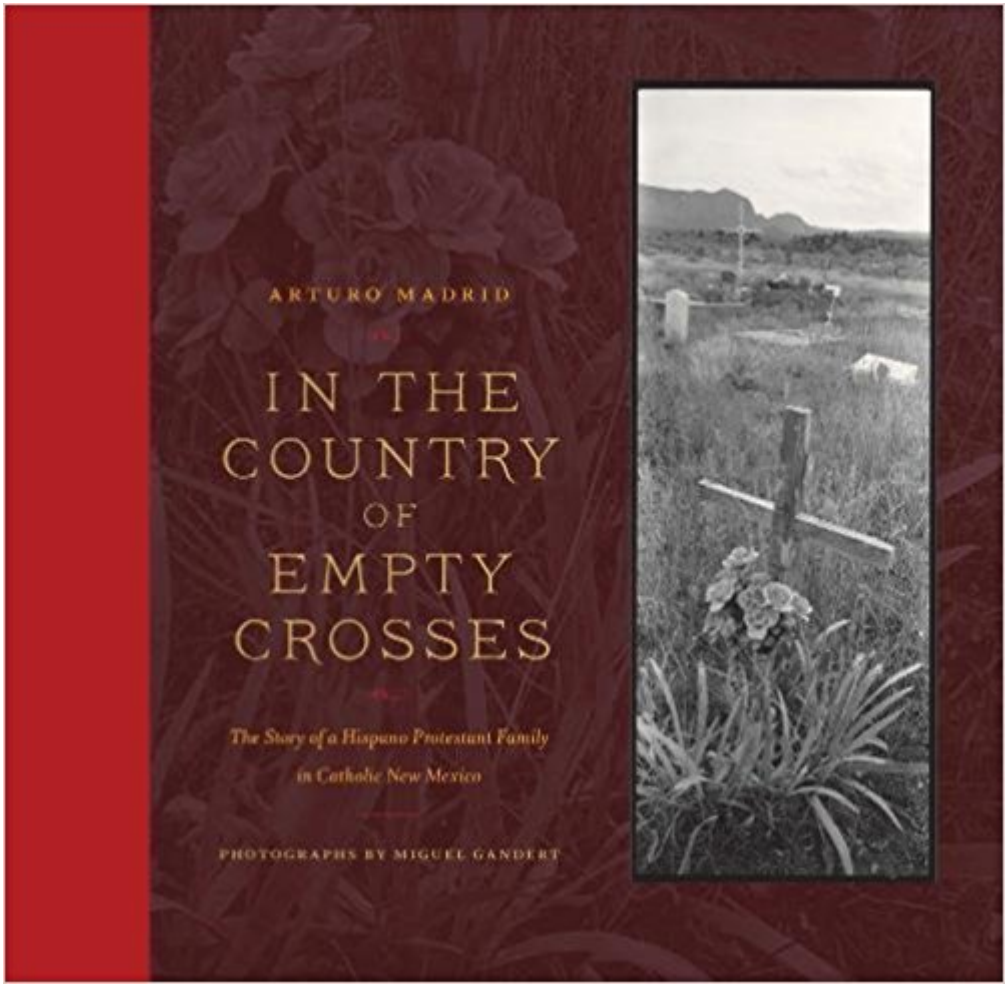
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In The Country Of Empty Crosses: The Story Of A Hispano Protestant Family In Catholic New Mexico



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Synopsis

ArturoÃ¢â ¬â„¢s MadridÃ¢â ¬â„¢s homeland is in the shadow of the Rocky Mountains in northern New Mexico, where each town seems a world apart from the next, and where family histories that extend back four centuries bind the people to the land and to one another.This New Mexico is a land of struggle and dispute, a place in which Madrid's ancestors predate those who landed at Plymouth Rock.In the Country of Empty Crosses is MadridÃ¢â ¬â„¢s complex yet affirming memoir about lands before the advent of passable roads--places such as Tierra Amarilla, San AugustÃƒÂ-n [insert "u" and note accent on I], and Los Fuertes that were once among the most remote in the nation. Madrid grew up in a family that was doubly removed from the community: as Hispanic Protestants, they were a minority among the region's politically dominant Anglo Protestants and a minority within the overwhelmingly Catholic Hispanic populace.Madrid writes affectingly of the tensions, rifts, and disputes that punctuated the lives of his family as they negotiated prejudice and racism, casual and institutional, to advance and even thrive as farmers, ranchers, and teachers. His story is affectionate as well, embracing generations of ancestors who found their querencias—their beloved home places—in that beautiful if sometimes unforgiving landscape. The result is an account of New Mexico unlike any other, one in which humor and heartache comfortably coexist. Complemented by stunning images by acclaimed photographer Miguel Gandert -- ranging from intimate pictures of unkempt rural cemeteries to New Mexico's small villages and stunning vistas -- In the Country of Empty Crosses is a memoir of loss and survival, of hope and redemption, and a lyrical celebration of an often misunderstood native land and its people.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Professor Arturo Madrid has written a sensitive story about the early history of New Mexico, and brought it to life by sharing with readers his family's experiences. The book is a beautifully written narrative that focuses, from a personal perspective, on several interlacing themes. Madrid blends together the different themes and stories in his narrative to weave a remarkably appealing tapestry. His first person style personalizes the genealogy and history of his family. But in that process he surfaces internal and external forces that uncover the challenges his ancestors endured. When New Mexico was conquered by the US, the economic, political and societal structures changed dramatically. This alone was a major challenge for New Mexico Hispanos who had lived there since before major English settlements along the Atlantic Seaboard. However, add to this the decision by his family to convert from Catholicism to Protestants. Instantly, the Madrids were considered heretics by the Catholic Church, and "the others" by Anglo protestants. The book's format is a remarkable blend of stylistic writing that is emotional, but appealing, and sensitive without being mushy. He introduces characters and explores their background and personalities in a soft and humane way. The photographs included, all in black and white, lend the appeal of work done by Ansel Adams and paintings by Georgia O'Keeffe. They blend together to strengthen the narrative and provide the reader with a feeling of place and time. The use of Spanish, especially that spoken in New Mexico, adds immeasurably to the book. The old Spanish words and idioms lend a unique and descriptive account of emotions, relationships and environment. Madrid is a master story teller, and a gifted writer. This is a unique and valuable book. Anyone interested in the American west, and in evocative reflections of life experiences in an enchanting land must purchase this book to savor its lovely story and writing.

A lovely book that deserves to be dipped into as well as read closely.

Arturo Madrid's, In The Country of Empty Crosses, is an eye opener to an additional form of discrimination--religious discrimination bases solely on one's families choice of religion. A very significant study of discrimination within an ethnic group--reminds me of discrimination based on whether one has a light or dark skin color. A profound representation of intra-racial/cultural discrimination.

A professor friend recommended Arturo Madrid’s book. Since I have Madrid ancestors in New Mexico, I ordered "In the Country of Empty Crosses" out of curiosity, and discovered that, yes, the Roque Madrid mentioned in the book is my second cousin, nine times removed! While my Californian,Catholic background is completely different from Arturo Madrid’s New Mexican, Protestant one, I found his book fascinating and evocative of earlier times. For those of us who are researching our ancestry, this book is a gem.

"In the Country of Empty Crosses" explodes the racial, religious and language divides of New Mexico. Protestants, Catholics, Anglos and Hispanos live parallel lives whose overlaps fuel the Madrid family’s story. Seasons, harvests, geography and the power of faith that the author doesn’t share, draw us into the humble lives of these rare Protestants. More than a simple memoir, this is a family love story whose elegant prose snaps us and hold us close. At a family funeral, Madrid’s amazingly engaging style shows us clearly why we need to read this bookÃ Â In the Country of Empty Crosses: The Story of a Hispano Protestant Family in Catholic New Mexico,Ã Â "The Jemez Mountains rise due west. Below them lie Los Alamos, the canyons that cut into the Pajarito Plateau, and three of the Northern Pueblos -- San Juan, Santa Clara, and San Ildefonso--as well as almost all the original communities of the Rio Arriba. With a powerful telescope, I could probably see the juncture of Rio Santa Cruz and the Rio Grande, where my grandparent’s farm was located; and upriver, the Methodist Cemetery in Alcade where Grandmother Trinidad and Grandfather Ramos are buried alongside Ernesto." Madrid’s cemeteries are where the past meets the present to sketch the future.

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