

Publication Date: 10/16/2008
Contact: Nadea Mina
636-307-5573
nadea.mina@stmartins.com

"The poignant story of one woman's journey into the fascinating world of Santeria . Irete Lazo fearlessly describes the power and emotion of spiritual rituals and sheds humane insight on an often misunderstood religion. This heartfelt debut rings boldly, candidly true."

—Cristina García, author of *A Handbook to Luck*

"The author... is knowledgeable about her subject, she's a former scientist and a practicing Santera, and does an entertaining job of contrasting science with religious beliefs."

– *Publisher's Weekly*

"The Accidental Santera is a moving, original debut novel that made me shiver with delight. Irete Lazo is that rare combination of guts, grace and passion that, when translated onto the page, gives us truly fantastic literature."—*Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez, author of Dirty Girls on Top*

Dear Reviewer,

The secretive world of Santeria is no place for a respectable scientist... or so Gabrielle Segovia thought. As a lapsed Catholic, Gabrielle's feelings about religion are fraught with confusion, and her marriage to an atheist has stifled her religious leanings even further. Thus, when Gabrielle follows a friend into one of the mysterious voodoo shops of New Orleans, she is shocked to feel the seductive tug of Santeria taking hold of her. In **THE ACCIDENTAL SANTERA** (Thomas Dunne Books / Hardcover / October 2008 / 0-312-38188-3 / \$24.95), Gabrielle Segovia is in the midst of great personal crisis; she has had three miscarriages and she and her husband are drifting further and further apart every day. Desperate for answers, she begins to feel a powerful need to learn everything she can about this strange new world she has stumbled upon.

At first incredulous, Gabrielle takes her first reading as a scientific challenge; every prediction realized, a data point gathered. When more and more of the Santero's words come true, she decides it's time to contact her long lost family in Miami, all of whom are practicing Santeros. Soon enough, Gabrielle finds herself in Florida with her aunt and cousins who are more than willing to help their uninitiated cousin find her way to the wisdom of the Religion.

Guided by her family, both living and dead, Gabrielle finds her skepticism being replaced by hope and finally faith. With a feeling more like a homecoming than a pilgrimage, Gabrielle Segovia's journey into Santeria only confirms the visceral reaction she felt upon her first encounter with the faith: you don't go looking for Santeria, Santeria comes looking for you...

A devout believer in Santeria herself, Irete Lazo creates a genuine and engaging portrait of the induction into this intriguing culture. Santeria, known to many as the Religion, is a syncretic belief system drawing from the Catholic and West African Yoruba traditions. Shrouded in myth and mystery, Santeria, Ifá and Voodoo are commonly sensationalized in pop culture, but Lazo succeeds in showing the deeper and more complex aspects of her faith through the story of Gabrielle Segovia in *THE ACCIDENTAL SANTERA*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

IRETE LAZO (a pseudonym) is a practicing Santeria and former scientist who received her Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley. She lives with her husband and son in the San Francisco Bay Area.

I hope you'll be considering this fascinating new novel for review this October, and please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Best regards,

Nadea Mina
St. Martin's Press
(646) 307-5573
nadea.mina@stmartins.com