



Spare Parts: Four Undocumented Teenagers, One Ugly Robot, and the Battle for the American Dream

By Joshua Davis

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Four undocumented Mexican American students, two great teachers, one robot-building contest . . . and a major motion picture

In 2004, four Latino teenagers arrived at the Marine Advanced Technology Education Robotics Competition at the University of California, Santa Barbara. They were born in Mexico but raised in Phoenix, Arizona, where they attended an underfunded public high school. No one had ever suggested to Oscar, Cristian, Luis, or Lorenzo that they might amount to much—but two inspiring science teachers had convinced these impoverished, undocumented kids from the desert who had never even seen the ocean that they should try to build an underwater robot.

And build a robot they did. Their robot wasn't pretty, especially compared to those of the competition. They were going up against some of the best collegiate engineers in the country, including a team from MIT backed by a \$10,000 grant from ExxonMobil. The Phoenix teenagers had scraped together less than \$1,000 and built their robot out of scavenged parts. This was never a level competition—and yet, against all odds . . . they won!

But this is just the beginning for these four, whose story—which became a key inspiration to the DREAMers movement—will go on to include first-generation college graduations, deportation, bean-picking in Mexico, and service in Afghanistan.

Joshua Davis's *Spare Parts* is a story about overcoming insurmountable odds and four young men who proved they were among the most patriotic and talented Americans in this country—even as the country tried to kick them out.

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- Rank: #63626 in eBooks
- Published on: 2014-12-02
- Released on: 2014-12-02
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

An Amazon Best Book of the Month, December 2014: *Spare Parts* is the fantastic story of four Mexican-American teenagers struggling to find their place. An unlikely robotics competition becomes the focus of the narrative, but the story covers a lot of ground. By describing how these teens came together, author Joshua Davis gives us a succinct history of immigration and a micro-lesson in Arizona politics. It all leads to the scene in a pool in Santa Barbara, CA—with each team member realizing how they fit on the team, and in their adopted homeland. — *Amy Huff*

Review

“Perhaps the most gripping popular-science book I have read.” ?Noel Sharkey, *Nature*

“A great feel-good tale of scrappy underdogs beating long odds. But there's more to the story, and *Spare Parts* illuminates the human side of two polarizing political issues: immigration and education . . . *Spare Parts* is a delightful book . . . A great American story.” ?Peter Carlson, *The Washington Post*

“*Spare Parts* is an unforgettable tale of hope and human ingenuity. Against a backdrop of urban desert decay, a faltering school system, and our country's cutthroat immigration policies, Joshua Davis offers a moving testament to how teamwork, perseverance, and a few good teachers can lift up and empower even the humblest among us.” ?Héctor Tobar, *author of Deep Down Dark*

“It's the most American of stories: how determination and ingenuity can bring triumph over long odds. There are too few stories like these written about Latino students. Poignant and beautifully told, *Spare Parts* makes you feel their frustration at the obstacles and indignities faced by Cristian, Lorenzo, Luis, and Oscar--and to cheer as they rise to overcome each one of them.” ?Sonia Nazario, *author of Enrique's Journey*

“*Spare Parts* is one of those rare stories that grabs hold and doesn't let go. It's hilarious, sad, and beautifully told. It will make you think hard about what it means to be American and where we will find the next generation of talent.” ?Chris Anderson, *author of The Long Tail*

“This is hands down my favorite kind of story: underdogs plus ingenuity plus pluck and dedication equals a deeply moving and touching narrative. I love these kids!” ?Adam Savage, *cohost of MythBusters*

“This is important reading.” ?Booklist (*starred review*)

From the Inside Flap

In 2004, four Latino teenagers arrived at a national underwater robotics championship at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Oscar, Lorenzo, Cristian, and Luis were all born in Mexico but raised in Phoenix, Arizona, where they grew up in constant fear of deportation. Their high school? hundreds of miles from the nearest ocean, no pool, little money to spare, and more than

80 percent of students below the poverty line?was the last place you'd expect to find kids building an underwater robot. But two bighearted teachers believed that four unusual students?a disciplined ROTC cadet, a rebellious would-be gang member, a brainy nerd, and a quiet towering giant?needed something different in their lives.

Their robot, which they dubbed Stinky, wasn't much to look at, especially compared to the competition. They were up against some of the best student engineers in the country, including a team from MIT backed by a \$10,000 grant from ExxonMobil. The Phoenix teenagers had scraped together less than \$1,000 and built their robot out of scavenged parts, donations from bemused strangers, and, when Stinky sprang a leak just moments before the competition, a handful of tampons.

But this contest is just the beginning for these four young men, whose story takes us from the unpaved roads of West Phoenix to the halls of Congress and from the battlefields of Afghanistan to vigilante-style murders in the American Southwest. It is a story whose impact is still being felt today. It is the story of a fight for the new American Dream.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Anna Lewis:

Book will be written, printed, or descriptive for everything. You can realize everything you want by a book. Book has a different type. As it is known to us that book is important thing to bring us around the world. Adjacent to that you can your reading skill was fluently. A e-book Spare Parts: Four Undocumented Teenagers, One Ugly Robot, and the Battle for the American Dream will make you to become smarter. You can feel much more confidence if you can know about everything. But some of you think this open or reading a book make you bored. It is far from make you fun. Why they may be thought like that? Have you in search of best book or appropriate book with you?

Jamie Sparks:

This Spare Parts: Four Undocumented Teenagers, One Ugly Robot, and the Battle for the American Dream book is not ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you will get by reading this book is usually information inside this reserve incredible fresh, you will get facts which is getting deeper you read a lot of information you will get. This kind of Spare Parts: Four Undocumented Teenagers, One Ugly Robot, and the Battle for the American Dream without we understand teach the one who looking at it become critical in pondering and analyzing. Don't possibly be worry Spare Parts: Four Undocumented Teenagers, One Ugly Robot, and the Battle for the American Dream can bring when you are and not make your case space or bookshelves' turn into full because you can have it in your lovely laptop even mobile phone. This Spare Parts: Four Undocumented Teenagers, One Ugly Robot, and the Battle for the American Dream having great arrangement in word as well as layout, so you will not feel uninterested in reading.

Sue Joseph:

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Teresa White:

Typically the book Spare Parts: Four Undocumented Teenagers, One Ugly Robot, and the Battle for the American Dream has a lot of information on it. So when you read this book you can get a lot of profit. The book was compiled by the very famous author. The writer makes some research prior to write this book. This kind of book very easy to read you may get the point easily after reading this article book.

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