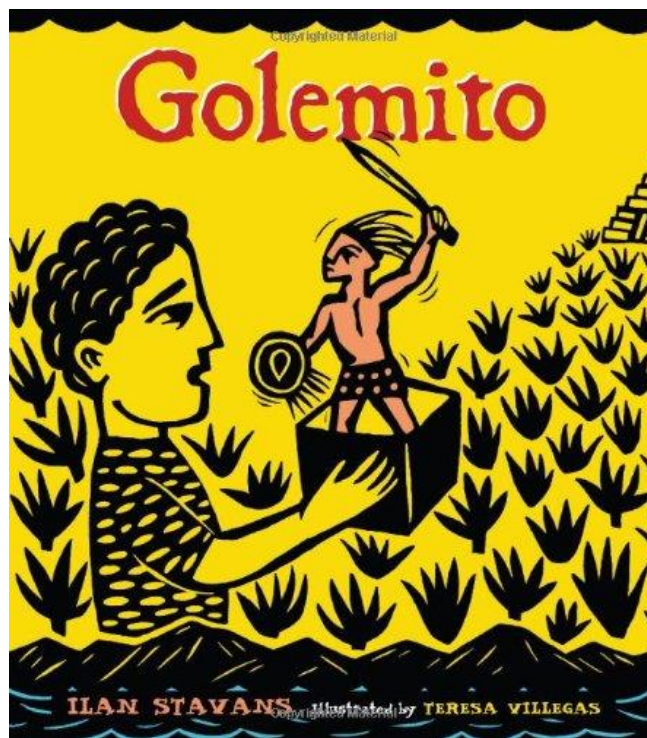


Children and Young Adult Book Review
Elementary School
Golemito

Educator Reviewer: Helene Halstead
Student Reviewers: Ziraili Tenas-Balderas and Daisy Jacquet



Stavans, I. (2013). *Golemito*. Illus. by Teresa Villegas. Montgomery, AL: New South Books.

Educator Review:

Golemito (Stavans, 2013) does a superb job of uniquely blending two cultures while dealing with the topic of classroom bullies. Our two protagonists, Sammy and Ilan, attend a Jewish school in Mexico City. While Ilan spends his free time reading and learning Nahuatl, a language of the Aztec people, Sammy designs inventions that show off his scientific abilities. Sammy is also the object of the class bullies, Berle Shapiro and Benny Burak, who are known as the duo: ShaprioandBurak. As one, they steal Sammy's lunch and his homework. Sammy takes revenge, but when his revenge causes even more problems, he enlists the help of his best friend Ilan.

In telling this tale of courage, Stavans (2013) will pique young readers' curiosity about different alphabets, golems, and Aztec warriors. The beautiful two-color, woodcut style illustrations complement the story without distracting from the message, all the while lending an air of authenticity to the text.

Because there is some language that may cause younger readers to pause (i.e., furious, agitated), and potentially new ideas (i.e., golems and the Dead Sea), this is a great read-aloud book. There are plenty of opportunities to stop and make predictions, relate to the characters, and reflect on the strength Sammy discovers within himself. The story also provides opportunities for brief class research projects as well as for discussion about the power of poetry to give voice to your feelings.

Golemito does a superb job of uniquely blending two cultures while dealing with the topic of classroom bullies

Helene Halstead
The University of Georgia, Athens, GA

Student Review:

Golemito, a wonderfully written book by Ilan Stavans with beautiful illustrations by Teresa Villegas, is a terrific example of how learning and studying can really help people. In the story, two Jewish boys have to face two bullies who steal their lunch. As a solution, they conjure up a "mythical" beast that is an Aztec warrior version of an old Jewish folktale character named Golem. Golem tells the principal that the bullies were going to cheat on their bible test. Then that night the Golem grows to be a big warrior. Our favorite part of the story is when one of the Jewish boys named Sammy reads a poem that inspires him to make a poem of his own. Our recommendation is for people to read this book to help answer their own life questions and mysteries.

Ziraili Tenas-Balderas and Daisy Jacquet
Chase Street Elementary School, Athens, GA
5th Grade