



Soledad

Angie Cruz

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Soledad Angie Cruz

Tía Gorda has always claimed Soledad was born con la pata caliente -- with feet burning to be anywhere but here. In truth, Soledad couldn't wait to get beyond the stifling confines of West 164th Street, away from her superstitious, contentious family with their endless tragedies and petty fights; from the leering men with their potbellies, the slick-skinned teen girls with their raunchy mouths and snapping gum. At eighteen, Soledad couldn't get away from the volume and the violence of the barrio some call Dominican Heights fast enough. Two years later, an art student at Cooper Union with a gallery job and a hip East Village walk-up, Soledad feels eminently cool and infinitely far from the neighborhood where she grew up.

But when Gorda calls with the news that Olivia, Soledad's mother, has lapsed into an emotional coma, Soledad knows she hasn't escaped la familia. Gorda insists Soledad's return is the only thing that will cure Olivia. Fighting the memories of the life she's left -- the broken hydrants on littered corners, her jealous cousin Flaca, her bizarre mother and, curiously, images of her mother's Dominican youth -- Soledad returns home to Washington Heights. Her journey has only begun. As Soledad tries to salvage her damaged relationship with Olivia, tame Flaca's raucous behavior, tolerate her zany Tía Gorda and resist falling for Richie, a soulful, intense man from the neighborhood, she also faces the greatest challenge of her life: confronting the ghosts from her mother's past.

Rich, evocative and wise, *Soledad* is a wondrous story of culture and chaos, of family and integrity, myth and mysticism. Angie Cruz is a dazzling new voice, a Latina literary light whose passionate debut in *Soledad* surely marks the beginning of a remarkable career.

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