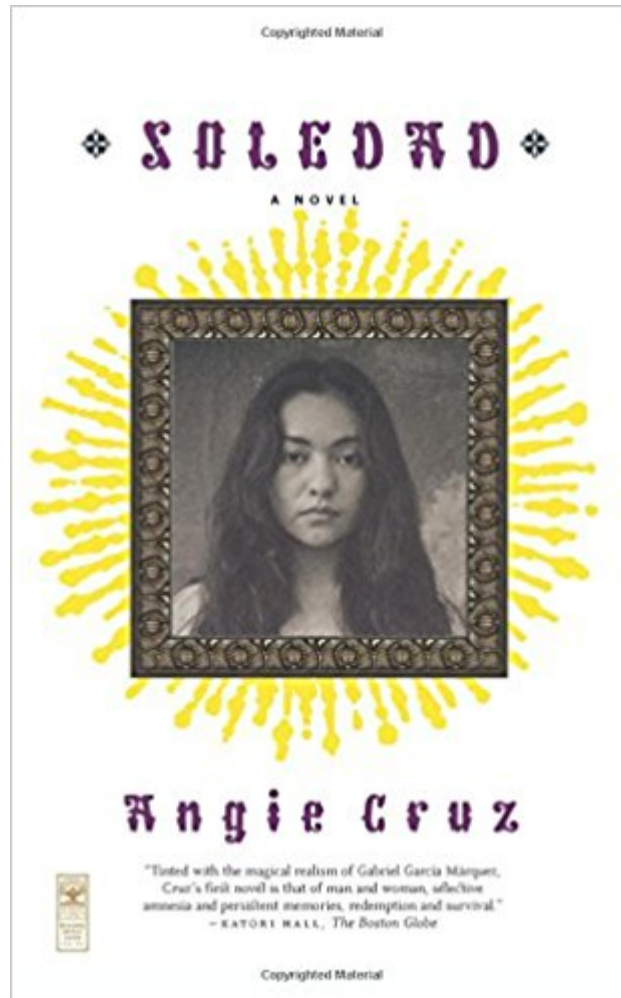




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Soledad: A Novel



Synopsis

At eighteen, Soledad couldn't get away fast enough from her contentious family with their endless tragedies and petty fights. Two years later, she's an art student at Cooper Union with a gallery job and a hip East Village walk-up. But when TÃ- a Gorda calls with the news that Soledad's mother has lapsed into an emotional coma, she insists that Soledad's return is the only cure. Fighting the memories of open hydrants, leering men, and slick-skinned teen girls with raunchy mouths and snapping gum, Soledad moves home to West 164th Street. As she tries to tame her cousin Flaca's raucous behavior and to resist falling for Richie -- a soulful, intense man from the neighborhood -- she also faces the greatest challenge of her life: confronting the ghosts from her mother's past and salvaging their damaged relationship. Evocative and wise, Soledad is a wondrous story of culture and chaos, family and integrity, myth and mysticism, from a Latina literary light.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

New Novel Reviewed: Soledad, by Angie CruzIn her first novel Soledad, Angie Cruz shows that she can write good prose. Her style is evocative, simple, and clear, presenting an interesting world of spirit and intrigue packed with rich descriptions of upper New York City life. Although the title features the protagonist's name, the most brilliant and successful aspect of the novel is Cruz's creation of the teenage character Flaca. Effectively conveying the terror and beauty of adolescence, she is interesting, believable, and her scenes are full of internal and external conflict. Soledad captures a glimpse of the adolescent spirit similar to JD Salinger's classic The Catcher in the Rye,

but within a Latino environment. Like Holden Caulfield, Soledad, a New York youth (but already 20 years old), suffers inner turmoil by much of what she sees. At the opening of the novel, Soledad returns to the home that she had once desperately fled. Her troubled past comes alive in the Washington Heights ghetto of New York City, where, in facing her family and friends, she confronts old and new parts of herself, eventually to the point of reexamining former assumptions. As she approaches her old block, she endures an attack within her own neighborhood, but not by any real physical forces of aggression; she is attacked by the memory of all things connected to home: "As soon as I arrive at 164th Street I'm attacked. I trip on the uneven sidewalk. The air-conditioners spit at me. The smell of onion and cilantro sting my eyes. I start to sneeze, the humidity is thick...Hydrants erupt...I know I should turn back while I still can...There are more cops on the street than fire hydrants. Merengue blares...sneakers hang from lamp posts...my time in Washington Heights is like a prison sentence.

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