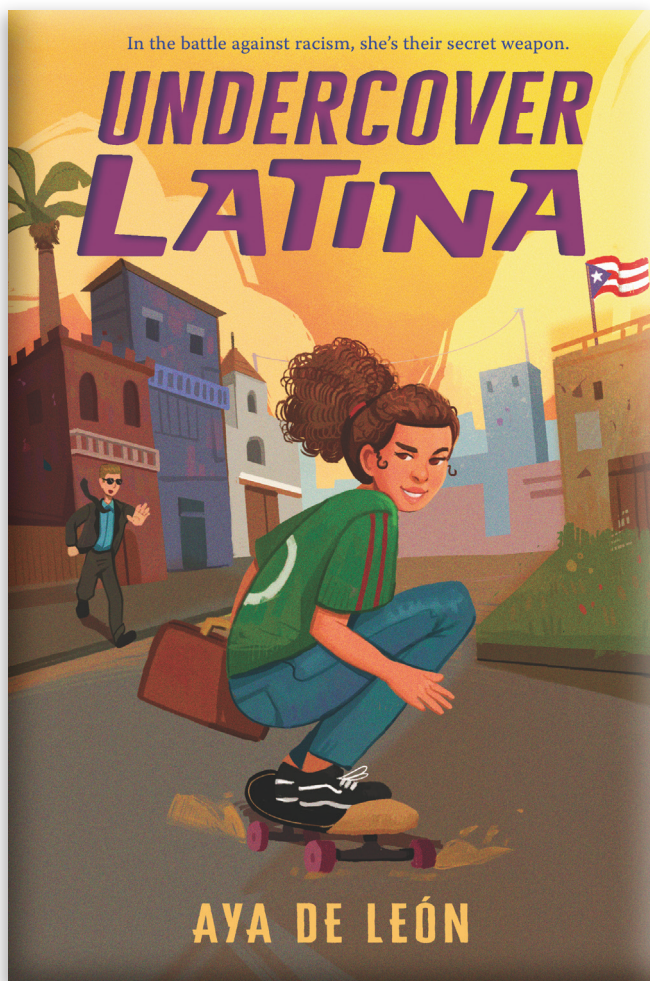


A Latina teen spy goes undercover as a white girl to stop a white supremacist terrorist plot in a fast-paced middle-grade debut from a seasoned author of contemporary crime fiction.

UNDERCOVER LATINA

AYA DE LEÓN



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Also available as an e-book

ABOUT THE BOOK

In her first book for younger readers, Aya de León pits a teen spy against the ominous workings of a white nationalist. Fourteen-year-old Andréa Hernández-Baldoquín hails from a family of spies working for the Factory, an international organization dedicated to protecting people of color. For her first solo mission, Andréa straightens her hair and goes undercover as Andrea Burke, a white girl, to befriend the estranged son of a dangerous white supremacist. Andréa will have to make use of her Factory training and do a deep dive into the son's interests—comic books and gaming—all while taking care not to speak Spanish and blow her family's cover. But it's hard to hide who you really are, especially when you develop a crush on your target's Latino best friend. Can Andréa keep her head, her geek cred, and her code-switching on track to trap a terrorist? Smart, entertaining, and politically astute, this is fast-paced upper-middle-grade fare from an established author of heist and espionage novels for adults.

Common Core Connections

This discussion guide, which can be used with large or small groups, will help students meet several of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts, including the reading literature standards for key ideas and details, craft and structure, and integration of knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL).



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some challenges Andréa faces when she moves to a new town? What are some possibilities that moving to a new place can create?
2. Consider other stories, movies, or TV shows about families of spies. What do they have in common with Andréa's family? Do you think your family could hide in plain sight as spies? What would be your challenges and strengths?
3. Have you ever had to move far away from what was familiar? If you have, what was your experience like?
4. As she begins her assignment and leaves her father and brother behind, Andréa thinks, "It was like a portal to a new identity. I would need to get used to being ANN-dree-yuh, teenage white girl" (page 34). Does your name have more than one pronunciation? If it does, what are the others? How do names connect with one's identity? Do you find you are sometimes called different names by different groups? How would/do you feel about being called more than one name?
5. Do you think you can tell someone's inner beliefs by how they look on the outside? What do you consider to be clues? What are some outward expressions of inner beliefs that you hold? For example, wearing a necklace with a religious symbol or a T-shirt with a message on it.
6. Have you ever heard of or played Magic: The Gathering? If you have, do you see how it connects to Triángulo? What do you think of Triángulo? Would you like to learn to play it? Do you think you could create it based on the book's description?
7. Andréa plays Triángulo with live players, but many of the games Kyle plays are online via video chat. What are advantages and disadvantages of playing with people online? In what ways is playing games with video chat different from playing anonymously? If you play games online, do you play anonymously or just with people you know? Do you have a preference?
8. Do you think playing Triángulo with teammates is similar to playing physical sports like basketball? Is watching others play exciting? Do you have a preference for sports or e-sports?

BONUS ACTIVITIES:

- See if you can use the rules of the game from the book to make your own set of Triángulo cards and play the game.
 - Write an origin story for one of the characters in the deck.
9. Kyle surprises Andréa by correcting her use of the word *slaves* to *enslaved people* (page 83). Have you had the experience of calling out racism, sexism, or other harassment to your friends in settings such as school, work, or sports? How did it feel? Would you do it again? Has anyone ever called you out? Did it change your thinking? What are some strategies to make this easier to do and to hear?



10. How are Ramón and Kyle similar? How are they different? What are some examples from the book that support your thinking?
11. What does Kyle reveal in chapter 20? Did that change your thinking about his character?
12. Have you ever known someone who was the victim of identity theft? What happened?
13. What does Ramón accuse Andréa of in chapter 29? Have you ever accused someone of passing as another ethnicity or race? What happened?
14. In chapter 30 Andréa’s mother tells her a lot about anti-Blackness and colorism within the Latine diaspora. What do you know about colorism? How does it show up historically and in your community? In your opinion, what can be done to overcome it?
15. What is your definition of racism? After discussing, read Jerrold’s description on page 268. Does this change or expand your definition?
16. Given her commitment to the Factory’s goals and her own experience, were you surprised by Andréa’s mother’s reaction to Andréa being asked to go to ComxCon? Andréa thinks later, “Just as I had asked—no, demanded—to be treated like an adult, it was dawning on me that my parents wouldn’t be able to protect me in the same ways they had” (page 239). Have you been able to convince your caretakers to treat you like an adult in some ways? Does that make you feel confident, or can it create anxiety?
17. Consider both the benefits of and the potential problems with cosplay. What do you know about cultural appropriation and costumes? Do you think the same ideas apply to the world of science fiction and comic conventions? Consider the following resource: [My Culture Is NOT A Costume | Teen Vogue](#).
18. Read the author’s note. What does it teach you about colorism, anti-Blackness, passing, racial hierarchies, power and privilege, and injustice? In your opinion, what can be done to help humanity heal from the harm white supremacy causes?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

AYA DE LEÓN is the Afro-Latina author of several suspense novels for adults as well as *The Mystery Woman in Room Three*, an open-source online novel about two undocumented Dominican teens who uncover a kidnapping plot to stop the Green New Deal. She teaches creative writing at the University of California, Berkeley, and is active in movements for racial, gender, and climate justice. She lives in Northern California.

These questions were prepared by Julia E. Torres, a nationally recognized veteran language arts teacher-librarian in Denver, Colorado. Julia facilitates teacher development workshops rooted in the areas of anti-racist education, equity and access in literacy and librarianship, and education as a practice of liberation. Her work has been featured on NPR, Al Jazeera’s *The Stream*, PBS Education, and KQED’s *MindShift* and in *Rethinking Schools* and *Learning for Justice* magazines, and many more. She is the coauthor of *Liven Up Your Library: Design Engaging and Inclusive Programs for Tweens and Teens*.

