

Dreams in the Golden Country, Kathryn Lasky

Reading Guide/Journal Activity

The novel *Dreams in the Golden Country* is historical fiction, meaning the events described are based on actual historical events. The characters may be based on real people too, but were created by the author. All of Kathryn Lasky's grandparents were migrants; her father's family came to America to escape the violence of the pogroms in Russia, just like the family in the novel. It is written in the form of a diary by a young Jewish migrant, Zipporah Feldman, and begins just after Zipporah, her mother, and two sisters arrive at Ellis Island, waiting to be "processed" so they can join her father, who came to America two years earlier. The diary covers Zipporah's first year and a half in America, from September 1903, through March 1905.

You will keep a journal for this novel. Please label and number each part of your journal using the lists and model below, and skip lines between each part. Before you begin the novel, read the author's biography at the end of the book. List at least 3 details that might be important to this novel. Next, look at the migration pictures, and read the caption for each. Select three pictures that were the most interesting to you, and explain why in a sentence for each. Finally, read the "Historical Note" on page 159. List three details you learned about Jewish migration.

Kathryn Lasky Biography (p. 181-183)

Migration pictures (p. 166-176)

Historical note (p. 159)

As you read the novel, record the following information for each "clump" of diary entries listed:

Date

1. Explain in a sentence or two each, at least two examples of migration factors (the journey, push and pull factors, settlement, work and mobility, reception/reaction, adjustment, assistance, assimilation) including the page on which that example can be found.
2. Summarize the entries in 2-3 sentences.
3. Record at least one question that you want or need to be answered.

September, 1903 (p. 3-26)

October, 1903 (p. 26-41)

November, 1903 (p. 41-53)

December, 1903 (p. 53-66)

January, 1904 (p. 67-77)

February-March, 1904 (p. 77-91)

April-July, 1904 (p. 91-115)

August-September, 1904 (p. 115-130)

October-November, 1904 (p. 130-141)

January-March, 1905, Epilogue, (p. 141-152)

Model

September, 1903

1. Zipporah came close to not finishing her journey when a nurse marked her jacket identifying bad eyes. Her older sister turned the jacket inside out without being noticed, so they weren't stopped (6).
Zipporah says that on the journey to America she threw up all across the Atlantic, and lost a lot of weight (7).
Zipporah's father looks very different without his traditional hair (sidelocks) and her mother is quite upset that he has cut them (adjustment/assimilation)(8).
Zipporah is thankful that the Tsar's armies did not make it to her village during the violent pogroms (push factor) (10).
2. After a long wait at Ellis Island, Zipporah, her mother, and her sisters are finally reunited with her father, and arrive at the tenement, where they have 3 rooms, and share a bathroom with the other family who lives on their floor. "Zippy" is not happy with all of the changes in her life. Although she is glad to be able to go to school, because in Russia only the boys go, but is mortified when she is placed in the first grade because she doesn't speak English.
3. Why did Jewish women wear wigs? How often did most Jewish people go to services at the synagogue?