



## ***With Love, Echo Park***

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Grades 9-12

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Reading Guide by Giovanna Araujo, L.A. Conservancy Volunteer

### **Discussion Questions**

1. In the novel, the community gathers to celebrate Salvador Monte's life at Echo Park Lake. Mr. Montes was a leader in the Cuban Echo Park community, championing family businesses and local artists. Can you think of any cultural leaders in your community? What impact have they had? Where would your community gather in your neighborhood to honor someone important to them, and why?
2. Clary is trying to obtain a historical landmark designation for the Echo Park Commercial District on Sunset Boulevard in Echo Park. Research the steps she'll have to take to obtain this designation in the City of L.A. What historic landmark or area would you want to preserve in your neighborhood? Research its history. Has it been designated at the city, state, or federal level already? If not, is there an effort underway to preserve it?
3. Jada mentions spending hours reading about the history of Echo Park online but finding no mention of the Cuban immigrants that settled in the area. When you search online for the history of your neighborhood, what do you find? Are there many sources available, and do they give a complete picture? If not, why do you think that is? What are some things individuals and communities can do to create and share more accurate histories of the places they live in? Why is this important in the first place?
4. The Delgados and Avalos face anxieties from the ongoing wave of gentrification creeping into their neighborhood. What is gentrification? How has it affected areas around L.A. County? Describe any examples of gentrification that you or someone you know may have experienced or witnessed.



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5. The Delgado's floral shop is named after Jose Marti's poem "Cultivo Una Rosa Blanca." What are the main themes of the poem? Where do these themes emerge within the story itself?
6. How does Clary exemplify forgiveness, openness and friendship throughout the novel? How can we apply these traits in our life and communities?

## Activities

1. Draft a sample proposal for preserving a cultural landmark in your area. Include the site's name, any important dates in the site's history (year built, year restored, etc.)
2. Most of the novel takes place along the commercial district of Sunset Boulevard in Echo Park. Create a map of your local 'main street' and highlight some of your favorite small businesses.
3. There are several murals mentioned throughout the book. Draw a mural you would want painted in your neighborhood. Add a description about your mural and the inspirations behind it.
4. Have a Cuban picnic in Echo Park Lake! Pack some snacks (perhaps some Cuban pastries from Porto's Bakery or other Cuban legacy businesses) and spend some time observing the city views and vibrant life in and around the park. Be sure to stop by the Jose Marti statue at the southwest corner of the park, one of the last remnants of the Cuban exile community that moved to the area in the 1960s.

### **Include a sentence or two about each of the following:**

- a. The physical characteristics of the site
- b. The site's history
- c. The site's cultural or historic significance and how designating it will impact the city and community

