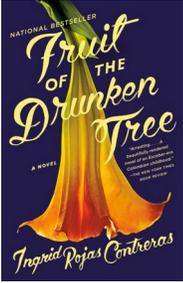


Books by the Stack



Fruit of the Drunken Tree by Ingrid Rojas Contreras

Rojas Contreras delivers the heart wrenching story of a sheltered girl and a teen maid, who forge an unlikely friendship that threatens to undo them both amid the violence of 1990s Columbia.

Why you'll like it: *Coming of age. Character-driven. Moving. Unlikely friendships.*

About the Author: Ingrid Rojas Contreras was born and raised in Bogotá, Colombia. Her essays and short stories have appeared in the Los Angeles Review of Books, Electric Literature, Guernica, and Huffington Post, among others. She has received fellowships and awards from The Missouri Review, Bread Loaf Writer's Conference, VONA, Hedgebrook, The Camargo Foundation, Djerassi Resident Artists Program, and the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures. She is the book columnist for KQED Arts, the Bay Area's NPR affiliate.

Questions for Discussion

1. *The Fruit of the Drunken Tree* shifts between the perspectives of Chula and Petrona. How do the dual perspectives impact your reading of the novel? What would be lost without Chula's perspective? Without Petrona's?
2. During most of the novel, Chula narrates *Fruit of the Drunken Tree* as a child. How did the child narration effect your reading experiences? Did you enjoy the perspective?
3. The author does a great job of showing the many sides to a story, and develops each character fully. With which character did you sympathize the most? The least?
4. When Chula is brought back to her mother after the kidnapping attempt, she doesn't understand her mother's anger and protests "but [Petrona] brought me back." Who do you side with? Do you think Petrona deserves forgiveness?
5. Did you understand Petrona's final decision to stay with Gorrion? Were you surprised to learn that she married him? Why?
6. The symbol of the drunken tree figures heavily into the novel. How does Ingrid use this symbol? What is its significance?
7. There are many mentions of supernatural elements (witches, ghosts, tarot cards) in *Fruit of the Drunken Tree*. Why do you think the author included them? And what do they add to your reading experience?
8. What did you know about Columbia before reading this novel? Did the book change your perspective?
9. At the end of the novel, you find out that much of the story is based off of experiences from the author's life. Did you know it was autofiction? If not, how did that knowledge add to overall reading of the book?
10. Each character in the novel copes with trauma in a different way. How do their strategies compare to one another? How do you imagine you would react to a similar experience?

- 11.** Did Chula's experience immigrating to the US impact your understanding of refugees and immigrants? Do you feel that you have more empathy after reading it?
- 12.** What do you envision happens to the characters after the book ends?

(Questions provided by the publisher)



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