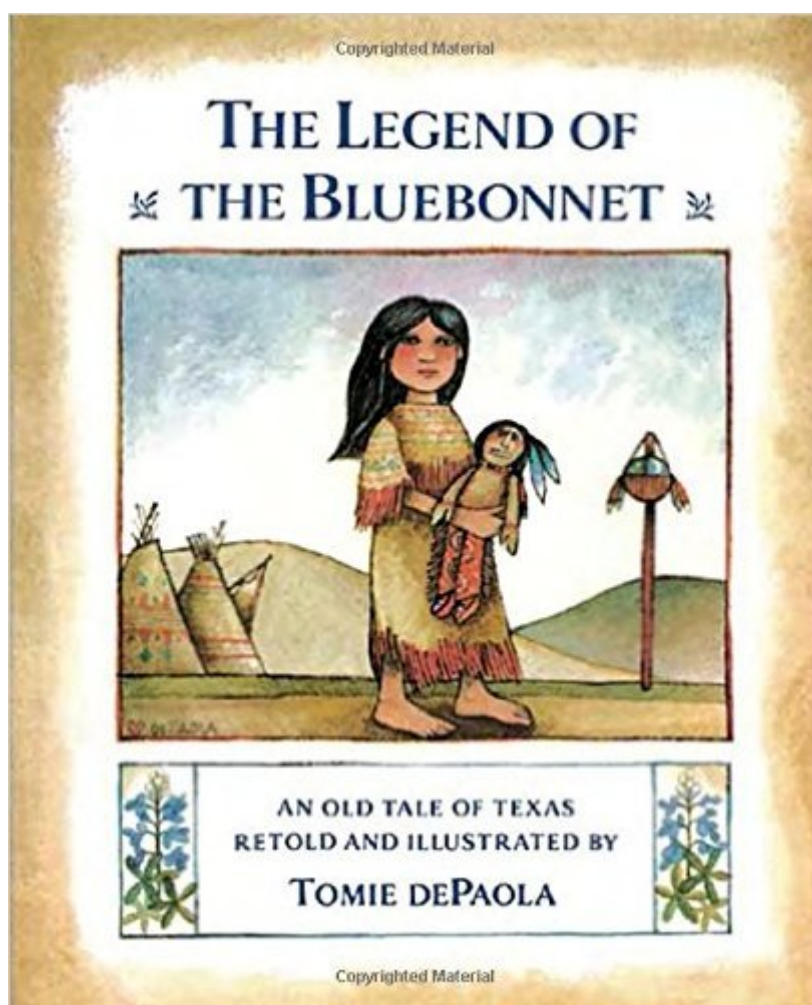


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# The Legend Of The Bluebonnet



## Synopsis

When a killing drought threatens the existence of the tribe, a courageous little Comanche girl sacrifices her most beloved possession--and the Great Spirit's answer results not only in much needed rain but a very special gift in return. "An ideal complement to Native American and Texas studies..."Booklist

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 740 (What's this?)

Paperback: 32 pages

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Product Dimensions: 8.1 x 0.1 x 10.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (57 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #34,765 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #26 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Native North & South Americans #37 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Fairy Tales, Folk Tales & Myths > Multicultural

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

After bravely sacrificing her most valued possession to end her tribe's suffering, a young girl awakens to find a reward of her selflessness--thick clusters of vivid blue flowers spread all over the Texas hills. In dePaola's *The Legend of the Bluebonnet*, an unseasonably long drought orphaned the Native American girl, leaving her with only memories and a warrior doll. Yet, when the Great Spirits request a sacrifice to restore life to Earth, She-Who-Is-Alone courageously volunteers her doll as the burnt offering and scatters its ashes to the wind. This wonderful tale of Comanche folklore explains the origin of the bluebonnet, the Texas state flower, while paying homage to the Comanche value and respect for family, community, and Earth. DePaola's powerful retelling and majestic full-page paintings compliment each other, capturing the traditions of Comanche people and Texas landscape. Realistic and engaging use of language, singing "Great Spirits, the land is dying. Tell us what we have done to anger you" maintains the flavor of oral tradition. The writing

attends to cultural songs, dances, and prayers; while the illustrations depict cultural dress and lifestyle. In his thorough source note, dePaola mentions his tireless research in an effort to accurately portray the Comanche customs and base the legend on the original Indians. The Legend of the Bluebonnet appeals to children of younger ages with its simple language and graphic pictures; its *pourquoi* nature satisfies even adult readers.

Every spring, throughout central Texas where I live, we are blessed with one of mother nature's great floral displays--Texas Wildflower Season. For three to four weeks in April and May the countryside--as far as one can see in all directions--is a rainbow of color as billions of wild flows bloom. Chief among these are the Bluebonnets, the State Flower of Texas. The Legend of the Bluebonnet is the retelling of the old Indian legend of how this event came to occur. It relates the story of She-Who-is-Alone, an orphaned Indian girl being raised by her tribe during a time of extreme drought and famine. This young girl is the sole remaining member of her family--the others have all died in the famine. The tribe calls upon the Shaman to commune with the Great Spirits to divine what it is the People must do to regain harmony with nature. The Shaman states that a "great sacrifice" needs to be made. How She-Who-is-Alone acts upon that message is how the Bluebonnets come to be in Texas. This is a very sad and heart-rending story in large part, though it is also incredibly heartwarming and inspiring as well. This has always been one of my kid's favorite books--my wife's and mine as well. However, it is probably a book best left to a bit older child--say 8 and above. Once you start reading it though, you will never stop. You will read it many times to your children--and your grandchildren. This book is a treasure.

First, let me say that I love Tommie dePaola's books. He is a tremendously talented artist and this is, like all of his books, a beautifully told and illustrated story. However, we received this book as a gift for our two-year-old. Drawn to the illustrations, she wanted me to read it to her immediately. Big mistake. I ended up with a frightened, confused child (and a book that is now on the top shelf of her closet). She-Who-Is-Alone is, after all, alone. She is surrounded by adults who don't seem to care about her and, at the end, sacrifices the last tangible memory of her family. As an adult, this is a touching and inspiring story (it's hard to read without crying). But for a small child, it's a representation of their worst nightmares with an ending that, for modern children, does not allay their fears. By all means, buy this book, for yourself or an older child (like 8 or 9). It is not an appropriate gift for the younger set, though.

This was my favorite story when I was a child. I love how it tells of a young girl who chooses to give up something she loves for her family and people... I read this book whenever I could in school. Now that I teach pre school I get to share the beauty of this story with my class and they love it too...In Texas you see them everywhere in late March to early May. I use to think it was funny but now I have to wonder why, when you see a bluebonnet an Indian paintbrush isn't that far away?

Found lovely handmade bluebonnet ornaments at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center for our Grands. and knew the exact books from Tomie dePaola to accompany them. Beautifully written and illustrated, these books connect children to a heritage more eloquent and mindful than flash-in-the-pan action figures and dolls.

Tomie De Paola's version of "The Legend of the Bluebonnet" is a wonderful tale of sacrifice, and homage to the importance of family and community. The young Native American girl has been orphaned due to a terrible drought, and lives alone. Yet, she is willing to give up the only thread of the connection to her past. She sacrifices her prized possession, her doll by placing it upon the sacrificial fires of her tribe. The sacrifice is rewarded by the gods with rains to end the drought which claimed her family. There is yet another gift from the gods for the girl's unselfish act. Beautiful bluebonnets now grow in the wilds commemorating the child's gift to the gods on the behalf of her people. The artful depiction of the drought, and the renewal of the earth when the rains come tell the tale of the desperation, and the hope in "The Legend of Bluebonnet". This selection pairs nicely with Barbara Cooney's "Miss Rumphius" for classroom literature comparisons. This is a must for the elementary library. A fine example of integrated science literature.

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