



Sacred Leaf (Cocalero Novels)

By Deborah Ellis

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After finally managing to escape from being held as a virtual slave in an illegal cocaine operation, young Diego is taken in by the Ricardos, a poor, coca-farming family who provides a safe haven while he recovers from his ordeal. But even that brief respite comes to an end when the Bolivian army moves in and destroys the family's coca crop — and their livelihood. Diego eventually joins the *cocaleros* as they protest the destruction of their crops by barricading the roads and confronting the army head on. As tension builds to a dramatic standoff, he wonders whether he'll ever find a way to return to his family. This thought-provoking book offers a different perspective of the war on drugs, revealing the terrible price it exacts from Bolivians who have grown coca for legitimate purposes for hundreds of years. And like all of Ellis' books, it offers a sensitive and compelling look at the plight of children in developing countries.

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