

The hungry woman : A Mexican Medea

By Cherrie L. Moraga

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In *The Hungry Woman*, an apocalyptic play written at the end of the millennium, Moraga uses mythology and an intimate realism to describe the embattled position of Chicanos and Chicanas, not only in the United States but in relation to each other. Drawing from the Greek Medea and the myth of La Llorona, she portrays a woman gone mad between her longing for another woman and for the Indian nation which is denied her.

In *Heart of the Earth*, a feminist revisioning of the Quichí Maya Popul Vuh story, Moraga creates an allegory for contemporary Chicanismo in which the enemy is white, patriarchal, and greedy for hearts, both female and fecund. Through humor and inventive tale twisting, Moraga brings her vatos locos home from the deadly underworld to reveal that the real power of creation is found in the masa Grandma is grinding up in her metate. The script, a collaboration with master puppet maker Ralph Lee, was created for the premiere production of the play at The Public Theater in New York in 1994.

In a Foreword to this edition, Moraga comments on her concerns about nationhood, indigenism, queer sexuality, and gender information.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal
In the 1990s, nationally known Chicano feminist lesbian writer Moraga authored the two complex dramatic scripts assembled here, "The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea" and "Heart of the Earth: A Popul Vuh Story." The first is drawn from the Greek Medea and the pre-Hispanic La Llorona myths. Combining cultural history and mythology, realism and compassion, Moraga portrays Medea as a single mother poisoning her son to prevent custody by her ex-husband. Her salvation comes only in death when she is poisoned by her ghost son and lesbian lover. The play is poetic but blunt, with sexually explicit passages. "Heart of the Earth" is a feminist dramatization of the Quichi Mayan Popul Vuh legend of the prehuman world. With humor, Moraga vividly describes the defeat of Lords of Death and the underworld in a playful ball game and the making of humans with maize. Irma Mayorga's critical afterword is essential, as the multilingual passages and multicultural allusions make these plays a challenge to read. Recommended for selected academic and public libraries. Ming-ming Shen Kuo, Ball State Univ. Lib., Muncie, IN
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Review
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From the Inside Flap
In these two plays Cherrie Moraga traverses the landscape of tragedy and comedy to show how myth and cultural history have shaped the Chicano Imagi-Nation.

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Rose Heck:

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