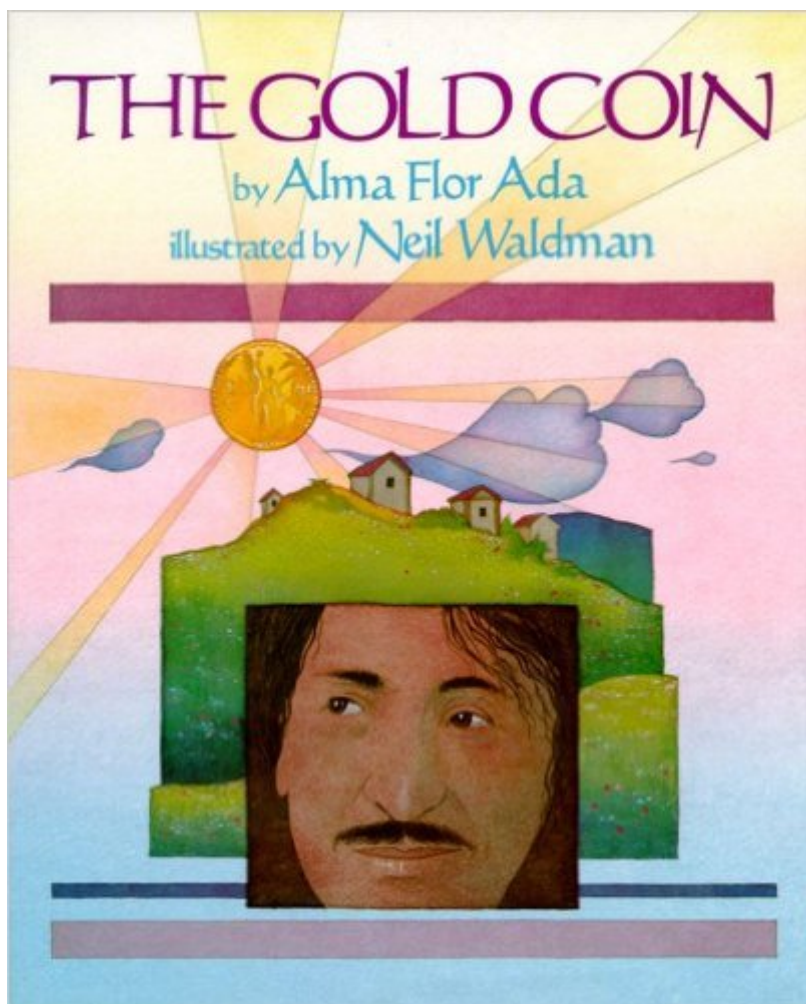


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# The Gold Coin



## Synopsis

Juan has been a thief for many, many years. So many, in fact, that he can't even remember what it's like to be anything else. When he tries to steal Doña Josefa's gold, something strange begins to happen to Juan. His skin becomes tan instead of pale, his body straight instead of bent, and his mouth smiles instead of scowls. Juan also begins to remember things. He remembers eating good, home-cooked food, being among friends, and laughing. When the opportunity arrives for him to take Doña Josefa's gold, another strange thing happens. Juan realizes he can't. Maybe he isn't a thief anymore. Set against a Central American background, this is a story of love and faith in the human spirit.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 550L (What's this?)

Paperback: 32 pages

Publisher: Atheneum Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (March 1, 1994)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0689717938

ISBN-13: 978-0689717932

Product Dimensions: 8 x 0.2 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (12 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #341,630 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #114 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Central & South America](#) #306 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Hispanic & Latino](#) #3986 in [Books > Children's Books > Fairy Tales, Folk Tales & Myths](#)

Age Range: 5 - 8 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 3

## Customer Reviews

The Gold Coin is the story of Juan, a thief of experience, and his journey to find an old woman who gives away gold coins. In his quest to find her to steal away her assumed riches, Juan is forced to experience the helpfulness of strangers, depend on their kindness and enjoy with them the feeling of an honest day's labor. By the end of his travels, he has been transformed by the goodness of the people he has met. When he finally comes face to face with the woman he had intended to rob, he is a different person. Instead of taking her gold, Juan offers to mend her roof. He learns that giving

to others allows him to feel rich. The Gold Coin is a great story to read aloud. It is warm and inspiring.

Alma Flor Ada is an author who writes both in Spanish and English. Her work focuses on action over description. Her communication of the values and qualities of the culture in which she immerses her readers makes her books notable. The Gold Coin tells of a man who is twisted in body and spirit until he is transformed by honest hard work, and caring decent people. The reader is introduced to an inspirational character, Dona Josefa. Although the thief doesn't meet her until the end of the story, it is her model of goodness that shines throughout the story. The illustrations admirably reflect the changes the thief undergoes as his body becomes straighter and his face less pale and angry. There are many surprises seeded throughout the story and the ending is wonderfully satisfying. Although this is an original tale, the writing has the flavor of a folktale and the culture and landscape of Central America are authentically portrayed.

The Gold Coin is listed as multicultural and it is but you could drop the plot into any culture. It's a story about a woman with a gold coin telling herself how wealthy she is. A burglar is watching determined to take all her gold. He follows her from one place to another learning a lesson at each stop and by the time the scene comes full circle back to her house he has reformed. In the end he wants none of her possessions but does want to be a help to her. This is a must have for people with intermediate age children and teachers.

I first read this book about 15 years ago and loved it! I love that the main character changes so much from the beginning of the book to the end. The illustrations show the change his hearts undergoes in a physical way. It just a beautiful story about how hard work and kindness can change a person.

This is an excellent book. I originally found this book in our reading basal. My students loved it! I decided to search for this book as an individual title, and when I found it, I was too excited. I used this book as a read aloud with my 3rd and 4th graders. When I finished and put the book down, my students couldn't wait to get their hands on it. I loved the illustrations as well as the reading skills that I can use to teach particular skills. Great Book!

One night Juan sees something shining through the window of a little cottage. He sees a lovely gold

coin shining from the hand of an old lady. He was going to steal the gold coin from the old lady but when he went to her cottage after she had gone the coin was gone also. She went around the country side taking care of sick people. Now he had to follow the path the old lady had gone in order to catch up with her to steal the gold coin.

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