



### Discussion Questions: *Ramón and Julieta*

“Words, Words, Words” Book Club—November 2022

1. What are your first impressions of the novel? If asked, what would you say this novel is about?
2. Were you familiar with *Romeo and Juliet* before reading this story? What echoes of Shakespeare’s plot did you notice? If you weren’t familiar with *Romeo and Juliet*, did you feel something was lacking or does the story stand on its own?
3. *Ramón and Julieta* is one of a number of Latinx romance retellings of *Romeo and Juliet* that have come out in the last few years. What about Shakespeare’s play and/or its history of performance do you think lends itself to these adaptations?
4. Gentrification is a central theme in *Ramón and Julieta*. Is it possible to retain an area’s cultural heritage during development? Why or why not?
5. How did geography contribute to the story? As the narrative moved between locations, did it affect how you received the plot?
6. Albertson introduces a parallel love story in the history between Ramón’s father and Julieta’s mother and gives reason for the ill feelings between the families, which Shakespeare never provides. Did understanding the origins of the conflict affect your feelings about the outcome?
7. Arturo was once heavily involved in the fight for his community, but gradually lost his investment. Do you think the same fate will befall Ramón and Julieta?
8. This is the first in a series of Shakespeare retellings Albertson plans to set within this community, the next being an adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew*. What do you expect to carry over? What could be improved upon?
9. The story begins and ends with Día de los Muertos celebrations. What does this novel have to say about grief, memory, and cultural tradition?
10. *Romeo and Juliet* takes place over five days and tells the story of teenagers, whereas *Ramón and Julieta* concludes a year after its opening scene and follows the romance of mature adults. Do you think if Shakespeare’s characters had had more time/maturity their story would have ended differently? To what extent do you think the trajectory of love depends on timing?