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Stuck in the Middle

I choose chapter 1 of Borderlands /La Frontera since it focuses on Mexico, and I come from a Mexican decent. Gloria Anzaldua the author of this book gives us a quick run-down on how Mexico lost a big majority of its land to the United States of America. To keep it short, it was sold for an extremely unfair price. Once the Americans bought the land, they moved the border to El Rio Grande. This meant that people that lived in Mexico were now part of the United States over night. I read a good quote in my Mexican American history class at Delta. It went we went to sleep as Mexicans and woke up as unwanted Americans. Now that we know how the boarder came to be between Mexico and the United States Gloria Anzaldua gives us a great definition of a Bordertown. She says, “A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants”(Anzaldua, 38). This is a very powerful way to tell the reader what a Bordertown is. To me it sounds supernatural, it sounds like somewhere in space where no one lives except for the unwanted creatures. I think she meant to make it sound like that since Mexican people are literally called illegal aliens and are treated as less than human. I really can’t think of a better example of a borderland the area between Mexico and the United States. Not many people can because they hear the word border and automatically think of Mexican people. A more abstract borderland would be the place babies go if they pass away without being baptized. Being raised a catholic all my life I was told that if a baby passes away without being baptized its soul goes to a place called limbo. That sounds like a Bordertown to me, it’s a place in the middle where you go if you don’t have a certain qualification. In one case if you don’t have your “paper” and in the other case if you are not baptized. In that first chapter there were many themes mostly negative in my opinion. The first theme I want to highlight is power and corruption. I love this country, but I must admit that this country is corrupt. What they did to the Mexican people is not morally acceptable at all. First, they pretty much stole their land and after that they literally stole their land. They would target Mexican people that did not know the language and use legal power to take their land away. We even hear that some Americans go as far to lynch some Mexican people. No matter what this country does to change its image it will always go down as being very corrupt. Another theme I want to cover is survival. You can call Mexican people what you want but deep down they are survivors. They survived wars, poverty, racial discrimination and much more. I want to talk about the trip that Mexican people take to make it to the United States. I don’t even know how far it is, but I do know that a lot of people cross it on foot. My mother would tell me stories that the Mexican people have to cross a dessert and then across a river. I don’t know how true that it but the only thing I know is that the trip is incredibly hard. If that wasn’t enough often Mexican people have to deal with border patrol trying to stop them. On top of that I’ve heard stories that border patrol are not the greatest people. So that tells me one thing and that is that Mexican people are survivors. They will do whatever it takes so that their family can have a better life. Just like my parents did many years ago and when I graduate in the fall of 2024 and I will have them to thank. The last theme I want to cover is mental health. I think mental health is ignored when it comes to crossing the border. Since your main goal is to get there in one piece. People often neglect their mental health. My parents never cared about mental health since that was the last thing on their mind. They cared about providing a roof over my head and food on the table. That’s why I don’t really acknowledge mental health and I have developed my own ways to cope with sadness. I think it is an important theme in this chapter. Many people leave their homes and loved ones to come over to this country. I know that must be physically and mentally exhausting. Gloria Anzaldua talked about the hardships that women who cross the border face. They are often sexually abused and that must take a toll on them mentally. If they are not abused, they often miss their loved ones back home. So mental health is a big theme that we often forget about for people that are living in Bordertown’s or crossing over the border. Living in a Bordertown is truly like being stuck in the middle of no man’s land. Some people in the United States treat these people if they are not human and that is not right. Gloria Anzaldua is brining attention to undocumented people so more people can know their story. So that people realize that they are people like everyone in this county.

Works Cited

Anzaldúa, G. (2022). *Borderlands = la frontera: The New Mestiza*. Aunt Lute Books.