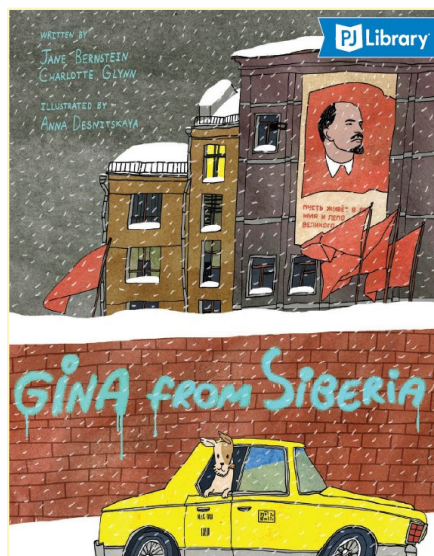


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{ What journey have you taken? }

Modern Exodus

Gina and her family are moving! Gina's story is an example of the modern exodus of Jews from the Soviet Union. Gina loves her home, but Jews in the Soviet Union couldn't practice their religion and customs openly and were viewed as second-class citizens. Trying (or even wanting!) to leave landed some Jews in prison. Thankfully, Gina's family made it out along with 290,000 other Jews between 1970 and 1988, most of whom made their homes in Israel and the United States. The floodgates really opened in 1991 with the end of the Soviet Union – 1.6 million Jews found freedom abroad. Moses and the Jews (and their pets?) who left Egypt thousands of years before during the first Exodus would be proud. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/ginafromsiberia.

HANDS ON!

Make a Home Collage

Gina and her family have to leave their home in the Soviet Union, but soon make their new location into home, too, with its own special qualities. What qualities do you love about where you live? What makes it home?

Supplies:

- Large white poster board
- Scissors
- Glue
- Family/home photo or drawing
- Crayons/markers/colored pencils

Cut a large circle out of the poster board. Glue the photo or drawing of your family and/or home in the center of the circle. Draw pictures (or glue more photos) around the center of all the things that make the place you live feel like home (a pet, special foods, the backyard swing, the town baseball team, the ice cream shop up the street, friendly neighbors, etc.). Hang your home circle up in your house as a reminder of what makes your little corner of the world so special.

On the Move

Moving toward something new means moving away from something else. Like many immigrants, Gina misses many things about home, and feels her new country is strange and hard to figure out...until slowly, she discovers pizza, new smells, new friends, and the charm of New York City. It's empowering to discover that you can adapt to a new and different place -- but you don't have to forget where you came from. For people and dogs alike, all the places you've been help to make you who you are. Bark of approval from Gina!

The Journey Counts

Gina sees some weird and wonderful things on her long journey to America. Whatever the reason for the journeys we take in life, keeping our eyes (and noses!) open can help us learn, grow, and deepen our understanding of the world and ourselves. Journeying runs in the Jewish family. God tells Abraham, the first Jew, "Go to the land which I will show you" (Genesis 12:1). Abraham isn't even told the destination (which ends up being the Land of Israel); maybe God wants him to focus on the journey. Sometimes journeys come with close calls – Gina is disguised as a baby to make it onto a train. But this funny episode proves her family's commitment to ensuring that all family members reached their destination together. So, when journeying, keep your eyes open – you never know what may be around the next bend.

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

LOOK closely at the illustrations. What cues do you see that this is a Jewish family?

YOU can tell a lot about how Gina is feeling by looking at her expressions on each page. When does Gina look happy? Scared? Angry? Excited?

IF you were going to move to a new town, city, or country, what would you be excited to explore in your new home? What would you miss about where you live now?