

Dear Reader,

I never set out to become a writer of children’s books, but one early summer day a couple of years ago, this story found me. It begged to be told. *When Lola Visits* is about a Filipina American girl whose lola (“grandmother” in Tagalog) comes for her annual stay and the wonderful sights and smells of summer they experience together.

When Lola Visits was inspired by my love of summer, and my lola who came to visit and our special times spent together. This story is a celebration of the warmth and joy of Filipino family and culture, where food is always present at family gatherings and is a way to express love as well as honor heritage and pass on traditions from one generation to the next.

I loved spending time with my lola and seeing the wonder in her eyes as she experienced so many things for the first time in America. Out of her big leather suitcase came stories, intriguing aromas, and beautifully-wrapped confections. She brought the Philippines with her. While she was with us, she loved reconnecting with long-lost relatives—talking and laughing with them for hours—and she always sang lullabies to my baby brother before bedtime. Known for having the greatest culinary talent in our family, her pancit molo, empanadas, lumpia, and mango royale icebox cake were unparalleled. She kept a collection of recipes in her head, but she cooked with her heart, which is why her food touched so many people.

As a child, I longed for books that were about kids like me. I’m excited to share this Filipino American story that combines a Filipino upbringing with American experiences, and that also speaks to the special bond between grandmother and grandchild. My hope is that all who read it will be reminded of similar sweet memories with their own grandparents and families.

Warmly,
Michelle Sterling

