



Pig Park

By Claudia Guadalupe Martinez

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It's crazy! Fifteen-year-old Masi Burciaga hauls bricks to help build a giant pyramid in her neighborhood park. Her neighborhood is becoming more of a ghost town each day since the lard company moved away. Even her school closed down. Her family's bakery and the other surviving businesses may soon follow. As a last resort, the neighborhood grown-ups enlist all the remaining able-bodied boys and girls into this scheme in hopes of luring visitors. Maybe their neighbors will come back too. But something's not right about the entrepreneur behind it all. And then there's the new boy who came to help. The one with the softest of lips. *Pig Park* is a contemporary Faustian tale that forces us to look at the desperate lengths people will go to in the name of community--and maybe love.

Claudia Guadalupe Martinez, author of the award-winning *The Smell of Old Lady Perfume*, has long been distressed about how the global economy is displacing workers and families. Claudia grew up in El Paso, Texas. She and her family now live in Chicago, Illinois.

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Pig Park By Claudia Guadalupe Martinez Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 7 Up—Fifteen-year-old Masi Burciaga is facing a summer of uncertainties as her fictitious Chicago neighborhood, Pig Park, sits in the shadow of an abandoned lard company that moved its plant to China. The subsequent decline in population and economic downturn causes local businesses to flounder and Masi's school closes. In desperation, struggling community members agree to build a huge pyramid in their central park to attract tourists. They sell their cars and dig into their savings to contribute to the project. The youth are pressed into heavy labor and clerical work to prepare for its grand opening. An unseen university professor also funds the project, sending his student Felix to help organize community efforts. Later, his colleague Belinda arrives bearing traditional Mexican clothing and folk art with ideas that cause the teens to chafe. She wants them to wear brightly colored, traditional Mexican clothing and sprinkle Spanish in their speech—whether they are of Mexican descent or not. In the midst of it all, Masi's mother suddenly decides to take a "vacation," leaving Masi and her father to run their Mexican bakery alone. The summer is filled with a first crush, an absent parent, fear of losing home and friends, and community engagement. Although the story presents multiple disparate themes with little depth, readers will appreciate its strong characters and identify with the protagonist's teen angst.—Ruth Quiroa, National Louis University, IL

Review

"The story of a community working together is uplifting ... Martinez uses nicely specific physical details to relate Masi's experiences, and the moments in the bakery seem particularly authentic and are suffused with love." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"Martinez uses diversity to her advantage, showcasing Masi, her family, and all of the people living in this town... Overall, this is a quick read that touches on family issues, young love, and the strength that comes when times get tough." —*VOYA Magazine, *starred review**

"Between those yummy covers is an equally delicious book... The novel tackles that age-old question of how far, how much, what exactly would you do for something that matters to you?" —*All Brown All Around*

"Filled with a first crush, an absent parent, fear of losing home and friends, and community engagement ... readers will appreciate its strong characters and identify with the protagonist's teen angst." —*School Library Journal*

"Martinez creates an emotional dilemma for Masi, caught between a romantic crush and her family's struggles, yet... suggests a fairy-tale undercurrent within the novel." —*Publishers Weekly*

"Deftly crafted characters and an inherently fascinating and imaginative tale, 'Pig Park' is enthusiastically recommended for personal reading lists and would make a popular addition to community library collections." —*Margaret Lane, The Midwest Book Review*

"A fast-moving page-turner, *Pig Park* is an excellent example of how young people, through creative action, really can bring about personal and political change. It's highly recommended." —*De Colores: The Raza Experience in Books for Children*

About the Author

Claudia Guadalupe Martinez is the award winning author of *The Smell of Old Lady Perfume*. She grew up in sunny El Paso, Texas where she learned that letters form words from reading the subtitles of old westerns with her father. At age six, she already knew she wanted to create stories. She hold a Masters Degree in English Education, and lives and writes in Chicago.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Preston Sloan:

As people who live in typically the modest era should be revise about what going on or information even knowledge to make these individuals keep up with the era which is always change and advance. Some of you maybe can update themselves by looking at books. It is a good choice in your case but the problems coming to a person is you don't know what one you should start with. This Pig Park is our recommendation to make you keep up with the world. Why, since this book serves what you want and need in this era.

Lucille Roller:

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Herman Jenkins:

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