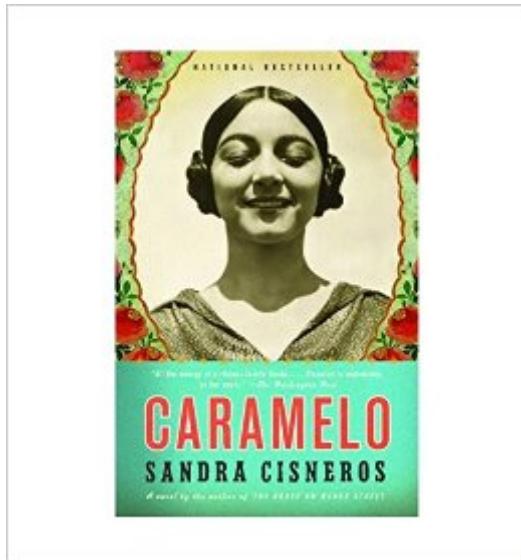


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# Caramelo



## **Synopsis**

Every year, Ceyala "Lala" Reyes' family--aunts, uncles, mothers, fathers, and Lala's six older brothers--packs up three cars and, in a wild ride, drive from Chicago to the Little Grandfather and Awful Grandmother's house in Mexico City for the summer. Struggling to find a voice above the boom of her brothers and to understand her place on this side of the border and that, Lala is a shrewd observer of family life. But when she starts telling the Awful Grandmother's life story, seeking clues to how she got to be so awful, grandmother accuses Lala of exaggerating. Soon, a multigenerational family narrative turns into a whirlwind exploration of storytelling, lies, and life. Like the cherished rebozo, or shawl, that has been passed down through generations of Reyes women, Caramelo is alive with the vibrations of history, family, and love.

## **Book Information**

Paperback: 464 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (124 customer reviews)

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## **Customer Reviews**

CARAMELO, the gorgeous new novel by Sandra Cisneros, begins with a portrait taken on a summer trip to Acapulco, one of those spontaneous group shots offered by photographers who comb the beach to record memories, real or manufactured. All of the members of the Reyes family are there...all except for Lala, the youngest, forgotten a few yards away as she happily makes sandcastles. And so Lala spends the rest of the book painting a portrait of her own. It's impossible not to love an author who names her characters "the Awful Grandmother," "Aunty Light-Skin" and "Uncle Old." Cisneros's warm, wry humor has been on display since THE HOUSE ON MANGO STREET, and in her latest blended book (equal parts American and Mexican influence), she ensnares us again. This is Lala's story, first and foremost, but it's also the story of so many other

things --- of growing up in two cultures, of growing up in general, of family life and daily upheaval, of class and racial strife. The Reyes family travels south to Mexico City each summer to spend time with Inocencio's parents, his heavy-handed mother and henpecked father. Thirteen running, screaming kids caught between the Chicago culture of their daily lives and the Mexican roots of their parents. Three daughters-in-law left to stew in their own juices when mama's around. One hundred reasons why, we soon learn, everything is not OK. We watch things unfold through Lala's eyes, even the things she was not there to witness. She is an always-precocious narrator. Of Aunty Light-Skin's secretarial job, for example, we're told that she wears beautiful cocktail dresses and high heels, and is picked up each day by her big-shot boss. Lala overhears her mother and aunts' ridicule, but does not spell out the details.

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