

Julia alvarez, how the
garcia girls lost their
accent response



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“How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents” How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents is a very thought provoking novel and in particular makes one feel for those who are not living in their native land and the sort of identity dilemma they face. I am an immigrant myself therefore I could empathize with many of the characters in the book. The book is about an influential Spanish family but focuses more on the life of the children of the family. The siblings are four girls referred to in the book with the following names; Carla, Yolanda, Sandy and Baby Fifi. The girls are born to a very influential Spanish family which lives in the Dominican Republic. Due to the strong opposition of the girls' father to the political dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, which prevailed in their homeland, the family manages to immigrate to America. The story revolves around their feelings as immigrants, the problems faced by them, the dilemmas they go through as immigrants where they had to let go of the memories of their past and try to adjust in a new life and culture which did not particularly match theirs. In many of the book reviews that I have read, it has been written that the novel is inspired from Julia Alvarez's personal life, which can be a possible reason for her very realistic outlook on the problems faced by immigrants. I myself felt that there were many aspects of the book that I could relate to as an individual. As with the previous book “Their Eyes Were Watching God,” love plays a very important role in this book as well. The central character is Yolanda narrates a considerable part of the story. In one chapter of the book she narrates her experiences as a college student. Her major was English which was challenging for her because in her class of English majors many were native speakers of the language and many of the phrases which they spoke were difficult for her to understand. Moreover, her understanding of English poetry

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was different from that of the natives which is something which many immigrants face. As a consequence she had to work extra hard in order to compete with the native students. I share exactly the same feelings I need to put in extra effort in order to bring my work at par with that of my fellow classmates who are well versed in English language. Yolanda experienced her first ever crush in College and the way the author has described it is very close to reality. The feelings of Yolanda have been penned down to the minutest of details which would make anyone with a similar past experience feel nostalgic and empathize with the fictional character and feel " Oh I've been through this myself." The fact that the relationship needs of men and women can be at odds has been emphasized along with the element of different cultural values, for example with her family background Yolanda was not very comfortable with the idea of sleeping around which was something assumed to be taken as understood by the native Americans. Another aspect of the book was Yolanda's marriage. Yolanda is an individual who is very poetic in nature. She has been portrayed as someone who likes to talk in rhyming words and thus finds the melodies in life. Her husband on the other hand was a person with opposite personality traits. He was very organized, liked to keep his pencils sharpened and so forth. The point when Yolanda found the checklist he had made to weigh the pros and cons of marrying her infuriated me to quite an extent. I feel there are certain important decisions of one's life in which one does not really need to slot things down on paper, intuition plays an important role, but sadly that was not the case with John. I felt that again the novel emphasized the power of nerves and of the strength of a woman's personality when Yolanda was portrayed as strong enough to take a bold decision of leaving her husband

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which was adequately understood by her parents. The support which Yolanda got from her parents was another important factor that showed how important it is to have family support while making critical decisions since Yolanda had fallen ill and without the love and support of her family she would not have managed to recover soon. Amongst the other issues faced by immigrants, peer pressure I felt was highlighted in the book and rightly so because as an immigrant I myself find it hard to resist the thrust of peer pressure which fades away one's original identity. Therefore, I felt I could relate to many aspects of the book since the situations and feelings of the characters were described very meticulously.