

## Esperanza tricks Señor Death but soon realizes that death is a necessary part of life.

"Gray's small yet masterful tweak to this adapted Spanish fable creates quite the twist..."—*Booklist*



Ages 8–12  
Guided Reading: Q  
Lexile™: 590L  
Interest Level: Grades 2–6  
Grade Level: 4

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### The Pear Tree

A folktale retold by Luli Gray  
Illustrated by Madelyn Goodnight

In this retelling of a folktale, an old woman named Esperanza (originally called Tía Miseria) gives her last pear to a beggar and is rewarded with the best pear crop she's ever had—and the power to ensnare anyone she wants in her tree. When Señor Death comes for her, Esperanza tricks him into climbing her tree, where he becomes stuck, unable to come down and do his work. From that point on, no one dies. But when Esperanza learns that the end of death doesn't mean the end of suffering, she agrees to let Señor Death down from her tree. The final work by legendary children's author Luli Gray.

**JUVENILE FICTION / Fairy Tales & Folklore / Adaptations •  
Legends, Myths, Fables / General • Social Themes / Death & Dying**

- An upbeat retelling of a folktale told in many places
- Helps assuage children's fears of death and the unknown
- Humorous, philosophical tale that helps children understand difficult concepts of mortality and immortality
- An afterword by the publisher encourages children and adults to consider why the author may have changed the story the way she did



LUISA "LULI" GRAY (1945–2017) was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Though she always considered herself a writer—of mostly letters and comic verse—she did not begin writing fiction until 1987. She traveled to and lived in many places around the world before moving to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where she lived the rest of her life. Her first novel, *Falcon's Egg*, was an ALA Notable Book.

MADelyn GOODNIGHT grew up in Oklahoma where her family encouraged her to explore anything and everything and shared a deep connection to their Native American heritage that emphasized the magic of storytelling. With each new book or piece of art that she makes, she's always trying to convey that magic. Madie uses a wide range of media and outlets for her art so that it is as diverse, energetic, and playful as the children who are seeing it.