

Dear Michele

November 11, 2000

Dello. I don't even know if people write letters anymore but I thought I would to you anyways. My name is Jaymi Barragán (or La Bringa as my husband's family calls me) and I'm a married mother of two white girl.

I go to the library once a week and scan the - This JUST IN - books. Yours caught my eye. It's the Chicana Role Model one. To be honest I have never heard of you before. I was at the Lala Palooza you did readings at and I don't recall you. Perhaps you saw me I would be another white girl, oversized wallet chain, dickers on my legs, and "locs" covering my blue eyes. Oh yeah don't forget my baby doll shirt I was wearing. I believe it said Latino Lover. ☺

Anyway I started your book a few days ago and now I am almost finished. I just read about Gabby Mi'p. What a wonderful story. I was cracking up. I have kept a journal since grade school and have told guys I wrote sexy things about them so they would sleep with me. That's so funny.

Don't worry I am not saying we are one in the same and should be best friends or anything - just throwing in some of my tid-bits. My husband's family - mom, dad, 6 sisters, 3 brothers - came to Montebello when he was two years old. He doesn't remember Mexico

he is the baby of the family. The "sisters" as we call them recall this or that and then apologize to a distant aunt for my husband's ignorance on their home in Jalisco.

There weren't many whites (he said one) in his school years but even yet - he was treated like shit by teachers and staff for being Mexican.

When I met him he was what I call a yuppie. All "Gap"-ped out from head to toe. People would talk to him in Spanish and he would answer in English. Infact he spelled his name George when his name is Jorge.

He would pretend not to know Spanish in my presence and overexert him self to be accepted by white people on a daily basis.

As being white don't feel what he is going through. But is this what white people are doing to him - and others. Making a strong wonderful man ashamed to be from a great home with ~~of~~ great traditions. And even if he weren't from Mexico does that make him less American?

Your book - I saw in your writing the pain on my husband's face when white women hold their purses ~~to~~ tighter and their children ~~tighter~~ closer. When white men talk shit about him because they think he can only speak Spanish and when my family has a "special" serving of Chile on the table for Jorge ~~when~~ even though we are having mushroom cheese crepes!

"The Question" as you refer to it comes up daily. My friends see his picture and say oh... where is he from? East Los Angeles I say. They giggle and say no silly is he like Cuban or something. GRRR. But you know he gets that from the Hispanic side as well. He refuses to speak Spanish, even though his family speaks NO English!


Your book came in handy in that I could tell my husband about the stories and it would give him the opportunity to tell his own sad story. It really has helped him to open up and I thank you.

I hope you are not thinking he is just another traitor who has delved himself into the white world by marrying me. But really why does it matter what you think ha-ha. But seriously - I am on the opposite side trying HARD to fit in and belong with the brown. My husband's family is "coming around" finally but I have had to put many hours to prove I could be a good obedient Mexican wife. ☺ I make hand made tortillas on weekends and always there is a pot of beans waiting to be fried. Wait I'm not like Vanilla Ice, Snow, or God forbid Eminem or anything I just want my husband to know he can be proud of who he is.

Like I said your book gave me alot
of insight and helped my Jorge to help himself.
we have a 2 year old daughter that looks just
like him. I want her to feel she is blessed
that half of her is from and that she is
part of a fabulous place.

Thank you! I am off to the book stores
now to find more of your works. ☺

Sincerely
Jaymi Barragán



A Long Way From East L.A.
military dont you know ☺