

# Playing with Boys: A Novel

By Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez

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When Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez' first novel was published last year, it caused a sensation. Readers flocked to the story of six friends in Boston because both the voice and the characters Valdes-Rodriguez created were utterly fresh. A brand new, large, and eager audience came out for a book they felt had been created just for them-young American women whose Hispanic side had been overlooked by commercial novels until *The Dirty Girls Social Club*.

In Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez' delicious new novel-each a Latina in her late 20's - take Los Angeles by storm in Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez' delicious new novel. Marcella, Olivia and Alexis have bonded not only over the trouble with men but about how tough it is to make life work in L.A. no matter what you do. Marcella is a hot young television actress, hardly able to enjoy the life she's bought for herself and certainly not enjoying her body, which is never quite perfect enough. Olivia's boy is her toddler son-and she's tethered to him and to her suburban mommy track so tightly the other girls sometimes cringe. Alexis has a smart mouth and an ample body; she's a beautiful musicians' manager with loads of style but about enough self-esteem to fill a Prada card case. Her complicated love affair with the casually sexy Cuban rapper Goyo is a deeply satisfying romance that will delight readers almost as much as the emotional richness and girly fun of the heroines' friendship.

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## Playing with Boys: A Novel By Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Three very different Latina women vow to bring Los Angeles to its collective knees in this funny, guilty pleasure of a novel, which bears some resemblance to its author's previous hit, *The Dirty Girls Social Club*. Dallas-born talent agent Alexis Lopez is trying to break her fellow Meximericans, a band called Los Chimpances del Norte, into the big-time spotlight, but she's also looking for new blood. Enter Marcella Gauthier Bosch, a half-French bad-girl actress, once a star of Spanish-language soap operas and now aching for a mainstream movie career that doesn't involve being cast as a maid or a hooker. All she needs is a serious, Latina-focused script—and that's where Olivia Reyes comes in. The shy, dowdy stay-at-home mom is still traumatized by the memory of seeing her father gunned down by Salvadoran soldiers. But she also has a serious, autobiographical screenplay, and Alexis convinces her to let Alexis show it around—with the idea that Marcella will be perfect as Soledad, Olivia's mother. Complications abound, of course—there's Olivia's cheating husband, Marcella's disdain for men in general and a Cuban rap star who seems determined to break Alexis's heart—but so do the laughs. There's Alexis's middle-aged white ex-boyfriend who thinks he's a teenage gangsta, Marcella's latent-goth suitor and the good ol' hard-drinking, beer-gutted, coke-addled Mexican boys of Los Chimpances del Norte. While the action is slow and the novel repetitive in places—Alexis turns whining about her small breasts into an art form—this is a funny, heartfelt piece of escapism, Latina-style.

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## Review

"*Playing with Boys* is a testament to the powers of women wrapped up in a pretty Cinderella story times three."—*Albuquerque Journal*

"A beach read that . . . might make you giggle and blush."—*Chicago Sun-Times*

"As Marcella, Alexis, and Olivia grapple with men and their careers, they really don't seem all that different from Bridget Jones herself."—*Miami Herald*

"The three amigas—a television actress, a single mother, and a manager of musicians—each has her own distinct lifestyle, quirks, and notions of romance, yet each manages to help her friends find balance, along with loads of good times."—*Sacramento Bee*

"Three very different Latina women vow to bring Los Angeles to its collective knees in this funny, guilty pleasure of a novel . . . [A] heartfelt piece of escapism."—*Publishers Weekly*

From the Inside Flap

Praise for *The Dirty Girls Social Club*:

"...a fresh spin on the best-of-friends novel that's funny, touching, and exhilarating. A winner!"

- Jennifer Crusie, author of *Faking It*

"Don't dare lump this novel in with...*Sex and the City* knockoffs. Yes, it's a compulsive beach read, but the women are smart, brassy, and messy enough to make you pause mid-sunscreen slathering."

- Entertainment Weekly

"The feel of a night out with the girls...charming...undeniably fun."

- Miami Herald

"This lively debut novel...reads like the Hispanic version of Waiting to Exhale."

- New York

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### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Angela Dickens:**

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