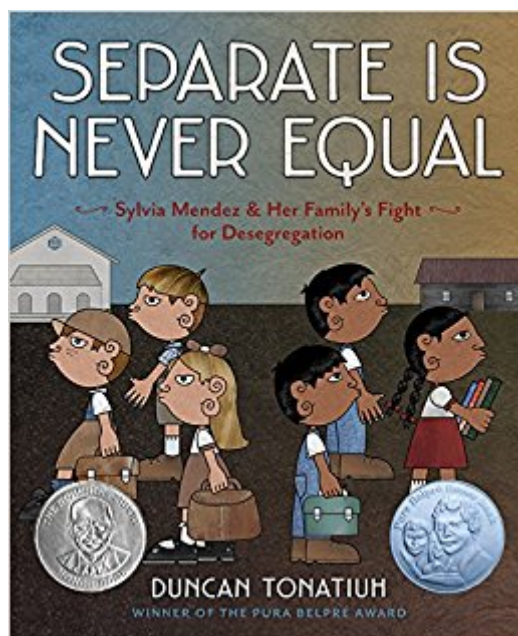




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Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez And Her Family's Fight For Desegregation (Jane Addams Award Book (Awards))



Synopsis

A 2015 Pura Belpré® Illustrator Honor Book and a 2015 Robert F. Sibert Honor Book Almost 10 years before Brown vs. Board of Education, Sylvia Mendez and her parents helped end school segregation in California. An American citizen of Mexican and Puerto Rican heritage who spoke and wrote perfect English, Mendez was denied enrollment to a "Whites only" school. Her parents took action by organizing the Hispanic community and filing a lawsuit in federal district court. Their success eventually brought an end to the era of segregated education in California. Praise for *Separate is Never Equal* STARRED REVIEWS "Tonatiuh masterfully combines text and folk-inspired art to add an important piece to the mosaic of U.S. civil rights history." --Kirkus Reviews, starred review "Younger children will be outraged by the injustice of the Mendez family story but pleased by its successful resolution. Older children will understand the importance of the 1947 ruling that desegregated California schools, paving the way for Brown v. Board of Education seven years later." --School Library Journal, starred review "Tonatiuh (Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote) offers an illuminating account of a family's hard-fought legal battle to desegregate California schools in the years before Brown v. Board of Education." --Publishers Weekly "Pura Belpré® Award-winning Tonatiuh makes excellent use of picture-book storytelling to bring attention to the 1947 California ruling against public-school segregation." --Booklist "The straightforward narrative is well matched with the illustrations in Tonatiuh's signature style, their two-dimensional perspective reminiscent of the Mixtec codex but collaged with paper, wood, cloth, brick, and (Photoshopped) hair to provide textural variation. This story deserves to be more widely known, and now, thanks to this book, it will be." --The Horn Book Magazine

Book Information

Lexile Measure: AD870L (What's this?)

Series: Jane Addams Award Book (Awards)

Hardcover: 40 pages

Publisher: Harry N. Abrams (May 6, 2014)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 9.4 x 0.5 x 11.4 inches

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 72 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #7,910 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #5 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Hispanic & Latino](#) #9 in [Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > 1900s](#) #10 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Multicultural](#)

Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Grade Level: 1 - 4

Customer Reviews

Gr 2-5 •When the Mendezes moved to Westminster, CA, in 1944, third-grader Sylvia tried to enter Westminster School. However, the family was repeatedly told, "Your children have to go to the Mexican school." "But why?" asked Mr. Mendez. "That is how it is done." In response, they formed the Parents' Association of Mexican-American Children, distributed petitions, and eventually filed a successful lawsuit that was supported by organizations ranging from the Japanese American Citizens League to the American Jewish Congress. Younger children will be outraged by the injustice of the Mendez family story but pleased by its successful resolution. Older children will understand the importance of the 1947 ruling that desegregated California schools, paving the way for *Brown v. Board of Education* seven years later. Back matter includes a detailed author's note and photographs. The excellent bibliography cites primary sources, including court transcripts and the author's interview with Sylvia Mendez, who did attend Westminster School and grew up to earn the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Tonatiuh's illustrations tell a modern story with figures reminiscent of the pictorial writing of the Mixtec, an indigenous people from Mexico. Here, the author deliberately connects his heritage with the prejudices of mid-20th century America. One jarring illustration of three brown children barred from a pool filled with lighter-skinned children behind a sign that reads, "No Dogs or Mexicans Allowed," will remind readers of photographs from the Jim Crow South. Compare and contrast young Sylvia Mendez's experience with Robert Coles's *The Story of Ruby Bridges* (Scholastic, 1995) to broaden a discussion of school desegregation. •Toby Rajput, National Louis University, Skokie, IL

Pura Belpré Award-winning Tonatiuh (Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote, 2013) makes excellent use of picture-book storytelling to bring attention to the 1947 California ruling against public-school segregation. The concise, informative text, with occasional and always translated Spanish lines, discusses how being banned from enrolling in an Orange County grade school because of her skin tone and Mexican surname inspired Sylvia Mendez's family to fight for

integrated schools. Soon they were joined by many others, including the NAACP and the Japanese American Citizens League, which led to their hard-won victory. Tonatiuh's multimedia artwork showcases period detail, such as the children's clothing and the differences between the school facilities, in his unique folk art style. An endnote essay recapping the events, photos of Sylvia and her schools, and a glossary and resource list for further research complete this thorough exploration of an event that is rarely taught. This would be a useful complement to other books about the fight for desegregation, such as Deborah Wiles's *Freedom Summer* (2001) or Andrea Davis Pinkney's *Sit-In* (2010). Grades 2-5. --Francisca Goldsmith

Prior to reading this book, I didn't know that school desegregation started with Mexican-American children. This book tells the story of an important and not well known part of American history. Children will relate to Sylvia Mendez's feelings. I particularly appreciated that the book showed that her parents had to work hard to secure justice for her, and that they didn't give up. Cleverly illustrated. This is a good book for an adult and child to read together and discuss.

Wonderful book! Many of us are really not aware of the plight of the Mexican pioneers who fought for desegregation! It is part of our history, told with the honesty of the writer who portrays the emotions and reality of its characters. It is enhanced through beautiful illustrations...that make this story compelling-- both for young readers as well as adults. It allows us to look into the window in the life of a Mexican family and of their determination to bring us the singular opportunity to enjoy the equality of human rights, within the context of our singular culture. I highly recommend you have a copy of this book in your library!

Every school should have this book and its lessons should be taught in elementary schools and at home. When my attention was drawn to this book and the fact that the desegregation fight began with the Latino community I had to buy this book. I am a lawyer and was a child during the civil rights fight yet I was unaware that the first desegregation victory was not *Brown vs. Board of Education*. A third grader could read this book him/herself. It is appropriate to read to second graders at the same time black history month is celebrated. It describes how persistent one has to be to attain justice, but that other good citizens will help you, and that justice (sometimes--my edit) will prevail. The artwork is Latino style and the text is straightforward. I am buying 2 copies -- one for each of my upcoming third grade teachers--in the hopes they will cover this in class. Though we live in a community with a substantial Guatemalan population, the vocal parent have succeeded in

excluding Latino-American history from the agenda. I am Caucasian and my children are from Guatemala. And the more things change the more they stay the same.

It is important that we find ways to pass on to generations current and next the importance of inclusion for all and what those in our past have endured in the quest for equal rights for all. This book and story nails it. Thank you, Duncan Tonatiuh, for your accepting and exceeding the challenge to tell.

I can't say enough about this book. It's amazing and a great book for ANY grade level. And I mean any. The message is important, relevant (about racial discrimination and equal access to education), but it's also a story that is rarely included in history texts. The illustrations are different from what you'd see on typical storybooks, but I have used this in multiple classrooms (I have worked as a teacher in 3-5th grade) and they can be used to encourage even more discussion. Due to the important subject matter and the accessible language used by the author, I could see this book being used for grades K-12 for sure.

This is such an important book. What separate and unequal looks and feels like to kids is clear, stark and heartfelt. The reader will clearly understand why this lawsuit was necessary and empathize with the kids and the families who took action in 1947, seven years before Brown v. Board of Education. Kids of all ages should read this book, even those who are above the grade level specified, for insight into the civil rights struggle for people of color. There are lots of discussion opportunities here. There is nothing like this on the market. Bravo!

Excellent book to use when teaching kids about segregation and fighting for equality and civil liberties. My 7-year-old really likes it.

Adding this to my in-house personal library. After reading up on the case and the history involved there, it's a great addition to own.

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