



Alma and How She Got Her Name

Juana Martinez-Neal

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What's in a name? For one little girl, her very long name tells the vibrant story of where she came from — and who she may one day be.

If you ask her, Alma Sofia Esperanza José Pura Candela has way too many names: six! How did such a small person wind up with such a large name? Alma turns to Daddy for an answer and learns of Sofia, the grandmother who loved books and flowers; Esperanza, the great-grandmother who longed to travel; José, the grandfather who was an artist; and other namesakes, too. As she hears the story of her name, Alma starts to think it might be a perfect fit after all — and realizes that she will one day have her own story to tell. In her author-illustrator debut, Juana Martinez-Neal opens a treasure box of discovery for children who may be curious about their own origin stories or names.

Alma and How She Got Her Name Details

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Author : Juana Martinez-Neal

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From Reader Review Alma and How She Got Her Name for online ebook

Becky says

I LOVE this book! Alma and How She Got Her Name written and illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal shares the story of sweet, little Alma. The story begins with her spelling out Alma Sofia Esperanza José Pura Candela and complaining to her father about the many parts of her name. Her dad sits her down and shares the story of each part of her name and offers her the opportunity to understand the history of her name.

Juana Martinez-Neal uses pinks, grays, blacks and blues to delicately illustrate this book about little Alma. Along with the vivid descriptions of each family member, each page is sprinkled with Spanish words and artifacts inspired by her Peruvian upbringing.

Long naming conventions in the Spanish culture still play a role in many students lives and this book will definitely fill a gap in libraries. This book will be published both in English and Spanish on April 10, 2018 by Candlewick Press.

Linda says

Oh, I wish I had had this wonderful book when I was teaching. Often, I suggested that students research and write about their names. There are other great books that tell about names, like The Name Jar by Yangsook Choi and one chapter of The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros, and this one is a very special one. Alma Sofia Esperanza José Pura Candela has way too many names: six! She is shown trying to fit her name on a piece of paper that needs an addition. As Alma talks to her Daddy, he begins to tell her about all her names, like "Sofia, her grandmother" who likes books and poetry and of course "Daddy". Alma agrees that she, too, is Sofia who loves books, poetry and her daddy. The stories vary, but soon Alma realizes that indeed, though long, each name fits. We all do wear our names from the past, but Juana Martinez-Neal adds one extra idea at the end that readers will love.

Martinez-Neal's muted pencil illustrations feel like sweet stories, with touches of color mostly in Alma's dress and a few other spots. Thanks to Candlewick for the advanced copy.

Sarah Hannah says

Love the art, love the story. Definitely going on the shortlist of books for baby showers and birthdays.

Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow says

I had to flip through this book a few times and could do it many more times and still get enjoyment. The art has so many interesting layers and details, I kept wanting to look back at it and study it. Martinez-Neal has a very interesting sketchbook-like style. I love the way she sparingly incorporates color and also the way she creates the old photos of people from the MC Alma's family. There is a scrapbook/photo album feel to the way she incorporates these elements.

In addition to the illustrations, I absolutely loved the purpose of the book. Alma is a girl whose name is "too long to fit" on a piece of paper. Her father explains how her name does fit by sharing the history of the little girl's various names. Through this telling, we also get exposed to aspects of the MC and author's culture. This is a beautiful book--especially for children who might feel their names don't quite "fit" for any reason.

Danielle says

It all starts with a name, Alma's long name. And then a conversation with her father, tracing each part of her name that belonged to someone in her family tree. Each name that connects her to the past and to her family and to her current and future self.

I love the structure of the book, the way sweet Alma peeks into and enters the past on every other spread, the colors—blue for history and pink for present—and all the facial expressions of the characters.

My favorite page is "I am Candela!" with Alma holding a sign, her marching buddies stuffed animals, drawings, and dolls.

A special book.

Mary Lee says

LOVE LOVE LOVE this and will add it to my stack of books for exploring names at the beginning of the year!

Baby Bookworm says

This review was originally written for The Baby Bookworm. Visit us for new picture books reviews daily!

Hello, friends! Our book today is *Alma And How She Got Her Name* by Juana Martinez-Neal, a wonderful tale of a little girl with a very big – and very special – name.

Alma Sofia Esperanza José Pura Candela has a very long name, so long that it often doesn't fit when she tries to write it out. She tells her father, who sits her down and promises to explain what her name means, then she can decide if it fits. He then tells her of five people: her grandmothers, Sofia and Candela, her great-grandmother Esperanza, her grandfather José, and her great-aunt Pura. Each family member was special and unique in their own way, and Alma connects with each over a shared interest or characteristic. At last, her father explains her first name, Alma: he chose it just for her. She is the first Alma, and her story is her own to write. But she will always carry her family with her to encourage and inspire her – they're right there in her name.

Delightful and dear. Alma's story celebrates both specific Latin-American naming customs and the tradition and emotion behind them, as well as the notion that our names have meaning, often both as a connection to our past as well as an identity all our own. Alma's namesakes are presented as individuals admirable for

gestures big and small, which adds a nice message about how we honor and connect to our older family members, even after they've passed. The illustrations are adorable, using simple, charming characters and an exquisite use of light and shadow to set a range of moods. The length is perfect, and JJ loved it. This one was just wonderful, and it's Baby Bookworm approved!

Be sure to check out The Baby Bookworm for more reviews!

Ireadkidsbooks says

A simple conversation between a father and daughter, but a strong message about identity. The blurred lines and gentle palette of the illustrations soften the overall tone, but don't be lulled into thinking this is anything other than a powerful lesson in cultural heritage and pride.

Beth says

A beautiful story about the importance of names and how they shape our identity.

Kaethe says

Just lovely. The concept, the art, the text. It all works together beautifully.

And also it has the daughter sitting with her father in that platonic ideal of a reading chair.

Library copy.

KC says

Darling tale of how Alma got her name.

Sara Cook says

Sweet illustrations and a lovely story of the history of Alma's long name. Would be great to start a name unit for a classroom.

Jillian Heise says

I am in ? with this picture book! Alma Sofia Esperanza José Pura Candela is adorable, even if her name is a mouthful. The story is so sweet as her father teaches her about the ancestors who she is named after, and why he chose those names for her. A story about identity, pride, and family, all combined with the stunning

illustrations of Martinez-Neal is a must-share in the classroom. Bonus: Spanish version will be released simultaneously with the English version.

Julie Kirchner says

This is a fantastic book about the importance of names and where they come from. So many times I hear kids making fun of names or kids saying it's okay when their names are mispronounced. This book celebrates every part of Alma's name and where it comes from. A wonderful story with lovely illustrations.

Kate Olson says

@candlewickpress #partner This is the sweet story of how Alma Sofia Esperanza Jose Pura Candela got her name, told to her by her father, and it is absolutely fabulous. It will be available in both English and Spanish editions, although the English version does also include some Spanish words on signs in the book. The author's note about her own LONG name and how she despaired over it while growing up in Lima, Peru before growing to love it later on in the US is a wonderful addition to the story. I will be purchasing this for my elementary library collection and reading to grades 1 and 2.

Thanks to Candlewick and the author for this review copy. It hits shelves on April 10, 2018. I am passing on to @kidlitexchange for further reviews!
