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Five-year-old Author Draws Shrieks (of Delight) with “A Halloween Story”

How many 5-year olds do you know who can capture the spirit of a holiday in a story, with a great structure, a solid plot, and plenty of suspense, in 60 words or less? And in another language? A new Children’s Book Publisher, Maroma Books asks, how many 5-year-olds have you asked to try?

This is exactly what young Alberto Fernandez has done with “A Halloween Story,” and with the unique “Your Turn” pages, the readers (or the children being read to) are invited to create their own stories, using creepy characters they meet in the story.

This remarkable picture book is Maroma Books’ first title. It pairs the clever tale with illustrations of Mexican artist Pilar de la Fuente, whose black & white drawings in pencil & ink, add ghoulish glee to “A Halloween Story.”

Alberto, who was born and lives in Monterrey, Mexico, wrote the story in his English class as part of a project last Halloween. Just learning how to write, and just learning English, his first version was with phonetic spelling, and accompanies by his own creature creation drawings. His teachers, surprised by its remarkable structure, and how the story captures its audience, shared it with Alberto’s parents.

Alberto’s father, Alberto Fernandez, Sr., inspired by his son’s story saw the book as the start of something big:

- Finding new ways and audiences to appreciate talented young Mexican authors and artists.
- Improving education, (more than half of Maroma’s profits will go towards improving education in some of Mexico’s most impoverished areas).
- Enhance multi-cultural & multi-lingual understanding, (each of the books will be available at the publisher’s website in various languages, easy and free to print-out for children to practice and compare with their copy).

Thus, Maroma Books was born. (The word “Maroma” is Spanish for “summersault.”)

The founding principles of Maroma Books, says Fernandez, Sr. is “to reach children, through our books, to:”

1. **Feel.** Through a tear or a belly-laugh.
2. **Free** themselves from the artificial limits adults unconsciously set for children.
3. **Question.** To arrive at the meaning each book has for them, by their own able minds and means.
4. **Explore.** Languages & Cultures.
5. **Learn.** To compliment what children learn in school with an emphasis on the arts.”



About Alberto Fernandez



Born: November 4, 2000. **From:** Monterrey, Mexico

Education: Tsikuri Kindergarden; The American School Elementary School, Monterrey, Mexico.

Hobbies: Tai Kwan Do combat (he is a brown belt), playing basketball, and making up & telling stories.

Favorite Author: Dr. Seuss. His favorite titles include *“Hop on Pop”* and *“The Lorax.”*

Alberto wrote this story for Halloween 2006 as part of a school English project (his native language is Spanish) when he was 5 years old. His original version was with phonetic spelling of the words and with his own illustrations.

Hopes for this story: “That people ask, **“WHO is it?”**—with a question mark,” he adds, with a tip from his current studies in first grade punctuation; “because ‘Who is it?’ gets a question mark you know.”

“I want people to get a scared face, with their mouths formed like an ‘O!’—and then their mouths change from an ‘O!’ into a smile.”

About Pilar de la Fuente



Born: 1972

From: Juarez, Mexico

Education: BA in Visual Arts from the Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo Leon, 1996, & Graphic Design from the Centro de Estudios Superiores de Diseño de MTY, 1992

Pilar has won prizes, grants and much acclaim for her artwork, including a residency at the Banff Center for the Arts in 2005 in Canada, and most recently a grant for Young Artists, from FONCA, (a Mexican national fund for culture and the arts). Her work has been in nearly 80 exhibitions, both individual and collective, in museums and galleries throughout Mexico and beyond, including Spain, France, Portugal, Peru, and the U.S.

While most of her work is drawing-based “exploring the behavior of the line on paper,” Pilar also works in painting, photography, performance and installation art.

“I was really excited to work on A Halloween Story. I have so many Halloween memories; like once when I was Alberto’s age, my parents stayed up all night making me a witch hat that was as tall as I was, and how it got caught in the trees the next day at school.” “Halloween was my favorite day as a kid, so I knew *exactly* what Alberto was talking about. My childhood was evoked, and in these drawings it got the chance to conjure up some Halloween creatures again.”

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A Halloween Story

By Alberto Fernandez

age 5, from Monterrey, Mexico, written in English, his 2nd language

Category: Children's Picture Book

For Ages: Toddler + up (2-10)

Trim size: 8:25 x 8:25 inches.

LCCN: 2007929770

Pub Date: Sept. 15, 2007

Pages: 48

Illustrated: 22 Illustrations

Retail Price & ISBN:
hardcover: \$14.95 US
ISBN 13: 978-0-9796465-08
ISBN 10: 0-9796465-1-0

paperback: \$9.95
ISBN 13: 978-0-9796465-2-2
ISBN 10: 0-9796465-2-9

Distributed by: Baker & Taylor(hardcover), Maroma Books
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Additional Features: 7 pages of activities, 4 we call **"Your Turn"** where readers (and those read to) are invited to make up their own stories about the creepy characters they meet.



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