



Tarnished Beauty: A Novel

Cecilia Samartin

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Now available in paperback from the critically acclaimed author whose writing is “soulful and unsentimental” (*Kirkus Reviews*)—a profound story that reflects on the true meaning of beauty.

From the moment she was born, Jamilet’s gruesome birthmark frightened the superstitious villagers in her rural Mexican town, making them believe she was marked by the devil: “It was said by some to resemble a freshly gutted cow, by others to writhe like many snakes in a pit of blood. The few who had actually seen it said it was beyond description and that they were unable to sleep for days after seeing it.” When she enters young womanhood, she can no longer bear her lonely, scorned life as an outcast. She flees her oppressive village and illegally crosses the border to Los Angeles in hopes of finding a medical cure for her physical affliction. Eventually, Jamilet finds work at a mental hospital where she attends to the eccentric and disagreeable elderly Señor Peregrino. He begins to share with her the glorious stories from his youth when he embarked on a religious pilgrimage along the legendary and mystical Road to Santiago. An unlikely spiritual connection forges between them—healing their minds, bodies, and hearts in ways that medicine could not. *Tarnished Beauty* is a compelling story of redemption, faith, and the enduring power of friendship that examines the wounds of the soul.

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