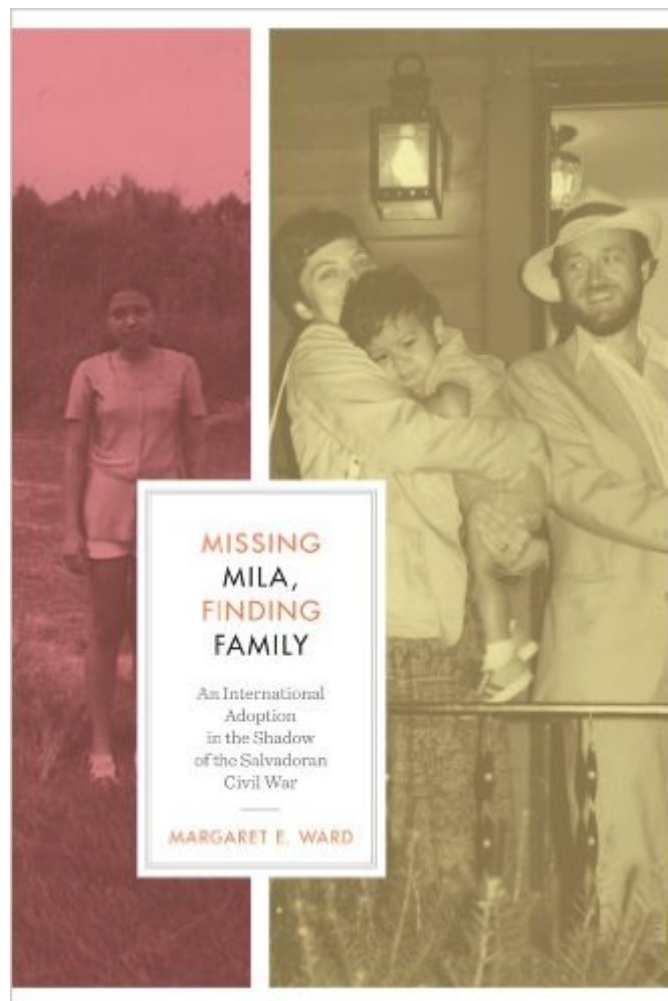


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# Missing Mila, Finding Family: An International Adoption In The Shadow Of The Salvadoran Civil War (Louann Atkins Temple Women & Culture Series)



## Synopsis

In the spring of 1983, a North American couple who were hoping to adopt a child internationally received word that if they acted quickly, they could become the parents of a boy in an orphanage in Honduras. Layers of red tape dissolved as the American Embassy there smoothed the way for the adoption. Within a few weeks, Margaret Ward and Thomas de Witt were the parents of a toddler they named Nelson—“an adorable boy whose prior life seemed as mysterious as the fact that government officials in two countries had inexplicably expedited his adoption.” In *Missing Mila, Finding Family*, Margaret Ward tells the poignant and compelling story of this international adoption and the astonishing revelations that emerged when Nelson’s birth family finally relocated him in 1997. After recounting their early years together, during which she and Tom welcomed the birth of a second son, Derek, and created a family with both boys, Ward vividly recalls the upheaval that occurred when members of Nelson’s birth family contacted them and sought a reunion with the boy they knew as Roberto. She describes how their sense of family expanded to include Nelson’s Central American relatives, who helped her piece together the lives of her son’s birth parents and their clandestine activities as guerrillas in El Salvador’s civil war. In particular, Ward develops an internal dialogue with Nelson’s deceased mother Mila, an elusive figure whose life and motivations she tries to understand.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Several months have passed since I read *Missing Mila, Finding Family*, and this compelling true

story told by Margaret Ward remains in my mind. Parents quickly called to Honduras to meet their to-be-adopted son, mystery surrounding the boy's previous life, the whirlwind of emotions unleashed by Nelson's birth family relocating him in 1997, and the families coming together and forming strong bonds, all grasp the reader's attention from cover to cover. Nelson's deceased mother Mila's elusive presence is central to the story, as is the backdrop of the Salvadoran Civil War, where Nelson's birth parents were involved in clandestine activities as guerrillas. Beautifully written, carefully researched, heartwarming, and very highly recommended.

Beneath the clearly written history of a far off Salvadoran civil war is the emotional account of a family who adopted a homeless child, only to learn 14 years later that he was being sought by his birth family. What follows is the coming to grips with this reality - with the voices of many involved individuals, resulting in a redefined sense of family love.

Honest, forthright book, very moving story, not whitewashed. Well written, meticulously documented, and filled with fascinating historical background material on Central American politics.

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