

Hermanas
Deepening Our Identity and Growing Our Influence

Available January 15, 2019 | \$16, 224 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-4561-3

“An invaluable work about Latinas, faith, and community.”

Sara Martinez, *Booklist* STARRED review

The Dreams of Hermanas

FROM NATALIA KOHN: Growing up, I was frequently the girl who would get the question, “What are you?” The times I heard that my skin color is “olive” and I’m “ethnically ambiguous” are more than I can count. I had a go-to answer that would fall out of my mouth effortlessly, but as I grew older in my southern Californian society my answer to “What are you?” began to come from my heart. I went from rolling my eyes at my biracial complexities to smiling with confidence stating that I am both Argentinian and Armenian.

I grew up in Pasadena, California, surrounded by a small family constantly communicating with our very large family back in Argentina. I grew up with my *papi*, an immigrant who only speaks Spanish, who wanted his wife and children to communicate for him when English was required, and an Americanized Armenian mother, who navigated the American system to help her children function and thrive in this country. Both these cultures are a joy and a challenge that I have been navigating and growing in for decades, and I still have more maturing to do.

It was in my college years and throughout my years on staff with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship that I began my ethnic journey, wrestling with what it means to be Argentine and Armenian. In these years I saw how communal our ethnic journeys are and how, as in our walks with Jesus, we cannot journey in isolation—we need one another. I grew in my Latina confidence in community, in my relationships con mis hermanas y hermanos. Being a Latina went from being a label to an identity I honor and cherish.

My hope for every reader, every hermana reading this book would be to continue to journey with Jesus in both faith and ethnicity—both being journeys that must intersect and be tied together and continuously be refined and transformed by our heavenly Father. I hope that you can identify with our cries, our stories, and our longings, and know that you are not alone. I have met too many Latina women who journey alone out of shame, fear, and isolation, having never experienced that Latina community. I pray you would journey with us—our lives, our Latina *parientes*, our *amigas*—taking steps closer to Jesus and to these biblical heroines that also needed to live out their gender and their faith in relation to others. Let’s learn together how to confidently live as Latinas leading with his love, life, and light in this world.

Our journeys as Latina women are full of stories you hopefully can relate to, connect with, and learn from. We’ve had the incredible honor of mentoring many Latina and non-Latina women alongside many Latino and non-Latino college-age students, believers from our churches, pre-believers, and non-believers who all let us into their sacred spaces with the Lord. All three of us authors would be honored to be thought of as distant mentors to you as you wrestle, process, and cultivate more with Jesus. We desire to be resources empowering and cheering you on as you go deeper in your identity, intimacy, influence, and impact. We are here alive and still learning like you; the primary mentors of this book are the twelve women of the Bible who guide and encourage all of us in our faith, our identities, and our leadership. They have become dear hermanas to us, full of rich wisdom, and the Holy Spirit has used them again and again to grow and mature us. Our prayer is that they’d become your mentors and hermanas as well.

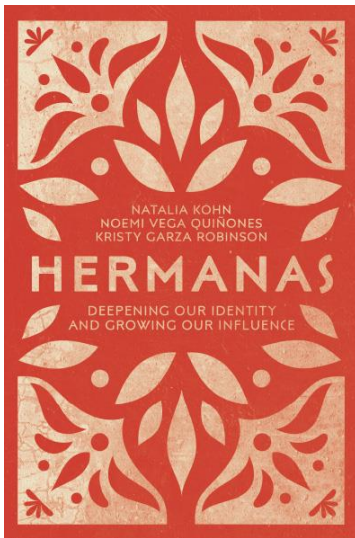


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FROM KRISTY GARZA ROBINSON: My whole childhood was spent growing up in Edinburg, a border city at the southern tip of Texas. I am a third-generation Mexican American. My grandparents immigrated to the United States from Mexico in the late 1940s. My parents later raised us between these two cultural worlds. I was and am very shaped and influenced by the values of the majority culture here in the United States. I also identify strongly as a Latina, with values and worldviews influenced by my family of origin. I spent my life geographically and emotionally straddling the border of the United States and Mexico, finding my home and feeling displaced in both countries and cultures. This is what it means to me to be a US Latina.

This book is about the varied experiences of many Latina women with different ethnic and leadership journeys. My desire is to see each of us learn from one another and from the biblical women whose stories we share with you. While we each have our own unique space we are taking up in the world, we also have a collective identity that I believe God is forming in all its diversity. It is beautiful, and I hope this book is a companion to the identity that is forming through all of our different voices.

FROM NOEMI VEGA QUIÑONES: Hola! I am the oldest of five children, a daughter of hardworking immigrant parents, Rigo and Irma, and a once-undocumented child. Born in the inner city of Guadalajara and raised in affluent central California, I had an multifaceted childhood. I grew up speaking English with my dad and Spanish with my mom. I was raised on Sunday school expectations and fun weekends, on chores after homework and family vacations in the summer that involved long drives on the road back to Mexico. Now, I live in San Antonio and serve as the Area Ministry Director for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship in South Texas. I spent fifteen years learning from the city of Fresno where my faith in Jesus flourished and where dreams for campus and city transformation began.

I hope that this book brings healing and empowering Holy Spirit transformation to all who read. Sitting at the feet of Mija (the bleeding woman), Rahab, Tabitha, and Mary the mother of Jesus has been a gift and a challenge. Each of these women has taught me to trust the Lord with my whole life, my whole being, and my future dreams. This book is for my hermanas who have struggled, like me, to embrace their voice and leadership. Growing up Mexican in the United States, a Latina, a brown girl, is both beautiful and painful. I recall moments when my culture was questioned and shamed and when my leadership was challenged more than my male peers. I also recall moments when my leadership was embraced and given voice. I long for our readers to experience the healing and joy that each of these biblical women bring.

I find hope that at some point in history, Mija, Rahab, Tabitha, and Mary walked among their people and influenced their communities. Some influenced directly, others indirectly, some willingly, some unknowingly, but *all* influenced out of their *encounters* with the living Lord. I read these women as a Gentile and a foreigner entering their stories, seeking to understand their experience, and sharing what I have learned with you all. While more of us are entering into places of influence and leadership and seeking to mentor one another, the need for Latina mentors in all sectors of life continues. I hope that these women serve as mentors in your leadership journey. As my mom would always say to me, *“Mija, dedícale todo a Cristo porque acuérdate que todo lo puedes en Cristo que te fortalece,” Filipenses 4:13.* Remember this, hermanas, that all things—all things—are possible through Christ who strengthens you, me, us, one another, and our communities.

—Taken from the prologue



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