



The Old Man's Love Story (Chicana and Chicano Visions of the Americas series)

Rudolfo Anaya

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“There was an old man who dwelt in the land of New Mexico, and he lost his wife.” From that opening line, this tender novella is at once universal and deeply personal. The nameless narrator, a writer, shares his most intimate thoughts about his wife, their life together, and her death. But just as death is inseparable from life, his wife seems still to be with him. Her memory and words permeate his days. In *The Old Man's Love Story*, master storyteller Rudolfo Anaya crafts the tale of a lifelong love that ultimately transcends death.

An elegy not just for the dead but for the vitality of youth, the old man's story captures both the heartaches and ironies of old age. We follow him as he proceeds through days of grief and memory, buying his few groceries, driving slower than the other travelers on the road. He talks with his wife along the way. “Go slow,” he hears her admonish. As he sits in the garden with their dogs, he senses her worry over his loneliness. A year passes. He longs to care for someone, but—to love again?

Like characters in Anaya's previous fiction, the old man lives in a real New Mexico, but one inhabited by spirits. Death provides a gateway to other worlds, just as memories connect him to other times and places. When he eventually begins a new friendship with a woman, a widow, they share a bittersweet understanding of joy mixed with sorrow, promise mixed with loss.

Anaya's reflections, as shared through the experiences of this old man, point to the power and importance of love at every stage of life. Lyrical and earthy, sad yet suffused with humor, *The Old Man's Love Story* will speak to all readers, perhaps especially to those who have suffered a recent loss.

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