

The Legend of the Bluebonnet

retold and illustrated by Tomie dePaola

Introduce yourself and tell your group your if this story brings to mind an experience in your life.

Tomie dePaola (pronounced Tommy da-POW-la) wrote and/or illustrated over 270 books. Nearly 25 million copies of his books have been sold. He died March 30, 2020.

Vocabulary:

legend - traditional story or group of stories told about a particular person or place.

bluebonnet - the state flower of Texas. The shape of the petals on the flower resembles the bonnet worn by pioneer women to protect them from the sun.

bonnet - a type of hat that covers the ears and is tied under the chin, worn by babies or, especially in the past, by women.

Comanche - A Native American tribe that lived on the central plains of the U. S., including Texas. They called themselves Nermernuh, which means "the People."

drought - a long period of time during which there is very little or no rain

famine - a situation in which many people do not have enough food to eat

buckskin - a soft type of leather that is made especially from the skin of a deer or similar animal

warrior - a person who fights in battles and is known for having courage and skill

shaman - in particular religions, a person who is thought to have special powers to control or influence good and evil spirits, making it possible for them to discover the cause of illness, bad luck, etc.

sacrifice - the act of giving up something that you want to keep, especially in order to get or do something else or to help someone. EX: The pandemic required everyone to make *sacrifices*. He *sacrificed* his personal life in order to get ahead in his career.

Discussion Questions:

What is your opinion of the illustrations? Do you have a favorite illustration?

Talk about how the Comanche people are loyal to She-Who-Is-Alone and how She-Who-Is-Alone is loyal to her tribe.

Think about the circumstances of the tribe. What problems did they face?

Why are drought and famine hardest on the very young and the very old?

Why is her doll her most valued possession?

Think of a possession you value highly. What might make you give up or sacrifice this possession?

Think of someone who has acted selflessly. What did they sacrifice?

NOTE: selfless - concerned more with the needs and wishes of others than with one's own; unselfish.

What is something you have had to sacrifice?

Have you or someone in your family lived through a time of drought or famine?

An origin myth is a story about how something came to be. *The Legend of the Bluebonnet* explains why bluebonnets bloom in Texas every spring. What other origin stories do you know?

Many people in Texas take family pictures among the bluebonnets. Have you taken pictures of your children or family surrounded by bluebonnets or other wildflowers?

We should begin to see bluebonnets blooming any time now. The peak of the bluebonnet season is usually early in April, but it cannot be predicted exactly. Some years there are more bluebonnets than other years, depending on the climate. This website has a list of places to see bluebonnets near Austin: <https://www.austintexas.org/austin-insider-blog/post/where-to-see-wildflowers-near-austin/>

Talk about flowers that represent your country or state.

What might a child learn from this story? Do you think a child would enjoy this book? Would you want to share this book with a child in your life? Is there anything in the book that would be upsetting to a child? What age is too young for this story?

If you have time, you can read the information at the back of book.