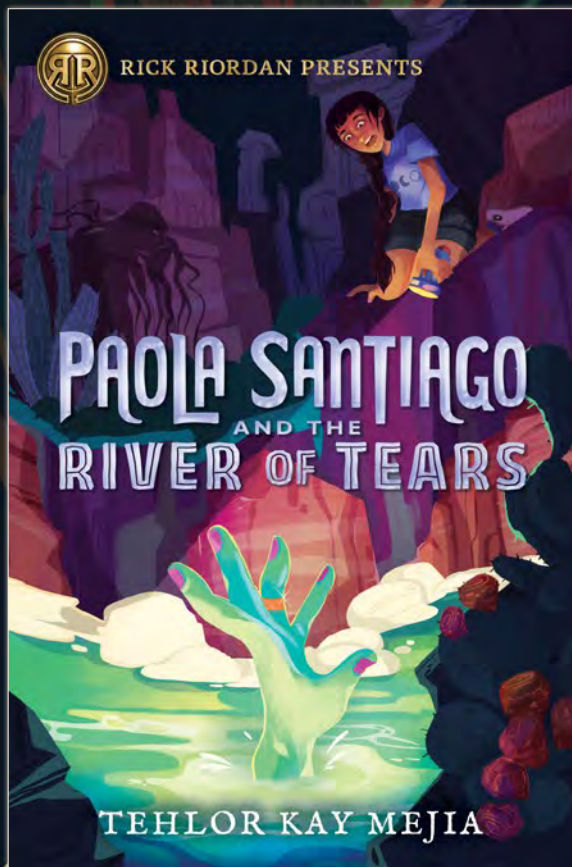




RICK RIORDAN PRESENTS

PAOLA SANTIAGO

By Tehlor Kay Mejia



EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

Disney • HYPERION

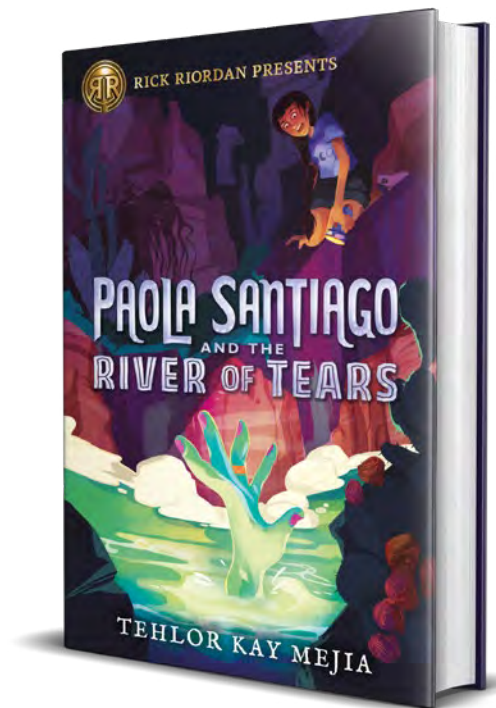
ABOUT THE BOOK

PAOLA SANTIAGO AND THE RIVER OF TEARS

Paola “Pao” Santiago is obsessed with science and discovery, anchoring her world in thoughtful inquiry. A thick tension exists between Pao and her mother, a spiritualist who believes in tarot cards and superstitions. So strong are her mother’s beliefs that she prohibits Pao from going anywhere near the Gila River, where superstition holds that La Llorona wanders and wails, looking for her children that she drowned many years ago.

Not to be dissuaded by such baseless nonsense, Pao and her two best friends, Dante and Emma, agree to meet by the riverbank for a night of stargazing. However, Emma, who was to bring the telescope, never arrives. Just before Pao and Dante leave to search for Emma, Pao catches sight of a shadowy figure in the reeds.

Armed with a flashlight, a sandal, and a bottle of Florida Water, Pao and Dante are thrust into a mission that leads them into the depths of the river, through the dark corners of Pao’s nightmares. To save Emma, Pao will have to abandon everything she holds as fact, leaving behind the logical for the fantastical.



AS-YOU-READ ACTIVITY

START YOUR OWN SPANISH-ENGLISH DICTIONARY

As you come across words in Spanish in your reading, write them down, including the page number, use context clues to help you define their meaning, and think of what the English word might be for each of your terms. You can use your self-made dictionary for a post-reading activity.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR DISCUSSION OR WRITING

1. Though Dante's and Emma's friendship means a great deal to Pao, Dante holds a special place in Pao's heart. In the last year, however, he's felt "half-in, half out to Pao, like he was always thinking about being somewhere else when they were together." Reflecting on your friendships, have you ever felt that you or some of your friends have been "half-in, half-out"? What causes friendships to become strained? Explain your answer.
2. Pao's mother would tell stories, such as the myth of La Llorona, to keep Pao from doing anything dangerous. These stories gave Pao nightmares, which she "erased with good old-fashioned research." Do you think that all stories should have to be proven in order to be important or true? Give examples of stories or superstitions that people believe even though there is no proof they are true.
3. Emma, unlike Pao and Dante, lives on the "gilded" side of town. Though she tries not to envy Emma, Pao's thoughts come out twice in the book when she thinks, "*The sun always bails on us first*," and later in the book, "disappointment in her own life took up more space in her stomach than the food." What is Pao really expressing in these two statements?
4. Pao finds herself always at odds with her mother. "They were always speaking to each other in a kind of code . . . Pao wished that, for once, they could just *talk*." Think about three issues Pao has with her mother as you read the book. Do Pao's feelings about her mother change over time? What does she learn about herself and her mom? Explain your answer.
5. In Chapter 2, Pao wakes up from a nightmare where she is being pulled underwater by a hand that is wearing Emma's ruby, heart-shaped ring. What signs or hints do you think our author is giving the reader about our story?
6. Pao and Dante reluctantly agree to meet Emma's parents at the police station to report Emma missing after she fails to show up at the river for their star viewing. Describe how the police officer treated Dante and Pao and how it made you feel. Why does Pao feel "shame" and "powerless" after they get sent home for "loitering"?
7. Pao is visited by two policemen whom she takes out to the river to the place of Emma's disappearance and tells them about the man she spotted. While they are at the river, Pao comes upon Emma's ring in the sand. What is the connection between Pao's dream and finding Emma's ring? Do you believe, like Pao, that "dreams are just electrical impulses that take things from memories" or do dreams "have a purpose in our greater journey"? Explain your answer.



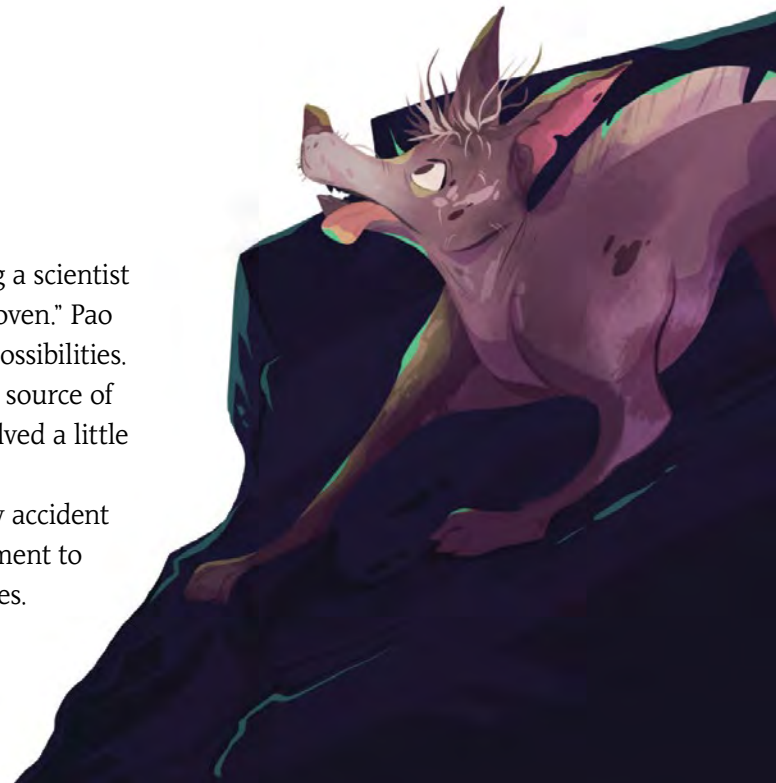
8. As the stress builds around Emma's disappearance, so do Pao's nightmares. Pao has a conversation in a nightmare with someone named Ondina who tells her, "you can't run . . . she needs you . . . don't hesitate. It won't save them." Do you believe Ondina really exists? Who do you believe Ondina is referring to in the nightmare? Is Ondina trying to help or hurt Pao?
9. Pao knows that it is up to her to find Emma, and Dante's grandmother tells Pao and Dante that "she seeks the Dreamer." Somehow, Pao knows she's the Dreamer but wonders how this is connected to Emma's disappearance. What do you believe is Pao's mission?
10. As Pao and Dante take off through the cactus forest, Pao sees the image of Marisa Martinez, the girl who drowned in the Gila River, fighting Ondina, the girl from Pao's dreams. Incredulous, Pao tries to come between them, but Marisa stabs Ondina, who then vaporizes. Marisa tells Pao, "If you're not a rift creature, this won't kill you," and proceeds to stab Pao. What is a rift and how does this relate to what Pao is seeing and experiencing? Is Pao walking between worlds?
11. Dante discovers that the light from the flashlight his grandmother gave him bends to the east when pointed at Pao, defying physics. Pao tells Dante, "None of the normal rules seem to apply, but that doesn't mean there aren't rules . . . It's just that we don't know what they are yet." Which kind of rules would apply to help Pao and Dante find Emma? Give your opinion about why or why not they should follow the flashlight.
12. In Chapters 10 and 11, we discover that Dante's chancla is an "Arma del Alma," a weapon tied to the soul of the wielder that reveals itself when it is most needed. What other fantastical stories have you read that also have *armas del alma*? What were they and what role do these *armas* play in the stories?
13. Just before Dante and Pao leave to find Emma, La Señora Mata tells them that "the third quarter is almost here, and the boundary will be crossable again. The solstice approaches." In the *campamento de los Niños de la Luz*, Sal tells Pao about the third-quarter moon—"when the veil gets thin. It's when the monsters can get through." What is the connection between the solstice, the veil, and the boundary? Do these terms mean the same thing? Explain your answers.
14. Marisa says that given the way Pao and Dante fended off the *manos pachonas*, she would be honored to have their help in the next battle. Dante does not hesitate, but Pao only cares about finding Emma and going home. Is Pao right to be selfish? What is it that scares Pao so much?
15. Pao's dreams begin to reveal clues that may help her find Emma. Should she trust Marisa with these revelations and dare to ask who Franco is?
16. To save the camp from being breached, Dante volunteers to go with Naomi. Naomi orders Pao to stay at the camp saying, "[I]f you're there, he'll be distracted. It could be dangerous for both of you." Why does Naomi say this Pao? What is happening with Pao and Dante's friendship? What was the first sign(s) in the book when you realized that things were changing between Pao and Dante?
17. Pao's flashlight turns out to be not only a compass but also a key that can ward off the rift creatures. In addition, the flashlight's power is drawn from Pao's energy. What danger does the flashlight pose to Pao if she is not careful?

18. After Sal helps her escape from Marisa and Naomi's clutches, Pao heads out into the cactus field to find Emma and Dante, knowing it means going through the rift. With her remaining energy and her newfound chupacabra puppy, Bruto, Pao takes on the passage and its demons, including her own. What realization and discoveries does Pao make as she navigates through the rift? What does she lose and gain in the passage?
19. As she forges her way to the glass castle, Pao comes upon Dante, who is in the middle of fighting off creatures. Their reunion is short-lived when Ondina locks Dante away and fights Pao for control. Shockingly, Ondina's power is stripped by a powerful voice. Pao realizes this voice was "a Source in the rift—someone who could intimidate and control the void's most fearsome creatures." Of all the creatures mentioned in the books thus far, who do you believe is behind the voice? Support your answer with clues from the book.
20. Does your opinion of Ondina change once you know the truth about her relationship to La Llorona? Do you fault Ondina for having done what she did to Pao and Dante? Explain your answer.
21. La Llorona wanted to right her wrong by bringing Ondina back to life. But in order to make that happen, Pao was going to have to trust that Ondina's desire for freedom would prevail. Do you believe Ondina can overcome her mother's will? Can Ondina be trusted to do right by everyone?
22. If you had the opportunity to harness and own the power and energy of the pearl, would you take it? What would you do with such immense power? Can you still accomplish your dreams without this energy?
23. What did it take for La Llorona to make the ultimate sacrifice?
24. Pao wanted to share with her mom what had really happened in the cactus field, but Señora Mata said, "[I]t was best to let people hold on to their illusion sometimes." Do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.
25. What is your impression of la Señora Mata after her startling revelations? Any idea what her story might be?

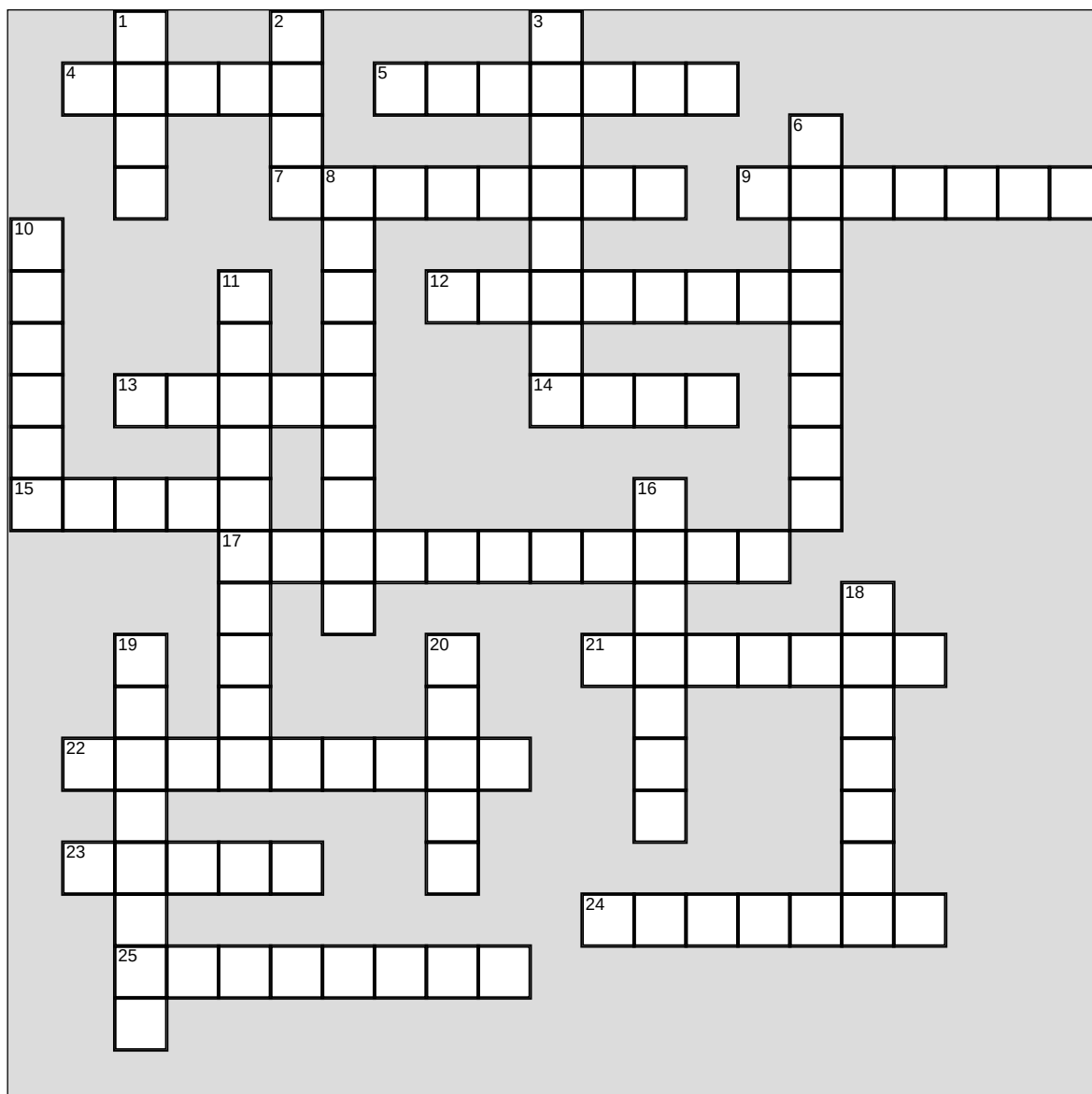
SCIENCE RESEARCH ACTIVITY

On page 129 of the book, Pao says she "always thought being a scientist meant having to dismiss things that couldn't be tested or proven." Pao also believed that "Scientists had to be open to all kinds of possibilities. Who would have thought, for example, that algae could be a source of fuel? In fact, what major scientific breakthrough *hadn't* involved a little faith in something previously believed to be impossible?"

Do research into something that was discovered either by accident or with intention that had an impact and made an improvement to society. Create a slideshow for presentation to your classmates.



PAOLA SANTIAGO AND THE RIVER OF TEARS CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 4. Spanish for pay
- 5. Spanish for heart
- 7. Spanish for lunch
- 9. Spanish diminutive for dummy
- 12. Spanish for home remedies
- 13. Spanish for beast or idiot

14. English for alma

- 15. Spanish for flame or call
- 17. English for veladora
- 21. English for ahogado
- 22. Spanish for healer
- 23. English for fantasma
- 24. A stage or phase
- 25. Spanish for listen

DOWN

- 1. Spanish for hand
- 2. Spanish for weapon
- 3. Spanish for tears
- 6. When the sun reaches its maximum or minimum decline
- 8. Wailing woman

10. English for chancla

- 11. Wild, blood-sucking dog
- 16. Spanish for herbs
- 18. Spanish for owl
- 19. English for hija
- 20. Spanish for cures

(Answers on page 12.)

ABOUT THE BOOK

PAOLA SANTIAGO AND THE FOREST OF NIGHTMARES

After successfully fighting off La Llorona in the rift last summer with her two best friends, Paola should feel invincible, able to conquer anything, but that is not the case. Since that time, Emma has made new friends, and Dante and Paola rarely speak to each other. Paola has also been dreaming of her estranged father and has no one to tell. Her mother, who spends more time with her new boyfriend than with Paola, is no help. Ultimately, Paola decides to visit Señora Mata, Dante's grandmother who is also a Niña de la Luz. Paola discovers that Señora Mata is not herself, saying things that are completely nonsensical before she falls into an unconscious state. To save Señora Mata and get to the truth about her father, Paola will have to sacrifice a friend in order to combat an evil stronger than La Llorona.



AS-YOU-READ ACTIVITIES

CREATE YOUR OWN SPANISH-ENGLISH DICTIONARY

As you come across words in Spanish in your reading, write them down, including the page number. Use context clues to help you define their meaning by guessing what the English word might be for each of your Spanish words. You will need your self-made Spanish-English dictionary for a post-reading activity.

PAOLA SANTIAGO'S OREGON TRAIL

Paola discovers that her father's address is in Oregon, which sets her on a trek to find him. Plot Paola's trek north by listing the cities and places she visits, as well as the events that happen along the way. Pay close attention to the roads they travel and details about the landscape. Create a map legend for each of the elements you would like to incorporate into your road map. This activity can be done using paper, pens, and colors, or on a computer.

Below are some ideas and resources to help you map Paola's Oregon Trail.



PRINT MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES

- Highway map of the United States
- Crayons, pens, markers (assorted colors), note cards, tape, pins
- Map legend (create your own)
- Map scale (create your own)



ONLINE RESOURCES

- Mastering Map Reading
- 20 Ways Google MyMaps Can Enhance Lessons in Any Class

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR DISCUSSION OR WRITING

1. Everything seems to be going wrong for Paola. She is at odds with her mom, things between her and Dante are not normal, and Emma has made new friendships. Pao understands that people grow apart, “but that didn’t make it any less sad.” How have you handled the loss of a friendship? Explain what can cause really good friends to grow apart.
2. Paola’s mother believes that her daughter’s ghost hunting from last summer was Pao simply getting lost in the wilderness around the Gila River. However, when Pao tries to talk to Dante about the Niños or the rift, he seems embarrassed and acts like he’s trying to forget about it. What reasons would Dante have to deny that their mission to save Emma ever happened?
3. Pao is having dreams again, dreams that involve her father, a subject her mother will not discuss. In a fit of rage because of not having anyone to talk to, Pao ransacks her mother’s bedroom and discovers a Post-it with her dad’s address. Instinctively, Pao goes to Señora Mata for help. What happens to confirm that Pao was correct about visiting Dante’s grandmother? What warning does Señora Mata give Paola?
4. Dante walks into his apartment and finds his grandmother Señora Mata unresponsive on the ground. He believes Paola is fully to blame for what is happening to his grandmother, but Dante may be missing something. What signals are given that Dante, too, is connected to the paranormal activity surrounding his grandmother?
5. When Señora Mata falls unconscious, Paola fears calling 911 to get help for Mata, and she wonders: How is she supposed to get care for the people she loves “when the ‘care’ being dispatched was equally likely to kill them or ruin their lives?” What exactly is the author referring to in this statement?
6. Strange things are happening to Paola. First, her father appears in her dreams, followed by Señora Mata’s warning before her collapse. Additionally, a fantasma in the hospital is telling Pao that there is something strange about her, and even Paola feels that there is “something she’d been in the dark about her whole life.” What do you believe has been kept from Paola? Write down what you predict will happen.
7. Surprised that the Niños camp is gone without a trace, Dante fights with Paola about what to do next. Ultimately, they decide to get some rest before they head to the bus station. As Pao drifts off to sleep, she dreams again about her dad. Yet, this time Dante is in the dream with her, though only as a shadow that quickly disappears. What do you believe is lurking behind Dante’s change in attitude toward Paola?
8. Both Paola and Naomi suspect that there may be a connection between Pao’s mission to see her dad in Oregon and Franco’s magic anomaly, which took him and the Niños north. What could be the link between these two phenomena?

9. On her trek, Paola experiences three things that try to keep her from proceeding northward. She experiences an attack from a woman in the restaurant bathroom telling Pao to go with her, and she sees a hitchhiker wearing red. She then spots a boy in red pajamas on the side of the road with a sign that reads *North*. All three figures are eerily familiar to Pao, but she cannot remember from where. What connection do you see that Pao does not?
10. Lured into the past by a duende (an elf), Pao finds herself saving baby Dante from the wrath of a fantasma that has killed his father. Señora Mata then appears to take baby Dante home after he is abandoned by his mother. Señora Mata tells Paola that in order to get rid of the fantasma she will need to find his family, purify them, and “poof!” Describe what you believe are the steps that Pao has to take in order to successfully close this loop in time.
11. We learned from the first book, Paola Santiago and the River of Tears, that an “Arma del Alma” is tied to the soul of the wielder. To their life force. It is a rare and potent thing, usually handed down through bloodlines.” Do you believe Paola inherited her Arma del Alma, and if so, from who? If not, then why did it present itself to her? Explain your answers.
12. In Chapter 19, “The Unlikely Hero,” we witness the implosion of Dante and Paola’s friendship. What did you find most shocking about their incredible fight? Is Dante justified in blaming Paola for what has happened to him and his grandmother? Can this friendship ever be mended? Explain your answers.
13. Pao is perplexed that Dante was able to call the fantasma back from the void after she had dissolved it by pouring Florida Water over the locket. How do you think Dante could yield that kind of power?
14. Paola and Naomi encounter the Hitchhiker that has been following them since they departed for Oregon. What power does the Hitchhiker possess? Why do you believe the Hitchhiker is trying to thwart their mission?
15. Paola relays to Naomi the warnings Señora Mata made about Beto from her dreams. Naomi responds by telling Paola that Beto is La Llorona’s son. Paola then remembers La Llorona calling Beto ungrateful because he did not want to live if it meant others had to die in order for him to continue living. What role could Beto possibly be playing in Paola’s pursuit of her father?
16. Paola and Naomi find themselves being “spit out” by the forest in their pursuit of Paola’s dad. When Naomi asks Pao what could possibly be causing this to happen, Pao simply replies, “Magic.” Explain why Paola’s response is surprising. Support your answers with examples from the book.
17. Paola and Naomi have to convince the duendecillos that they can be trusted, but their leader says her kind has brought nothing but ruin to the forest. Pao explains that not all humans are bad, and the leader replies, “It is not the human in you we object to . . . It is the other.” Who or what do you suspect is the “other”?

18. The Hitchhiker tells Paola that an incredible power awaits her when she joins them. Deep inside, Paola knows she is bound to the leyenda, but her desire to know her truth is not as strong as her will to survive and save her friends. If you were Paola, what choice would you make? Explain your answer.
19. When Pao crosses into the portal to meet her father, she quickly gathers that he is possessed. He shares his body with a horrible soul. How do you think her father came to have another person's soul in his body?
20. Paola knew instinctively that if she could get her father to look into her eyes, she might be able to escape dying. How would you describe what happened between Paola and her father? What would you call that kind of power?
21. Throughout the book, Paola thinks of herself as evil, a monster. She believes she belongs to the void, just like her father. Yet her dad tells her she is not bound by what he is or what she was. "You are your own person—only you get to decide who you're going to be." Do you believe that Pao, after everything that has happened to her, truly has control over her destiny?
22. After separating her dad from the evil spirit, Paola sees that there is much to celebrate, with one exception: Dante is missing. At the end of Chapter 33, the author shares with readers her own thoughts on Pao's conflict: "Well, Pao had been to the void once before, hadn't she? With all these people on her side, maybe there was still hope." With Dante now possessed, is this the end for Paola's friendship with him? What does the future hold for them?



PAOLA SANTIAGO AND THE FOREST OF NIGHTMARES

WORD SEARCH

Use the Spanish-English dictionary you created to help you find the Spanish translation for each of the words listed below.

F	A	E	C	S	R	P	A	R	A	D	A	M	Q	U	A	F	T	S	S
C	R	A	Q	P	E	D	Y	D	N	T	A	A	J	N	J	F	N	E	U
L	W	I	I	E	V	M	Q	C	A	L	B	E	A	V	O	V	V	D	C
P	B	D	I	S	E	T	H	U	D	G	J	T	M	P	P	H	O	N	C
H	R	R	D	O	N	O	M	E	I	D	O	Q	U	Y	B	C	X	E	T
G	B	O	Q	D	E	V	O	N	X	B	T	H	Z	Z	H	Z	Z	I	E
Z	D	C	I	N	N	J	P	T	U	F	X	N	A	I	T	J	P	T	T
R	Q	I	Y	I	O	W	E	O	Q	D	Z	Z	S	K	G	S	S	N	L
A	Q	R	I	H	E	W	C	D	S	Z	K	T	H	J	K	L	Y	E	E
N	J	E	R	C	Z	M	L	E	O	S	E	R	A	D	U	Y	A	A	Y
I	J	S	O	U	U	G	W	H	S	S	F	G	P	C	Q	O	M	F	E
C	L	I	S	E	D	X	M	A	E	B	I	D	S	X	V	S	Q	Q	N
O	A	M	R	U	O	G	W	D	B	Y	E	V	N	S	A	P	U	M	D
C	S	T	E	R	H	R	A	A	T	S	I	P	O	T	S	O	T	U	A
X	E	N	Z	B	A	M	E	S	T	I	B	S	N	A	D	R	E	D	M
Z	D	H	S	R	I	K	E	N	G	Z	Y	A	X	L	A	F	Y	E	O
E	W	G	U	X	T	C	D	N	I	Y	F	U	V	S	O	A	T	Z	T
Q	R	S	O	R	L	M	O	N	E	D	A	S	F	E	R	V	W	L	C
K	A	R	N	U	P	R	E	O	C	U	P	E	S	N	V	O	S	S	F
B	P	Z	D	O	G	A	M	L	A	N	U	E	H	M	E	R	G	R	M

KISSES

CANDY

SNACK

DROWNED

HELP

NEXT

MONEY

COINS

UNDERSTAND

COOK

DEATH

EVIL EYE

ELF

STOP

MERCY

JOKES

GHOST

LEGEND

POISON

SOUL

FAIRY TALE

PLEASE

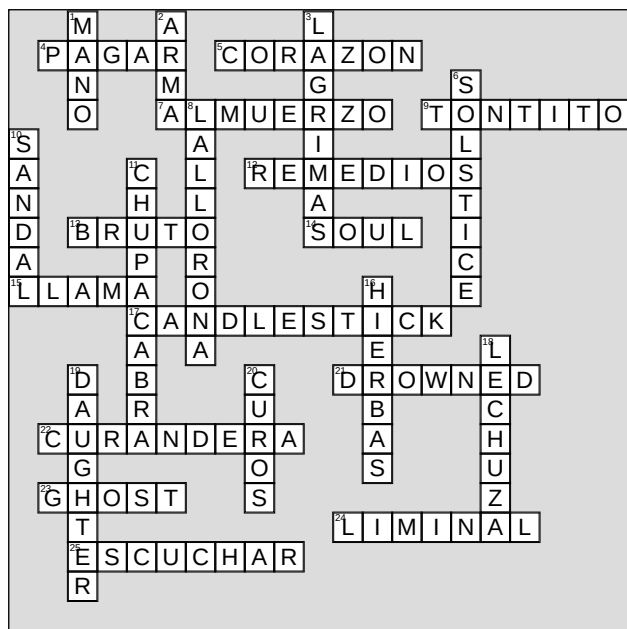
TRASH

WORRY

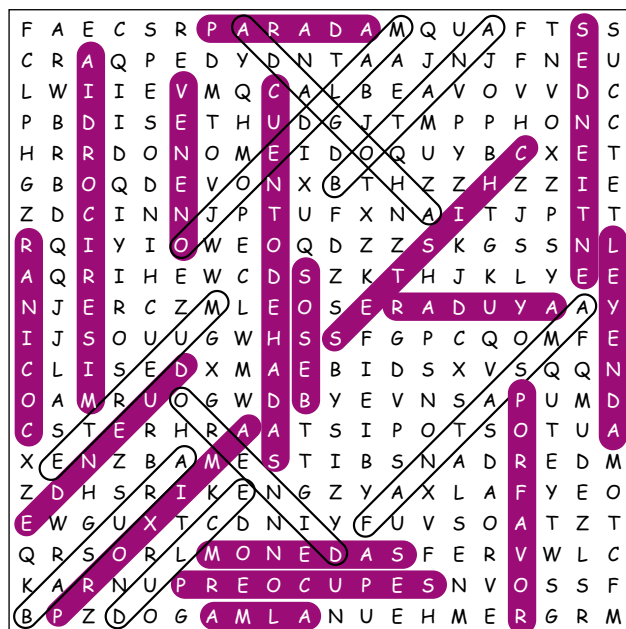
(Answers on page 12.)

ANSWER KEY

PAOLA SANTIAGO AND THE RIVER OF TEARS CROSSWORD



PAOLA SANTIAGO AND THE FOREST OF NIGHTMARES WORD SEARCH



SPANISH-ENGLISH DICTIONARY

Book 1

Beast—Bruto	Listen—Escuchar
Candlestick—Veladora	Lunch—Almuerzo
Cures—Curos	Owl—Lechuza
Daughter—Hija	Pay—Pagar
Drowned—Ahogado	Sandal—Chancla
Dummy—Tontito	Soul—Alma
Flame/Call—Llama	Tears—Lágrimas
Ghost—Fantasma	Wailing Woman—
Hand—Mano	La Llorona
Healer—Curandera	Weapon - Arma
Heart—Corazón	
Herbs—Hierbas	
Home remedies—	
Remedios	

Book 2

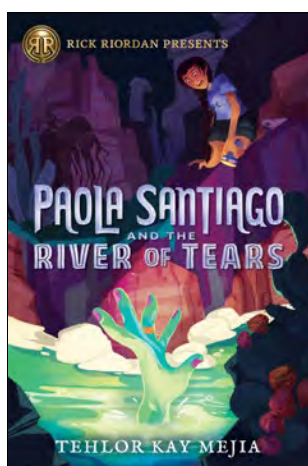
Candy—Dulce	Legend—Leyenda
Coins—Monedas	Mercy—Misericordia
Cook—Cocinar	Money—Dinero
Death—Muerte	Next—Próxima
Drowned—Ahogada	Please—Por favor
Elf—Duende	Poison—Veneno
Evil eye—Mal de ojo	Snack—Botana
Fairy tale—	Soul—Alma
Cuento de hadas	Stop—Parada
Ghost—Fantasma	Trash—Basura
Help—Ayudar	Understand—Entiendes
Hitchhiker—Autostopista	Worry—Preocupes
Jokes—Chistes	
Kisses—Besos	

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tehlor Kay Mejia is the author of the critically acclaimed young adult fantasy novel *We Set the Dark on Fire* as well as its sequel, *We Unleash the Merciless Storm*, and *Miss Meteor* (cowritten with National Book Award nominee Anna-Marie McLemore). Her debut novel received six starred reviews and was chosen as an Indie Next pick and a Junior Library Guild selection, as well as being an IndieBound best seller in the Pacific Northwest region. It was featured in *Seventeen*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *O, The Oprah Magazine*, and named a best book of 2019 by both *Kirkus* and *School Library Journal*. Tehlor lives in Oregon with her daughter, two very small dogs, and several rescued houseplants.



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**Paola Santiago and the
River of Tears**

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**Paola Santiago and the
Forest of Nightmares**

Hardcover

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This guide was written by **Maribel Castro**, a former school and academic librarian, currently serving as the director of technology and information services at Louise S. McGehee School in New Orleans, Louisiana. Castro has served on several reading list committees, served as president of the Texas Library Association and was a member of the executive board of the American Association of School Librarians. She is the child of migrant workers from Mexico who did not have much in terms of wealth, but got her a library card, opening up a rich world of words and thoughts. Castro believes that children of diverse backgrounds deserve to be reflected in the pages of the books they read.

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