



We Were Here

By Matt de la Peña

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Newbery Award-winning author Matt de la Peña's *We Were Here* is a "fast, funny, smart, and heartbreaking" novel [Booklist].

When it happened, Miguel was sent to Juvi. The judge gave him a year in a group home—said he had to write in a journal so some counselor could try to figure out how he thinks. The judge had no idea that he actually did Miguel a favor. Ever since it happened, his mom can't even look at him in the face. *Any* home besides his would be a better place to live.

But Miguel didn't bet on meeting Rondell or Mong or on any of what happened after they broke out. He only thought about Mexico and getting to the border to where he could start over. Forget his mom. Forget his brother. Forget himself.

Life usually doesn't work out how you think it will, though. And most of the time, running away is the quickest path right back to what you're running from.

From the streets of Stockton to the beaches of Venice, all the way to the Mexican border, *We Were Here* follows a journey of self-discovery by a boy who is trying to forgive himself in an unforgiving world.

"Fast, funny, smart, and heartbreaking...The contemporary survival adventure will keep readers hooked."-*Booklist*

"This gripping story about underprivileged teens is a rewarding read."-*VOYA*

"A furiously paced and gripping novel."-*Publishers Weekly*

"A story of friendship that will appeal to teens and will engage the most reluctant readers."-*Kirkus Reviews*

An ALA-YALSA Best Book for Young Readers

An ALA-YALSA Quick Pick for Reluctant Readers

A Junior Library Guild Selection

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 9 Up—Miguel struggles to forgive himself for a tragic event that changed his life and his family forever. He willingly accepts his one-year sentence to a juvenile detention center and the requirement that he keep a journal. De La Peña uses the conceit of the journal to tell the story in Miguel's words. At the center, Miguel befriends Rondell, a mentally challenged teen prone to violent outbursts, and Mong, a troubled boy with myriad physical and emotional problems. Mong organizes an escape, and with little apparent thought, Miguel and Rondell agree to join him. The boys' convoluted travels take them up and down the California coast and are recorded in Miguel's journal, along with his personal journey of self-discovery. It is frustrating that the salient event, the one that led to Miguel's incarceration, is kept from readers, and most other characters, until the end of the book. Once the truth of what happened is exposed, it is difficult to comprehend the callousness shown to Miguel by other family members; in fact, readers may question why he was imprisoned at all. The premise of juvenile delinquents on the run, camping out, and trying to survive and to find themselves will appeal to teens, but the story is just too drawn out to hold the interest of most of them.—*Patricia N. McClune, Conestoga Valley High School, Lancaster, PA*

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Review

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About the Author

We Were Here is Newbery Award-winning author Matt de la Peña's third novel. He attended the University of the Pacific on a basketball scholarship and went on to earn a Master of Fine Arts in creative writing at San Diego State University. He lives in Brooklyn, New York, where he teaches creative writing. Look for Matt's other books, *Ball Don't Lie*, *Mexican WhiteBoy*, *I Will Save You*, and *The Living*, for which he received the Pura Belpré Author Honor Award, all available from Delacorte Press. You can also visit him at mattdelapena.com and follow @mattdelapena on Twitter.

From the Hardcover edition.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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