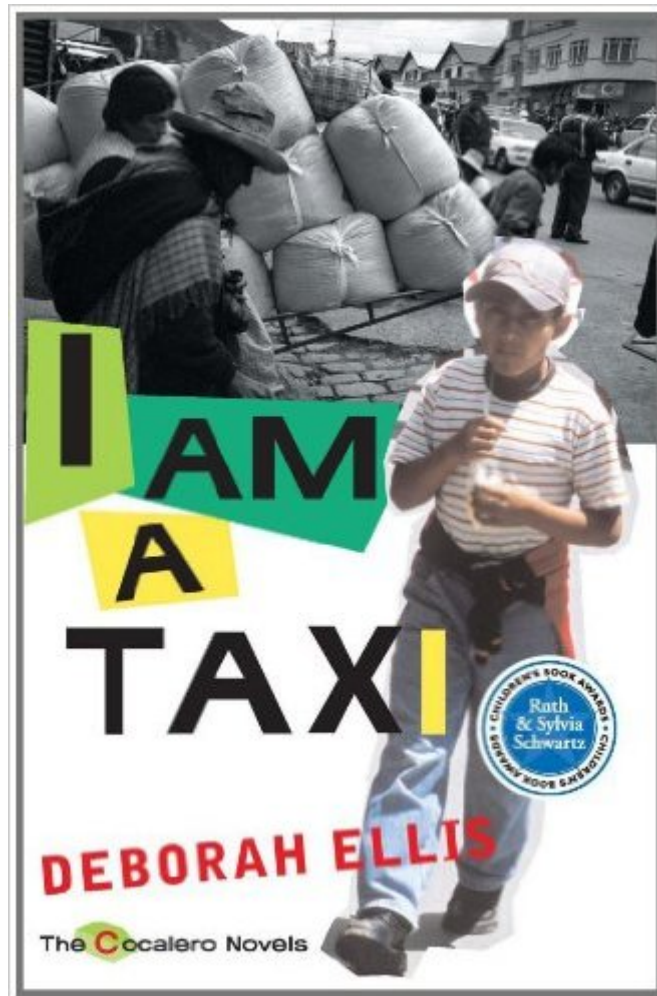


The book was found

# I Am A Taxi (The Coccalero Novels)



## Synopsis

For twelve-year-old Diego and his family, home is the San Sebastian Women's Prison in Cochabamba, Bolivia. His parents farmed coca, a traditional Bolivian medicinal plant, until they got caught in the middle of the government's war on drugs. Diego adjusted to his new life. His parents are locked up, but he can come and go: to school, to the market to sell his mother's hand-knitted goods, and to work as a "taxi," running errands for other prisoners. But then his little sister runs away, earning his mother a heavy fine. The debt and dawning realization of his hopeless situation make him vulnerable to his friend Mando's plan to make big money, fast. Soon, Diego is deep in the jungle, working as a virtual slave in an illegal cocaine operation. As his situation becomes more and more dangerous, he knows he must take a terrible risk if he ever wants to see his family again.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 760 (What's this?)

Series: The Cocalero Novels

Paperback: 208 pages

Publisher: Groundwood Books; 3 Reprint edition (February 28, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 9780888997364

ISBN-13: 978-0888997364

ASIN: 0888997361

Product Dimensions: 0.8 x 5 x 7.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (5 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #208,017 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #31 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Runaways](#) #33 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Drugs](#) #192 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Hispanic & Latino](#)

Age Range: 10 - 14 years

Grade Level: 4 - 9

## Customer Reviews

This book is an interesting and engrossing read. I'm not certain that younger readers (for which the cover, in particular, seems to be aimed) will "get" it, but the action makes for quite a page-turner, and

the subject matter is very thought provoking. The author includes some anti-American and anti-religion undertones which I find a bit annoying, and although she does explain that the cocaine extraction process is different from the coca tea itself, the reader is left cheering for the humble coca farmers. Once again, I hope youthful readers make the distinctions, and that the "bad guy" is cocaine use and not necessarily the U.S. In any case, this book could be a great read-aloud, and I'm looking forward to the sequel.

I have visited the prisons in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia and this is just what you see. This story is very correct about the children living with their parents in prison. I saw small shops under stairwells and restaurants in hallways. Very different from the U.S. Interesting read. I plan to buy the follow up book.

All three of my children commented on this catchy unusual title, expressing doubt that it could possibly be of any interest to them (ages 10, 12, and 14), "What is that? Who checked that out of the library?" Having traveled to Bolivia, I couldn't wait to begin reading it aloud to my youngest before bed. We were not disappointed and I've tossed it to the next child, insisting she read it as she is interested in traveling to South America. The book is quick paced, includes a few Spanish words (Saltenas, Chupe, tc.) and a good glossary for assistance is at the end. Many simple aspects of the Spanish culture were touched on, such as religion (whether the Angel Gabriel will actually come and open the prison doors, lighting church candles) and explaining the Quechua VS Aymara Indians. Descriptive paragraphs of the laundry hanging to dry, bowler hats, merchants in the markets, and more made me envision being back on a village street in Bolivia. Diego is smart, cautious, and asks many questions. There is much emphasis on maintaining composure, loyalty, surviving, and not showing one's fear. I did not interpret any underlying messages, anti-American tones, or otherwise. It is often said in South America, "The bus comes when it comes...." and perhaps, due to my travels through Bolivia and Peru, I have a different attitude of... Life is what it is...and this story about a boy, is what it is - the struggle and challenges of his life. Highly recommend. Tracy Foote  
Author: Let's Go Up! Climbing Machu Picchu, Putucusi and Huayna Picchu  
Let's Go Up! Climbing Machu Picchu, Huayna Picchu and Putucusi or A Peru Travel Trip Hiking One of the Seven Wonders of the World: An Inca City Discovered ... the Andes Mountains (Multilingual Edition)

My 12 year old daughter loved this book. Anything Deborah Ellis writes is well researched and wonderful. She wants to read the sequel!

Great book!!

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