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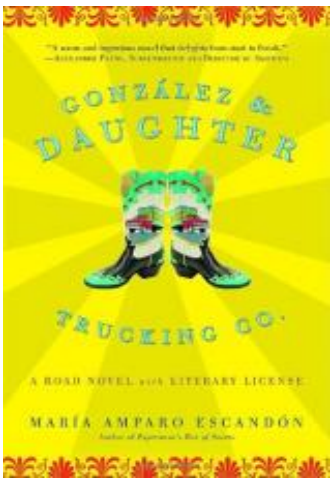
Gonzalez and Daughter Trucking Co.: A Road Novel with Literary License

by María Amparo Escandón



About the Book

Serving a sentence in a prison in Mexico, Libertad González finds a clever way to pass the time with the weekly Library Club, reading to her fellow inmates from whatever books she can find in the prison?s meager supply. The story that emerges, though, has nothing to do with the words printed on the pages. She tells of a former literature professor and fugitive of the Mexican government who reinvents himself as a trucker in the United States. There he falls in love with a wild woman with whom he shares his truck and his life?that is until Joaquín González unexpectedly finds himself alone on the road with a baby girl and González & Daughter Trucking Co. is born. Joaquín and his daughter make the cab of an 18-wheeler their home, sharing everything?adventures, books, truck-stop chow, and memories of the girl?s mother?until one day the girl grows into a woman, and a chance encounter with one man causes her to rebel against another.

With her stories, Libertad enthralls a group of female prisoners every bit as eccentric as the tales she tells. In **González and Daughter Trucking Co.**, bestselling author María Amparo Escandón seamlessly blends together these elements into one compelling and unexpected conclusion that will have you cheering for Libertad and filled with joy.

Discussion Guide

1. Warden Guzmán takes advantage of her position for her own gain and is sometimes motivated by her desire for money rather than her strict responsibilities as a warden,but she also displays an understanding of her prisoners that leads her to recognize Chapopota?s rehabilitation and at times, also kindness. How much do you think the warden cares about the women under her watch? Is her system, such as it is, effective in promoting the inmates? welfare?

2. When Libertad is greeted at the prison gates by her father and Martin, the inmates remark that Martin is not handsome

enough to be the man in the story?revealing that Libertad?s account of her past in Library Club is perhaps not the strictest truth. Are there any other parts of her story you would doubt? Is there anything you suspect she?s left out?

3. What portion of the Library Club do you think believes that Libertad?s story is a work of fiction? Are those that believe she is truly reading from books written by others gullible to believe this, or is this a willful delusion?

4. The book begins with Libertad?s wish that she could bring back all the people she killed. What was your initial impression of her crime? How did our suspicions evolve over the course of the book?

5. Was Libertad?s arranging to have her father beaten an act of kindness, or was there some malice involved? Do you think she forgave him for his mistakes?

6. Many of the women in the prison seem to have invented names to use in prison. What does this say about the culture in the prison? What do the inmates? names?Matriarca, Maciza, Diva, Libertad?say about the women themselves?

7. How do you envision Libertad?s life after her release? Will her relationship with Martin be happy? Will she continue on the road? How do you think her relationship with her father will change?

8. Do you think Maciza will be a good mother to her son, Pollito? Why or why not?

9. When the Vietnamese prisoners ask to stay in prison rather than go free, the warden is unsurprised. In fact, this is not the first time in the course of the book that a woman has made such a request. Why would they want to remain incarcerated? What do they?and what do you?find appealing about the prison?

10. When Libertad saw high heels in Martin?s tidied-up house, what do you think the real story was? Was there another woman? Is that, as Libertad explains it, only natural given her own long absence and silence, or is there a more innocuous explanation?

11. After Libertad?s departure, it is announced that the time slot once held by Library Club will now feature sessions of wrapping lollipops for a candy factory. How do you think this change will affect the prisoners? Do you think the prisoners will find other group activities to fill the same creative or therapeutic needs that Library Club addressed? Do you think they?ll need to?

12. What makes Libertad?s story so compelling for her audience?

Author Bio

María Amparo Escandón is the author of L.A WEATHER, winner of the International Latino Book Awards, along with the #1 *Los Angeles Times* bestseller ESPERANZA'S BOX OF SAINTS and GONZÁLEZ & DAUGHTER TRUCKING CO. Named a writer to watch by both *Newsweek* and the *L.A. Times*, she was born in Mexico City and has lived in Los Angeles for nearly four decades.

Critical Praise

?A warm and ingenious novel that delights from start to finish.?

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