

Ama, Your Story Is Mine



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出版者:Univ of Texas Pr

出版时间:2007-4

装帧:Pap

isbn:9780292716575

In the preface to her memoir, Ercenia "Alice" Cedeno recalls the secrecy and turmoil that marked her youth: "I spent most of my growing years mad at my mother and wanting her to change to fit in with the rest of the world," she writes. "When my sisters and I wanted her to visit our friends' mothers, she would say, 'Why do people need to know other peoples' lives?' Looking back, I wonder if she was really saying, 'I don't want them to know our business.' There was so much to hide." Now bringing those hidden memories to light, "Ama, Your Story Is Mine" traces the hardship, violence, deceit, and defiance that shaped the identity of two generations of women in Alice's family. Born in the mountains of northern Mexico, Alice's mother married at age 14 into a family rife with passion that often turned to anger. After losing several infant children to disease, the young couple crossed into the United States seeking a better life. Unfolding in a series of powerful vignettes, "Ama, Your Story Is Mine" describes in captivating detail a daring matriarch who found herself having to protect her children from their own father while facing the challenges of cultural discrimination. By turns wry and tender, Alice's recollections offer a rare memoir that fully encompasses the Latina experience in the United States.

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