

A sparkling middle grade novel about a daughter and father finding their way back to each other in the face of their changing family and community.



Emilia Torres has a wandering mind. It's hard for her to follow along at school, and sometimes she forgets to do what her mom or abuela asks. But she remembers what matters: a time when her family was whole and home made sense. When Dad returns from deployment, Emilia expects that her life will get back to normal. Instead, it unravels.

Dad shuts himself in the back stall of their family's auto shop to work on an old car. Emilia peeks in on him daily, mesmerized by his welder. One day, Dad calls Emilia over. Then, he teaches her how to weld. And over time, flickers of her old dad reappear.

But as Emilia finds a way to repair the relationship with her father at home, her community ruptures with some of her classmates, like her best friend, Gus, at the center of the conflict.

*PERFECT FOR FANS OF
SEE YOU IN THE COSMOS,
AMINA'S VOICE, AND
THE THING ABOUT JELLYFISH.*



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Emilia record videos to send to her father when he is deployed?
2. Emilia and her family drink café con leche, Cuban coffee. Her mother says that the smell of it is “the sweet aroma of our island [Cuba] and our ancestors.” What does that mean?
3. Why does Emilia choose to begin her tour at the Latino food store?
4. When Emilia discovers that the Olympic stadium was built by immigrants who then risked deportation, she wonders about the fate of her family members who are immigrants. She thinks: “Who makes the rules about who gets to stay somewhere and who has to leave?” This is a big question. Should someone have the power to dictate where another lives? If they stay or go?
5. Why do you think many students in Emilia’s class don’t know about the history of Park View and Merryville?
6. Why does Gus forgive Emilia for standing him up at Clarissa’s party?
7. Why does Mr. Richt cancel the travel brochure project?
8. Eventually, Emilia Rosa insists that Clarissa call her by her real name, instead of “Emi Rose.” Why is it so important that Emilia Rosa be called by her real, full name?
9. Describe Emilia’s relationships with her family (mother, father, and grandmother). Why would she be okay with her mother taking the job in San Francisco when her family is so rarely all together?
10. Emilia’s father makes her a video at the end of the book. How does Emilia react to this video?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Emilia and Gus’s video makes a big impact on their school, and Mr. Richt even hopes to share it with the community. In keeping with this moment in the text, make a video, like Emilia and Gus, about something going on at your school. The videos should include interviews and other footage relevant to the topic. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7)

So many of Pablo Cartaya’s books seek to understand familial connections, but they also highlight the families that we make for ourselves that often transcend biological relations. Keeping this in mind, create family trees (both biological and chosen), doing research on your family archives to construct relations and see connections. These projects should be creative and should be accompanied by a brief, reflective writing where you explain your creative processes. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.10, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.5, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.7)

About
PABLO CARTAYA



Pablo Cartaya is an award-winning author, speaker, actor, and educator. In 2018, he received a Pura Belpré Author Honor for his middle grade novel, *The Epic Fail of Arturo Zamora*. His second novel, *Marcus Vega Doesn't Speak Spanish*, is available now. His third novel, *Each Tiny Spark*, publishes in 2019. Learn more about Pablo at pablocartaya.com and follow him on Twitter @phcartaya.

PenguinClassroom.com



PenguinClassroom



@PenguinClass



PenguinClassroom

