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Prietita And The Ghost Woman/Prietita Y La Llorona



Synopsis

Ever since she can remember, Prietita has heard terrifying tales of la llorona — the legendary ghost woman who steals children at night. Against a background of vibrant folk paintings, Gloria Anzaldua reinterprets, in a bilingual format, one of the most famous Mexican legends. In this version, Prietita discovers that la llorona is not what she expects, but rather a compassionate woman who helps Prietita on her journey of self-discovery. “This tale provides a fascinating context in which to introduce and discuss folktales.â • — School Library Journal

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 690L (What's this?)

Paperback: 32 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (8 customer reviews)

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Age Range: 6 and up

Grade Level: 1 and up

Customer Reviews

"Prietita and the Ghost Woman" is a re-imagined and re-telling of the original story of La Llorona, the Weeping Ghost Woman, widely known in Mexican/Chicana/o folklore. The original Mexican tale involves a young woman weeping over the children she drowned after committing an act of vengeance over her unfaithful husband. The story is usually meant to frighten, especially children. However, Anzaldua recasts La Llorona as an uplifting spiritual guide helping Prietita, the leading protagonist of this story, on a special journey. One day, Prietita is summoned by her younger sister to seek help after their mother falls ill. Prietita seeks the help of a curandera-a healer, who asks Prietita to seek a rue plant found in "King Ranch," which is surrounded by barbed wire and promises

that trespassers will be shot. While proving not only a challenging but also dangerous task, Prietita finds the courage to seek the plant in this dangerous territory in order to save her mother. Through her journey inside the King Ranch, Prietita becomes lost and seeks the help of several animals. After almost losing hope in this frightening territory, La Llorona appears as a glowing light helping Prietita find the rue plant. The incorporation of animals, guiding spirits, and brave young Chicanitas are common elements making "Prietita and the Ghost Woman" a signature work for Anzaldua, who has used these special elements in her work of fiction and poetry. The writing is simple but filled with specific descriptions of each of the narrative's scene that readers may even imagine the story for themselves without the illustrations. However, the artwork by Christina Gonzalez is spectacular in that she uses many dark and light colors beside intricate patterns in the portraits unfolding the narrative.

Prietita and the Ghost Woman, written by Gloria Anzaldúa and illustrated by Christina Gonzalez, presents a feminist adaptation of the Hispanic legend by featuring strong, female protagonists, and portraying La Llorona as a benevolent spirit, rather than a haunting ghost. The female relationships in the story are loving and respectful, and women of all different ages look out for each other in a lovely constellation of female alliances. The story is written in English with a Spanish translation on each page, as well as Spanish words peppered throughout the English text. When interspersing Spanish words, Anzaldúa has taken care to provide translations or context clues for English-language readers. For example, when Prietita asks Doña Lola for help, Doña Lola replies, "I'm sorry, mijita, I'm sorry, my child, but I've used up all the ruda I had and none of the neighbors grow it." To complement Anzaldúa's text, illustrator Maya Christina Gonzalez has created dramatic illustrations reminiscent of mural art. According to Lee and Low books Gonzalez is a widely exhibited artist renowned for her vivid imagery of strong women and girls. Additionally, Kirkus Reviews notes that this book's illustrations completely fill each spread, laden with southwestern flora and Mexican motifs. Indeed, the reader can spot an array of cultural and geographical hints, including large cacti, red chili peppers hanging from the wall, and little lizards scampering across the dry, forest floor. The illustrations also evoke an element of the imaginary or the fantastical, as they take the reader through a young girl's dream-like journey of growth and self-development.

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