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# Love, Amalia

Leah Christopher

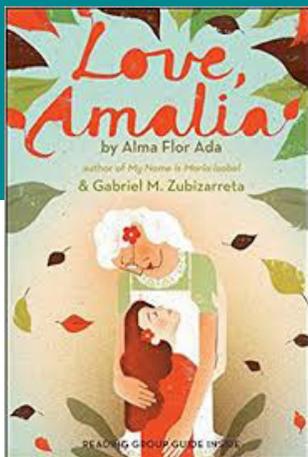
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## Book Review

### Love, Amalia

#### Author

Alma Flor Ada and Ga-

#### Illustrator

#### Reviewer

Leah Christopher

#### Rating

Excellent

#### Level

Intermediate

#### Pages

125

#### Year

2012

#### Publisher

Atheneum Books for Young Readers

#### ISBN

9781442444874

Saying goodbye stinks, Amalia decides when her best friend, Martha, moves away. More than losing a friend, it's as if only-child Amalia is losing a sister, and she is mad at Martha. Now they can't giggle in class together or enjoy weekly visits to Amalia's grandmother, Abuelita. Just when her self-pity is at its peak, Amalia receives even more devastating news--Abuelita has died. Reeling from the loss, Amalia doesn't want to talk to her unfamiliar relatives in town from Mexico and Costa Rica. All she wants to do is curl up in her bed and cry over memories of Abuelita. Then she discovers letters Abuelita wrote about how caring for Amalia helped her recover from losing her husband, Amalia's abuelo. Amalia's own healing process begins. Eventually, Amalia finds the inner strength to reach out and love others as Abuelita did--including her relatives and Martha.

Talented authors Alma Flor Ada and Gabriel M. Zubizarreta offer a unique book especially useful for its cultural insight, moral commentary, and value as a resource for coping with loss. A taste of the Spanish language as well as details of Mexican traditions add an instructive voice to the story. Several life lessons on honesty and accepting responsibility also create a somewhat didactic--rather than purely fun, fictional--tone. Teachers and parents of late primary to intermediate readers can use these episodes in the book as a starting point for important discussions. Also worth noting is the interesting structure of the book: through flashbacks and letters, readers get to know Martha and Abuelita, even though those characters are not currently in Amalia's life.