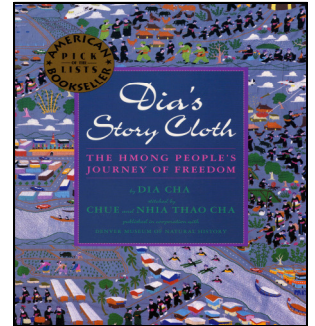


Minnesota Storytime  
Reading Guide

**Title:** (English) *Dia's Story Cloth – The Hmong People's Journey of Freedom*  
(White Hmong) *Diav Daim Paj Ntaub Dab Neeg – Hmoob Txoj Kev Nrhiav Kev Ywj Pheej*  
(Green Mong) *Diav Dlaim Paaj Ntaub Lug Nruag – Moob Txui Kev Nrhav Kev Ywi Pheei*



**Author:** Dia Cha

**Stitched by:** Chue and Nhia Thao Cha

**Publisher and Copyright Date** Minnesota Humanities Commission, 2002  
(Original Publication in English: Lee & Low, 1996)

**Connection to Minnesota:** Minnesota author, Minnesota publisher (translation)

**Summary:** This is the true story of the author as a child escaping from war-torn Laos, living in a refugee camp in Thailand, and eventually emigrating to the United States. The story is told visually through a “story cloth” that was stitched by the author’s aunt and uncle. The book is part of the Hmong Translation Initiative of the Minnesota Humanities Commission and can be read in English as well as White Hmong and Green Mong. The book also contains additional information on Hmong history and culture provided by the Denver Museum of Natural History.

**Suggested ages:** 7-10

**Tips for Reading:**

- Choose the language (English/White Hmong/Green Mong) that you will read.
- Allow plenty of time to read the book as it is fairly long, but also read the introduction (by the author) and the compendium (by the Denver Museum of Natural History) because both additional parts contain useful and interesting information.
- Show the entire story cloth (featured in the book’s centerfold) before reading the book and explain that the illustration on each page is a small part of the story cloth.

**Questions before reading:**

- Do you know how your ancestors (parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, etc.) first came to this country?
- What do you know about the Hmong people?
- What do you know about hand sewing, or quilting?

**To Introduce  
this story say:**

This is a true story about a Hmong girl escaping a war-torn country and ending up in the United States. The pictures in the book are all part of a story cloth that was made by the girl's aunt and uncle. That girl has grown into a woman and is now a college professor in Minnesota. Let's read her story.

**Questions  
After Reading:**

- What words would you use to describe Dia, the girl in the story?
- What happened to Dia's father?
- Why are the members of Dia's family considered "refugees"?
- How do you think Dia felt when she started school in this country but didn't know much English?

**RELATED ACTIVITIES**

**Culture:**

- Read and discuss the four page compendium in the back of the book provided by the Denver Museum of Natural History
- Visit the Hmong Resource Center at the Hmong Cultural Center in St. Paul in person or learn more by visiting their web site at <http://www.hmongcc.org>.
- View the "Hmong House" exhibit at the Science Museum of Minnesota in St. Paul.

**Language:**

- Learn more about the Hmong language by clicking on this link:  
<http://www.hmongnet.org/language/index.html>

**Writing:**

- Talk with an older relative, learn how their family got to this country, and write about the journey.

**Other:**

- Invite a Hmong person to speak to your group about their journey to the USA.
- Get more ideas by reading the 6 page classroom guide provided by Lee and Low Books, the original publisher, by clicking on this link:  
[http://www.leeandlow.com/p/dia\\_tq.mhtml](http://www.leeandlow.com/p/dia_tq.mhtml)

**Suggestions for  
English Language  
Learners:**

- If you are sharing this book with Hmong families, find someone who can read the story in Hmong.
- Instead of reading this fairly long book, tell the story by explaining the illustrations on each page.
- Have the children/families talk about their family's journey to this country.

**Related Books:**

- ***The Whispering Cloth – A Refugee's Story*** by Pegi Deitz Shea (Boyd's Mill Press, 1995)
- ***Many Ideas Open the Way – A Collection of Hmong Proverbs*** (Shen's Books, 2003)
- ***The Keeping Quilt*** by Patricia Polacco (Simon & Schuster, 1988)
- ***The Patchwork Quilt*** by Valerie Flourney (Dial, 1995)
- ***Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*** by Deborah Hopkinson (Knopf, 1993)

