

TEACHING BLESS ME, ULTIMA
GLOSSARY

afterbirth:	placenta that is delivered after a baby is born
agringado:	Americanized (negative connotation)
amulet:	an object worn to ward off evil
animism:	the belief that everything in the universe has a soul
apocalypse:	a revelation or discovery
barrio:	Hispanic neighborhood
bildungsroman:	a novel of maturation and growing up
black magic:	evil witchcraft
Black Mass:	the celebration of a Mass based on black magic
catechism:	the study of a set of religious beliefs
Catholicism:	a branch of Christianity
communion:	a Christian sacrament in which bread and wine are taken in recognition and memory of the death of Jesus
confession: priest	in Catholicism, telling one's sins to a priest
conquistadores:	conquerors
cuentos:	stories
curandero, curandera:	folk healer, someone who uses prayers, herbs, and the laying on of hands to heal; from Spanish "curar," to heal.
curandismo:	the practice by a curandero or curandera
epiphany:	a sudden awareness of knowledge
exorcism:	freeing someone of an evil spirit

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familiar:	the spirit of a shaman
fasting:	not eating for a period of time
Hail Mary:	a prayer to the Virgin Mary
heathen:	an irreligious person
heretic:	a person who rejects the accepted beliefs of a religion
Holy Communion:	another phrase for "communion"
initiation:	the process of being introduced to the knowledge of a subject
juniper tree:	a member of the evergreen family
Limbo:	in Catholicism, a place for the souls of unbaptized babies and good people who died before Christ; the term is not widely used now.
llano:	the plain
matriarch:	a mother who is head and ruler of her family and descendants
mestizo:	a person of mixed Spanish and Native American ancestries
midwife:	a woman who helps other women in childbirth
mortal sin:	in Catholicism, a very serious sin that, if not absolved, can prevent a soul from entering Heaven
nagual:	a guardian spirit
novena:	in Catholicism, a prayer repeated nine days in a row
paganism:	heathenism
patriarch:	a father who is head and ruler of his family and descendants
placenta:	another word for afterbirth; the organ that surrounds a fetus in the womb

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- pueblo: town
- Purgatory: In Catholicism, a state of being somewhere between Heaven and Hell; those in Purgatory must atone (make up for) wrongs they have committed before they can enter Heaven. Their suffering can be reduced by the offering of prayers and masses.
- rosary: in Catholicism, a string of beads used in counting prayers
- scapular: a covering for the shoulders, worn under regular clothing; in BLESS ME, ULTIMA, Tony is given Ultima's scapular that also holds a small packet of herbs.
- sign of the cross: the shape of the cross; people make the sign with their hand by touching the forehead, chest, left shoulder and right shoulder in sequence.
- Sodom and Gomorrah: in the Bible, a place destroyed by God for its wickedness
- tejano: Texan
- totem: an object (often an animal) that is an emblem or symbol of a person, family, or clan
- transubstantiation: in Holy Communion in the Catholic Church, the change of the bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Jesus
- vaquero: cowboy
- venial sin: a minor, excusable sin
- Virgin Mary: Jesus' mother
- white magic: magic used for good purposes, not evil ones

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