



**ASHA and BAZ**  
**Meet Katia Krafft**



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# ASHA and BAZ

Meet Katia Krafft

(Book 4)



By Caroline Fernandez



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## CHAPTER 1

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# THE GREAT VOLCANO CHALLENGE

**S**cience class had been building up to the Great Volcano Challenge all week. Each team had the supplies to create their own volcano laid out on their desks. “This might get messy,” Ms. Wilson warned.

The class was excited to get started.

“Does everyone have a partner?” Ms. Wilson asked, just to make sure no one was left out.

She looked around the room. There was a range of reactions. Some kids responded with a “Yes.” Others gave a thumbs-up. A few nodded.

Baz was one of the students who nodded. He was too shy to do anything bolder.

His best friend, Asha, was more outgoing. She gave all three reactions. “Yes!” she yelled, then she motioned a thumbs-up, and finally she finished with a larger-than-life head nod.

Baz’s cheeks blushed and he sank into his chair. “You don’t have to do all that,” he whispered to Asha.

“It’s fine,” said Asha. She enjoyed getting attention.

“You know, I’ve lived through a volcano eruption,” said Ms. Wilson. “In 2010, a volcano erupted in Iceland. It blew ash all over Europe. I got stuck in France because they closed all the airports.”

“Volcanoes are real?” asked a student.

“Very real,” said Ms. Wilson. “There are volcanoes all over the world.”

“And they erupt?” asked another student.

“Some of them do,” said Ms. Wilson. “But other volcanoes are sleeping. And some don’t erupt anymore,” said Ms. Wilson.

“How are volcanoes born?” asked Asha.

A student at the front of the class rolled their eyes. “Volcanoes aren’t born,” they said.

“Asha is not wrong. Volcanoes are created,” said Ms. Wilson. “Does anyone know how?”

The class was silent.

“The Earth is covered in a shell. We call the shell the Earth’s crust,” Ms. Wilson explained. “Volcanoes are openings in the crust of the Earth.”

“The Earth opens up? Uh-oh!” joked a student in the back.

Baz nervously looked out the window for any signs of the Earth cracking in half.

“Let’s back up a bit,” said Ms. Wilson. “The Earth’s crust is made of really big pieces of rock. These rocks are called ‘plates.’”

“Like dinner plates?” asked Asha.

“Kind of. But imagine big, flat, rock plates,” said Ms. Wilson. “The plates can move. One plate bumps another plate sometimes. This can make the Earth’s crust split open. Sometimes, two plates pull apart. This can also make the Earth’s crust split. The center of the Earth is made up of rock and hot liquid. The rock and hot liquid inside the Earth can rise up through the Earth’s crust. This creates volcanoes.”

“Whoa,” hummed the class.

“Do volcanoes always have big explosions?” asked Asha.



“Great question,” said Ms. Wilson. “Think of a volcano like a balloon. It can explode very quickly and loudly. Or it can be a slow flow, like letting air out of a balloon.”

The class broke into making volcano sounds. “BOOM. PFFFTT.”

Ms. Wilson clapped her hands. The class came to attention.

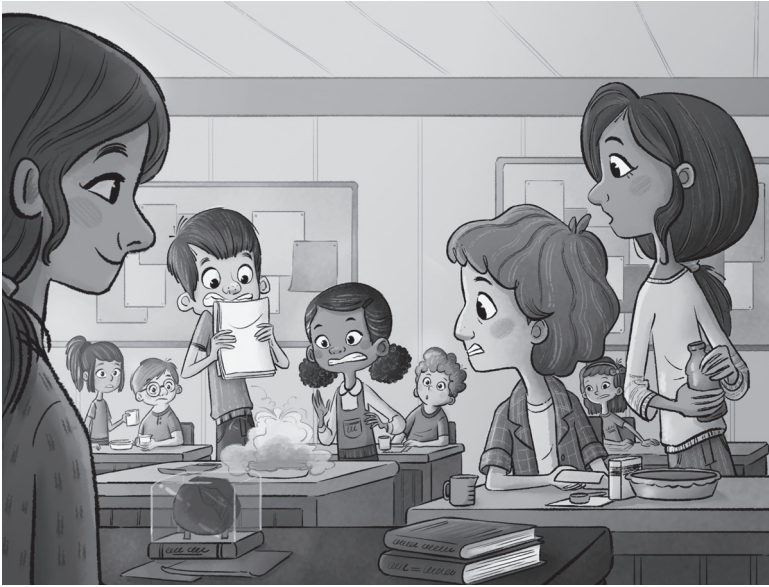
“Are you ready to build your volcanoes?” asked Ms. Wilson.

The class cheered.

The Great Volcano Challenge was a project and a competition. The teams had to build their own volcanoes using the supplies on their desks. The team that had the best volcanic eruption would get a real-life lava rock.

Asha wanted the lava rock. While Ms. Wilson was talking, Asha found herself staring at the rock on her teacher’s desk. Ms. Wilson had put the rock inside a clear plastic box. The lava rock was circle shaped and had a dull, black color. There were tiny holes all over it, just like a sponge. Asha wondered if it was as light as a sponge. Her fingers tingled to touch it.

“I want to win,” Asha said to Baz.



“I’m not sure we can win this one,” he said. “This looks like an impossible challenge.” He picked up the worksheet Ms. Wilson had given them. Then, he read it to Asha.

## **The Great Volcano Challenge**

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Build a volcano. Then, create a volcanic eruption.

Supplies:

- **White vinegar**
- **Baking soda**
- **Dish soap**
- **Empty plastic water bottle**



- **Small funnel**
- **Tablespoon**
- **Measuring cup**
- **Pie plate**
- **Clean cloth**

“There aren’t any measurements,” Baz whispered to Asha. He felt a roll of thunder in his belly.

“How do we build a volcano out of all this?” asked a student.

“Think about it,” said Ms. Wilson. “What is the shape of a volcano? What is inside a volcano? What happens when a volcano erupts?”

The class broke out into discussions and brainstorming. Baz looked around the room.

One team tried stacking the supplies to build a volcano.

“That looks like a tower, not a volcano,” whispered Baz to Asha.

“Is this it?” a student on that team asked Ms. Wilson.

“Keep trying,” said Ms. Wilson.

Another team poured all of the baking soda into the vinegar bottle. It made a huge mess on their desks.

“That’s not a volcano,” whispered Asha to Baz.

“Try again,” said Ms. Wilson. “And clean up, please.”

The whole room now smelled like vinegar.

Baz inspected each volcano supply on their desks. “This doesn’t make any sense,” he said. He leaned in to speak to Asha so the other teams wouldn’t hear. “These supplies don’t have anything to do with volcanoes.”

Asha pointed to the plastic water bottle. “This one might,” she said.

“What do you mean?” asked Baz.

“Ms. Wilson gave us a clue. What is the shape of a volcano?”

Baz thought for a moment and then frowned. “I don’t understand,” he said.

“Use your imagination,” said Asha. “Volcanoes are shaped like mountains. The top of a water bottle is kind of shaped like a mountain too.”

Baz studied the water bottle. “You’re right!” he replied. “The water bottle is a volcano shape.”

“Now, what do we do with it?” asked Asha. Just then, the recess bell rang out.

“Leave everything where it is,” Ms. Wilson said in a loud voice. “We are going to continue the Great Volcano Challenge after recess.”

“We need the stick,” Asha whispered to Baz.

The other students left their volcano supplies on their desks and walked to their backpacks to get their snacks and outside toys. But not Asha and Baz. Asha folded the worksheet and put it in her pocket. Then, she walked over to her backpack and dug out the special stick. The friends smiled at each other. They knew that an adventure was coming.

They had first found the stick in the schoolyard. The stick was as long as Asha’s arm from her wrist to her elbow. It was a dark chocolate-brown color at one end. At the other end, it was a warm, honey-yellow color. This was no ordinary stick. Whenever Asha and Baz drew something on the ground with this stick, they went back in time.

So far, it had taken them to see a rocket scientist, an inventor, and a code breaker. All from different times and places.

“Do you think the stick knows anything about volcanoes?” Asha asked Baz as they walked out of the school doors.

“I bet it does,” Baz said, biting his bottom lip. He always bit his lip when he was nervous. This time he was nervous about where the stick would take them.

The kids broke into a run. They headed for the edge of the playground where the grass met the sand.

“You do it this time,” Asha said, holding out the stick to Baz.

He took two steps back and held up his hands in protest. “Nope,” he replied. “No way.”

“You don’t need to be afraid of it,” said Asha.

Baz shook his head and said, “I’m not afraid of it. I don’t trust it.”

They both broke into fits of laughter. Asha thought it was funny not to trust a magic stick. Baz had nervous giggles.

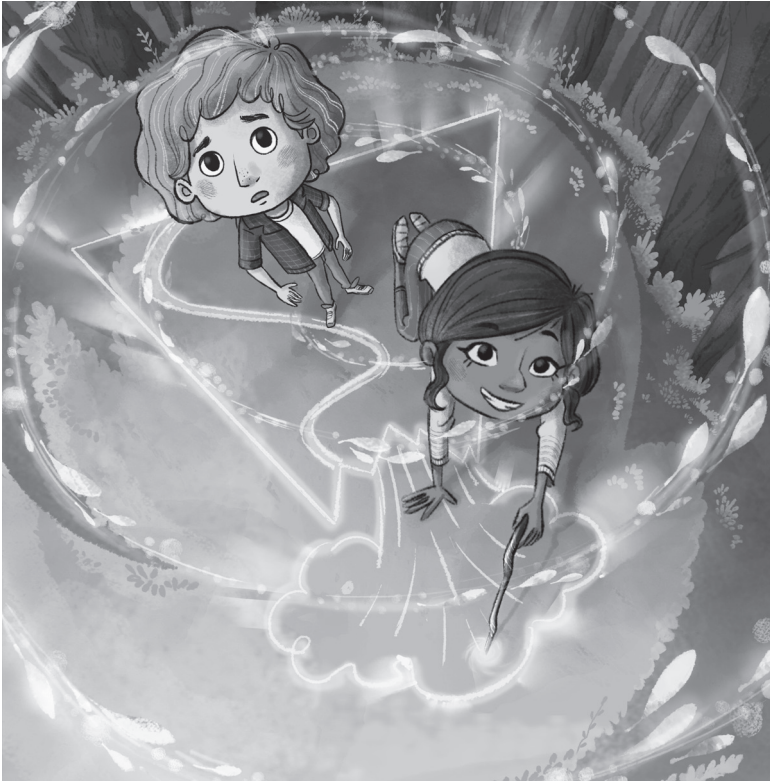
“Fine,” said Asha.

She sat on the sand. With the magic stick she drew a volcano on the ground. Then, she stepped inside the drawing.

“Wait for me,” Baz said and jumped onto the volcano with Asha.

Asha touched the stick to the sand and yelled, “Erupt!”

In that exact moment, a south wind blew a mini-tornado around them. The playground disappeared on the other side of the tornado. Asha and Baz were sent traveling through space and time.



“Are we there yet?” Baz yelled with his hands over his eyes.

“We are somewhere,” said Asha.

The south wind stopped. Baz uncovered his eyes and they both looked down at the ground. The volcano drawing was gone. Written in its place was a name and a year.

**Katia Krafft. 1973.**