



Lotería: A Novel (P.S.)

By Mario Alberto Zambrano

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In *Lotería*, the spellbinding literary debut by Mario Alberto Zambrano, a young girl tells the story of her family's tragic demise using a deck of cards of the eponymous Latin American game of chance.

With her older sister Estrella in the ICU and her father in jail, eleven-year-old Luz Castillo has been taken into the custody of the state. Alone in her room, she retreats behind a wall of silence, writing in her journal and shuffling through a deck of *lotería* cards. Each of the cards' colorful images—mermaids, bottles, spiders, death, and stars—sparks a random memory.

Pieced together, these snapshots bring into focus the joy and pain of the young girl's life, and the events that led to her present situation. But just as the story becomes clear, a breathtaking twist changes everything.

Beautiful full-color images of *lotería* cards are featured throughout this intricate and haunting novel.

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Loteria: A Novel (P.S.) By Mario Alberto Zambrano Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Zambrano's stellar debut is proof positive that good things come in small packages. Here the good thing—dare we say, the very good thing?—is the journal/memoir of 11-year-old Luz Castillo, who has been taken into the state's custody after her father is arrested. Luz's mother has disappeared, and older sister Estrella lies dying in a hospital. Luz, whom some might label a willful child, steadfastly refuses to speak to anyone, least of all her counselor; instead, the child has opted to share her thoughts with God via written entries inspired by the pictures in a deck of Lotería cards. Zambrano's selection of the Mexican bingo-like game cards as Luz's communication vehicle is sheer genius. Not only is it the girl's favorite game because it calls up happier times, but also because the images, including a tree, a rooster, and death, spur her imagination, unearthing events that otherwise might become forever suppressed. A nonjudgmental observer of her dysfunctional environment, Luz is trying to construct her own moral compass. Although this spare, little illustrated book may seem better suited to young adult readers, rest assured that Luz's story will engage both young and old right up to, and beyond, the startling plot twist. --Donna Chavez

Review

"Lotería is the card-based Mexican variant of bingo and, in the hands of Zambrano, it's a deck stacked with narrative possibilities.... An intriguing debut and an elegiac, miniature entry in the literature of Latin American diaspora that will break your heart." (*Publishers Weekly* (starred review))

"Zambrano's stellar debut is proof positive that good things come in small packages." (*Booklist*(starred review))

"Sometimes what Zambrano leaves off the page is just as important as what's been written. This narrative sleight of hand shows Zambrano's gift for evoking great pain in stark, lyrical sketches." (*Los Angeles Times*)

"Zambrano effectively uses his string of short-story-like entries to make Luz a many-faceted diamond, hardened by life but still filled with light and beauty." (*Minneapolis Star Tribune*)

"It's a polished tome of prose unreeling the tale of plucky little Luz Maria Castillo in the game of chance called life... *Loteria* should delight and disturb any reader sensitive to the ways of children and how they think and, more importantly, how deeply they feel." (*Dallas Morning News*)

"*Loteria*...captures, from a wide-eyed yet uncloying child's perspective, the way in which life can feel a lot like a game of chance." (*Vogue*, "Summer Reads")

"Coming of Age through bingo—the weirder, magical Mexican version." (*New York*)

"[Zambrano's] debut novel...is a polished tome of prose unreeling the tale of plucky little Luz Maria Castillo in the game of chance called life.... We peer like voyeurs, artfully led by Zambrano's pacing, dialogue and comically drawn characters." (*Houston Chronicle*)

"LOTERIA is a taut, fraught, look at tragedy, its aftermath, and the stories we tell ourselves to survive. With suspense, dread, and always the possibility for redemption, we watch as Zambrano flips the cards of chance and fate." (Justin Torres, author of *We The Animals*)

“LOTERIA... is constructed as a beautiful, gripping, and lyrical set of riddles (asked and solved) about life—and—death matters in one family. Like the novels of Cortazar, its form is intricate and beautiful.” (Charles Baxter, author of *Gryphon: New and Selected Stories* and *The Feast of Love*)

“Mario Alberto Zambrano performs a lyrical and formal sleight of hand conjuring a spiritually profound and deeply moving story. *Loteria* is about everything that matters. . . . This gorgeous, one-of-a-kind debut, marks the emergence of a singular and powerful new literary voice.” (Amber Dermont, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Starboard Sea* and *Damage Control: Stories*)

“In a bold, deeply-felt debut Mario Alberto Zambrano brings us tragedy made powerful . . . These are people who hold on to each other so hard it hurts. And this moving novel will hug you too, every bit as tight.” (Josh Weil, author of *The New Valley*)

“Take the architecture of Calvino’s *The Castle of Crossed Destinies* and marry it to the wide-open childhood receptivity of McCullers’s *The Member of the Wedding*, and you might achieve something like the effect of LOTERIA.” (Kevin Brockmeier, author of *The Brief History of the Dead*)

“If a book can be a spirit, this one is lithe, beautiful, and true. Mario Alberto Zambrano brings the heart of an artist immersed in movement and music to his prose and the result is dazzling.” (Ru Freeman, author of *A Disobedient Girl*)

“*Loteria*, charms on every page, despite heartache, love and loss. . . . The beauty and joy of her voice overcomes the hardships of her life, and by the end we have fallen in love. Bravo to a marvelous debut!” (Andrew Sean Greer, author of *The Confessions of Max Tivoli*)

“Mario Alberto Zambrano’s *Loteria* is a tender, beautifully written story. In every line, Zambrano finds the happy and sad music of childhood. It is an entrancing work.” (Lynne Tillman, author of *Someday This Will Be Funny*)

“His restraint from sentimentality, his mastery of well-made sentences and his rich imagination lift words off the page—like dancers in a ballet.” (*National Post* (Canada))

“The broken tale and imaginative first-person narration lend weight to this curious novel. It’s an impressive first step for an artist exploring a new medium.” (*Kirkus Reviews*)

“In this debut novel, a Mexican-American girl uses the game of Loteria to reveal her memories, which add up to a heartwrenching tale of violence, love and a broken family.” (*Los Angeles Times*, “Summer Reading”)

“This is a smart and powerful tale, beautifully rendered by a sensitive artist.” (*Shelf Awareness*)

“An incredible first novel.” (*Village Voice*)

“This is a gripping, heartbreaking novel by a new writer who already understands the power of understatement and controlled revelation.” (*El Paso Times*)

“*Loteria* is... like stumbling onto the gut-wrenching journal of a preteen girl. It’s imaginative, mysterious, and sometimes too real.” (Daily Candy)

“...*Loteria* reaches a rare plane where it transcends its form and comes alive as a commentary on character,

family and culture.” (*Brooklyn Rail*)

“Luz’s (and by extension Zambrano’s) refusal to give in to easy condemnations of her father’s actions, beautifully highlighted by genuinely difficult arguments between Luz and Estrella, is among this novel’s most risky and ultimately successful gambits.” (*School Library Journal* (starred review))

From the Back Cover

Struggling to cope as her family falls apart, eleven-year-old Luz María Castillo retreats into her beloved set of *lotería* cards—a Mexican game featuring riddles and vibrant images. Each card represents a different memory, and as Luz shuffles through the deck, she weaves her recollections into a compelling story of love, loyalty, tragedy, and hope.

By turns affecting and inspiring, *Lotería* is a powerful novel that heralds the arrival of an outstanding writer, one who reminds us of the importance of remembering even when we are trying to forget.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Robert Frye:

The book untitled *Loteria: A Novel (P.S.)* is the book that recommended to you you just read. You can see the quality of the publication content that will be shown to anyone. The language that author use to explained their ideas are easily to understand. The article writer was did a lot of investigation when write the book, hence the information that they share to your account is absolutely accurate. You also might get the e-book of *Loteria: A Novel (P.S.)* from the publisher to make you considerably more enjoy free time.

Elizabeth Murphy:

The book untitled *Loteria: A Novel (P.S.)* contain a lot of information on this. The writer explains the woman idea with easy means. The language is very easy to understand all the people, so do certainly not worry, you can easy to read that. The book was published by famous author. The author will take you in the new era of literary works. You can easily read this book because you can read on your smart phone, or device, so you can read the book inside anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can open up their official web-site as well as order it. Have a nice read.

Jill Goulet:

That guide can make you to feel relax. This particular book *Loteria: A Novel (P.S.)* was vibrant and of course has pictures on the website. As we know that book *Loteria: A Novel (P.S.)* has many kinds or genre. Start from kids until teenagers. For example *Naruto* or *Investigator Conan* you can read and believe you are the character on there. Therefore not at all of book are make you bored, any it can make you feel happy, fun and relax. Try to choose the best book for you personally and try to like reading that.

April Miller:

A lot of people said that they feel uninterested when they reading a publication. They are directly felt it when they get a half parts of the book. You can choose typically the book Loteria: A Novel (P.S.) to make your reading is interesting. Your own skill of reading ability is developing when you including reading. Try to choose easy book to make you enjoy to see it and mingle the sensation about book and reading through especially. It is to be initially opinion for you to like to open a book and study it. Beside that the publication Loteria: A Novel (P.S.) can to be a newly purchased friend when you're really feel alone and confuse using what must you're doing of this time.

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