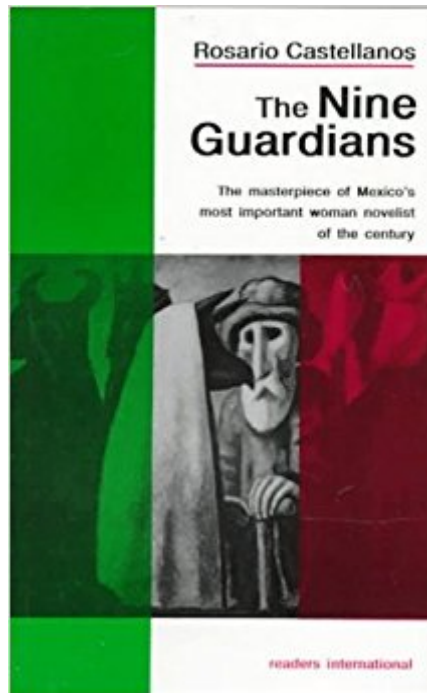




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The Nine Guardians



Synopsis

The Nine Guardians is crowded with the magic and malice of warring gods and men.

Book Information

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: Readers International; 1st edition (September 25, 1992)

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (8 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Originally published as "Balun-Canan [Nine Stars]" (referring to the ancient Mayan villages in Chiapas, Mexico, where this novel is set), this thickly plotted, autobiographical novel describes a wealthy family during the 1930s, fifteen years after the Mexican Revolution. The novel is bookended by lengthy sections told by the landowner's daughter--a never-named seven-year-old girl who resembles Castellanos herself. (The author was also raised on her family's ranch in Chiapas, her brother died young, and she lived a relatively isolated existence under the aloof custody of her father and his overprotective wife.) These chapters introduce the family and the inhabitants of the town of Comitán, as seen through the eyes of the girl, and describe peripherally the ongoing tensions between Mexicans of Spanish descent and those of Indian blood, between the wealthy landowners and the reform government, and between men and women. While the first and third sections carry the emotional weight of the novel, the middle, longest section contains the "meat" of the plot, told mostly in the third person--although some events are seen from the vantage point of individual characters. The family members travel to their ranch, Chactajal, where the hostilities between opposing social forces finally burst into the open. Goaded by legal reforms introduced by the national government, the Indian workers, almost inevitably, rebel against labor conditions that can be described as close to slavery. Caught in the middle is Felipe, the landowner's illegitimate nephew, whose blood guarantees him certain rights but whose birth prevents him from acquiring

any status.

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