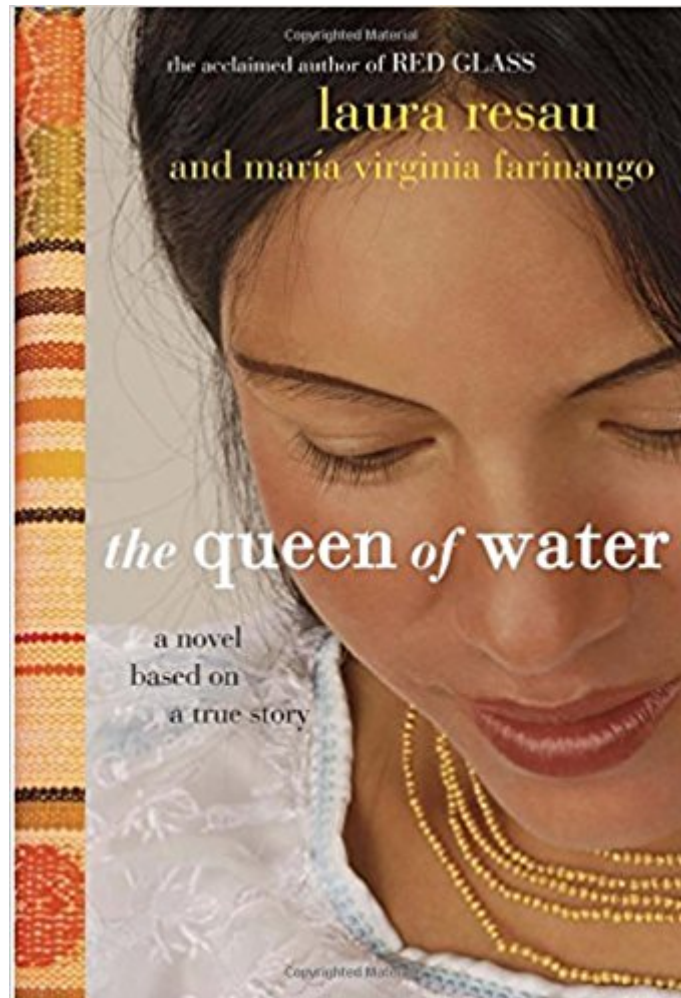




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The Queen Of Water



Synopsis

An ALA Amelia Bloomer Selection
An ALA-YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults Book
Born in an Andean village in Ecuador, Virginia lives with her large family in a small, earthen-walled dwelling. In her village of indÃ­genas, it is not uncommon to work in the fields all day, even as a child, or to be called a longa tonta –â••stupid Indian–â•• by members of the ruling class of mestizos, or Spanish descendants. When seven-year-old Virginia is taken from her village to be a servant to a mestizo couple, she has no idea what the future holds. In this poignant novel based on a true story, acclaimed author Laura Resau has collaborated with MarÃ­a Virginia Farinango to recount one girl's unforgettable journey to self-discovery. Virginia's story will speak to anyone who has ever struggled to find his or her place in the world. It will make you laugh and cry, and ultimately, it will fill you with hope. From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review In a desperately poor Andean village in Ecuador, 7-year-old Virginia is sold off by her indÃ­gena (Indian) parents as a servant to an academic, mestizo family. In her new home, the wife beats her, the husband gropes her, and she is insulted as a longa tonta (stupid Indian). Still, she teaches herself to read and write and begins to perform science experiments in secret. Then, when she is 12, she finally gets a chance to return to her parents: But does she want to? And do they want her? Virginia does travel back to her indÃ­gena family, but there is not the expected sweet reunion. Ashamed of her illiterate parents and bitter that they gave her away, Virginia is uncomfortable in the family's mud-walled shack, where she cannot speak the language and

hates the hard work. Could she go back to being enslaved in the mestizo family's clean prison? Rooted in Farinango's true story, the honest, first-person, present-tense narrative is occasionally detailed and repetitive, but it dramatizes the classic search for home with rare complexity and no sentimentality or easy resolutions. Virginia's conflicts with her birth parents and her employers are heartbreaking, even as she finds a way to attend school and shape a more hopeful future. A moving, lyrical novel that will particularly resonate with teens caught between cultures. Grades 8-12. --Hazel Rochman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Starred Review, Booklist, February 15, 2011:"A moving, lyrical novel that will particularly resonate with teens caught between cultures."Starred Review, Publishers Weekly, May 9, 2011:"The authors' candid narrative richly depicts Virginia's passage from a childhood filled with demoralization to a young woman who sees her life through new eyes."Starred Review, School Library Journal, June 2011:"This is a poignant coming-of-age novel that will expose readers to the exploitation of girls around the world whose families grow up in poverty."From the Hardcover edition.

I could not put down this special collaboration between Laura Resau and Maria Virginia Farinango! The Queen of Water perfectly depicts the cultures and setting of rural Ecuador, and taught me a lot about the social issues. I was deeply moved by Maria Virginia's struggle and inspired by her strength and will to overcome. The fact that she took an unjust and tragic situation and used it to formally educate herself and significantly raise the quality of her life is commendable. This story has been steadfast in my head since I read it and I look forward to reading it again soon... And getting my hands on more of Laura Resau's writing! I have shared The Queen of Water with my mom, sisters, and various friends... the conclusion is it is a fast read, yet very impactful and everyone loved it. I am happy a dear friend passed it along to me in May!*I was recently fortunate enough to visit with Maria Virginia in Otavalo and she is every bit of the strong, yet gentle woman I expected her to be. She is caring, sincere, and a true advocate of education and individual rights. Now that I have read Laura Resau's very rich, raw, and realistic novels (though labeled a novel, The Queen of Water is a biography with minor changes), I feel that Laura wrote The Queen of Water using Maria Virginia's voice, or her portrayal of it. I would love to see The Queen of Water translated and published in Spanish!

The Queen of Water" by Laura Resau, opened my eyes to some of the problems of racism and

classism in contemporary Latin America. A novel based on a true story, "The Queen of Water" tells the story of Virginia, a little girl who is taken from her dirt-poor indigena family in mountainous rural Ecuador to be, basically, a slave to a slightly wealthier couple. To Virginia, who is only seven at the time, it's never clear whether she was sold, taken, or given away. She just knows that she is a housekeeper and child care provider to a couple who keep her locked inside the house at all times and won't even let her eat off the same plates the family uses. As Virginia grows up in this household, her world begins to change when she learns how to read and begins to educate herself as much as possible. The story winds up being a testament to the power of education and determination. It's also a poignant memoir of how it feels to not belong anywhere. Technically, "The Queen of Water" is a young adult novel. As such, it didn't go into as much depth as I would have liked. But it's a fascinating story, made even more interesting by being based on fact, and it's an easy read. If, like me, you don't remember much from that tiny bit of Latin American history you got in school, you might find this book eye-opening.

The story is magnificent; the telling of the story is even better. A remarkable, insightful, very personal, and incredibly uplifting biographical story that begins with a young girl, and ends with a teenager. In between are stunning revelations into culture, inbred racism, coming to terms with life, self introspection, honesty with oneself, with one's existence and one's identification. Powerful and instructive. This is a story of an amazing child/woman, that is written deftly, caringly, honestly, and engagingly. Thought and reflection of message are the guiding principles in this fantastic book. This story and this novel are a gift to us all. This is a superb crafting of the life story that is real and visceral.

This is somewhat like a fairytale... in the end anyway. The beginning, not so much. Virginia comes from a very poor Indian family in Ecuador. References to the tv show MacGyver had me thinking her childhood was the 1980s and I was surprised by how very backwards Ecuador was. Virginia doesn't even know her birthday. Her family lives in a dirt hole basically. They work themselves to the bone for the white man who come and steals their children and make them into slaves. Virginia is forced to be a nanny. She is beaten for every little thing. She is locked inside the house even for entire weekends. She is not allowed to go to school. To make matters worse, as she enters womanhood, the man of the house begins to look at her in a very "unfatherlike" way. It's a very sad story.. of a girl forced to be slave and denied the life she wants and deserves. She has a bright mind and teaches herself while locked in the house. She learns to read, does science experiments, writes poetry.

Even worse, her kidnaper/boss raises her believing her people, her heritage, her family even, is something to be ashamed of. In the end, Virginia is asked to be enter a pageant for an Indian queen. How can she be an Indian queen when she is ashamed of being Indian? She must decide what side of the fence she is going to be on and come to terms with her heritage. It's nothing to be ashamed of.. and she can either continuing pretending to be "white" or she can become an Indian that can represent her people. Extremely well written and hooked me from the get go. I have one quibble.. Virginia made me mad.. her weakness and inability to take any opportunity to leave her abusive captors angered me to the point I had to set the book down at times. I don't like weak heroines. I was yelling at her, "he's gonna rape you and you want to go back?? What the hell is wrong with you? Why didn't you leave when you had the chance??" and so on. I began to suspect that Virginia had Stockholm's syndrome, but as Virginia says, "Fear feels familiar. And freedom feels terrifying." I still didn't like it though. She redeems herself in the end, however, and even brought me to tears with a heartfelt speech. Favorite quote: "Have you noticed that if you really want something, you can make it happen? But you need to be sure it's what you really want, because sometimes, when it comes true, you realize too late that it's not what you wanted."

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