



Buried Onions

By Gary Soto

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Buried Onions By Gary Soto

For Eddie there isn't much to do in his rundown neighborhood but eat, sleep, watch out for drive-bys, and just try to get through each day. His father, two uncles, and his best friend are all dead, and it's a struggle not to end up the same way. The violence makes Fresno wallow in tears, as if a huge onion with its ubiquitous vapors were buried beneath the city. Making an effort to walk a straight line despite constant temptations and frustrations, Eddie searches for answers after the death of his cousin and discovers that his closest friends may be his worst enemies.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Eddie can always smell onions in the air--the sharp bitter odor of hopelessness and anger that haunts the poor side of Fresno. "I had a theory about those vapors, which were not released by the sun's heat but by a huge onion buried under the city. This onion made us cry. Tears leapt from our eyelashes and stained our faces." Eddie tries to escape from the poverty and gang society that surrounds him by taking vocational classes and staying away from his old "cholos," (gang friends). But when his cousin is killed, his aunt urges him to seek out and punish the murderer. To avoid the pressure building in his neighborhood, Eddie takes a landscaping job in an affluent suburb. But this too goes awry when his boss's truck is stolen while in his care. In the end, with his money gone and a dangerous gang member stalking him, Eddie's only choice is to join the military and hope that they can give him a better future than the one Fresno seems to offer.

There is no tidy closure--certainly no happy ending--to this bleak novel. But that is exactly what gives *Buried Onions* its strong, acidic flavor. Teens with a low tolerance for any type of pretense will appreciate Gary Soto's honesty in not trying to force a fairy-tale ending. In spare but always striking prose, Soto has written an unrelentingly grim story that teens will savor because it rings true. (Ages 13 and older) --*Jennifer Hubert*

From Publishers Weekly

This bleak, claustrophobic novel perfectly captures the cyclical despair of its [19-year-old, Hispanic protagonist], said PW; Soto leaves this bitter street tale unsweetened to the end. Ages 12-up.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 9 Up?Life is a struggle for 19-year-old Eddie as he survives one day at a time in Fresno, California. He lives in a rough neighborhood plagued by drive-bys, drugs, and desperate people. After his cousin Jesus is killed, Eddie's aunt pressures him to avenge her son's death. Eddie drops out of City College and works odd jobs, all the while pondering this, the latest of the senseless killings that have become a fact of life within the community. A run of bad luck adds to his frustration as he is inextricably caught up in the violence he deplores. Soto's writing is apt; he provides readers with strong images through the eyes and voice of Eddie. The young man frequently describes his surroundings, "I returned to my apartment, which was in a part of Fresno where fences sagged and the paint blistered on houses....Laundry wept from the lines, the faded flags of poor, ignorant, unemployable people." Additionally, the author stirs more senses with his descriptions of smells and sounds. The only drawback to the story is that it is somewhat repetitious.

Characters are introduced, then reenter the story with repeated delineation. Still, Soto's descriptions are poetic, and he creates deep feelings of heat and despair. A powerful and thought-provoking read.?Mary M. Hopf, Los Angeles Public Library

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Gary Lopez:

Here thing why this kind of Buried Onions are different and dependable to be yours. First of all reading

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Joyce Lynch:

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Brenda Villa:

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