

Newsletter – October 2005

Hi Everyone!

I'm excited to present my first newsletter. I've wanted to have a way to communicate monthly with readers for ages and haven't had the opportunity (read: time) to do it. Until now! I hope you enjoy it and will give me your input and thoughts on how to improve it, what you'd like to know about, and what you're interested in seeing. This newsletter is for YOU so don't be shy about communicating with me.

MARCELA'S LIST OF 10

Marcela, the main character of *BECOMING LATINA IN 10 EASY STEPS*, makes a list of 10 things she can do to become a better Latina--this to please her family. So, I decided the first article you will read each month will be a list of 10, and it will be something fun.

This month I decided I would share with you the 10 best books I read this summer. They are not necessarily listed in the order of my preference, just as I remember reading them.

1. Unsettling by Lynda Sandoval

Fun, hilarious, great characters and wonderful storytelling. Can't ask for more than that. I love characters that jump out of a book and seem real. Lynda's characters do. Will make you want to call up your girlfriends and go on a trip together.

2. Ain't She Sweet by Susan Elizabeth Phillips

Again, awesome characterization. I LOVED the heroine. This book was so good, I'm currently reading it again. I barely have time to read books once, so this says a lot for this book. And for anyone who's ever read *SEP*, you'll understand why – she's just the best.

3. The Nerd Who Loved Me by Vicki Lewis Thompson

Funny and cute. Since I love nerds...ah, I mean intelligent, competent, trustworthy, and handsome men, I loved this book.

4. Time Off For Good Behavior by Lani Diane Rich (who won the RITA for this book)

You can probably tell by now that I like spunky heroines. I kept reading just to see what this character would do next. Yikes--this girl has serious issues. And this author has a wonderful voice.

5. Ash Wednesday by Ethan Hawke

Yes, that Ethan Hawke--the actor. My husband bought me this book because he knows how much I love this guy. I didn't know he could actually write. Really enjoyed this

book. Wonderful descriptions--not quite literary, but not commercial fiction either. Sort of a slice of life book.

6. Body Double by Vicki Hinze

I have to say, that I like most of the Silhouette Bombshell books. They are all extremely well written and probably should be published outside of a "line". But Vicki's Body Double was one of my favorites from the line. Suspenseful, interesting concept, great writing. A close second was Code Name: Dove by Judith Leon – but I didn't read that one this summer.

7. Learning To Sing by Clay Aiken

Yes, I'm listing this one to please my mother who travels the United States to see Clay in concert. However, I really did enjoy Clay's book. I love to read about success stories and people achieving their dreams despite modest beginnings. Gives me some hope.

8. Buddah Mom by Jacqueline Kramer

This book taught me things like slaving over three healthy meals a day in my kitchen is really a good thing. I'm nurturing my family's body and spiritual life. Creating a peaceful and beautiful place for my family to grow in is an art and something they will one day appreciate as they become centered, loving human beings. Enough said.

9. The Book of Latina Women: 150 Vidas of Passion, Strength, and Success by Sylvia Mendoza

The only thing wrong with this book is that I'm not listed--just kidding. What a great, jam packed, informative book! Gives you a glimpse into so many amazing women and makes you want to go find out more. Great reference, especially for anyone who is a librarian or teacher. Excellent for teen Latina girls so that they can see what is possible in life.

10. You Fat Is NOT Your Fault by Carol Simontacchi, C.C.N., M.S

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Thank God someone finally said it!

I recommend all of these. The each added something to my life, and because I want to add something to your life, I will choose five of these books to give away in my contest. See CONTEST below. Good luck.

CONTEST

The good news is that if you are receiving this newsletter, you are automatically entered into this month's contest. I will randomly select five winners to receive one of the books from Marcela's List of 10. The bad news is you do not get to choose the book. I'll see if I can get a few of the authors to autograph their books (if anyone out there is tight with

Clay or especially Ethan feel free to send them my way--heck, I'll make the time to talk to those boys), and I'll decide this month which books I will give away. If you know of any friends, relatives, or neighbors who might want to participate in the contest, direct them to my website and there will be a navigational link leading them to the contest page.

WEBSITE UPDATES

The news section has been updated under the Meet Lara link and I have some info on my current work in progress BECOMING AMERICANA--and a question for you--so check it out.