

My Uncle Is Coming Tomorrow



Written by Sebastián Santana Camargo

A discussion guide for young adults,
middle school, and high school

Before Reading:

Read the title as a way of understanding what the story will be about.

Does the author give clues to the book's central idea in the title?

Why do you think he is not explicit?

What do you think the story will be about?

Do you think there is a central theme?

Predict what the story will be about based on the cover illustration and the title of the book.
Jot down your thoughts.



Reading the Story:

Read the story, *My Uncle Is Coming Tomorrow*.
STOP reading once you reach the black page.
Do not read the “afterword”!

Describe the author’s writing style.

Is the writing **explicit** or **implicit**? (See text box on page 5)

Answer the following questions relating to the story’s elements. If an element is unknown or uncertain, state that.

Who is the main character?

Who is telling the story? (Whose point of view is it?)

What is happening in the story?

Where does the story take place?

When does the story take place?

As you read the book, jot down predictions about the setting, plot, and character.



Infer:

How does your perspective change as you read?
Explain how certain details of the story sway how you interpret the text.

Recount the changes from the beginning to the end of the story.

Is there a problem/conflict? A solution/resolution?

Describe the illustrations. How do the simple black-and-white illustrations enhance meaning and tone?

Analyze word choices and visual clues used by Sebastián Santana Camargo to send his central message.

Describe the “door” throughout the book.
What symbolism does the door have in the story?

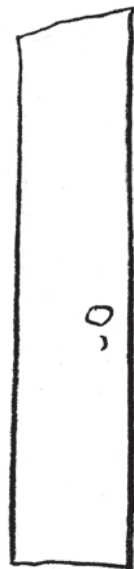
How does the author use symbolism to represent other ideas?

Discuss the position of the main character as the plot advances.

How does the last page of the story affect your understanding of the central theme?

What does Sebastián Santana Camargo mean in his dedication on the last page of the story?

How does the last page of the story impact you as a reader?



After Reading the Story:

What is “**forced disappearance**”?

What does “**forced**” imply?

As a group, discuss and chart ideas about “forced disappearance.”

My Uncle Is Coming Tomorrow may be a simply written story, but it is based on a very difficult concept. One that is not simple. Matters are left uncertain by the author until the afterword.

Here we can learn new information that will enable us to read between the lines, make inferences, and detect a deeper or hidden meaning.

MINI LESSON: WRITING STYLES

When talking about writing styles:

- **Explicit**- means something that is stated directly; it is obvious
- **Implicit**- refers to something that is implied, and not stated directly

Go back to *My Uncle Is Coming Tomorrow* and analyze the text in small groups.

What style of writing does the author use?

Give examples from the book.

Do you think that the author’s purpose is to be vague? Why?

How does this writing style leave a lot to the imagination?

How does individual perspective affect the understanding of the text?

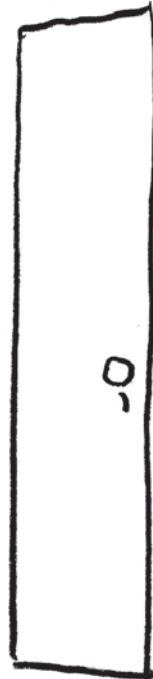
Read and discuss the quotation below:

“To most authors, the plot and the characters are just the packaging to attract the audience to consider other, more important, ideas that are hidden between the lines of the story.”

Chris Brooks, Principal, *High Performance Learning*

READ ALL ABOUT IT!

1. Read the new vocabulary words on page 7 together as a class.
2. Have each student create short fictitious news headlines based on the words.
3. Share responses!



VOCABULARY—WORDS AND TERMINOLOGY FROM THE AFTERWORD:

extinguishing	government	overthrown
disappeared	political activity	legitimate
unexplained absence	murdered United Nations	crime against humanity
twentieth century	condemned	social and political reforms
systematic instrument of terror	CIA (United States' Central Intelligence Agency)	dictatorships
political enemies		

COLLABORATIVE VOCABULARY ACTIVITY

Create a group “Graffiti Wall”!

You will need:

- Chart paper or mural paper
- Markers
- Sticky notes

1. Divide the class into small groups, giving each group a list of words.
2. Write the vocabulary word on chart or mural paper.
3. Ask each student, “What does the word make you think of?”
4. Each member of the group will write what the word means to them, or illustrate the word on a sticky note, and hang it on the chart.
5. Share responses.

1. Write each vocabulary word on the chart below and research the definition.
2. Leave the last column blank until you have read the afterword.

VOCABULARY WORD	DEFINITION	HOW THE WORD RELATES TO THE STORY

Social studies is “the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence... The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.”

NCSS (National Council for the Social Studies)

Essential Questions:

Read and discuss the essential questions below on the importance of understanding the past, present, and future.

1. Why study history?
2. What can we learn from the past?
3. How do we know what really happened in the past?
4. Who do we believe and why?
5. What causes change?
6. What remains the same?



7. How does the legacy of earlier groups and individuals influence subsequent generations?
8. How do patterns of cause and effect manifest themselves in the chronology of history?
9. How has the world changed and how might it change in the future?
10. Is it true that those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it?

Read the afterword. Warning: it is disturbing!

Take notes as you read. Write down:

- Important facts
- Dates to remember
- Names of important people or places
- Questions you have about the topic
- Connections to the story
- Familiar new vocabulary words and how they are used
- Unfamiliar words or phrases

Fill in the cause-and-effect chart using information from the afterword.

CAUSE	EFFECT
	People disappear causing anguish for families
People were actively seeking social and political reform	
	Forced disappearance is a crime against humanity
	The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED) was formed

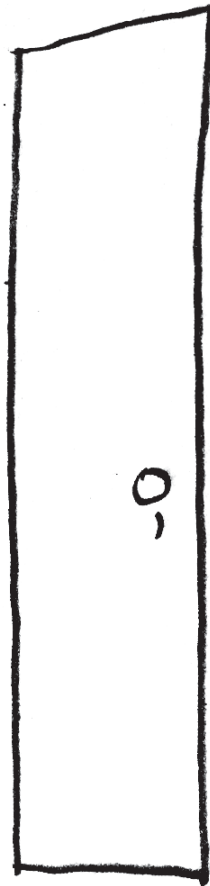
What impact does the afterword have on your understanding of the story as it is told by the author?

What is the author's purpose?

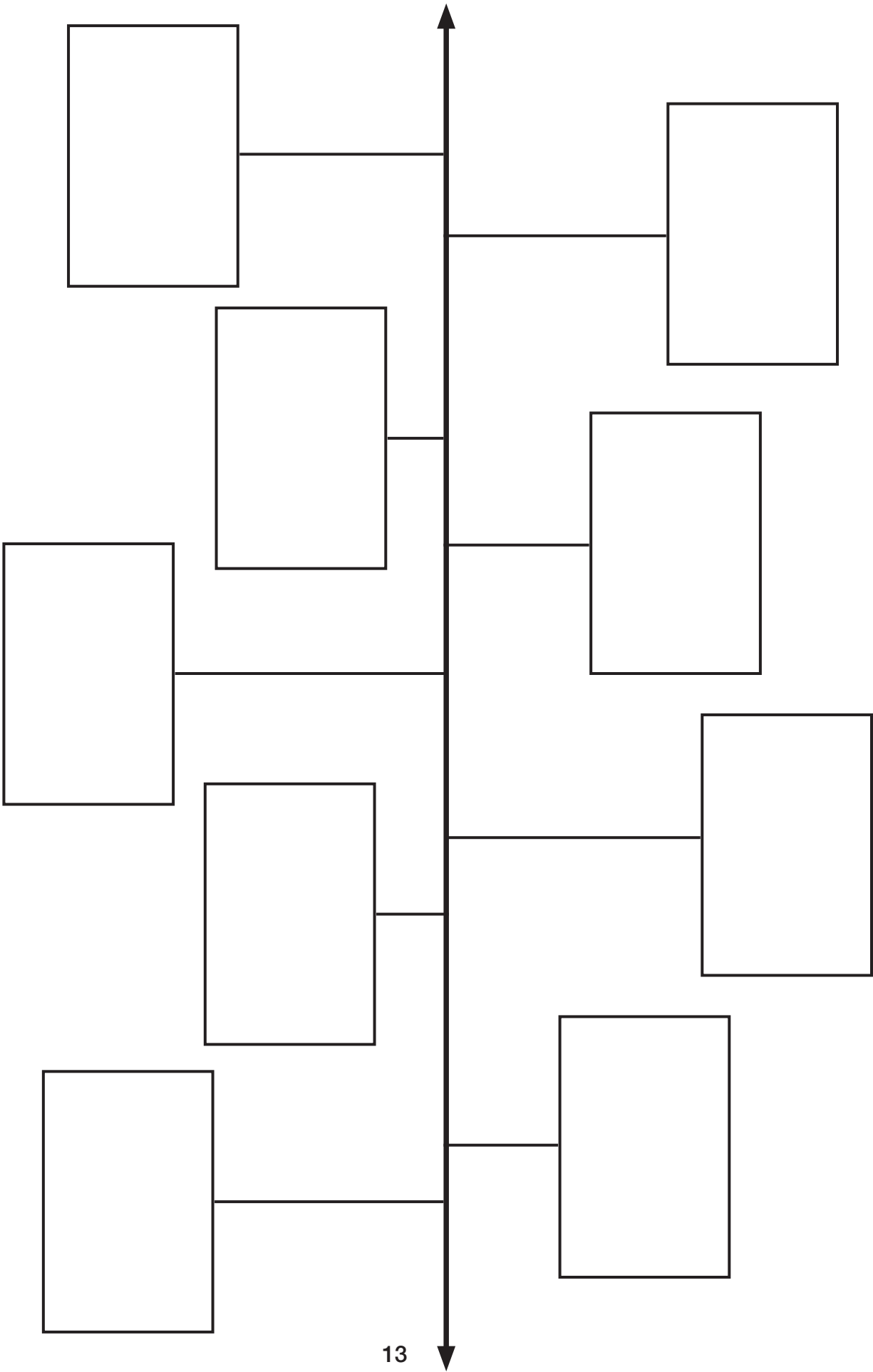
After reading about the author and translator, explain why they are authentic and passionate about this topic.

Research and create a PowerPoint on how governments throughout history have eliminated human beings for having different belief systems.

Create a timeline about disappearing people and government responses based on the afterword, and research "crimes against humanity."



Timeline

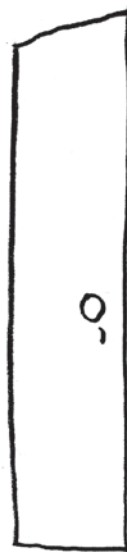


Research how international agencies have fought crimes against humanity over the years. What other international laws have been established over the years? Have these laws and committees rectified the problem? Give examples.

Example: The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED) is an international human rights instrument of the United Nations and intended to prevent forced disappearance—defined in international law as crimes against humanity. The text was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 20, 2006 and opened for signature on February 6, 2007. It entered into force on December 23, 2010. As of February 2022, ninety-eight states have signed the convention and sixty-seven have ratified it.

Problem: The forced disappearance of people still exists all over the world, to try to change the minds and beliefs of ethnic groups who stand up for their rights.

1. Write a slogan creating awareness.
2. Design a poster.
3. Share!



**READ AND DELINEATE THE ESSENTIAL
QUESTIONS. GIVE REAL WORLD EXAMPLES!**

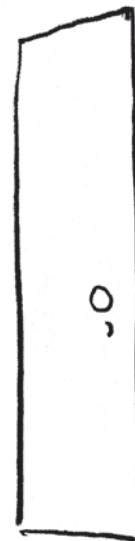
1. What are the roles and responsibilities of a government?
2. What would happen if we had no government?
3. What are the roles and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy?
4. What kinds of things do “good” citizens do?
5. Can an individual make a difference?
6. How do citizens (both individually and collectively) influence government policy?
7. What is power?
8. What forms does it take?
9. How do competing interests influence how power is distributed and exercised? How is power gained, used, and justified?
10. How can abuse of power be avoided?
11. Who should govern and rule?

12. How do governments balance the rights of individuals with the common good? How do different political systems vary in their toleration and encouragement of change?
13. What is civic participation and how can I be involved?
14. What is the balance between rights and responsibilities?
15. What is the role of the citizen in the community, in the nation, and as a member of the world community?

Choose a question and apply the answer to the topic of forced disappearances. Think about the role of governments, citizens, democracies, and individual members of a world community in keeping humans safe and free from crimes against humanity.

How do power, civic and individual rights, competing interests, and responsibilities influence the common good?

How can you make a positive difference?



Literacy Connections

Write a historical fiction narrative about a forced disappearance. Use fictitious characters based on accurate information and facts learned in the book *My Uncle Is Coming Tomorrow*. Be sure to identify & describe the setting (time and place), plot, character development, and conflict.

OR

Write a historical fiction narrative in graphic novel format using text and illustrations to depict the story elements.

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Use the vocabulary words from the story to write an explanatory text on “disappearing people”.

Write a letter to author Sebastián Santana Camargo, explaining how the story and afterword impacted you as a person. What did you learn from him about the world? How has the book changed you? What new questions do you have about the world? Why is this topic important to learn about? What bothered you the most? How did the author inspire you?

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Text to world connections: Find a current news article relevant to crimes against humanity happening in the world. Summarize the article and present it to the group.