

READING GUIDE

MISS QUINCES

BY KAT FAJARDO

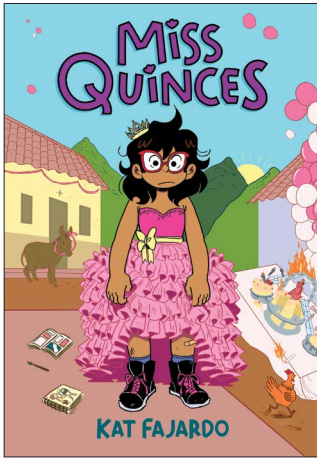
AGES 8-12
GRADES 3-7



The
Power
of Story

Building Equitable
Bookshelves

 SCHOLASTIC



About the Book

Sue just wants to spend the summer reading and making comics at sleepaway camp with her friends, but instead she gets stuck going to Honduras to visit relatives with her parents and two sisters. They live way out in the country, which means no texting, no cable, and no Internet! The trip takes a turn for the worse when Sue's mother announces that they'll be having a surprise quinceañera for Sue, which is the last thing she wants. She can't imagine wearing a big, floofy, colorful dress! What is Sue going to do? And how will she survive all this "quality" time with her rambunctious family?

Pre-Reading Questions for *Miss Quinces*

1. Find Honduras on a map of the world. How far away are you from Honduras? Have you, or has anyone you know, been to Honduras or visited Central America? Brainstorm a list of things you want to know about Honduras or another country in Central America. What languages are spoken there? What foods are popular there? What are the names of the capitals and main cities? Think of other questions you can answer through research at your school or local library, or through a trusted Internet source.
2. What do you know about quinceañeras? What would you like to learn about this coming-of-age tradition? How does your family or community celebrate coming-of-age birthdays?
3. Share about a trip that you were not looking forward to. How did it end up going? How did you feel about the trip after it happened?

Discussion Questions for *Miss Quinces*

1. Relationships between parents and children can be complicated. Why do you think Sue's mother is so overprotective of her children? How do you think that Suyapa's behavior reflects her relationship with her mother? What advice would you give Sue or her mother about how to act with each other?
2. Food is very central in *Miss Quinces*. How can food be important in a culture? What are some of your favorite foods to eat? Name a dish from the book that you would like to try cooking or eating.
3. Sibling relationships can also be complicated. Why do you think Carmen picks on Suyapa? What do you think would make things better between the two sisters?
4. Abuela tells Sue, "If you keep worrying about what people will say about you, you won't live your life to the fullest" (p. 41). What do you think about that advice? What advice would you give Sue? What advice have others given to you?
5. What do you think of Sue's reaction to finding out about the surprise quinces? Why do you think she is opposed to the party? What would you do if you were in her situation?
6. Children in multigenerational families are often very close to their grandparents. Why do you think children's relationships with their grandparents or caregivers from a different generation might be different from children's relationships with their parents or primary caregivers?

Discussion Questions for *Miss Quinces* (continued)

7. When Abuela tells the girls that she forgot her dance moves at her own quinces, Sue says, “That’s so embarrassing” (p. 102), but Abuela responds that it was actually more fun to improvise! Has there been a time in your life when you forgot something, or when something did not go your way? How did you react in that situation? How might you try to react if that situation were to happen again?
8. What was your reaction to Sue’s discovery that her camp registration was never completed? How would you respond to the news that an adult you trusted had broken their promise to you?
9. When Carmen opens up to Sue about having had panic attacks too, their relationship reaches a turning point. Being open and honest about their experiences brings the sisters closer. It’s important to have the courage and the opportunity to think about and process your feelings without shame. Do you have someone you trust to talk about your feelings with, a place you can go to think through things, or a journal you can write or draw in? What are some ways you can help create a safe space for others to process their feelings?
10. Sue’s tía modifies Abuela’s quinces dress to match Sue’s style, and Sue wears it for her own quinces. How does Sue feel about the modified dress? How do you think Abuela would react to this? How might you honor a loved one in your life?

Reflection and Writing Prompts for *Miss Quinces*

1. Sue’s style, hobbies, and personality make her unique. What do you think makes you unique?
2. When Sue receives the opportunity to help plan her own quinces, she is given the opportunity to express and be true to herself while participating in a broader tradition that is significant to her family. How and when do you feel able to express your true self?
3. Sue uses fashion—like the boots she wanted at the beginning of the story—as a way to express herself. Do you also use fashion to express yourself? What are some other ways in which someone can share or show who they are?
4. Culture and tradition are central themes in *Miss Quinces*. What are some of your favorite family or community traditions? How long has your family or community been doing those traditions?
5. Draw a picture of your favorite friend, family member, or community member. Write a few sentences about your relationship with that person. What makes that person your favorite?



Making Literary Connections with *Miss Quinces*

Exploring Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing is a literary device used to create dramatic tension in a story. This type of presentation of events and scenes offers clues for what may take place later on in the story. What examples of foreshadowing can you find in the text and illustrations in *Miss Quinces*? Use the space below to record your observations.

Clue	Foreshadows
<i>EXAMPLE: Abuela's cough</i>	<i>Abuela's death</i>

Exploring Symbolism

Symbolism is a literary device in which words, people, locations, colors, shapes, or abstract ideas act as symbols, representing something beyond their literal meanings. What examples of textual and visual symbolism can you find in *Miss Quinces*? Use the space below to record your observations, and be sure to include evidence. A few possible symbols to explore are Sue's quinces dress, the shoe ceremony, and the tiara.

Symbol	Meaning
<i>EXAMPLE: The Last Doll</i>	<i>Giving up her last toy symbolizes the quinceañera leaving her childhood behind and becoming a young woman.</i>

Exploring Comics with *Miss Quinces*

Make Your Own Comic



Now it's your turn! Use the panels below to write and draw a comic in response to one of the Extension Activity prompts, or create your own unique story. Your comic can be autobiographical, based on your own life experiences, or it can be completely from your imagination! Feel free to use as many additional pages as you need to complete your comic.

Extension Activities for *Miss Quinces*

Create Your Own Travelogue

Using Sue's summer travelogue (p. 238–245) as inspiration, write and/or draw a travelogue of your own. Consider a trip you have taken, or a trip you'd like to take. What were the most memorable or significant parts of that travel experience? How can you use words and/or illustrations to convey your experience? What tone would be most appropriate to use when describing that travel experience? What mood do you want to evoke in your readers?

Design Your Dream Party

Quinceañera celebrations require a lot of planning. If you were in charge of choosing all the elements of an important party being given in your honor, what would it be like? Write or draw about what you'd wear, the theme and decorations, the food, the guests, the location, the activities, and any other details!

Share a Favorite Recipe

Ask a family or community member about their favorite recipe. What makes that recipe special to them? When did they learn how to make it? How frequently do they prepare it? If this family or community member is willing to share their favorite recipe, consider asking a trusted adult to help you shop for and prepare the ingredients so that you can make it yourself!

Write and illustrate a recipe page for a cookbook. You can use your own favorite recipe or the favorite recipe of a family or community member. Be sure to include the recipe name, a list of ingredients, the steps to prepare the recipe, and any special notes or instructions!

Create Your Own Folktale Retelling

A folktale is a story or legend passed down from generation to generation. These stories are often passed down by word of mouth and used to teach young people about their culture or as cautionary tales.

In *Miss Quinces*, Sue's cousins tell her the stories of La Sucia and El Gritón. Use words and/or art to retell one of these folktales, or another folktale that you read or were told growing up.



Praise for *Miss Quinces*



HC: 9781338535587 • \$24.99
PB: 9781338535594 • \$12.99
Ages 8–12 • Grades 3–7
Also available in ebook



PB: 9781338535655 • \$12.99
Ages 8–12 • Grades 3–7
Also available in ebook

Also available in Spanish!

★“Fajardo’s deft graphic-novel paneling, expressive use of line, and palette . . . convey the complexity and full range of Sue’s feelings in important moments and more mundane ones.”

—*Horn Book*, starred review

★“With all of the charm of Raina Telgemeier and Lucy Knisley’s works, this title will be enjoyed by voracious fans of coming-of-age graphic novels. But the specificity of having to stride two cultures and feeling like an outcast in both will especially resonate with readers from bicultural communities.”

—*School Library Journal*, starred review

“Fajardo’s colorful artwork is lively, full of emotion, and done in a style that will appeal to fans of Raina Telgemeier and Jen Wang. *Miss Quinces* is a bittersweet coming-of-age story that teaches young readers that there can be a balance between accepting themselves for who they are while also cherishing their multigenerational family traditions.”

—*Booklist*

“Breezy paneling and cartoony art bring humor and warmth, and Suyapa, with messy hair and slouching pose, is the picture of teenage awkwardness and chaos.”

—*Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books*

“Touching and warm-hearted, this graphic novel shows the joy in embracing family traditions while still being true to yourself.”

—*Entertainment Weekly*

“*Miss Quinces* is a colorful, funny tale of growing up, finding out what’s important, and figuring out how to be yourself.”

—NPR’s “Best Books of 2022: Books We Love”



About the Author

KAT FAJARDO is a Honduran Colombian award-winning cartoonist and illustrator from the lively and magical place of Loisaida, New York City. She is a graduate of the School of Visual Arts, and her work has been recognized by online publications such as *Remezcla*, *El Hispanic News*, *School Library Journal*, *Huffington Post Latino Voices*, and more. Kat loves to create playful and colorful work about self-acceptance and Latine culture. When she isn’t making comics, you might find her collecting small junk for scrapbooking, listening to spooky podcasts, or chasing after her sock-stealing pups, Mac and Roni. Kat lives in Austin, Texas. Visit her online at katfajardo.com.

About the writer of this guide: Margarita Longoria is an award-winning high school librarian in South Texas. She is the founder of Border Book Bash: Celebrating Teens and Tweens of the Rio Grande Valley and the editor of *Living Beyond Borders: Growing Up Mexican in America*. She holds a BA and an MA in English and an MLS in Library Science. You can visit Margie online on Instagram at @MargiesMustReads.

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