



Bulletproof Vest: The Ballad of an Outlaw and His Daughter

Maria Venegas

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A *New York Times* Editors' Choice book

The haunting story of a daughter's struggle to confront her father's turbulent-and often violent-legacy

After a fourteen-year estrangement, Maria Venegas returns to Mexico from the United States to visit her father, who is living in the old hacienda where both he and she were born. While spending the following summers and holidays together, herding cattle and fixing barbed-wire fences, he begins sharing stories with her, tales of a dramatic life filled with both intense love and brutal violence—from the final conversations he had with his own father, to his extradition from the United States for murder, to his mother's pride after he shot a man for the first time at the age of twelve.

Written in spare, gripping prose, *Bulletproof Vest* is Venegas's reckoning with her father's difficult legacy. Moving between Mexico and New York, between past and present, Venegas traces her own life and her father's as, over time, a new closeness and understanding develops between them. *Bulletproof Vest* opens with a harrowing ambush on Venegas's father while he's driving near his home in Mexico. He survives the assault—but years later the federales will find him dead near the very same curve, and his daughter will be left with not only the stories she inherited from him but also a better understanding of the violent undercurrent that shaped her father's life as well as her own.

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