



## The Moonlit Vine

written by Elizabeth Santiago

### About the Book

**Genre:** Realistic Fiction

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**Reading Level:** Grades 8–12

**Interest Level:** 8–12

**Guided Reading Level:** Z

**Spanish Guided Reading Level:** Z

**Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:**

N/A

**Lexile™ Measure:** N/A

\*Reading level based on the ATOS Readability Formula

**Themes:** Hope, Conflict resolution, Coping with death, Courage, Cultural diversity, Discrimination, Empathy and Compassion, Fiction, Forgiveness, Family (Grandparents), Generational Trauma, Heroism, History, Identity, Self Esteem and Confidence, Immigration, Integrity and Honesty, Leadership, Mothers, Neighbors, Overcoming Obstacles, Paranormal, Persistence and Grit, Pride, Protest, Responsibility, Siblings, Spanish, Tolerance and Acceptance, United States History, Puerto Rico, Women's History, Teen/YA interest, Biracial/Multiracial Interest, Indigenous/Native American Interest, Latino/Hispanic/Mexican Interest

#### Resources on the web:

[leeandlow.com/books/the-moonlit-vine](http://leeandlow.com/books/the-moonlit-vine)

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.

## SYNOPSIS

***Fourteen-year-old Taína just learned that she is a descendant of a long line of strong Taíno women, but will knowing this help her bring peace and justice to her family and community?***

Despite her name, Taína Perez doesn't know anything about her Taíno heritage, nor has she ever tried to learn. After all, how would ancient Puerto Rican history help with everything going on? There's constant trouble at school and in her neighborhood, her older brother was kicked out of the house, and with her mom at work, she's left alone to care for her little brother and aging grandmother. It's a lot for a 14-year-old to manage.

But life takes a wild turn when her abuela tells her she is a direct descendant of Anacaona, the beloved Taíno leader, warrior, and poet, who was murdered by the Spanish in 1503. Abuela also gives her an amulet and a zemi and says that it's time for her to step into her power like the women who came before her. But is that even possible? People like her hardly make it out of their circumstances, and the problems in her home and community are way bigger than Taína can manage. Or are they?

A modern tale with interstitial historical chapters, *The Moonlit Vine* brings readers a powerful story of the collective struggle, hope, and liberation of Puerto Rican and Taíno peoples.

Also available in Spanish! *Claro de Luna* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/claro-de-luna>)

## BACKGROUND

### Adapted from Author's Note by Elizabeth Santiago

"As a Puerto Rican woman, I had always been told and always believed that I was Taíno. My mother often said, "Nosotros somos Indios, Africanos y Españoles." Loosely translated, she said, "We are made up of Indian, African, and Spanish ancestry."

Growing up, I learned a lot about my Spanish ancestors, a little less about my African ancestors, and little to nothing about my Indian—or rather, Taíno—ancestors. What is documented of this heritage came from early journal writings, letters, and stories shared by Spanish (and other) colonizers—stories that have constituted the dominant narratives we know today, with the most prevalent being that the Taíno did not survive.

However, I had always been curious about this part of my heritage and did what I could to learn about them. I learned their tribal name was not really Taíno but Arawak, how when they greeted Christopher Columbus, they'd said "taíno" to make their visitors feel welcome, because it meant "good people." Columbus misunderstood the word to be their tribal name, and it stuck. I also learned that the Arawak were living on many islands: Puerto Rico (Borikén), Haiti (Ayiti), the Dominican Republic (Quisqueya), Cuba (Cubanascan), and Jamaica (Xaymaca). Later, I visited the Taíno petroglyphs in Jayuya, Puerto Rico, and talked to elders where my parents are from in San Sebastian. I learned that beyond petroglyphs, the Taíno did not document their culture and beliefs in contemporary ways (in writing). Instead, they passed on oral histories, which is why many Puerto Ricans have always had a different understanding of Taíno survival, because we've heard stories from our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents as was the original tradition.

This understanding through oral history went against the grain of historians and anthropologists who needed that written account to legitimize a people. In my own family, my mother told me stories about her Taíno great-grandmother and how her ways of living and being had passed down to each generation, mother to daughter, eventually reaching her and then me. For example, my mother often spoke of how her grandmother and aunts taught her to live off the land. To this day, she can grow vegetables anywhere, even in the hardest of soils in Boston, MA. Historical documentation spoke of the Taíno in the past tense, as if they had perished forever, yet Puerto Ricans spoke of the Taíno as if they had never left. I spent years trying to come to terms with what I read against what I was taught and felt deep in my soul: that the Taíno, my ancestors, lived within me.

In 2018, while finishing up a doctoral program in arts and education, I read an article published on Smithsonian.com titled, "Ancient DNA Contradicts Historical Narrative of 'Extinct' Caribbean Taíno Population." This article chronicled a research project into the DNA of an ancient tooth found in a one-thousand-year-old skeleton. This skeleton was found in the Bahamas and was of a human who predated Columbus. Through the DNA found in this tooth, researchers were able to track the migration of Arawak people from islands in the Caribbean and discovered that present day Puerto Ricans had the most Taíno DNA. That was it. That was the "truth" that lived in my blood. See! We are still here! My mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother—as well as many other Caribeños—had shared that truth with the world, but now science backed up what we already knew.

Something reawakened inside me—a need to honor my ancestors by digging deeper and learning more about how they had ensured their survival. I wanted to understand the lengthy history that caused the Taíno to try and blend in with their oppressors—to hide in plain sight. And I felt strongly that my Taíno ancestors had instilled in me, my family, and other people of Taíno descent a deep-seated sense of survival based on love for one's family, land, and culture, and a profound respect for nature. With renewed vigor, I continued to research and learn. I read all I could on the Taíno. I read work by anthropologists, scientists, fiction writers, and children's book authors (see the list of references at the end of this note) but I wasn't satisfied. I had yet to find a story that presented the Taíno as strategic—a people who understood that genocide was happening and fought back in ways that ensured their survival. I also wondered how historical trauma affects our present-day lives, how the past is connected to the present, and how we articulate the pain and loss of a major part of history through our contemporary lenses. But I couldn't find a work of fiction or nonfiction that shared what I wanted to understand or express.

At a 1981 speech to the Ohio Arts Council, the late amazing literary genius Toni Morrison said, "If there's a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it." I took those words seriously, which is what set me on the journey to write *The Moonlit Vine*. A book to name how vital the Taíno were to not only my survival, but also the survival of my family and many, many others. A book to show how much their joy, intelligence, and love continue to shape me and others to the present day. They are more than just the people who warmly greeted Christopher Columbus and welcomed him to their islands. They are family. This novel is my way of sharing my deep gratitude and respect for them. And I truly believe they were guiding me through this process, ensuring this work would have an audience. I hope this story will resonate not just with Puerto Ricans but with all of us who feel untold history in our blood and have stories to share because of it.

*The Moonlit Vine* weaves in historical chapters and content into a contemporary work of fiction. Through this structure, I've shown how historical trauma makes itself known within the lives of present-day descendants of the Taíno and how colonial oppression still exists. Not all of the characters in the book are works of fiction. Anacaona and Caonabo are very real historical figures—royalty in the Caribbean before Columbus. I chose Anacaona to begin the matrilineal line to the present-day fictional character of Taína, because Anacaona is Taíno royalty most Caribbean folks have heard of, and Anacaona worked diligently to keep her people safe. I also wanted to show ancestral unity between Caribbean islands that have Taíno ancestors like Haiti, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico.

Other Caribbean islands have Taíno ancestors, but I focused on the islands where I could have a connective story arc with Anacaona. Since she ruled in present-day Haiti, I imagined that her daughter, Higüamota, made her way across that island to short-term safety on Mona Island. Higüamota (aka Higuemota) is a real, historical figure.

She was the only recorded child of Anacaona and Caonabo. However, there is no written knowledge of what happened to her. She may have died as a child or lived until adulthood.

I wondered what she would have had to do to survive. I imagined her receiving important artifacts from her mother and finding her way to Ámona or Mona Island (La Isla de la Mona to Spanish speakers). Mona Island, which lies between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, is currently not a

habitable island. Yet there is known Taíno activity there. Archeologists have found Taíno cave drawings, establishing their inhabitation of the island. It was easy to imagine Higüamota hiding there for a time on her travels to nearby Mayagüez, Puerto Rico.

The Taíno have influenced present-day America. Have you ever swung in a hammock? The Taíno invented them. While they didn't have a written language, their words have endured. Words like hamaca (hammock), as well as barbacoa (barbecue), canoa (canoe), tabaco (tobacco), yuca, and huracán (hurricane) have been incorporated into both Spanish and English languages.

Finally, the purpose of my doctoral research was to focus on narrative techniques that support liberation and healing of young people who have been marginalized by systemic racism and oppression, and yet this novel took a very personal turn by supporting my own liberation and healing. The healing was unexpected. I had not written creatively for many years and diving into my curiosity and research to support this narrative awakened the creative side of my brain. I began to place my research into a context with real, modern-day people, neighborhoods, and larger societal issues. *The Moonlit Vine* describes how the themes I was encountering in my research play out in schools, communities, and homes. The biggest theme I wanted to convey is that young people have power. They can change their personal life trajectories as well as the quality of life in their communities. This is why Taína, our fourteen-year-old protagonist, discovers and uses her power through the understanding of her history. Her awakening to her ancestral history plays out in the resilience of her present-day life.

I have been humbled and honored to bring Taína to life. Taína is not only me but also many young girls I see in my community, who are beautiful, powerful, and able to do so much more than society tells them is possible. My niece Tori texted me after reading a draft of the book, "Taína is soooo bold!" Yes, she is, and creating her channeled my own need to be bold. It took me a long time to find my voice again as a writer and as a creative person, and the amazing Taíno, my ancestors, and my fictional character, Taína, both gave me personal power. I hope *The Moonlit Vine* inspires others to reflect, act, and be bold." –Elizabeth Santiago, author

Please check out the additional resources at the end of the book

- Anacaona and Caonabo Ancestry
- Key Moments in Puerto Rican History

### Colorism

Ty's family member makes microaggressions about Abuela's hair and skin color along with other comments about Isabella having "good hair". It is important for students to be aware that these comments can be harmful. Learning for Justice has created a toolkit for "What's 'Colorism'?" with resources and tips on how to teach about Colorism in the classroom (<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/fall-2015/toolkit-for-whats-colorism>).

### Resources for Educator on Gun Violence and Trauma

The Perez family and Denton community experience trauma throughout *The Moonlit Vine*. This can be triggering for students, and it is important as educators to talk and listen to students' feelings about traumatic events that occur in the community and around the world. See the following resources below for additional information on how gun violence is affecting young people and how to support students and the school community:

- Learning For Justice, Gun Violence in Schools (<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/gun-violence-in-schools>)
- Chalkbeat, "Stop the Shooting": Inside the effort to protect students from neighborhood gun violence (<https://www.chalkbeat.org/2022/9/13/23349462/students-shootings-community-gun-violence-school-security>)
- Center for American Progress, Gun Violence Is Having a Devastating Impact on Young People ([www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/06/YouthGunViolence-factsheet.pdf](http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/06/YouthGunViolence-factsheet.pdf)) and Community-Based Violence Interruption Programs Can Reduce Gun Violence (<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/community-based-violence-interruption-programs-can-reduce-gun-violence/>)
- Edutopia, 8 ways to Support Students Who Experience Trauma (<https://www.edutopia.org/discussion/8-ways-support-students-who-experience-trauma>)
- Healthy Children, Childhood Exposure to Violence (<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Crime-Violence-and-Your-Child.aspx>)

### Resources for Supporting Students Experiencing Bullying and Racism

Beatriz, Ty, Vin, Luis and other characters in *The Moonlit Vine* experience different instances of racism and bullying both at the hands of teachers and peers. These situations can be triggering for students. Since it's critical to understand the harm that racist ideologies can affect individuals and communities, here below are resources for additional information on how to support students and teachers:

- Teaching for Tolerance, "Let's Talk! Discussing Race, Racism and Other Difficult Topics with Students" ([www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/general/TT%20Difficult%20Conversations%20web.pdf](http://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/general/TT%20Difficult%20Conversations%20web.pdf))
- Center for Racial Justice in Education, Resources for Talking About Race, Racism, and Racialized Violence with Kids (<https://centerracialjustice.org/resources/resources-for-talking-about-race-racism-and-racialized-violence-with-kids/>)
- ¡Colorin Colorado!, Talking About Racism and Violence: Resources for Educators and Families (<https://www.colorincolorado.org/talking-about-racism-and-violence-students-resources-educators>)
- National Education Association, Teaching with an Anti-Racist Lens (<https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/teaching-anti-racist-lens>)
- Edutopia, A Guide to Equity and Antiracism for Educators, (<https://www.edutopia.org/article/guide-equity-and-antiracism-educators>)

## Resources for Educators on Addressing School Discipline and Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline

*The Moonlit Vine* addresses the school-to-prison pipeline and how young people are affected by police and discipline practices. This situation can be triggering for students. It is important that teachers educate themselves and students on the harm that these oppressive systems can cause individuals and communities. See the following resources below for additional information on how to support students and teachers:

- Anti-Defamation League, School Discipline and the School-to-Prison Pipeline ([https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/school-discipline-and-school-prison-pipeline?gclid=CjwKCAjwsvujBhAXEiwA\\_UXnAI\\_djXLaxDkEO4jAREUK\\_loPUBbJzuQohHukx-QpAF1H6tLEtkaTJ5BoC5qUQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/school-discipline-and-school-prison-pipeline?gclid=CjwKCAjwsvujBhAXEiwA_UXnAI_djXLaxDkEO4jAREUK_loPUBbJzuQohHukx-QpAF1H6tLEtkaTJ5BoC5qUQAvD_BwE))
- Learning for Justice, The School-to-Prison Pipeline ([https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/spring-2013/the-school-to-prison-pipeline#:~:text=The%20school%2D-to%2Dprison%20pipeline%20starts%20\(or%20is%20best,into%20the%20criminal%20justice%20system.\)](https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/spring-2013/the-school-to-prison-pipeline#:~:text=The%20school%2D-to%2Dprison%20pipeline%20starts%20(or%20is%20best,into%20the%20criminal%20justice%20system.)))
- National Education Association, What Educators Can Do to Help Dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline (<https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/what-educators-can-do-help-dismantle-school-prison-pipeline>)

## BEFORE READING

### Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

- Why do you think learning family stories is important? Have you ever asked your grandparents, aunts or uncles, parents, or other adults in your life about what it was like for them when they were kids? What did you learn?
- Have you ever stood up for something or someone? Was there ever a time when you stood up for something that you believed in, even if others disagreed with you? How did it feel? What did you do?
- What strategies do you use when you're sad or scared? What kinds of techniques do you use to make you feel better? How did you come up with ways that help you in times of need?
- Have you ever been in a difficult situation where you didn't know what to do? Who did you go to for help? What plan did you come up with to tackle the situation? How did this situation make you feel?
- What does it mean to be a friend? What are the qualities of friendship? How do you support your friends? Why is it important to be loyal to your friends and defend them?
- What does it mean to be resilient? How do you demonstrate resilience even though something may be challenging? Why is it important to be resilient? Do you think it can be learned? How so?

- Ask students to think about their family and what family means to them. How is family important to you? How do you interact with your family members? How do you help them?
- What does the word “freedom” mean? What does freedom mean to you? What about independence? Are freedom and independence different from each other? How?
- Ask students why it’s important to acknowledge traditions and cultures that are different from their own. For example, what prior knowledge do students have about Puerto Rican history? Why is it essential to learn about different cultures in the United States and around the world, even if you do not identify with that particular culture or tradition?
- Why is bilingualism important? If you are bilingual (or speak more than two languages), what does it mean to you? If you are not bilingual, why do you think those languages are significant to that person?

You may want to have students journal their responses to these questions or pose the final question as a KWL discussion and chart so that you can refer back to it throughout and after the reading of the book to further their thinking on the topic(s).

### Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1; Craft & Structure, Strand 5; and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)  
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

- **Book Title Exploration:** Talk about the title of the book, *The Moonlit Vine*. Ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?
- **Book Walk:** Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, table of contents, author’s dedication, the chapter line art, the ancestry, timeline, historical figures, bibliography, author’s bio and author’s note at the end. Display the book and analyze the cover. What do students notice in the illustrations?
- **Read Elizabeth Santiago’s biography:** Read about Elizabeth Santiago on the jacket back flap and her author’s note. Encourage students to think about what could have been her inspiration for writing *The Moonlit Vine*.
- Encourage students to stop and jot in their reading notebooks during the read-aloud when they: learn new information, have an emotional reaction or an idea, have a question, or see new words.
- Have students write feeling(s) in their notebook during reading. After reading, ask students why they wrote that feeling down and have them write a journal entry about it. Have students complete one journal entry per each reading session.

## Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- what happens to Ty (Taína), her friends and family
- the importance behind the family heirlooms
- who are the Taíno people and what is their history
- how to confront harmful representations and racism
- how Ty, her family, and friends change over the course of the book, and what events cause those changes
- how young people show resilience through difficult times
- how the support from family and friends during difficult times is important
- why it's important to advocate for yourself and stand up for your beliefs, identity, culture, and traditions.
- how and why trauma can affect people differently
- how Ty manages and copes with complex emotions while her life is changed forever

Encourage students to consider why the author, Elizabeth Santiago would want to share this story with young people.

## VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

The book contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below.

Encourage a variety of developmentally-appropriate strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: Look at a photo or picture that represents the word, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, explain the meaning of a word to a partner, act out the meaning of a word, explain how the meaning of one word is the similar and different to another word.

### Content Specific

yucca, yautia, hibiscus, areítos, yucayeque, bohio, amulet, Zemís, shamans, polyester, truce, corridor, linoleum, motif, cacophony, quell, cologne, disinfectants, alcapurrias, merengue, sazón, bachata, muchacha, flaca, bacalaítos, quemé, throes, Alzheimer's disease, myriad, colozinadores, colonizers, ridículo, cacique, warmongers, loincloth, catapult, hammock, rhetorical, ornate, rift, café, lithe, proclamation, omens, reggaeton, relic, caldero, suficiente, sabor, plantains, granules, jovial, hologram, curvaceous, grimace, hysterics, miniscule, majesty, güiro, oppressors, decipher, snide, cassava, maravilloso, comer, heirlooms, disassociation, mundane, momentito, bilingualism, abyss, soothsayer, cálmate, truce, boisterousa



## Academic

caress, waning, descent, unadorned, brute, beckoning, luminescence, contemplated, transfixed, lulled, fidgeted, eligible, flanked, shrewd, enveloped, punctuate, taming, wayward, mimicked, prominently, bearers, vigorously, reluctantly, incurable, shrouded, secrecy, perplexed, imperceptible, unnerving, squirmer, rambled, melancholy, propelled, simultaneously, coveted, mercifully, accentuated, engrossed, peered, unintelligible, electrocuted, bristled, obscured, swiveled, scurried, retaliating, estranged, extricated, engulfed, ferocity, enormity, inconsolable, embalmed, reprimand, trudged, absentmindedly, stoically, berated, ruminating, sullen, pensive, disheveled, subdued, emanated, dilapidated, dutifully, imprinting, reiterated, earnestly, admonishing, scathing, unceremoniously

## AFTER READING

### Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite textual evidence with their answers.

### Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

### Chapters 1–10

1. What do you observe about the chapter illustration of the Prologue? Where is Jaragua in present day?
2. Why is Higüamota weeping? What does Anacaona tell her?
3. What does Anacaona say to her daughter when she hands Higüamota the zemi and amulet? What instructions does she give to Higüamota about the amulet?
4. Why does Ty blame her mother for her brother and father being gone?
5. Why is Ty apprehensive about the new after school creative writing program? Why does her mother refuse financial aid?
6. What is Ty's real name? Who is she named after?
7. What history does Ms. Neil have with the family? What did she do to Vincent?
8. What is the situation between Alex and Eddie? Eddie and Ty?
9. How does Ms. Neil respond when Ty apologizes? What is Ty thinking as she is apologizing?
10. What is happening in the Dent community? How does Ty feel about what is happening?
11. What does Esmeralda explain to her mother about the situation with Ms. Neil? What is Esmeralda's response?
12. What does Ty do with all the things Abuela tells her? Since what age has Ty been doing this?

13. Where is present day Amoná in Puerto Rico? What story does Higüamota share with Guanina? What do you observe about the chapter illustration of Amoná, 1530?
14. What feeling does Ty have towards the moon?
15. What is the relationship like between Milagros and Ty's family? What type of comments does Milagros make?
16. What is the relationship between Juana and Isaura like?
17. What do you observe about the chapter illustration of Borikén, 1550? What is Borikén also known as? Why is Guanina fleeing to Borikén? How does Guanina memorize the cave drawing of Anacaona? What does Guanina find comfort in on her journey to Borikén?
18. What is different about Eddie when Ty sees him at the park? Who shows up at the park? How does Ty feel about Eddie's change in character?

### Chapters 11-20

19. What information does Alex give Ty about his fight with Eddie?
20. Why is Benny worried about Abuela?
21. Why is Ty having a hard time feeling happy to enjoy family moments?
22. What happens when Abuela barges into Ty's room?
23. Describe the different family heirlooms that Abuela hands down to Ty.
24. What does Ty discover when she goes to check in on Abuela?
25. What do you observe about the chapter illustration of Yagüeca, 1634? Where is Yagüeca in present day Puerto Rico? How is Guaynata related to Casiguya? How does Spanish colonization change the Borikén that Guaynata once knew? What does Guaynata share with Antonia? What does reminder does Guaynata leave Antonia with?
26. Why does Luis ask Ty if it was Abuela's ghost he had seen last night?
27. How does Ty feel after the passing of her abuela? What does she question?
28. Why did Eddie feel forced to join the Night Crawlers?
29. What final information does Alex give Ty about the day he got into a fight?
30. What tribal messengers has Ty seen? What do they mean? Who taught her what the messengers mean?
31. Who does Ty meet at the library? What does Ty learn from meeting this person?
32. What do you observe from the chapter illustration of Mayagüez, 1760?
33. In what year did Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria de Mayagüez become an official town? What is the significance of the name Mayagüez?
34. What musical instrument did the Spanish bring to the island? What musical instrument is Taíno? What are the origins of the drum?

35. How does Cristina describe her daughter Rosa? Why does Cristina say that their world is changing? What does Cristina share with Rosa?
36. What definition of oppressors does Ty discover after her conversation with Sofia?
37. What is gentrification? What connection does Ty make between gentrification and her ancestors? What is a coqui?
38. What explanation does Tía Juana give about why things do not get fixed quickly after a natural disaster in Puerto Rico?

### **Chapters 21-30**

39. Why is Esmeralda taking out her anger with Ty and Luis?
40. What new information is Ty learning from the book she checked out at the library?
41. When did Isaura inherit the box with the family heirlooms? What year does Ty inherit the box?
42. How does Tía Juana know about the items? What does Tía Juana tell Ty about the conflict her and Isaura had over the items?
43. Why is Alex not safe in Dent?
44. Why does Ty ask Jose about the name Atabey? What does Jose explain?
45. What tribal messenger does Ty spot outside her window the night of Abuela's funeral? What does Ty do about this?
46. What Taíno words are still used till this day?
47. What happens to Ty after she drops Luis off at school?
48. What do you observe from the chapter illustration of Mayagüez, 1919? How old was Ides when she received the scared objects? What did Ides's mother, Anna, tell her when she passed down the objects? How does Ides describe Clara? What type of list is inside the scared box?
49. What year did Puerto Rico gain independence from Spain? When did the Puerto Rican people gain U.S. citizenship?
50. What does Ty learn about the Taíno history? Why is there not much recorded?
51. How does Ty describe Denton Elementary? Why is she at Luis's school?
52. Why does Alex want to come home? Why does Ty not want him to come home?
53. What do you observe from the page illustration of Mayagüez, 1972? What do you learn about Isaura and Juana's relationship? Why does Juana apologize to Isaura?
54. What message does Ty receive when she is at school? What does she find out when she gets to Luis's school?
55. What are the names the Taínos had given to the Caribbean before the others changed them to the present-day names? Haiti? Cuba? Puerto Rico? Dominican Republic?

### Chapters 31–Epilogue

56. Ty and her mother realize they need more than a police report and voicemail to the superintendent to bring attention to what happened to Luis. What idea does Ty have?
57. What happens when Esmeralda finally reaches her breaking point?
58. Why did Professor Martinez go into journalism? Why does Sofia also want to be a journalist?
59. Why is the family in uproar over Milagro's comment? What does Uncle Benny do?
60. What happens as the Perez family is gathered after the incident with the brick? What does Alex do? Who shows up to their house?
61. What situation does Esmeralda explain to the police officer? What does the police officer do?
62. How much danger is Alex in? What does Ty do about this?
63. Why does Ty call everyone to the park in the neighborhood? Why does Ty open the amulet? What is the result of this community gathering?
64. Where do they find Eddie and Alex? What does Jayden do when confronted?
65. What is the community thinking after gathering at the park? What are they saying and recounting about this experience?
66. What happens when Professor Martinez shares her article online? What is the response?
67. What happens between Esmeralda and Alejandro?
68. What solutions do Vin, Ty and Beatriz suggest to address the issues that they are facing at school and in the community?
69. What do you observe from the illustration of Chapter 40?
70. At the end of the book, what is the status of Ty and Esmeralda's relationship? What have they talked about and addressed?
71. How does Ms. Carruthers help Ty with Ms. Neil?
72. What prayer does Ty say as she is walking home from the park? Why does she say this prayer? What does it mean?
73. Why is the illustration at the end of the Epilogue important? What does the illustration mean to you after reading *The Moonlit Vine*?

### Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What does the title *The Moonlit Vine* mean to you after reading? Why do you think the author chose this particular title?
2. How does Ty's character change and evolve from the beginning of the book to the end of the book?
3. Why do you think it was important that the author discuss the history of the Taíno? Why was

- it important to share with the reader the story of Anacaona and Caonabo along with their lineage?
4. What role does community play in *The Moonlit Vine*? What does community mean to you after reading this book?
  5. How does Ty use her passion for freedom of expression to fight for what she believes in? Who helps her with this? What does this show you about the true meaning of friendship and family?
  6. Ty's mother had a confusing childhood and never felt like she belonged anywhere. Why do you think she felt that way? Why is this an issue that many first generation and second generation Americans identify with?
  7. What is gentrification? How does the author connect this to Ty's ancestors? What do Ty and her community do to fight against it? Why is important to show that there is power in numbers and in community?
  8. What does family mean to you after reading this story? Have any of your perceptions or feelings toward family members changed after reading this book? How do Ty's relationships with her family members inspire you to act toward your own family and friends?
  9. Ty wonders why she was not taught Taíno history in school. Why do you think that Taíno history isn't traditionally taught in U.S. schools?
  10. Why does Ty reflect on what Abuela once told her: "M'ija, sometimes you have to take people's crap to keep the peace, but don't ever let them conquer you. You have too much strength to keep it hidden."? How does this speak to Ty's passion for speaking up for what you believe in? How does this connect to the history of her ancestors?
  11. How has violence and gun violence affected Ty's family and community? What does gun violence look like across the United States today? What does violence look like across the world?
  12. As the reader, when the interviewer, Professor Martinez, asks Ty, "We think readers will want to know how this has affected you as his big sister who is also in school," what do you feel as you hear Ty's response? Why do you feel this way?
  13. Recount how Ty describes her school environment with Ms. Neil and how she describes Luis's school, Denton Elementary. What do you learn about the school-to-prison pipeline? Were you familiar with this term before? If not, what other information would you like to learn about regarding this topic?
  14. What does Ty reflect on at the end of the book? What do you think she realizes? What lesson(s) does Ty learn at the end of the story?
  15. Explore the structure of this text. Does the story describe events chronologically, as comparison, cause and effect, or problems and solutions? Why do you think the author structured the text the way she did? How does this story compare to other texts you have read?
  16. Why do you think the author decided to include historical chapters throughout *The Moonlit*

*Vine*? What did you learn from reading about the history of Anacaona and the matrilineal society? What did you learn about the history of Puerto Rico? What do you learn about the Taíno in past and present history?

- 17.** As a reader, how did you feel throughout the book? What thoughts and emotions did you experience as you read *The Moonlit Vine*? What did you learn about what it means to fight for what you believe in? How did this story connect to your life? What moments did you identify with? Why?
- 18.** Read Elizabeth Santiago's "Author's Note." What inspired her to write this story? How can our own lives and experiences be mined for inspiration? How can real life be used in fiction writing?

### Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. Suggest that students respond in independent or collaborative writing, artwork, or oral discussion. You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

- 1.** What is one big thought (takeaway or reaction) you have after reading this book?
- 2.** Think about how Ty navigates and experiences trauma throughout *The Moonlit Vine*. How does she process trauma and change during the story?
- 3.** What do you think is Elizabeth Santiago's message to the reader? Think about possible motivations behind her intentions for writing the book. What do you think she wanted to tell her readers?
- 4.** Have students make a text-to-self connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to your own life? What do Ty's experiences, thoughts and feelings mean to you?
- 5.** Have students make a text-to-text connection. Did you think of any other books while you read *The Moonlit Vine*? Why did you make those connections?
- 6.** Have students make a text-to-world connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to what you have seen in the world or on the news? Why did *The Moonlit Vine* make you think of that?
- 7.** How do Ty's actions in *The Moonlit Vine* demonstrate her determination and persistence? How does Ty handle difficult situations? Why is it important for her to problem solve?
- 8.** What different type of conflicts are presented in *The Moonlit Vine*? Discuss Ty's conflicts within herself, with her family, with her friends, and conflicts in the world. Compare and contrast the different conflicts within the text.
- 9.** Have students write a book review after reading *The Moonlit Vine*. Consult ReadWriteThink's lesson plan on how to teach students how to write book reviews (<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/what-think-writing-review-876.html>). Students can also refer to other book reviews for references. What did they enjoy about *The Moonlit Vine*? What would they tell a friend or another person who wants to read the book? Students can share

their book reviews with small groups or the whole class.

### Multilingual Learners Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)  
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Learners and multilingual learners. The book language used may differ from children's oral language.

1. Assign Multilingual Learners to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Review each chapter and chapter title. Have students summarize what is happening in the chapter, first orally, then in writing. Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about one of the characters in the book. Have them discuss what characteristics they admire about the person they chose.
5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose Multilingual Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.
6. The book contains different Spanish words. Have students highlight them in the text, and then record them separately. Have students look up their definitions and share their knowledge about these words, if applicable.
7. For Spanish speaking students, *The Moonlit Vine* is also available in Spanish: *Claro de Luna* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/claro-de-luna>).
8. Consider consulting <https://www.multilinguallearningtoolkit.org/> for more ideas on how to support Multilingual Learners.

### ACTIVIDADES EN ESPAÑOL PARA APOYO EN PROGRAMAS BILINGÜES Y DE INMERSION DUAL

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)  
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

For the CCSS in Spanish, please check out <https://commoncore-espanol.sdoe.net/CCSS-en-Espanol/SLA-Literacy>

1. Asigne el libro *Claro de Luna* a sus estudiantes. Coloque dos estudiantes juntos para leer el libro en voz alta. Compare las palabras en inglés y en español. ¿Cómo se comparan las palabras? Los estudiantes pueden practicar las palabras que tengan dificultad en pronunciar.

Estudiantes pueden tener un cuaderno con las palabras difíciles para hacer referencia en el futuro.

2. Durante el tiempo de tiempo de lectura, haga preguntas de comprensión a los estudiantes en inglés y en español para medir el nivel de comprensión en los dos idiomas. Preguntas pueden incluir: ¿de qué se trata el cuento? ¿Conectaste con uno de los personajes en el cuento? ¿Por qué sí o no? ¿Qué parte te gusta más en el cuento?
3. Elija palabras de vocabulario. Los libros ilustrados bilingües son una excelente manera para que sus estudiantes aprendan nuevas palabras de vocabulario porque el idioma se presenta en contexto. Si es posible, haga fotocopias de las páginas. Estudiantes pueden usar subrayadores en un color para inglés y un color para español para las palabras nuevas. También, puede anotar las palabras en un póster para referencia. Reflexione con sus estudiantes sobre cuales palabras ya sabían y cuales palabras aprendieron.
4. En casa los estudiantes pueden pre-leer el libro con sus familias y puede sugerir que lean el libro juntos. Esto ayuda a practicar la lectura y a aprender de los dos idiomas, inglés y español.
5. El uso de cognados puede ser útil en libros bilingües, en español y en inglés. En esta actividad estudiantes pueden buscar cognados en el libro. Los estudiantes pueden trabajar en parejas para identificar y formar una lista si las palabras son cognados verdaderos o falsos. Al final de la actividad es importante distinguir como clase la lista de los cognados verdaderos o falsos.

Estas actividades solo son sugerencias. Puede encontrar más recursos para apoyar las clases de inmersión dual y bilingües. Puede leer más en (<https://blog.leeandlow.com/2013/11/04/using-dual-language-and-bilingual-books-in-third-and-fourth-grade>), un recurso flexible para grados K-12.

### Social and Emotional Learning

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4-6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 6)

Social and emotional learning involves being aware of and regulating emotions for healthy development. In addition to understanding one's own feelings, strong socio-emotional development allows individuals to develop empathy for others and to establish and maintain relationships.

Use the following prompts to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of this book.

1. How does Ty demonstrate persistence and resilience throughout *The Moonlit Vine*? Identify a scene from the story that exemplifies how Ty is resilient. What made you choose this passage? How did it affect you and what did you learn from Ty after reading *The Moonlit Vine*?
2. What kinds of emotions does Ty struggle with? How do these emotions affect her thoughts and actions throughout the story?
3. Throughout the story, Ty resents that her cousin Isabella can enjoy her teenage life without many adult responsibilities. Have you ever felt a pressure like the one that Ty is feeling—like to be responsible for others' care or to have many responsibilities at home and at school?



What does this pressure feel like and what are some strategies that you use to overcome those feelings?

4. What are the coping strategies and techniques that Ty uses after the passing of her Abuela? How does she evolve in her coping strategies throughout the story?
5. Ty, her friends and family face discrimination in school. How do you respond to prejudice or discrimination? When you experience it yourself and/or when you see it happening to others?
6. How does trauma affect Ty and her family members differently? How do they each cope with the trauma that they face? Think of specific examples and characters in the book
7. How has a family member impacted your life? How do you think Ty's family has inspired her? Provide evidence from the story to support your ideas.
8. Encourage students to identify passages where characters manage and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways. In a chart with four columns, write: What was the cause of the conflict? What was the consequence of the conflict? How does the character(s) resolve the problem? What are additional ways the character(s) could have solved the problem? What advice would you give?
9. Choose an emotion that interests you: happiness, sadness, fear, anxiety, frustration, hope, perseverance, and so on. Illustrate or act out what that emotion looks like in *The Moonlit Vine*.
10. Have students go on a Social and Emotional Learning scavenger hunt in the text, looking for evidence in the details from the book. Assign students to relevant Social and Emotional Learning themes, such as: empathy, problem-solving, perspective taking, perseverance, and recognizing and managing emotions.

## INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

### English/Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3; Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6; Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9; Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3; Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6; Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9; Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3; Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Prepare a persuasive essay that explains your views on which character changed the most throughout the course of the novel.** Defend your views by citing specific examples. Track their change through evidence from the book over the course of the story. What did you notice about how they changed? Readwritethink.org “Inferring How and Why Characters Change” lesson plan provides additional details and ideas on how to teach about character change (<https://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/inferring>)

characters-change).

- **Encourage students to watch the book trailer** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-moonlit-vine>) **for *The Moonlit Vine* and examples of student-made book trailers.** If the necessary equipment is available at school or in students' homes, encourage students to record and edit their own book trailers for *The Moonlit Vine*. For ideas, check out this Creating Reading Excitement with Book Trailers lesson plan (<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroomresources/lesson-plans/book-report-alternativecreating-c-30914.html>) by ReadWriteThink.org.
- **Have students identify a character that changes throughout the book.** At what point do students think that this character changed? How does the character feel before the change, what causes the change, and then how does they feel after? Create a graphic organizer with a column on the left that says "Before," a column in the middle that says "Event—what happened that caused the change," and then a column that says "After." Afterwards, students can write an essay detailing their findings from the graphic organizer, and what they learned from analyzing the character's change.
- **Select a scene in which you disagreed how a character handled a situation, person, or event.** In the voice of that character, rewrite the scene as you think it should have happened. Here are a few resources on how to teach voice in writing (<https://www.teachwriting.org/612th/2020/1/29/teaching-voice-in-writing-a-guide-for-creative-teachers>) and (<https://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/teaching-voice-anthony>). Have students share their writing pieces afterwards, and reflect on what it was like to think about the characters differently.
- **Assign students different characters from the book and have them brainstorm about a guiding question: what and how can this character teach us?** Students can think about different characters to examine as a whole class and then break into smaller, specific character groups. Encourage students to think about how characters have made mistakes and have also done good things in the book, and ultimately what they learned from that character. Have students share out their findings: How is this character important to the book, and what lessons did they teach us over the course of the story? How did their actions develop the narrative, and why are they crucial to understanding the meaning of the book?
- **The rich and varied language used by Elizabeth Santiago in *The Moonlit Vine* provides an opportunity for students to develop their vocabulary skills in authentic contexts.** Challenge students to learn and practice using the academic and content-specific words listed in this teacher's guide:
  - Before reading: Provide students with a list of the vocabulary words to sort into categories (e.g. very familiar, somewhat familiar, unfamiliar).
  - During reading: Have students make note of the vocabulary words as they encounter them in *The Moonlit Vine*. They can underline, highlight, or keep a log. Have students predict what the words mean based on context clues.
  - After reading: Have students work in pairs to look up the definitions of the "unfamiliar"

words on their combined lists. Were their predictions correct? Post the new vocabulary words on your word wall.

- **Envision a sequel to *The Moonlit Vine* and have students title the second book.** What do they think it would be called? Then, students can write the first chapter to the second book. What do they imagine is happening with Ty? Is she keeping her promise to Abuela? What is going on with the rest of the family? Have students write creatively in the first (or more) chapters in their self-titled accompaniment. Students can also create a cover for the book: for more details on the question about creating a cover see the Art/Media section of this guide.
- **Have students come up with a list of questions to ask author Elizabeth Santiago.** What do students want to know about the process behind writing a children's book? How did the author come up with the idea to write *The Moonlit Vine*? Consider contacting Elizabeth Santiago and inviting her to your school, library, or other relevant setting for a virtual author visit.
- **Have students read the Author's Note from Elizabeth Santiago.** What did they learn from the Author's Note after reading the story? How did it make them think differently about *The Moonlit Vine*? What is Elizabeth Santiago's perspective and why did she decide to write this story? Have students write a reaction essay to the Author's Note, and present 3 follow up questions Elizabeth Santiago.
- **Have students go through the Author's Backmatter and read about the different inspiring Borriqueños.** Have students pick an inspiring Borriqueño that they would like to know more about and have them conduct a research project on that person. Students can present their findings to the class via poster or slide show.
- **In an essay, poem, or other written format, have students share something that's important to their identity, using inspiration from Ty in *The Moonlit Vine*.** How is this critical to who they are? Why is this important to students, and how does it make them feel to show people their true selves? Why is it essential to be who you are? Students can share with a partner, small group, or the whole class.

### Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1-3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4-6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10) (Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10) (Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **Conduct a research study on oppressive school discipline and the School-to-Prison-Pipeline.** Ty and Luis both experience the harsh reality of oppressive school discipline and the School-to-Prison-Pipeline. Encourage students to learn more about what the School-to-Prison-Pipeline is and how it affects students and communities today (<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/spring-2013/the-school-to-prison-pipeline>). What did students learn about the School-to-Prison-Pipeline? What did students learn about the who is in the pipeline? What can communities do to fight back against these oppressive systems? Have students write an essay detailing their findings.

- **Investigate the history of the Taíno.** In Ty's research, she discovers that Puerto Ricans have the most Taíno DNA. Have students research the history of the Taíno. Who are the Taíno? Where are they from? Where did they live? What is their story? Educators, consider following this lesson from Teaching for Change (<https://www.teachingforchange.org/teaching-about-tainos-columbus-indigenous>). Additional information and digital collections about Taíno are available at Centro, Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College, The City University of New York (<https://centroca.hunter.cuny.edu/>). Have students create a visual presentation and present their research findings to the class.
- **Have students read this article by the Zinn Education Project** (<https://www.zinnedproject.org/if-we-knew-our-history/whose-history-matters-taino>) **and have them reflect on why Taíno history is not widely known.** What new information did students find after reading the article? What did they already know? How does this information make them feel? What do they wish they could know more about? Have students reflect on the article and write a short response. Students can share their reflections in groups or with partners.
- **Have students find a map of Indigenous Boriken and compare it to map of present day Puerto Rico.** What do students notice about the names of the native map? What do students notice of the present-day map? Why do they think the names changed? What other similarities or differences do they notice? Students can share their reflections with a partner. For a map of Indigenous Boriken visit (<http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/41/299.html>).
- **The Taíno influenced many of the words we use in present day.** What Taíno words do we still use till this day? What inventions do we use that were created by the Taíno? What foods did they cultivate that are still in use today? Students can consult the Author's Note for this information as well as this article from Smithsonian Magazine for more information (<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/what-became-of-the-taino-73824867/>) and create a chart of words that they found.
- **Have students find a historical Taíno map of the Caribbean Islands and compare it to a map of present day Caribbean Islands.** What do students notice about the names of the pre-Columbian map? What do students notice of the present day map? Why do they think the names changed? What other similarities or differences do they notice? Students can share their reflections with a partner. For an Indigenous map of the Caribbean Islands, visit (<https://decolonialatlas.wordpress.com/2014/11/27/taino-and-island-carib-territories/>).
- **The Taíno had to flee to Borikén, which is present day Puerto Rico, to escape from the colonizers.** Have students study a map and observe the distance between the western side of Puerto Rico and measure the distance from the Dominican Republic. Students can use Google maps as a tool to measure the distance between both countries. What is the distance that the Taíno had to travel? How do you think they traveled from present day Dominican Republic to present day western Puerto Rico?
- **Conduct a research study on the oppression of the Taíno by the Spanish colonizers.** Students can refer to the Author's Note to learn more about Taíno history. Guiding questions to ask: When did the oppression of the Taíno begin? How did the Spanish invade and occupy Taíno land? How did it impact individuals, communities, and the area as a whole, as well as the whole world? What connections does Ty form about the oppression her ancestors faced compared to

the oppression her people face in present day? Additional resources that students can consult, (<https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/article/section/pre-colonial-history/taino-indigenous-caribbeans/>) and (<https://gsp.yale.edu/case-studies/colonial-genocides-project/hispaniola>). Afterward, have students reflect on what they learned and display the information that they collected in a visual presentation.

- **Research the individual events presented in the Timeline in the back of *The Moonlit Vine*.** Divide students into groups to conduct a research study on each grouping of events. What did students find? What kinds of resources were they able to look at and get information from? Create an enlarged timeline in front of the class and students in their groups can add photographs and other pieces of information. Afterward, the class can reflect on what it was like to conduct detailed research on events and what they learned from the process.
- **Encourage students to learn more about the ancestry of Anacaona and Caonabo.** Have students read the Backmatter in *The Moonlit Vine* that shows the ancestry of Anacaona and Caonabo. Place students into groups and have them read through the ancestry and create a family tree of the ancestry based on *The Moonlit Vine*. If time allows, students can illustrate their family trees with images of the items that were passed down as well as any additional information that they learn in the descriptions. Groups can present their family trees to the class if time allows.
- **Have students research the food dishes that are mentioned in *The Moonlit Vine*.** Various Puerto Rican foods and dishes were mentioned in *The Moonlit Vine*. Have students identify the different foods that were discussed in the book, find photographs, and compile recipes to create a Moonlit Vine cookbook for the class. What were the typical ingredients (spices and herbs) used in these dishes?
- **Have students identify themes in *The Moonlit Vine* and connect them to present-day issues.** Provide students with a graphic organizer that has "Themes in *The Moonlit Vine*" in the left-hand column and "Present-day Issue" in the right-hand column. Explain to students that they need to list themes from *The Moonlit Vine* and present-day issues that relate to that theme. Once the graphic organizer is complete, have students select one theme and one present-day issue and write an essay explaining the connection between the two in more detail. Why did they pick this theme to focus on, and what are the implications in our society today? Consider modeling the theme of "colonization" in *The Moonlit Vine* and connecting it to the gentrification of communities like Denton. Brainstorm with students how and why these two themes connect, and then have students write an essay about a different theme from their organizer.

### Arts/Performing Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1-3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4-6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10) (Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10) (Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **For the question about the sequel activity in the English/Language Arts section, have students draw a cover image for their follow-up to *The Moonlit Vine*.** What kind of materials do they want to use for the cover? Encourage students to consider what they think will happen in the second book, and how that reflects the artwork for the cover. How can

they use the current cover to inspire their work?

- **Have students illustrate the different items that are passed down to Ty.** Students can search through *The Moonlit Vine* to find descriptions of each of the items. Have students share their illustrations with a partner, small group, or whole class.
- **Citing textual evidence, select a theme portrayed in the novel, *The Moonlit Vine*.** Create a visual presentation with illustrations, drawings, and any other creative materials to reflect how this theme is developed over the course of the text.
- **Have students illustrate a feeling one of the characters experienced in the story.** What do they want to convey? Students can think about a particular scene that stood out to them from *The Moonlit Vine* featuring the character of their choosing. What kinds of materials do they want to use? Have students share their pieces with a partner, small group, or whole class.
- **Have students reimagine the cover to *The Moonlit Vine*.** What would they change? What would they keep? If time allows, have students illustrate a new book cover.
- **Analyze the chapter art for *The Moonlit Vine*.** Have students think about the different symbols that are present on the chapter and create a graphic organizer with columns according to each of the symbols (i.e. the flowers, the baby, etc.). Underneath each symbol, have students explain what they think it means and why it's important to the story.
- **Have students identify the different music genres that are mentioned in *The Moonlit Vine*.** Music is present in much of the story, for example, when Ty goes to the market, the music she hears playing throughout her community, as well as the music her family plays at home. Have students identify the different music genres that are mentioned in the book. Assign groups of students a music genre and have them research the history of each music genre. Students can find song examples of the music and compile different school appropriate songs to create a Moonlit Vine playlist for the class. Students can then compare each music genre and present their findings to the class. Consider consulting these resources for additional support: Bachata (<https://www.npr.org/2008/07/31/93140350/the-humble-roots-of-old-school-bachata>) and (<https://www.danceus.org/bachata/>). Salsa (<https://musicorigins.org/item/puerto-rican-salsa-music/>) and (<https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/pathways-through-salsa.htm>). Merengue (<https://merenguetipico.org/history/>) and (<https://www.masterclass.com/articles/what-is-merengue-music-and-dance>).
- **As a follow up to the previous activity of identifying the different music genres mentioned in *The Moonlit Vine*, have students make the connection between the different music genres.** What are the cultural influences in each music genre? What musical instruments are used? Where do these musical instruments originate? Have students present their findings in groups and discuss as a class. Consider consulting the following resources for additional support (<https://www.history.com/news/origin-latin-music-styles>), (<https://www.benvaughn.com/puerto-rican-music-a-fusion-of-african-european-and-indigenous-influences/>) and (<https://latinomusiccafe.com/2020/09/01/guiro-guira-and-guicharo-the-guira/>)

## Home-School Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9) (Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10) (Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **Have students interview a parent, guardian, or adult mentor about their experiences with fighting for something they believe in or going through a hardship.** How did this person react to and handle the situation when they were faced with obstacles? What advice do they have for someone trying to take up a cause and stand up for justice? What advice do they have for someone who has been abused or silenced?
- **Encourage students to interview family members about a favorite or impactful childhood memory.** How did that event influence the family member? How did it affect the person's life moving forward? Consider having children, if comfortable, share their findings with a partner, a small group, or whole class.
- **Similarly, ask students to speak with family members about their cultures and how their cultures are special to them.** What is unique about each person's culture? How did it influence the person throughout life?
- **Have students reflect on a family member or friend who has made a difference in their life.** Ty's grandmother is a positive influence on her and teaches her a lot about life lessons. Students and families can discuss how this family member or friend made an important impact on their life and why.
- **Encourage students to share what they learned from reading *The Moonlit Vine* with their families.** For students familiar with the Taíno history, what was it like to read a book that centered that? For students unfamiliar with Taíno history, have them start a discussion with their families about what they learned and what it was like to read about the horrors and atrocities that Taíno faced.



## Ordering Information

### General Order Information:

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Elizabeth Santiago** grew up in Boston, MA with parents who migrated from San Sebastián, Puerto Rico in the 1960s. The youngest of nine, Elizabeth was entranced by the stories her mother, father, aunts and uncles, and community elders told her. Later, she sought to capture and honor those narratives and share them with the world. She earned a BFA in creative writing from Emerson College, a master's in education from Harvard University, and a PhD in education studies from Lesley University. She still lives in Boston with her husband Kevin and son Ezekiel, but travels to Puerto Rico as often as she can to feel even closer to her ancestors, culture, and heritage. Find her [@liznarratives](https://twitter.com/liznarratives).

## Reviews

"Filled with arresting prose and historical stories, this novel brings Puerto Rican history into the present, mixing in realistic themes to which most readers will relate. The Spanish edition (*Claro de Luna*) publishes simultaneously.." – **starred review**, *Booklist*

"Readers will cheer for the bold, resourceful protagonist as she uses her new-found power to bring everyone she cares about together to save loved ones and create positive change in her neighborhood. Mayle's evocative black-and-white art and interstitial chapters centering Ty's ancestors through the centuries round out the contemporary storyline. Deeply moving, beautifully written, and inspiring" – **starred review**, *Kirkus Reviews*

"Via evocative third-person prose, Santiago proudly showcases Taíno culture in this empowering debut that is at once educational, realistic, and speculative." – *Publisher's Weekly*

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