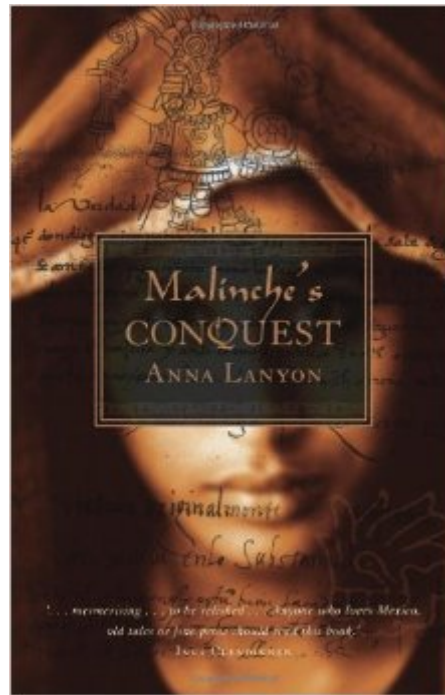


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Malinche's Conquest



Synopsis

Malinche was the Amerindian translator for Hernán Cortés "from her lips came the words that triggered the downfall of the great Aztec Emperor Moctezuma in the Spanish Conquest of 1521. In Mexico, Malinche's name is synonymous with 'traitor,' yet folklore and legend still celebrate her mystique. The author traverses Mexico and delves into the country's extraordinary past to excavate the mythologies of this exceptional woman's life. Malinche "abandoned to strangers as a slave when just a girl" was taken by Cortés to become interpreter, concubine, witness to his campaigns, mother to his son, yet married to another. She survived unimaginably precarious times relying on her intelligence, courage, and gift for language. Though Malinche's words changed history, her own story remained untold, until now.

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Customer Reviews

For a brief moment in the 16th century, a teenage slave was the most influential woman in the world. Malinche, to use one of her many names, was the translator and go-between in perhaps the pivotal cultural drama of the last millennium - the moment when the Old World represented by Hernan Cortes, conquered the New World in the form of Montezuma's Mexico. Anna Lanyon, an Australian backpacker, stumbled onto the story of Malinche while travelling in Mexico in the 1970s. Intrigued, she returned home, studied Spanish and Portuguese to literary translation level, and revisited Mexico in search of this enigmatic woman. So few are the clues, and often so contradictory, that Lanyon works like an archeologist with a soft-haired brush to bring Malinche's life into relief

from its bedrock of myth. In official Mexican history, Malinche is the "betrayers". Her name forms the root of a modern-day word for traitor. Lanyon finds a teenager blessed with intelligence, intuition and a sharp instinct for survival. Her options were few. Given as a sexual slave to the conquistadors, Malinche became Cortes's concubine, adviser, and mother of his first child. She died in obscurity, probably before she was 30. But those close to her admired her. Lanyon makes the point often forgotten in facile renderings of the conquest: to vast numbers of people in what now is Mexico, Montezuma's "Aztecs" (more accurately, the Culua-Mexicans) were the feared and hated enemy. Malinche was therefore not a betrayer so much as a warrior, within her own context. But even more than that, she was a woman, condemned to slavery as a child, "assigned" to alien men when not yet 20, who simply did the best she could.

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