



2018

Dancing Home

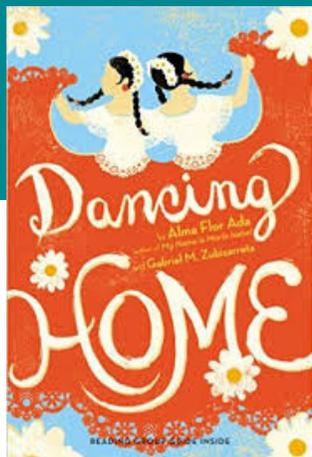
Rachel Iba

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Book Review

Dancing Home

Author

Alma Flor Ada and Gabriel

Illustrator

Reviewer

Rachel Iba

Rating

Excellent

Level

Primary, Intermediate

Pages

147

Year

2011

Publisher

Atheneum Books for

ISBN

9781442481756

Margarita (Margie) is proud of her American birth and is embarrassed by the Mexican culture of her parents. However, when her cousin Lupe comes straight from Mexico to live with them, Margie finds it impossible to ignore her Mexican heritage. Having Lupe in class is embarrassing. Margie is expected to help Lupe by translating for her, but she can't speak Spanish very well and just ends up more frustrated. Even at home, Margie's parents speak entirely in Spanish for Lupe, and Margie has a hard time understanding anything at home. Eventually, Margie recognizes Lupe's kindness and courage and is more willing to embrace her family's Mexican traditions. The girls become as close as sisters and continue mixing their languages and cultures.

The story portrayed in this book will resonate with students in almost every classroom across the United States, as it is a country of immigrants. It addresses many themes of immigration and second generation citizenship such as the difficulties of learning a new language or culture, embracing the new while treasuring the old, and feeling embarrassed or unsure where you belong. Many students will connect with the dynamic emotions and experiences of Margie and Lupe. The writing is clear and direct, although sometimes the "lessons learned" can be a bit preachy. As well as being an enjoyable story, *Dancing Home* is a great way to open up a dialogue with a class about what it truly means to be an American.