

Last Stop on Market Street

By Matt de la Peña

Before reading

1. When have you ridden on a bus? **Examine the cover and title page illustrations.** How is this bus similar or different than your experience?
2. Page through looking at the illustrations. Describe the setting. **Does it look like your neighborhood?**
3. In an interview, Matt de la Peña specifically said he wants suburban students to read this book. While we read the book, think about why he said that and we'll talk about it after we finish reading.

During reading

1. **Make predictions** about where CJ and his grandmother are going.
2. How does the weather in the story **connect to CJ's emotions?**

After reading

1. Why do you think Matt de la Peña wants **kids in the suburbs** to read this book?
2. Matt de la Peña never mentions race in the book. **What role does race play in the story?** How does it push back against stereotypes about people of color?
3. What is the theme in the book? What do you think CJ's grandmother meant when she said, **"Sometimes when you're surrounded by dirt, CJ, you're a better witness for what is beautiful"**?

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Continuing the Conversation

- **Go on a scavenger hunt** looking for beauty in unexpected places. Photograph the evidence. For example: a refrigerator full of food, a table set for dinner, cleaning supplies, well-stocked bookshelf, etc. How are these things beautiful?
- **Seek out buses** in your community. Ride a city bus, if possible. Who did you meet?
- Examine the artwork and **paint your neighborhood buildings and street** in a similar style. What are similarities and differences to CJ's neighborhood?
- **Learn about the medals on the book cover.** Why do you think this book was nominated for the Coretta Scott King Award? Check your library for other books that won this award.
- **Volunteer** at a soup kitchen or help at a food pantry. Learn more about food insecurity in your community.

Just for the Grown Ups

While it is important to read stories about the history of race in our nation, reading books without explicitly naming race is important, too. Books featuring characters of color in strong family relationships serving the community in positive settings work to combat negative stereotypes.