



# The Lightning Queen

*Laura Resau*

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Nothing exciting happens on the Hill of Dust, in the remote mountains of Mexico in the 1950s. There's no electricity, no plumbing, no cars, just day after day of pasturing goats. And now, without his sister and mother, eleven-year-old Teo's life feels even more barren.

And then one day, the mysterious young Esma, who calls herself the Gypsy Queen of Lightning, rolls into town like a fresh burst of color. Against all odds, her caravan's Mistress of Destiny predicts that Teo and Esma will be longtime friends. Suddenly, life brims with possibility. With the help of a rescued duck, a three-legged skunk, a blind goat, and other allies, Teo and Esma must overcome obstacles—even death—to fulfill their impossible destiny.

Inspired by true stories derived from rural Mexico, *The Lightning Queen* offers a glimpse of the encounter between two fascinating but marginalized cultures—the Rom and the Mixtec Indians—while telling the heart-warming story of an unlikely friendship that spans generations.

## The Lightning Queen Details

Date : Published October 27th 2015 by Scholastic Press

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Author : Laura Resau

Format : Hardcover 336 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Childrens, Middle Grade, Young Adult, Magical Realism, Fantasy, Fiction

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## From Reader Review The Lightning Queen for online ebook

### Beth says

A treasure of a book. Believable characters, lyrical writing, and a mystery left unsolved until the final pages. Highly recommended!

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### Ryan Loveless says

Read in a day and then dreamed about this book. Then daydreamed about it. It did things to my emotions.

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### Elaina Gilbertson says

I LOVED THIS BOOK!!!! I recommend this to everyone. I couldn't put it down!

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### Sonia says

After a long day, I was feeling rather depressed about the state of things in my life. I decided to finish reading this book and was quickly enveloped with such magical storytelling. I could travel in the world Laura Resau paints with her words for eternity.

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### Arielle Walker says

This book is *stunning*.

I'm forming a terribly bad habit here, but review to come later. Still recollecting my thoughts, and it's so much harder to write about something you loved the most.

Until later, a quote:

And I screamed, at first wordless, open mouthed screams. Dozens, maybe hundreds that I'd swallowed over the past year. Then, when I was all screamed out, words formed, words for Esma. "I will see you again. And one day, I will save you, too."

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### Kat says

Wow! A really beautifully written story of friendship in rural Mexico. Not something I would normally pick up, but the lovely folks at Scholastic sent me an advanced copy and I fell in love with the cover. Basically, it's the story of an unlikely friendship between a gypsy and a Mexican grandson of a healer. It's told in two sort of narratives, as if the grandfather is telling his grandson about his childhood friend. By the end, you're rooting for them to rekindle their friendship.

It seems like the author did a lot of research for the book, as it seemed to ring true. Definitely a unique read and recommended to kids who like stories of friendship and far off places.

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## Pamela says

*[T]here in the dapple moonlight, with creatures warm and breathing, and lightening passing between the places our skin touched, we told each other all the things that best friends share."*

The joy of having a best friend for life - one who loves us just as we are, in spite of all our weirdness and imperfections. Isn't that what everyone desires? Someone who will treasure our eccentricities, guard our secrets, delight in our successes, share the sorrow of our failures, and encourage us to stand tall despite our fears?

Mateo of the Mixtecos - an indigenous tribe in Mexico - longs for just such a friend.

Living in a rural village outside of Mexico City, Mateo is certain nothing grand (at least not in any good sort of way) will ever happen on "Dust Hill." Oh how he wishes it would, though. He desperately wants something to happen that will shake-off the doldrums and wipe-away his shame and regret. He is quite close to his grandfather - the healer of their village. But Grandfather has his hands full tending to Mateo's mother who is lost in a world of sorrows. Mateo is thankful for aunt Pela and his cousins, and his beloved animal menagerie: a whistling duck, a three-legged skunk, and blind goat. Yet, something of great importance seems to be missing.

*"[I]t takes strength to move past your hurt to help someone . . . Especially someone you think you hate. But sometimes that is the very person who needs your help the most."*

Then, like a storm out of the blue, all that's mundane turns spectacular. That which is broken, mends. They who were hated, are loved. And those who sing, soar.

A band of gypsies (the Romanis) roll across the arroyo plains into the hills of Dust, carrying their *cine ambulante* to the villages of the indigenous peoples. In their bright festive wagons and whirlwind gaiety, they dole out fortunes, play movies, offer goodwill. And the most spectacular of all: **The Lightning Queen - Esma of the Romani's, daughter of the Duke of the Traveling Cinema!!!** She, who believes **NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE**.

*Life is like a movie . . . We get so involved, we think that's all there is, what's on the screen. We laugh, we cry, we love. We forget that if we only moved our eye away, we'd see so much more."*

All the way around, The Lightning Queen is a charming, exceptionally good book! Recommended for young adults and those young at heart who appreciate the beauty and magic of lyrical storytelling rich in culture, founded on historical/anthropological myths and truths. And props to Laura Resau and/or the editing team for including Mixteco and Romani glossaries with pronunciations.

FOUR \*\*\*\* Lyrically Enthralling and Sagaciously Magical \*\*\*\* Stars RT

### Alexa Hamilton says

I have a great love for Laura Resau, whose writing is always lyrical, descriptive and sensitive to a myriad of issues. This is a sweet book about a small town in Mexico and traveling Romani who come through, and it highlights friendship, family and a little bit of magic!

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### Barbara says

I haven't enjoyed a young readers' this much in a long time! Multi-cultural, multi-generational story of what happens when a young Romani girl rides into a small village in 1950's Oaxaca Mexico with her family in their brightly painted gypsy caravan. Sweet, fun, magical! Highly recommended!

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### Nicole says

What a magical story. Resau does a masterful job painting a beautiful picture of the world the reader jumps into every time they open the book. Topics covered are death, friendship, sickness, stereotypes, and family constellations.

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### Mary says

A fortune teller binds Teo, a young Mixtec, to Esma, the Gypsy Queen of Lightning and their connection turns into an enduring friendship. Part Bless Me Ultima meets Stargirl, this is a haunting love story that captures the beauty and mystery of the Rom people and the Mixtecs in the remote mountains of Mexico.

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### Sam says

INCREDIBLE.

Everyone go and pre-order this book because it's breathtakingly gorgeous.

The story shifts between the 1950s and 2010s as Teo tells the story of his forbidden friendship with Esma, the Gypsy Queen of Lightning, to his grandson.

Check out my full review on [sambfarkas.blogspot.com](http://sambfarkas.blogspot.com)!

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### Saleh MoonWalker says

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**Ian says**

I was so lucky to get my hands on a review copy of this electrical gem of a read - I'm a big Laura Resau fan and her latest work does not disappoint! As always, I learned about new cultures, in this case indigenous Mexicans and Romani. Enjoyed the vibrant characters, funny animals, and the magical landscape she describes so beautifully. The friendships between characters are heart-warming - a great read!

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**Sandi says**

Loved it. Loved it. Cannot speak highly enough of this book. A real treasure. Meanspiritedness is overcome by kindness in the story. All ages can enjoy this, although the intended audience is middle school. Interaction between two diverse cultures, lots of wisdom and excellent storytelling. I predict an award winner.

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**Erica Ravenclaw says**

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**No spoilers and colorful language abound! I received this ARC from the publisher...three years ago... in exchange for an honest review. Better late than never?**

The Lightning Queen is a whimsical getaway for the spirit, and a delight for the heavy hearted. Let this beautifully written tale of friendship take you away and soothe your weary soul. Esma and Teo will sweep you into 1950's rural Mexico where a young Mixtec boy and an electric Gypsy girl paths collide, forever altering their lives.

There is nothing amiss in this story, it is brimming with love, loyalty, and redemption. The writing is light, but powerful, introspective and curious. The Lightning Queen is nothing short of fantastic!

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### **Clarissa says**

This is a book about Gypsies (Romani people) and indigenous Mexican people, with characters you care about. Even the minor characters have depths and grow during the book. The Lightning Queen alternates between the 1950's in Mexico and the present day in Maryland.

Mateo lives in MD, but in the summer he travels to Mexico with his mother to visit his grandfather Teo who lives in a rural village. His grandfather asks Mateo to help him, and then tells the story of his childhood friendship with a Gypsy girl named Esma Queen of Lightning. Esma dreams of becoming a famous singer, although doing so would require her to leave her people forever. Teo's own grandfather is a healer, and is training Teo to become one too. When Teo was younger his father was run over by a car while they were in Mexico City to sell fruit they grew. And a year before the book starts Teo's sister drowned in a flash flood. Teo's mother is suffering from deep depression and can no longer function, and Teo himself has lost the ability to feel any joy in life. And then the gypsies come. They bring films to show in small rural towns, because, like the indigenous people they are treated badly in the cities. They show their film, and tell fortunes. When it comes time to tell Teo's fortune, he is told that he and the gypsy girl Esma, who does the translating between the gypsies and the townspeople will become friends for life. From this beginning both Teo and Esma's lives are changed forever. This was a great read, with a wonderful feel good ending.

Clarissa, NSR

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### **OwlBeReading says**

One of the best books I have ever read. The story was just so special and different from all the integrity books that I have read. The characters were amazing and I loved Esma, Queen of Lightning! The Romani culture is so amazing and I love how it intertwined with the Mixteco's. I loved how they healed each other in a way that I've never read about. I can't even stress how amazing this book is. 100 out of 5 stars.

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### **Sylvia Patience says**

Another beautiful and haunting book by Laura Resau, one of my favorite authors. I love the magic elements, combined with historical and cultural details of two previously maligned cultures.

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### **Heather says**

This review is for the audiobook edition.

The Lightning Queen starts out in modern times with a modern American boy, Mateo, visiting his grandfather, Teo, in Mexico. The grandfather asks the boy for his help with something, then proceeds to tell his grandson the story of his loyal friend, The Lightning Queen, a gypsy girl he met over 50 years ago. The Lightning Queen's name is Esma, and she claims to have been struck by lightning, which gave her special powers. It is predicted by the gypsy girl's grandmother that Esma and Teo will both save each other when no one else can.

The author paints vivid pictures of life in rural Mexico in the 1950s. There are moments of pure delight and moments of great pain and sadness. Christian Barillas sounds appropriately young as the voice of Mateo and

Thom Rivera is a perfect narrator for the Teo chapters, his voice is rich and full of emotion. This title is definitely worth a listen.

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