



Mexican Enough: My Life between the Borderlines

By Stephanie Elizondo Griest

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Growing up in a half-white, half-brown town and family in South Texas, Stephanie Elizondo Griest struggled with her cultural identity. Upon turning thirty, she ventured to her mother's native Mexico to do some root-searching and stumbled upon a social movement that shook the nation to its core.

Mexican Enough chronicles her adventures rumbling with luchadores (professional wrestlers), marching with rebel teachers in Oaxaca, investigating the murder of a prominent gay activist, and sneaking into a prison to meet with indigenous resistance fighters. She also visits families of the undocumented workers she befriended back home. Travel mates include a Polish thief, a Border Patrol agent, and a sultry dominatrix. Part memoir, part journalistic reportage, *Mexican Enough* illuminates how we cast off our identity in our youth, only to strive to find it again as adults -- and the lessons to be learned along the way.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Griest (*Around the Bloc*), whose mother is a third-generation Mexican-American, made a conscious choice to be white like my dad one day in elementary school and, initially, finds her Hispanic identity when a guidance counselor advises that given her SAT scores, otherwise closed doors would swing open (she graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Texas in 1997). The realization that nearly every accolade I have received in life... has been at least partially due to [this] genetic link inspires her journey to Mexico to learn Spanish and to gain a deeper understanding of [her] cultural heritage. Roughly from January to June 2005, she lives in Querétaro (north of Mexico City), coincidentally with a bunch of gay men. Aside from learning about the gay scene, the art scene and Mexico's unique wrestlers, the timing of her trip places her there when the gay activist Octavio Acuña is murdered. In July, she goes to Chiapas (Mexico's southernmost state), Zapatista territory, and devotes the second half of her book largely to documenting a burgeoning social movement that shook parts of the nation to the core. Patches are interesting, but Griest is not compelling or profound about the harassment and violence suffered by homosexuals, for instance, nor seriously affecting about her personal dilemma, being biracial. (*Aug.*)

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Review

"Stephanie Elizondo Griest dances where others fear to tread. There were several places in this book where I said, 'No, you can't say that.' I am glad she did." -- Luis Alberto Urrea, bestselling author of *The Devil's Highway*

"I can't think of anyone who does a better job of capturing the people and places that inhabit the soul of a country. She grants us access into the hidden corners of a Mexico we've only heard about, with her own brand of humor, spot-on wisdom, and heart." -- Michelle Herrera Mulligan, editor of *Juicy Mangos* and *Border-Line Personalities*

"A revealing exposé of one woman's struggle to live between two cultures and two worlds, and yet not fully belong to either." -- Teresa Rodriguez, author of *The Daughters of Juárez*

"This is a travel journal for the new millennium, a biracial woman searching for herself among the complexities of the borderlands." -- Sandra Cisneros, bestselling author of *The House on Mango Street* and *Caramelo*

"[O]ne thing is undeniable about Griest: This chica's got guts. The systematic self-incrimination she repeatedly displays and the frenzied compulsions fueling her quest to figure out just how Mexican she truly is -- if at all -- are what make Griest's work important. It speaks to the larger truths all biethnic individuals are fixated on but aren't always as willing to expose with such intense honesty and nerve. So we continue watching with an interest best described as uneasy. We know what is at stake for this writer, for all hyphenated Americans confronting their heritages, each curious to see what happens when Griest chooses to fling herself in front of the next moving vehicle, hoping the epiphany it heralds will be enough." -- *Los Angeles Times*

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