



Little Nation and Other Stories

Alejandro Morales, Adam Spires (Translator)

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I'm sick of you punks, Micaela said. And I'm warning you now. I'm going to get you for that murder! In the title story, the Latino community in East L.A. suffers horrible gang-related violence. Children are killed in the crossfire and young people use and sell drugs. But the rape and murder of a 15-year-old girl is the last straw for Micaela Clemencia, a local teacher. With the help of other women in the neighborhood, Micaela keeps her promise to punish the murderer. And much to the dismay of the police and other city officials, the women take control of the barrio, their little nation.

While some characters face a violent world driven by greed, others long for a sense of belonging or a place to call their own. In Mama Concha, a grandmother shares her ancient wisdom with her grandson, teaching him to appreciate the land and the fruits and vegetables she grows. In The Gardens of Versailles, a home with beautiful gardens is a local favorite, until it stands in the way of progress that will benefit the entire community. And in Prickles, an artist who is a grotesque oddity because of the thorny tumors that sprout all over his body develops a special, unusual relationship with the Virgin of Guadalupe.

Alejandro Morales returns to his native Southern California community of Montebello in four of these five stories. Originally written in Spanish, this volume includes the first-ever English translation of these thought-provoking stories, in which Morales explores the Chicano community's marginalization and search for a space to call its own.

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