

Using
Lost in Sierra
in the classroom

Thirteen-year-old Ana's beloved *abuela* (grandmother) dies, leaving her a ticket to Spain, a place Ana knows only through family stories. Despite her reluctance, Ana realizes that Abuela must have had strong reasons. She spends the summer with her great-aunt in the mountain village of Sierra.

In Spain, Ana discovers a family mystery and sets out to unravel secrets and deceptions from the past and to find a long-lost family member – a young man lost in the turmoil of the Spanish Civil War. But she also discovers there are people in the village who don't want her to find him.

- Eleanor used diamonds as a metaphor to describe friendship; they're formed over many years, are durable and beautiful and may have flaws. Ask your class if they can think of other metaphors for friendship. What do they value in friendships? Have them write a paragraph describe a close friend and explaining why this friendship is important to them.

- Paco and Ana had an uneasy friendship. Invite discussion about what the class thinks were the strengths in their friendship. What were the weaknesses? Even though they went through difficult times and eventually parted ways, Paco and Ana remained friends. How did they manage to stay friends? Have any of your students gone through a hard time with a friend? How did they stay friends?

- Men and women from around the world went to Spain to help the Spanish people fight for democracy and human rights when the Spanish Civil War broke out. Ask you students if there a cause they feel needs support or something that they feel needs to be protected. Invite discussion about what would make them want to volunteer to help. Have students write a letter to a friend or family member explaining what the cause is and why they want to help. Have them make a poster trying to recruit others to help their cause.

- Graciela, Paco's grandmother, led the villagers in stoning Luis. Ask your students why did she did this. Which side did she think Luis was fighting on? Why were the villagers so ready to join her? Have them write a letter of apology from Graciela to Eleanor, in which Graciela explains what she was feeling and thinking when she saw Luis enter the village and the reasons for her actions.

- When Ana tried to find out about her great uncle, Luis, she had to look for information in different places. Invite discussion about where students would look if they were investigators trying to piece together a bit of family history. Have students ask a member of their family if they have a special memory of a day or a time. Have them make a one-page presentation of that person's special memory using photos, recordings of them speaking, notes, have old letters or diaries, or any information they can find.

