

# THE RED HAMMOCK

TEXT BY MÓNICA LAVÍN

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARÍA PERUJO





MÓNICA LAVÍN is the author of more than twenty short stories, novels and essays. She has won the Premio Nacional de Literatura Gilberto Owen for her short story book *Ruby Tuesday no ha muerto*; the Premio Narrativa Colima for her novel *Café cortado*; the Premio Iberoamericano de Novela Elena Poniatowska for *Yo, la peor*, about Sor Juana and her time; and the Governor General Award from Canada. Her short stories have been translated into several languages and have been included in numerous anthologies. Her most recent books are *Cuando te hablen de amor* (Planeta, 2017), nominated for the Premio Bienal de Novela Mario Vargas Llosa; the personal anthology of short stories *A qué volver* (Tusquets, 2018), and *Todo sobre nosotras* (Planeta, 2019). *La más faulera* and *La edad de los peces*, both titles aimed at young audiences. *Una voz para Jacinta* (Norma), *La inesperada amiga de Carlos* (Planetalector) and *Rey Libélula* (Colofón), the latter two illustrated by María Perujo, are books aimed at girls and boys. She trained as a biologist and since 2005 she has been a research professor at the Academy of Literary Creation of the Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México. She is a member of the Sistema Nacional de Creadores.

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# PRESENTATION

*The Red Hammock* is a story from the **Árbol** collection that the Instituto Nacional Electoral (INE, National Electoral Institute) makes available to children and adolescents with the intention of disseminating issues of civic formation, democratic values, interculturality and equality between women and men in a simple and enjoyable manner.

The Unidad Técnica de Igualdad de Género y No Discriminación (Technical Unit for Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination) of INE aims to extend the human rights approach and the principles of equality, gender parity and non-discrimination to all areas of the Institute and to citizen services, in order to help people, without distinction, to participate in elections and be part of the decision-making process that involves them.

This story will take readers into the life of an Afro-descendant community, where Daniela meets Laila, an audacious girl who, from her school, promotes actions aimed at improving life in her community. This friendship will also boost their confidence as women, as they learn about the value of their differences and the recognition of the equal rights that Mexicans have, regardless of their physical characteristics, customs, or traditions.

This short story is an opportunity to enjoy a literary work of great quality and to do so in community.

The story is suitable for readers of all ages, even if it was created for girls and boys in the last grades of elementary school. This story will certainly encourage reflection on the importance of dialogue and respect for the rights of individuals in the pursuit of the common good.

The purpose of the final section “To Reflect and Discuss” is for the kids, alone or with the support of an adult, to reflect on the importance of analyzing the causes of the problems facing our society, to make suggestions for resolving conflicts, and emphasizing that we all have a commitment as citizens to participate in solving them.



# The Red Hammock

It's not that she had set out to see it, it's just that she was passing by the TV room when the image appeared on the screen. The knee crushing the man's face against the sidewalk. Choking him. The man couldn't breathe. She stopped behind her parent's couch, unnoticed. The news anchor announced that, crushed by the policeman, George Floyd had died. Daniela stifled a scream with her hand.

"Weren't you in your room reading?" her parents said, as they noticed her presence. "What's wrong with you, honey?" asked her mother.

Then, ignoring Daniela's presence, she told her husband:

"There are images that young people should not see."

Daniela was still standing thinking that the black man might be her father's age, and the man had died.





“I don’t want anything to happen to you, Dad,” she said fearfully.

Her father beckoned her to sit with them.

“It is a problem between a group of black people and some police officers in the United States. But there are no people with that skin color here,” her father said unknowingly; “don’t worry,” and he hugged her.

He was wrong, because the following Sunday they were having lunch, as usual, and at his grandmother’s house was Aunt Fernanda, the youngest of his mother’s siblings, who was an anthropologist and traveled a lot. The conversation between the adults and some cousins diverted to the riots that were happening in the United States, after the death of that man. It was Daniela who said:

“But there are no black people here.”

Aunt Fernanda, with her tousled hair falling over her forehead, looked at her in surprise:

“What do you mean there are no black people here?”

Daniela exchanged a glance with her father. He apologized with a slight grin, because Aunt Fernanda wouldn't stop talking after that.

“In Mexico there were also women and men who were slaves, but not in large numbers as in the United States, and slavery was abolished here as a result of Independence; instead, in the United States it happened fifty years later, with Abraham Lincoln, and then came segregation, which separated spaces between people by the color of their skin. Black people couldn't go to the same coffee shops as white people, or go to the same schools, or get on the same buses. Imagine, this was still going on in



the 1960s while the Beatles were releasing their hits and the youth of the world were demonstrating to be heard. That's when the African American community's protests for equality began. What we are seeing now is not over because, sometimes, it is hard for us to understand that no matter the color of your skin, we are equal, and how we relate to stereotypes is a consequence of many years of mistreatment."

"And where do black people live here, Aunt Fernanda?" Daniela interrupted. "In my school there are no black boys or girls, and I don't see anyone with black skin on the street either."



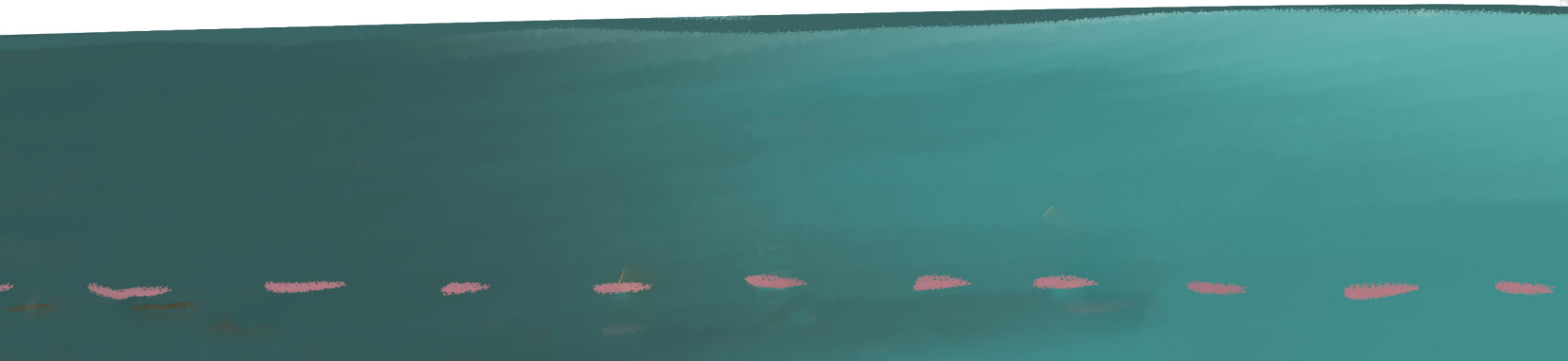
“That’s right, Daniela,” the aunt glanced around the table because some of the cousins were beginning to get up, and the adults were talking among themselves.

Only Daniela was interested in what Aunt Fernanda had to say.

“There are black communities mainly in Oaxaca, Veracruz, Guerrero, and Mexico City. They are called Afro-descendants or Afro-Mexicans. They live in the places where the slave populations settled, when they were already freed, or before, when they escaped.”

The girl ate what was left of her flan and looked at her mom, who had approached the scene attracted by the curiosity of what her younger sister was saying.

Daniela knew what she thought of her: that she was very fearless and could encourage wild ideas in her little eleven-year-old Daniela! Then she chimed in:





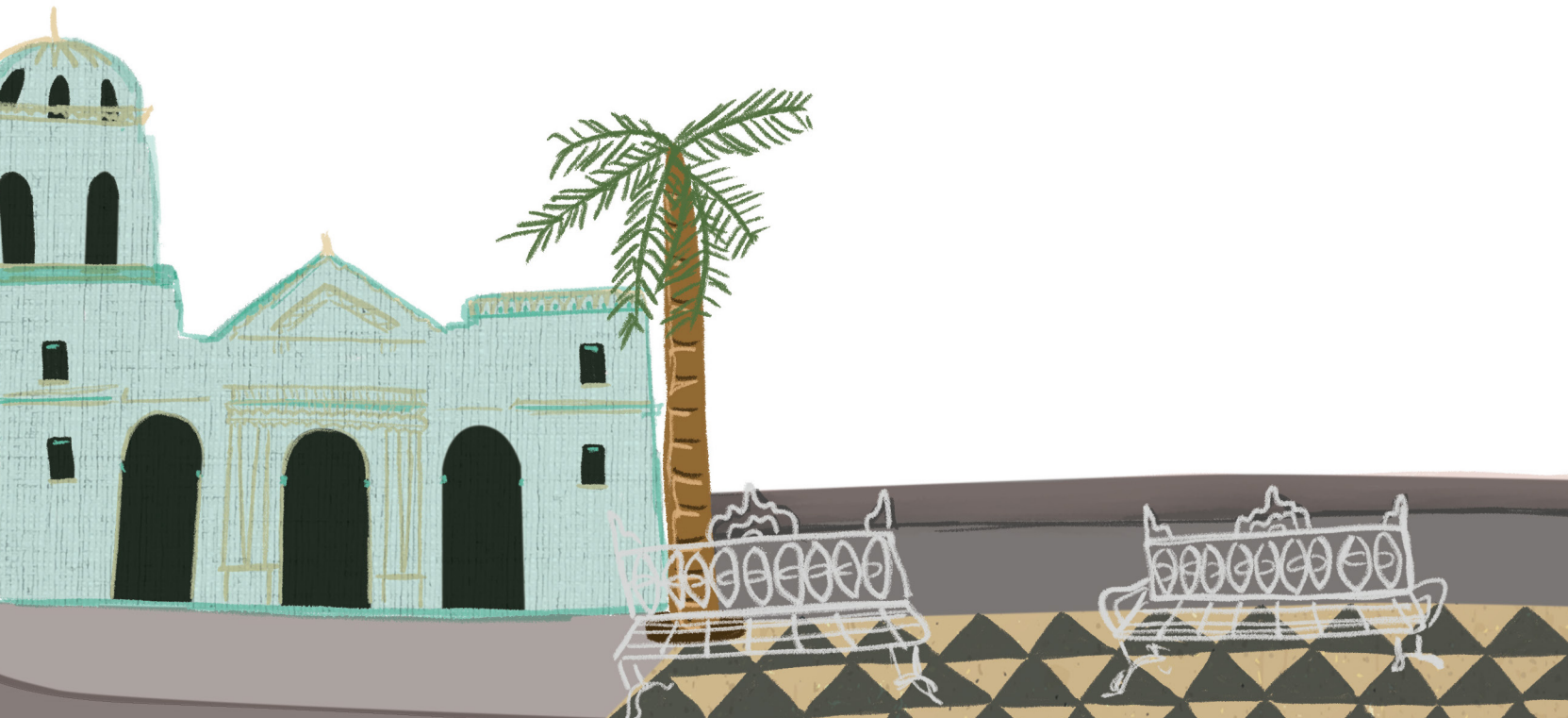
“I read a novel by Sor Juana, the nun writer, and I learned that slavery existed in her time. In the convents it was customary to have slaves who helped with daily chores.”

“It's true,” Fernanda answered, “but you're talking about the 17th century.”

“Anyway, it's proof that there was slavery and that the idea wasn't very scandalous back then,” said her mother, who didn't want to be left out of the conversation.

“I would like to meet some black people,” Daniela said bluntly.

“You've seen them,” Fernanda added. “You've been to Veracruz with your mom and dad. The Afro-descendant people, brought as slaves from Africa—that's why the correct thing is to call them *Afro-Mexican*—, eventually mixed with the local population, both Spanish and indigenous: this is what is called *miscegenation*,

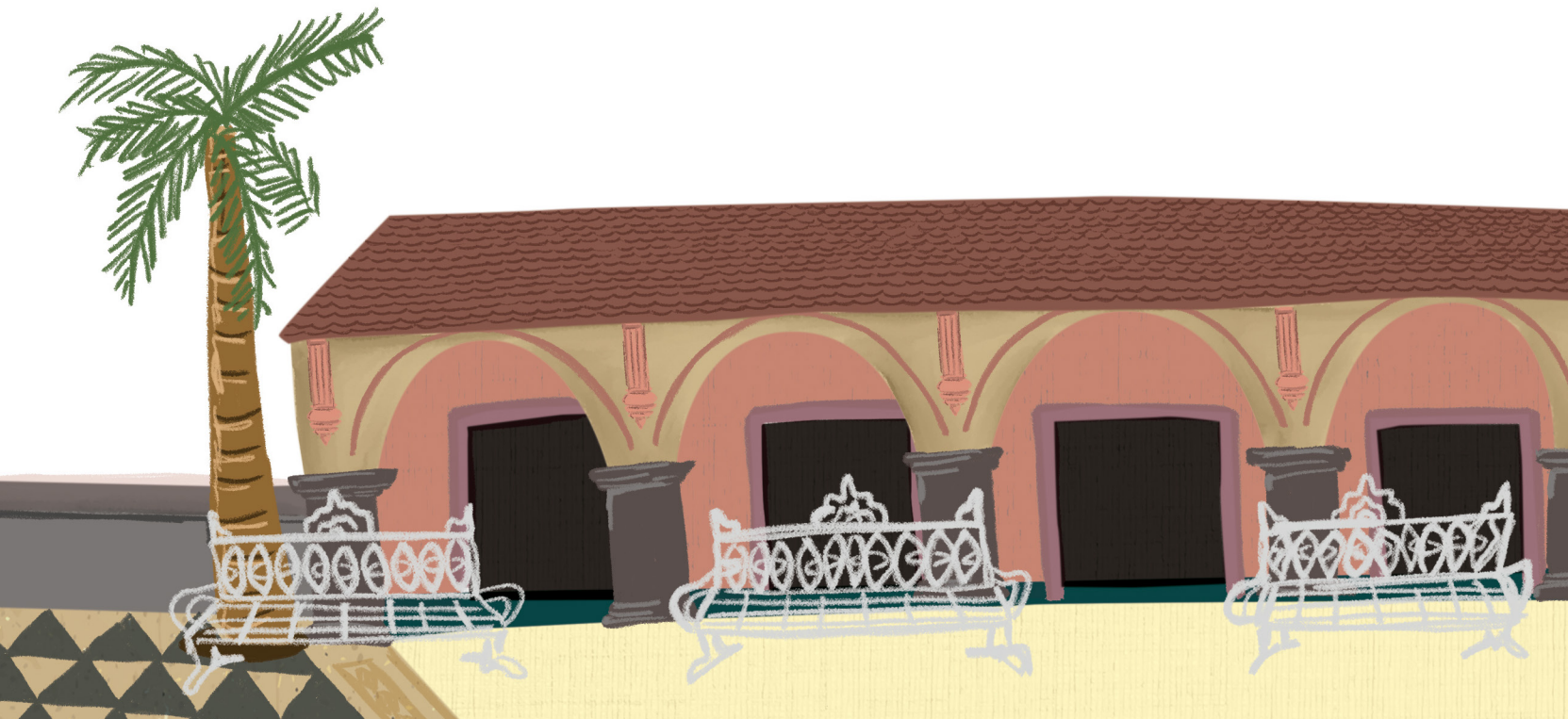


all people are mestizos. Slaves were sold as merchandise, men were worth more than women for their labor power in the mines or the sugarcane plantations.”

Daniela looked at her, shaken by the idea of a people’s market. She had heard the word miscegenation in school, but it had not been as clear to her as it was at this moment. She remembered the portals of Veracruz and the coffee with milk she drank, hitting the glass with the spoon so that a boy would pour both the dark liquid and the steaming milk from the two teapots.

“Do you remember the marimba at the portals? Some say it is an instrument brought from Africa by slaves.”

“Mom,” she said, “when are we going to Veracruz?”





Aunt Fernanda's call took Daniela by surprise. She was inviting her to spend a few days in the small town in the Costa Chica of Guerrero\* where she was doing her research.

“This is your chance to know the Afro-Mexican communities in our country,” the aunt insisted.

Daniela told her aunt that she was not on vacation.

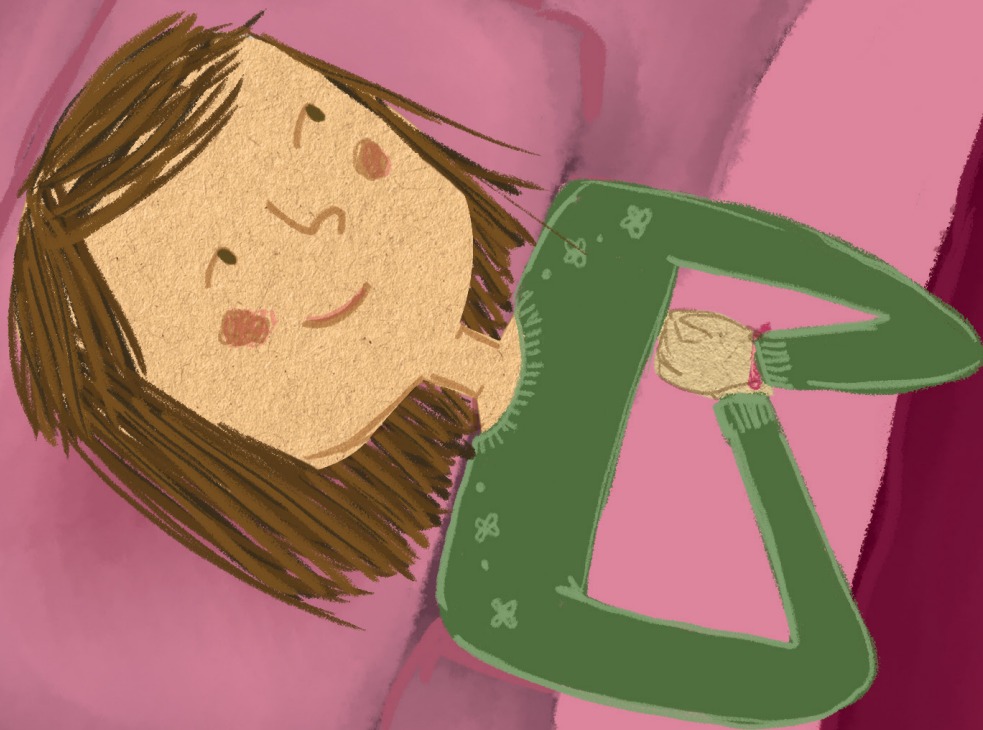
“It’s only for a few days,” she replied, “When you get back, you’ll catch up. I need an assistant to take pictures.”

When she hung up the phone, Daniela felt it was going to be difficult to convince her mom and dad, and she was right. She told them during dinner, and it seemed unjustified to them to miss school to go with Aunt Fernanda to see a part of Mexico, precisely the less visible part, where old slave families had settled, as Aunt Fernanda had surely explained to them. Because when Daniela asked for permission, they were already prepared to say no.

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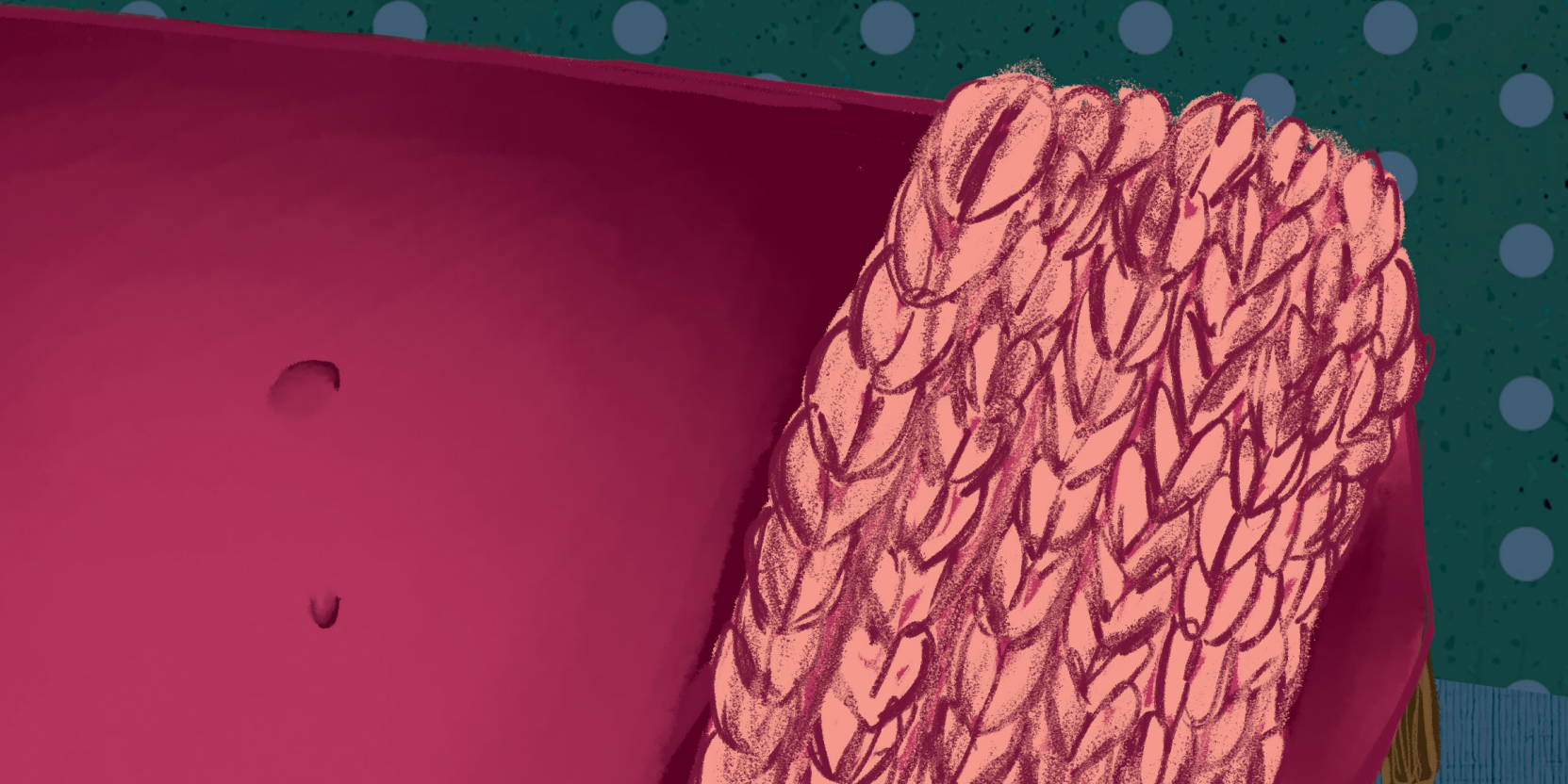
\* Translator’s Notes (TN): Costa Chica of Guerrero is one of the seven regions of the state of Guerrero. It is located in the southeastern part of the state, on the Pacific coast, between the region of Acapulco and the state of Oaxaca. Various ethnic groups live in this region: Mixtecos, Afro-Mexicans, Amuzgos, Chatinos and mestizos.

She went to bed very sad, but later she heard voices. They came from her parent's room, so she put her ear to the door. It seemed to her that they were talking about her; her mother said she remembered when she missed school once because they went to visit her grandfather at the sugar mill where he worked.



“I can’t forget,” she heard what her mother said, “the smell of the cane when it was crushed, the trucks unloading it, the liquid that came out of those mills, the explanation of how it turned into sugar crystals, and the jar of molasses that I took home. It is a trip I treasure. I think we have to consider it.”

Daniela smiled, sensed what would happen, and thanked the little jar of molasses for the change in decision the next morning.





The road snaked through the mountains for several hours and was tedious. At times Daniela felt like throwing up, but Aunt Fernanda distracted her by showing how the trees changed from oaks to pines, how magnificent the landscape of the Sierra Madre del Sur\* was. After Daniela asked several times how close they were to arriving, Aunt Fernanda said:

“Don’t you feel the humidity and warmth? We are very close.”

The family with whom they would stay, and whom Aunt Fernanda already knew because several months before she had begun her interviews with them, enthusiastically welcomed them at the door of their house. The father said that he already had the red snapper that he had caught in the morning and that his wife would prepare to celebrate Fernanda’s return and the arrival of her niece, and hugged Daniela with his big hands.

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\*TN: Sierra Madre del Sur: mountain range in southern Mexico, it is about 750 miles long and at its highest point reaches 12,204 ft in height. It crosses the states of Jalisco, Michoacán, Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Chiapas.

It was an Afro-Mexican family, as she had learned to name them: the mother with joyful eyes and a wide smile. She had two sons and a daughter: Laila, who approached Daniela and asked her point-blank: “Would you like to play in the sand?” Then there was Fermín, who was almost his brother’s age, eight years old, and who was hiding behind one of the columns that supported that great *palapa*, and then there was baby Juan, whom her aunt had met at just months old; she was his godmother.

“Come in, come in,” Laila’s mother said.

And while her aunt glanced over at Daniela’s astonishment at that wide-open house, she told her that there was a cabin for them next to the Morales’ family.

As soon as they entered, the baby cried. When Fernanda took him from the hammock where he was lying wrapped in a sheet, Daniela saw his round face, his chubby lips. He seemed precious to her, with those big eyes and those playful little hands.





“You must be tired,” said Laila, “I’m going to give you some *chilate*\* that my mother makes. It is very refreshing and gives you energy, it is made with cocoa, rice, cinnamon and sugar.”

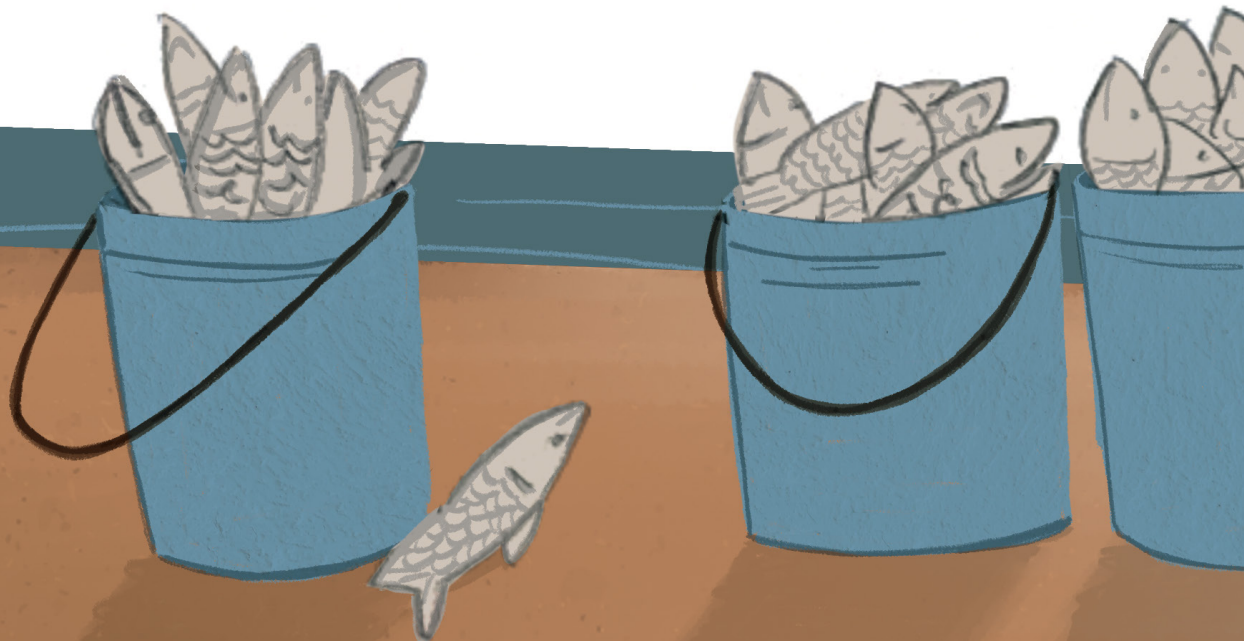
With a glass full of that thick, cool concoction, Laila led her to the back of the house, where the palapa’s roof sheltered two hammocks that hung in solitude and brought the house closer to the sea. They lived next to the Pacific Ocean! Daniela listened to the waves and watched them bursting big and foamy.

“You can't swim here, can you?” she asked.


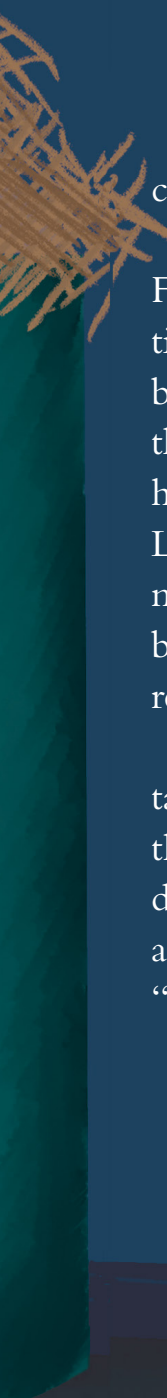
“Carefully, yes,” Laila replied, and told her that she used to fish with a rod from the shore of the beach. Some people told her that this activity was only for men, but she loved fishing and did it very well, even though her father would leave very early in the morning on the boat with uncle Hermilo and they would bring back buckets full of fish to sell in the market and to eat.

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\*TN: *Chilate*: a traditional drink of the state of Guerrero, especially in the Costa Chica, that has a pre-Hispanic origin. Chilate comes from the Nahuatl *chilli*=chili and *atl*=water, “chili water”, although it does not contain chili.







Daniela understood that by the sea and living from it, one could not be afraid of it.

After dinner with Aunt Fernanda and Laila's family, as Fermín refused to go to bed because he had slept several times during the day, acquaintances of the aunt arrived. Laila beckoned Daniela to follow her. They went out to the porch of the hammocks overlooking the sea. There, under the darkness, the red hammock and the yellow hammock looked like two dark dolphins floating. Laila had already told her that when it was very hot, she slept there, under the mosquito net her mother put up to protect her. Daniela imagined her body twisted and marked by the mesh of the hammock. She couldn't suppose that it was comfortable and refused to try it on that night when Laila suggested it.

The next morning, Daniela accompanied Laila to school. Her aunt asked her to take pictures. Little did she imagine that her aunt knew, from her close contact with the Morales family and the community of that town, that it was not a normal school day. As soon as she arrived to school, Daniela noticed that posters made by the girls and boys who studied there hung around the basketball court: some had the word “Ecology” and some showed a sea full of garbage, another read “Food” and compared

a plate of fish with a crossed-out bag of potato chips; others said “Inclusion” and one with drawn faces of many women of all ages caught her attention. There was also one for “Health”, where someone had drawn a hospital and ambulances.

Daniela nervously followed her friend, because the fifth-grade class had surrounded her to ask about the new girl. Laila said she was her friend and had come from far away. That seemed to be enough for Daniela to be included in the activities, where Laila went to the front of the court while the rest sat on the ground. Daniela imitated them. She noticed the very different faces, a boy turned to see her constantly and the girl next to her offered her some mango *enchilado*\*. Laila took the floor to remind them that the activity that morning, during community proposal week, was called “Dreaming the Future”.

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\*TN: Mango *enchilado*: peeled mango, in pieces or whole, to which chili powder or liquid is added, very popular throughout Mexico.



On a blackboard held up by chairs, Laila wrote down the group's ideas.

“More doctors so we don't have to go to Ometepec,” said a girl.

“They should build a high school,” said a boy, explaining that his sister had gone to live with some uncles to be able to go to school and he missed her.

Someone said nonsense and everyone laughed, like building a soccer stadium or organizing a big music festival, because they had a lot of famous musicians. Álvaro Carrillo for starters. Someone else joked:

“Sure, you want to win the contest.”



The boy answered that he was sure he could make it.

“That when I go with my father to sell coconut candies in the city, the taxi driver wants to take advantage of us because he sees us loaded and wants to overcharge us,” added another.

Laila wrote: “Let there be no discrimination or abuse.”

Someone said:

“I want my dad to no longer treat my mom badly.”

There was a great silence, and Daniela recalled that a classmate at her school had already complained about something like this in his family. She regretted that this sad situation was also happening there. The boy hid his face in his arms. Daniela looked uneasily at her friend.

This time Laila did not write anything down, but she addressed the group:


“We must not allow ourselves to be mistreated, we must all be respectful and never use violence. Who votes for it to be so?”

They raised their hands and the boy who had been hiding joined in decisively. Daniela took pictures with her cell phone. She had almost forgotten, as she was so immersed in how boys and girls were participating in the gathering that Laila was leading. Then someone said:

“I want Laila to be president.”







She heard laughter and applause as she fixed on their faces with the camera. Daniela excitedly imagined Laila, an Afro-Mexican woman, as president of Mexico. She would have liked to say that she wanted that too.

At recess the classmates wanted to stand next to Laila and her friend from far away. The boy who had winked at Daniela joked:

“If you're vice president, I'll vote for you.”

The last night, after picking branches on the beach with Laila, they walked back. While she felt the freshness of the sand on her bare feet, Daniela listened to the swaying of the sea and skirted the darkness, as if she, too, were native to the place.

A few meters from the house, Laila dropped the branches and told Daniela to throw hers on top. After a while she returned with matches and alcohol and, in a few moments after there was a bonfire, like a fan of light, illuminating the night and shedding light on the sea foam as it retreated, clinging to the sand.

Laila brought a mat, placed it far from the fire between the house and the sea and the friends sat down there. The only campfire Daniela had ever lit was at a camp with her parents and uncles in the woods around the city, where they roasted marshmallows and sheltered from the cold, but it wasn't cold here. From the crackling of the fire emanated a glow which begged them not to get so close, because their faces were reddening and sweating.

“I wish I had hair like yours,” said Daniela to Laila, whose skin was glowing fanned by the fire. She reached out her hand and touched that bristly bush that looked like a mattress. She thought she wouldn't need a pillow, while Daniela needed two to sleep. In turn, Laila slid her hand over her new friend's hair.

“It feels so good,” said Daniela.

“You're crazy,” Laila said, “I would like to have your straight hair, like a waterfall.”

“It's very ordinary,” Daniela said, “almost all of us have hair like that.”

Laila was slow to answer.

“It isn't true. At school, almost all the girls have hair like mine and dark skin. Others are brunettes, have curly or straight hair, but no one is as white as you, *cuija*\* type. You saw them today.”

“*Cuija*?” Daniela asked, “What is that?”

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\*TN: *Cuija*: a lizard of the gecko group that arrived from China or the Philippines via the nao that sailed from the Philippines to Acapulco during the Spanish occupation, which is why Guerrero is the state with the largest population of cuijas.





“Oh, don’t tell me you haven’t seen them. I’ll show you one later, they are always on the walls, they are transparent lizards.”

Daniela looked at her hands, under the yellow light of the campfire they looked orange.

“I’m not transparent.”

Laila laughed:

“No, you look like the ones on TV, the ones in the commercials, the ones on the standup shows, the ones in the soap operas. Have you noticed that no one is like me on TV?”

It was true, that’s why she thought there were no black people in Mexico. Nor did she remember any movie, play or fairy tale in which there were black-skinned protagonists. Only in some *gringo*<sup>\*</sup> programs. But from what she had seen in school, Laila could host a TV show on her own.

“Everything will change when you become president,” she said.

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\*TN: *Gringo*: this is the name given in Mexico to everything related to the United States of America, including its inhabitants.

“Your aunt, who is very inquisitive, says we are Afro-Mexicans or Afro-descendants. At school they teach us those words too. Did you know that your aunt Fernanda wants to know how far back our memories go? I know I’m from here, from the Costa Chica of Guerrero, I’m Mexican and I don’t identify with anyone on TV,” and she crossed her arms as if sulking.

Daniela was sure something was off.

“Oh!” Laila said suddenly, waving her hands in the air, “we’re getting very serious,” and she turned up the music. She stood up and began to dance to that tune that Daniela knew because it was in fashion. Daniela was enthralled by Laila’s rhythm and joy.

“Come on, move it,” she urged her.



She couldn't dance like Laila, but she tried. Her friend touched her waterfall-like hair as she touched Laila's quilted hair.

After a while, the fire subsided into reddish embers. They lay down on the mat: one head next to the other, while their feet were in opposite directions, to feel the darkness barely illuminated by the secret light of the fading campfire. A dome of stars adorned the night.

When it was time to say goodbye to the whole family at the door of the house, Laila and Daniela put their arms around each other like inseparable friends. The night before, Laila had given her a bag made of coconut shell.

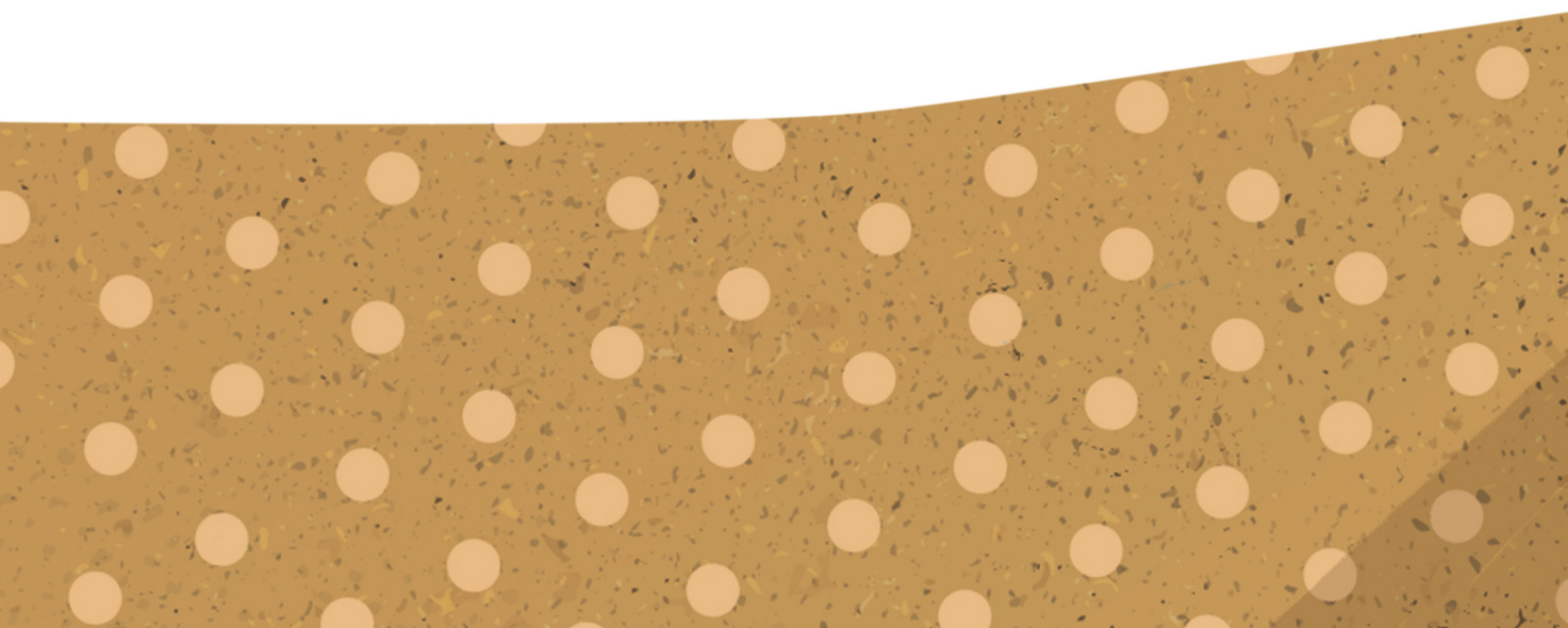


Daniela didn't know what to give her in return and took out a little mirror from her bag, with colored pebbles.

“You have to come to visit me in the city,” Daniela told as she said goodbye.

“Maybe,” Laila said, “on the condition that the next time you come you sleep in the red hammock.”

The friends high-fived in a pact that neither the road through the mountains, nor the arrival in the city, nor the two pillows Daniela used to sleep on could ever erase. She was sure that they would see each other again, and that when she would dedicate herself to writing TV programs, perhaps with the help of her aunt, she would include Laila's and Fermin's story, and the stories of boys and girls like those at her friend's school, because they were part of her country. She also knew she would have to explain to her dad that there were black people in Mexico, but that what she had seen on the news would not happen to them. They would not allow violence and mistreatment, she had seen it in school. And she had a secret: Laila would one day be president of Mexico.





TO REFLECT AND DISCUSS

# Democracy and Interculturality



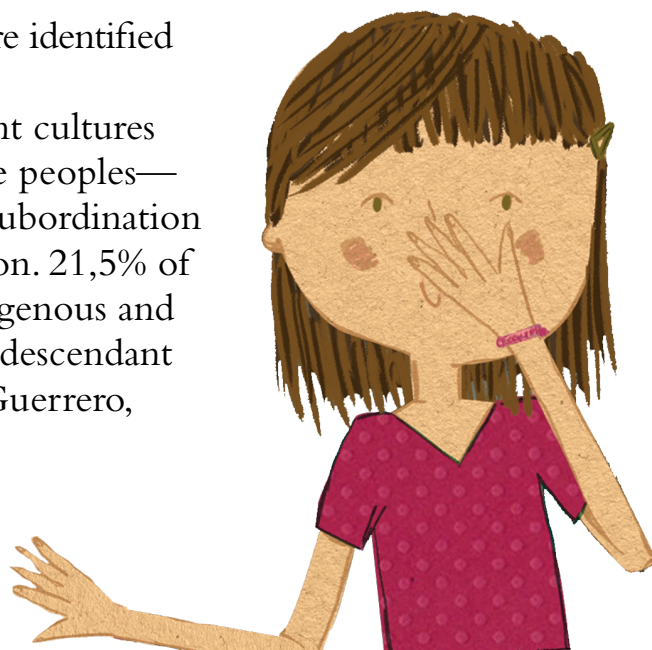
# Our Third Root

In this section we offer some elements of analysis that can motivate and facilitate reflection and dialogue on our third root, an important topic in the history and present time of our country.

*The Red Hammock* offers its readers an approach to the condition of inequality that particularly affects Afro-descendant women, who experience a triple-edged discrimination: by gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic factors. In this way, some Afro-Mexican women will be able to reevaluate their origins and identity, find spaces to express themselves, have an active participation in their community and recognize themselves as subjects of rights. And, above all, those who read this story will become aware that this third root constitutes a cultural reality that, by including it in all aspects of our social and democratic life, enriches us as a country. In order to make this story meaningful for girls and boys, we encourage those close to them, such as teachers and family members, to be a companion in reading it, to enjoy the story, to talk about the importance of recognizing diversity and interculturality: values that enrich us and make us strong as a nation.

The following are some important concepts that are identified throughout the narrative.

Mexico is a multicultural country where different cultures and identities coexist, which—especially the native peoples—were subjected to a relationship characterized by subordination and discrimination, forced integration and exclusion. 21,5% of the population of our country considers itself indigenous and 1,16% Afro-descendant. Seven states have an Afro-descendant population above the national average, especially Guerrero, Oaxaca and Veracruz.



Daniela, the protagonist of this story, thought that there were no black people in our country, until one day her aunt Fernanda told her that in Mexico there are indeed Afro-Mexican people who currently continue to be excluded and discriminated against in practice only because of the color of their skin and their physical appearance. Unfortunately, this is the case even though it contradicts our laws.

The Afro-descendant population has lived in our territory for more than five centuries and has been made invisible. This has generated great inequalities compared to other groups. However, little by little, people of African descent have been making progress in their identity process and in the recognition of their rights.

Daniela's aunt also told her that the people who were used as slaves were brought from Africa—that is why it is correct to call their descendants Afro-Mexicans—and sold as merchandise; the men were worth more than the women for their labor force for the mines or the sugar cane plantations. The abolition of slavery was a result of the struggle for Independence.

Article 2 of the Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos (Political Constitution of the United Mexican States) recognizes and guarantees the right of indigenous peoples and communities to self-determination and, consequently, to the autonomy to decide their internal forms of coexistence, as well as all the elements that constitute their culture and identity.

Daniela traveled with her aunt to a community in Guerrero where she met an Afro-Mexican family, of which Laila was a member and with whom she became friends. Living with the family allowed her to get to know their customs, problems and way of life. When she accompanied Laila to school, she witnessed a meeting in which boys



and girls expressed their concerns about various aspects that their community needed, such as better medical services, closer schools, sporting events and cultural activities; and above all, they talked about the defense of their rights to end the abuse and discrimination, which they suffered on a daily basis. A very clear example of this was shared by a boy, when he told how a cab driver tried to overcharge his father when he took them to the city to sell coconut candies.

The purpose of the Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia (General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence) is to establish coordination with different authorities to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women, as well as the principles and modalities to guarantee their access to a life free of violence that favors their development and well-being in accordance with the principles of equality and non-discrimination.

At that meeting, Daniela also witnessed the sad request of a boy asking his father to stop treating his mother badly, which reminded her of a similar request she had previously heard at her school, and she regretted that this situation occurred in different places and circumstances.

The purpose of the Ley General para la Igualdad entre Mujeres y Hombres (General Law for Equality between Women and Men) is to regulate and guarantee equal opportunities and treatment between women and men, in addition to proposing institutional guidelines and mechanisms to guide the nation towards the fulfillment of substantive equality in the public and private arenas, by promoting the empowerment of women and the fight against any discrimination based on sex. This law also establishes that women may be appointed to any public service job or commission, if they have the qualifications determined by law.



Laila and Daniela had the opportunity to recognize themselves as women, they learned the value of their differences, as well as the equal rights that we Mexicans have, regardless of our physical characteristics, customs, and traditions.

Today, some people find it difficult to understand that regardless of the color of our skin, we have a history and cultural diversity that enriches and unites us. Women and men are equal; however, stereotypes have resulted in many years of mistreatment and exclusion, so it is the commitment of all people to take action, as happened in Laila's school, so that this situation changes and we live in a more just and egalitarian society.

With Laila as a leader, students decided to demand actions to end any kind of abuse, violence and discrimination. One of her classmates said he would like her to become President and she also wished the same, not only as a dream but with the conviction to achieve it. Perhaps our first female president will be an Afro-Mexican woman.



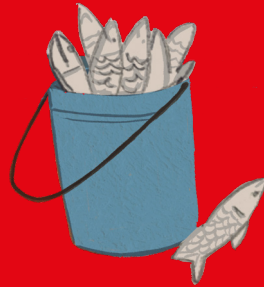


*THE RED HAMMOCK*

The Bembo Std font family was used.



MARÍA PERUJO was born in Mexico City in 1988. She studied Graphic Design at the Universidad Iberoamericana and holds a Master's Degree in Illustrated Books and Audiovisual Animation at the Universidad de Vigo, Facultad de Bellas Artes, in Pontevedra. In that city she learned that stories can be told without words, that images, as the pages turn, give rhythm to reading and allow us to fly through unimaginable worlds. She has been an illustrator since long before studying to be one, when as a child she copied her mother's book presentations and portrayed the members of her father's mariachi band. She teaches art classes in middle and high school, a daily pleasure that accompanies her creativity. She has designed and illustrated books such as: *Es puro cuento* (Sélector), *Rey Libélula* (Colofón), *Luisol y las pesadillas* (Sélector) y *La inesperada amiga de Carlos* (Planetalector), and continues to bake her ideas in the oven to savor them, along with her readers, in the near future. She has always liked to draw, she prefers to forget her wallet to a notebook and a pencil (because she usually forgets something when she leaves home), she enjoys the spontaneity of the sketch and the grace of transforming it into an illustration. Hand in hand with her strokes is music: María sings, because the lines and notes paint her world with joy.



Laila and Daniela are two girls who have the opportunity to get to know each other and start a friendship that will allow them to recognize each other as women, in addition to recognizing the value of differences and the equal rights that we Mexicans have, regardless of our physical characteristics, customs and traditions.

This book is part of the **Árbol** collection, whose objective is to contribute to the citizen culture of children and young people through stories that encourages reflection and active participation in society, particularly in relation to gender equality and non-discrimination.