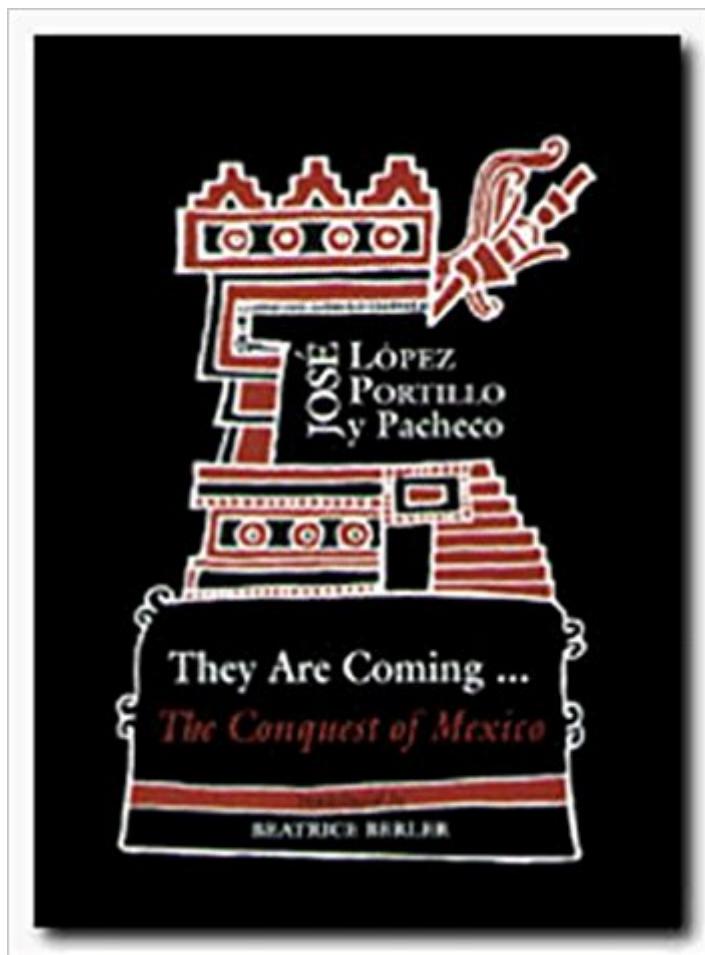


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They Are Coming: The Conquest Of Mexico



Synopsis

When Hernán Cortés and his explorers and their horses encountered the Aztecs under Moctezuma the violent collision of two worlds occurred: one mysteriously bound by the prophecy of the return of Quetzalcóatl and the other on a grand adventure without equal. This translation, written and illustrated by a former president of Mexico, takes the side of the Indian and through dramatic historical narrative, which displays the flavor of Mexico as it actually was in 1519, reveals the Indians' history of the Conquest. Through the author's clever juxtaposition of Cortés and Moctezuma and the love story of Marina and her Captain-General, we know more about how this strange land was conquered.

Book Information

Hardcover: 375 pages

Publisher: University of North Texas Press; First Edition edition (March 1, 1992)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0929398351

ISBN-13: 978-0929398358

Product Dimensions: 7.3 x 1.5 x 10.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.7 pounds

Average Customer Review: 3.5 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #925,827 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #111 in Books > History > Ancient Civilizations > Aztec #482 in Books > Literature & Fiction > World Literature > European > Spanish & Portuguese #1201 in Books > History > Americas > Mexico

Customer Reviews

For the Mexican Indians, the Spanish Conquest of 1522 was a cosmic tragedy in which conquistador Hernando Cortes and his small, ill-equipped band of men were mistaken for descendants of the light-skinned, exiled Aztec god Quetzalcoatl. For the West, the Conquest was a great adventure, a fulfillment of the expansionist imperative thought to inhere in Christian salvation. The violent collision between two worlds is plausibly recreated in a vivid narrative that uses invented dialogues and interior monologues combined with exhaustive ransacking of primary sources. Lopez Portillo, a novelist, political scientist and former president of Mexico, adds human interest to a bloody saga by highlighting Cortes's love of Malinalli, a dignified Indian woman torn between two cultures, who converted to Christianity and was baptized as Marina. The cadenced, majestic prose is punctuated by 103 kinetic drawings by the author that have the feel of on-site 16th-century

sketches. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Though the publisher calls this "post-modern non-analytical history," it is actually romanticized historical fiction. In this overlong account the ex-President of Mexico writes of the conquest of Mexico from the viewpoint of the participants. His narrative follows closely the work of William Prescott. The fictional dialog allows the characters to display their emotions about the events they are caught up in. Welcomed into Mexico because myth had predicted the coming of white people, the small band of Spaniards view with awe a capital city that rivaled anything in Europe. How they conquered the vastly superior number of Indians is a story worth retelling. The conquest, a holocaust of immense proportions, is in reality a clash of religions--one which considered human sacrifice a duty and another which abhorred it yet burned at the stake those who spurned conversion. Along with Ronald Wright's much less kind Stolen Continents (Viking, 1992), this is a timely purchase during the Columbus quincentenary, calling to mind the great civilizations that were destroyed as a result.- Louise Leonard, Univ. of Florida Libs., GainesvilleCopyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I purchased this book at the recommendation of a Mexican friend and historian. This is written by a past president of Mexico. He said it was very good and for a historical novel, was factually correct and well written. Well the Spanish version might have been well written, but the language in the English version is dry, stilted and has no rhythm or artistry. I know that English and Spanish don't translate very exactly but I've read some beautiful translations (100 years of solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, for example and Aunt Julia and the Script Writer). This translator appears to try and make this accurately translated instead of interesting. I have to wade my way through it. Because I'm interested in the subject matter, I am continuing to read it, but after 100 pages, I sometimes wonder why.

This book allowed me to reconnect with my Mexican roots. It's description and use of specific spanish words allow you to picture with all your senses the tragedy of this conquest. I absolutely loved it.

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