



In the Name of Salome

By Julia Alvarez

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"The story of my life starts with the story of my country... ." Thus begins Julia Alvarez's epic fictional account of the real-life Salomé Ureña-the "Emily Dickinson of the Dominican Republic." Born in the 1850s, in a time of intense political repression and turmoil, Salomé's fervent patriotic poems turned her-at seventeen-into a national icon. **In the Name of Salomé** is equally the story of Salomé's daughter, Camila, who grows up in exile, in the shadow of her mother's legend. Shy and self-effacing, Camila's life is in stark contrast to Salomé's. While her mother dedicated her brief life to educating Dominican girls to serve their struggling new nation, Camila spent her career explaining the Spanish pluperfect to upper-class American girls. But when, at age sixty-six, Camila makes a decision to leave her comfortable life behind and join Castro's revolution in Cuba, she begins a journey to make peace with her past-and bring the lives of two remarkable women full circle.

Spanning more than a century, **In the Name of Salomé** proves Alvarez equally adept at capturing the sweep of history and the most intimate details of women's lives and hearts. It is Alvarez's richest and most inspiring novel to date.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

It's 1960, and 65-year-old Camila Ureña decides to join the New World. Castro's new world, that is, which she has been following on the news with a heated excitement she hasn't felt for years. Forced into early retirement from her 20-year post as a Spanish teacher among the perky white girls of Vassar College, Camila faces a choice: whether to move to Florida and live down the block from her best friend or to fly over Florida and into Havana where her brothers live--and thereby land in a place of upheaval and hungry ghosts. The hungriest ghost of all is Camila's mother, Salomé Ureña, whose poems became inspirational anthems for a short-lived revolution in the late-19th-century Dominican Republic.

Based in fact, *In the Name of Salomé* alternates between Camila's story and her mother's. Camila's chapters are written in the third person, Salomé's in the first. By calling Camila "she," Alvarez alienates her within the text--as if in her attic at Vassar she is floating outside herself in an America that does not belong to her. In contrast, Salomé's chapters vibrate with life and tears and melodrama. Through the alternating voices, which Alvarez handles masterfully, the reader comes to grasp Camila's longing for the color and music of her mother's lost world--how the meek daughter wishes "she" could become the "I" of her mother's revolutionary and passionate life as a poet, which began under a pseudonym, Herminia, in a local political paper:

Each time there was a new poem by Herminia in the paper, Mamá would close the front shutters of the house and read it in a whisper to the rest of us. She was delighted with the brave Herminia. I felt guilty keeping this secret from her, but I knew if I told her, all her joy would turn to worry.

Yet for Salomé, her pseudonym allows her to become the voice of a country, "and with every link she cracked open for la patria, she was also setting me free." --*Emily White*

From Publishers Weekly

The Dominican Republic's most famous poet and her daughter, a professor in the United States, are the remarkable protagonists of this lyrical work, one of the most moving political novels of the past half century. Camila Henríquez Ureña is introduced as an "eminent Hispanicist, a woman with two doctorates [and] a tenured chair" at Vassar. She is also the exiled daughter of both renowned Dominican poet Salomé Ureña and the country's last democratically elected president. Born in 1850, Salomé called a revolution into being with her fearless poetry. Even as an adolescent, she saw her pseudonymous poems inspire bloodshed in the streets. Camila, born in 1894, followed the fortunes of her famous family into exile, first in Cuba, then on her own in the U.S., where she became an academic's academic. Alvarez, who has written more than once about women in exile (*How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*) and women revolutionaries (*In the Time of the Butterflies*), and who is herself a poet, academic and exile, has found in Salomé and Camila Ureña her best topic yet. The novel's protagonists are based on real characters, yet by offering history through the lenses of both the poet and the scholar, as well as by portraying male-dominated events from the perspective of female activists, Alvarez conveys purely Latin American revolutionary idealism with an intellectual sensuality that eschews magical realism. The narrative flows freely across time and place: Havana in 1935; Minnesota in 1918; Washington, D.C., in 1923; Santa Domingo in the mid to late 19th century; Poughkeepsie in the 1950s; and is punctuated with letters and poetry. While Salomé is the flame that heats this cauldron, Camila tends the fire. When she retires from teaching in 1960, she must choose a meaningful conclusion to her life. Her long-time love, Marion, though recently married, invites her to live nearby in Florida. But born and bred to revolution, Camila has been too long away from the fray. It is not giving away anything to say that she

spends the next 13 years in Cuba, heeding the old call to create "Jos Marti's America Now." \$50,000 ad/promo; 22-city author tour. (June)

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From Library Journal

When Camila was three, her mother, Salom Urena, the Dominican Republic's "National Poetess," died. For years, the youngster wrestled with the loss, holding fast to the dream that her mother would someday reappear, a mysterious, larger-than-life stranger. Meanwhile, her aunt Ramona struggled to help the child understand Salom 's demise, teaching her a special, if sacrilegious, incantation to soften what had happened: "In the name of the Father, the Son and my Mother, Salom ." Alvarez (How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents) has written a brilliantly layered novel that is grounded in 100 years of Latin American history. As Salom 's story intertwines with Camila's, we are made privy to politics both personal and international. Passionate and unpredictable, the book quietly lambastes colonialism and imperialism. At the same time, feminist themes emerge, from the enduring agony of motherless daughters to the integration of lesbians into progressive movements. Well wrought and powerful--if at times structurally confusing--this is a novel to be passed from friend to friend, from madre to hija. Highly recommended.

-Eleanor J. Bader, Brooklyn, NY

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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Do you have favorite book? Should you have, what is your favorite's book? Book is very important thing for us to understand everything in the world. Each e-book has different aim or maybe goal; it means that reserve has different type. Some people feel enjoy to spend their time to read a book. They are really reading whatever they acquire because their hobby is definitely reading a book. Why not the person who don't like reading a book? Sometime, individual feel need book once they found difficult problem as well as exercise. Well, probably you should have this In the Name of Salome.

Hazel Mishler:

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