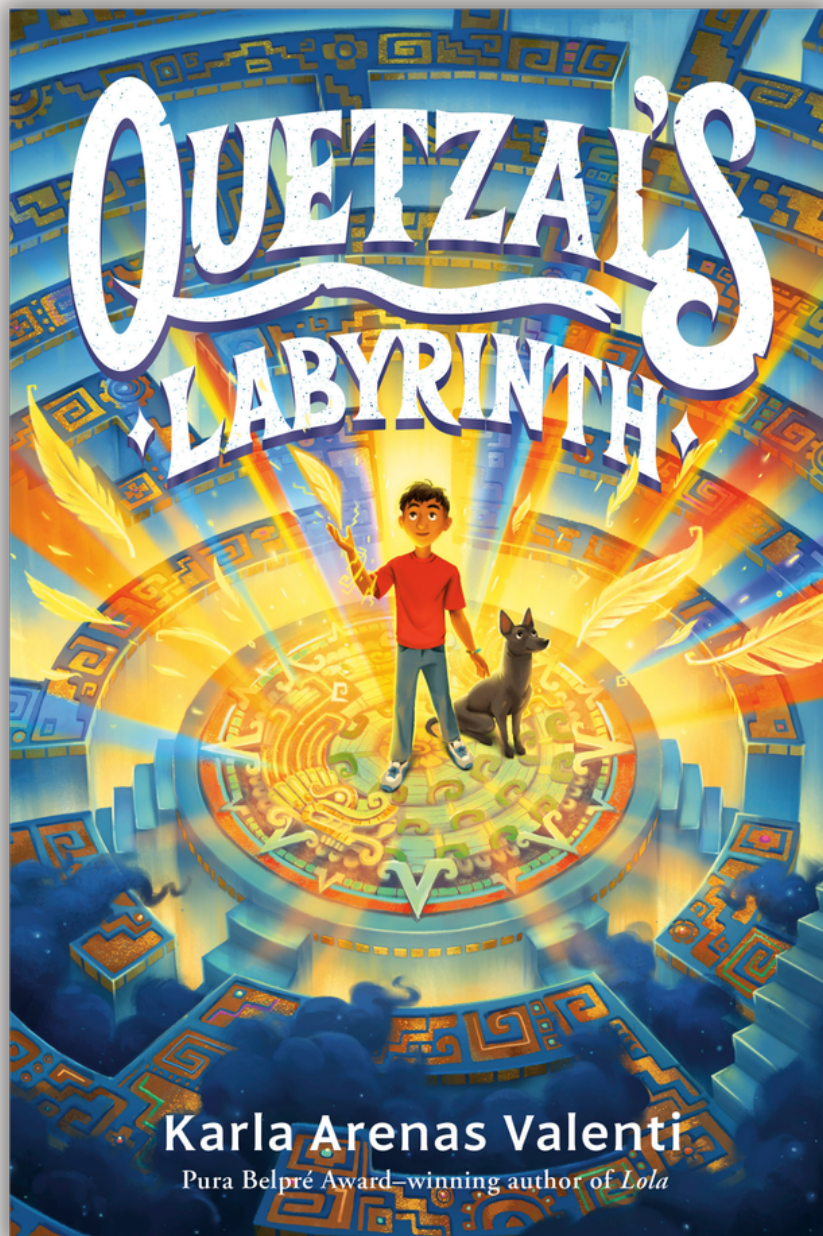
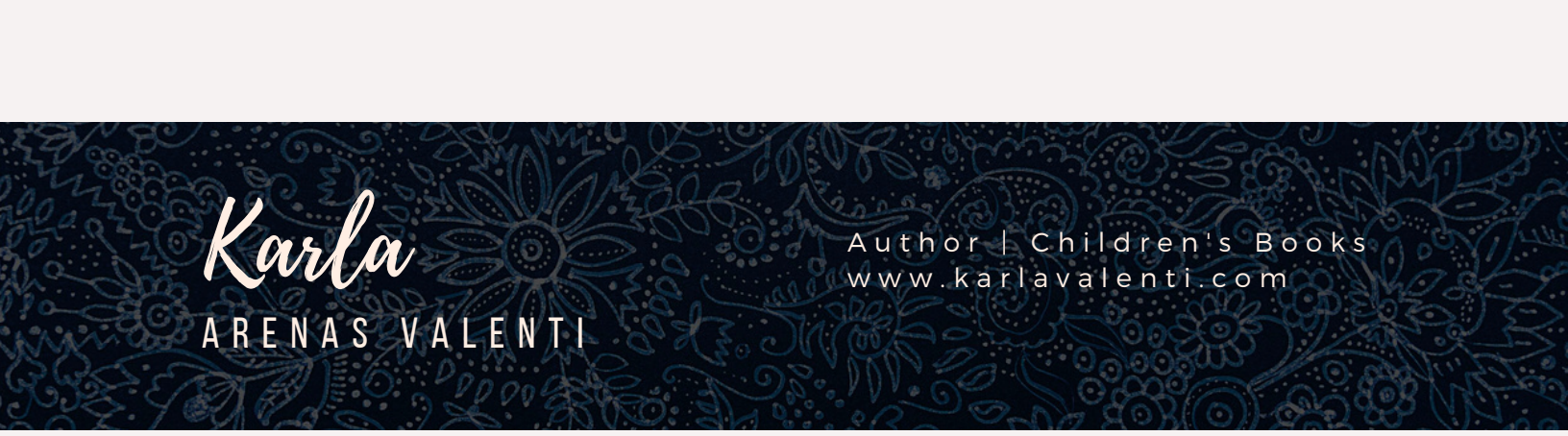




The Aztec Deities



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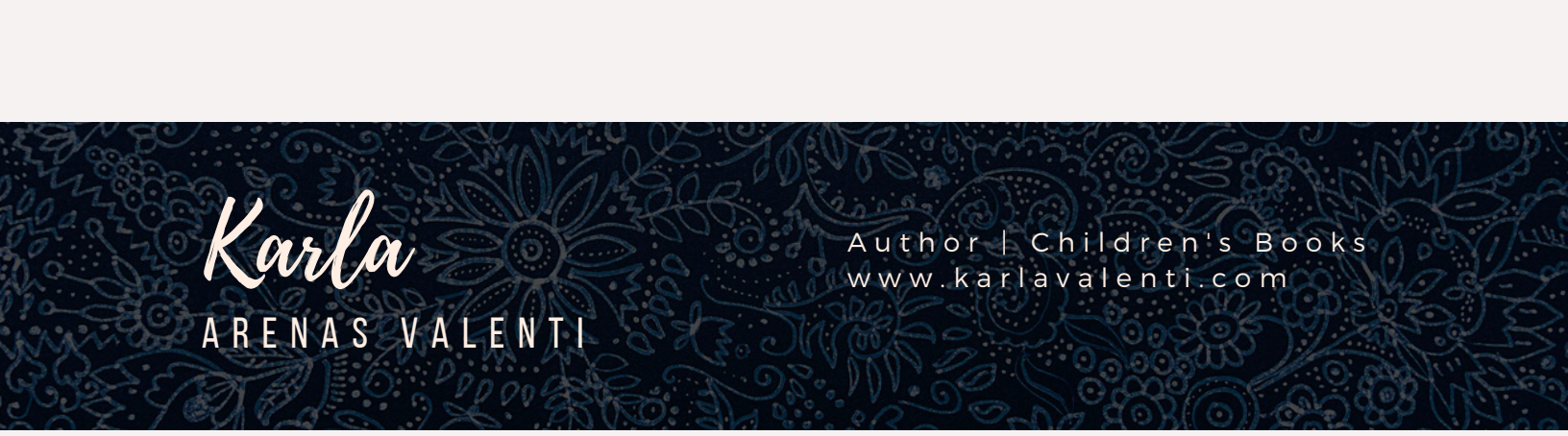
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The Aztec Deities

Quetzalcóatl (ket-sahl-KOH-ahtl)

Quetzalcóatl—nicknamed Quetzal in this story—is a primary god in the Aztec tradition. He is known as the “Feathered Serpent,” and is often depicted as a shimmering serpent covered in emerald feathers, gliding through the skies.

Revered as a creator of civilization, he taught humans how to write, farm, and live wisely. He is also a master of wind and light. According to Aztec lore, he and his cosmic brother, Tezcatlipoca, took turns creating humans but their never-ending rivalry always led to the destruction of their creations. Each cycle of creation and destruction is an era or “sun” in the Aztec creation myth.



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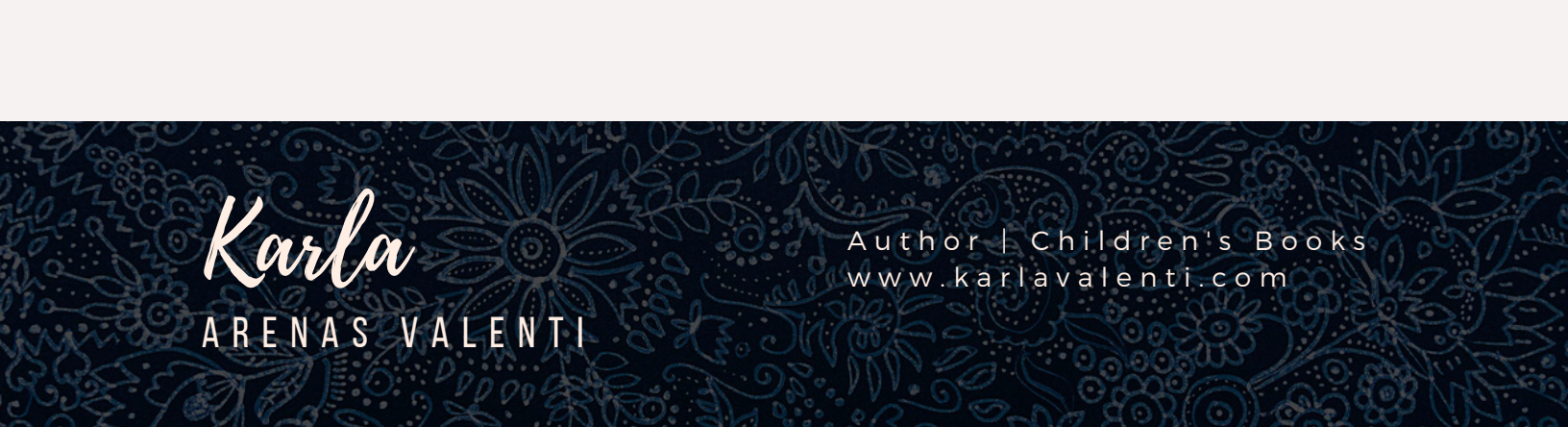
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The Aztec Deities

Xolotl (SHO-lohtl)

Xolotl—or Cholo—was Quetzalcóatl's twin brother and shadow self. The two brothers represent dual sides of the same essence. Quetzalcóatl is the god of wind, knowledge, creation and light where Xolotl is the god of lightning, fire, and sickness. He often appears as a dog.

He was a loyal companion to many, helping the sun rise each day and escorting the dead through the underworld with care. In one myth, Xolotl accompanies Quetzalcoatl into Mictlan to retrieve the bones of past humans so he can create new life for the fifth sun.



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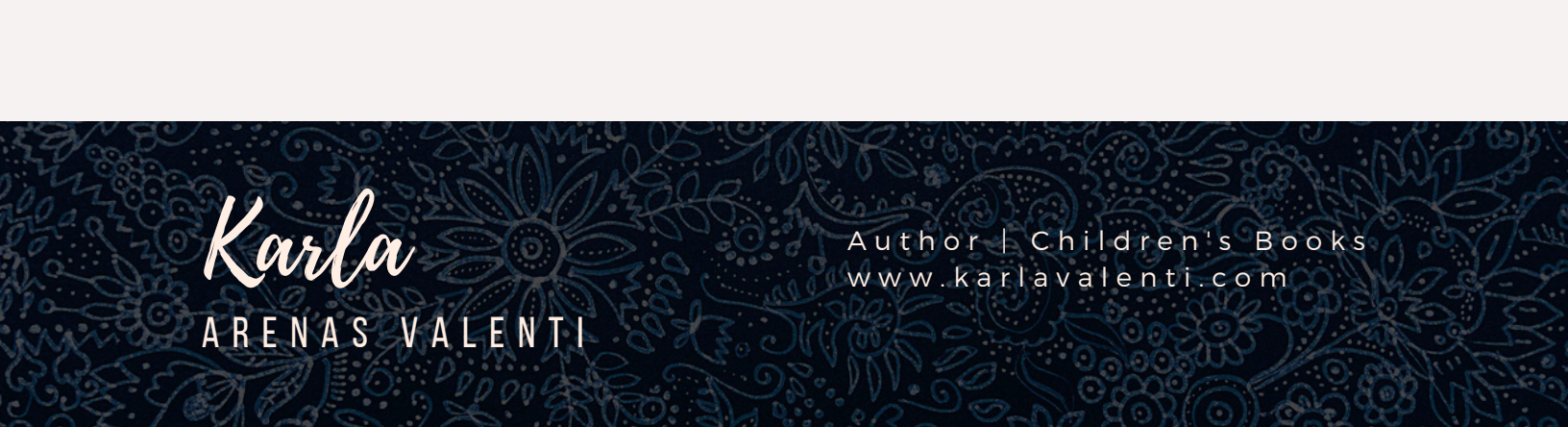
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The Aztec Deities

Tezcatlipoca (tez-caht-lee-POH-ka)

Tezcatlipoca—or Tezca in this book—is the trickster of the Aztec pantheon. A god of illusions, he could be charming and cruel, generous and destructive. He is known as the “Smoking Mirror” and sometimes depicted as a jaguar.

Tezcatlipoca ruled over the night, sorcery, and fate, often appearing with a mirror that revealed hidden truths—or distorted them. He constantly challenged Quetzalcóatl, and his stories are full of cosmic drama and moral ambiguity.



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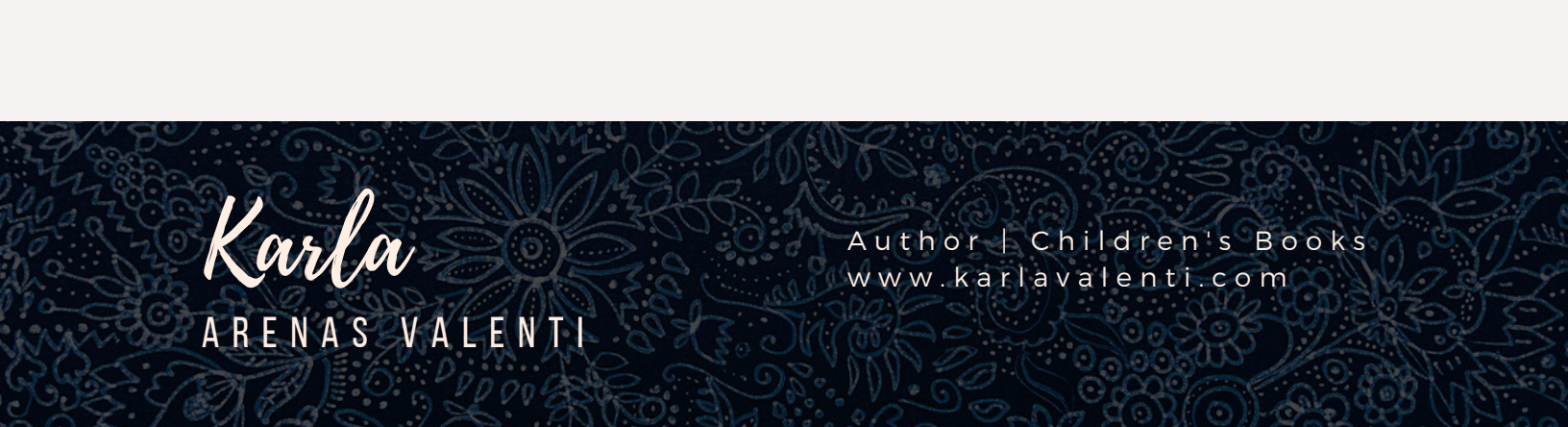
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The Aztec Deities

Tlaloc (TLAH-lohk)

Tlaloc is the god of rain. He is always depicted with eyes like goggles and jaguar fangs. As the master of rain, he was thought to control storms and droughts. People loved him for the life-giving rains he brought, but feared his wrath, which could manifest in terrifying tempests.

According to Aztec lore, he briefly ruled over one of the human eras until Tezcatlipoca betrayed him by stealing the love of Tlaloc's life. In one version of this myth, Tlalcoc was so distraught by Tezcatlipoca's treachery that he unleashed an epic flood, destroying all of humanity.



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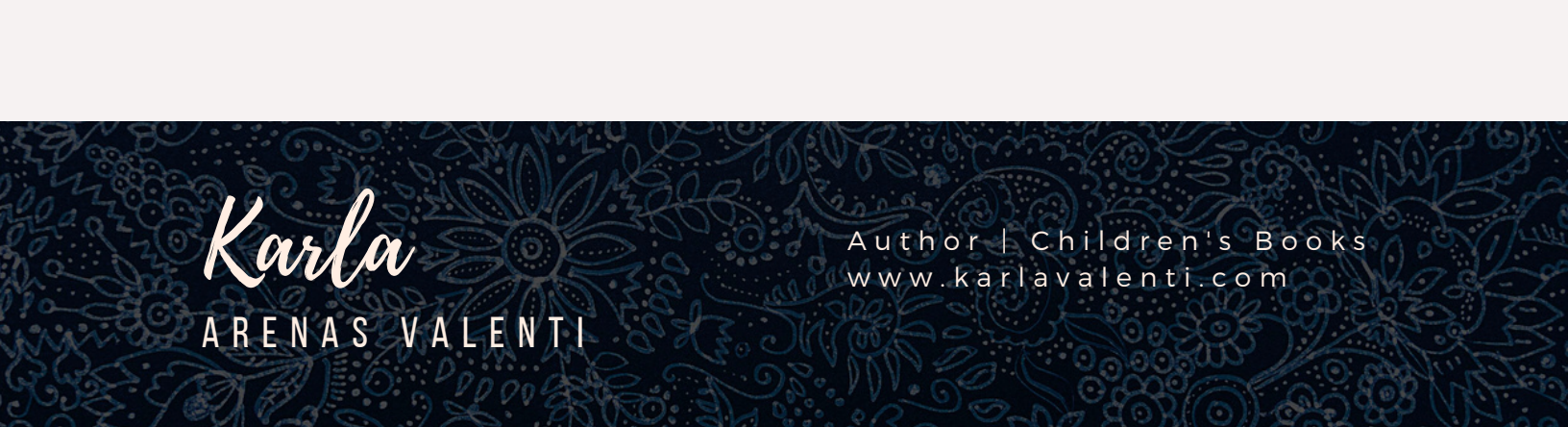
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The Aztec Deities

Mictlantecuhtli (meek-tlan-teh-KOOT-lee)

Mictlantecuhtli, the “Lord of Mictlan,” ruled the deepest part of the Aztec underworld (Mictlan). He is often pictured as a towering skeleton draped in owl feathers and wearing a necklace of human eyeballs.

According to Aztec lore, the souls of people who died ordinary deaths had to journey through nine grueling levels of Mictlan to reach him (and he didn’t make it easy!). But Mictlantecuhtli wasn’t evil—he was a cosmic gatekeeper, ensuring the dead were honored and the cycle of life continued.



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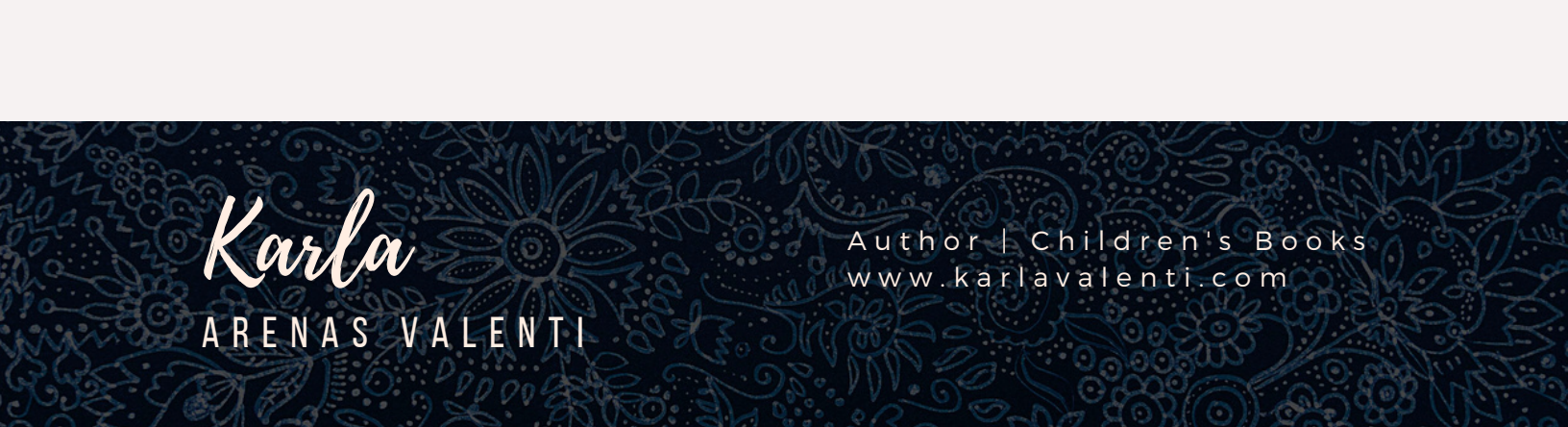
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The Aztec Deities

Mictecacihuatl (meek-teh-kah-SEE-wah-tuhl)

Mictecacihuatl, the “Lady of the Dead,” was Mictlantecuhtli’s queen and co-ruler of Mictlan. She’s often shown as a skeleton with her jaw wide open to swallow stars. Her role was to guard the bones of the dead and oversee ancient festivals honoring those who have passed.

Today, she’s considered a spiritual ancestor of Día de los Muertos, Mexico’s Day of the Dead celebration. Far from being terrifying, Mictecacihuatl represents reverence, remembrance, and the beauty of honoring those who came before.



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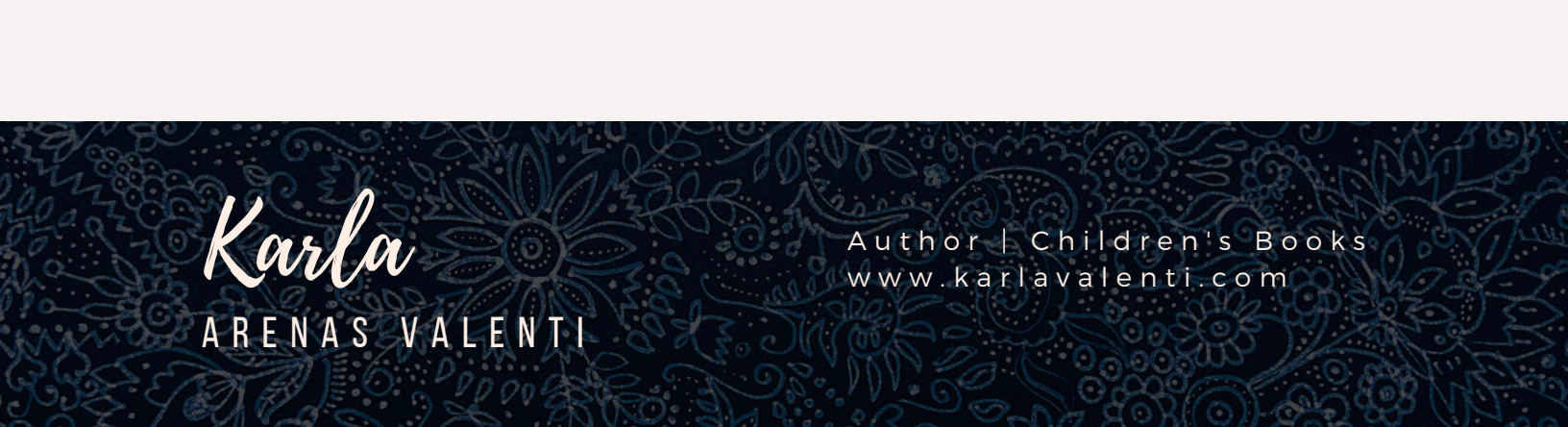
The Aztec Deities

Xochiquetzal (so-chee-KET-sahl)

Xochiquetzal was the goddess of beauty, love, and flowers. She protected young women, artists, and lovers, and was often shown surrounded by blossoms and butterflies.

Ehcatl (EH-kah-tl)

Ehcatl, the wind god, was a gentle yet powerful force. He helped move the sun across the sky and clear paths for rain. He wears a duck-bill mask to blow the winds and was known for his swiftness and subtlety.



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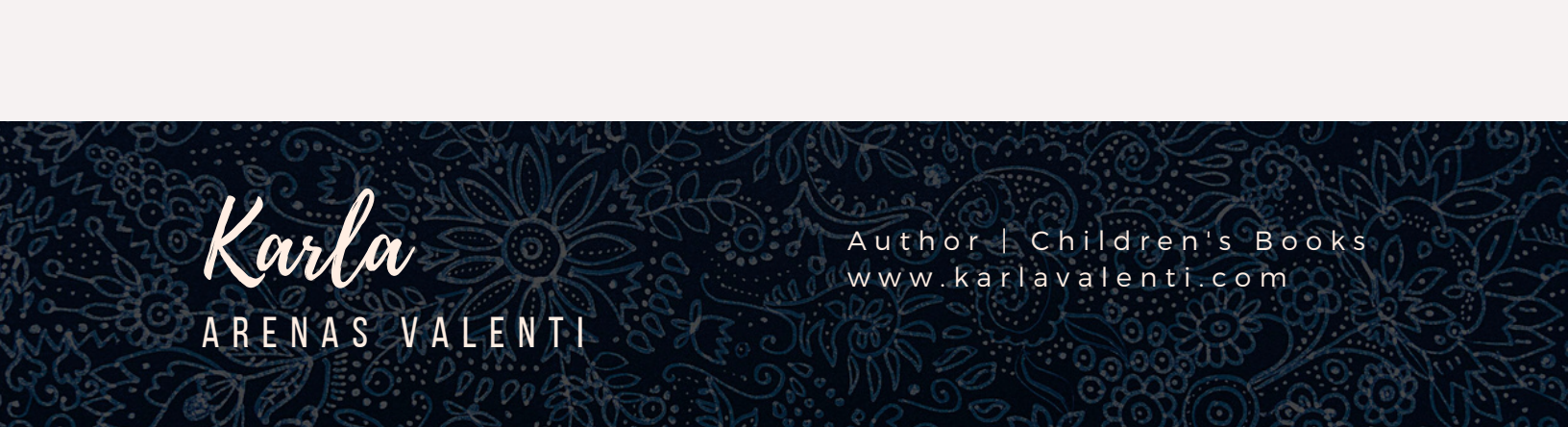
The Aztec Deities

Tonatiuh (toh-NAH-tyoo)

Tonatiuh was the blazing sun god, demanding strength and sacrifice to keep the world turning. He radiates a fierce, golden light. Warriors worshipped him, believing their bravery fed his fire.

Chalchiuhtlicue (chal-chee-oot-LEE-kway)

Chalchiuhtlicue was the goddess of rivers, lakes, and childbirth. As Tlaloc's beloved, she balanced his stormy nature with grace and rebirth. Known as "She of the Jade Skirt," Chalchiuhtlicue is typically depicted in a jade skirt shimmering like golden sunlight on water.



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The Aztec Deities

Chicomecóatl (chee-koh-meh-KOH-aht)

Chicomecóatl was the goddess of maize and sustenance. She represented abundance and the sacred cycle of planting and harvest.

Huitzilopochtli (weet-see-loh-POCH-tlee)

Huitzilopochtli, the hummingbird warrior god, is said to have led the Aztecs to their promised land, now Mexico City. Fierce and fiery, he was the god of war and the sun, demanding blood to fuel his battles.

Huehucóyotl (way-way-KOY-ohtl)

Huehucóyotl was a god of music, dance, and mischief. He loved to stir up trouble—sometimes for fun and sometimes to teach a lesson.