# Mexican mystery series 'The Secret of the River' makes a splash on Netflix



A new Netflix series delving into subjects like gender identity featuring a trans actress has crept up on worldwide audiences. The Secret of the River, a gripping Mexican mystery drama, premiered last week and has quickly climbed into the streaming giant's Top 10 most-watched shows. This unexpected hit has been drawing attention for its exploration of complex interpersonal relationships set against a backdrop of mystery and intrigue.

The series features Diego Calva, a rising star known for his performances in Narcos: Mexico and Babylon, who shares the screen with Trinidad González, a trans model who embarks on her first acting role. Their performances as former friends bound by a haunting secret are drawing praise for their depth and authenticity.

Set in the small towns of Oaxaca, the series opens with young Manuel, played by Frida Sofía Cruz, who comes to live with their grandmother. Manuel faces bullying due to her effeminate demeanour and struggles with her sexual and gender identity. Throughout her journey, Manuel befriends Erik, portrayed by Mauro Guzmán, and finds solace among local muxes, a recognized third gender in Indigenous Zapotec cultures. Unlike trans women, muxes encompass a variety of pronouns and sexual orientations, often misunderstood and sidelined by the wider society.

The narrative intensifies when Manuel and Erik become witnesses to a shocking death by the river, thrusting them into a dangerous conspiracy. Bound by the shared secret, their friendship faces new trials.

As the series progresses, it jumps two decades into the future. Erik, now played by Calva, remains in the town, married and planning a family. Manuel, now living as Sicarú and portrayed by González, has transitioned and returns to the town for a funeral. This reunion unravels old tensions and compels them to confront their buried past and the shared secret.

Critics and viewers alike have embraced The Secret of the River for its riveting storytelling and exploration of complex themes such as identity, belonging, and the significance of platonic relationships. The series has also sparked meaningful conversations about gender identity and cultural misconceptions, drawing attention to the underrepresented muxe community.

Trinidad González, in an interview, shared her personal affinity with the story, echoing her experiences growing up in a similar conservative environment in Tabasco. She emphasized the show's commitment to authenticity and the challenges faced by muxes, often glossed over in popular media narratives.

The Secret of the River portrays a genuine depiction of Oaxaca while touching on broader themes of societal machismo and the struggles faced by both women and men. González expressed her pride in contributing to a narrative that resonates with truth and reflects the realities of marginalized communities.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.netflix.com/title/81629642> - Corroborates the premise of the series, including the setting in a small Mexican village and the formation of a profound friendship between two boys.
* <https://www.rottentomatoes.com/tv/the_secret_of_the_river> - Provides details on the cast, director, and genres of the series, as well as its release date on Netflix.
* <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt30068040/> - Confirms the plot involving a secret death witnessed by two boys and their reunion twenty years later, along with the cast and crew information.
* <https://www.rottentomatoes.com/tv/the_secret_of_the_river/s01> - Supports the information about the series' release date, cast, and the director, as well as the genres and setting.
* <https://www.reddit.com/r/netflix/comments/1fzqb8k/the_secret_of_the_river_review_new_drama_series/> - Discusses the series' exploration of gender identity and the positive reception of the first episodes, including the portrayal of a trans character.
* <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt30068040/> - Details the storyline involving Manuel's journey, the friendship with Erik, and the cultural context of muxes in Oaxaca.
* <https://www.rottentomatoes.com/tv/the_secret_of_the_river> - Lists the main cast members, including Diego Calva and Trinidad González, and their roles in the series.
* <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt30068040/> - Mentions the series' setting in Oaxaca and the significance of the river in the narrative.
* <https://www.rottentomatoes.com/tv/the_secret_of_the_river/s01> - Confirms the series' genres as Mystery & Thriller and Drama, and its original language as Spanish.