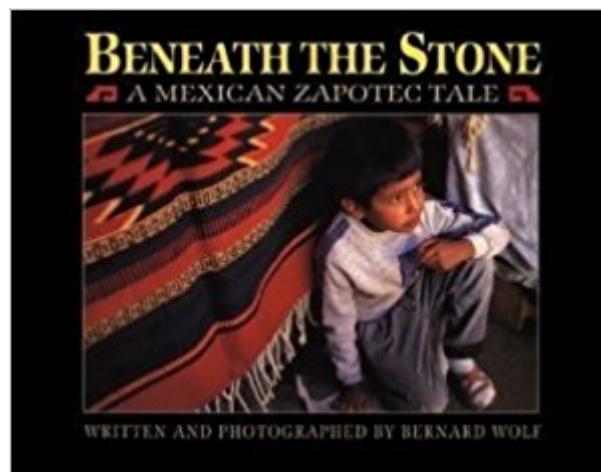


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# Beneath The Stone: A Mexican Zapotec Tale



## **Synopsis**

Stunning photographs and a clear text afford a fascinating glimpse into a unique, ancient culture--still very much alive today--and introduce young readers to Leo Ruiz, a young boy who wants to become a weaver and follow in his father's footsteps.

## **Book Information**

Library Binding: 1 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

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Age Range: 4 and up

Grade Level: Preschool and up

## **Customer Reviews**

Kindergarten-Grade 6-Although the subtitle might imply that this is a folktale, it is in fact a photo essay about a contemporary Zapotec Indian family living in Oaxaca, Mexico. The title refers to their village-Teotitlan del Valle, which means "Beneath the Stone in the Valley," so named by the people who settled there some 3,500 years ago. Wolf focuses on the daily life of six-year-old Leodegario Vicente Golan Ruiz. Vivid full-color photographs capture the boy and his family as they buy food and cook meals; go to school; weave tapetes (rugs/wall hangings) and sell them in Oaxaca City; and celebrate Los Dias de los Muertos, the anniversary of the Mexican Revolution, and Christmas. The lively text clearly explains what is going on in the pictures and highlights the dual nature of contemporary Zapotecs, whose cultural traditions are descended from the ancient Indians as well as from the Spanish conquistadors. The importance of family, community, and heritage in Leo's life comes across in both photos and text. By following him through his daily experiences, the author has made the boy's culture accessible to readers, who will recognize similarities as well as differences between his and their own ways of life. A pronunciation guide, map, and a two-page history of the Zapotecs makes this book useful for assignments. However, it will also be pored over

and read for pleasure. Lauren Mayer, New York Public LibraryCopyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Gr. 4-6. Despite the word tale in the title, this book is a nonfiction photo-essay. Full-color photographs and text follow six-year-old Leo and his family through several months in their mountain valley village near Oaxaca City, Mexico. Leo's family, Zapotec Indians, are weavers. Everyday home and school activities are presented, as well as celebrations for The Days of the Dead (in which adults toast with bottles of beer), the anniversary of the Mexican Revolution, and Christmas. The text discusses the economics of a family business, and it avoids an emphasis on "quaint" activities. A map, a pronunciation guide, and a summary of the Zapotec's place in Mexican history are provided. Mary Harris Veeder --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I met the woman who is featured in this story and have one of her weavings that i treasure. I met her in Ajijic, MX and she showed me the book so I had to come home and buy it. Interesting story that I enjoyed.

I thought the book was larger

the book is great! and the shipping and the service was great! thanx 1 hell of a lot! and have a nice day! ya'll!

This is a great book about a nice family. I met Antonieta in Ajijic, Mexico and bought several of her beautiful tapete wall hangings.

"El libro, muestra el libro" said Senora Galan in the simple room of their home as we sipped hot chocolate against the chilly night air. Leo ran off and returned with a picture book which he presented to me, and returned to his mothers side to watch as I read. The book of course was *Beneath the Stone: A Mexican Zapotec Tale*, written about Leo and his family by Bernard Wolf. I met Leo's mother in the marketplace in Oaxaca. She was standing in front of a table covered with beautiful woven rugs and wall hangings. When I admired her rugs and heard about the way she and her family weave them, in the same way their family has done for centuries, I was fascinated. The weavings on the wool rugs made intricate patterns, mostly traditional designs, Senora Galan told

me, and are passed down family to family. The dies they use are from the plants around them, boiled for days in a tub in the bare yard of their home. We spoke for a while, and when Senora Galan discovered that I was a young woman traveling alone, she insisted that I stay with her family that night in Teotitlan de Valle, a short way from Oaxaca city. Feeling a bit lonely, I accepted, and was welcomed by the Galan family to their simple home. Mr. Wolf's book, which I read in the room were he took many of the photos, beautifully describes the desolate beauty of Teotitlan and the warmth and kindness of the people to whom this land is home. Leo proudly watched as I read about him, following along the path of his day with the picture book. Leo, like the rest of his family, helps weave the rugs in the winter time, when the farm work is done. *Beneath the Stone*, details the steps involved in making the rugs, closely following the work from raw wool through dying and weaving until the finished products are stacked in a special room to await market day. Mr. Wolf very accurately captures the feel of Teotitlan and the lives of its Zapotec inhabitants. His book details the lives of this family so well that Senora Galan was worried that perhaps too much was revealed about her family's trade secrets. She also seemed sad to not have heard from Mr. Wolf since he left their home to complete the book in New York. In an increasingly homogenous world, surviving traditional cultures like the Zapotec become more fascinating to the world. I recommend *Beneath the Stone* for children, because of its clear vision of another child's very different life, but I would hope parents would include with it a lesson on the dangers of exploitation.

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This is a book geared toward the young reader, but anyone with an interest in the Zapotec weavings and culture will find it a heartwarming and quick read. While visiting Oaxaca over Christmas I had the privilege to meet Antoinetta in her kiosk at the Zocolo. This gracious lady introduced me to the book as well as to the beautiful works of her family.

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