



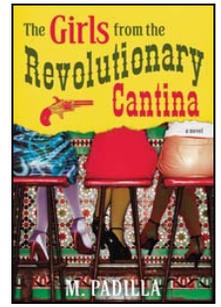
The Girls from the Revolutionary Cantina

by M. Padilla

St. Martin's Griffin

ISBN: 978-0-312-59308-7

Trade Paperback



About the Book

Inspired by their good-natured rivalry, career-oriented best friends Julia Juarez and Ime Benevides have never let anything come between them. Then enters Julia's new coworker, Ilario, who pulls both women's heartstrings, disrupts their friendship, and brings Julia's career to the brink of disaster.

Looking for support, Julia turns to her other friends: Concepción, a party-obsessed dance instructor; Nina, a timid but shrewd seamstress who's not too taken with her fiancé; and Marta, owner of the Revolutionary Cantina, who is preoccupied with the details of a Hollywood murder case. When they involve Julia in a risky scheme, she must choose between her loyalty to her friends and a chance to live the life she's worked so hard to achieve.

Boasting irreverent, edgy humor and a clear sense of Southern Californian culture, this hilarious, insightful debut novel by award-winning author M. Padilla brilliantly captures the comforts and dangers of friendship.

Reading Group Guide Questions

1. By the end of the novel, Julia has lost many of the things she thought she needed to feel secure in life. What does she lose, and what does she gain in place of those things?
2. How does Julia's childhood shape how she behaves toward her friends?
3. Nina deludes herself about her sexuality for much of the novel. In what ways do the other characters delude themselves? What problems result from their delusions?
4. Who do you think is the most destructive character in the novel? What makes her or him that way?
5. Julia and Ime claim to be best friends. What is their friendship based on from Julia's perspective? From Ime's?
6. The novel is filled with humorous scenes. Which were your favorites? Why?
7. Ilario and Diego, the novel's main male characters, attend Concepción's Cinco de Mayo party, but never meet. If someone were to introduce them, what would they think of each other? Would they find anything in common?
8. Marta, at times, refers to Julia and her friends insultingly as "pochas", which roughly means "Americanized and out of touch with one's Mexican heritage." Yet the insult seems not to faze Julia or Ime. Why not?
9. Marta is the only character whose family members we ever see. Why do you think the author chose not to introduce us to most of the women's families?
10. Julia's opinion of Ilario is constantly changing throughout the novel. What are some of the factors that influence her opinion of him?
11. Many rules get broken in this novel—rules of friendship, rules of business conduct, the rule of law. Are there instances where a character's outlaw behavior is admirable?
12. Betrayals in the novel range from the small to the large. Which characters grow as a result of experiencing betrayal and which do not?
13. A few couples emerge at the end. Which couple do you think has the greatest chance for success? Why?
14. What advice would you offer Julia as she embarks on her new friendship with Lydia?