

Alma and How She Got Her Name

By: Juana Martinez-Neal

Alma Sofia Esperanza José Pura Candela had a long name --- too long if you asked her.

"My name is so long, Daddy. It never fits," Alma said.

"Come here," he said. "Let me tell you the story of your name. Then you decide if it fits."



"Sofia was your grandmother," he began.
"She loved books, poetry, jasmine flowers, and, of course, me. She was the one who taught me how to read."

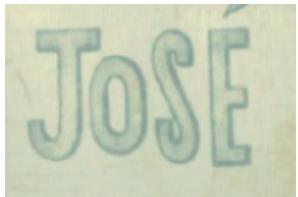
"I love books and flowers . . . and you, too, Daddy!"
I am Sofia.



 "Esperanza was your great-grandmother," he continued. "She hoped to travel, but never left the city where she was born. Her only son grew up to cross the seven seas. Wherever her sailor son went, so did Esperanza's heart."



"The world is so big! I want to go see it, Daddy. You and me together." I am Esperanza.

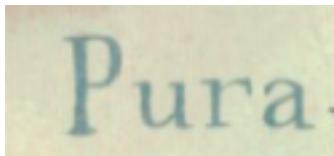


"José was my father," Alma's daddy said. "He was an artist with a big family, like many people had back then. Early each morning, he walked to the mountains and the plazas to paint everyday life. Sometimes I went along. Your grandfather taught me to see and love our people."

"I wake up early every day, and I draw a lot, too! This morning, I drew a kitty cat for you, Daddy!"



I am José.



keep you safe.”

“Pura was your great-aunt. She believed that the spirits of our ancestors are always with us, watching over us. When you were born, she tied a red string around your wrist: a charm to



“Candela was your other grandmother. She always stood up for what was right.”

I am Candela!



“I love the story of my name! Now, tell me about *Alma*, Daddy. Where does that come from?”



“I picked the name Alma just for you. You are the first and the only Alma. You will make your own story.”

Alma Sofia Esperanza José Pura Candela!

“That’s my name, and it fits me just right! I am Alma, and I have a story to tell.”