

Grandmother's Song

Barbara Soros

Jackie Morris, Illustrator

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The premise of this book is based on the Mexican belief in the healing power of spirit ancestors. The book starts out slowly, but then gains in emotional strength as a young Mexican girl learns, through her Grandmother's soothing touch, how to overcome fear, gain dignity and trust in the world. She grows from a child who is frightened by an armadillo in the road, to a strong, capable woman. Even when Grandmother dies, the girl gains comfort from Grandmother's spirit and is able to pass that on to her own grandchildren.

This book utilizes well the thematic heartbreaker of the lasting bond between generations whereby the child in need eventually becomes the caregiver. Whether this is of concern to children is questionable. It would help stimulate the reader's interest if the book's opening was less long winded, although the repetition in the text as Grandmother regularly strokes the child is nice. The illustrations are bold in design. Earth tones with highlights of blue and purple are predominant. Stiff, blocky faces of obvious ethnic origin appear against a background of village huts and the flora and fauna of Mexico. These watercolors play a strong role in the reader's acceptance of this multicultural title.

MARTHA TOPOL (September / October 1998)

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