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Official Bio


Mariana Ríos Ramírez is a Mexican author living in Anderson, South Carolina with her husband, two kids, and a Chihuahua dog named Rogers. She loves writing stories about diversity, kindness, friendship and perseverance; and she enjoys sharing elements of her culture, language, and traditions through her books.

Mariana has a degree in international business and an MBA degree by Tecnológico de Monterrey and Thunderbird School of Global Management in Arizona, USA. Before becoming a children's book author she worked as a high school teacher and co-owned an online business of party decorations.

Mariana is currently a member of SCBWI, Storyteller Academy, Las Musas, and Rate your Story. She's represented by Natascha Morris at The Tobias Literary Agency.

Santiago's Dinosaurios is Mariana's debut picture book. It was published by Albert Whitman & Company in October 2022. The story was inspired by her son's experience when her family moved from México to the USA in 2016. *Abuelita's Gift: A Día de Muertos Story* is Mariana's second picture book and it was published by Knopf Books for Young Readers in September 2024. It's based on the Mexican celebration of Día de Muertos (Day of the Dead), and Mariana feels honored to share about this beautiful tradition in her country. A Spanish edition is also available (*El regalo de abuelita: Un Cuento de Día de Muertos*).

Besides writing, Mariana enjoys photography, singing, traveling, watching k-dramas, and spending time with family and friends. She also loves flowers, dogs, and Chai Lattes.



Other Bios

Mariana Ríos Ramírez is a Mexican children's book author who loves sharing elements of her culture, language, and traditions through her stories. Besides writing, Mariana loves photography, traveling, and spending time with family and friends. She currently resides in Anderson, South Carolina.

Mariana Ríos Ramírez is a Mexican author living in Anderson, South Carolina. She received a degree in international business from Tecnológico de Monterrey (México) and an MBA degree in Tecnológico de Monterrey and Thunderbird School of Global Management in Arizona, USA.

Before becoming a children's book author she worked as a high school teacher for seven years and co-owned an online business of customized party decorations.

Mariana is a member of SCBWI, Storyteller Academy, Las Musas, and Rate your Story. *Santiago's Dinosaurios* is her debut picture book. *Abuelita's Gift: A Día de Muertos Story* and *El regalo de abuelita: Un cuento de Día de Muertos* are her newest books.

Mariana Ríos Ramírez is a Mexican picture book author represented by Natascha Morris at The Tobias Literary Agency. Her debut book *Santiago's Dinosaurios*, illustrated by Udayana Lugo, was published by Albert Whitman in October 2022. *Abuelita's Gift: A Día de Muertos Story* and its Spanish edition *El regalo de abuelita: Un cuento de Día de Muertos*, are her newest books. They are illustrated by Sara Palacios and published by Knopf Books for Young Readers.

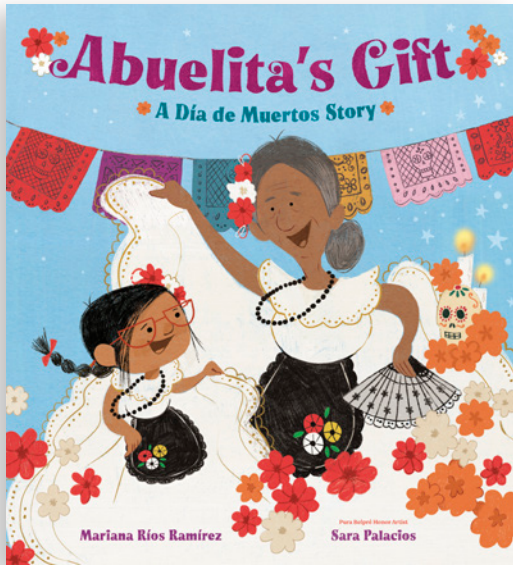
Headshots



By J. Pray Photography



About the book



Title: Abuelita's Gift: A Día de Muertos Story

Publisher: Knopf Books for Young Readers

Language: English

Hardcover: Picture Book

ISBN-10: 0593568362

ISBN-13: 978-0593568361

Reading age: 4-8 years old

Grade level: Preschool -3

Blurbs

1

Julieta is a Mexican girl who's excited about the first Día de Muertos visit of her beloved Abuelita who has recently passed away. Immersed in the folklore of her family's tradition, Julieta is determined to find the perfect gift to honor Abuelita at the ofrenda and to show how much she misses her. However, Julieta will struggle to come up with the right present as her ideas fail one by one and the celebration day comes closer. Only when Julieta embraces the memories they once shared, she'll realize the perfect gift comes from within and the connection between them will be restored forever.

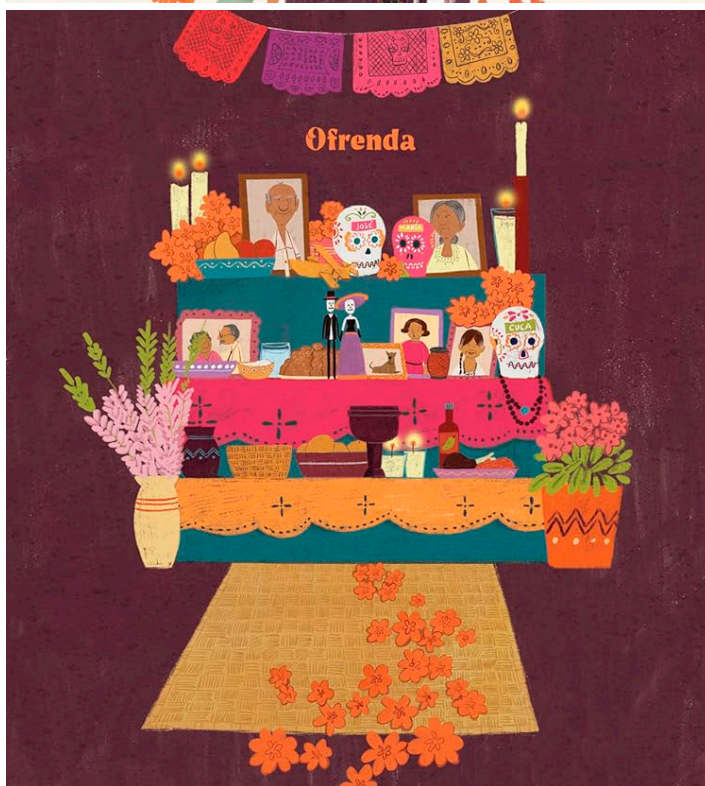
2

Julieta is eager to honor her Abuelita's spirit on Día de Muertos, but struggles to find the perfect gift. A touching story that celebrates ancestors and teaches that the most meaningful tributes come from the heart. Illustrated by award-winning Sara Palacios.

3

Julieta is excited for Abuelita's spirit to visit on Día de Muertos. She is determined to find the perfect gift to honor Abuelita and to show how much she misses her. However, her ideas fail one by one and Julieta grows worried. It is only when Julieta embraces the memories she once shared with her abuelita, that she realizes the perfect gift comes from the heart. An uplifting story about both life and death, family, and the threads that connect us, long after we are gone.

Graphics of the book



Ofrenda Elements



Calaverita
represents those who have died and symbolizes that death is part of life



Incense
cleanses the atmosphere



Candles
light the way to the ofrenda, represent the element fire



Pan de muerto
food for the souls, represents the cycle of life and death



Cempasúchil flowers (marigolds)
guide souls to the ofrenda through color and scent



Papel picado
sets a cheerful tone, represents the element air



Favorite foods
to honor those who've died and to make them happy



Personal objects
to remember the lives of dead loved ones



Fruits of the season
food for the souls, represents the element earth



Petate (puh-TAH-tay)
a woven bedroll so that the souls can rest after their journey



Glass of water
eases the thirst of the souls after their journey, represents the element water



Photographs
to show who is being honored in the ofrenda



Salt
purifies the souls

Art by Sara Palacios

Reviews



“A heartwarming story for Día de Muertos celebrations and displays.”

- School Library Journal Starred review



“A touching tribute to the pain of losing a loved one—and the joys of honoring them.”

- Kirkus Reviews starred review

“A moving tale of loss, family, and tradition.”

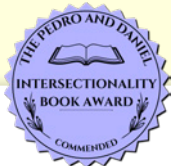
- Booklist



2025 Crystal Kite Awards - Southeast Division Winner Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators



The Best Children's Books of the Year 2025 edition Children's Book Committee of Bank Street College of Education



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2024 Transcendent Holiday Picture Books - School Library Journal

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Available for podcasts and interviews in English and Spanish.

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Mariana Ríos Ramírez



Buy the book



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