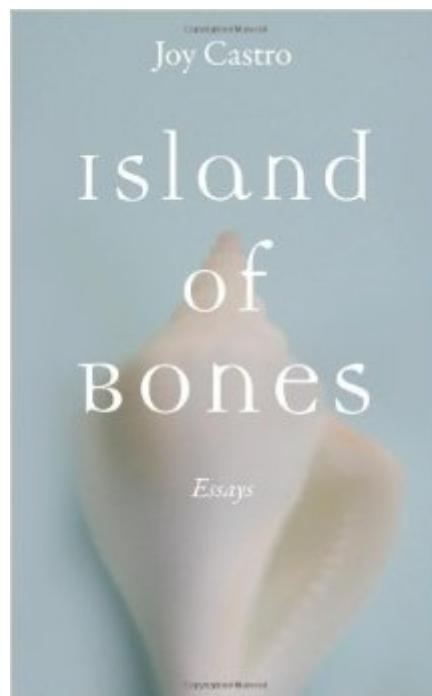


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# Island Of Bones: Essays (American Lives)



## Synopsis

What is âœidentityâ • when youâ™re a girl adopted as an infant by a Cuban American family of Jehovahâ™s Witnesses? The answer isnâ™t easy. You wonâ™t find it in books. And you certainly wonâ™t find it in the neighborhood. This is just the beginning of Joy Castroâ™s unmoored life of searching and striving that sheâ™s turned to account with literary alchemy in *Island of Bones*. In personal essays that plumb the depths of not-belonging, Castro takes the all-too-raw materials of her adolescence and young adulthood and views them through the prism of time. The result is an exquisitely rendered, richly detailed perspective on a uniquely troubled young life that reflects on the larger questions each of us faces in a world where diversity and singularity are forever at odds. In the experiences of her pastâ™s hunger and abuse, flight as a fourteen-year-old runaway, single motherhood, the revelations of her âœtrueâ™ ethnic identity, the suicide of her fatherâ™s Castro finds the âœjagged, smashed place of edges and fragmentsâ™ that she pieces together to create an island all her own. Hers is a complicated but very real depiction of what it is to âœjump class,â™ to not belong but to find oneâ™s voice in the interstices of identity. Â

## Book Information

Series: American Lives

Paperback: 132 pages

Publisher: University of Nebraska Press (September 1, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0803271425

ISBN-13: 978-0803271425

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.4 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars Â See all reviews Â (5 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #820,267 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #143 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > Hispanic & Latino #631 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Specific Demographics > Hispanic American Studies #21839 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Memoirs

## Customer Reviews

*Island of Bones* is a beautifully poetic collection of treatises from the life of Joy Castro. She introduces us to some unknown facts regarding Latin heritage, which she covered so eloquently and made so interesting I wondered why I didnâ™t already know any of it. Raised surprisingly in the

Jehovah Witness faith, I found her insights into JW and its oppression of females absolutely riveting. She shines a unique light on the heartbreak of divorce from a young girlâ™s perspective that burn with intensity. She portrays varying degrees of anxiety and horror of living with her motherâ™s second husband, which had me holding my breath. My heart ached! Joy shares her disappointments with such vividness, as a camera rolling, collecting and revealing disturbing nuances. Castroâ™s beautiful voice concisely suggests, in an understated way, the larger picture with a few intimating details that will haunt you long after you lay this book aside. In Theory is one of the most startling essays Iâ™ve read in a long time. I wept while reading the events that were possible in the heart of a creosote bush. She is not the voice of every woman, but the voice of so many women who live with the dog of doubt growling at their heels. It is inspirational how she turned so many broken moments into a beautiful mosaic of essays. What I enjoyed most about her writing, is how similar I feel to her, how she and I could have been neighbors, or girlfriends talking over the fence or over coffee. Her thoughtful turns of phrase are like diamonds plucked from the ravaged earth. Her ability to share the bizarre details of her life, allow me to realistically look at the bizarre details of mine. How many women carry a secret shame? While the particulars may not be the same, the burden to carry it in secrecy are identical.

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