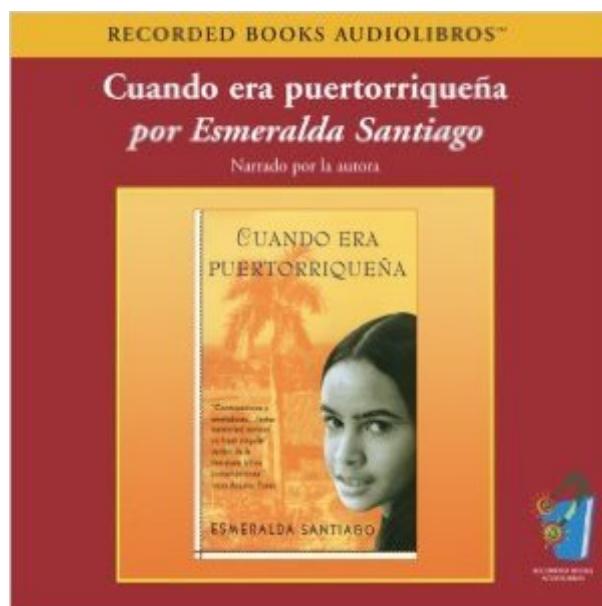


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Cuando Era Puertorriquena/When I Was Puerto Rican (Spanish Edition)



Synopsis

From a rippled zinc shack in rural Puerto Rico to "the better life" in a decaying Brooklyn tenement, Esmeralda Santiago's Puerto Rican childhood is one of sorcery, smoldering war between the sexes, and high comedy. Hers is a portrait of a harsh but enchanted world that can never be reclaimed. Selling over 16,000 copies in hardcover, this triumphant coming-of-age memoir is now available in paperback editions in both English and Spanish. In the tradition of Black Ice, Santiago writes lyrically of her childhood on her native island and of her bewildering years of transition in New York City.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I read this book three years ago and was very impressed with the way the themes were developed by Esmeralda Santiago. The book is a reflection of the Puerto Rican society in the time when Esmeralda Santiago was a young girl. Therefore, it is true reflection of how many Puerto Ricans lived and struggled to ascertain life's most basic needs. I like the fact that Esmeralda did not leave a pillow unturned while describing family situations, how the father left the family to survive with very little income and lastly their move to NYC in search of better opportunities. The reader can identify with Puerto Rican culture and what it means to be Puerto Rican because of the way Esmeralda describes her life in a language that's very adequate, full of descriptions and expressions of her deepest sentiments. The beauty and simplicity of her vocabulary facilitates one's understanding of the book, the themes and situations presented. Overall, it is an exemplary memoir that paints a very real description of the ups and downs of the Puerto Rican society in the fifties. I recommend this

book to all those who are fond of literature of any kind.-----LeÃ- este libro hace tres aÃ- os y quedÃ© muy impresionada con el tema que ha sido muy bien desarrollado por Esmeraldo Santiago. El libro realmente es un reflejo de la sociedad puertorriqueÃ a en aquella Ã©poca cuando Esmeralda Santigao era niÃ a. Por lo tanto, es un retrato real de como muchos puertorriqueÃ os vivÃ an y luchaban para tener las cosas mÃ s bÃ sicas de la vida.

I give 5 stars, not because I was necessarily challenged in weighty intellectual "profundities" (as one of the critics above states), but simply because the quality of story-telling (at least in the Spanish version) is insurpassable. I was able to see right into the heart of Esmeralda's thinking. She was almost always eloquent beyond her years; at first I thought that this wasn't accurate for a girl of her age; but in retrospect, I think that the author knew this beforehand and realizes that her character is indeed representative of the many children or tÃ- neys who are absolutely brilliant but are perceived to be not so bright because of a spoken language. I would like to find out if this was a subtlety that she wanted to communicate. With that said, my favorite aspect of Esmeralda's eloquent subtleties is her honest, authentic anger towards haughty and egotistical people. I believe that E. Santiago was intending also to disfrazel the machista haughtiness that existed in Po'rico. I wanted to reach into the story and punch her Papi in the face. What a pig! I grieves me to think that such a man really existed! Another thing, the move to New York, wonderfully contrasted with MacÃ³n - and the innocence of perceiving the jews, italians and blacks throught the eyes of a sweet girl with no prejudices - a brilliant girl indeed! How was she able to dislodge herself from all of the enticements of having prejudices so quickly formed? The best part of the entire novel - a definite tear-jerker - is the rapid dÃ©nouement punched at me (the first sentence of the epilogue). I didn't expect it; it had sort of a Great Expectations twist there at the end; if there were ever a movie based on this story, I think that that would be the brilliant finish of the story.

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