



Karla Arenas Valenti

By: Jessica Valadez & Marycruz
Fraire

About Karla Valenti

- Karla Valenti was born and raised in Mexico city
- Her Mexican heritage guides and inspires the stories she writes
- Children's book and Middle grade author
- Has three children and two cats! - Currently living in the Chicago Metro Area



Fun Facts

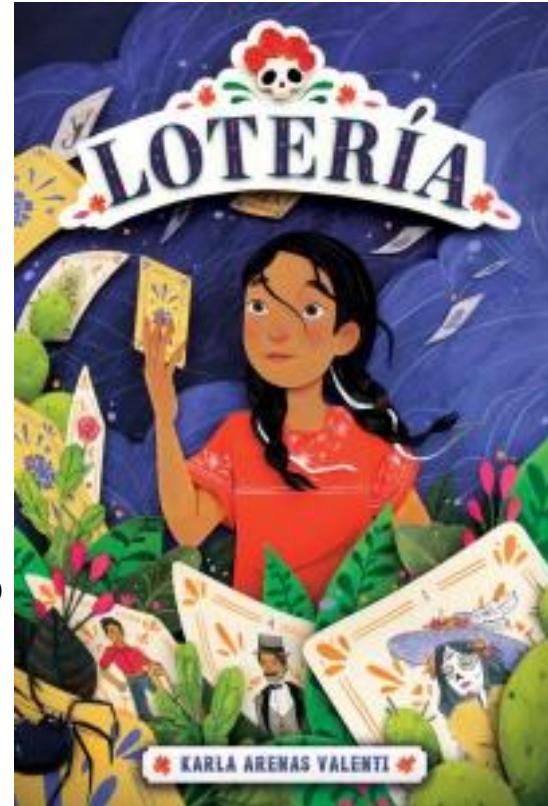
- She enjoys having long philosophical talks
- Offers a master course in picture book writing and editing
- Is part of Las Musas Writing collective, a group of Latinx writers and illustrators
- Has a blog about writing children's books and tips for aspiring writers -
<https://karlavalehti.com/blog/>



Valenti's Books

Lotería

- Released on September 7th, 2021
- Lotería takes us on Carla's journey to save a loved one, as her fate is being determined by a game of lotería played by longtime friends, life and death. Each card drawn plays a significant role that shapes what happens to Carla, as she struggles to save her loved one. Carla realizes that each of her actions have a consequence and must find a talent within herself that will help save her cousin.



Message/Themes in Lotería

- Magical realism
 - Life and Death play Loteria to determine Carla's destiny

"La Lotería was a simple game of chance. The first player to get four cards in a straight line—horizontal, vertical, or diagonal—would win. A win by Catrina would deliver Clara into her hands. A win by Life would spare the child, granting Clara a long life." (Valenti 25)

- Carla crosses through a portal into Aztlán; a realm influenced by the home of the Aztecs
- Uses death and fate to play with the possibilities and mystical elements of literature through a culturally relevant storyline



Message/Themes in Lotería

- Free will & Determinism
 - Is life our choice? Is it influenced by our past experiences?
 - Is our life predetermined? Is our life written out before we're born?
 - Questioning free will and our true power in our own lives to connect with possibilities of the future
- The theme of Death
 - In Mexican culture it is not seen as the end; there is more life even after one passes
 - Connecting the past and the future



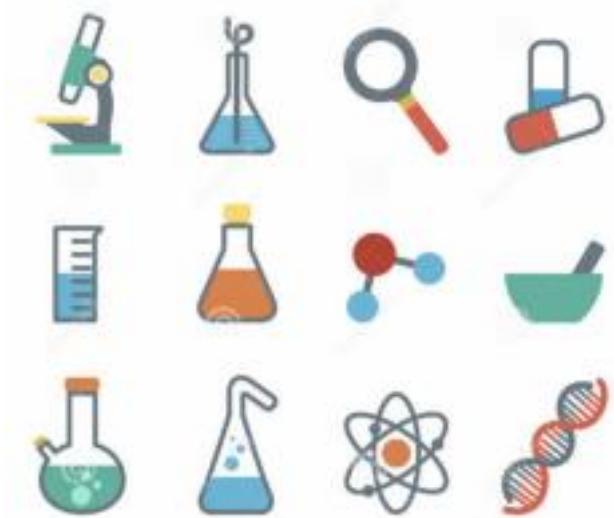
Inspiration

- Oaxaca México
 - Main setting of Loteria. Valenti had recently taken a trip there and was able to incorporate her experiences into her story
- The Gruta de Oro, based on the Grutas de Cacahuamilpa
- The kingdom of Las Pozas, is a real place
- The characters are not based on any one in particular- underlying principles and values based on family (trust, importance of family, family gatherings)
- The characters are a reflection of her experiences



“My Super Science Heroes” Book series

- This book series is appropriate for children K-4th grade
- It teaches children to embody every aspect of their identity as they are unique and can play a meaningful role in achieving their dreams
- Valenti uses scientists to showcase the many different traits people can have and highlights the ways in which they positively impacted their lives
- Encourages children to explore and embrace their different identities and pursue their dreams



Marie Curie and the Power of Persistence



- Released in 2021
- First book of the "My Super Science Heroes" book series
- Highlights how persistence can help you achieve goals by helping you overcome obstacles

Alan Turing and the Power of Curiosity

- Released in 2021
- Is the second book to apart of the series - Highlights how curiosity helps people become more knowledgeable and answer questions they have

Lotería Reviews

 "A magical, philosophical tale rooted in Mexican lore that will hold readers from beginning to end with its verdant language and setting."
- *School Library Journal*

 "From the first line of this philosophical debut, Arenas Valenti demonstrates a gift for interweaving immersive, sensory-rich storytelling with a thoughtful discussion of fate vs. determinism."
- *Publisher's Weekly*

 "Clara's unexpected decisions lead to the story's heart: 'Even when you have no choice about what has happened to you, you can still decide what you're going to do about it.' The tale is a scaffolding for this debate, and what a lush, verdant scaffolding it is. The story is filled with Mexican imagery, abundant with descriptions of food, flowers, vegetable gardens, forests, markets, and fetes, and especially of the jungle and ornate architecture, spiral stairs, curlicues, and darksome caves of Asrean. Clara's valor and littleness stand out amidst this lavish context."
- *Horn Book*

"In this marvelous blend of magic realism, suspense, and adventure, readers will be rooting for Clara to beat the odds and shape her own destiny. Valenti seamlessly infuses Mexican culture and myth into a spellbinding story that explores free will through a traditional Mexican game."
- *Booklist*

Themes in Valenti's Books

- Mythology
- Magical realism
- Identity
- Culture
- Innovation
- Philosophy





“The root of “heritage” stems from inheritance, a legacy passed on from generation to generation. In this case, the inheritance is a cultural one, passed on through food and music, fables and myths. It is a gift of history, a wealth of traditions, a bounty of stories.”

Sources

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Images

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Slide 2

- <https://karlavalenti.com/about/>

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- <https://karlavalenti.com/picture-book-critiques/>

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