

Parrot in the Oven



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Dad believed people were like money. You could be a thousand-dollar person or a hundred-dollar person'even a ten-, five-, or one-dollar person. Below that, everybody was just nickels and dimes. To my dad, we were pennies. Fourteen-year-old Manny Hernandez wants to be more than just a penny. He wants to be a vato firme, the kind of guy people respect. But that's not easy when your father is abusive, your brother can't hold a job, and your mother scrubs the house as if she can was the trouble away. In Manny's neighborhood, the way to get respect is to be in a gang. But Manny's not sure that joining a gang is the solution. Because, after all, it's his life'and he wants to be the one to decide what happens to it. Winner of the 1996 National Book Award for Young People's Literature, *Parrot in the Oven: mi vida* is a fresh, original, and powerfully written account of one boy's coming-of-age in a difficult time. For Manuel Hernandez, the year leading up to his test of courage, his initiation into a gang, is a time filled with the pain and tension, awkwardness and excitement of growing up in a mixed-up, crazy world. Manny's dad is always calling him *el perico*, or parrot. It's from a Mexican saying about a parrot that complains how hot it is in the shade while all along he's sitting inside the oven and doesn't know it. But Manny wants to be smarter than the parrot in the oven—he wants to find out what it means to be a vato firme, a guy to respect. From an exciting new voice in Chicano literature, this is a beautifully written,

vivid portrait of one Mexican-American boy's life. 1998 Pura Belpré Author Award

1996 Americas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature

1997 Books for the Teen Age (NY Public Library)

1996 National Book Award for Young People's Literature

作者介绍:

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