



# LOTERÍA



## Reader's Guide

# Common Core Connections

This reader's guide can be used with large or small groups and will help students meet several of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts.

These include the reading literature standards for key ideas and details, craft and structure, and integration of knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL), as well as the speaking and listening standards for comprehension and collaboration, and for presentation of knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL).

Questions can also be used in writing prompts for independent work.

# Reader's Guide

1. Every choice Clara makes has a consequence, starting with her choice to open the window. Can you identify how her choices led to the various events unfolding in her life? What do you think would have happened had she made different choices along the way?
2. How have your choices led to certain events? How do you think your choices have affected other people?
3. Clara's fear in the Golden Grotto leads her to make a choice: to exit the cave where she draws a dragon. Had she not doubted herself, she would not have drawn the sketch, and the dragon would not have been consumed by the roots of the tree (which led to her being stung by the scorpion... and everything that came after). In the end, Clara's fear led to her demise. However, it also helped her learn courage and to believe in herself. Can you look back on certain events in your life and identify how they have shaped you in unexpected ways?
4. There are three key moments where Clara's fear or insecurity had big consequences for her: first, at the entrance to the Golden Grotto; second, when the bird requests a drawing and she refuses; third, when she enters the tunnel under the wall of vines. How did each of these events change her story?
5. There is a moment in the story when Clara thinks she's been betrayed: the scene with the rose. Was this actually a betrayal or a misunderstanding? How did this event actually help Clara? Can you think of a time in your life when you felt betrayed but everything turned out okay in the end? How might a misunderstanding lead us to make the wrong decision?

6. The scene with the spider is a turning point for Clara: she feels that she has hit her lowest moment and that all hope is lost. What keeps her going? How does her decision ultimately lead to her success?
7. This is a story about free will, and in each chapter there are various symbolic references to freedom. For instance: windows being closed, birds flying, oranges rolling away. Can you identify other ways in which freedom is represented in each chapter? What role do these symbolic references play in exploring the question of free will and determinism?
8. The lack of freedom is also explored throughout the story. Can you identify different ways that the characters are trapped (they lack freedom)? For instance, how do Clara's insecurities restrict her freedom? What is the role that grief plays in trapping her young cousin? Can ignorance be a trap? What about being a foreigner in a new land and not knowing the rules that govern a community? How does our own paradigm of life restrict us and limit our choices?
9. How do the characters in the story free themselves from their various traps? What role do knowledge, courage, and hope play in their freedom?
10. Using a set of Lotería cards, build your own story. Start by shuffling the deck and selecting a card at random. The image on that card is your first prompt to get your story going. If you get stuck, flip another card and use the image on that card to continue your story. Write until you've used up five cards (or more!)