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The Book Of Unknown Americans



Synopsis

Named a New York Times and Washington Post Notable Book, an NPR Great Read, The Daily Beast's Novel of the Year, and a Mother Jones, Oprah.com, School Library Journal, and BookPage Best Book of the Year When fifteen-year-old Maribel Rivera sustains a terrible injury, the Riveras leave behind a comfortable life in Mexico and risk everything to come to the United States so that Maribel can have the care she needs. Once they arrive, it's not long before Maribel attracts the attention of Mayor Toro, the son of one of their new neighbors, who sees a kindred spirit in this beautiful, damaged outsider. Their love story sets in motion events that will have profound repercussions for everyone involved. Here Henríquez seamlessly interweaves the story of these star-crossed lovers, and of the Rivera and Toro families, with the testimonials of men and women who have come to the United States from all over Latin America. The Book of Unknown Americans is a stunning novel of hopes and dreams, guilt and love—a book that offers a resonant new definition of what it means to be American.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Arturo and Alma Rivera lived a happy life in Mexico until their beautiful teenage daughter, Maribel, sustains a serious injury in an accident. Unsure if she'll ever be the same again, they migrate to the United States—Delaware, specifically—where Maribel will be able to attend a special school and hopefully begin to recover some semblance of normalcy. But America is difficult for the Riveras—the job Arturo secures to sponsor their journey to America is brutal, Maribel doesn't seem to be making much progress in school, and Alma struggles with English, and trying to become

acclimated to a different life."Because a place can do many things against you, and if it's your home or if it was your home at one time, you still love it. That's how it works."The one bright spot is that the Riveras meet Celia and Rafael Toro, who came to the U.S. years ago to escape the destruction and violence in Panama. The Toros are more settled into their American lives, although Celia in particular longs to return home, at least for a visit. And when their teenage son, Mayor, who struggles with self-confidence in the shadow of his more athletic, popular older brother, sets eyes on Maribel for the first time, he finds himself completely in her thrall, and wants nothing more to spend time with her, despite what others perceive as her challenges. As the relationship between the Riveras and the Toros grows stronger, it is tested— as are relationships within each family— by secrets, incorrect assumptions, fears, longing, and struggles. And a number of incidents occur which set in motion a chain of events which will affect each member of both families in vastly different ways.

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