



Mexican Lives

Judith Adler Hellman

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On the eve of the most significant trade agreement in recent Mexico-U.S. history, Judith Adler Hellman, a leading authority on Mexican politics, went into the homes and workplaces of a variety of Mexicans, from rich industrialists to poor street vendors. In bringing us their stories, Hellman puts a human face on the political and economic transformation currently under way in this rapidly changing country, and puts in context the rage and frustration that is feeding the current rebellion in the Mexican state of Chiapas.

The Mexicans interviewed in this remarkable book share their views on an array of subjects, including pollution, the political elite, corruption, economics, and the migrant experience in the United States. Some seek collective solutions to the challenges they face; others, for a variety of interesting reasons, have no involvement with any group beyond their immediate or extended family, and rely for their well-being only on themselves and their kin.

Here we meet a small subsistence farmer, eager to break into the more profitable gourmet fruit and vegetable export market; a very wealthy family pondering how best to position its company to profit from NAFTA; and a former housewife turned union organizer, who must figure out what to do with her life savings: underwrite her son's migration to the United States, put down a payment on a new house with running water, or buy an industrial sewing machine with which to start her own business.

These personal portraits, combined with Hellman's concise and engaging presentation of recent Mexican economic and political history, make this essential reading for those concerned about Mexico and the growing global economy.

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