



# Love War Stories

*Ivelisse Rodriguez*

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Puerto Rican girls are brought up to want one thing: true love. Yet they are raised by women whose lives are marked by broken promises, grief, and betrayal. While some believe that they'll be the ones to finally make it work, others swear not to repeat cycles of violence. This collection documents how these "love wars" break out across generations as individuals find themselves caught in the crosshairs of romance, expectations, and community.

## Love War Stories Details

Date : Published July 10th 2018 by The Feminist Press at CUNY

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Author : Ivelisse Rodriguez

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## From Reader Review Love War Stories for online ebook

### **Y.Z. says**

Memorable characters carry these stories straight into the reader's heart. The various characters' earnest yearnings are made compelling by lively storytelling and Rodriguez's wonderful eye for detail. Rodriguez is also surefooted in the way she deftly gives each character strong outlines, either through dialogue or by sketching out personality quirks. My favorite stories are Summer of Nene and El que? dira?n.

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### **Yvonne says**

You can read my review of this powerful book in an upcoming issue of The Brooklyn Rail.

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### **Dionisia says**

MUST. READ.

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### **Preethi+Groktestuk20 says**

Joseph, a literature student at Berkeley, is the son of a Jewish mother and a Muslim father. One day, a mysterious package arrives on his doorstep,

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### **Mya says**

Such a fascinating mix of perspectives, experiences, and tones that bring vibrant insight into a variety of cultural and intergenerational tensions intimately tied to the acts of searching for, trying to understand, and finding love. This book contains beautiful meditations on love and its complicated nature; on cultural perceptions and the mythologizing of women in love in both macro and micro scales; and the insecurities and emotional strength of Puerto Rican women as they search and attempt to capture true love.

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### **R.L. Maizes says**

What I loved about Ivelisse Rodriguez's collection LOVE WAR STORIES: 1. The author's voice. It was unlike one I'd read before but made me instantly comfortable, secure in its powers of storytelling. 2. The author's insights about the role love plays in the lives and imaginations of the Puerto Rican girls she writes about and the conflicts it creates with their mothers. 3. Women and girls are at the centers of these stories, their hearts exposed on every page, daring the reader to look away. And much, much more. Highly recommend.

### **Laura says**

Read the full review here: <http://pageandplate.com/love-war-stories>

I wasn't sure what to expect from this collection, but from page one, I absolutely fell in love with Rodriguez's writing and the characters she created. It didn't feel like I was reading a short story; it felt like I was voyeur-ing my way through real people in real situations.

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### **Monica says**

Really enjoyed this book! Each story kept you engaged and was different from the rest, you could find yourself in each character too. A quick and easy read, well worth it!

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### **Virginia Alanis says**

In the first story, "El qué dirán," it's been seven years since Lola's husband left Puerto Rico to work in America and no one thinks he's coming back, but Lola has hope. She receives weekly love letters from him. The neighbors know that talk is cheap, even written words are cheap. There are other women who have been in the same position as Lola, young married women that get left behind when their husbands travel for work. They predict that Lola will be abandoned just like they were.

Twenty-four year old Lola hasn't made any progress in her life. She lives with her sister's family and they support her. Lola's job seems to be that of faithful woman yearning for her husband, waiting for his return. She puts him on a pedestal, idealizing him and their love. Their reunion gets put off indefinitely when Lola receives a break-up letter from him. Lola reacts to her husband's letter by coming unhinged. She is completely shattered and humiliated.

Because she has been living in a fantasy world for years, her family is exasperated with her. They have no sympathy. Lola has no friends, no dreams, no goals, or sense of purpose outside of the marriage that she invested in so deeply.

The other Puerto Rican women in this story collection are strong and often tragic. These stories gave me chills for their insight into the human condition and for the telling details that the author wrote. Ivelisse Rodriguez's work reminds me of Federico García Lorca and Anton Chekhov. There are also shades of Charles Dickens i.e. Miss Havisham in my favorite story from this collection, "El qué dirán". I'm excited to read more work from Ivelisse Rodriguez; her stories really resonated with me.

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### **Mona AlvaradoFrazier says**

This book is a short story collection which observes and explores generations of women who have

consuming relationships, betrayal, and different expectations of love. The back cover describes the stories well:

"Puerto Rican girls are raised to want one thing: true love. Yet they are brought up by women whose lives are marked by grief and betrayal...While some believe they'll be the ones to make it work, others swear not to repeat cycles of violence..."

Not only Puerto Ricans girls are socialized this way. As a Chicana, there are similar expectations for love as I'm sure this is the same for Mejicanas and other Latinx. I admit, I saw myself (in the past) in a couple of these stories.

This is one of the few books where I shouted at the characters, cried, and laughed while reading. Early books of Sandra Cisneros, Ana Castillo, and Helena Maria Viramontes evoked similar reactions. The author of this book, Ivelisse Rodriguez, is a fierce writer, managing to beautifully render the broken heart, the obsessive love, and the private hell of lost love.

My favorite story was "The Belinda's" but all of the stories have an aspect which will appeal to many readers. This book is one I'll reread because it's that good.

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### **Sarah says**

I was so excited to read this book and even woke up at 4:00 a.m. to start it. I read it in one sitting. Ivelisse wrote this book for all my fellow Boricua daughters and moms. The complicated relationships they form, exhibiting what love looks like for them, and carrying their inter-generational trauma of what is perceived as love versus reality. A love story will not save you nor define who you are and what your legacy will be. I wish I read this book in my teenage years. I saw glimpses of my younger self throughout. My favorites were El Que Diran, which reminded me a little of Stephen King's Carrie, Boricua style. Also, the Summer of Nene. I truly wish there will be a full length novel based on those characters. It stopped me dead in my tracks and proved love comes in all forms, not only in some romanticized hetero version. Felt it was the best love story in the book. La Hija de Chango spoke to me on a spiritual level and I received it's message wholeheartedly. I reread the last 5 paragraphs AT LEAST 10 times. There was a great tribute to Julia de Burgos, Puerto Rico's famous poet in the Simple Truth. A different take on her life and contributions I have not read before. There is such longing in that short story and Ivelisse nailed it. Love War Stories, the book's namesake was phenomenal. Thank you for writing this magical book. I will gift this book to all my Boricua sisters. We finally have our stories on the page. Highly recommend this book and seriously look forward to Ivelisse's future work.

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### **Taina says**

Novelleja, jotka repivät perinteisiä sukupuolirooleja, rakkaudentunnustuksia ja yhteiskuntaluokkia hajalle. Moniulotteisia lähinnä naispäähenkilöitä, joiden kautta Puerto Rico ja puertoricolaisuus näyttäytyy sekä vankilana että rikkautena. Olipas vaan hyvä ja vielä debyytti!

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### **Jennifer says**

4.5: I know people tend to hate the self-instituted half-point ratings.

"Summer of Nene" and the titular "Love War Stories" were my faves. All of these stories stand out and really do encapsulate the theme of love, often not always with a happy ending, but often not leaving folks unquestioning and unfulfilled. Love Rodriguez's voice and the characters she brings to life.

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### **The Dude says**

What's really sad is the woman who really writes exceptionally well about every aspect concerning Puerto Rican women will never get her due. Aurora Levins Morales' *Recipe for Heartbreak* puts all these stories to shame. Do yourself a favor and find this story to truly understand the problems that come with being a Puerto Rican woman, which are many and involve a lot more than love.

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### **Diane says**

I believe that this book is going to be a classic--a book that MFA students will study for the wonderful writing, and women's studies and other students will study it for the rich content about women's lives. People who want to know about women in Puerto Rico will read it for the Latina wisdom it provides. It won't be a book I quickly forget.

The characters in these stories were richly portrayed, multi-dimensional human beings who I'd like to meet. From the young woman whose husband went to the mainland to work, saying he would send for her and never did, to the girls who refuse to believe their mothers that men will always leave--these are all wonderful characters, and I would love to sit and have a conversation with them about life and about love. The writing doesn't get any better than this. I hope we see much more of Ivelisse Rodriguez's work, soon.

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