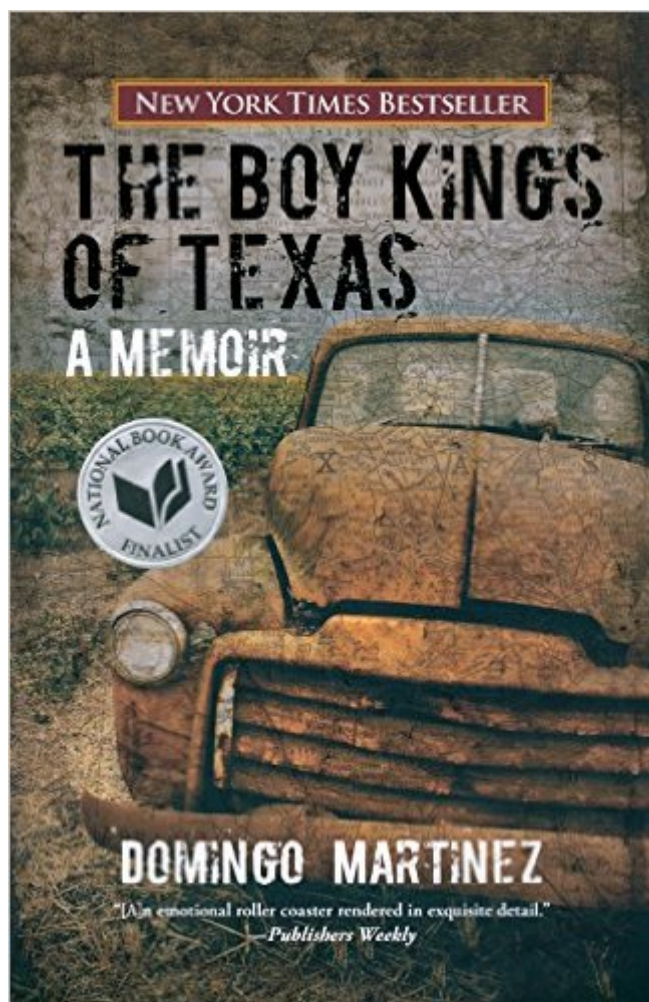


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Boy Kings Of Texas: A Memoir



Synopsis

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER AND NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST Lyrical and gritty, this authentic coming-of-age story about a border-town family in Brownsville, Texas, insightfully illuminates a little-understood corner of America. Domingo Martinez lays bare his interior and exterior worlds as he struggles to make sense of the violent and the ugly, along with the beautiful and the loving, in a Texas border town in the 1980s. Partly a reflection on the culture of machismo and partly an exploration of the author's boyhood spent in his sister's hand-me-down clothes, this book delves into the enduring, complex bond between Martinez and his deeply flawed but fiercely protective older brother, Daniel. It features a cast of memorable characters, including his gun-hoarding former farmhand, Gramma, and the Mimis, two of his older sisters who for a short, glorious time manage to transform themselves from poor Latina adolescents into upper-class white girls. Martinez provides a glimpse into a society where children are traded like commerce, physical altercations routinely solve problems, drugs are rampant, sex is often crude, and people depend on the family witch doctor for advice. Charming, painful, and enlightening, this book examines the traumas and pleasures of growing up in South Texas and the often terrible consequences when different cultures collide on the banks of a dying river.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Martinez's book is about a young family born into the unique clash of cultures in South Texas where the children must learn to consolidate their cultures. Their family gives them the understanding that being American/white/speaking English is superior to being Mexican/speaking Spanish and are

callous and manipulative when the author does not adhere to the horrid machismo customs that they associate with being men, not with being Mexican. These themes are likely familiar to those growing up in South Texas, but the author was born in the exact circumstances that would exaggerate these problems for him - lack of power balance between the parents, young family, poor, being introspective, being male. I highly recommend this book for anyone. Some of his experiences are potent, but he is so good at providing relevant events from his childhood, that you come to understand, and even predict, the actions he will take next, even if they wouldn't be your own. I found myself cheering him on but understanding why he would sometimes falter. Mr. Martinez is introspective, even at an early age, which puts the reader in his head during some pretty substantial events. He allows you to understand his experiences and the conflict between knowing what is best and his own impulses. Also, he's pretty funny. He unexpectedly made me laugh out loud like three or four times. I read this thing in less than two days. I usually enjoy reading Mexican-American literature, but I find that the themes usually center around the differences/problems between Mexican-Americans and whites or the rest of the US.

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