

## **Carmela Full of Wishes**

Words by Matt de la Pena  
Illustrations by Christian Robinson

**Sit back and enjoy the story and illustrations.**

**Introduce yourself and tell your group your first impression of the book or if it reminds you of anything in your life.**

Matt de la Pena and Christian Robinson have worked on several books together. Some of you read their first collaboration, *The Last Stop on Market Street*.

butt in - interrupt or intrude on a conversation or activity

EX: He kept on butting in with silly comments. Sorry to butt in on you like this, but there's an important call.

tag along - to go somewhere with a person or group, usually when they have not asked you to go with them

EX: I don't know her, she just tagged along with us. James doesn't want his little brother to tag along.

small talk - conversation about things that are not important, often between people who do not know each other well

EX: I don't enjoy parties where I have to make small talk with complete strangers. I soon learned how to make small talk with people at formal receptions.

stop in one's tracks - To stop at the exact spot where one is and stay motionless.

EX. They stopped in their tracks and stared at him in amazement. The economy stopped dead in its tracks as a result of the global pandemic. The sound of Samantha's angelic voice on the radio stopped me dead in my tracks.

**Read the story with your group.**

**Discussion questions:**

Why is this day special to Carmela?

Describe Carmela's family situation. Where are her parents? What jobs do they have? What are her brother's responsibilities?

What was Carmela about to do when her brother butted in? Why did she lie to her brother?

Does the relationship between Carmela and her brother seem realistic? How does their relationship compare with you and your siblings?

When they were at the laundromat, Carmela did things "one-handed" and "one at a time." What does this mean and why did she do things that way?

In the story, Carmela and her brother sometimes communicate without words. Give an example and tell what the person communicated.

Why does Carmela jingle her bracelets? Why does she take them off at the end of the story?

What are Carmela's wishes?

Have you ever wished on a dandelion? What are some other traditions (or superstitions) for making wishes?

"She stared down at the dandelion in her hand. It seemed so much more important now that she knew it was a place to put her wishes. What if she made the wrong choice?"

Why did Carmela pick the dandelion at the beginning of the story? How did Carmela's feelings about the dandelion change from the beginning of the story to the end of the story?

Why didn't Carmela want to cry when the dandelion was crushed?

What are the main ideas in the story?

Do you have a favorite illustration? Why did you choose it?

Traditional cut paper art in Mexico is called papel picado. In Texas, we most often see this around Cinco de Mayo and the Day of the Dead. Is there a tradition of cut paper art in your country? How does it differ from the illustrations in the book? Have you made any?

It is popular these days to make a vision board. A vision board is a visual collage of images and words that represent your goals and dreams in life. Some people believe that keeping a vision board where you can see it every day will help you achieve your goals or bring these desires into your life. Have you ever made a vision board? Was it helpful?

Today I read this: "Wishes are often goals we find hard to achieve." Do you agree?