

In Perfect Light

By: Benjamin Alire Saenz

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About the Author

Benjamin Alire Saenz

- Born in New Mexico in august of 1954.
- Award winning poet, novelist and writer of children's books.
- Received BA in Humanities and Philosophy.
- MA in Creative Writing.
- PhD in American literature
- Fun fact: He was a priest in El Paso, Texas.



Social, Historical, and Cultural Context

In perfect light by Benjamin Alire Saenz goes back and forth in El Paso Texas and in Juarez, Mexico around the early 2000's. The author aligns the story around abuse, sex, prostitution, drugs, resilience and cultural displacements. This Young Adult Fictional Chicanx novel describes life altering events that were brought on by tragedies in which each of the characters suffers. Ultimately, the author is portraying his hometown and its many struggles of which each character plays part in describing the hope and despair of finding the light of healing.

Book Plot Summary

- Part One

- Main characters: Grace and Andres
- Andres- orphaned at young age, older brother takes charge of siblings, but ends up causing negative consequences.
- Grace- broken relationship with her son Mister, often mourns over her deceased husband. Dealing with cancer diagnoses. Becomes Andres' therapist

- Part Two

- Andres- continues getting into trouble with the law
- Grace- begins to improve her relationship with her son

Book Plot Summary

- Part Three

- Andres - Backstory details revealed: a broken family, prostitution, an unlikely friend, and a revelation
 - Things fall apart in Juarez, leading Andres and his siblings down a dark way of life with a brutal man named Homero
 - Significance/establishment of child predators in the area
 - Andres finds solace in another victim of his similar predicament, putting them above the people he is put in the care of after escaping
 - Many confessions involving other characters made
- Grace - a new beginning for her family leads to a grim climax

Main Argument/Lesson

- Through the character of Andres the text shows the effects of past trauma on the present self.

“...Andres Segovia, was all broken into pieces and he knew that he had this one chance to do something, to do something, to say something, to try, to act to not be passive because he wasn't twelve anymore...” (Saenz, 2005, p.75)

Parallels with other works

- Many themes shared between this work and other Chicana literature (*I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter / Across a Hundred Mountains*)
 - Writing as escapism
 - Prostitution
 - Forced situation based on dire monetary circumstance
 - Shattered Family Bond
 - Emphasis on togetherness
 - Pro-LGBTQ+ aspects
 - Companions on the spectrum

Works Cited

Grande, A. (2006). *Across a Hundred Mountains*. Washington Square Press.

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Sanchez, Erika L. (2017). *m Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*. Random House Children's books.