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Dream Things True: A Novel



Synopsis

Evan and Alma have spent fifteen years living in the same town, connected in a dozen different ways but also living worlds apart -- until the day he jumps into her dad's truck and slams on the brakes. The nephew of a senator, Evan seems to have it all - except a functional family. Alma has lived in Georgia since she was two, surrounded by a large (sometimes smothering) Mexican family. They both want out of this town. His one-way ticket is soccer; hers is academic success. When they fall in love, they fall hard, trying to ignore their differences. Then Immigration and Customs Enforcement begins raids in their town, and Alma knows that she needs to share her secret. But how will she tell her country-club boyfriend that she and almost everyone she's close to are undocumented immigrants? What follows is a beautiful, nuanced exploration of the complications of immigration, young love, defying one's family, and facing a tangled bureaucracy that threatens to completely upend two young lives. This page-turning debut asks tough questions, reminding us that love is more powerful than fear.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up • This teen romance centering on the drama of immigration focuses on two protagonists, Alma, a beautiful, undocumented young woman, and Evan, a privileged Southern young man, who fall in love despite class, race, and national divides. Alma struggles to manage her grades, friends at a new school, and the fear of deportation as she enters her junior year at Gilberton High School in north Georgia. After Evan helps Alma avoid a traffic accident in her father's

truck, the two begin a relationship, which soon turns into an intense romance. Evan's background as the nephew of a senator with bigoted views on immigration and undocumented migrants complicates the plot as his feelings grow stronger for Alma. Ultimately, Alma's life as an undocumented teen encroaches on the teens' relationships and opportunities—forcing the two to struggle with the social and racial tensions that keep them apart. Marquardt provides a critical view of the stigmas and difficulties plaguing undocumented youth in U.S. schools without glossing over the legal realities of deportation and detainment. Readers will find the romantic aspects of Alma and Evan's relationship sweet and exciting, though there are times when Alma's body and beauty are exoticized by the male gaze (particularly the white male gaze) in tandem with stereotypes about Latina femininity. VERDICT A debut romance for libraries looking to diversify their offerings. —Marilisa Jimenez Garcia, Hunter College, New York City

“Marquardt knowledgeably takes on the plight of undocumented families . . . readers seeking a star-crossed love story with a twist won't be disappointed.” —Publishers Weekly
“Marquardt has a lot to teach . . . but never does it feel didactic. Instead, Marquardt envelops you into the story of this one family and this one young couple trying to beat the odds.” —Bustle
“Worthy examination of undocumented immigration in the American South through the lens of young love.” —Kirkus
“Marquardt provides a critical view of the stigmas and difficulties plaguing undocumented youth in U.S. schools without glossing over the legal realities of deportation and detainment. Readers will find the romantic aspects of Alma and Evan's relationship sweet and exciting.” —School Library Journal
“Marquardt has written a book with a hopeful, if not happy, ending, filled with stark details about life in the U.S. for undocumented families. Eye-opening and touching.” —Booklist
“Dream Things True is a satisfying and rich debut novel about love and the importance of following dreams.” —Aristocras Award Committee
“A true Romeo and Juliet romance with a wider moral sweep—tender, heart-wrenching and wise. Every character shines.” —Huntley Fitzpatrick, author of *What I Thought Was True*
“DREAM THINGS TRUE by Marie Marquardt is a story that must be told and needs to be read. With sensitivity and care, Marquardt deftly illustrates the struggles and hopes of Alma, an undocumented teenager living in the United States. Alma's story reflects the lives of millions of young people trapped between countries and cultures, longing for a place to belong. An important story that's full of heart, it will forever change the way you view those who live their lives in the shadows.” —Jennifer Mathieu, author of *The Truth About Alice*
“A compelling read with complex,

true-to-life characters, *DREAM THINGS TRUE* is a unique novel. Not only will it cause readers to empathize with characters in difficult situations, it will get them to consider the plight of people in the real world. Add in a love story you can root for. *Adi Alsaid*, author of *Let's Get Lost* "Marquardt's *Dreams Things True* vividly weaves to life the thrill of falling in love in the South while awakening readers to the struggles of US-Mexican immigration policies. In this touching coming-of-age story, full of hope and possibilities, Marquardt captures the bittersweet world of undocumented teens living in the US and the power of true love. *Malin Alegria*, author of *Border Town* series

I believe this book should be required reading for students to understand the challenges faced by our friends and neighbors who may or may not have proper documentation to live in the country. The challenges Alma's family faces throughout the story shine a frightening light on the realities faced by undocumented immigrants. The love story between Evan and Alma is sweet and feels very real. The author successfully uses their relationship to tell a very serious story. This is a book that will change the reader.

This is a powerful book that humanizes the situation of being undocumented (without legal authorization) in the USA, growing up, dreaming about a better future, and falling in love. Marquardt knows what she is talking about. If you liked this book, you must also read *The Secret Side of Empty* by Maria Andreu!

An interesting take on young love with the added complications of cultural differences and immigration issues. I have read other teen romance stories but this one is different, mainly because the author doesn't dumb down the complexities of modern life in a small town. I enjoyed this read.

Fantastic book. Couldn't put it down. Very cute love story with important underlying themes that really hit home. Marie Marquardt is a fantastic writer!

Beautifully written, engaging characters and an enlightening story within a coming of age teen romance. What more could you ask for?

Dream Things True by Marie Marquardt Overview: This is a story that transcends anything a summary or details about plots or themes could say. There is no way to truly understand the magic

of this book without having read it yourself. It achieves the full meaning of what a powerful book is supposed to do by crafting a beautiful story that breeds empathy in anyone who reads it. It is the story of Alma, an intelligent, promising young woman who was brought to the United States as a young child from Mexico, and Evan a wealthy country club, preppy southern boy who are thrown together by random circumstances one day. Held together by a love for each other, Evan and Alma work together to fight the horrible immigration issues that comes to threaten Alma's family and friends. As Evan's eyes are opened to the harsh realities that Alma faces, so are the readers. This is a powerful story that humanizes an issue so prevalent in the news today. Overall: 5 (Is there a higher score?) Characters: 5 Each character has a purpose and is unique. Alma represents the underprivileged immigrant community on one side of town while Evan represents the other, blissfully wrapped up in their country club life only brought together at the local public school. When their worlds mesh, they both grow to understand each other and the very different backgrounds they come from. In Alma's family, there is her father who brought them to America for a better life and runs a lawn service that works on Evan's lawn and her brother, star soccer player and Evan's teammate who was working toward college before getting caught up in the immigration issues. On Evan's side there's Whit his cousin and son of Georgia's conservative senator who struggles with addiction to cope with his family's strict, closed door policy. Plot: 5 The path this story takes is quite compelling and entertaining. There were interesting twists that I didn't see coming, and the plot kept its integrity the entire time. Writing: 5 I was blown away by the writing. The execution of using a dual POV in third person was amazing, a tool that is rarely successful. I was also blown away by how unique each POV was, and how accurate the portrayal of the two separate worlds were. This is definitely a book everyone needs to read as it carries such substance and importance to breeding empathy about an issue that is often desensitized. This review first appeared on Reading Writing and Me, a blog about YA books. Link in my profile

Received an ARC, read it, and when it came out I bought a copy as a gift for my sister. I LOVED this book. It is so refreshing to see a true immigration-love story portrayed in a YA novel. Marquardt has a deep understanding of Latino culture, its community and the immigration process. She does a phenomenal job of putting a face to the plight of so many. But above all this is a love story. Two teens trying to find themselves, instead find each other. Alma is an undocumented Mexican immigrant living in the shadows, and Evan is a Southern white boy born into a family of privilege. As they fall for each other they struggle with an unfair "system" keeping them apart. This novel is well written and researched. I highly recommend it.

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