Visit him online at <http://www.stuartloughridge.com/>.

ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

LEE & LOW BOOKS is the largest children's book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, "about everyone, for everyone," is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company's goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at leeandlow.com.

ORDERING INFORMATION

On the Web:

www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering (general order information)

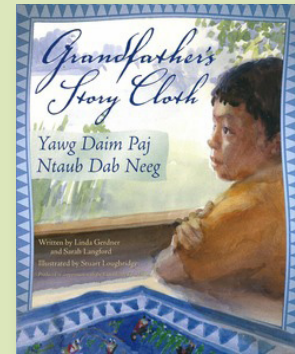
www.leeandlow.com/books/2899 (secure online ordering)

By Phone: 212-779-4400 ext. 25

By Fax: 212-683-1894

By Mail: Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

Book Information for *Grandfather's Story Cloth*



\$9.95, PAPERBACK

978-1-88500-865-7

32 pages

*Reading Level: Grades 2–3

*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

Interest Level: Grades K–4

Guided Reading Level: M

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:
3.4/0.5

Lexile™ Measure: AD520L

THEMES: Family Life (Grandparents), Intergenerational Relationships, Story Cloths/Story Quilts, Diseases (Dementia/Alzheimers), Hmong Interest, Laos Interest, Immigration, Asian/Asian American Interest, Empathy/Compassion, War, History, Kindness/Caring, Memory

RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

www.leeandlow.com/books/2899

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