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Serafina's Stories



Synopsis

New Mexico's master storyteller creates a southwestern version of the Arabian Nights in this fable set in seventeenth-century Santa Fe. In January 1680 a dozen Pueblo Indians are charged with conspiring to incite a revolution against the colonial government. When the prisoners are brought before the Governor, one of them is revealed as a young woman. Educated by the friars in her pueblo's mission church, Serafina speaks beautiful Spanish and surprises the Governor with her fearlessness and intelligence. The two strike a bargain. She will entertain the Governor by telling him a story. If he likes her story, he will free one of the prisoners. Like Scheherezade, who prevented her royal husband from killing her by telling him stories, Serafina keeps the Governor so entertained with her versions of Nuevo Mexicano cuentos that he spares the lives of all her fellow prisoners. Some of the stories Serafina tells will have a familiar ring to them, for they came from Europe and were New Mexicanized by the Spanish colonists. Some have Pueblo Indian plots and characters--and it is this blending of the two cultures that is Anaya's true subject.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Governor of Spanish New Mexico is a troubled, lonely man, caught between his Spanish subjects, the increasingly restless Pueblo peoples, the Apache marauders, and a fanatical Catholic church that is becoming ever more repressive. One day in 1680 twelve Indian prisoners are brought into town, accused of plotting against the Spanish government. Turns out, one of the "plotters" is a beautiful young woman and gifted storyteller, Serafina. The Governor strikes an odd bargain with this

Serafina. For every night that she entertains him with a story he will free one of the prisoners. Sounds like the Thousand And One Nights, but with some unusual twists. Not only are the lives of the prisoners at stake, and that of Serafina, but the future of the territory. Can the Spanish colonials and the native peoples cross their cultural divide and live in peace? Can the stories of the gifted Serafina bring them together? Or is it already too late? Well, you simply have to read this book. Author Rudolfo Anaya writes in a beautiful, heartfelt style, sprinkling his clear, simple English with Spanish words and phrases, to create a vivid impression of the old Southwest. Loosely based on actual historical events, the story is as meaningful as ever in a time when peoples and cultures are struggling to coexist. The stories are so well done that they become more than stories. They speak to the reader personally. This book is easily read but will move you deeply. I recommend it most highly. Reviewed by Louis N. Gruber.

I loved the stories- they crossed the cultural divide with adaptations of stories most of us heard as children.

See below. Serafina's Stories is in that special category of book to be appreciated by both adults and children.

Great for adults and young adults.

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