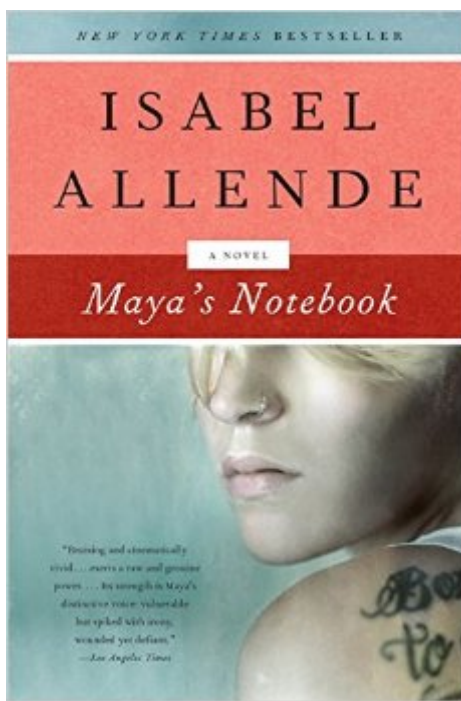


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Maya's Notebook: A Novel (P.S.)



Synopsis

Maya's Notebook is a startling novel of suspense from New York Times bestselling author Isabel Allende. This contemporary coming-of-age story centers upon Maya Vidal, a remarkable teenager abandoned by her parents. Maya grew up in a rambling old house in Berkeley with her grandmother Nini, whose formidable strength helped her build a new life after emigrating from Chile in 1973 with a young son, and her grandfather Popo, a gentle African-American astronomer. When Popo dies, Maya goes off the rails. Along with a circle of girlfriends known as "the vampires," she turns to drugs, alcohol, and petty crime--a downward spiral that eventually leads to Las Vegas and a dangerous underworld, with Maya caught between warring forces: a gang of assassins, the police, the FBI, and Interpol. Her one chance for survival is Nini, who helps her escape to a remote island off the coast of Chile. In the care of her grandmother's old friend, Manuel Arias, and surrounded by strange new acquaintances, Maya begins to record her story in her notebook, as she tries to make sense of her past and unravel the mysteries of her family and her own life.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars See all reviews (589 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

With Maya Vidal, the protagonist of Isabel Allende's new novel, "Maya's Notebook", Allende takes us on a most searing personal odyssey of self discovery as seen through the eyes of her likable, but emotionally scarred, protagonist, who literally falls into a psychological abyss of her own making; an abyss fraught with ample physical as well as psychological terror. Readers will find themselves rooting for Maya, hoping that she will prevail despite ample obstacles in her path. A personal

odyssey in which Maya learns some cold, hard, difficult, truths about herself and uncovers decades-held secrets about her family and its tragic history, especially in the bloody aftermath of the military coup that killed Chile's elected president, Salvador Allende and created a harsh military dictatorship persisting for years under the leadership of the coup's leader, General Augusto Pinochet. Told compellingly through Maya's own eyes, "Maya's Notebook" displays once more Allende's tremendous gifts for storytelling and creating characters as memorable as Maya Vidal, her grandmother Nidia - affectionately known as Nini - and Manuel Arias, the aging anthropologist who offers her sanctuary on a remote island off the coast of Chile with a past nearly as enigmatic as her grandmother's. When her kindly, almost saintly, grandfather, Popo, a distinguished Berkeley astronomer, dies, Maya embarks on a self destructive journey of drinking, drug addiction and thievery, escaping to Las Vegas where she becomes the target of drug dealing assassins, corrupt local police, and even the FBI. Barely escaping numerous scrapes with death, Maya finds her one chance of survival in her beloved Nini, who sends her to the remote Chilean island as a guest of Manuel Arias.

4.5 Stars Maya's Notebook is a coming of age contemporary novel that follows Maya Vidal as she escapes into hiding from her home in America to a small island off of Chile to escape her past of crime, prostitution and drugs - as well as running from Interpol, the FBI, police and even a gang of assassins. Throughout the book, we learn of Maya's life: her family history, her mistakes, her past, her thoughts and dreams, and even a family secret so deep that it threatens to shatter Maya's life. This is another breathtaking novel from a bestselling author whose talent is evident from the first paragraph. This story deviates from her other books, as it's set in the current time instead of the past. Maya's character is a solid and very layered main character. We learn a lot about her throughout the story. I came to see her in many ways and was able to watch her character grow and come into her own. I loved reading about Maya's life and her family, all of which made her more realistic in my eyes, which is a great quality for a lead character. The book is written from Maya's point of view, in the form of journal entries. Although I normally don't like this format, I think the epistolary form worked well for the plot and the characters in the story. The pace of the book was well done and the journal entries made for easy reading. The plot flowed effortlessly and easily intertwined Maya's past with her present circumstances and her thoughts. The writing style was flawless and done with such vivid descriptions and lyrical prose that I was immediately captivated and brought into Maya's world within the first few sentences of the book. It was a wonderful mixture of beauty, sadness, and hope that I haven't seen in many books before.

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