



# A Place Where the Sea Remembers

By Sandra Benitez

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**A Place Where the Sea Remembers** By Sandra Benitez

Winner, Discover Great New Writers Award. Winner, Minnesota Book Award for Fiction. "Profound.... a quietly stunning work that leaves soft tracks in the heart."--*The Washington Post BookWorld* "Merits placement beside some of the mesmerizing new literature with its roots in Latin America."--*The New York Times Book Review*

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## A Place Where the Sea Remembers By Sandra Benitez Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1270738 in Books
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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

Latina writer Benitez begins her excellent debut novel with a painful event--the wait for a drowned body to float to shore--and works backwards, retracing the myriad, seemingly insignificant steps that led to the character's death. As in *Like Water for Chocolate*, this novel sympathetically explores the lives of Mexican women caught in a mystical, fatalistic world. Chayo, a flower seller, and her sister Marta, a chambermaid, live in a poverty-stricken village by the sea. When 15-year-old Marta is raped and becomes pregnant, seemingly barren Chayo and her husband, Candelario, agree to take the child. Soon after, however, Chayo discovers that she too is expectant and reneges on the promise. Livid, Marta arranges with el brujo, the witch doctor, to put a curse on her sister's child. Both women bear sons, and a remorseful Marta tells her sister about the curse, which she claims to have had removed by la curandera, the healer. But when Chayo's son almost dies after being bitten by fire ants, the sisters' relationship once more deteriorates and, inexorably, the tragedy presaged in the book's opening chapter comes to pass. Benitez's unsparing vision into the stark realities of village residents' lives offers a poignant counterpoint to superficial vacation snapshots of Mexico. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From School Library Journal

YA-In the small Mexican town of Santiago, childless Chayo and her husband find their prayers answered when they agree to adopt the unborn child of Marta, Chayo's sister. When Chayo becomes pregnant and they change their mind about adoption, Marta has a witch doctor put a curse on Chayo's unborn baby, setting in motion a series of tragic events. Characters, presented individually by the author and then woven together by plot, attach themselves to readers' sensibilities, and lull them into believing in the goodness of life in this sleepy seaside community. However, all this cultural richness is poised for tragedy when divine retribution takes over.

*Ginny Ryder, Lee High School, Fairfax County, VA*

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From Library Journal

This emotionally gripping, though flawed first novel tells a story of life and death in the Mexican village of Santiago. When the infertile Chayo unexpectedly conceives, she and her husband renege on their promise to raise her sister's unwanted child as their own, setting in motion a chain of events that ultimately result in tragedy. The author displays an exceptionally keen sense of detail and creates interesting people whose very different lives lend variety to the narrative. However, the book suffers from an abundance of underdeveloped characters and story lines, which at times render it rather unsatisfactory. The inclusion of an apparently supernatural element works potently at a visual level but makes no substantive contribution to the novel and may prompt readers to wonder if Benitez is simply hopping on the bandwagon of Magical Realism.

Recommended for libraries with a strong interest in Latino literature.

*- Cherry W. Li, Univ. of Southern California Lib., Los Angeles*

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## **Users Review**

**From reader reviews:**

**Diana Rush:**

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**Elaine Jenkins:**

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**Lee Fuller:**

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