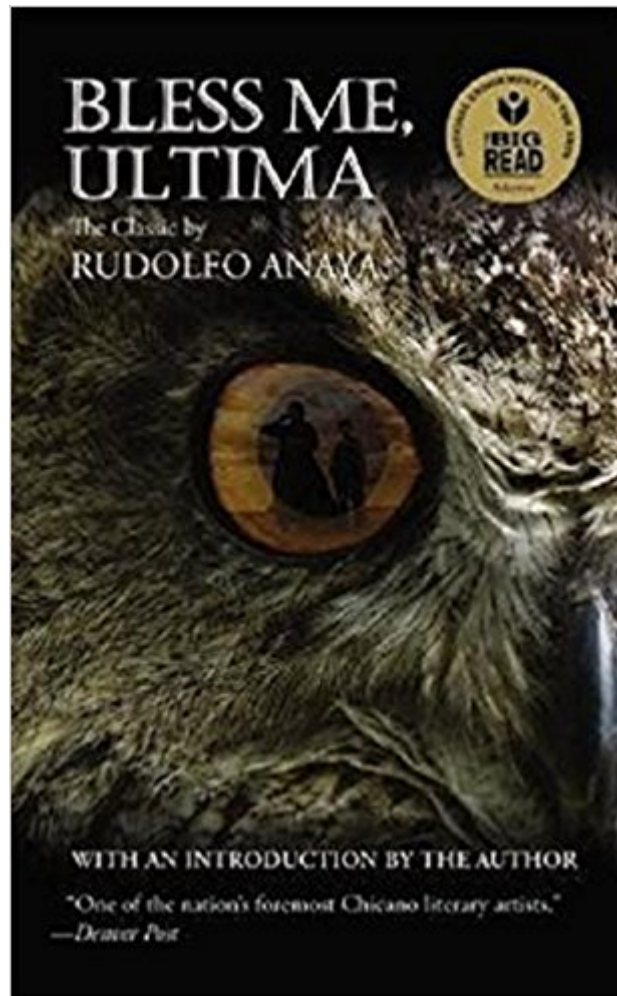




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# Bless Me, Ultima



## Synopsis

\*Please note: There are two versions of this cover. The content is the same. Exquisite prose and wondrous storytelling have helped make Rudolfo Anaya the father of Chicano literature in English. Indeed, Anaya's tales fairly shimmer with the haunting beauty and richness of his culture. The winner of the Pen Center West Award for Fiction for his unforgettable novel *Albuquerque*, Anaya is perhaps best loved for his classic bestseller, *Bless Me, Ultima*... Antonio Marez is six years old when Ultima comes to stay with his family in New Mexico. She is a curandera, one who cures with herbs and magic. Under her wise wing, Tony will probe the family ties that bind and rend him, and he will discover himself in the magical secrets of the pagan past—a mythic legacy as palpable as the Catholicism of Latin America. And at each life turn there is Ultima, who delivered Tony into the world...and will nurture the birth of his soul.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Besides winning the Premio Quinto Sol national Chicano literary award, this novel of a young boy in New Mexico in the 1940s has sold more than 300,000 copies in paperback since its 1973 debut. Here, however, the book gets the hardcover treatment, with a few illustrations added for color. LJ's reviewer asserted that "the novel has warmth and feeling" (LJ 2/1/73) and a place in all fiction collections, especially those serving Chicano populations. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

"One of the nation's foremost Chicano literary artists." •Denver Post

One of the most moving novels I have ever read. The characters, right out of old New Mexico culture, stand out as real people, and by the end of the book the reader feels what they feels, thinks what they think. If you want to laugh, be moved, and cry, this is the novel that will do it for you. Plus help you understand a culture now mostly lost from the high plains of New Mexico.

Well written story of Antonio, a 6 year old boy whose aunt, a "curer", comes to live with his family. She helps him see the world differently than his mother sees it. Set in a Mexican village in northern New Mexico. This was on my son's summer reading list, and I read it, too. I also saw the movie which was adapted from the book, and that, too, was very good.

Bless Me Ultima was an enjoyable read. I respect all religions but I have full faith belief in my own tradition as a Navajo person. A lot of the situations that occurs throughout the book was exciting to read considering in my own culture we have similar beliefs. Knowing each ethnic group once had its own traditions and practice is interesting to learn about yet makes me wonder what ever happened to that tradition that it phased out with newer generations. The only thing preventing me from giving this book 5 stars was I felt like the author abruptly rushed through the story to come to an end. I wonder what became of the family after the final scenrio. All in all, this book made think a lot about religion, One God versus my own culture versus mainstream society. In the end, it made me realized I have a strong hold on my own tradition, culture and beliefs that is rejected by mainstream society yet I feel complete. This book is a good read, if you have time pick it up and read a few pages. I liked it.

The item came on time and as described. The packaging was right as well. I am very pleased with my purchase!

The imagery and setting are so well conveyed. I spend a good deal of time in the SW and this really seems like "being there". A fine coming of age novel as we follow the protagonist (Antonio) through his various trials. The mystical doings of Ultima include all the main themes of Navajo witchcraft and/or spirituality depending on one's point of view. She's part grandmother and part guardian angel and part "good witch". If mysticism is your bent, you'll love this. If you love the roots of NM, this is also for you.

Our book club is looking at banned books. This was at one time banned in four states, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado and California. It was written at the time "Chicano" studies were popping up. This was considered a "must read". The story is told from the view of a young boy, Antonio whose family takes in the aging curandara, Ultima. She is a "folk doctor" who uses herbs to cure. One paper I read said the book was banned because of all the swearing by Antonio and his classmates. Others banned it because it "might cause unrest among young Latinos. Some places considered it un-American. The story takes place in the mid-1940s in rural New Mexico.

I read this as part of a local library program that included community presentations. I would not have otherwise thought to purchase this book. I enjoyed it particularly knowing it is an early example of this genre. I found the author's voice to be interesting though did at times find the "narrator" and "protagonist" voice(s) distracting, seemingly torn between pre-teen and sage adult perspective(s). The mythical "feel" of the story appealed to me personally particularly because I had not read enough writers who directly employed it. This is a worthwhile read just for the "black hat's" ride through town (which I will not ruin here). I strongly recommend this for a light, easy read particularly if you wish to expand your experience with Chicano literature. I personally find myself increasingly interested in the genre and other authors who write it given this read.

Rudolfo Anaya, a prominent Chicano writer, has a distinct style of writing as he dives into religiosity in his best known novel "Bless Me, Ultima." Published in 1972, this fictional piece is set in Anaya's homeland of Las Pasturas, New Mexico, and has been proclaimed a classic piece of Chicano literature. The beauty of Anaya's novel lies in his ability to write simplistically while still maintaining a tone full of emotion. Just like his other novels ("Heart of Aztlán" and "Tortuga"), Anaya fuses dense word choice with raw emotion. This heavy emotion is created thanks to Anaya's youngest fictional character--seven-year-old Antonio Májrez. Anaya's readers explore the land and spiritual customs of New Mexico only through the naive eyes of Antonio. Antonio finds himself stuck in a spiritual/religious conflict. Will he commit to his mother's way of life--living harmoniously with the farm land, or with his father's way of life--living the life of an always moving vaquero? Every character in Anaya's novel is deeply religious because it is their Hispanic custom. But the custom and belief system of Ultima, a curandera (healer), changes Antonio's life and decisions even more. He now sees even more confliction--the Church versus the healer. While composing the story line, Anaya writes "Bless Me, Ultima" through the perspective of Antonio. As they read Anaya's novel, readers have to step into the shoes of a young Hispanic boy as they witness every one of Antonio's

life and religious uncertainties. Even though Anaya leaves his readers expecting more of a resolution at the end of his novel, Antonio finally realizes that his heritages, although they are very opposite, can be unified.

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