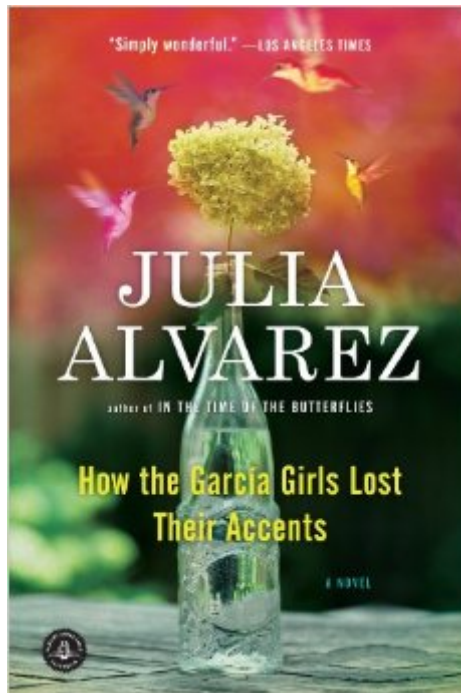


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How The Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents



Synopsis

“Simply wonderful.” —Los Angeles Times
Acclaimed writer Julia Alvarez’s brilliant and buoyant and beloved first novel gives voice to four sisters recounting their adventures growing up in two cultures. Selected as a Notable Book by both the New York Times and the American Library Association, it won the PEN Oakland/Josephine Miles Award for books with a multicultural perspective and was chosen by New York librarians as one of twenty-one classics for the twenty-first century. Ms. Alvarez was recently honored with the 2013 National Medal of Arts for her extraordinary storytelling. In this debut novel, the Garcías—a sisters—Carla, Sandra, Yolanda, and Sofía—and their family must flee their home in the Dominican Republic after their father’s role in an attempt to overthrow a tyrannical dictator is discovered. They arrive in New York City in 1960 to a life far removed from their existence in the Caribbean. In the wild and wondrous and not always welcoming U.S.A., their parents try to hold on to their old ways, but the girls try find new lives: by forgetting their Spanish, by straightening their hair and wearing fringed bell bottoms. For them, it is at once liberating and excruciating to be caught between the old world and the new. How the Garcías—a Girls Lost Their Accents sets the sisters free to tell their most intimate stories about how they came to be at home—and not at home—in America. A joy to read. —The Cleveland Plain Dealer

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Characteristic of the immigrant novel looking back upon one’s beginnings, Julia Alvarez’ novel begins in a reverse chronological order. The story introduces 39 year old Yolanda returning to her

home in the Dominican Republic after an absence of five years. She is greeted by her extended family of aunts and cousins who still live a well to do lifestyle in a junta regime. It was the same Trujillo regime that caused Yolanda's parents and three sisters to flee their homeland in the early 1960's to the U.S. The story returns through a series of vignettes to the girls experiences and customs in a more genteel era. Where maids and chauffeurs were the order of the day, it lays the foundation for the sense of disillusionment and deprivation the girls feel in the United States where confrontations with schoolmates and unsavory exhibitionists only fuel their resilience. In addition to the normal difficulties associated with growing up, the girls contend with the confusion of having to forsake their native land with its Latin culture, tropical environment, extended family life, for a struggle with a strange language and even stranger culture. While in the Dominican Republic their mother, Laura, feeds the need in the "four girls" to seek their individuality by dressing them in identical outfits which differ only in color for each girl. The traditions and customs of the old both identify and isolate the girls in their new environment. The stories weave a tapestry of familial love, honor, confusion and tension. The girls are forever caught between who they were and where they came from, but never lose sight of who they have become. The author has presented a colorful tale in a semi-autobiographical work.

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