

Theme: Immigration

A Piece of Home: Page 1



A Piece of Home tells the story of a young boy whose family moves from Korea to the strange new world of West Virginia, where people speak and act differently. Lyrical prose and lovely illustrations combine in a gentle, realistic story about finding connections in an unfamiliar world.

Discussion Questions

Adjusting to a New Life Situation. After moving from Korea to the United States, Hee Jun, his little sister, his grandmother, and his parents all have to adjust to life in a new country, which is very hard. Author Jeri Watts and illustrator Hyewon Yum show challenges that some of the family members face in adapting to their new lives.

- ▶ Which characters' challenges are shown through the text and illustrations?
- ▶ What are some of these challenges?
- ▶ Whose challenges aren't seen in the story?
- ▶ Why do you think Watts and Yum decided not to show all of the characters' adjustments to their new lives in West Virginia in as much detail?

Feelings in Words and Illustrations.

- ▶ What are some of the differences between Hee Jun's life in Korea and his life in West Virginia?
- ▶ How do the words and illustrations show his feelings about his new home and school?
- ▶ How do the words and illustrations show the feelings of Hee Jun's little sister and grandmother?
- ▶ How might the ages of Hee Jun, his little sister, and his grandmother affect how they respond to new and difficult situations?

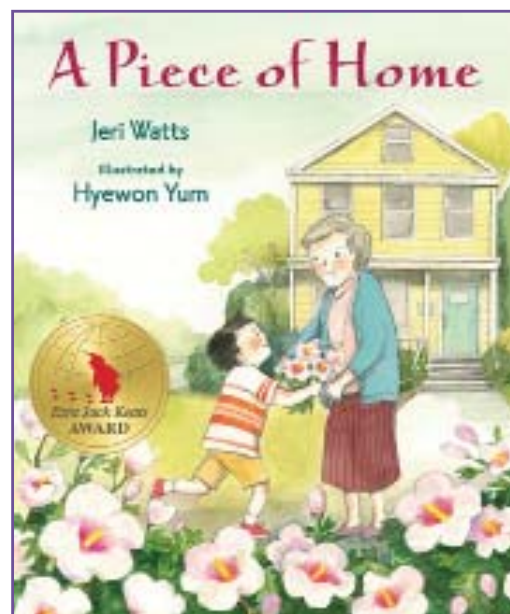
Communication. As this story shows us, learning a new language is extremely difficult.

- ▶ What are ways in which people who don't speak the same language can still communicate with one another?

Focus on Word Choices. On pages 6, 8, 16, 23, and 32, Hee Jun uses the word "ordinary" to describe people and situations.

- ▶ What do you think he means when he uses this word? What does he mean on page 6 when he says his grandmother "could find the extraordinary held within the ordinary?"
- ▶ What's extraordinary about the ordinary?
- ▶ What's ordinary for you? What do you find extraordinary about your ordinary?

Title: *A Piece of Home*
Author: Jeri Watts
Illustrator: Hyewon Yum
Publisher: Candlewick
Award: 2017 Writer Award
Intended Grade Level: 3rd - 5th
Age Range: ~8-12 Years Old



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A Piece of Home: Page 2



Activities for *A Piece of Home*

Finding Connections: Hee Jun and his grandmother are delighted to learn that a flower they grew in their garden in Korea can also grow in their garden in West Virginia. The flower may have different names—"mugunghwa" in Korean and "rose of sharon" in English—but it is the same flower.

- ▶ If you were moving, what thing from your old home would you most want to have in your new home, too?
- ▶ Draw a picture of this thing.
- ▶ Write a description of it and its meaning for you.
- ▶ What does it remind you of?
- ▶ Why is this item important to you, just as the flower is important to Hee Jun and his grandmother?

Honoring Traditions: At the end of the book, Hee Jun's grandmother follows a Korean tradition and sews a mugunghwa blossom onto the wedding dress of her friend.

- ▶ What are some other wedding traditions in the Korean culture and in other cultures?
- ▶ Do some research in books, online, or by talking with older family members and friends about their weddings and weddings they've attended.
- ▶ Write and/or draw about your findings.

Ezra Jack Keats Award: Book Discussion Guide

Theme: Immigration

Tía Isa Wants a Car: Page 1



Tía Isa Wants a Car to take the whole family to the beach, but half the money is set aside to someday bring family members who live far away to join them. Meg Medina's simple, genuine story about keeping in mind those who are far away is written in lovely, lyrical prose and brought to life through Claudio Muñoz's charming characters.

Discussion Questions

Repetition. "Tía Isa wants a car." Not only is this the title of the book, but Meg Medina includes this sentence in the story nine times.

- ▶ Why do you think she repeats this line so often? What does the repetition of the line tell the reader?

Focus on Word Choice. Medina uses descriptive language to appeal to the five senses as seen in the inset below.

- ▶ Which **words** and **phrases** can you find in Medina's writing that best describe each sense?
- ▶ How do her word choices help you to imagine the **settings of the story**?
- ▶ What do Claudia Muñoz's **illustrations** tell you about the settings?
- ▶ How do the words and illustrations work together to give you the fullest understanding of the locations?

Examples to Use In Discussing Senses:

- ▶ **Sight:** "Muddy like ogre shoes" (Page 13)
- ▶ **Sound:** "the scrape of forks" (Page 8)
- ▶ **Smell:** "Smells of lemon pies" (Page 7)
- ▶ **Taste:** "sucking on red Popsicles" (Page 17)
- ▶ **Touch:** "feel the seashells between my toes" (Page 24)

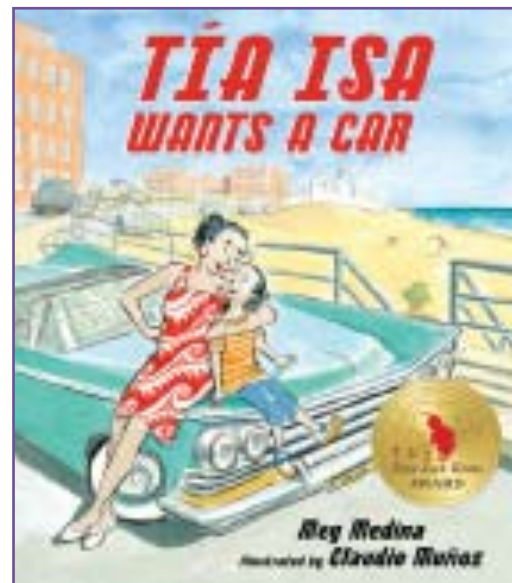
Importance of Setting. The title page shows a beach scene and the closing illustration shows a beach scene. There are also lots of references to the beach, both in the illustrations and the text, throughout the story.

- ▶ Why is the beach so important to the narrator and Tía Isa?
- ▶ Where do you think the narrator, Tía Isa, and Tío Andrés live?
- ▶ Where do you think they used to live with the narrator's parents, grandparents, and cousins?
- ▶ What details in the text and illustrations give you clues about their new and old homes?

Finding Connections.

- ▶ How does the narrator help Tía Isa earn the money for her car?
- ▶ Why does the narrator want to help her aunt? Describe a time when you helped someone get something they really wanted.

Title: *Tía Isa Wants a Car*
Author: Meg Medina
Illustrator: Claudio Muñoz
Publisher: Candlewick
Award: 2012 Writer Award
Intended Grade Level: K - 2nd
Age Range: ~5-9 Years Old



Ezra Jack Keats Award: Book Discussion Guide

Theme: Immigration

Tia Isa Wants a Car: Page 2



Activities for *Tia Isa Wants a Car*

Helping Your Community: The narrator wants to help Tía Isa earn money to buy her car. The people in their community, such as Señor Leo, María, and Miss Amy, also help the narrator to accomplish this goal.

- ▶ What is a community?
- ▶ Have the people in your community or neighborhood ever worked together toward a shared goal?
 - ▶ If so, what was this experience like?
 - ▶ If not, what might be a good project for people in your community to work on together?
- ▶ What steps would all of you have to take to complete your project and accomplish your goal?
- ▶ Through a written list of step-by-step activities or a series of drawings, create a plan that shows how your community can—or did—carry out a project that could help people in the community.

Telling Your Story: On pages 10-11, the narrator recalls “the gulls that swooped for your crab buckets” in her “favorite Tía story.” Medina’s words give a brief account of this tale, but Muñoz’s illustrations provide the beginnings of a more detailed story.

- ▶ Look at this double-page spread and write the story of the gulls’ visit to Tía Isa’s crab buckets.
- ▶ What happened to the gulls, the crabs, and the young Tía Isa?
- ▶ Can you use descriptive words that appeal to all five senses in your telling of the story? [Refer to the inset on the first page]
- ▶ Write and illustrate one of your favorite family stories or a story about a funny experience that happened to you.