

The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction



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出版者:Harvard University Press

出版时间:2001-04-02

装帧:Paperback

isbn:9780674005358

In 1904, New York nuns brought forty Irish orphans to a remote Arizona mining camp, to be placed with Mexican Catholic families. Soon the town's Anglos, furious at this "interracial" transgression, formed a vigilante squad that kidnapped the children and nearly lynched the nuns and the local priest. The Catholic Church sued to get its wards back, but the courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, ruled in favor of the vigilantes. Linda Gordon brilliantly recreates and dissects, the tangled intersection of family and racial values, in a gripping story that resonates with today's conflicts over the "best interests of the child."

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