

Written by *RUTH BEHAR*

Pura Belpré Award Winner

Illustrated by *DEVON HOLZWARTH*

Tía Fortuna's New Home

A JEWISH CUBAN JOURNEY



Educators' Guide

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About the Book

A poignant multicultural ode to family and what it means to create a home as one girl helps her tía move out of her beloved Miami apartment.

When Estrella's Tía Fortuna has to say goodbye to her longtime Miami apartment building, the Seaway, to move to an assisted-living community, Estrella spends the day with her. Tía explains the significance of her most important possessions from both her Cuban and Jewish culture as they learn to say goodbye together and explore a new beginning for Tía.

A lyrical book about tradition, culture, and togetherness, *Tía Fortuna's New Home* explores Tía and Estrella's Sephardic Jewish and Cuban heritage. Through Tía's journey, Estrella learns that as long as you have your family, home is truly where the heart is.

About the Author

Ruth Behar is an acclaimed author of adult fiction and nonfiction, and *Lucky Broken Girl*—winner of the Pura Belpré Award—was her first book for young readers. Her second novel, *Letters from Cuba*, the inspiring story of a Jewish girl who escapes Poland to make a new life in Cuba, is a Sydney Taylor Notable Book and received an International Latino Book Award. She was born in Havana, Cuba, and grew up in New York, and has also lived and worked in Spain and Mexico. Her honors include a MacArthur "Genius" Award, a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, a Fulbright Senior Fellowship, a Distinguished Alumna Award from Wesleyan University, and being named a "Great Immigrant" by the Carnegie Corporation. She is a member of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences and is a Distinguished University Professor of Anthropology at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

About the Illustrator



Devon Holzwarth is an illustrator and writer of picture books full of warmth and charm. She grew up in Panama with the jungle as her garden and parrots and iguanas as pets. Childhood memories and her collection of vintage children's books strongly inspire her work. Devon earned her bachelor of fine arts from the Rhode Island School of Design, focusing on screen printing and painting, and afterward lived in California painting murals around the Bay Area and working for a children's publication. After having two children and moving to Germany, Devon discovered she was an illustrator and had stories to tell. She currently lives in Aachen with her husband, kids, and beloved old hound dog. Learn more at devonholzwarth.com.

Discussion Questions

1. Ask students if they have ever had to move from one place to another. How did they feel? What memories do they have of their old home? What reminds them of it? How is their current home different?
2. Ask: How do you think you'd feel if you were forced to leave home, like when Tía Fortuna left Cuba?
3. Define memory. Are memories always good? What about sad memories, like when Tía Fortuna had to leave the Seaway? Do you think it's important to remember both the good times and the sad times? Why or why not?
4. Tía Fortuna gives Estrella the key to her beloved apartment at the Seaway. Though she cannot go back there, it holds many memories and represents her history and heritage. Why do you think Tía Fortuna gave the key to Estrella?

Extension Activities

1. Tía Fortuna had colorful bracelets adorned with “lucky eyes” that you may have noticed throughout the book. Many Sephardic Jews wear good luck charms, such as the lucky eye to ward off curses or the “evil eye.” Estrella and Tía Fortuna associate the lucky eye with their Sephardic traditions. What kind of symbol represents your traditions or culture? [Option to draw or write.]
2. Borekas are a type of empanada or pastry. Tía fills her borekas with potatoes and cheese and esperanza, or hope. Tía Fortuna and Estrella's ancestors took these borekas wherever they went, from Spain to Turkey to Cuba and now Miami. Is there something that has been passed in your family? Perhaps a food tradition, a song or dance, a story, a picture, a religious symbol? Is there anything you'd like to pass on to future generations? [Option to draw or write.]

Praise for *Tía Fortuna's New Home*

★ “A nostalgic glimpse at a little-known but rich culture within the broader Jewish American community.” —*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

“Eloquent multilingual storytelling couples with peaceful artwork as Estrella learns that change can be OK and that keeping your traditions and culture alive is even more important.” —*Booklist*

“Behar's warmhearted storytelling turns the past, present, and future into a confluence of connections as Estrella realizes her role in a legacy of faith, hope, and resilience. The text's lyrical mood is well supported by Holzwarth's (Papa, Daddy, and Riley) mixed media illustrations.” —*Publishers Weekly*



Educators' Guide by Anjelica N. Ruiz, MLS,
Director of Libraries and Archives, Temple Emanu-El



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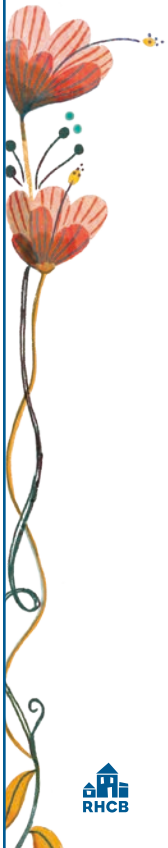
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Suitcase of Memories

Tía Fortuna only had one suitcase filled with belongings because she didn't need much when she had so many memories. What would you pack if you only had one suitcase? Draw or write about the objects you've chosen and why you would want to take it with you.



Name _____



Your Own Key

When Tía Fortuna had to leave her home in Cuba, she took the key to her house, even though she wouldn't be returning. And when she had to leave her home in Miami, she took the key to her apartment at the Seaway, again knowing she wouldn't be returning. The key had a deep meaning for Tía Fortuna, since according to legend her ancestors took their keys when they had to leave their homes. What does the key mean to you? Design a special key that can open a door to a place that is special to you.

