



Discussion Questions for
Under the Mesquite
by Guadalupe Garcia McCall

1. The story is told from Lupita's perspective. How would the story have been different if it were told from Lupita's mother's perspective? Papi's perspective? Mr. Cortés' perspective? How does the perspective of the narration affect how you experience the story?
2. Talk about the author's craft. How does Guadalupe Garcia McCall tell the story? Is the plot linear? Does she utilize flashbacks? Is there one central plot or are several plots occurring at the same time?
3. Why do you think Guadalupe Garcia McCall decided to write this novel in verse? Why not use prose? Do you agree with her decision? Why or why not?
4. Describe the character of Mami. What is she like? What is her relationship with Lupita like? Use examples from the text to support your answer.
5. Why do Lupita's friends give her a hard time about her accent (p. 78, "To Be or Not To Be Mexican")?
6. How does Lupita balance her Mexican heritage with her adoption of American culture?
7. Would you ever want to be the oldest of eight siblings? What are the advantages and disadvantages? Use examples from the book to support your answer.
8. How does Lupita change over the course of the book? Name three events or experiences that trigger this change. Are there any ways in which Lupita does not change? What are they?
9. What are some of the major themes of the story? Use details from the text to support your answer.

10. Do you find the characters and events in the story to be believable and relatable? Use detailed examples from the text to support your answer.
11. How might the story have been different if Lupita's family had stayed in Mexico? How might the story have been different if it had been set in your community? What might Guadalupe Garcia McCall have had to change about the story? What do you think would stay the same?
12. What were some of the struggles that Lupita had to face? What did you learn from Lupita's struggles? Was there a particular struggle that Lupita goes through that you identified with?
13. Lupita spends time writing under the mesquite to help her cope with hard days. What do you do to help you manage bad days?
14. What does the mesquite symbolize? Why do you think Guadalupe Garcia McCall chose to use this tree as a symbol in the story?
15. How did you feel about the way *Under the Mesquite* ended? Were you satisfied with the ending? Why or why not?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Guadalupe Garcia McCall was born in Mexico and moved to Texas as a young girl, keeping close ties with family on both sides of the border. Trained in Theater Arts and English, she now teaches English/Language Arts at a junior high school. Her poems for adults have appeared in more than twenty literary journals. *Under the Mesquite*, her first book, is a contemporary novel inspired by the difficult experiences her own family went through during her teen years. McCall lives with her husband and their three sons in the San Antonio, Texas area.

Book Information

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Reading Level: Grades 4 and up

(Reading level based on the Dale Chall Readability Formula)

Interest Level: Grades 6 and up

Themes: Coming-of-Age, Identity, Family, Dealing with Illness, Power of Words, Immigration, Hispanic/Mexican American Interest

RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Learn more about *Under the Mesquite* at

http://www.leeandlow.com/books/391/hc/under_the_mesquite

BookTalk with Guadalupe Garcia McCall

http://www.leeandlow.com/p/under_the_mesquite.mhtml

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