



## GAME MAKEOVER



Game cards by Teresa Villegas give a bold, colorful new look to the enduring Mexican game of loteria, which is played much like bingo. *Jeffrey Scott / Arizona Daily Star*

# ¡Lotería!

*Former Tucsonan's love affair with Mexican culture inspired her to paint new cards for the traditional game*

By Rhonda Bodfield Bloom  
ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Those folks at the bingo parlor don't know what they're missing. Instead of waiting for a sterile "B-4" and filling up a card with random numbers, life it could be solving riddles in loteria, a game of chance in the Mexican tradition that is played much like bingo, only with more color and perhaps a bit more vibrancy.

Take this riddle for example. "Filled with red juices, life it produces. In love it is full, behaves like a bull. What is it?"

The answer: heart, translated into its Spanish name, el corazón. If you had that heart on your game board, you would plunk a chip on it and hope you'd fill up your board sooner than anyone else as the riddles continued. The first one to yell "Lotería!" wins.

And for those who don't speak Spanish, not everyone plays with the riddles. Some just call out the names of the cards, also in Spanish, but easier to understand with the images on the cards and the help of a Spanish-English dictionary.

Theresa Garza, the owner of a marketing and management company, has fond memories of playing loteria with her grandmother — minus the riddles — when she was a young girl in Chicago.

She would play with her cousins, too, using frijoles, or beans, for board markers. On special occasions, they would play with pennies or dimes. That was really exciting, she recalled.

Garza always thrilled to hear "la garza," the heron, called out — "I

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LA CALAVERA

OLD DRAWING

Artist Teresa Villegas used lush colors to lend a new appearance to loteria. She spent a year in Mexico researching all aspects of the game.

didn't know anyone else with their name on a game," she said. She loved to get "la chalupa" as well, a little canoe filled with flowers, because her parents had a picture taken in one on their Acapulco honeymoon.

She learned about her culture through the game. When "el gallo," the rooster, came up, her mother would tell stories about the family having to slaughter chickens themselves because they couldn't just head to the market.

Later, she found a cross with loteria images on it and hung it between her kitchen and fireplace so she could enjoy the images of her



La Calavera

NEW LOOK

childhood every day.

When Garza meets people of Mexican-American heritage, she said, she always asks if they played loteria growing up. She remains surprised at the number of people who never played.

"I always assumed every Mexican child had a grandmother who played the game with them." So now, when she baby-sits, she likes to introduce kids to the game, not only to help with their Spanish, but to help them connect with their traditions.

The loteria Garza remembers has just had another update — and the images are entirely different

from loteria games of the past. Sadly for Garza, there's no "la garza." Also missing are some of the ones that may seem controversial or dated to American audiences, like "el borracho," (the drunk) or "el negro" — cards Garza warns parents are in there when she sends the older version of the game as gifts to children of friends or family.

Artist Teresa Villegas, a former illustrator for the Arizona Daily Star who now has a studio in Phoenix, did the art for "Lotería! (University of Arizona press, 2004, \$14.95), a book released in late April.

The all-new images she created in lush colors are also captured on the cards and game boards of a loteria game for sale locally for \$5 at Picante Designs, 2932 E. Broadway. The riddles were written by Ilan Stavans, a professor at Amherst College and the author of numerous books, including "The Hispanic Condition: The Power of a People" (Rayo, \$14).

Villegas didn't play growing up in Iowa. She was introduced to the game at 18, when she came to Tucson to attend the University of Arizona, and saw someone playing it on a trip to Mexico.

"I fell in love with the imagery of it," she said. It launched an affair with Mexico, which is still in full bloom after 20 years.

Not a Spanish-speaker initially, she used the game to learn more about the country. She'd point to an image and ask for its story. Because of the language barrier, the riddles were tough at first.

ReView  
Phil Villarreal



## Woody's color was definitely purple

By Phil Villarreal  
ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Cranking out just about a film a year, Woody Allen is easy to take for granted, especially recently, as quantity seems to be winning the battle over quality.

In Allen's current slump, a flurry of mediocre work, ranging from horrid miscalculation ("Small Time Crooks," "Hollywood Ending") to slightly above average romantic comedy ("Anything Else"), it's gotten easy to overlook his great films. And "The Purple Rose of Cairo" is the most overlooked of his great films. Of the 33 features Allen has directed, it's one of the few in which he didn't appear, and the one he calls his favorite. That love and reverence is contagious: it radiates through in every frame.

Starring Allen's longtime muse and lover, Mia Farrow, the dreamy, Depression-era-set romance searches out connections between reality and fantasy, and the ability of each to support and torpedo the other.

Farrow plays Cecilia, a harried, plate-breaking diner waitress who wilts under orders and chastisement

barked by her boss, (David Kieserman).

Things aren't any better at home, where she puts up with her grimy, mean-spirited husband, Monk, who fills his empty hours of unemployment with gambling, boozing and womanizing.

Cecilia's one respite is the local movie house, which blesses her with 90-minute vacations into the glamour of silver-screen dance musicals, cocktail party mysteries and jungle adventures.

The latest picture show is a high-stepping adventure yarn called "The Purple Rose of Cairo," featuring up-and-comer Gil Shepherd in the key supporting role of explorer Tom Baxter. A breezy and cocksure Jeff Daniels winningly struts through his dual roles as Gil and Tom.

Cecilia blushing adores Tom Baxter and his film. She prefers the company of a fictional character to that of any real person. Her sad eyes glimmer when Tom enters the screen.

Then at one screening, Tom's eyes glimmer back. The character breaks away from the plot, turns to the audience and tells Cecilia he's noticed her in the audience several times. The other characters onscreen, as well as the crowd in the theater, are aghast as Tom and Cecilia flirt back and forth, and Tom steps out of the screen into the real world.

Tom sweeps Cecilia away on a romance, igniting two sometimes interlocking plotlines. The love story is the centerpiece while the black-and-white movie characters, stuck in limbo until Tom returns, engage in a comical discussion about what this all means.

The studio, worried that one of their characters on the loose may cause a lawsuit, dispatch Gil to round up his character and coax him back onscreen.

Allen, all but smacking his lips over the gorgeous possibilities, lets loose with whip-smart strings of anecdotes and dialogue, twisting movie clichés inside out.

Much of the best banter takes place in the movie-within-a-movie, where the characters taste freedom from plot machina-

### THE PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO

(1985). Rated PG for violence. Starring Mia Farrow and Jeff Daniels. Written and directed by Woody Allen. 84 minutes. Available on DVD and VHS.