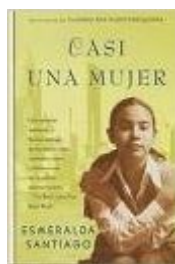


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Synopsis

From a three-room apartment in Brooklyn occupied by ten family members, Esmeralda Santiago begins a journey that is both a triumphant struggle for identity and independence, and a mother's worst nightmare. Challenged by language barriers, cultural stereotypes, and the fiercely protective Mami, Santiago continues the rollicking ascent she began in *When I Was Puerto Rican*. By day she perfects the role of Cleopatra at Performing Arts High School and interprets for the family at city welfare offices. At night she accompanies her mother and sisters to Latin dance halls, but on such a strict leash that she has her first date at the age of twenty. Undaunted, she makes up for lost time in a romantic apprenticeship at once hilarious and heartbreaking.

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