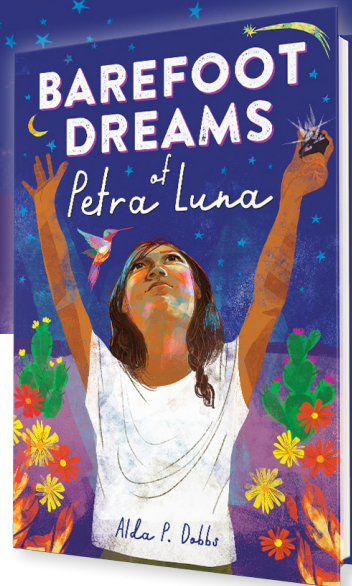


# BAREFOOT DREAMS

Petra of Luna

## EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



### ABOUT THE BOOK

A tale of one family's perilous journey to cross the U.S. border during the Mexican Revolution that is every bit as relevant and heartbreaking today

It is 1913, and twelve-year-old Petra Luna's mama has died while the revolution rages in Mexico. Before her papa is dragged away by soldiers, Petra vows to him that she will care for the family she has left—her abuelita, little sister Amelia, and baby brother Luisito—until they can be reunited. They flee north through the unforgiving desert as their town burns, searching for safe harbor in a world that offers none.

Each night when Petra closes her eyes, she holds her dreams close, especially her long-held desire to learn to read. Abuelita calls these barefoot dreams: "They're like us barefoot peasants and indios—they're not meant to go far." But Petra refuses to listen. Through battlefields and deserts, hunger and fear, Petra will stop at nothing to keep her family safe and lead them to a better life across the U.S. border—a life where her barefoot dreams could finally become a reality.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alda P. Dobbs is as passionate about connecting children to their past, their communities, and to nature as she is about writing. Alda lives with her husband and two children outside Houston, Texas.

### Praise for **BAREFOOT DREAMS OF PETRA LUNA**

"Dobbs' *wrenching debut*, about family, loss, and finding the strength to carry on, illuminates the harsh realities of war, the heartbreaking disparities between the poor and the rich, and the racism faced by Petra and her family. Readers will love Petra, who is as *strong* as the black-coal rock she carries with her and as *beautiful* as the diamond hidden within it." —**BOOKLIST**, STARRED Review ★

"Petra Luna's incredible odyssey in pursuit of her 'barefoot dreams' is as *vital and perilous* and hopeful as that of today's dreamers, who still set off across the desert seeking a better life in America more than a hundred years later."

—**ALAN GRATZ**, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Refugee*

"A *brilliant and authentic* historical novel about a young woman's struggle for freedom. Petra Luna's dream will fill your heart with courage." —**FRANCISCO X. STORK**, award-winning author of *Illegal*

"[As] *breathhtaking as a shooting star*...this moving story has a profound resonance today." —**LAURA RESAU**, award-winning author of *TREE OF DREAMS* and *THE LIGHTNING QUEEN*

"Lyrical, heartfelt, and *deeply authentic*, this book will stay on your mind long after you've read the last page."

—**J. ANDERSON COATS**, award-winning author of *The Many Reflections of Miss Jane Deming*



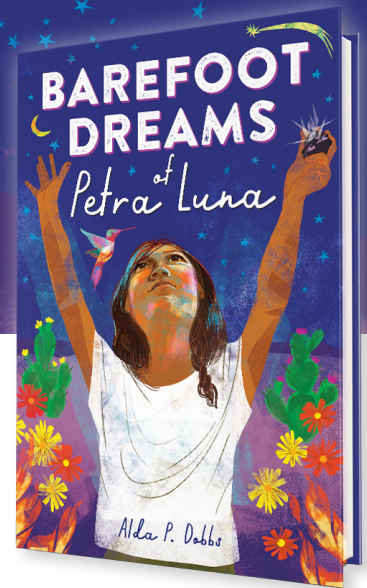
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# BAREFOOT DREAMS

Petra of Luna

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*Dear Educators:* *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna* is a unique and captivating story of just how much a young girl can accomplish in the face of adversity. Surrounded by uncertainty, danger, and hopelessness, Petra's courage and determination help guide her family to safety and opportunity. In this guide, you will find ties to both the Common Core Standards (CCS) and the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum for English and Language Arts, Writing, History, and Social Sciences. There are several versions of the questions and concepts to help you adapt them to the appropriate grade level. The guide is written so that it can be used to teach individual activities from excerpts of the book, or in its entirety as part of an English or History/Social Studies curriculum. The goal is to make this material more accessible and enjoyable for you and your students.

### KEY IDEAS AND THEMES

- The importance of resilience, perseverance, and family
- Leadership and self-determination
- Selflessness
- Immigration's impact of the country

### CLASSROOM LESSON PLANS

The questions below are meant to help students relate to the story and use the book to further their education. They have been sorted into groups and written in a way that can be used as simple question and answer or as writing prompts. These questions can easily be adapted to any level between 3rd and 6th grade and have been linked to both Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and Common Core Standards (CCS) to assist educators in developing lesson plans.

Reading and discussing this text supports TEKS RLA 3-5.1, 3-5.3, 3-5.4, 3-5.5, 3-5.6, 3-5.7, R.2-9 / CCS RL3-6.9, 3-6.10; W6.4; RH6.8, 6.10.

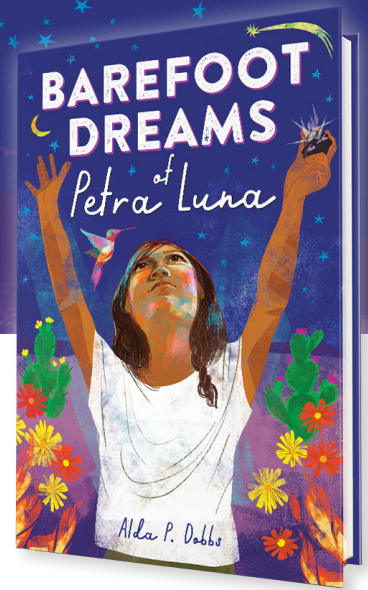
### PRE-READING ASSIGNMENT

1. Examine the front cover. What do you notice? What do you think the book will be about?
2. Read the synopsis on the back cover. What did you learn from the summary? What words or phrases catch your attention?
3. Looking at the entire cover—colors, text, illustrations—what adjectives would you use to describe it?

# BAREFOOT DREAMS

Petra of Luna

## EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



- Write a paragraph describing your initial thoughts about the book. What questions do you have that you hope to answer by reading the book?
- Indicate whether you think the statements below are true or false before reading the book. After reading the book, ask the same questions and see if your perspectives have changed. Emphasize that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers, but that students should be able to explain their reasoning.

Before Reading	After Reading	Statements
		Children can lead a group even when there are older kids or even adults in the group.
		There is much that can be learned from interacting with people from other cultures or backgrounds.
		People can change their circumstances.

## OBSERVATION

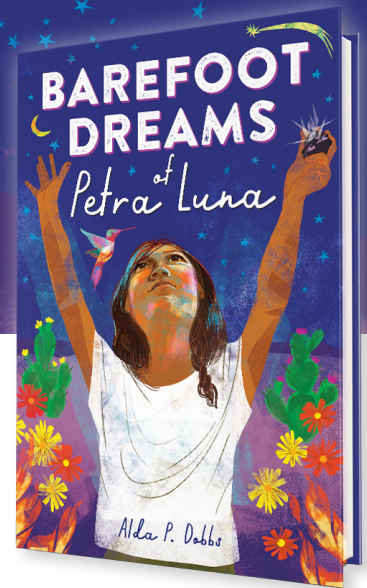
- What was your first impression of Petra and how did it change throughout the novel? What about Marietta? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.3, 3-6.4; W3-6.1)
- What were Petra's first impressions of Marietta? Does this impression change? Why does she have these feelings? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.1, 3-6.3, 3-6.4, 3-6.6; W3-6.9, RH6.1)
- What are some of the themes you noticed in the book? Choose one and explain how it is revealed through character, plot, and/or events. (TEKS RLA3-5.8, 3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.1, 3-6.2, 3-6.4; RH6.2)
- When the soldiers enter Petra's house and Petra risks her life to retrieve her "black rock," what do you infer about the rock? Was your inference confirmed when you found out that her father had given it to her as a special gift? (TEKS RLA3-5.8, 3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.1, 3-6.4; RH6.1)



# BAREFOOT DREAMS

Petra of Luna

## EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

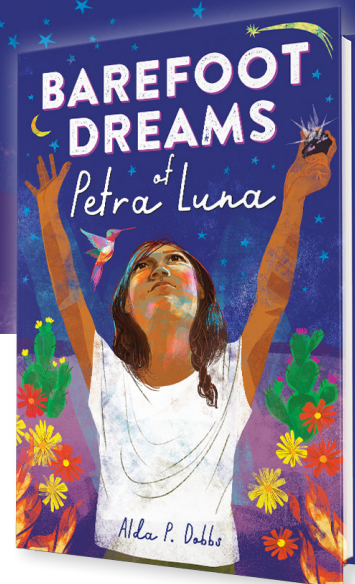


5. When Petra is in the desert, she sees a coyote and a hawk while having specific thoughts. How does the author use these animals to relate to the thoughts Petra is having in those moments? What do these animals represent? What do the descriptions of these animals say about Petra's personality, mood, and attitude when she encounters them? (TEKS RLA3-5.8, 3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.1, 3-6.2, 3-6.4; W3-6.9; RH6.1)
6. In what ways are Petra and Adeline different? In what ways are they similar? Why do you think they were such strong friends even though they were different in many ways? (TEKS RLA3-5.13, SS3-5.15, 6.13 / CCS RL3-6.1, 3-6.3, 3-6.4; W3-6.1, 3-6.2, 3-6.9; RH6.1)
7. When Petra is begging for money while holding her baby brother, she is at a low point in her journey. Who enters the story to help her in her darkest moment? What does this person represent? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.1, 3-6.3, 3-6.4; W3-6.2)
8. What do you think draws Petra to Marietta? What do you think draws her to Adeline? (TEKS RLA3-5.13, SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.1, 3-6.3, 3-6.4; W3-6.1, 3-6.9; RH6.1)
9. What is the importance of Marietta's character? What characteristics and values does she represent? (TEKS RLA3-5.8, RLA3-5.13, SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.1, 3-6.3, 3-6.4; W3-6.9)
10. Compare and contrast Abuela and Marietta using specific details in the text. Consider their character traits, their relationship with Petra, and the possible reasons for their differences. (TEKS RLA3-5.8, RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.1, 3-6.3; RH6.1)
11. How does the weather when Petra and her family cross the narrow train bridge change the mood of the scene? How would the mood be different if they had crossed on a bright sunny day? (TEKS RLA3-5.8, 3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.1, 3-6.4; W3-6.2, 3-6.3; RH6.1)
12. In Chapter 22, the author uses the setting to convey a general mood of Petra. What mood do you perceive from reading this chapter? What specific words help establish this mood and how does it help you better understand the story? (TEKS RLA3-5.8, 3-5.13, SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.1, 3-6.2, 3-6.4; W3-6.2; RH6.1)
13. During a flashback, Petra remembers a conversation with her Papa discussing a picture of President Madero and his wife in the newspaper. Petra observes that the wife looks scared for her husband and

# BAREFOOT DREAMS

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Petra's mother says "I bet there are plenty of men in that room who covet Madero's power. She probably feels it." This is an example of foreshadowing. What does "foreshadow" mean and what real life event does this scene foreshadow? (TEKS RLA3-5.8, 3-5.13, SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.5; W3-6.2; RH6.1)

14. Sometimes supporting characters in a story represent one or two traits that the main character may need in order to be successful. The supporting characters help the main character in becoming a more "complete" person. Marietta, Abuelita, Amelia, Adeline, Papa, and even Luisito display certain traits that help Petra. What traits do you most closely relate to these characters and how do these help Petra? Are there any other minor characters in the story who add to Petra's character or to the feel of the story? If so, how? Use examples from the text to support your answers. (TEKS RLA3-5.8, RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.1, 3-6.3, 3-6.6; W3-6.3; RH6.1)
15. There are many Spanish words used that you may not have known before reading the book. Could you guess what each word meant when you first read it? Could you determine its meaning from the context of the text? How does the author's use of Spanish help establish the setting of the story? Why is this important? (TEKS RLA3-5.8, 3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.4)
16. What do you think is the climax of the story? Explain why you chose that scene. (TEKS RLA3-5.8, 3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.5; W3-6.1, 3-6.9; RH 6.1)
17. What is a metaphor? Can you find an example of a metaphor in the text and explain what it means? (TEKS RLA3-5.8, 3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.1, 3-6.4; W3-6.9; RH 6.1)
18. The author added the story of Luz and Chenchu to the book after she finished the first draft of the book. What elements are added to the book through their story? Do you think this was a good addition? Explain your answer. (TEKS RLA3-5.8, 3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.3, 3-6.5; W3-6.1, 3-6.9)

## VISUALIZATION

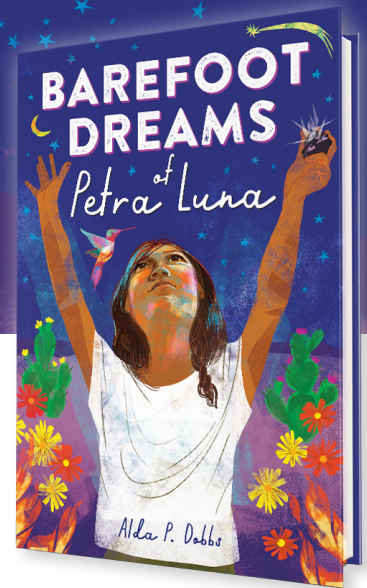
1. After reading the first chapter, make a prediction about how the book will end. At the end of the book, compare your prediction to the actual ending. (TEKS RLA3-5.8, 3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.3)
2. What point of view is the story told from (1st or 3rd)? Why did the author choose to use this point of view? How would the story be different if told from the other point of view? (TEKS RLA3-5.8, 3-5.10, 3-5.12, 3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.5, 3-6.6; W3-6.3; RH6.6)



# BAREFOOT DREAMS

Petra of Luna

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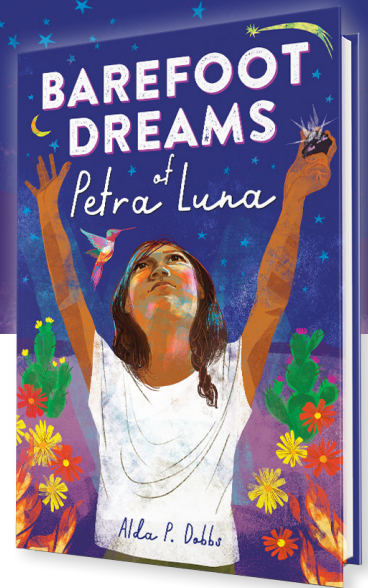


3. Pick a character other than Petra (Amelia, Abuelita, Marietta, Papa, etc.) and describe how the story would be different if it were told from their point of view? (TEKS RLA3-5.8, 3-5.10, 3-5.12, 3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.1, 3-6.3, 3-6.5, 3-6.6; W3-6.3)
4. As you read the book, pretend you are Petra and keep a diary. Write down what you think Petra would have written each day along her journey. (TEKS RLA3-5.12, 3-5.13; SS3-15 / CCS RL3-6.3, 3-6.6; W3-6.3, 3-6.10)
5. When Petra arrives at the military camp, the author describes it as a place full of food, music and dancing. Do you think this was always the mood in the camp? Why does the author choose to portray the camp in this way and how does that make Petra's decision harder? (TEKS RLA3-5.8, 3-5.10, 3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.1, 3-6.3, 3-6.9; RH6.6)
6. Marietta offers to teach Petra to be a soldado, a soldier. Adeline offers to help her get to America and reach her dream of learning to read. Petra declines both offers of assistance. What does she want to do? Why does she decide not to accept their assistance? What would you have done in her situation? Have you ever decided not to do something you really wanted to do? Explain. Can you imagine an alternate storyline if Petra had decided to take either of these offers? How might the story have ended? (TEKS RLA3-5.12, 3-5.13; SS 3-5.15, 3-5.16, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.7, 6.9, 6.13, 6.15, 6.16, 6.17 / CCS RL3-6.3; W3-6.1, 3-6.2, 6.9)
7. Make a poster that encourages support for the Federales. Make another that encourages support for the Revolucionarios. Have a debate between two teams representing each point of view. (TEKS RLA3-5.12, 3-5.13; SS3-5.1, 3-5.2, 3-5.15, 6.2 / CCS RL3-6.6; W3-6.1, 3-6.3, 3-6.7, 3-6.9)
8. Using the author's description, draw a picture of your favorite scene from the book. (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-15 / CCS RL3-6.4; 3-6.9; RH6.6)
9. Using the author's description, draw a picture of your favorite character. (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-15 / CCS RL3-6.4; W3-6.9; RH6.6)
10. Why do you think the author chose *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna* as the title? If you had to choose a different title, what would it be? (TEKS RLA3-5.10, 3-5.12, 3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.2, 3-6.4; W3-6.1, 3-6.3, 3-6.9; RH6.6)

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11. What do you think will happen to Petra and her family after the story ends? Write a summary of your imagined story and share it with the class. (TEKS RLA3-5.12, 3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.1, 3-6.3, 3-6.9)

### COMPREHENSION

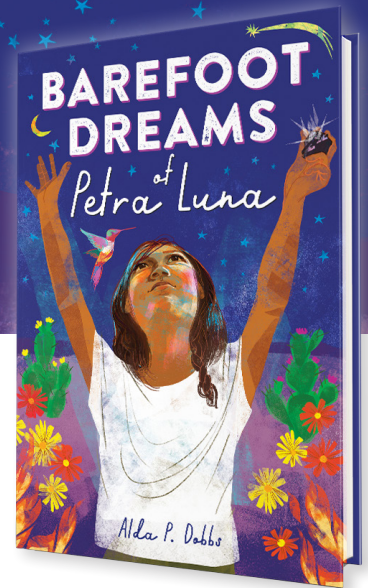
1. The name Petra means "rock" in Greek. What are some qualities of a rock? How does this name relate to who Petra is as a person? (TEKS RLA3.13; SS3-5.15)
2. What is an omen? What role do omens play in the story and how do they affect the actions of the characters? Do you believe in omens? Use examples from the text or personal experience or knowledge to support your belief. (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.15, 6.13 / CCS W3-6.1, 3-6.8, 3-6.9)
3. How does the setting influence your understanding and the mood of the story? What emotions or thoughts do you have when Petra is at her hut? The church? The desert? The military camp? On the bridge? Under the flagpole? What are the first words that come to mind when you think of these places? (TEKS RLA3-5.8, 3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.4; W3-6.9; RH6.1)
4. After Petra learns that Amelia has named the donkey the author states that "It was a strict rule: don't name the animals. Names create bonds and bonds tend to break, especially during war". What do you think this means and do you think this is a good rule for Amelia and Petra to live by? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.1, 3-6.9)
5. What is the significance of Petra's black rock? What does it symbolize? Use evidence from the text in your answer. (TEKS RLA 3-5.8, 3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.4; W3-6.1, 3-6.9)
6. Why does Abuelita not want Petra to learn to read, or to climb trees? Use evidence from the text. (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15, 6.13 / CCS RL3-6.3; W3-6.1, 3-6.9; RH6.1)
7. In the scene where Petra and Adeline are talking about the revolution, why does Petra not want to say which side her father is fighting on? Use evidence from the text. (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15, 3-5.16, 6.13 / CCS RL3-6.3, 3-6.4; W3-6.1, 3-6.9; RH6.1)
8. There are several examples of Petra failing during her journey. Identify one of these failures and explain how Petra used it to ultimately succeed. (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.1, 3-6.2, 3-6.3, 3-6.4, 3-6.5, 3-6.6; W3-6.2, 3-6.9; RH6.1)



# BAREFOOT DREAMS

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9. How does the flashback of Marietta's father being killed enhance your understanding of the story? What did you learn from the flashback that changed your perceptions? Why are flashbacks important in telling a story? (TEKS RLA3-5.8, 3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL 3-6.5; W3-6.9; RH6.1)
10. Luz's baby, who is called "Chencha," is named Inocencia. What do you think Inocencia means in English? Why do you think the author chose this name? What other character exemplifies inocencia? (TEKS RLA3-5.8, 3-5.10, 3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.4; W3-6.1, 3-6.9; RH6.6)
11. What is the most important factor in Petra's ability to get her family to safety? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.1, 3-6.9)
12. What is the importance of Petra's desire to learn to read? What does learning to read represent to Petra? To Abuelita? (TEKS RLA 3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15, 6.13 / CCS W3-6.2, 3-6.9)
13. Petra's father tells her "When life's big problems squeeze you hard, you grow stronger. You grow up to shine like a diamond." What does he mean by this? Do you agree or disagree and why? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.1)
14. Choose your favorite scene. What about that scene makes it your favorite? What emotions or mood do you feel when reading that scene? (TEKS RLA3-5.8, 3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.5; W3-6.9; RH6.1)
15. Projection is when a person sees what they want to see in another person, animal, or event. In the schoolhouse, Petra sees a hummingbird flying around and takes this as a sign. How is this an example of projecting? Use the text to explain your answer. (TEKS RLA3-5.8, 3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.9; RH6.1)

## APPLICATION/EXTENSION

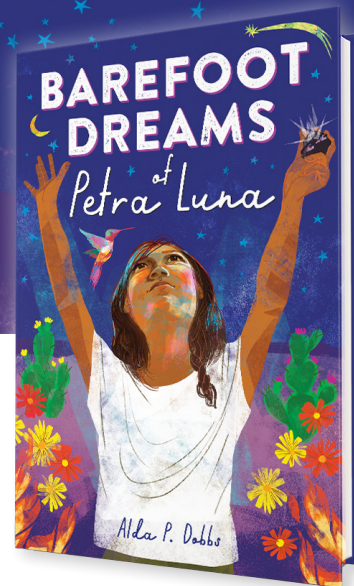
1. Which character did you identify most with and why? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.3; W3-6.2, 3-6.8)
2. Describe the character traits of each character. Do any of the characters have only "good" or only "bad" traits? How does this make you think about the character traits of the people in your life? What about your opinions of those you don't know well? (TEKS RLA3-5.8, 3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.3; W3-6.1, 3-6.8, 3-6.9; RH6.1)



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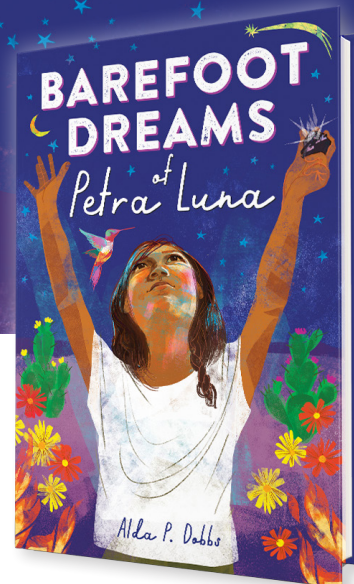


3. Petra's papa told her that life's challenges are what makes people stronger. Do Petra's actions demonstrate that she believes this? Cite examples. Do you believe this is true? Do your actions demonstrate your belief? Cite examples. (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.1, 3-6.3; W3-6.1, 3-6.8, 3-6.9)
4. Describe the relationship between Petra and Amelia or between Petra and Abuelita. Have you had any similar relationships? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.2, 3-6.8, 3-6.9)
5. Petra and Amelia are especially close as sisters. What factors do you think made them so close? Think of your relationship with your sibling(s) or another close family or friend. What factors have formed your relationships and how could you change those relationships if you wanted? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.1; W3-6.2, 3-6.8, 3-6.9; RH6.1)
6. Why do you think Abuelita does not share the dream of a better life and seems resigned to a life where she barely scrapes by? How do you think you would react in her situation? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.3; W3-6.1, 3-6.3, 3-6.8, 3-6.9)
7. Do you think that Petra understands Abuelita's view of the world? Does Abuelita understand Petra's view? Can you relate to the differences when you think about your parents and teachers? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.6; W3-6.8, 3-6.9)
8. When Petra and Amelia deliver wood to Don Raul, the woman who answers the door is rude to them and throws their money in the street. Petra stops Amelia from picking up the money, which their family desperately needs. In your own words, explain Petra's feelings when she does this. What would you have done? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.3, 3-6.4; W3-6.1, 3-6.3, 3-6.8, 3-6.9)
9. Petra's father is forced to fight for the Federales, but Marietta is fighting for the Revolucionarios. How do you think it makes Petra feel to have two people she cares about fighting on opposite sides? Have you ever experienced a similar situation? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.3, 3-6.8, 3-6.9)
10. While riding on the train, Abuelita tells Petra a story about her Papa when he was a boy on the hacienda. How did her flashback change the way you viewed Abuelita? Did it make you better understand why she was afraid of Petra's growing independence from her? Do you think your parents may have some of the same fears about you as Abuelita has about Petra? (TEKS RLA-5.13; SS3-5.15, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.7, 6.13 / CCS RL3-6.3, 3-6.6; W3-6.2, 3-6.9)

# BAREFOOT DREAMS

*Petra of Luna*

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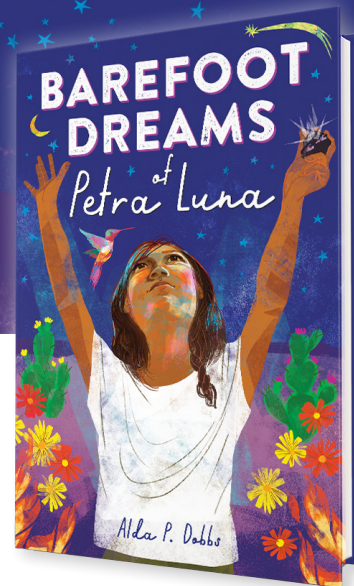
11. Have you ever had something as special to you as Petra's "black rock" is to her? What was it, why was it special to you, and how did it make you feel? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.2, 3-6.8)
12. Why is Petra's promise to her father to keep her family safe so important for her to keep? Have you ever made an important promise to someone? Was it easy to keep? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.1, 3-6.2, 3-6.3, 3-6.4, 3-6.5, 3-6.6; W3-6.1, 3-6.2, 3-6.8, 3-6.9)
13. Why is Petra nervous about telling Abuelita about her plan to go to the United States? Have you ever had to convince someone to do something they didn't want to do? How did you do it? (TEKS RLA 3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.2, 3-6.8, 3-6.9)
14. Near the end of the book, Petra is trying to cross the bridge to the U.S with her family. It is a hectic and chaotic scene and Petra loses contact with Abuelita. Have you ever been in a chaotic situation like that, or have you ever lost contact with your parents? How did that make you feel? How did you resolve of the situation? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.2, 3-6.8)
15. What emotions do you imagine Petra feels standing under the flag with her family? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.1, 3-6.4; W3-6.3, 3-6.9)
16. How does Petra grow during the story? How do the characters around her help her grow? How does Abuela change during the story? How might your role in your family change as you grow older and gain more experience? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.1, 3-6.3; W3-6.1, 3-6.2, 3-6.9; RH6.1)
17. Petra believes that her struggles, challenges, failures, and victories will chisel her character and make her shine like a diamond. Do you agree or disagree with this idea? Why? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.2, 3-6.8)
18. What is the biggest challenge you have ever faced? Did you overcome that challenge? If so, how? If not, what did you learn from the failure? Did anyone help you in your struggle? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.8)
19. Did you learn anything from reading the story that you can apply to your own life? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.2, 3-6.8)



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Petra of Luna

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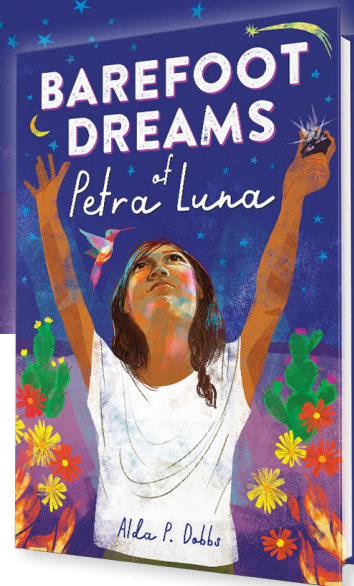
### CONNECTIONS

1. This book is classified as "Historical Fiction." What does that mean? Are there any parts of this story that you don't believe could have happened as described? Why? (TEKS RLA3-5.8, 3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.1, 3-6.2, 3-6.3, 3-6.4, 3-6.5, 3-6.6; W3-6.2, 3-6.9)
2. Where did Petra start her journey and where did it end? Use a map to determine the distance between the two locations. Describe the terrain and climate of the area and how that influenced Petra's decisions. What are some of the geographical features that Petra encounters on her journey? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.3, 3-5.4, 3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.2, 3-6.7, 3-6.8, 3-6.9; RH6.1)
3. At the beginning of the book, Petra and her family observes a "smoking star" or a comet, which really did occur in 1910. What was this comet called? How often can we see it from earth? Will you be able to see it in your lifetime or do you know anyone who has? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.15 / CCS 3-6.7, 3-6.8)
4. How did Petra's mother die? Childbirth in the early twentieth century was dangerous for both the mother and the child. Compare the fatality rate in the early twentieth century and twenty-first century, determine the factors that made it so dangerous, and identify how these were overcome. (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.1, 3-5.2, 3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.7, 3-6.8)
5. This book highlights several issues that were relevant during Petra's time and still resonate today: immigration, inequality, war, revolution, prejudice, and poverty. Pick one of these issues or another of your choice and explain the similarities and differences between then and now. (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.1, 3-5.2, 3-5.14, 3-5.15, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.7, 6.9, 6.13, 6.15, 6.17 / CCS W3-6.7, 3-6.8, 3-6.9; RH6.1)
6. Inequities are presented throughout this story. Identify some of the inequities and explain how Petra deals with each of them. (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.1, 3-5.2, 3-5.14, 3-5.15, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.7, 6.9, 6.13, 6.15, 6.17 / CCS W3-6.1, 3-6.7, 3-6.8, 3-6.9; RH6.1)
7. How has immigration affected the United States since its founding? How has it contributed to make this country stronger? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.1, 3-5.2, 3-5.14, 3-5.15, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.7, 6.9, 6.13, 6.15, 6.17 / CCS W3-6.1, 3-6.7, 3-6.8)

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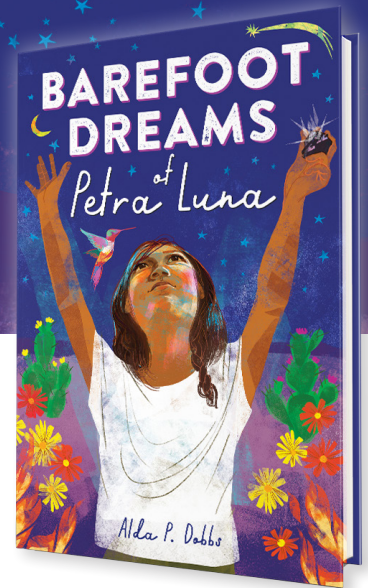
8. Why are stories of immigration such as this one important for all Americans? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.1, 3-5.2, 3-5.14, 3-5.15, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.7, 6.9, 6.13, 6.15, 6.17 / CCS W3-6.1, 3-6.7, 3-6.8)
9. Why do you think people from all over the world immigrate to the United States? Where did your family immigrate from? Do you think there are parallels between your family's journey and Petra's? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.1, 3-5.2, 3-5.14, 3-5.15, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.7, 6.9, 6.13, 6.15, 6.17 / CCS W3-6.1, 3-6.7, 3-6.8)
10. Do you know any first-generation immigrants? If so, interview them and ask questions such as the following:
  - Why did they come to the U.S.?
  - What was their journey like?
  - How were they received?
  - What opportunities have they found here that were not available in their home country?
  - What do they miss most about their home country? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.1, 3-5.2, 3-5.4, 3-5.14, 3-5.15, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.7, 6.9, 6.13, 6.15, 6.17 / CCS W3-6.1, 3-6.7, 3-6.8)
11. The idea of family is important to Petra, so much so that she delays her personal dreams in order to keep the family together. How does this compare to the view of the "family" today? Is the "family" as valued today in the same way as it was in the early twentieth century? Why or why not? (TEKS 3-5.13; SS3-5.1, 3-5.2, 3-5.15, 6.13, 6.17 / CCS W3-6.7, 3-6.8)
12. This story highlights some of the strongest elements of Mexican culture. After reading the story, what important elements about Mexican culture can you identify? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.1, 3-5.2, 3-5.3, 3-5.10, 3-5.15, 6.1, 6.2, 6.5, 6.13, 6.15, 6.17 / CCS W3-6.2, 3-6.7, 3-6.8)
13. The author described the Aztec gods Tláloc and Huitzilopochtli. Research these gods and other aspects of the Aztec culture and determine how they influenced the Mexican culture. (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.1, 3-5.2, 3-5.10, 3-5.15, 6.1, 6.2, 6.5, 6.13, 6.15, 6.17 / CCS W3-6.2, 3-6.7, 3-6.8)
14. Mexico has many indigenous cultures and ancient civilizations. Divide the class into small groups and have each a research and report on one of the following: modern and ancient Mayans, ancient Aztecs, modern



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and ancient Nahuas, modern and ancient Mixtecs, ancient Olmecs, and modern and ancient Zapotecs. (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.1, 3-5.2, 3-5.10, 3-5.15, 6.1, 6.2, 6.5, 6.13, 6.15, 6.17 / CCS W3-6.2, 3-6.7, 3-6.8)

15. Research the Mexican Revolution and list some of the causes and important turning points in the war. How did it end? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.1, 3-5.2, 3-5.3, 3-5.4, 3-5.15, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.7, 6.9, 6.13, 6.15 6.17 / W3-6.7, 3-6.8)
16. Do you or anyone you know speak any other languages? Do you think it is beneficial to speak more than one language? Why or why not? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.1, 3-5.2, 3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.1, 3-6.8, 3-6.9)

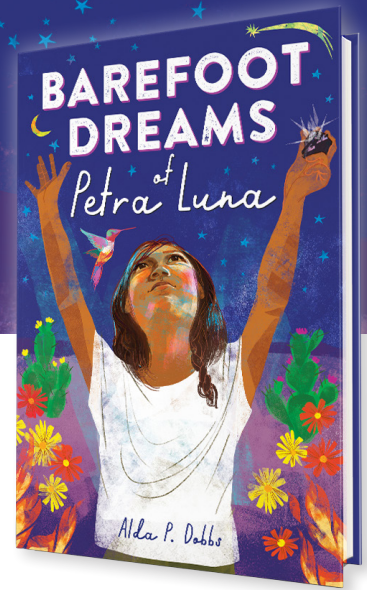
## DISCUSSION

1. One of the themes in the book is that everyone is important and can contribute. How does each character solve a problem or contribute in a way that is unique to them? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.1, 3-6.2, 3-6.9)
2. Why were the Revolucionarios fighting against the Federales? Were there "good guys" and "bad guys" or was the conflict more complicated? Explain your answer. (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.1, 3-5.2, 3-5.6, 3-5.14, 3-5.15, 6.1, 6.2, 6.7, 6.9 / CCS RL3-6.6; W3-6.1, 3-6.2, 3-6.7, 3-6.8, 3-6.9)
3. How does Petra's father's description of how a diamond is formed relate to Petra's journey? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS RL3-6.1, 3-6.2; W3-6.2, 3-6.9)
4. What were your thoughts when you read about the people cooking and sleeping and riding on top of the train? Why do you think people traveled this way? Have you heard of people traveling in this manner? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.2, 3-5.3, 3-5.4, 3-5.6, 3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.2, 3-6.7, 3-6.8, 3-6.9)
5. As Petra is walking through the chaos after the train wreck, she finds Luz, holding her baby, Chenchu, who has died. Doña Amparo tells Petra that it is the family's sacrifice for the war. This causes Petra to ask herself the following, "A sacrifice? A sacrifice meant surrendering something valued, something cherished for the sake of a greater good. But who decided how much we sacrificed? Who decided when to stop? Who decided it'd been enough?" What does this passage mean to you? How would you advise Petra to think about this idea of a sacrifice for the greater good? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.1, 3-5.2, 3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.1, 3-6.8, 3-6.9)

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6. Petra decides to lead her family to the United States. Is this a good decision? What other decisions could she have made? What decisions would you have made? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.1, 3-5.2, 3-5.3, 3-5.4, 3-5.6, 3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.1, 3-6.3, 3-6.9; RH6.1)
7. When Petra and her family get to the bridge to cross into the United States, she finds out that the price to cross the bridge has increased one hundred times what it usually costs. Why do you think the authorities increased the price during this chaotic time? How would the story be different if the price had not been increased? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.1, 3-5.2, 3-5.6, 3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.1, 3-6.3, 3-6.9)
8. Petra seems to have an eternal flame of hope within her, which keeps her moving forward despite all odds. Do you think this hope and optimism are important? Why or why not? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15, / CCS W3-6.1, 3-6.8, 3-6.9)
9. It is said that character is built through adversity. What do you think this means and how do you think Petra's character is built through the adversity she faces? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.1, 3-6.8, 3-6.9)
10. How is Petra's life different from yours? How is it similar? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.2, 3-6.8, 3-6.9)
11. In your own words, summarize the most important lesson you learned from reading this book? (TEKS RLA3-5.13; SS3-5.14, 3-5.15 / CCS W3-6.2)

## FUN ACTIVITIES

**Barefoot Dreams Book Party** – After reading the book, it may be fun to have a Barefoot Dreams Book Day. Below are some fun ideas of things to do that can help your students better understand Petra's journey.

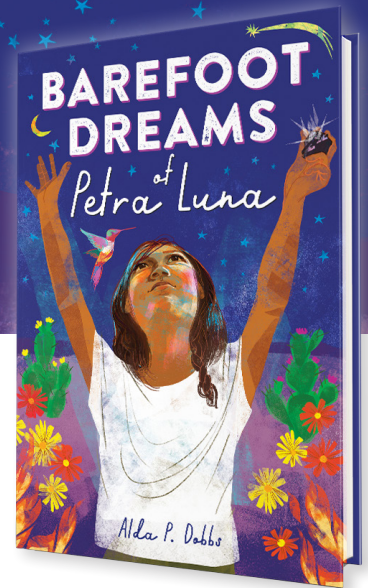
1. Make tortillas using a package of Mazeca corn flour from the grocery store (very easy with teacher's help).
2. Listen to (and maybe even dance to!) the following songs from that period: "Alejandra," "La Cucaracha," "Las Coronelas," "Jesusita En Chihuahua," "La Marcha de Zacatecas," "Las Bicicletas," "Las Tres Pelonas," "La Adelita."



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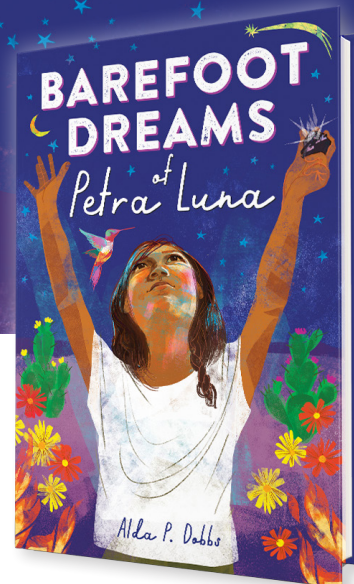


3. Visit the author's website at [www.aldapdobbs.com](http://www.aldapdobbs.com) to watch a video on the Mexican Revolution and see pictures of that period.
4. Play a game of marbles, or have students bring a tin cap to perform several trials of "corcho o lata," a "heads or tails" game played in Mexico. In the past, tin caps contained cork on the bottom side. Before flipping the tin cap, have the students call out either "corcho" (cork) or "lata" (tin).
5. Have students decorate the interior of a small box (shoe size) similar to the hollows Petra finds dug into the walls of the dry creek bed. Inside the box, place pictures of loved ones who have passed, small items or trinkets that belonged to them or remind you of them, and/or food they enjoyed. Decorate the inside or outside of the box with artificial flowers or ones made out of colorful tissue paper. Add flameless tealight candles to enhance its look.
6. Have kids dress in serapes, shawls, and other articles of clothing typical to the time period.
7. Research Aztec gods such as Tláloc, Huitzilopochtli, or Quetzalcóatl and discuss how they related to the people who worshiped them.
8. Explore and research facts about the Mexican Revolution.
9. Organize a play where children act out the part of the characters in a chosen scene either using the actual dialog, or their own ad-lib dialog.
10. Construct a diorama of one of the main events.
11. Have students write a letter to the author and explain what they liked or disliked about the book.
12. Make storyboards of important scenes in the book.
13. Make posters for the Revolucionarios and Federales and debate each side.
14. Create interviews where students act as the interviewer or as one of the characters.

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### AUTHOR Q&A

#### 1. What inspired you to write *Petra Luna*?

Growing up, I loved listening to stories about my great-grandmother's experience during the Mexican Revolution. They all told of extraordinary events and unbelievable trials she endured as a child. One story in particular intrigued me. It was of my great-grandmother and her family anxiously waiting for the US border to open along with thousands of other people so that they could reach safety. I decided to do some research to find out if it was true. Without having an exact date, I searched through old newspapers and after a few months, I found an article that described the event exactly as my great-grandmother had recounted it. I knew then I had to share her story with everyone, and *Petra Luna* was born!

#### 2. How much of *Petra Luna* is real?

*Petra Luna*'s character and some of her experiences were inspired by my grandmother's and great-grandmother's childhoods. Though the story's characters are all fictional, their circumstances and experiences are based on actual stories I was told by elders or read in newspapers and books.

#### 3. Where do you get your ideas?

Ideas are everywhere, all around you, and as a storyteller it's your job to poke at them to see if they're "alive." Sometimes ideas twitch or glimmer and require more poking or turning over to see what they're made of. There are some that remain dull and motionless no matter how much you prod, and all you can do is move on to the next one. The best ideas leap right at you, anxious to be carried away. I find ideas in newspapers, family stories, sunsets—pretty much in anything and everything.

#### 4. Do you have any advice for young aspiring writers?

Read everything you can get your hands on. Read for pleasure but also find books that you enjoy and analyze them. Like a biologist who dissects a specimen to learn more about it, do the same with your favorite books. Dissect each scene, each paragraph, each sentence and read it aloud to learn how it flows. Don't forget to write everyday (you're a writer, after all!). Read your own writing aloud and listen to its rhythm and flow. See if you stumble anywhere. Don't be afraid to share your writing with people you trust. It takes courage but improvement will always follow. Seek a mentor to guide you through. Don't be discouraged. Don't give up. And learn to listen to your own voice. Always remember that writing is HARD, HARD work!