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## **The Dirty Girls Social Club**

by Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez

### **“Sidelights”**

Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez was born in 1969 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The daughter of a sociologist and a poet, Valdes-Rodriguez moved around as a child, even living in Glasgow, Scotland for a time. After graduating from high school, she studied at Boston’s Berklee College of Music, and went on to get a graduate degree in journalism from Columbia University. Stints as a reporter for the Boston Globe and Los Angeles Times followed, until Valdez-Rodriguez determined that she would rather retire with her husband and moved to the mountains of New Mexico to write. Her debut novel, *The Dirty Girls Social Club*, captivated many reviewers and readers when it was released in 2003, and the film rights were quickly optioned by Columbia Pictures.

*The Dirty Girls Social Club* follows the lives of six Latino friends, now in their late twenties, who met while students at Boston University. The six “sucias,” or “dirty girls,” each have unique lives and problems: Spanish-Amerindian Rebecca, the founder and editor of a Latin women’s magazine, is grappling with a failing marriage to a Marxist academic; Puerto Rican material girl Usnavys is an ambitious executive at United Way; Mexican-American Amber is a struggling musician; Colombian-born Elizabeth hosts a Boston morning TV show and has become a born-again Christian; half-Cuban Lauren is a feisty newspaper columnist; and Sara, from a wealthy Jewish-Cuban family, is a stay-at-home mom dealing with an abusive husband. At their bi-annual gathering in Boston, the women unite to discuss their quandaries and their triumphs, and amid the camaraderie some hidden tensions emerge. As Valdez-Rodriguez told Carina Chocano in *Entertainment Weekly*, “If somebody asked me what my message is, I would say that it’s that Latinos are as diverse as the world.”

Noting that Valdes-Rodriguez tells her novel in “six distinct voices and points of view,” Shelley Mosley praised *The Dirty Girls Social Club* in *Library Journal* as “a universal friendship book, crossing cultural lines as the characters advise, comfort, and support each other.” Citing the book as an “engaging novel” featuring “fast-paced dialogue and a pop-culture sensibility,” *Book* contributor Mikita Brottman added that Valdes-Rodriguez’s “heroines transcend stereotypes.” In *Library Journal*, Shelley Mosley dubbed *The Dirty Girls Social Club* “a universal friendship book, crossing cultural lines as the characters advise, comfort, and support each other.”

Valdes-Rodriguez’ second novel, *Playing with Boys*, was published in the fall of 2004, and focuses on the lives of L.A.-based Latina entertainment professionals.

### **PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Family: Born 1969, in Albuquerque, NM; daughter of Nelson P. Valdes (a sociologist) and Maxine Conant (a poet); married; husband’s name Patrick; children: Alexander. Education: Berklee College of Music, graduated, c. 1993; Columbia University, M.A. (journalism), 1994. Hobbies and other interests: Playing tenor sax. Addresses: Home: New Mexico. Agent: c/o Author Mail, St. Martin’s Press, 175 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010. E-mail: alisarr@hotmail.com.



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### **CAREER**

Journalist and novelist. Boston Globe, Boston, MA, reporter, c. 1994-98; Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles, CA, reporter, 1998-2001; Albuquerque Tribune, Albuquerque, NM, features editor, beginning 2001.

### **WRITINGS BY THE AUTHOR:**

- The Dirty Girls Social Club, St. Martin's Press (New York, NY), 2003.
- Playing with Boys, St. Martin's Press (New York, NY), 2004.

Contributor to newspapers.

### **MEDIA ADAPTATIONS**

Film rights to The Dirty Girls Social Club were optioned by Jennifer Lopez/Columbia Pictures.

### **WORKS IN PROGRESS**

Another novel.

### **FURTHER READINGS ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

#### **PERIODICALS**

- Book, May-June, 2003, Mikita Brottman, review of The Dirty Girls Social Club, p. 82.
- Booklist, April 1, 2003, Meredith Parets, review of The Dirty Girls Social Club, p. 1381.
- Entertainment Weekly, May 16, 2003, Carina Chocano, review of The Dirty Girls Social Club, p. 42.
- Kirkus Reviews, March 1, 2003, review of The Dirty Girls Social Club, p. 346.
- Library Journal, April 1, 2003, Shelley Mosley, review of The Dirty Girls Social Club, p. 132.
- Publishers Weekly, April 14, 2003, review of The Dirty Girls Social Club, p. 49; May 12, 2003, Daisy Maryles, review of The Dirty Girls Social Club, p. 20.

#### **ONLINE**

- Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez Web site, <http://www.alisavaldesrodriguez.com> (May 15, 2004).
- BookPage.com, <http://www.bookpage.com/> (October 12, 2003), review of The Dirty Girls Social Club.\*

#### **SOURCE CITATION**

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