



Love's Rebirth: A Tejana Story

Adria Cruz Tabor

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The compelling historical novel Love's Rebirth pronounces links between love and spirituality via a woman's romance with a Texas Ranger.

In Adria Cruz Tabor's historical novel *Love's Rebirth*, a young woman works to find love and spiritual enlightenment.

Ana Dolores lost most of her family in a fire. Only her great grandmother, Braulia, whom Ana Dolores only knows as her nursemaid, survived. Anthony and Catherine, friends of Ana Dolores's mother, take her in and raise her.

Ana Dolores inherited the ability to see people's auras, as well as a gift for spiritual clarity that both Braulia and family friend help her to cultivate. At sixteen, Ana Dolores meets Robert, a young Texas Ranger who shares her spiritual gifts. But Robert leaves, and turmoil rocks Ana Dolores's family.

Set in Texas in the early 1800s, Ana's story develops against a backdrop of political and social turmoil. Several events in her life are linked to this setting, too. Among the most significant: her family and her first husband are killed during Native American raids. And a great deal of historical information is presented, in particular during the first third of the novel, which is expositional to excess.

Spirituality links the book's events and characters together. Topics including reincarnation, the spiritual link between all living beings and nature, and love as a unifying thread between religions are explored in depth. But the book also muses through subjects like destiny and the existence of spiritual masters. These topics are often explored in conversation, resulting in a variety of different opinions on them.

The book's cast is distinctive; individual people are differentiated in terms of their speech patterns, personality traits, and skills. This does not extend to the Native American cast, though. Even Ana Dolores and Braulia's heritage comes up only in relation to their spiritual gifts, feeding into negative tropes.

The story includes two romances as a result of love at first sight, but of the two, only Ana Dolores and Robert's instant connection makes real sense. And even they are said to have had a relationship in a past life—a detail that is relied upon to justify their connection in the present, when they barely get to know each other as the people they are now. Still, their relationship is piquing, as is the one between Ana Dolores and her first husband, André. The book handles love and loss with nuance and respect.

Some interruptive tone-deafness occurs, though, as when Ana Dolores is upset about visiting a city where slavery is legal, and André expresses that he is sorry that her vacation is now soured; and when Braulia's relationship with Ana Dolores's great grandfather is presented as a loving one, despite his twice marrying other women, and not acknowledging her as the mother of his surviving daughter. Still, the novel closes on a satisfactory note, tying up all loose ends with a note of triumph.

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with a Texas Ranger.

CAROLINA CIUCCI (June 5, 2022)

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