



Dreams In The Golden Country: the Diary of Zipporah Feldman, a Jewish Immigrant Girl, New York City, 1903

Kathryn Lasky

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New dreams and old traditions flourish and clash when a Jewish girl and her family emigrate from Russia to America.

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Author : Kathryn Lasky

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From Reader Review Dreams In The Golden Country: the Diary of Zipporah Feldman, a Jewish Immigrant Girl, New York City, 1903 for online ebook

Eva Leger says

I forget where I picked this up at but I finally read it less than two months ago. I have a friend or two who are slowly reading and/or collecting the Dear America series. I have no interest in doing the same but every once in awhile I read one that interests me for a specific reason.

Since I read a lot about the Holocaust and how the Jewish people survived, and in many cases didn't survive, this caught my eye because of the title. Of course, the date is also on the cover so I knew what I was getting. I didn't expect it to be about the Holocaust itself.

There are some really great old photos in the back of the book that will probably get minds turning, along with maps, two of them I think.

I was a little surprised at the realisticness of the diary. I think since it's Dear America I expected it to be more of a younger-than-pre-teen-type of story and in all actuality a much older person can get quite into it. As I have so proven to myself.

I think I'll keep my eye out for others in the series that I might like but it's certainly not something I want to read every one of. I am looking forward to introducing the books to Julia in a few years. Maybe she'll be so enamored that she decides to make a goal out of the series.

Kelsey Hanson says

I have always found this period of American history fascinating. The story of Zippy and her family shows the struggles faced by immigrants, particularly learning English and trying to combine the traditions of their country with the new ideas they were exposed to in America. I did feel a bit out of touch with some of the Jewish traditions and High Holy Days, because I am Catholic, like Sean, but I did find the family's devotion to their Jewish traditions touching and it was interesting to learn about a different religion.

Williamkhaykin says

i like the book so much that it make me think of a part in my life that my famliy nevreto brake up or have to go some whare to live alone.

Alex Blose says

This is the diary of Zipporah Feldman. Zippy's family came over to America in 1903 in hopes of a better life. Her father has already come over and established a life for himself and his family. Zippy has two sisters, Tovah, who becomes very involved in the unions, and Miriam, who falls in love with an Irish boy.

Zipporah wants to do what is best for her family and help out whenever she possibly can. Her Mama and

Papa will not let her work though, on account of her age, so Zippy must go to school. Since she is so behind in America, she must start at grade three and work her way up. Zipporah meets Blu, and together these two girls come up with a plan to be in the eighth grade in a short time.

Zippy's plans don't seem to go as she planned though when her family cannot get along, Miriam runs off with her boyfriend, Blu's father runs away and Blu falls behind in school, and Mama doesn't want to leave her old ways behind and become a true American. Zippy seems to push through everything as best she can in hopes of pursuing her dream of becoming an actress. Will things work out for Zippy in the end? Or will she be left with hanging dreams and never become who she has always wanted to be?

I liked this book, especially the way that it was set up. It was neat to read a book that was written like a diary, and this made it very easy and quick to read. The historical aspect of the book is greatly accurate, which makes this all the better to read because of how informational it is. Even though it is written in 1903 by a Jewish immigrant, it is even very easy to read because it is written in an eleven-year-old's language from 1903, but in a way that people of today can understand it very easily.

As a future teacher, I would use this book and probably anyone in the series for any historical unit I was teaching. I think that it would give the students a great look into how life would have been for them if they had been alive during this time period, and it will make them feel more connected to the reading because the character is around their age. Also, the fact that it is written like a diary so the pages are not completely full with text will make it more enjoyable by many students. Because it is a historical fiction book, this would be a great book to use to introduce this genre to students.

Laura says

I enjoyed this book, and not just because the sister's name was Tovah, which made me think of my friend's sister, Tova! I like reading about what it might have been like for immigrants to this country in the early 1900s, and I didn't really know anything about Russian Jewish immigrants before reading this story.

Amanda says

I read this book several times. I really loved the Dear America series. I think they still have a place in YA literature today, and I think more girls should read them because it gives an opportunity to make connections to the past in a personal way.

Jaye Smith says

NOTE Some spoilers.

This was a great book - an accurate depiction of what life was like for immigrants coming to American and life for them on the Lower East Side at the turn of the century.

Twelve-year-old Zipporah Feldman keeps a diary from 1903-1906 - we join her at her first days in America at Ellis Island where she writes totally in Yiddish. She improves in school, her English-written entries in italics. Her family has many struggles - a smelly, interesting boarder, her older sister Miriam falling in love with the Irish Catholic boy who turns out their lights for them on the Sabbath (Saturday for Jews), her other

older sister Tovah joining the union - and many triumphs - Zippy excels in school, her father takes up violin playing again, and Zippy falls in love with the theatre.

This is a great Dear America book to read - I highly recommend it.

Monica says

My mother-in-law gave me this children's novel after we visited the Tenement Museum on the Lower East Side. The guided museum tour was fantastic (and highly recommended), and the experience helped me visualize the family's apartment and neighborhood in the novel. The main character, Zipporah, is a lovable, hardworking girl that you just want to root for. Go, Zippy!

Amanda says

I absolutley loved reading these books when i was younger, and actually remember historical events that occured because of these books. The pictures at the back of the book of the time period and event were great, and I would often stare at them for an endless amount of time. I think this was one of my favorites, the description of the triangle factory fire amazed me, and to this day I remember what happened and what the triangle fire was and what it did for the US. Awesome book overall :D

Meadow Frisbie says

Zipporah (Zippy) Feldman is a Jewish Immigrant to America, she has heard of all the great opportunity in America, and is eager to take some. Zippy runs into all the greatness of America, as well as some of her downfalls. She starts school, makes new friends, and watches her sister, Miriam fall in love.

This book was sweet. It is a true account of what Jewish Immigrants felt. It was well written, and full of information. I loved the sisters, even when different belifes seperated them. They still loved each other.

Sherrie says

This book is written like a diary. Zipporah is the one doing the talking. She is 10 years old when her family immigrates from Russia to America. She keeps a diary for about 18 months. All her hopes, dreams and tragedy's are written here. The first thing she has to do is go to school. Since Zipporah can't speak English very well they put her in with the first graders. But she learns fast and moves up through the school system. Zipporah's one big dream is to become an actress in the theater. Does she make it in the theater? You'll have to read the book to find out.

Ana Mardoll says

Dreams in the Golden Country (New York City) / 0-590-02973-8

It seems I like all the Dear America books, and this one is no exception. Although I was expecting something a little more along the lines of "The Jungle" and a little less along the lines of "Fiddler on the Roof", this book does manage to neatly encapsulate the life of an immigrant to America in the early 1900s.

The author skims briefly over their stay at Ellis islands, the perfunctory and frightening medical exams, and the cramped apartment living that waits them in the new world. This is dealt with in a light vein, and the overall tone is never dim or depressing. The life of the family is never terribly hard - the mother starts a sewing business more to stay occupied than to bring in money, and the father is offered a position at the local university teaching violin.

Because the "immigrant hardships" are toned down so much, the conflict in the book comes from the social changes within the family: one daughter becomes involved in unions and suffrage activities, another daughter romances and marries a non-Jewish boy, and the father slowly stops following the Orthodox manner of dress and grooming, to the mother's horror and consternation. As the family is absorbed into this new culture, they have to decide which traditions are sacrosanct and which traditions can be abandoned for the new ways.

Parents might want to be aware of some of the themes presented here, depending on the age and maturity of the child. Although the theme of "immigrant hardships" is largely ignored, the book does feature two sudden deaths - one a newborn infant, and the second a worker who dies from unsafe working conditions involving a warehouse fire. The imagery is moved over as swiftly as possible, but the concepts are disturbing. One of the daughters routinely sneaks out at night to see her non-Jewish boyfriend, although there is never any indication that the young lovers are doing anything more than holding hands and kissing. Lastly, the mother can come off as an unsympathetic character, as she routinely and openly alienates several members of the family for not being "religious enough". Although this issue is resolved by the end, the mother can come across as caring more about her religion than about her family, depending on your own point of view.

~ Ana Mardoll

Mellanie C says

I registered a book at BookCrossing.com!
<http://www.BookCrossing.com/journal/14430420>

T says

Gives quite an informative view of life in the US for Russian Jewish immigrants.

Paul says

I rated this book 3 stars because, I didn't really know much about life in NY was in 1903-1905 despite Ellis Island. This book didn't have much plot or setting. But had a lot of character. These are my thoughts on this book. I read this book when it was due, I just forgot to update this book.

