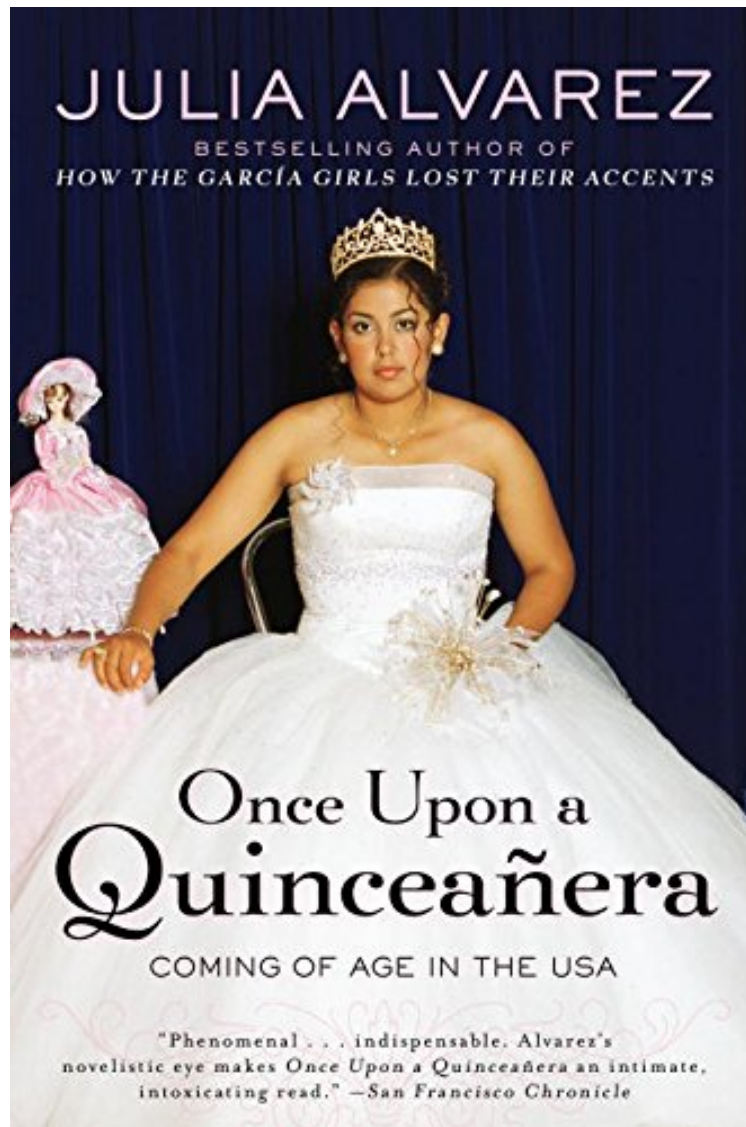


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Once Upon a Quinceanera: Coming of Age in the USA

Julia Alvarez

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#363433 in Books Julia Alvarez 2008-07-29 2008-07-29 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .60 x 5.301, .55 #File Name: 0452288304275 pages Once upon a Quinceanera Coming of Age in the USA | File size: 64.Mb

Julia Alvarez : Once Upon a Quinceanera: Coming of Age in the USA before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Once Upon a Quinceanera: Coming of Age in the USA:

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Interesting and Entertaining By Y. Morales I am a student at the University of Maryland in College Park and read this book for an American Studies class. We had to choose a book to write a review about, but the book had to be a testimonio of sorts. I chose this book because I thought it would be

interesting to learn a little more about the Quinceanera tradition. I am a Latina myself and I cannot say that I knew a lot about the history of the tradition before reading this book. The book was an eye-opener when it comes to the life of young Latinas growing up in the United States today. I am one of them and even I did not realize some of these things. I did not know that Latina women are at the top of the statistic charts when it comes to high risk behavior like drugs, alcohol, and teenage pregnancy. Alvarez does an amazing job of using the Quinceanera tradition and showing various themes throughout the book. For example, what does a Quinceanera instill in a young Latina? When one thinks about it, it really does encourage the young girl to marry, have children, and be a devoted wife and mother. It does not really encourage the girl to be truly independent and value things like education. Even the father of the young girl who Alvarez follows in the novel mentions this when he says that, "Years ago, you hoped to be able to give your daughter a wedding. Today, though, you don't know if they are ever going to get married or just live with the guy like they do here. Why not give them something like that while we can?" And that something for them is the Quinceanera. I really recommend this book, especially to young Latinas growing up in the U.S., it is great in terms of learning a lot more about the history of the Quinceanera. However, the book is truly great at showing how difficult it truly is to be a young Latina coming of age in the United States.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. What are we teaching our girls? By Aunt JoI graduated from a women's college, where I was surrounded by young women who were told, and who believed, that we could be anything we wanted. "There are stories in our heads about who we must be and what we can do, and these stories drive our lives," Alvarez states in "Once Upon a Quinceanera." Unfortunately, according to this book, the message that young women are receiving has narrowed. Conspicuous consumption, the celebration of "native customs" while simultaneously trying to assimilate into the mainstream culture, the celebration of a girl's physical appearance with little regard to developing her intellectual capabilities--all of these are disturbing threads in this book. Alvarez weaves her own experiences as a transplant from the Dominican Republic to the U.S. into the fabric of the book, providing not only a glimpse at a contemporary quince but a look through time from the 1960s to the present. Read this book whether you are Latina/o or not, and consider what our society is teaching young girls. Where do they find their value? What contributions can they make to society? What doors are open for them? For what are they praised and rewarded? Alvarez ends the book with a desire to gain wisdom from other women; may we hope the same for our young women before it's too late.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Amazing! By Luz MartinezIt came in on time and was in perfect condition and was a really good read! I would definitely recommend this book to anyone who was interested in learning about Quinceaneras

Finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award, a phenomenal, indispensable (USA Today) exploration of the Latina sweet fifteen celebration, by the bestselling author of *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* and *In the Time of Butterflies*. The quinceanera, a celebration of a Latina girl's fifteenth birthday, has become a uniquely American trend. This lavish party with ball gowns, multi-tiered cakes, limousines, and extravagant meals is often as costly as a prom or a wedding. But many Latina girls feel entitled to this rite of passage, marking a girl's entrance into womanhood, and expect no expense to be spared, even in working-class families. Acclaimed author Julia Alvarez explores the history and cultural significance of the quince in the United States, and the consequences of treating teens like princesses. Through her observations of a quince in Queens, interviews with other quince girls, and the memories of her own experience as a young immigrant, Alvarez presents a thoughtful and entertaining portrait of a rapidly growing multicultural phenomenon, and passionately emphasizes the importance of celebrating Latina womanhood.

From Publishers Weekly With a voice that is at once huskily mature and sweetly girlish and with a native sense of Spanish pronunciation and rhythm, Broadway star Daphne Rubin-Vega was an inspired choice to narrate Alvarez's examination of the Latina girl's sweet 15 celebration, the quinceanera, a booming industry now as immigrant families in the U.S. show off their success by throwing fabulous parties for their daughters. As Alvarez interviews and observes teenage Latinas while reminiscing about her own turbulent adolescence in the 1960s, Rubin-Vega alters her sultry tone expertly to contrast the younger generation's brash American attitudes with Alvarez and other older immigrants' more skeptical views. In the second half, Alvarez's writing turns comparatively dry and preachy when she shifts from describing concrete experience to discussing her research into the development of tradition and advocating for a better support system for adolescents. Still, there's plenty to savor in this production, and anyone looking for insight into a phenomenon that will only grow as the Latino population in the U.S. increases will appreciate this skillful presentation of Alvarez's insights into the culture. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From Bookmarks Magazine Best-known for her best-selling novels *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* and *Yo!*, Julia Alvarez draws on her past to create a hybrid sociological study, memoir, and cultural critique. ers praise her open-minded exploration of this treasured fairy-tale ritual, but they note Alvarez's mixed feelings about quinceaneras. Do they bring immigrant families closer together and provide a valuable cultural reference point? Or is the excessive cost too burdensome on families, especially considering that the money could be spent on higher education instead? Alvarez's lively bits of family history illuminate the challenges of the immigrant experience, and while she doesn't reach any firm conclusions, she raises many questions worth asking. Copyright 2004 Phillips Nelson

Media, Inc. From Booklist Alvarez, a much-loved author *Saving the World* (2006) is her most recent novel offers an insightful look at the Latino tradition of the quinceanera, an "elaborate, ritualized fiesta" on a girl's fifteenth birthday. Though she arrived in the U.S. from the Dominican Republic in the early 1960s, shortly before her own coming-of-age, Alvarez never had a "quince." Intrigued with the tradition, she has now made up for missing hers by immersing herself in this popular rite of passage for a year, traveling to various Latino communities in the U.S. and documenting all the details of the quince: the mandatory limo, the photographer, the court and their professionally choreographed dances, the cake, and, above all, the gown. She also delves into the history of the ritual itself, from Mayan ceremonies to Spanish balls, and the reasons the quinceanera is thriving today in the U.S., especially as a way for girls to keep in touch with their culture. Alvarez enlivens the discussion with flashbacks to her own adolescence in Queens, adding another facet to her enlightening look at an important event in the lives of Latinas in America. Donovan, Deborah