



# Caramelo

By Sandra Cisneros

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Every year, Ceyala "Lala" Reyes' family--aunts, uncles, mothers, fathers, and Lala's six older brothers--packs up three cars and, in a wild ride, drive from Chicago to the Little Grandfather and Awful Grandmother's house in Mexico City for the summer. Struggling to find a voice above the boom of her brothers and to understand her place on this side of the border and that, Lala is a shrewd observer of family life. But when she starts telling the Awful Grandmother's life story, seeking clues to how she got to be so awful, grandmother accuses Lala of exaggerating. Soon, a multigenerational family narrative turns into a whirlwind exploration of storytelling, lies, and life. Like the cherished *rebozo*, or shawl, that has been passed down through generations of Reyes women, **Caramelo** is alive with the vibrations of history, family, and love.

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## **Caramelo** By Sandra Cisneros Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #88800 in Books
- Brand: Vintage
- Published on: 2003-09-09
- Released on: 2003-09-09
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

*Caramelo*, Sandra Cisneros's first novel since her celebrated *The House on Mango Street*, weaves a large yet intricate pattern, much like the decorative fringe on a rebozo, the traditional Mexican shawl. Through the eyes of young Celaya, or Lala, the Reyes family saga twists and turns over three generations of truths, half-truths, and outright lies. And, like Celaya's grandmother's prized *caramelo* (striped) rebozo, so is "the universe a cloth, and all humanity interwoven.... Pull one string and the whole thing comes undone." The Reyes clan, from Awful Grandmother Soledad and her favorite son Inocencio to Celaya, follow their destinies from Mexico City to the U.S. armed forces, jobs upholstering furniture, and to Chicago and San Antonio. Celaya gathers and retells, in over 80 chapters, the stories that reinforce her family's, and subsequently her own, identity as they travel between the U.S.-Mexican border and within the United States. Rich with sensory descriptions and animated conversations and peppered with Mexican cultural and historical details, this novel can hardly contain itself. Also an acclaimed poet, Cisneros writes fiercely and thoroughly, and her characters enter and exit the page with uncommon humanity. Although the book is long--over 400 pages plus a relevant U.S.-Mexico chronology--in many ways it's not long enough. The world of the 20th-century Mexican family, and of the Reyeses in particular, is as complicated, timeless, and satisfying as our own family stories. --*Emily Russin*

### From Publishers Weekly

"Uncle Fat-Face's brand-new used white Cadillac, Uncle Baby's green Impala, Father's red Chevrolet station wagon" the parade of cars that ushers in Cisneros's first novel since *The House on Mango Street* (1984) is headed to Mexico City from Chicago, bearing three Mexican-American families on their yearly visit to Awful Grandmother and Little Grandfather. Celaya or "Lala," the youngest child of seven and the only daughter of Inocencio and Zoila Reyes, charts the family's movements back and forth across the border and through time in this sprawling, kaleidoscopic, Spanish-laced tale. The sensitive and observant Lala feels lost in the noisy shuffle, but she inherits the family stories from her grandmother, who comes from a clan of shawl makers and throughout her life has kept her mother's unfinished striped shawl, or *caramelo* rebozo, containing all the heartache and joy of her family. When she, and later Lala, wear the rebozo and suck on the fringes, they are reminded of where they come from, and those who came before them. In cramped and ever-changing apartments and houses, the teenaged Lala seeks time and space for self-exploration, finally coming to an understanding of herself through the prism of her grandmother. Cisneros was also the only girl in a family of seven, and this is clearly an autobiographical work. Its testaments to cross-generational trauma and rapture grow repetitive, but Cisneros's irrepressible enthusiasm, inspired riffs on any number of subjects (tortillas, telenovelas, La-Z-Boys, Woolworth's), hilarious accounts of family gatherings and pitch-perfect bilingual dialogue make this a landmark work.

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### From School Library Journal

Adult/High School-A rich family tale, based on Cisneros's own childhood. Although lengthy, the book will appeal to many teens, particularly girls, because of its compelling coming-of-age theme and its array of eccentric, romantic characters. Celaya Reyes, called LaLa, is the youngest and the only girl among seven siblings. The book follows her from infancy to adolescence as she grows up in a noisy, disputatious, and loving clan of Mexican Americans struggling to be successful in the United States while remaining true to their cultural heritage. The Reyes's annual car journey from Chicago to Mexico City for a visit with the matriarch known as "The Awful Grandmother" is both a trial and a treat for LaLa. The imaginative and sensitive girl often feels lost within the family hilarity and histrionics, but she gradually forms an uneasy

bond with her grandmother, inheriting from her the family stories, legends, and scandals. Eventually LaLa fashions these into a weave of "healthy lies" that chronicles the movements and adventures, both factual and imaginary, of several lively generations above and below the border. Her telling is a skillful blending of many narrative threads, creating a whole as colorful and charming as the heirloom striped shawl that gives the novel its title.

*Starr E. Smith, Fairfax County Public Library, VA*

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## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **John Folsom:**

Spent a free time to be fun activity to accomplish! A lot of people spent their sparetime with their family, or all their friends. Usually they doing activity like watching television, about to beach, or picnic inside park. They actually doing ditto every week. Do you feel it? Do you wish to something different to fill your own free time/ holiday? Could be reading a book is usually option to fill your cost-free time/ holiday. The first thing that you will ask may be what kinds of e-book that you should read. If you want to attempt look for book, may be the book untitled Caramelo can be fine book to read. May be it could be best activity to you.

#### **Julian Eaton:**

Often the book Caramelo has a lot info on it. So when you read this book you can get a lot of gain. The book was authored by the very famous author. This articles author makes some research previous to write this book. This book very easy to read you will get the point easily after reading this article book.

#### **Thomas Heiden:**

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#### **Oscar Barr:**

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