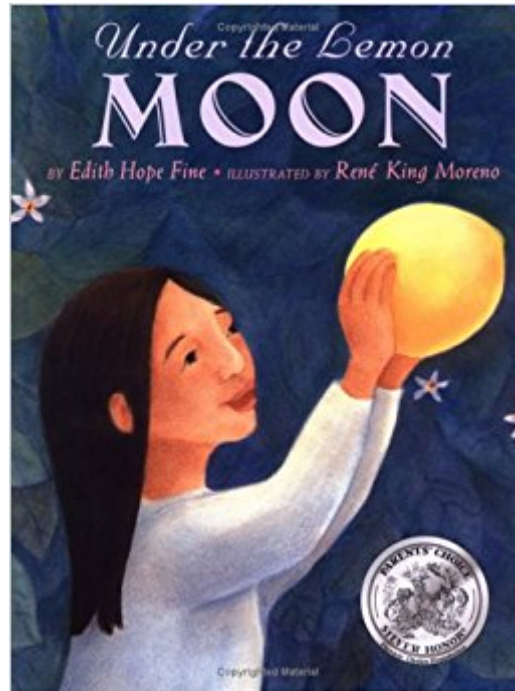




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Under The Lemon Moon



Synopsis

Under the Lemon Moon (PB)

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 600 (What's this?)

Paperback: 32 pages

Publisher: National Geographic School Pub; Reprint edition (June 23, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1584300515

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Product Dimensions: 0.2 x 8 x 10.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 12 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #296,386 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #58 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Mexico #160 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Where We Live > Country Life #274 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Hispanic & Latino

Age Range: 6 - 8 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 3

Customer Reviews

One night young Rosalinda wakes up to a "Wsss--shhh--snap!" outside. She slips out of bed and peers out the front door into the darkness. Way back by the lemon tree, something is moving. It's a man stuffing lemons, her very own lemons, into a cloth sack! To make matters worse, by the end of the week her lemon tree is very sick. As she wanders through the Mexican countryside seeking tree-healing advice, she sees the mysterious Night Man at the mercado--and he is selling her beautiful limones! She summons the help of La Anciana, a wise old woman with gentle eyes, and it is finally she who provides a creative solution. That night, Rosalinda sleeps under her lemon tree, and as she slumbers, "Her tree glowed golden in the night, dripping with lemons as big and round as baby moons." Her tree is magically cured! The next day she hands out the amazingly fat lemons, one by one, giving the very last lemon to the Night Man at the mercado. "Siembra las semillas. Plant the seeds," she tells him as he tilts his head towards his hungry family. "For you and for them." He agrees to do as she says, and Rosalinda's heart is "as full as a lemon moon." This simple tale of human compassion will appeal to young children on many levels. They'll be alarmed about the thief,

concerned about the sick tree that makes Rosalinda so sad, relieved to see the tree in full fruit, and happy to see how kind and generous Rosalinda is in the end. (Click to see a sample spread. Text ©1999 by Edith Hope Fine. Illustrations ©1999 by Rene King Moreno, reproduced with permission of Lee & Low Books, Inc.) (Ages 3 and older) --Karin Snelson

Fine (Fantastic Flight) works a bit of wonder in an understated story with the powerful themes of regeneration and redemption. One night, a horrified Rosalinda spies a man picking all of the fruit from her carefully tended lemon tree. Soon afterward, the leaves begin to turn yellow, and Rosalinda seeks out help. When her grandmother tells her about La Anciana, the Old One, who "walks the countryside helping things grow," the child determines to find her. At the end of a day's search for La Anciana, Rosalinda sees the lemon thief selling her tree's bounty at market, while his wife rocks an infant nearby. At this point La Anciana magically appears: "Perhaps he had a need," she tells Rosalinda, and hands her a branch with directions to bind it onto the lemon tree. A miraculous transformation follows, and a grateful Rosalinda shares her plentiful new crop with her family and neighbors and even the contrite thief, whom she instructs to plant the seeds. Fine's message is stronger for remaining implicit. Softly punctuated with the hues of the flower-filled Mexican countryside, Moreno's (Fiesta) watercolor and pastel images quietly convey the picturesque setting. Her attention to folkloric details helps bridge the story as it travels between realism and fairy tale. Ages 4-up. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

What starts out as a disturbing story of lemon theft ends with a practical teaching. The story takes place in a Spanish speaking location and the wisdom comes from an ancient one. The practical aspect of the story is that the theft is put right and the soulfulness comes from forgiveness and empathy for the thief. It is the combination of the two elements that makes the story so good for young listeners. I think sometimes children bristle at well intentioned "turn the other cheek" stories that let offenders off scott free. The artistry of both author and illustrator take the promising tale to the status of well loved story. I purchased the book for our church's Storyteller Time which pairs a picture book with a lectionary passage.

I was disappointed in the book. The story wasn't what I expected. It was new age.

Edith Hope Fine is an excellent author of children's books and they all please the children. She has received many honors and accolades for her books, as well she should. This is almost a life-long

passion of hers.

Such a beautiful, beautiful book. My son's pre-K class did a project with this book at school and he was always talking about it. I so we decided to buy. The story made me cry! I love it.

Neat story, just not quite what I expected. A tad too wordy for first graders, I think, but it has a very sweet message.

This book takes place in the Mexican countryside and the English narration is interspersed with Spanish vocabulary words. Fine has provided an index at the beginning of the book to help non-Spanish speaking readers puzzle through the Spanish interjections. Not only will students learn lessons on patience, forgiveness, and compassion, but they'll also get exposure to new vocabulary, while practicing using an index as a tool for comprehension. The story starts by introducing the female protagonist, Rosalinda, who has started to grow her very own lemon tree in the backyard. One night she hears something rustling outside. When she goes with her pet hen, Blanca, to investigate, she sees a man with hunched shoulders picking all the lemons off her tree and stuffing them into a sack before scurrying away into the night. Rosalinda is furious: "Her lemons. From her tree." As Rosalinda is learning to take care of her plants and her pets, reinforcing feelings of pride, care and responsibility, her sense of possession also starts to get the best of her. In portraying this delicate balance, Fine shows how important it is for children to have things that they can take care of on their own, that they can be proud of and responsible for, while also showing how this is in itself a learning experience and an opportunity for growth: Rosalinda asks herself, "Who is the Night Man? Why does he take my lemons?" The next morning Rosalinda finds that not a single lemon is left on her tree. The branches are bare and the leaves have a yellow, sickly tinge to them: "Rosalinda crooned a sad song as Blanca bawled along. She loved her lemon tree almost as much as she loved Bianca." As the week goes by Rosalinda notices that the leaves on her precious lemon tree are turning more yellow, and starting to fall off, and she begins to worry that the tree is dying. When she goes to her parents for comfort they suggest that maybe a friend or a neighbor could help, or her dear abuela. Rosalinda's parents are kind and compassionate and try their best to soothe her worries, while also encouraging her to find a creative solution on her own. Throughout the story, Rosalinda's agency and independence are consistently reinforced: "Rosalinda set out." Ultimately, the story culminates in Rosalinda resolving her own predicament in a way

that is both gratifying for herself and compassionate towards others. As Rosalinda talks to various people in her neighborhood they each give her tips on how to care for a tree, watering it and even talking to it to make it feel better. But Rosalinda has already done all of these things and nothing has worked. Rosalinda takes good care of her plants and has already tried everything that she can think of. Finally, though, she goes to speak to her wise abuelita. Her abuela tells her that she should light a candle for her tree, something Rosalinda has not tried yet, and that maybe the candle will summon La Anciana, a wise old spirit known for making things grow. Abuela eased the worries from Rosalinda's forehead with her warm palm, and proceeds to lovingly tell her the legend of La Anciana. Little does Rosalinda know, as she awaits La Anciana and her powers to make her tree grow, she also awaits her wise words and her powers to make her, Rosalinda, grow and mature. As Rosalinda makes her way back home she stops by the local market. As she walks by all of the stands she notices the Night Man. He's sitting in front of a stand selling lemons, her lemons! Just as Rosalinda begins shivering with rage and fear, La Anciana appears, her wrinkles deep, her eyes gentle. After listening to Rosalinda's predicament, La Anciana agrees, to take your lemons was wrong, but then adds, Perhaps he had a need. Indeed, when Rosalinda goes back to the market the next day she notices that the Night Man's hands are rough and hardened by tough work, and his family beside him looks hungry and disheveled. Before leaving, La Anciana tells Rosalinda how to cure her tree, and, after following her instructions, Rosalinda wakes up the next day to find her tree overflowing with big, juicy lemons. She loads them up in a crate and takes them to the market, generously handing them out to everyone she sees, her neighbors, her friends, and even complete strangers. Finally, she stops by the Night Man's stand. Rosalinda hands him her last lemon. She tells the night man to *siembra las semillas*, or *plant the seeds*, so that he can grow a lemon tree of his own. The Night Man thanks her and when Rosalinda leaves, her feelings of anger and worry from a week prior are now replaced by feelings of love and joy: Rosalinda felt content, too. Except for one fat hen, Rosalinda's cart was empty, but her heart was as full as a lemon moon. This beautiful story shows readers the power of forgiveness and generosity, and how sometimes, by taking care of others, we ultimately take care of ourselves. With Moreno's stunning illustrations, this book exudes a calming tone that encourages readers and young children to reflect upon their feelings and the feelings of others. Moreno's illustrations have also appeared on our blog before with my book review of *Uncle Monarch and the Day of the Dead*, which is also a lovely, calming story about the flourishing wisdom of young children. In *Under the Lemon Moon*, the

protagonist embarks on a journey of personal growth and maturity that ultimately teaches her to care not only for her own plants and pets, but also for her neighbors and for the people around her. In the end, the best way to feel as round and full as a lemon moon or a shimmering lemon tree is to spread kindness and generosity to the people around us.

After hearing "Under the Lemon Moon" read aloud to a group of 15 kindergarten students, I knew my original assessment was correct - kids will love this story! The illustrations so enhance the author's tale that it is hard to imagine one without the other. The glossary is vital, and helped the children recognize the Spanish words in context. The librarian/reader fielded such comments as: "That girl is really nice", and "the old man shouldn't have stolen the lemons, but he wasn't bad". Then they discussed how many of the class liked to eat lemons without sugar. Several asked if they could check the book out - always the clincher!

This engaging book is a wonderful tool to help young children gain brief insight into Mexican culture. With basic Spanish included in a glossary, reading *Under the Lemon Moon* to your children may be the perfect way to stimulate interest in and discussion of foreign language. Perhaps more significant than exposure to other cultures, this entertaining tale teaches initiative, principles, and respect. The harmonious blend of captivating artwork and thoughtful plot make this story a must for all children over the age of three.

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