

Summer reading

Spanish II

Bless Me Ultima

Complete the following activities while reading the book and be prepared to hand in a portfolio of your work upon your return to school August 30 or August 31. We will also discuss the book in class.

1. Read Chapters *Uno* and *Dos* (pp. 1-26). What do Antonio's dreams reveal about his personality, his fears, and his desires?
2. Read Chapters *Tres*, *Cuatro*, and *Cinco* (pp. 27-50). Why does Antonio's uncle say that there is hope for the young protagonist?
3. Read Chapters *Seis*, *Siete*, *Ocho*, and *Nueve* (pp. 51-82). How do God and morality shape Antonio? How does our sense of God and belief in what is right and wrong shape who we are?
4. Read Chapter *Diez* (pp. 83-105). What do you think of Ultima's cure?
5. Read Chapters *Once*, *Doce*, and *Trece* (pp. 106-142). Why does Antonio's dream at the end of Chapter *Once* bring him peace?
6. Read Chapter *Catorce* (pp. 143-176). Despite the differences among the three symbols discussed in this lesson, how does Anaya use them in crucial moments of the plot to probe Antonio's anxieties, doubts, and fears, and therefore develop his character?
7. Read Chapters *Quince*, *Dieciséis*, and *Diecisiete* (pp. 177-202). Review the essay on Catholicism as supplemental reading to the narration of Antonio's first Communion. Consider the significance of this ceremony for Antonio.
8. Read Chapters *Dieciocho*, *Diecinueve*, and *Veinte* (pp. 203-235). Why might the boys insist that Antonio play the priest?
9. Finish reading the novel, Chapters *Veintiuno* and *Veintidós* (pp. 236-262). Where does the end of the novel leave Antonio? What has he learned? How has he grown older or wiser through the course of these events?

10. Anaya has written:

"The beliefs of my traditional New Mexican culture are grounded in the Catholic religion and Spanish folktales from the Iberian world. These beliefs are influenced by cultural borrowings from the Pueblo Indian way of life. This culture is the backdrop for the novel. It is the way of life of the Nuevos Mexicanos that inspires my creativity. But a novel is not written to explain a culture, it creates its own. I create stories, so the reader must separate realistic portrayals of the culture from fiction."

Write an essay that discusses the ways this novel portrays a world of its own, one that borrows from real culture and history.