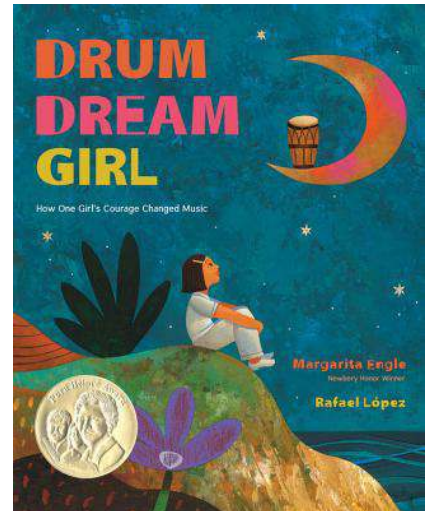




## A discussion guide provided by MERGE for Equality

### **Drum Dream Girl** By Margarita Engle Illustrated by Rafael López



#### **Book Summary:**

Girls cannot be drummers. Long ago on an island filled with music, no one questioned that rule—until the drum dream girl. In her city of drumbeats, she dreamed of pounding tall congas and tapping small bongós. She had to keep quiet. She had to practice in secret. But when at last her dream-bright music was heard, everyone sang and danced and decided that both girls and boys should be free to drum and dream. Inspired by the childhood of Millo Castro Zaldarriaga, a Chinese-African-Cuban girl who broke Cuba's traditional taboo against female drummers, *Drum Dream Girl* tells an inspiring true story for dreamers everywhere.

#### **Why has MERGE selected this book?**

*Drum Dream Girl* illustrates how boys and the mean they become receive privilege and benefits simply for being boys, and that girls are denied access to basic rights.

The triumph of *Drum Dream Girl*, and her dream, was to be accepted as a drummer. This demonstrates the importance of adults supporting children in achieving their dreams, as well as, disrupting harmful gender norms and stereotypes that deny children the opportunity to go after dreams.

At MERGE, we have a commitment to identifying and highlighting children's books that provide healthy examples of masculinity and an appreciation for flexible gender norms.

**Before reading** you may wish to develop background knowledge and anticipation by asking questions such as:

- What do you think this book is about?
- What activities do you enjoy doing?
- Why do you think some things children like or enjoy are considered for boys or for girls?
- Have you ever been told you can't do something because it's only for boys or only for girls?

**Invite children** to be active participants in making meaning of what they see and hear. This helps children think critically about the book. While you are reading the story, ask questions such as:

- What do you think the title means?
- Who do you think the book may be about? What makes you think that?
- Throughout the book ask, what do you see happening in this picture? Tell me how the picture says that.



**After reading** you can help children communicate what they have learned by asking the following questions. Ask them how the words and pictures communicate ideas to them. This assists them in thinking critically about what they are seeing and hearing.

- What types of activities does drum dream girl enjoy? How do words and pictures communicate these ideas?
- How do the people on the island of music feel about girls playing drums? How do words and pictures communicate these ideas?
- How do the adults support drum dream girl in the story? How do words and pictures communicate these ideas?
- How do you think drum dream girl feels at the end of the story? How do words and pictures communicate these ideas?
- What activities do you dream about doing, and would like to share with your friends and family?

**About the author:** Margarita Engle is the 2017-2019 national Young People's Poet Laureate, and USBBY's 2019 nominee for the Astrid Lindgren Award, the world's largest children's literature honor. She is the Cuban-American author of many verse novels, including the Newbery Honor winner, *The Surrender Tree*, and PEN USA Award winner, *The Lightning Dreamer*.

**About the illustrator:** Rafael López is an internationally recognized illustrator and artist. In 2017 he was awarded the Silver Medal from the Society of Illustrators, New York Original Art show for his work on *Bravo! Poems about Amazing Hispanics*. A children's book illustrator, he won the 2016 Pura Belpré medal from the American Library Association for his illustrations for *Drum Dream Girl* and the 2010 Pura Belpré medal for *Book Fiesta*. The illustrations created by López bring diverse characters to children's books and he is driven to produce and promote books that reflect and honor the lives of all young people.

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