

A Spoon for Every Bite / Una cuchara para cada bocado

written by Joe Hayes
illustrated by Rebecca Leer

About the Book

Genre: Fiction (Folktales)

Format: Paperback, pages 32

ISBN: 9780938317937

Reading Level: Grade 3–4

Interest Level: K–5

Guided Reading Level: 0

Spanish Guided Reading Level: 0

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:
4.0/0.5

Lexile™ Measure: 630L

*Reading level based on the ATOS Readability Formula

Themes: Folktales, United States–New Mexico, Poverty, Latino/Hispanic/Mexican Interest

Resources on the web:

leeandlow.com/books/a-spoon-for-every-bite-una-cuchara-para-cada-bocado

SYNOPSIS

In this lovely New Mexico folktale, a rich man tries to prove his wealth to his poor neighbors by using a new spoon for every bite. In the process, he's served a pretty dish of comeuppance.

En este encantador folklore de Nuevo México, un hombre ricotrata de demostrar su riqueza a sus vecinos pobres usando una cuchara nueva para cada bocado. En el proceso, ha servido un bonito plato de merecido.

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

BACKGROUND

Compadres (Godparents)

In English, the word “compadres” usually refers to close friends, but in Spanish, it refers to a father and a godfather who are considered “co-fathers” to a child. It is a masculine noun; the feminine equivalent is “comadre.” In the Christian church—the Catholic church, especially—parents often choose godparents as individuals they hope will be involved in a child’s upbringing, especially the child’s religious education.

Excerpted from the author’s note:

“Humorous tales about rich and poor compadres abound in Hispanic story lore...Curiously, while the old tales so often portray an almost adversarial relationship between compadres, the actual relationship is quite the opposite. The role of godparent is highly esteemed, and parents typically choose a very dear friend to fill it. The tales of los dos compadres, however, are quite old and perhaps reflect the time when the wealthy hacendado would serve as godfather to all the children born to his peones as an expression of noblesse oblige. Whatever the true reason may be, these tales serve as a reminder that folktales cannot always be viewed as accurate expressions of contemporary mores and practices of the culture from which they derive.” – *Joe Hayes, author*

Tortillas

Tortillas have long been a key element of Mexican diets. Traditional corn tortillas are made from corn soaked in a lime mixture and ground to form a dough (“masa.”) Patting out round tortillas by hand is a traditional practice used by many families throughout history and today. Tortillas can be served in many formats and with different toppings, and can certainly be used as “spoons” to scoop beans, meat, or other fillings. Learn more about the process for making corn tortillas at <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/tortillas-de-maiz.htm>. According to the author’s note, the joke about a tortilla being “a spoon for every bite” is well known in the American Southwest.

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and 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:

- What are different eating utensils or strategies people might use to eat? What is your favorite way to get food into your mouth?
- Why might someone want to be rich? Think of other stories you've read. What is something unusual or extreme that a character did to try to get rich or to show off their wealth? What are some lessons stories often share about the dangers of focusing too much on wealth?

You may want to have students journal their responses to these questions or pose the final question as a KWL discussion and chart so that you can refer back to it throughout and after the reading of the book to further their thinking on the topic(s).

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)

- **Book Title Exploration:** Talk about the title of the book, *A Spoon for Every Bite/Una cuchara para cada bocado*. 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?
- **Book Walk:** Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, bilingual text, author and illustrator biographies, and Author's Note at the end. Display the book and analyze the cover. What do students notice in the illustration?
- **Read Author's Biography:** See the inside book cover or end of this guide. What do you think the process is like to write a book for young readers? Why do you think he wrote this book for young readers?
- Encourage students to stop and jot in their reading notebooks during the reading when they: learn new information, have an emotional reaction or an idea, have a question, or see new words.
- Have students write feeling(s) in their notebook during reading. After reading, ask students why they wrote that feeling down and have them write a journal entry about it. Have students complete one journal entry per each reading session.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

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

Have students read to find out:

- What does the title mean "*A Spoon for Every Bite?*"
- What do the characters learn as a result of their experiences in this story?

Encourage students to consider why the author, Joe Hayes would want to share this story with young people.

VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

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

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

The book contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below.

Encourage a variety of developmentally-appropriate strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: Look at a photo or picture that represents the word, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, explain the meaning of a word to a partner, act out the meaning of a word, explain how the meaning of one word is the similar and different to another word.

Content Specific

godfather (compadre), baptized, servant, master, livestock, land, Indian pueblo, tortilla

Academic

couple, fine, wealth, possessions, protested, accept, invite, delicious, scarcely, embarrassed, lavishly, demanded, ordered, discarded, informed, growled, squandered, welcomed, comfort

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 textual 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 are the characters in this book? How do they know each other? How are the husband and wife different from their neighbor?
2. When the husband and wife have a baby, what do they decide to do? What do they wonder about as they make their decision?
3. When the husband and wife want to have their neighbor over for dinner, what's the problem? What do they decide to do?
4. How does the neighbor act when he comes over for dinner? What does he do and say? How do the husband and wife respond? How does the dinner end?
5. What does the neighbor do after the dinner? What does he tell his servant?
6. What happens as the neighbor begins to run out of spoons?

7. What happens when the husband and wife take their neighbor to visit their friend at his pueblo?
8. What is the joke about a "spoon for every bite?" How does the neighbor react when he learns about the joke?
9. How does the story end for each character?

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. Why do you think the wife suggested asking their neighbor to be their child's godfather? Would you have made the same choice? Why or why not?
2. Think about the husband and wife's situation with not having enough spoons to have their neighbor over. What do their actions tell you about them as characters?
3. Think about the neighbor's reaction when he learns that the husband and wife only own three spoons. What does his reaction tell you about him as a character? How might the story have turned out differently if he'd reacted differently?
4. Why do you think the wife chose to tell the neighbor about their friend who "uses a different spoon for every single bite he eats?" Do you think they knew what would happen next? Why do you think that?
5. Think about how the story continues once the neighbor starts focusing on "a spoon for every bite." What words could you use to describe him as a character?
6. Why do you think the servant goes along with the neighbor's demands? What might he have been thinking as he did?
7. When the neighbor says, "You lied to me!" do you agree? Why or why not?
8. Look at the facial expressions of each character on the page when they are eating the Indian pueblo. What might they each be thinking? How do you know?
9. How are the situations of each character the same or different at the end of the story? What do you think each character learned?

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 independent or collaborative writing, artwork, or oral discussion. You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. What do you think the author's message to the reader is? What do you think he wanted to convey to young readers? Why do you think he chose this story to tell?
2. Have students make a text-to-self connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to your own life? What is your role in your own family?

3. Have students make a text-to-text connection. Did you think of any other books while you read *A Spoon for Every Bite/Una cuchara para cada bocado*? Why did you make those connections?
4. Have students make a text-to-world connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to what you have seen in the world or on the news? Why did *A Spoon for Every Bite/Una cuchara para cada bocado* make you think of that?
5. What is one big thought that you have after reading this book? Think about different character changes, the setting, and the relationships. What did you learn from reading *A Spoon for Every Bite/Una cuchara para cada bocado*?
6. What different type of conflicts are presented in *A Spoon for Every Bite/Una cuchara para cada bocado*? Discuss the husband, wife, and neighbor's conflicts within themselves, their family, and conflicts in the world. Compare and contrast the different conflicts within the text.
7. Make a list of "a-ha moments" that various characters had in this story. Use a three-column chart. List the character, the experience that changed their thinking or made them decide to take a certain action, and what happened as a result.
8. Which character in this book would you most like to eat dinner with? Share several reasons and include thinking about the characters' traits based on their actions in the story.
9. What parts of this folktale are outdated? What aspects of it are relevant to life today? Make a detailed two-column list of your ideas.
10. Do you think the husband and wife did anything wrong? Make a list of your ideas about why or why not.

Multilingual 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 Learners and multilingual learners. The book language used may differ from children's oral language. Comparing any differences will help children read and understand the story. Words can hold different meanings in other types of Spanish around the world.

1. Assign Multilingual Learners 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.
 - Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
 - Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
2. Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
3. 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 their favorite meal and how they eat it.

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 Multilingual 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.
6. The book is both in English and in Spanish, with Spanish on one side and English on the other. Have students read both texts and compare both. Have students highlight any unknown words in the text, and then record them separately. Have students look up their definitions and share their knowledge about these words, if applicable.
7. Have students identify true cognates throughout the book. Students can begin with one to two pages and gradually increase to a chapter(s) where students highlight true cognates and determine the meaning of the word if they do not already know it. This can also be a great opportunity to also discuss false cognates with students. If time allows, have students reflect on the cognates that they found. Did they know the word in English? Did they know the word in Spanish? If it was an unknown word in English, did the identification of the Spanish cognate help them define the word? Consult ¡Colorin Colorado! for more ideas on how to use cognates in the classroom with MLs: <https://www.colorincolorado.org/using-cognates-ells>.
8. Consider consulting <https://www.multilinguallearningtoolkit.org/> for more ideas on how to support Multilingual Learners.

ACTIVIDADES EN ESPAÑOL PARA APOYO EN PROGRAMAS BILINGÜES Y DE INMERSION DUAL

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

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

For the CCSS in Spanish, please check out <https://commoncore-espanol.scoed.net/CCSS-en-Espanol/SLA-Literacy>

1. Estas estrategias se pueden usar en la clase de español o en la clase de inmersión dual igual cómo el resto de la guía de actividades.
2. Asigne el libro *A Spoon for Every Bite/Una cuchara para cada* a sus estudiantes. Coloque dos estudiantes juntos para leer el libro en voz alta. Compare las palabras en inglés y en español. ¿Cómo se comparan las palabras? Los estudiantes pueden practicar las palabras que tengan dificultad en pronunciar. Estudiantes pueden tener un cuaderno con las palabras difíciles para hacer referencia en el futuro.
3. Durante el tiempo de lectura, haga preguntas de comprensión a los estudiantes en inglés y en español para medir el nivel de comprensión en los dos idiomas. Preguntas pueden incluir: ¿de qué se trata el cuento? ¿Conectaste con uno de los personajes en el cuento? ¿Por qué sí o no? ¿Qué parte te gusta más en el cuento?
4. Elija palabras de vocabulario. Los libros ilustrados bilingües son una excelente manera para que sus estudiantes aprendan nuevas palabras de vocabulario porque el idioma se presenta

en contexto. Mire a través del libro y asigne las palabras de vocabulario a las ilustraciones del libro. Si es posible, haga fotocopias de las páginas. Estudiantes pueden usar subrayadores en un color para inglés y un color para español para las palabras nuevas. También, puede recordar las palabras en un póster para referencia. Reflexione con sus estudiantes sobre cual palabras ya sabían y cuales palabras aprendieron.

5. En casa los estudiantes pueden pre-leer el libro con sus familias y puede sugerir que lean el libro juntos. Esto ayuda a practicar en leer y en el aprendizaje del vocabulario de los dos idiomas, inglés y español.
6. El uso de cognados puede ser útil en libros bilingües, en español y en inglés. En esta actividad estudiantes pueden buscar cognados en el libro. Los estudiantes pueden trabajar en parejas para identificar y formar una lista si las palabras son cognados verdaderos o falsos. Al final de la actividad es importante distinguir cómo clase la lista de los cognados verdaderos o falsos.

Estas actividades solo son sugerencias. Puede encontrar más recursos para apoyar las clases de inmersión dual y bilingües. Puede leer mas en (<https://blog.leeandlow.com/2013/11/04/using-dual-language-and-bilingual-books-in-third-and-fourth-grade/>).

Social and Emotional Learning

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4-6)

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

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6)

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

Social and emotional learning involves being aware of and regulating emotions for healthy development. In addition to understanding one's own feelings, strong socio-emotional development allows individuals to develop empathy for others and to establish and maintain relationships.

Use the following prompts to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of this book.

1. What Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) skills do the husband and wife exhibit over the course of the book? Some examples of SEL skills include problem-solving, grit and perseverance, self-regulation, and perspective taking. How do they demonstrate these skills?
2. Have students go on a Social and Emotional Learning scavenger hunt in the text, looking for evidence in the details from the book. Assign students to relevant Social and Emotional Learning themes, such as: empathy, problem-solving, perspective taking, perseverance, and recognizing and managing emotions. Alternatively, or as a follow-up, have students go on a scavenger hunt for places where a character could use a social and emotional learning lesson! Discuss scenes that could have turned out more positively if a character displayed more empathy, self-regulation, etc.
3. Encourage students to identify passages where characters manage and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways. In a chart with four columns, write: What was the cause of the conflict? What was the consequence of the conflict? How does the character(s) resolve the problem? What are additional ways the character(s) could have solved the problem? What advice would you give? Talk specifically about how the neighbor's life could have turned out differently had he been able to use various social and emotional skills. Also talk about what

might have happened if the husband and wife had chosen to let the neighbor in on the joke earlier.

4. Use sticky notes to label the emotions of various characters at different points in the book. Have students choose an emotion that interests them: happiness, sadness, fear, anxiety, frustration, hope, perseverance, regret, and so on. Illustrate or act out what that emotion looks like in *A Spoon for Every Bite/Una cuchara para cada bocado* and then also in an example from modern-day life.
5. Do you think the author wants the characters in this book to be role models for young people or an example of caution? Why or why not, for each character?

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.

Writing and English/Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3; Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6; Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9; Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3; Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6; Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9; Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3; Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Use sticky notes to add characters' thought bubbles to key scenes in the text.** Talk about using evidence from the text and characters' facial expressions to generate the content of the thought bubbles.
- **Have small groups act out key scenes from the text.** Use both the dialogue in the text and the illustrations to help them decide on characters' lines, expressions, gestures, and actions.
- **Read the story *The Day It Snowed Tortillas/ El día que nevó tortillas*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-day-it-snowed-tortillas-el-dia-que-nevo-tortillas>). Make connections between these two stories. They both involve "tricks" related to tortillas that teach a lesson.
- **Read other traditional folktales from Spanish-speaking cultures, such as *La Llorona*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/la-llorona>), ***¡El Cucuy!*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/el-cucuy>) or ***Juan Verdades: The Man Who Couldn't Tell a Lie / El hombre que no sabía mentir*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/juan-verdades>). Make connections between texts.
- **Talk about the power of oral storytelling.** Show students Joe Hayes's oral version of this story <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ebpu0PeCkyA>. Compare the book format to the oral version; how does each help readers/listeners appreciate the story in different ways?
- **In small groups, have students read the Q & A with the author found on his**

website (<https://www.joehayesstoryteller.com/kids-q-a>). Have each group prepare a short presentation to explain what the author's answer to one of the questions in their own words, and make connections between the answer and the book.

Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1-3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4-6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10) (Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10) (Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **Have students research more about tortillas and their strong presence in Mexican history and culture.** If possible, try out making tortillas using the directions at <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/tortillas-de-maiz.htm>. You might also read *Nacho's Nachos* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/nacho-s-nachos>) for a different perspective on how tortillas could be enjoyed!

Art

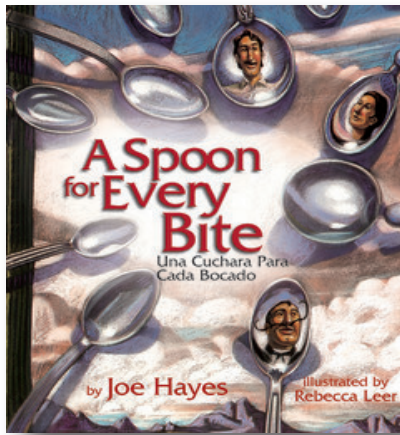
(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1-3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4-6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10) (Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10) (Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **Use the cover art to inspire kids to make self-portraits or portraits of literary characters on a "spoon" background.** Talk about how a spoon can serve as a "mirror" to reflect one's character traits. Add word art to the portraits about character traits.

Home-School Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9) (Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10) (Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **Develop interview questions as a class for students to ask an adult at home or in their community about a story with a moral or message shared with them as children.** Give examples from your own life to spark ideas. Share and compare responses at school.



Ordering Information

General Order Information:
leeandlow.com/contact/ordering

Secure Online Ordering:
leeandlow.com/books/a-spoon-for-every-bite-una-cuchara-para-cada-bocado

By Phone: 212-779-4400 ext. 25

By Fax: 212-683-1894

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

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joe Hayes is one of America's premier storytellers. He grew up in a small town in southern Arizona where he started learning Spanish from his classmates. As Joe got older, he began reading the work of folklorists and anthropologists and gathering the old stories from the Southwest region. His books have received the Arizona Young Readers Award, two Land of Enchantment Children's Book Awards, the Texas Bluebonnet award, and the National Storytelling Network Talking Leaves Award. He lives in New Mexico. Learn more about him at johayesstoryteller.com

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Rebecca Leer has been a freelance illustrator for many years. Her illustrations and paintings have been awarded by organizations such as the New York Society of Illustrators, LA Society of Illustrators, Oil Painters of America, The Salmagundi Club, Hudson Valley Artists Association, American Artists Professional League, Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Art Club and Allied Artists of American, including four Best in Show. You can see more of her work at rebeccaleer.com.

REVIEWS

"The landscapes and lore of the desert are captured in this traditional Hispanic fable. . . Hayes includes an author's note about his sources, while Leer successfully combines the colors of the southwest with the caricatured figures who piquantly inhabit the tale. An entertaining marriage of pictures and words." - *Kirkus Reviews*

"The exaggerated facial expressions flatter the hyperbolic story line while also helping to clarify for children the moral choices found in this deftly told tale." - *Publishers Weekly*

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.