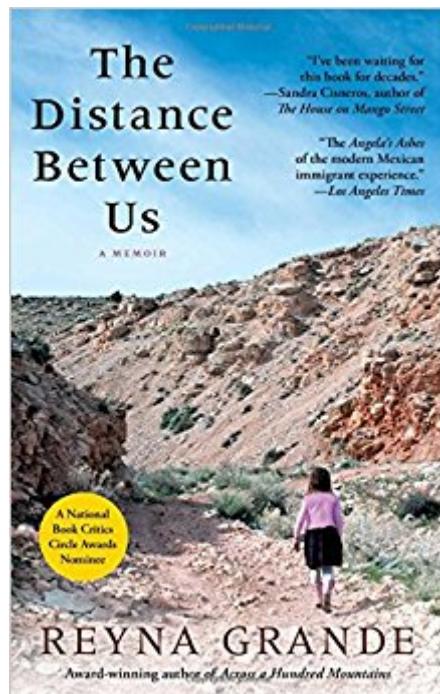


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# The Distance Between Us: A Memoir



## Synopsis

“In this poignant memoir about her childhood in Mexico, Reyna Grande skillfully depicts another side of the immigrant experience—the hardships and heartbreaks of the children who are left behind.”<sup>1</sup> Sonia Nazario, Pulitzer Prize winner, and author of *Enrique’s Journey* Reyna Grande vividly brings to life her tumultuous early years in this “compelling . . . unvarnished, resonant” (BookPage) story of a childhood spent torn between two parents and two countries. As her parents make the dangerous trek across the Mexican border to “El Otro Lado” (The Other Side) in pursuit of the American dream, Reyna and her siblings are forced into the already overburdened household of their stern grandmother. When their mother at last returns, Reyna prepares for her own journey to “El Otro Lado” to live with the man who has haunted her imagination for years, her long-absent father. Funny, heartbreaking, and lyrical, *The Distance Between Us* poignantly captures the confusion and contradictions of childhood, reminding us that the joys and sorrows we experience are imprinted on the heart forever, calling out to us of those places we first called home. Also available in Spanish as *La distancia entre nosotros*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

One of the Best Adult Books 4 Teens 2012 (School Library Journal) One the 15 Best Books of 2012 (The Christian Science Monitor) “In this poignant memoir about her childhood in Mexico, Reyna Grande skillfully depicts another side of the immigrant experience—the hardships and

heartbreaks of the children who are left behind. Through her brutally honest firsthand account of growing up in Mexico without her parents, Grande sheds light on the often overlooked consequence of immigration—the disintegration of a family. (Sonia Nazario, Pulitzer Prize winner, and author of *Enrique's Journey*) Award-winning novelist (>) Grande captivates and inspires in her memoir. Raised in Mexico in brutal poverty during the 1980s, four-year-old Grande and her two siblings lived with their cruel grandmother after both parents departed for the U.S. in search of work. Grande deftly evokes the searing sense of heartache and confusion created by their parents' departure. Eight years later her father returned and reluctantly agreed to take his children to the States. Yet life on the other side of the border was not what Grande imagined: her father's new girlfriend's indifference to the three children becomes more than apparent. Though Grande's father continually stressed the importance of his children obtaining an education, his drinking resulted in violence, abuse, and family chaos. Surrounded by family turmoil, Grande discovered a love of writing and found solace in library books, and she eventually graduated from high school and went on to become the first person in her family to graduate from college. Tracing the complex and tattered relationships binding the family together, especially the bond she shared with her older sister, the author intimately probes her family's history for clues to its disintegration. Recounting her story without self-pity, she gracefully chronicles the painful results of a family shattered by repeated separations and traumas (Aug.) (Publishers Weekly: Starred Review) "Reyna Grande is a fierce, smart, shimmering light of a writer with an important story to tell." (Cheryl Strayed Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail) "I've been waiting for this book for decades. The American story of the new millennium is the story of the Latino immigrant, yet how often has the story been told by the immigrant herself? What makes Grande's beautiful memoir all the more extraordinary is that, through this hero's journey, she speaks for millions of immigrants whose voices have gone unheard." (Sandra Cisneros, author of *The House on Mango Street*) "Powerful, harrowing." (San Antonio Express News) "Eloquent, honest storytelling. This book would be fabulous required reading for college freshmen or, even better, for freshman members of Congress." (Washington Independent Review of Books) "An important piece of America's immigrant history." (BookPage) "Grande never flinches in describing her surroundings and feelings, while her resilience and ability to empathize allow her to look back with a compassion that makes this story one that everyone should read." (School Library Journal)

Reyna Grande is an award-winning novelist and memoirist. She has received an American Book Award, the El Premio AztlÁfÁjn Literary Award, and the Latino Book Award. Her second novel, *Dancing with Butterflies*, received critical acclaim. In 2012, she was a finalist for the prestigious National Book Critics Circle Awards for her memoir *The Distance Between Us*. Her works have been published internationally in countries such as Norway and South Korea.

Love this book - was recommended by my son. Loved it so much i sent it to a friend! He loved it too. In fact, one of his roomies read it and loved it too. This true life story of a small girl growing up in a very poor vila in Mexico - the abandonment of her parents - the abuse of her and her siblings by the paternal grandmother - her adventure to America to live with the parents that left so many years before in search of the golden streets and the money trees that lined neighborhood streets - to her ultimate coming of age. Loved every page. Loved the honesty. Loved the author's rise from the pits of sadness and hopelessness.

My daughter read this for school. It is an amazing story with lots of surprises. It really helps the reader understand the struggles of border crossing families in search of a better life.

I brought this book for my daughters and they loved it

It's ok

the book came in excellent quality, and it turned out to be a great read for a class i was taking. thanks again.

This is a beautifully written book by a woman who came to the US from an impoverished town in Mexico. When she was very young her father went to "el otro lado," and a few years later her mother followed. The author and her sisters and brother were shuffled between relatives until their father finally brought them to LA. I highly recommend this book!

Really made me aware of the desperation of individuals crossing illegally, why do we allow companies to create slave labor; sense of abandonment children experience in Mexico and all countries where parents leave children to go to other countries

This is one of my all-time favorite books. I couldn't put it down. From the first page, you're a part of the author's life in Mexico, struggling to reconnect with family in the U.S. When I finished, I felt I had a much better understanding of immigrant children and families. I can't say enough about this book. Everyone should read it.

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