



# Serafina's Stories

*Rudolfo Anaya*

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**Serafina's Stories** Rudolfo Anaya

**This innovative novel combines Spanish folktales with Native American legends to create a captivating Southwestern version of *The Arabian Nights***

Like Scheherezade, who ensured her survival by telling her royal husband stories, the title character in Rudolfo Anaya's creative retelling of *The Arabian Nights* must entertain the recently widowed governor with legends of Nueva Mexicana, or she and her fellow captives will die.

With fresh snow covering the high peaks of Sangre de Cristo, a group of native dissidents prepare for revolt. In seventeenth-century Santa Fe, insurrection against a colony of the king of Spain is punishable by death. A Spaniard loyal to the governor names twelve conspirators. One of them is a young woman. Raised in a mission church, fifteen-year-old Serafina speaks excellent Spanish and knows many of her country's traditional folktales. She and the governor strike a bargain: Each evening, she will tell him a *cuento*. If he likes it, he will release one prisoner the following day.

The twelve tales recounted here mirror the struggle of a divided country. They include the social and political symbolism behind "Beauty and the Beast" and retell "Cinderella" as "Miranda's Gift." Interspersed with these timeless *cuentos* is the story of Serafina herself, and that of a people battling to preserve a vanishing way of life under the long shadow of the Inquisition.

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