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Return Of The Bones, Inspired By A True Native American Indian Story



Synopsis

First-place winner Historical Fiction - New Mexico / Arizona Book Awards! In 1915 at the age of thirteen, Grandfather witnessed the theft of 2,067 family skeletons stolen from the Pecos Pueblo. He had run after the trucks transporting the bones, their skulls hanging out of windows and eye sockets hollow, until he stumbled and fell with his ear to the ground, listening to the rumble of tires carrying his ancestors far away from their resting place. Grandfather lay on the dirt clutching a diary belonging to the thief in hopes that one day he might use the book as a clue to finding the remains of his missing family. If only the old man could read. He kept the secret of the stolen bones for 84 years because he feared the men who took the skeletons might come for him, too. He begs his granddaughter to help him bring home the bones for reburial at the wreckage of their family pueblo, for he hears the skeletons crying, longing for home. Hollow-Woman and Grandfather are the last of the Pecos people, but she wants nothing to do with the ghost pueblo of Pecos, a place which gives her the creeps. The family ruins is haunted by the Spanish Inquisition, church burnings, beheadings, blood spilling, ghosts, witches, and poisonings. Now Grandfather, an ancient ruin himself with one fist in a Pecos grave and the other in a bottle of wine, pleads with her to help him find the stolen bones of their ancestors, skeletons centuries old who should have turned to dust ages ago. Hollow-Woman doesn't care about ancient bones. She works at a Native American casino and is of the modern ways, but she reluctantly agrees to drive the old buzzard cross country on his quest to bring back the missing skeletons to the rubble of their family pueblo so they might join the other ancestral bones who Grandfather claims haven't had a night of peace since the others were ripped from their graves by the thief whose motives are hidden in his diary. Grandfather is a powerful shaman who believes his granddaughter does not appreciate family. He fashions a magical dream catcher that sometimes hurls Hollow-Woman into the past to experience the lives of her ancestors, some six centuries of sorrows, triumphs, and the dark side of religious fanaticism. In their odyssey to find their missing family, they discover what the Pecos skeletons have been up to for eight decades since being held captive, and how important the desecration of the Pecos graves is to America and to mankind. Most importantly, she embarks on a spiritual journey and truly comes to appreciate the ties that bind a family's past and present.

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Customer Reviews

This was an emotionally difficult book to read -- a harsh if fictionalized indictment of the Spanish who treated the Pueblo peoples so abominably, and then the American scientists who saw their holy bones as treasure to be dug up and stored in museum basements in their dusty thousands. But the characters of Hollow Woman and her grandfather make the book sparkle, even through long discourses on the history of the Pecos. This is ultimately a story of love and devotion, and the reader who sticks with it will be rewarded.

Loved this book, part history and part fantasy and difficult to tell them apart. Elder grandfather and orphaned woman plan to return the bones of over 2000 Native Americans to the ruined Pueblo from which they were taken by an American archeologist. Grandfather is a medicine man of great power and granddaughter is a modern woman but closely linked to native tradition, who's great pain is related to loss of parents as an infant and inability to bear children. Travel with this family through the trials of tracking the bones to finding and reclaiming them; relish the magic inherent in the beliefs of the Native People and explore the land that is their heritage, won through blood, loss and tears. The writing is very good, Garcia takes you in almost from the beginning, and you begin a love/fear relationship with Grandfather, and empathy for Granddaughter.

At first I didn't know what to make of this book. The beginning started slow but I understand now that the author was adding layer upon layer of history and making it personal and interesting. Soon I was fully involved with this book and could not put it down. I live in New Mexico.... this is a piece of New Mexico history skillfully woven from the fabric of an old shaman's tales about his Pueblo ancestors. It is worth your time to read this very interesting story!

I loved this story, part fiction, part fantasy, but based on truth. It's all about the bones of ancestors, the gradual loss of tribes and nations of North America's indigenous people and the repatriation of the bones. In this mystical and arduous journey an elderly shaman and his granddaughter, last of their once large tribe, are on a quest for the bones of their ancestors. Travelling physically in an old truck, and paranormally via a dreamcatcher, this story is spellbinding. Belinda Vasquez Garcia has a way of bringing reality to the past and present through images received by the granddaughter, a modern girl who is on this journey of discovery and recovery. Past and present are interwoven in such a way that I truly felt this in my own soul, legend becomes reality as Hollow-Woman begins to open her soul to the past. I found the book memorable and heartwarming as the connection between grandfather and granddaughter, ancient and modern, past and present grew. The author has done a wonderful job of working with history and keeping the truth while writing with a passion for the magical and spiritual feel through the centuries of the indigenous people.

I love the history of this remarkable act of returning the bones Taken in the early 1900s from the Pueblo Indians back to the Pueblo ruins in the 1990s. I could see feel taste the visions that appeared to hollow woman, will use the modern name Holly. Ren father was like so many elders that I know personally. I am from the land of the Apache And you know some of these legends and I found the story to be more truth than fiction. The history is rich or thick and her portrayal is very much in the style of those who may have read people of the owl people of the wolf etc. If you are interested in the Native American culture please do not miss this book.

This book was not always easy to read, but it gave me a lot to think about. I have always been fascinated with archeology, but slightly troubled by the necessity to disturb burial sights. After reading this book I am even more troubled. I agree that there is much to learn from graves, but I guess I am less willing to consider them as only artifacts. Then there is the secondary story of the relationship between the main characters which it seems can only grow as the cultural and mystical aspects are dealt with. A very thoughtful book.

I loved this book. Belinda Vasquez Garcia tells a real story, drawing from her own history. I learned so much by reading this book, about how the Pueblo Natives were treated by church leaders who should have loved them and helped them, but betrayed them time and time again. It is a story about a granddaughter's loyalty to her elderly grandfather, whom she loves but at the same time is greatly annoyed by, because of his unrelenting quest to have his ancestors bones returned to the ruins of the Pecos Pueblo. The bones were stolen by grave robbers when her grandfather was a boy. These sacred bones wound up in boxes or haphazardly strewn around a basement in a Washington DC museum. Grandfather insisted she bring the bones home because she was the only remaining descendant, the last in the line of the Ghost Pueblos. This book is really good and it touched my heart. I would recommend it to anyone who has an interest in Native American culture.

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