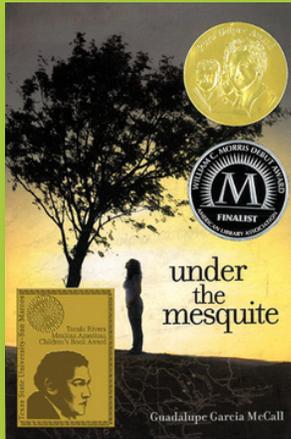


TEACHER'S GUIDE



LEE & LOW BOOKS

Under the Mesquite

written by *Guadalupe García McCall*

About the Book

Genre: Realistic Fiction, Poetry

***Reading Level:** Grades 6–7

Interest Level: Grades 6–12

Guided Reading Level: X

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points: 5.7/3.0

Lexile™ Measure: 990L

*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

Themes: Coming of Age, Identity, Family Life, Dealing with Illness (Cancer), Power of Words, Immigration, Dreams and Aspirations, Cultural Identity, Self Esteem and Confidence, Dramatic Arts, Self-Expression, Siblings, Sharing and Giving, Responsibility, Poetry, Overcoming Obstacles, Mothers, Home, Education, Coping with Death, Conflict Resolution, Poverty, Empathy

SYNOPSIS

As the oldest of eight siblings, Lupita is used to taking the lead—and staying busy behind the scenes to help keep everyone together. But when Lupita discovers Mami has been diagnosed with cancer, Lupita is terrified by the possibility of losing her mother, the anchor of their close-knit Mexican American family. Suddenly, Lupita must face a whole new set of challenges, with new roles to play, and no one is handing her the script.

In the midst of juggling high school classes, finding her voice as an actress, and dealing with friends who don't always understand, Lupita desperately wants to support her mother in whatever way she can. While Papi is preoccupied with caring for Mami at an out-of-town clinic, Lupita takes charge of her seven younger siblings. Struggling in her new roles and overwhelmed by change, Lupita escapes the chaos of home by writing in the shade of a mesquite tree, seeking refuge in the healing power of words.

Told with honest emotion in evocative free verse, Lupita's journey is both heart-wrenching and hopeful. *Under the Mesquite* is an empowering story about the testing of family bonds, the strength of a young woman navigating pain and hardship with surprising resilience, and the kind of love that cannot be uprooted.

Awards and honors include:

- **Pura Belpré Author Award**, ALSC/Reforma
- **William C. Morris YA Debut Award Finalist**, YALSA
- **Top Ten Best Fiction for Young Adults**, YALSA
- **Best Books of 2011**, Kirkus Reviews
- **ALA Notable Children's Book**, American Library Association
- **Best of the Best Books**, Chicago Library
- **"Choices"**, Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC)



BACKGROUND

Under the Mesquite is the story of a Mexican-American teenage girl who faces incredible challenges in her life when her mother is diagnosed with cancer. It is this experience and the family alongside her that shape her into the woman she is meant to become.

According to the author, Guadalupe García McCall, one of the biggest challenges for children when adjusting to a new culture is finding their own voice, their own sense of self, and hanging onto it within that new culture. It is easy to get lost in that new world, so children have to find the courage to say, “This is who I am, this is where I come from.” In the novel, Lupita struggles with this concept because her friends have a valid point: culture is important. But, for Lupita, so is growth. Finding balance is hard, but very essential.

Teachers will find that the act of being resilient through loss, coupled with children’s desire to be their true selves, are traits that nearly every student experiences. Teachers are encouraged to approach the instruction of the novel with these key thoughts in mind.

In discussing the moral of the novel, García McCall states that she would love for readers to find their own strength, their own voice, and hold onto it. To keep dreaming, even when times are tough. To honor their family, their culture, themselves in a way that fulfills them and brings them to a place of peace and happiness.

Additional Backmatter:

At its core, *Under the Mesquite* is a story of love, hope, loss, and self-actualization. Illness and death are topics that may affect students deeply. Teachers are encouraged to plan ahead for how they will address these topics in class. Seek out resources, both in-district and off-site, that may address coping with the death of a parent. Your school’s social worker or interventionist may have specific protocols regarding this issue. Be sure to seek their advice prior to introducing the novel.

Additionally, The New York Life Foundation offers resources for helping students cope with the death of a family member or friend.

To learn more, visit: <http://www.esc3.net/cms/lib/TX00001506/Centricity/Domain/14/SupportingYourStudents2013%20AFT.pdf>

Garcia-McCall’s style of writing, specifically as it pertains to cultural identity, is honest and raw. Some memorable lines include:

- “If you’re serious about acting—and I think you are—then you need to lose your accent.” Mr. Cortés
- “You talk like you wanna be white.” Sarita
- “Stop trying to be something you’re not!” Mireya

The hidden meanings of such dialogue must be addressed and handled with **deep sensitivity** and **open-mindedness**.

Teachers must be aware and prepared that by teaching this novel (and the corresponding topics addressed in it) they may be addressing a legacy of racial animosity, specifically within largely minority and underrepresented socioeconomic groups. Set the example of what **culturally responsive teaching** looks like:

- **Collaborate** with students to establish guidelines early on. This will serve as a reminder for discussion etiquette as thought-provoking topics are developed.
- **Anticipate** how your students will respond to controversial topics presented in the novel. (cultural identity, immigration) While teachers should **encourage** students to share their views without fear of judgment, teachers should consider how to respond to emotion, and use this to guide instruction and for future instructional planning.
- Don’t be afraid to **share** your own learning journey as it pertains to cultural identity. This will create a positive classroom climate and an overall feeling of sameness.
- Aim to **include** and discuss outside materials that align with the text and essentially address underrepresented groups’ experiences in ways that do not trivialize or marginalize their experiences.



VOCABULARY

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition.

Content Specific

chismosa (one who gossips), *comadres* (close friend, godmother), *secretos* (secrets), *amiguitas* (girlfriends), *limonada* (lemonade), *nopalera* (patch of prickly pears), *antojada* (anxious), *serpiente* (serpent), *cochinilla* (tiny insect), *los girasoles* (sunflower), *matachines* (bullies), *aduana* (customs), *chimenea* (chimney), *píñole* (flour-like grain originally used by the Aztecs), *hermanitas* (sisters), *muñeca* (doll), *cariño* (care, affection), *quinceañera* (girl's 15th birthday party), *coqueta* (cute, flirty), *picoso* (spicy), *telenovelas* (television soap operas), *tía* (aunt), *melancolía* (sadness), *Aztec güero* (fair-haired, blonde), *roughhousing*, *Alcatraz*, *calcetines* (socks, underwear), *salud* (health), *Hecuba*, *Andromache*, *Astyanax*, *tailgate*, *vaquero* (cowboy), *La Muerte* (death), *hermosa* (beautiful), *sirena* (mermaid)

Academic

resurrected, colossal, catechism, annex, emphatically, convent, cacti, consonants, colonial, ancestors, penance, chemotherapy, nauseated, incense, ravaging, inconsequential, inadequate, spontaneous, composure, dignity, patron, boisterous, strategically, reverence, cultivating, withering, melancholy, exhilaration, billowing, smoldering, psychiatric, illuminate, mesmerized, undaunted, pruning, profusely, flourishing, frayed, impromptu, precarious, drone, apparition, console, distorted, adamant, gumption, rivulets, stampede, taut, sacrificial, jubilant, avalanche, faceted, bog, ruinous, unfurl, confirmation

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

- **Class Art and Discussion:** Who are you? What is your identity? Create a self-portrait, complete with words or phrases that define the way you see yourself in the world, specifically in the United States of America. The teacher will lead the class in a discussion regarding how identity will play a role for the novel's main character, Lupita. Once whole group or small group reading ensues, students are encouraged to use a **character trait graphic organizer** to record examples from the text.
- **Carousel Brainstorming:** The teacher will create four large sticky-note posters with the following on each:
 1. Title and Cover Analysis: What words or ideas come to mind when reading the title of the novel? In your opinion, what does the mesquite symbolize? Select an alternative plant that could have taken the mesquite's place. Draw the plant and state your reason for choosing it.
 2. Take a "book walk" by perusing through the text. What lines of poetry stand out to you the most? List titles, page numbers, and corresponding thoughts.
 3. Read the novel's book jacket. Make predictions of the problems Lupita will face and how you think she will resolve them.
 4. Browse through the text. Select and write one word from the text that is unfamiliar to you. Write the sentence that the word is featured in. Use context clues to determine the meaning. (Student answers may not be repeated.)

The teacher will stick these posters in various locations in the class to provide groups with privacy and ample physical space. Each carousel will have a set of markers for students to record their answers. Explain the activity and break the class into four groups. Designate the proper amount of time groups will need to ensure that everyone gets a chance to write on the poster. (approximately 10 minutes) When time is up, groups will move to the next carousel and complete the written task. At the end of the activity, the teacher will gather the four large posters, display them on the visual board, and lead a class discussion on the points presented on the posters.



- **Bilingual Easter Egg Hunt:** This activity can be done prior to reading the novel and also during whole class or guided reading groups. Under the Mesquite contains many Spanish words, as well as English words with Spanish cognates. Present the students with a vocabulary list of content-specific words. Which ones do they know? Which ones do they not know? Invite them to look up the meanings of the words using a translation website such as www.spanishdict.com. Students may keep records of the translations. Once they've been introduced to the vocabulary, introduce the Easter Egg Hunt. The teacher may stuff the eggs with both Spanish and English vocabulary. During the reading, student(s) who identify the word or translation will pause the lesson and go on an Easter Egg Hunt. The first student to locate the proper egg wins a prize.

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Talk about the title of the book. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?

Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, definition of mesquite, author's dedication/letter, table of contents, acknowledgements, and glossary and pronunciation guide.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- how terminal illness impacts families
- how young people show resilience through difficult times
- the blurred lines that exist between loyalty to family and following your dreams—even the unlikely ones
- the intricacies of living between two cultures and how that impacts one's self-image

Have students also read to determine story structure and genre. Encourage students to consider why the author, Guadalupe García McCall, would want to share this story with young people.

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.**

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. Who is the narrator of the novel? What can you infer about her thus far? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.
2. What have you learned about Mami? What can you infer about her thus far? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.
3. What “secret” does Lupita’s mom keep hidden in her purse?
4. What does this hidden secret represent?
5. Where was Lupita born? How long did she live there? Where did she move afterwards? How old was she when she moved?
6. How has Mami changed since the move?
7. How is the mesquite resilient?
8. Why has Lupita been worried about Mami?
9. What illness does Mami have? How do we find out?



★“With poignant imagery and well-placed Spanish, the author effectively captures the complex lives of teenagers in many Latino and/or immigrant families.”
(starred review)

–Kirkus Reviews

“The simplicity of the story line belies the deep richness of McCall’s writing... This book will appeal to many teens for different reasons...”

–School Library Journal

“The close-knit family relationships, especially Mami and Lupita’s, are vividly portrayed, as is the healing comfort Lupita finds in words.”

–Booklist

10. Describe the hierarchy of siblings in Lupita’s family. Who is responsible for what tasks to keep the family functioning?
11. How does Lupita come to learn the reason for Mami’s recent behavior change? How does Mami react?
12. How does Lupita’s friends react to the news of Mami’s illness?
13. What is Lupita’s afterschool ritual on Wednesdays? How does this ritual take on a new meaning, once Lupita learns of her mother’s illness?
14. What promise does Lupita make to God? How does Mami ruin this promise for Lupita?
15. Who ignites Lupita’s passion for writing? How so? In what way(s) did this prepare Lupita for her arrival to the United States?
16. How did the move to *Los Estados Unidos* impact Lupita’s language development?
17. How does Mami feel about having so many children?
18. What is Papi’s ritual after each child is born?
19. In the beginning of the novel, Mami doesn’t allow Lupita to hang out with her friends from school. How does this change once Mami has her surgery? How has Lupita changed?
20. What “gift” does Mr. Cortés offer Lupita? How is this gift supposed to help her?
21. How does Lupita spend her 15th birthday? What is the traditional way to celebrate a quinceañera?
22. How do the representations of “señorita” differ amongst Lupita’s friends, mother, aunts, and Lupita herself?
23. How has Lupita’s involvement in drama impacted her friendship with Mireya and Sarita?
24. What is Lupita’s definition of what it means to be Mexican?
25. How has the return of Mami’s cancer impacted Papi emotionally? How does he impart these emotions on Lupita? What does she compare his anger to?
26. Why compels Papi to toss out the record books?
27. Describe how Lupita’s responsibilities have changed since her junior year in high school. How do her siblings react to Lupita’s newfound authority?
28. How do Lupita and her siblings manage to survive the summer Mami and Papi are away in Galveston? Provide three examples from the novel.
29. Why does Lupita envy the mesquite?
30. Why does Papi take the family to San Vicente? What does Lupita liken the experience to? What does she miss about home?
31. Why does the ghost sighting upset Mami? What does this sighting foreshadow?
32. What role does drama play in Lupita’s ability to cope with her mother’s illness?



33. Why does Lupita quit her part in the play? What advice does Mr. Cortés give Lupita?
34. What does Lupita compare waiting for her mother to die to?
35. What becomes of Mami's garden after she passes?
36. What milestones have occurred for Lupita since her mother's death?
37. After Lupita's graduation, Papi suggests that she needs a change of scenery. Where does Lupita go? What does she learn? How do her experiences there guide her future decisions?
38. How has the family changed since Mami's death? What roles have shifted? How so?
39. What is Papi's reaction when Lupita expresses her desire to leave home? How does Lupita maneuver her way around his final decision? What does the future hold for Lupita?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What is a *mesquite*? How does Lupita describe it in the beginning of the book? How does this description change over the course of the novel?
 2. Analyze the structure in which the author, Guadalupe García McCall, writes the book. What literary devices are used? How do these devices impact the reading experience?
 3. Analyze the author's purpose for writing the novel in verse, compared to prose. In your opinion, which technique is more effective? Are you #teamverse or #teamprose?
 4. Summarize Lupita's experience at her first District meet. What effect does this have on her friendship with Mireya? What effect does this have on Lupita's sense of identity?
 5. What support does the mesquite provide Lupita and her family throughout the course of the novel?
6. By sophomore year, Lupita takes on a new interest in drama. How does what Lupita views on television impact her self-image and perspective on beauty? How does this perspective impact her outlook on a possible acting career?
 7. Retell the events of the pivotal poem "At Abuelita's House" and explain how they change Lupita's motivations for the rest of the novel.
 8. How might the story have been different if Lupita's family stayed in Mexico? What components of the plot would need to be changed in order for it to align with the setting?
 9. In the poem "At Abuelita's House," Abuelita states "Sometimes it's best to take things down and start all over again. It's the way of the world." What is the deeper meaning behind this statement? How does it apply to Lupita?
 10. Write an alternative ending to the story that is different from the one the author wrote.
 11. How does Papi transform over the course of the novel? Cite specific events and examples.
 12. If you could give the novel a new title, what would it be? Rationalize your reasons for the new title.
 13. Compare and contrast the novel's main character, Lupita, with a real person you know or with similar character in another book. What factors contributed to your choice?
 14. How do you feel about the novel's ending? Is there anything that you hoped would happen, but didn't?
 15. Articulate the benefit(s) of Lupita deciding to leave home once Mami passed away.
 16. The novel ends Lupita standing in the parking lot of a college campus. Based on story details and online research, determine what college Lupita decided to attend and what course of study she chose.



Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. **Suggest that students respond in reader's response journals, essays, or oral discussion.** You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. How would you react if you discovered that a loved one was diagnosed with an illness? Summarize your reaction and emotions by writing a free-verse poem.
2. What are your thoughts on how Mireya responds to Lupita's news? How would you have responded if you were Lupita's friend? How would you respond to Lupita, if you were Mireya?
3. In the poem "To Be or Not to Be Mexican," Sarita accuses Lupita of talking like she wants to be white. In your opinion, what are Sarita's reasons for making this statement? What are your thoughts on this accusation? What does this say about perceptions of identity and assimilation within the Mexican culture?
4. Why do you think Mami won't allow Lupita to leave to become a nun? What do you believe are Lupita's reasons for wanting to become a nun?
5. Lupita is the oldest of eight siblings. In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of being the oldest? Use examples from the novel to support your answer.
6. In the poem "The Notebook," we learn that Mireya and Sarita have violated Lupita's privacy by reading through her notebook. Do you agree with how the sisters handled this scene? What would you have done differently?

ELL/ESL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
 - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
 - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about immigrant experience and/or life as an American born to immigrant parents.
5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.



INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection

English Language Arts/Writing

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)
(Language Standards, Conventions of Standard English, Strand 1)
(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 9)

1. In a persuasive essay, argue whether Mr. Cortés was (or wasn't) justified in instructing Lupita on how to lose her accent. What would you have done differently?
2. Poetry often uses rich figurative language. Search through *Under the Mesquite* to identify one example of each: simile, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole. Record your answers in your journal.
3. Have students extend the conversation between Lupita, Sarita, and Mireya after the District meet. Partner students together to create a group chat where the friends try to make amends. Take a screenshot of the text conversation and share with the class. Texts must include previous examples from the story.
4. In an essay, describe how does Lupita balance her Mexican heritage with her adopted American culture.
5. Identify three major themes of the story. Use details from the novel to support each theme.
6. Identity is a recurring theme in the novel. In the voice of Lupita, write a poem entitled, "Where I'm From." Now, write a poem of the same title detailing information about your culture.

Geography/Social Studies

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)
(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

1. Create a presentation that highlights key facts about the mesquite tree. Be sure to include details about where the tree grows, weather adaptations, common uses, et al.
2. Make a timeline of the events in the novel.
3. Create a road map showing Lupita's family's trip from Eagle Pass, Texas to San Vicente, Coahuila, Mexico. Be sure to include physical details of landmarks they might have seen along the way. Write a poem, in Lupita's voice, describing this trip.
4. Lupita and her family appear to travel between the United States and Mexico with ease. Do you think this is still the case for many families? What current societal issues would impact such travel today? Present your findings to the class.
5. Conduct research and create a reading list featuring immigrant stories and books featuring bicultural teenagers.

Art/Media

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

1. What are some of the strongest images Garcia McCall has created with her poetry? How do these images set the mood for the piece? Channel your inner artist and create a piece of art that aligns with an image in the novel.
2. Use a movie or video platform to create a book trailer for the novel.
3. In the poem, "The Natural," Lupita states that acting is her life raft. What form of self-expression is your life raft? Student volunteers will be given 1 minute to share this with the class, in a judgement-free zone. It can be a song, dance, a game, or anything that you feel represents what keeps you afloat during trying times.



School–Home Connection

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 2 and 3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strand 7)

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7) & Present Knowledge, Strand 7)

1. Interview a family member or community member who comes from an immigrant family. Question their experience with cultural identity as they settled into the United States.
2. Interview a friend or family member who has lost a loved one in the past to illness. Question their strategies for how they coped both before and after the loss. What lessons were learned? What memories will always be cherished?
3. Have students make a list of special foods, stories, and objects that relate to their families. Ask them to choose the one they feel most strongly about and write a chapter in verse about it.

Additional titles by Guadalupe García McCall

Summer of the Mariposas written by Guadalupe García McCall

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/summer-of-the-mariposas>

Shame the Stars written by Guadalupe García McCall

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/shame-the-stars>



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Guadalupe García McCall is the author of *Under the Mesquite* from Lee & Low Books, a novel in verse. *Under the Mesquite* received the prestigious Pura Belpré Author Award, was a William C. Morris Finalist, received the Lee Bennett Hopkins/International Literacy Promising Poet Award, the Tomas Rivera Children's Book Award, and was included in *Kirkus Reviews'* Best Teen Books of 2011, among many other accolades. Her second novel, *Summer of the Mariposas* from Tu Books, an imprint of Lee & Low Books, won a Westchester Young Adult Fiction award, was a finalist for the Andre Norton Award for Young Adult Science Fiction and Fantasy, was included in the 2013 Amelia Bloomer Project List, the Texas Lone Star Reading List, and the 2012 School Library Journal's Best Books of the Year. Her poems for children have appeared in *The Poetry Friday Anthology*, *The Poetry Friday Anthology for Middle School*, and *The Poetry Friday Anthology for Science*. García McCall was born in Piedras Negras, Coahuila, Mexico. She immigrated with her family to the United States when she was six years old and grew up in Eagle Pass, Texas (the setting of both her novels and most of her poems). Trained in theater arts, she is currently a high school English teacher in San Antonio. You can visit her online at <http://guadalupegarciamccall.com/>.

ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

LEE & LOW BOOKS is the largest children's book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, "about everyone, for everyone," is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company's goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at leeandlow.com.

ORDERING INFORMATION

On the Web:

www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering (general order information)

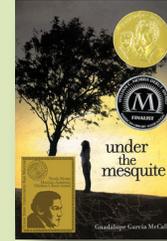
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/under-the-mesquite> (secure online ordering)

By Phone: 212-779-4400 ext. 25

By Fax: 212-683-1894

By Mail: Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

Book Information for *Under the Mesquite*



\$17.95, HARDCOVER

978-1-60060-429-4

240 pages, 5-1/2 x 8-1/4

*Reading Level: Grades 6–7

*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

Interest Level: Grades 6–12

Guided Reading Level: X

VXAccelerated Reader® Level/Points: 5.7/3.0

Lexile™ Measure: 990L

THEMES: Coming of Age, Identity, Family Life, Dealing with Illness (Cancer), Power of Words, Immigration, Dreams and Aspirations, Cultural Identity, Self Esteem and Confidence, Dramatic Arts, Self-Expression, Siblings, Sharing and Giving, Responsibility, Poetry, Overcoming Obstacles, Mothers, Home, Education, Coping with Death, Conflict Resolution, Poverty, Empathy

RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/under-the-mesquite>

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.