



THE INFILTRATORS

DELVE DEEPER READING LIST



The Infiltrators, directed by Cristina Ibarra and Alex Rivera, is a true story about a rag-tag group of undocumented youth - Dreamers - deliberately get detained by Border Patrol in order to infiltrate a shadowy, for-profit detention center.

Contributors

Tracey Stegeman

ADULT NON-FICTION

Arce, Julissa. *My (underground) American Dream: My True Story as an Undocumented Immigrant Who Became a Wall Street Executive*. Center Street, 2016.

For an undocumented immigrant, what is the true cost of the American dream? Julissa Arce shares her story in a riveting memoir. When she was 11 years old Julissa Arce left Mexico, and came to the United States on a tourist visa to be reunited with her parents, who dreamed the journey would secure her a better life. When her visa expired at the age of 15, she became an undocumented immigrant. Thus, began her underground existence, a decades long game of cat and mouse, tremendous family sacrifice, and fear of exposure.

Bixler, Mark. *The Lost Boys of the Sudan: An American Story of the Refugee Experience*. University of Georgia Press. 2006.

Jacob Magot, Peter Anyang, Daniel Khoch, and Marko Ayii were among 150 or so Lost Boys who were resettled in Atlanta. Like most of their fellow refugees, they had never before turned on a light switch, used a kitchen appliance, or ridden in a car or subway train-much less held a job or balanced a checkbook. We relive their early excitement and disorientation, their growing despondency over fruitless job searches, adjustments they faced upon finally entering the workforce, their experiences of post-9/11 xenophobia, and their undying dreams of acquiring an education.

Coan, Peter M. *Toward a Better Life: America's New Immigrants in Their Own Words: From Ellis Island to the Present*. Prometheus Books, 2011.

This book offers a balanced, poignant, and often moving portrait of America's immigrants over more than a century. The author has organized the book by decades so that readers can easily find the time period most relevant to their experience or that of family members. The first part covers the Ellis Island era, the second part America's new immigrants-from the closing of Ellis Island in 1955 to the present.

Cornejo Villavicencio, Karla. *The Undocumented Americans*. One World, 2020.

Looking well beyond the flashpoints of the border or the activism of the DREAMERS, Cornejo Villavicencio explores the lives of the undocumented as rarely seen in our daily headlines. In New York, we meet the undocumented workers who were recruited in the federally funded Ground Zero cleanup after 9/11. In Miami we enter the hidden botanicas, which offer witchcraft and homeopathy to those whose status blocks them from any other healthcare options. In Flint, Michigan, we witness how many live in fear as the government issues raids at grocery stores and demands identification before offering life-saving clean water.

Motomura, Hiroshi. *Americans in Waiting: The Lost Story of Immigration and Citizenship in the United States*. Oxford University Press, 2007.

In *Americans in Waiting*, Hiroshi Motomura looks to a forgotten part of our past to show how, for over 150 years, immigration was assumed to be a transition to citizenship, with immigrants essentially being treated as future citizens--Americans in waiting. Challenging current conceptions, the author deftly uncovers how this view, once so central to law and policy, has all but vanished.

Urrea, Luis Alberto. *The Devil's Highway: A True Story*. Back Bay Books, 2004.

In May 2001, a group of men attempted to cross the Mexican border into the desert of southern Arizona, through the deadliest region of the continent, the "Devil's Highway." Three years later, Luis Alberto Urrea wrote about what happened to them. The result was a national bestseller, a Pulitzer Prize finalist, a "book of the year" in multiple newspapers, and a work proclaimed as a modern American classic.

ADULT FICTION

Akhtar, Ayad. *American Dervish: A Novel*. Little, Brown and Co., 2012.

From Pulitzer Prize winner Ayad Akhtar, a stirring and explosive debut novel about an American Muslim family in Wisconsin struggling with faith and belonging in the pre-9/11 world.

Grande, Reyna. *Across a Hundred Mountains: A Novel*. Atria Books, 2006.

After a tragedy separates her from her mother, Juana García leaves in search of her father, who left them two years earlier. Out of money and in need of someone to help her across the border, Juana meets Adelina Vasquez, a young woman who left her family in California to follow her lover to Mexico. Finding themselves—in a Tijuana jail—in desperate circumstances, they offer each other much needed material and spiritual support and ultimately become linked forever in the most unexpected of ways. In *Across a Hundred Mountains*, Reyna Grande puts a human face on the controversial issue of immigration, helping readers to better understand those who risk life and limb every day in pursuit of a better life.

Henriquez, Cristina. *The Book of Unknown Americans: A Novel*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2014.

When fifteen-year-old Maribel Rivera sustains a terrible injury, the Riveras leave behind a comfortable life in Mexico and risk everything to come to the United States so that Maribel can have the care she needs. Once they arrive, it's not long before Maribel attracts the attention of Mayor Toro, the son of one of their new neighbors, who sees a kindred spirit in this beautiful, damaged outsider.

Kwok, Jean. *Girl in Translation*. Riverhead Books, 2010.

When Kimberly Chang and her mother emigrate from Hong Kong to Brooklyn squalor, she quickly begins a secret double life: exceptional schoolgirl during the day, Chinatown sweatshop worker in the evenings. Disguising the more difficult truths of her life—like the staggering degree of her poverty, the weight of her family's future resting on her shoulders, or her secret love for a factory boy who shares none of her talent or ambition—Kimberly learns to constantly translate not just her language but herself back and forth between the worlds she straddles.

Mengestu, Dinaw. *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears: A Novel*. Riverhead Books, 2007.

Seventeen years ago, Sepha Stephanos fled the Ethiopian Revolution for a new start in the United States. Now he finds himself running a failing grocery store in a poor African American section of Washington D.C., his only companions two fellow African immigrants who share his bitter nostalgia and longing for his home continent. Years ago and worlds away Sepha could never have imagined a life of such isolation. As his environment begins to change, hope comes in the form of a friendship with new neighbors Judith and Naomi, a white woman and her biracial daughter.

NON-FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Arce, Julissa. *Someone Like Me: How One Undocumented Girl Fought for Her American Dream*. Little, Brown and Co., 2018.

Born in the picturesque town of Taxco, Mexico, Julissa Arce was left behind for months at a time with her two sisters, a nanny, and her grandma while her parents worked tirelessly in America in hopes of building a home and providing a better life for their children. That is, until her parents brought Julissa to Texas to live with them. From then on, Julissa secretly lived as an undocumented immigrant, went on to become a scholarship winner and an honors college graduate, and climbed the ladder to become a vice president at Goldman Sachs.

Kuklin, Susan. *We are Here to Stay: Voices of Undocumented Young Adults*. Candlewick Press, 2019.

Meet nine courageous young adults who have lived in the United States with a secret for much of their lives: they are not U.S. citizens. They came from Colombia, Mexico, Ghana, Independent Samoa, and Korea. They came seeking education, fleeing violence, and escaping poverty. All have heartbreaking and hopeful stories about leaving their homelands and starting a new life in America. And all are weary of living in the shadows.

Morales, Yuyi. *Dreamers*. Neal Porter Books/Holiday House, 2018.

Yuyi Morales brought her hopes, her passion, her strength, and her stories with her, when she came to the United States in 1994 with her infant son. She left behind nearly everything she owned, but she didn't come empty-handed. *Dreamers* is a celebration of making your home with the things you always carry: your resilience, your dreams, your hopes and history. It's the story of finding your way in a new place, of navigating an unfamiliar world and finding the best parts of it. In dark times, it's a promise that you can make better tomorrows.

Nazario, Sonia. *Enrique's Journey*. Random House, 2014.

Enrique's Journey recounts the unforgettable quest of a Honduran boy looking for his mother, eleven years after she is forced to leave her starving family to find work in the United States. Braving unimaginable peril, often clinging to the sides and tops of freight trains, Enrique travels through hostile worlds full of thugs, bandits, and corrupt cops. But he pushes forward, relying on his wit, courage, hope, and the kindness of strangers.

Saedi, Sara. *Americanized: Rebel without a Green Card*. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2018.

This hilarious, poignant and true story of one teen's experience growing up in America as an undocumented immigrant from the Middle East is an increasingly necessary read in today's divisive world.

FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Colato Lainez, Rene, illustrated by Joe Cepeda. *From North to South/Del Norte al Sur*. Children's Book Press, 2010.

José loves helping Mamá in the garden outside their home in California. But when Mamá is sent back to Mexico for not having proper papers, José and his Papá face an uncertain future. What will it be like to visit Mamá in Tijuana? When will Mamá be able to come home? Award-winning children's book author René Colato Laínez tackles the difficult and timely subject of family separation with exquisite tenderness.

Danticat, Edwidge, illustrated by Leslie Staub. *Mama's Nightingale*. Dial Books for Young Readers, 2015.

After Saya's mother is sent to an immigration detention center, Saya finds comfort in listening to her mother's warm greeting on their answering machine. To ease the distance between them while she's in jail, Mama begins sending Saya bedtime stories inspired by Haitian folklore on cassette tape. Moved by her mother's tales and her father's attempts to reunite their family, Saya writes a story of her own—one that just might bring her mother home for good.

Marquardt, Marie. *The Radius of Us*. St. Martin's Griffen, 2017.

Told in alternating first person points of view, *The Radius of Us* is a story of love, sacrifice, and the journey from victim to survivor. It offers an intimate glimpse into the causes and devastating impact of Latino gang violence, both in the U.S. and in Central America, and explores the risks that victims take when they try to start over. Most importantly, Marie Marquardt's *The Radius of Us* shows how people struggling to overcome trauma can find healing in love.

Tan, Shaun. *The Arrival*. Hachette Children's Group, 2014

What drives so many to leave everything behind and journey alone to a mysterious country, a place without family or friends, where everything is nameless and the future is unknown. This silent graphic novel is the story of every migrant, every refugee, every displaced person, and a tribute to all those who have made the journey.

Yang, Kelly. *Front Desk*. Arthur A. Levine Books/Scholastic Inc., 2018.

Mia Tang has a lot of secrets. Number 1: She lives in a motel, not a big house. Every day, while her immigrant parents clean the rooms, ten-year-old Mia manages the front desk of the Calivista Motel and tends to its guests. Number 2: Her parents hide immigrants. And if the mean motel owner, Mr. Yao, finds out they've been letting them stay in the empty rooms for free, the Tangs will be doomed. Number 3: She wants to be a writer. But how can she when her mom thinks she should stick to math because English is not her first language? It will take all of Mia's courage, kindness, and hard work to get through this year. Will she be able to hold on to her job, help the immigrants and guests, escape Mr. Yao, and go for her dreams?