



A Birthday Basket for Tia (Aladdin Picture Books)

By Pat Mora

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"Exemplifies the best of recent multicultural publishing". -- The Horn Book

When her great-aunt, her tia, turns ninety, little Cecilia lovingly gathers together a basket full of memories. "Vibrant, detailed cut-paper illustrations portray family warmth and individuality with verve and panache". -- School Library Journal

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Little Cecilia and her cat Chica plan for a surprise party to celebrate her great-aunt's 90th birthday. While Mama cooks beans and cuts up mangoes and watermelon, Cecilia and Chica put together a birthday basket containing a favorite book, a mixing bowl, a flowerpot, and other objects that represent activities the little girl and her great-aunt like to share. After final preparations, including flowers and a piñata, the musicians arrive; finally Cecilia and her great-aunt dance together. Drawing on the author's experiences in the Mexican American community of El Paso, Texas, this fine story is illustrated by Cecily Lang in a series of simple but striking scenes. A touching story about a very special relationship. (Ages 3 to 8) --Richard Farr

From Publishers Weekly

The young narrator of this poignant picture book discovers that the best gifts are not always store-bought. Cecilia is stumped when it comes to getting a present for her great aunt's 90th birthday. She finally settles on filling a basket with reminders of all the good times Tia and she have shared. A mixing bowl recalls days spent baking cookies; a teacup holds memories of the special brew Tia prepares when Cecilia is sick. The thoughtful present is a hit when Tia unveils it at her surprise party. Mora's text flows smoothly from one event to the next, and clearly presents the careful planning behind Cecilia's gift-gathering mission. Repetition of the items inside the basket and the occasional use of Spanish words are helpful reinforcements for young readers. Two cavils: Mora's text tends to go on a bit too long, and the many asides Cecilia addresses to her cat Chica become somewhat intrusive as the story progresses. Lang's cut-paper illustrations provide a vivid picture of a diverse and dynamic Mexican American family. Warm brown skin tones contrast nicely with bold reds, blues and oranges to lend additional Latin flavor. Ages 2-6.

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From School Library Journal

Kindergarten-Grade 2-- Cecilia is excited by the approach of her great-aunt Tia's 90th birthday. The elderly woman has always been a special friend to both the bright-eyed heroine and her cat, Chica. For a gift, Cecilia hits on the idea of a basket filled with all the things that symbolize togetherness with Tia: a bowl for baking cookies, a cup for having tea, flowers for their times outside. Her delight in filling the basket is matched by Tia's as she enjoys the tributes. Vibrant, detailed cut-paper illustrations portray family warmth and individuality with verve and panache. This book, like Polacco's *Thunder Cake* (Scholastic, 1989), shows the close relationship between a child and an older relative (in this case, a family of Mexican-Americans).

Young readers will be engaged by the cumulative nature of the story while savoring this family's similarities to and differences from their own. --Ann Welton, Terminal Park Elementary School, Auburn, WA

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Users Review

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Kimberly Morris:

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