



*A World of Knowledge*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Get a jump start on BIG Read 2010**

NEWTON—Julia Alvarez’s novel, *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* is the BIG Read selection for 2010 in Catawba County.

The BIG Read is a countywide literacy effort sponsored by Catawba County Library System, Catawba Valley Community College, Lenoir-Rhyne University and Hickory Public Library System. The mission of The Big Read is to promote the power of books and the importance of literature. The key event will be an appearance by the author on April 16 in Hickory.

*Garcia Girls* is an autobiographical novel that follows four sisters from the Dominican Republic and their new life in the Bronx. The Garcia family, part of the elite of the Dominican Republic, is forced to flee to the United States when the father's part in a plot against the dictator is discovered. “Papi” Garcia is a doctor, but his credentials are not recognized in the United States.

The family comes to New York City relatively poor and victimized because of their Hispanic roots and accents. The book opens in 1989 when the thoroughly Americanized daughters of the family – Carla, Sandra, Yolanda and Sofia – are between 26 and 31 years old. They have been married and divorced. They have finished school and college. They have careers, love affairs, children and homes. The plot is an extended flashback, ending 1956 with the Garcia girls as preschoolers in the Dominican Republic.

Internationally acclaimed poet, novelist, and essayist Julia Alvarez is the author of many publications that have made her one of the most significant Latina writers of her generation. She received the 2009 F. Scott Fitzgerald Literary Award. Alvarez's book *How Tia Lola Came to Visit Stay* (2001) is the 2010 Catawba County Little Read for fourth graders.

Alvarez’s *In the Time of the Butterflies* (1994) crossed boundaries of generations and ethnicity. Alvarez has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Ingram Merrill Foundation as well as recognition and awards from such organizations as the American Academy for

Poetry. Some of her other books include *Yo!*, *In the Name of Salome*, *Saving the World*, *Return to Sender* and *Once Upon a Quinceañera* (2007), a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award.

Alvarez is on the English Department faculty of her alma mater, Middlebury College in Vermont. More information about the author can be found at her website, <http://www.juliaalvarez.com>

To check the availability of her books, contact any library branch.

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