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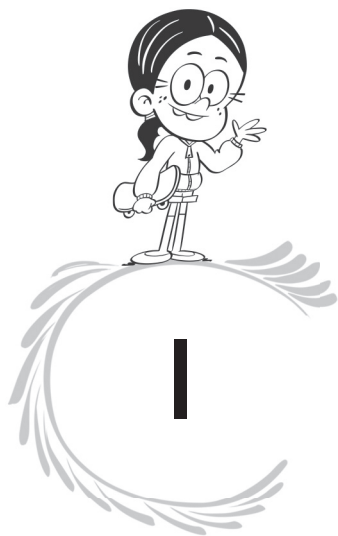


# **CASE OF THE MISSING CAKE**

By Daniel Mauleón

**SCHOLASTIC INC.**






**EL GALLO ROJO PUFFS UP** his chest and crows. The luchador, dressed like a rooster, leaps onto the ropes of the ring. He springs off and into the air, flying at—

“Bobby!” I shout at my older brother as he blocks my view of the TV. It’s bad enough that I have to watch from the kitchen.

“Oh, sorry, Ronnie Anne,” he says, grabbing one of Abuela’s flautas. “I needed




a restock.” He shoves it into his mouth and steps away. Finally, I can see the TV again.

“Ah man! I missed his signature move!”

“Mija—are you helping, or are you watching?” my abuela replies.

“Oh. Sorry, Abuela.” I turn away from the TV and back to the task at hand. My abuela, my mom’s mother, has a mixing bowl tucked in her left arm and an old recipe card in her left hand. She reads from the card to me while she stirs the contents of the bowl with her right hand. It’s no wrestling move, but it is a pretty impressive maneuver.


“While I’m mixing the wet ingredients, I need you to sift the flour, cocoa, baking soda, baking powder, and salt!”



I pour the ingredients one by one into a sifter, holding it carefully above a mixing bowl. Then I get to sifting, shaking the different parts together. They settle in the bowl below.

I live with my mom, brother, and grandparents in an apartment building, and my aunt, uncle, and cousins live there, too. (So does my best friend!) It can get wild, but it's fun—life here is never dull, that's for sure!

Anyway, tomorrow night is our building's annual summer party. Each tenant is supposed to bring something special to share. I kept joking that I would bring myself, but no one found that as funny as I did. That's when Abuela asked if I wanted



to help her make her famous tres leches cake, saying that we could bring it together. I agreed right away—Abuela is a fantastic cook, and her tres leches is delicious, so I knew that meant I'd be bringing one of the best things to the party! As long as I didn't mess it up.

Of course, when I agreed, I thought we would be making the cake the day of the party, but Abuela insisted it must be made the night before. So now I'm stuck in the kitchen helping her bake instead of watching all the Lucha Libre action in the living room with the rest of my family. And to make things even worse, my favorite luchadora, La Tormenta, is scheduled to fight tonight!