



## Ana María Reyes Does Not Live in a Castle

**Hilda Eunice Burgos**

Tu Books (Oct 2, 2018)

Hardcover \$18.95 (304pp)

978-1-62014-362-9

Hilda Eunice Burgos's *Ana María Reyes Does Not Live in a Castle* is thoughtful and entertaining. Eleven-year-old Ana María is bright, talented, and precocious, the second child in a family with four—soon to be five—children. She dreams of playing the piano at Lincoln Center and of attending the prestigious Eleanor School, but often feels overlooked.

Then Ana María's Tía Nona comes to visit. She is engaged, and her wealthy fiancé is going to pay for Ana María's entire family to go to the Dominican Republic, where much of their extended family still lives, for the wedding.

The story is filled with beautiful observations and lessons. Ana María learns a great deal about wealth; she observes the significant differences that exist between those who have material abundance and those who do not. She sees her beloved aunt mistreat a young servant girl who is Ana María's age, and she watches as her family and neighbors work hard to support one another whenever there is need. She begins to understand that while her hopes and dreams are important, taking care of the people in her life is even more meaningful and satisfying.

The characters in Ana María's life are complex, flawed, and likable. Ana María evolves and grows throughout the course of the story, and her family and friends grow with her. Wonderful details about the culture of the Dominican Republic make the story richer and more real. *Ana María Does Not Live in a Castle* is a meaningful, memorable, and thoroughly enjoyable book for middle-grade readers—a true pleasure to read.

CATHERINE THURESON (November/December 2018)

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