

Love Kneads Remembering

For the past two weeks Ana has been getting ready for an important event in her family. Dia de los Muertos begins on October 31st and is celebrated until November 2nd. Dia de los Muertos is a mixture of Aztec and Catholic traditions. Ana is excited to be a part of the family tradition again this year.



As her grandmother explained to her, family members who have passed away should be honored every year. Ana happily remembers dancing in the town parade as she and her family walked to the cemetery. Many of the local shops have special flowers, food and decorations during this time of year because so many people come to visit. Many people save their money for months to use to travel and buy things. These flowers and decorations are put on the graves of their family members at the cemetery. This will complete the ofrendas (altars) made to honor their family members. Yesterday, Ana visited the local flower shop

and bought several flowers for the celebration.

The celebration allows families to help each other care for the cemeteries as well. Ana's uncle David and her cousin Juan Carlos have been caring for the family cemetery. Many other family members, including Ana, come and help them by picking up

sticks and dead pieces of grass



to make sure the cemetery looks nice. She remembers walking home last year and looking at the beautiful cemetery filled with flowers.

Ana's favorite memories are the time she spent *en la cocina* (in the kitchen) with her grandmother and mother. She remembers how her grandmother would pull her hair back and place an apron around her neck, so that she would not get too messy. Ana's grandmother was a wonderful baker, and sold many types of *pandulce* (Mexican



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sweet bread) to the local community.

When Ana was in elementary school, her class joined the local Dia de los Muertos parade. These parades were colorful and some people even dressed up in skeleton costumes! For this celebration, the skeleton is used to try and take away the fear of death.



For many years, Ana's mother carried on the tradition of baking for their family during Dia de los Muertos. Now, it is Ana's turn. As she kneads the dough for the bread, she remembers her grandmother's smile, her smell and her arms around her as they kneaded the bread together. Her grandmother would ask "*Cariña, quieres me ayudarte*" (Sweetie, would you like me to help you)? Ana would have loved to mix the bread herself but she wasn't strong enough. Her grandmother was always able to help her and the bread was always kneaded perfectly. As they prepared the food her grandmother would tell her stories of family members

who had passed away. This year's celebration is even more important, as it is the first year they will honor her grandmother. You see, Ana's grandmother passed away earlier that year.

While some people think Dia de los Muertos is only for dressing up and having fun, Ana thinks of the traditions she shares with her family. As she remembers her family traditions, her hands squeeze into the hands of her daughter's hands as they knead the dough together. Now, she gets to share and pass down this family tradition to her own daughter.

