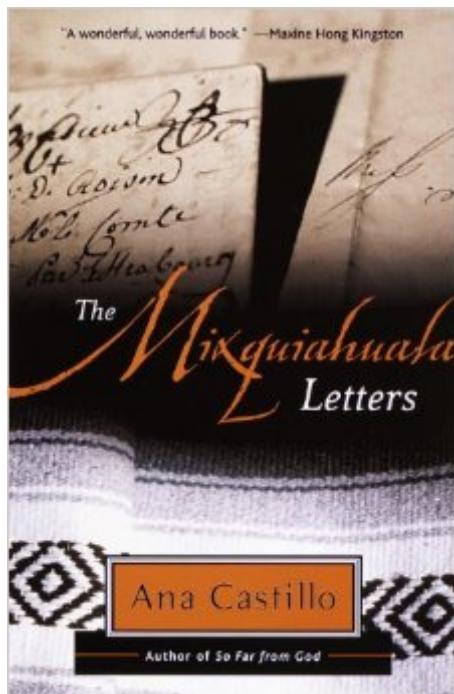


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The Mixquiahuala Letters



Synopsis

Focusing on the relationship between two fiercely independent women--Teresa, a writer, and Alicia, an artist--this epistolary novel was written as a tribute to Julio Cortázar's *Hopscotch* and examines Latina forms of love, gender conflict, and female friendship. Ana Castillo's groundbreaking first novel, *The Mixquiahuala Letters*, received an American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation and is widely studied as a feminist text on the nature of self-conflict.

Book Information

Paperback: 144 pages

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Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.4 x 8 inches

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Average Customer Review: 3.5 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (11 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I respect Ana Castillo and think that *The Guardians*, especially, was a fine novel, and so I hate to give *The Mixquiahuala Letters* a negative review. But it simply didn't work for me. Just not at all. It's the (sort of) story of two women, one a white American artist, Alicia, and one a Chicana poet, Teresa, who meet in an artists' retreat. They forge a friendship and proceed to experience several adventures in Mexico, falling into dangerous situations at every turn, and they help to support one another in their efforts to build successful creative careers and to build and sustain relationships. The stories are told through letters posted from Teresa to Alicia, and they are collected in a "choose-your-own-adventure" sort of structure, as Castillo lays out and recommends three orders--for the Conformist, the Cynic, and the Quixotic--in which to read the letters. The novel didn't work for me for several reasons. First, the characters are flat and lifeless. The men, especially, are just horrible caricatures. I don't think that Alicia and Teresa, especially when they're in Mexico, meet a man who doesn't want to rape them. Even Teresa and Alicia, though, are lifeless. Many of the letters read as though they are Teresa's psychological diagnosis of Alicia, and that's how Alicia is in

the novel, an object, a psychological specimen or symbol, rather than a human. The characters are lifeless, here to make Castillo's points. The choose-your-own-adventure pattern of the story is a barrier, too, to me for entering the story. I've always thought that a part of what is special and powerful about the novel is the ability it offers for you to sort of share the consciousness of the character or narrator, to enter into that figure's mind and story.

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