



The Skirt

Gary Soto , Eric Velásquez (Illustrator)

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Miata has left the beautiful folklórico skirt her mother wore in Mexico on the bus. She was going to wear the skirt on Sunday when her dance group performed folklórico. Can Miata and her friend Ana rescue the precious skirt in time?

The Skirt Details

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Author : Gary Soto , Eric Velásquez (Illustrator)

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Meg says

I liked this early chapter book a lot. There was enough narrative tension to keep you wondering what would happen, but it was resolved in a nice slow denouement with a beautiful twist. (These days it seems like much kids' and YA literature always has to have a giant over-the-top climax with like 1 page of denouement.) The pacing felt very real-life. I liked that the main character reflected about her character traits and flaws (always losing stuff) but it didn't turn into a moralizing lesson or anything. Also, it was nice that the story incorporated Miata's Mexican-American culture as part of the character and plot development, but without a lot of stress or conflict around issues of assimilation or prejudice.

A side note about parents and gender: The dad works as a welder all week, comes home and watches baseball on TV, while the mom makes dinner, cleans the house, and worries about her children's clothing. This may be realistic for many families, yet I am kind of tired of reading children's books with these same dynamics and would love to see books that mix it up a little and offer a different picture. (I felt the kids were less stereotyped and more 3-dimensional - for example, our main character is excellent at math, and is physically brave and always scraping up her knees in some adventure. She also dances folklorico, likes pretty clothing, and complains about boys teasing her.)

Holly says

Good story of actions and consequences. VERY YOUNG.

Sequeena says

This book is about a girl named Miata. She has a friend named Ana. They are good friends. One day they were on the bus and Miata and Ana were on the bus and Miata took her skirt to school. She did not ask her mother and when she took it to school she left it on the bus because some boys were messing with her on the bus. Her and Ana here trying to ignore them and they turned their backs on them and stuck their head in the window to eat some animal crackers. When she got off the bus she forgot her skirt on the bus. She thought for minute. I forgot my skirt on the bus! She screamed as loud as she can

(NS) Becca says

Gary Soto wrote The Skirt, illustrated by Eric Velasquez, published by Yearling (1992).

This book is written about a hispanic little girl named Miata. She is very excited because in the coming weekend she will be participating in a dance group to perform a Folklorico. She knows her parents are going to be very proud of her. There is only one problem; she left her beautiful dress on the bus. The book describes the trouble Miata goes through to rescue her folklorico dress from the bus over the weekend. The dress means a lot to Miata and her mother. Miata is afraid to get caught, but with the help of a friend, overcomes

her obstacles. This book is entertaining and easily relatable. It is authentic and uses good details without over-doing it. I think students would be able to connect to Miata, regardless of their culture.

Reading level is ages 6-9. I could see it being a good book for middle of second grade on average.

Bernadette says

An easy and fun read! Soto weaves Mexican American culture in to a story any child can relate to – losing something important and going on an adventure to find it. But by having the protagonist be Mexican American and losing something of cultural value, Soto gives Hispanic students a chance to see themselves in a positive light in literature. Soto uses Spanish phrases throughout the book and describes other cultural markers such as when Ana's grandmother answers the phone and speaks in Spanish. He also describes the food, occupations, and pastimes of Miata's family. A nice touch is also when the girls are in the library and both point out on the globe where their respective families are from in Mexico; one girl's parents were born in L.A. and the other's born in Mexico. Here Soto is showing the variety within a cultural label such as Mexican American. The illustrations were also well done and show variety in physical features. I think students (maybe mostly girls) of any cultural background would enjoy and learn from this story.

Steph says

Once again, Gary Soto delivers another "slice of life" that falls into the adorable category. Don't be deceived by its adorability into thinking that this short story doesn't have substance. It does! Soto is clever in the way he creates a text that is fun for a young adult audience to read, and yet rich in nuance for adults to read. Every middle school aged child can relate to Miata and Ana sneaking around to find what they lost, trying not to get caught by parents or other adults. And every adult can figure out that the skirt is cultural significance.

I also enjoy the way in which Soto develops characters who are first and second generation Mexicans/Americans. One character has never even been to Mexico, and yet she still feels it's necessary to help her friend "find" her link (the skirt) to her culture, to find it, to keep it, to hold onto it, and to treasure it. I love this short story, and I have no doubt this will be one of the works during my year of reading all things Chicana/Latina/Hispanic that I go back and read again and again.

Gale says

THE CONSEQUENCE OF CARELESSNESS

Fourth-grader Miata learns the importance of friendship and the need to act responsibly when she realizes that she accidentally left her mother's prized folkloric skirt on the school bus. Since she needs to wear it for Sunday performance she sets out to break into the parked bus--encountering various moral and legal dilemmas. Gradually she realizes what a tangled web she has needlessly woven--from the moment she chose to deceive adults, instead of requesting their aid.

Soto understands the lifestyle of Hispanic Americans, but he lets his young protagonist sort out her mess in her own way--skirting the embarrassing truth. Without a confession to relieve her private torment Miata

never makes things right with her concerned parents, who remain in suspicious ignorance about her strange behavior. How will she handle Sunday when she lacks a costume? This short story might send a divisive message to children trying to make their way in a complex adult world, for Miata does not demonstrate Trust in her own family--on any adult. Heavy burdens for a girl who made one small and then many bigger mistakes in judgment.

(May 5, 2011. I welcome dialogue with teachers.)

Kayla Strand says

This book is about a girl named Miata who left her dancing skirt on her school bus on Friday, it belonged to her mother when she was younger. Desperate to find it she calls her friend Ana', who is dancing with her on Sunday, to see if she had picked it up for her but Ana' told her she did not have it. Afraid to tell her mother she keeps quiet, she creates a plan to get her skirt back by breaking into the buses and taking her skirt back. Close to getting caught, she runs back home only to find her mother had bought her a new skirt. She wore both to dance, which I thought was a nice ending to the book. It would be a good book for younger students to read, but doesn't send the right message. I wanted Miata to learn that she could trust her parents instead of her getting away with breaking into the bus, but that is not the way the author intended the story to go. I still think it is a sweet book though.

Dekayla says

This book [THE SKIRT:] was mainly about a girl on one Friday evening, who happened to leave her skirt on the school bus. This skirt wasn't just any skirt, this was a very special skirt to Miata and her family. So on Saturday morning, Miata and some of her friends [Rewdolfo and Ana:] went to the bus yard to get Miata's skirt. When they got the skirt, Miata, Rewdolfo and Ana, went their separate ways home. When Miata got home, her mom told her that she had a surprise for her. Then Miata's mom slowly reached for a big box. When Miata opened it, it was a brand new skirt. The next day [Sunday:] Miata danced in not one but, both of her skirts.

Q.number 1-The main characters in the story ? They were Rewdolfo, Miata, and Ana.

Q.number 2-What was the problem ? Miata left her skirt on the bus.

Q.number 3-How did she solve it ? By going to the bus yard.

Q.number 4-What did I learn ? To never leave anything on the bus.

Q.number 5-Did I like the book or not ? Why ? Yes I did like this book because it told a lot of details about what was going on in the book.

Casey Brady says

The Skirt, written by Gary Soto, is a realistic fiction book for children that takes place in the San Joaquin Valley. Miata is riding a bus and due to some boys' teasing, she forgets her skirt on the bus. The skirt was

meant for her dance recital over the weekend. Miata is very worried about telling her mother about what happens so she decides to keep it a secret. Knowing that she needs to get the skirt back, Miata and her friend Ana decide to break into the parking lot for the buses and get the skirt off the bus. While they are at the parking lot, Miata's father comes to fix one of the broken buses. Miata and Ana hide hoping to stay undetected. Finally seeing a chance to escape, they take it but are spotted by another worker yet are not recognized. Miata returns home with the skirt but her mother had bought her a new one. Miata decides to wear both during the dance recital.

The age range for *The Skirt* is for the advanced simply due to the higher vocabulary as well as the insertions of Spanish. There actually might need to be an adult present because the Spanish can get confusing for a reader that has no prior knowledge of the language especially for a young reader. The illustrations were very nice. All were hand drawn and black and white. They accented the text very well allowing for a more vivid picture of the events. I only recommend the book to young girls since that seemed to be the target audience. Being a male, I did not really enjoy reading the book but others might have a different opinion.

Kyra Wonders says

This book is about a girl named Miata who left her dancing skirt on her school bus on Friday, it belonged to her mother when she was younger. Afraid to tell her mother she keeps quiet, she creates a plan to get her skirt back by breaking into the buses and taking her skirt back. Close to getting caught, she runs back home only to find her mother had bought her a new skirt. She wore both to dance, which I thought was a nice ending to the book. It would be a good book for younger students to read, but doesn't send the right message. I am a little lost with this book as it is a great little story but I don't think it has a positive message in it. Miata should have just told her mother what happened instead of breaking into the busses. In the end it all worked out but I am iffy on if I would share this in my classroom. I might use it as to teach what NOT to do.

Krista the Krazy Kataloguer says

What I really liked about this book was how, despite its brevity, the reader is able to quickly be drawn into the story. Miata and her friend Ana are such appealing characters. Miata has left her folklorico, her colorful dancing skirt, on the bus, and it's Saturday morning and she needs it to dance in on Sunday. How will she get it back by then? So much was made of the traditional Mexican dance that I wished the book had come with a video so I could see it! I also wish Gary Soto would write more books about the adventures and misadventures of Miata and her friends and family. This book would pair well with Alma Flor Ada's *My Name is Maria Isabel*. Recommended!

Ashley Teagle says

I would recommend this book to a third or fourth grader. I liked the cultural references but not every Spanish term was explained within the text. For that reason, I would say it would be a good book to recommend to Spanish speakers or to a child who in addition to this novel may be reading other nonfiction about Mexican food and culture to supplement the book. I think it was a good book about an elementary school child dealing with an age appropriate concern. The overall tone of this book is lighthearted.

Samantha says

I love it when kids get away with the childish things in life.

zabarj says

Guided Reading Level: N

Summary: Miata has left the beautiful folkloric skirt her mother wore in Mexico on the bus. She was going to wear the skirt on Sunday when her dance group performed.

My Take: This is a good book for students in two different ways: the reading level and the content. Students develop a better understanding for another culture and an item that some may value. The skirt is an object used to show how a young Mexican girl is involved in her community and her culture. She loses the skirt, finds it, and in the end, is given another skirt by her mother. After all Miata's efforts to find the skirt, she decides to wear both for her dance group. Narrative elements are present, even though basic, present some basic character development and plot.
