



The Remembering Day, or El Dia de los Muertos

November 2, 4, 6



The Remembering Day, or El Dia de los Muertos, written by Pat Mora and Illustrated by Robert Casilla is a bi-lingual picture book that pays tribute to the concept that embodies the November 2nd celebration of El Dia de los Muertos or the Day of the Dead.

The story introduces us to Bella and her grandmother Mama Alma and the many things they have done together since Bella was just a toddler. We are able to learn about some of those shared memories as they sit together on their favorite rock talking.

We learn that when Bella was very young, Mama Alma carried her to show her the trees, the flowers, and the cacti. As the oldest and wisest woman in the village, Mama Alma taught Bella to sing and to tell stories. She taught her as well to weave and to tend to the animals and people in the village—helping to heal the injuries and sickness.

Mama Alma stresses to Bella that it is important to remember those special times—even when the love one is no longer present in this world. Mama Alma shows Bella the beautiful rock from her mother and the carved wooden toy from her father. She tells Bella that since our bodies do not live forever, it is important to remember and that when she holds the rock and the toy, she remembers and knows that her parents are always with her.

Mama Alma asks Bella to promise to teach this to people and to plan a day each year to remember and celebrate those who are no longer on this earth. Bella, of course, wants her grandmother to be with her always, but as the months pass, Mama Alma becomes weaker and weaker. Bella and her family are very sad when Mama Alma dies, but Bella remembers her promise. The next year, when the leaves begin to change, Bella encourages her family to plan a remembering day. Together, with the good memories of walking in the garden, telling stories, singing songs, and weaving, they celebrate Mama Alma's life and Bella knows that she will always with them.

The story line is a simple one and the illustrations done with mixed media highlight the beauty of the tale.

The Remembering Day, or El Dia de los Muertos, written by Pat Mora and Illustrated by Robert Casilla is appropriate for ages 4-8.

This is Pamela Gates for THE CHILDREN'S BOOKSHELF.

Mora, Pat. The Remembering Day, or El Dia de los Muertos. Illustrated by Robert Casilla. Houston, TX: Arte Publica Press, 2015.

Questions and Activities:

1. What do you know about El Dia de los Muertos?
2. What is special about the way this story is told?
3. Why is it important to Bella's family to celebrate "Remembering Day?"
4. Do you have a favorite holiday celebration? What makes it special?
5. Do you have a favorite activity that you have shared with a grandparent or family member? What makes it special to you and why?
6. Create a poem or story about your special memory and share it with others.

