

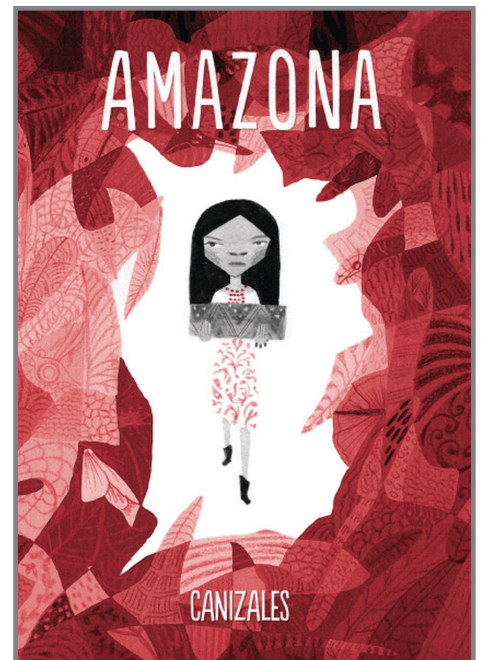
Amazona

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR
CANIZALES

SCIS: 5410845

ISBN: 9781728448671

RECOMMENDED FOR: Upper Secondary
(violence, sexual content)



SYNOPSIS

Andrea, a young Indigenous Colombian woman, has returned to the land she calls home. Only nineteen years old, she comes to mourn her lost child, carrying a box in her arms. And she comes with another mission. Andrea has hidden a camera upon herself. If she can capture evidence of the illegal mining that displaced her family, it will mark the first step towards reclaiming their land.

ABOUT THE CREATOR

Canizales is a Colombian author and illustrator whose books have been translated into numerous languages. His work has earned several awards including the Cuatrogatos Foundation prize for his picture book *Guapa*. He lives in Mallorca, Spain.

STUDY NOTES

- Based on the cover and title, what do you think this book is about? How do you think it will begin/end? Revisit your answer when you've completed the book. Was your answer correct?
- Discuss the title of the book. Do you think this is a good title? Why or why not? If you were asked to choose an alternative title for the book, what would it be? Remember, a good title should capture the audience's attention and give them some idea of what the book is about.
- What do you know about the Amazon and the people who live there? What can you find out before reading? What aspects of life in the Amazon rainforest do you think *Amazona* will deal with?
- What are some of the themes in this graphic novel? As a class, or in small groups, identify and list the themes. Individually, write a statement of belief about each theme.
- While *Amazona* is inspired by the real struggles of Colombia's indigenous peoples, it is a work of fiction. Read the afterword to learn more about the very real difficulties faced by people like Andrea. Do you think that *Amazona* has effectively communicated these struggles to you? Discuss the ways in which it creates an emotional connection between Andrea and the reader.
- Reread the afterword at the back of the book, and visit the websites listed in the selected bibliography. What more can you learn about the dangerous struggles faced by people like Andrea? What other stories could be told that convey these struggles as effectively as *Amazona* does?
- 'It's hard to explain... but I felt as if I was flying... As if the jungle opened up as I went... Perhaps it was the

overpowering excitement of the hope of getting our land back... Of knowing that I carried with me the evidence we needed to reopen the case...,' (p 89). Information is crucial to the story of *Amazona*. The corporation that has invaded Andrea's home is operating in secret, outside the law, but can't be touched unless the village can successfully bring a case against them. Discuss the importance of information to fairness and the law, then do some research into Australia's information laws. What laws does Australia have in place to ensure that information about the activities of governments and corporations is available? What about Colombia?

- Visual storytelling is the art of using images to convey a narrative. Compare *Amazona* to another graphic novel. How does the visual storytelling differ in each? What techniques does the illustrator use to convey a particular mood?
- How has the creator, Canizales, used panel arrangement, shape and space to create a particular feeling? Look especially at the page composition on pp 6, 10, 13, 31, and 65. What effect do these pages and their visual elements have on your reading of the story?
- 'The jaguar pushes me to keep going. I don't know if it's playing a trick on me, but it keeps telling me something I still don't believe to be true: "You are more powerful than their bullets."' (p 19). What do you think the Jaguar means by this? Does it prove to be true by the end of the book?
- Being driven from her home is traumatic for Andrea, and this terrifying experience is depicted in white pencil on a black background on pp 24–26 and 42–44. Apart from making it clear that these memories are set in the middle of the night, what other effects does this shift in colour have on our reading?
- Discuss the other uses of colour in *Amazona*, particularly the presence of the red-orange used for the Jaguar. How does colour shape our reading of the story? Why does it appear where it does?
- When the jaguar-eyed butterfly lands on Elkin the guard's gun, he and Andrea remember that they knew each other as children. It is this that convinces him that he should help her. What do you think of this revelation? Should Elkin have helped Andrea even if he didn't know her? Why do you think he wasn't going to?