

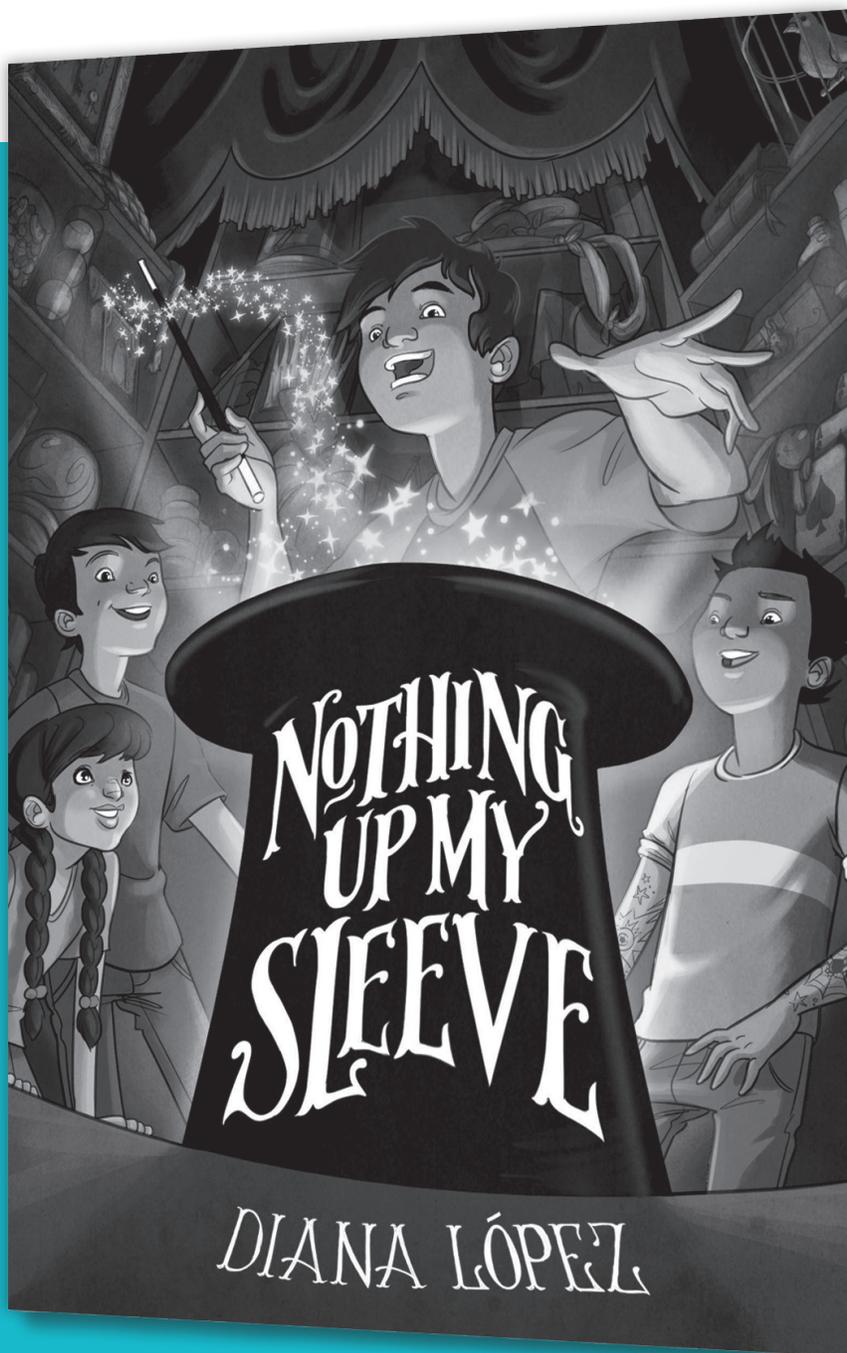
NOTHING UP MY SLEEVE

Curriculum connections

- ❖ Family
- ❖ Friendship

Ages 8–12

by
DIANA LÓPEZ



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Nothing Up My Sleeve* has three main characters: Dominic, Loop, and Z. How are they similar and how are they different? How do these differences lead to disagreements and how do they lead to solutions?
2. Each chapter opens with a term related to magic. Choose a few chapters and discuss how the magic terms relate to what happens in that section of the story.
3. Each of the boys is dealing with at least two problems, one related to the magic competition and one related to a situation at home. Identify their struggles and discuss how they are able to overcome their problems. In what way do events at home and with magic relate to each other?
4. Discuss Ariel. For example, her attitude toward the boys changes throughout the novel. Why is she at first mean, and then later, nice? How do her views about magic differ from her fathers? Do you agree with her or with her father's philosophy of magic? Explain.
5. The boys share their problems with Mr. Garza, but instead of giving straightforward advice, Mr. Garza performs magic tricks. Describe the tricks he performs and discuss how they function as "advice" for the boys.
6. Have you read other books with magicians? If so, how are they similar to or different from *Nothing Up My Sleeve*?



PERSONAL RESPONSES

- Dominic, Loop, and Z love to compete against each other. Sometimes they have fun with their contests, but other times, their desire to win causes problems with their friendship. Write about a time you competed against someone close to you. What sport, game, or contest did you play? What was the outcome? Were you guys good sports or sore losers? Explain.
- A major theme of the book is the importance of practice. As we follow Dominic, Loop, and Z, we watch how they move from fumbling with their magic tricks to mastering them. Think about an activity or talent that used to be difficult for you but you are now good at, or at least, much improved. What role has practice played in your progress?
- The boys have to perform in front of a live audience. Loop and Z don't seem to mind, but Dominic gets a serious case of stage fright. Have you performed or given a speech to a live audience? If so, how did you feel? Do you love to be the center of attention or do you get nervous like Dominic? Explain.



CREATIVE WRITING SUGGESTIONS

- Patter is the story that accompanies the magic trick. Pick a magic trick. It can be one from the book or one you have seen on TV or at a show. Describe the trick and write some patter to go with it.
- The boys snoop into Ariel's diary, so we get to hear her inner thoughts. But what about the boys' inner thoughts? Write a diary entry for one of the boys.
- Dominic, Loop, and Z vow to compete in the stage magic competition the following year. Look up some common stage magic tricks. Then, choose one of the boys, and write out a scene that shows him at the competition.

NOTHING UP MY SLEEVE

about the book



NOTHING UP MY SLEEVE

HC 978-0-316-34087-8

Also available as an ebook

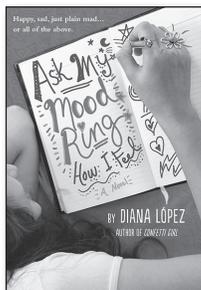
Sixth graders Dominic, Loop, and Z stumble upon a new magic shop in town and can't wait to spend their summer mastering cool tricks to gain access to the Vault, a key holders-only back room bound to hold all kinds of secrets. And once they get in, they set their sights even higher: a huge competition at the end of the summer. They work on their card tricks, sleights, and vanishing acts, trying to come up with the most awesome routines possible . . . Problem is, the trip is expensive, and it's money that each guys' family just doesn't have.

To make things worse, the shop owners' daughter, Ariel (who just so happens to be last year's competition winner), will do anything to make sure the boys don't come out on top. Even pit them against one another. Will they make it to the competition? And if so, at what cost?

"The friends' obstacles are realistic and the finale is satisfying. A clever reveal highlights this appealing, Latino cast." —*Kirkus*

"An upbeat coming-of-age story. The boys' easygoing banter is true to life, and details about their shared Latino background give the novel a strong sense of culture and place." —*Publishers Weekly*

"Intriguing magic and authentic perspectives make this a strong addition for middle grade collections." —*School Library Journal*



ASK MY MOOD RING HOW I FEEL

HC 978-0-316-20996-0

PB 978-0-316-20994-6

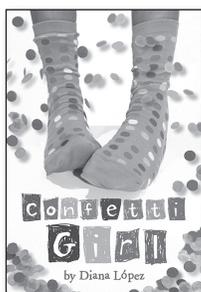
Also available as an ebook

also by Diana López

"Funny and heartfelt... López crafts a story that blends family and middle school drama successfully." —*Kirkus*

"López skillfully balances emotional moments with humorous ones, offering an honest portrait of a family under strain." —*Publishers Weekly*

"Chia's voice shines...A fast-moving, absorbing read about how one person's illness can affect the whole family in many different ways." —*School Library Journal*



CONFETTI GIRL

PB 978-0-316-02956-8

Also available as an ebook

"Employing lovely metaphors and realistic dialogue, López delicately displays the power of optimism and innovation during difficult times." —*Publishers Weekly*

about the author



Todd Yates

DIANA LOPEZ is the author of the novels *Ask My Mood Ring How I Feel*, *Choke*, and *Confetti Girl*, which won the 2012 William Allen White Award. She is the editor of the journal *Huizache* and the managing director of CentroVictoria, an organization devoted to promoting Mexican American literature. She lives in South Texas and teaches at the University of Houston-Victoria. Visit her online at dianalopezbooks.com.



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