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Frida (English Language Edition)



Synopsis

When her mother was worn out from caring for her five sisters, her father gave her lessons in brushwork and color. When polio kept her bedridden for nine months, drawing saved her from boredom. When a bus accident left her in unimaginable agony, her paintings expressed her pain and depression - and eventually, her joys and her loves. Over and over again, Frida Kahlo turned the challenges of her life into art. Now Jonah Winter and Ana Juan have drawn on both the art and the life to create a playful, insightful tribute to one of the twentieth century's most influential artists. Viva Frida!

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 280L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Arthur A. Levine Books; Library Binding edition (February 1, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0590203207

ISBN-13: 978-0590203203

Product Dimensions: 9.7 x 0.4 x 11.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 46 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #38,496 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #7 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Mexico](#) #13 in [Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Art > History](#) #30 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Art](#)

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

Customer Reviews

Beset by one shattering ordeal after another, world-renowned painter Frida Kahlo always managed to channel her anguish into creativity. Frida, by Jonah Winter and illustrator Ana Juan, is an exquisite and playful glimpse into the artist's life and work. Filled with the folk art icons of Frida's Mexican culture--monkeys, devils, smiling skeletons, and sympathetic jaguars depicted with acrylics and wax on paper--the book describes, in short streams of text, the feisty, irreverent, fierce nature of the artist. One especially memorable illustration, based on one of Frida Kahlo's own paintings, shows Frida herself caught in a tangle of thorns against a mournful blue night sky. The text reads,

"After the accident ... her body will hurt, always." Author and illustrator's notes add background information, but this stunning book from the author of *Diego*, about famed Mexican muralist (and husband of Frida) Diego Rivera, is a spectacular, lush introduction to an inspiring woman and her art. (Ages 5 to 8) --Emilie Coulter

Winter, who brought the Mexican muralist vividly to life in *Diego*, focuses on Diego Rivera's bride, Frida Kahlo an accomplished artist in her own right in this striking picture book-biography. With a spare narrative more akin to poetry than prose, the author touches on important events in his subject's childhood Frida's loneliness and the polio that kept her bedridden for months, as well as a bus accident, at age 18, that nearly killed her. He then shows how, each time, art helped her to transcend her injuries ("She turns her pain into something beautiful") and to unleash her magically surreal vision of the world in paintings ("In museums, people still look at them and weep and sigh and smile"). Juan, a Spanish fine artist and New Yorker cover artist making her children's book debut, creates artwork bursting with saturated color and infused with Mexican folk art motifs that also influenced Frida's own style. Floating figures, fantastical creatures and celestial bodies with human features cavort across the pages. Ana transforms Frida herself from a solemn, moon-faced child with uncompromising eyebrows (her well-known physical trait) to a woman whose gaunt features hint at both strength and inner struggle. One particularly breathtaking image shows the artist floating against a night sky, eyes closed and arms crossed on her chest in a death pose, held in the grip of a tree's thorny, gnarled branches ("Her body will hurt, always"). An outstanding introduction to an influential artist. Ages 4-10. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

I love the look and feel of this beautiful book. I am certain that it is no small task to select several phrases to depict the life of such a complicated and talented artist. Unfortunately the author falls into a common trap. Frida's father, the book reads, was an artist who inspired Frida and taught her to paint on photographs. The author writes that her mother on the other hand "takes care of six daughters" and is often "tired" as a result. Frida became lonely (apparently due to her tired and busy mother) and developed an imaginary friend. Far too often the success of women is credited only to their fathers and the support of their mothers is rendered useless or invisible. Frida was close with her father according to some historical accounts and he did inspire her. It seems that there is a missed opportunity here, however, to credit the hard work, love, and support that Frida Kahlo's mother contributed to Frida and to her family if even in a word or two. It may have been Frida's mother who had an easel created for Frida when she was confined to bed, for example. I would like

my child to grow up honoring strong women like Frida as well as the work of people who love them. That includes strong mothers like this one who undoubtedly suffered through watching her daughter endure pain and tragedy and still supported her creativity while raising six children. Sadly I will be returning this book and ordering one of the other books for children about the life of Frida Kahlo.

Lovely illustrations! The story is very honest, and therefore quite sad. A lovely addition to any library.

Frida fans will love this book, my 8 year old daughter very interested in Frida Kahlo's story.

The illustrations are amazing and though the subject matter is adult; her struggles with health and life; the prose is straightforward and appropriate to be shared with a child with adult care. My daughter loves the artist, Frida Kahlo and cannot wait to share this book when my granddaughter is older.

I first got this book when I was 5 years old. This is the book that made me fall in love with Frida Kahlo & I later lost it so when I found it again I had to get it. It is truly an amazing illustrated book. The verse are so short and poetically sweet. Great book

I bought this because I teach Spanish at an elementary school. I love Frida Kahlo and always incorporate lessons about her and her art, so I was excited to find this book. It is a good introduction to Frida and her life, and the illustrations are beautiful. They are very imaginative, which I thought was a good reflection of Frida's artistic style. My first and second graders were fascinated with the book, and we talked a lot about how Frida used her imagination to help her get through difficult things. I highly recommend this book, for art lovers of any age!

I was so happy to receive this book in time for Christmas for my four year old daughter. I had originally seen the paperback version in Spanish and thought the illustrations were gorgeous. I was even more impressed by the hardcover edition. My daughter absolutely loves it and has me read it to her every night. I would definitely recommend this book for parents who would like to introduce their children to the world of art and artists.

Beautiful artwork.

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