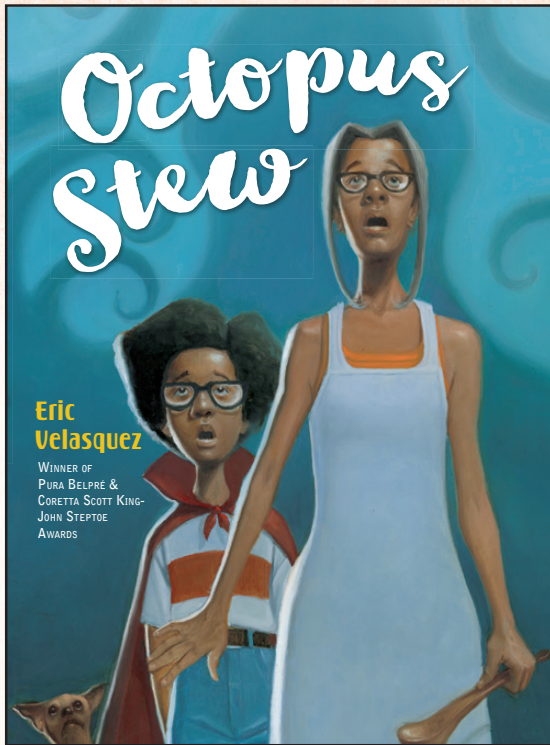


# HOLIDAY HOUSE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



Grades  
Pre-3



HC: 9780823437542 · E-book: 9780823443895

## OCTOPUS STEW

ERIC VELASQUEZ

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Two stories in one! The octopus Grandma is cooking has grown to titanic proportions. Open the fold-out pages to find Ramsey telling a story to his family. Keep the pages folded, and Rasey's octopus adventure is real.

This beautifully illustrated picture book, drawn from the author's childhood memories, celebrates creativity, heroism, family, grandmothers, grandsons, Puerto Rican food, Latinx culture, and more.

### CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

#### Literature/Language Arts

- **Fiction vs. Nonfiction**—In the story, Ramsey's grandma buys a huge octopus, and when she starts to make stew the octopus escapes from the pot and captures her. Ramsey is able to save her by drawing a picture of a ferocious shark that scares the octopus, which then releases Grandma. Have students review the incidents in the story to determine which are actually possible and which are impossible. Ask students to indicate the moment in the story when they knew it wasn't real. Introduce the terms *fiction* and *nonfiction*. To help students understand the differences between them, ask them to suggest a list of story events that would fall under each category. K-2.RL.1,3,5; K-2.SL.2
- **Humor**—Ask students to discuss the events in the story they found to be funny, and why.
- **Opinion**—The author presents two possible versions of this story, as shown in the four-page center fold-out. Ask students to decide which version they prefer, and why. K-2.W.1
- **Author's Note**—The author explains the traditions of his own Afro-Latino family in sharing stories, art, music, etc. Ask students to describe any traditions in which their own families participate when everyone gets together. Some may even have family stories to share with the class.



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#OctopusStew



## Art

- **Illustrations**—Ask students to look carefully at the illustrations, and to point out how the artist shows the action of the story by the different expressions on the characters' faces (including the dog's!). Make a list of the emotions shown: happiness, sadness, wondering, fear, determination, curiosity, relief. Have students draw faces showing these different emotions. K-2.RL.7; K-2.RI.7

## Research

- **Animal Facts**—Explain that authors sometimes use factual information, even though they are writing an imaginary story. Help students find books or articles about octopi and sharks to determine whether they are really enemies; whether sharks actually eat octopi; their relative sizes, habitats, and behavior; and any other helpful facts about either. They can then create a fact chart for each animal. K-2.W.7

## Online Resources

- **Octopus**—The following site presents a great photo and interesting facts about octopi:  
<https://oceana.org/marine-life/cephalopods-crustaceans-other-shellfish/giant-pacific-octopus>
- **Sharks**—The following site presents a great photo and information about sharks and their prey:  
<https://oceana.org/marine-life/sharks-rays>

Guide created by Sandy Schuckett, school library consultant.

Photo Credit: Elizabeth Rosario



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**ERIC VELASQUEZ**'s awards include the John Steptoe/Coretta Scott King Award for new talent, a Pura Belpré Award, an NAACP Image Award, and a Carter G. Woodson Award.

For Holiday House, he both wrote and illustrated *Looking for Bongo*, and he illustrated *Ol' Clip-Clop: A Ghost Story* by Patricia C. McKissack (Anne Izard Storyteller's Choice Award Winner, Georgia Children's Book Award, Bank Street Best Children's Book of the Year—Outstanding Merit) and *New Shoes* by Susan Lynn Meyer (Jane Addams Peace Association Children's Book Award, Bank Street Best Children's Book of the Year, New York State Reading Association Charlotte Award).

The son of Afro-Puerto Rican parents who encouraged music and storytelling, Eric grew up in Spanish Harlem, in New York City. As a child, he loved superheroes, comics, and drawing, much like the boy in *Octopus Stew*.

He teaches illustration at the Fashion Institute of Technology and lives in New York.

