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Viaje A La Tierra Del Abuelo (Spanish Edition)



Synopsis

Teenager Sergio is caught between two countries. He has lived in Los Angeles since the age of six, when he emigrated from Central America with his parents. But in a country far away from his birthplace and birthright, he finds himself coming of age without any sense of a "homeland." But Sergio has spent many years under the strong, guiding influence of his grandfather, who lived with Sergio's family until his recent death. Before Abuelo dies, he exacts a tough promise from Sergio. After years living in a land that is not his own, Abuelo demands to be buried in his own native soil. Sergio's struggle to honor his mentor takes him on a dangerous mission, fraught with unexpected disasters. Sergio's voyage journey of self-discovery and cultural exploration that requires Sergio take control. He encounters unexpected triumphs and discoveries that will enrich the rest of his life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Viaje a la tierra del abuelo explores critical questions of identity, homeland, and culture, issues that are grounded in the reality of immigrant teenagers who have been raised and educated in the United States. In this well-crafted and sensitive narrative, acclaimed author Mario Bencastro draws upon his own experiences working with immigrant teens to deftly examine the pressing questions and problems facing these bicultural teens.

Mario Bencastro is the author of numerous award-winning and critically acclaimed works that explore the impact of civil war on a people, and the lives of Central American immigrants in the United States. His first novel, *A Shot in the Cathedral* (Arte P blico Press, 1996), a finalist in the

International Diana y Novedades Literary Prize (Mexico), and his short story collection, *The Tree of Life: Stories of the Civil War* (Arte P  blico Press, 1997) focus on civil war in El Salvador. In *Odyssey to the North* (Arte P  blico Press, 1998) he turns his attention north of the border as his characters seek a better life in the United States. Bencastro's work has been published in El Salvador, Mexico, Haiti, India, Canada and the U.S. He lives and works in the Washington D.C. area.

This is one of the best stories that our Spanish conversation group has read. The text is written in Spanish about mid level, enough of a challenge and learning experience for those of us who are conversational, above beginner but not quite advanced. Our native speakers enjoyed the story very much, too, as it illustrates a common theme among the Hispanic culture now living in the United States - the feeling of not really belonging to this country or the country from which they emigrated, a feeling of being torn between two countries. Fantastic events take place which makes for good entertainment. A truly enjoyable Spanish language story.

As a friend of the author I'm not totally unbiased, but looking at the work on its own merits, I am impressed. For me, as an Anglo with ties to the Hispanic community, I found Mr. Bencastro's eloquent description of the Hispanic identity crisis in America particularly enlightening. Besides that, it's a pretty good story. Lastly, as I read it, I couldn't help but wish that it had been around when I was learning Spanish. The books we had to read for late high school and early college courses were not nearly so easy to read and interesting. The language itself is simple and straightforward, but not dull. For the intermediate student it provides new vocabulary, a nice story and some thought provoking themes.

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