

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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What If a Fish.

By Anika Fajardo

Aug. 2020. 240p. Simon & Schuster, \$17.99 (9781534449831). Gr. 4–6

After his best friend moves away, Eddie spends his summer waiting for his half-brother, Big Eddie, to visit from Colombia. Inspired by his late Papa, Eddie decides to enter a fishing contest, certain that his brother will be able to help him. But when Big Eddie's abuela becomes ill, he cancels his trip, and Little Eddie finds himself flying to Colombia to spend time with Big Eddie and Abuela, who wants to get to know him. As her condition worsens, Little Eddie spends more time with her, learning about Papa and his first wife and thinking about the life his parents shared before Papa passed away. Along the way, he discovers the magic of Colombia, the different ways people experience loss, and the importance of family. Fajardo's honest, heartfelt text evokes sorrow and grief but also understanding, navigating the many complexities of identity, friendship, family, loss, and death. Threads of magical realism, woven carefully into the story, are sure to leave readers pondering the magic present in their own lives.

— *Selenia Paz*