



Young Adult Literature from Latin America

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The Darkness of Colours

Martín Blasco

Original Title: La oscuridad de los colores

Working titles : The Darkness of Colours

Original Language: Spanish / Argentina

Publisher: Ediciones Norma

Publishing date: 2015

Number of pages: 243

Age: 14+

Other languages: French (2018)



Best Edited Novel, 2015

Awarded by the Argentine Chamber of Publishing

**Fundación Cuatrogatos Prize
Finalist, 2016**

**A pan-Americas organisation
based in Miami, USA**

**Prix Farniente
2019, Belgium
Awarded for the French
Translation**

**A historical thriller based on a chilling social
experiment, set in turn-of-the-century
Buenos Aires**

About the author

Martín Blasco is an Argentinian author. He studied Film Direction at the CIEVYC Cinema and Audio-visual College in Buenos Aires. His first book for young readers was published in 2007 and since then he has published thirteen books for children and young adults. Two of his previous novels have been included in the international White Ravens recommendations. In 2015, he won the Colibrí Medal awarded by IBBY Chile for his YA novel *Los extrañamientos*. **The Darkness of Colours** is his best-selling book to date.

Publishing Rights

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Overview

The Darkness of Colours is a **historical thriller** narrated from two different perspectives, in two eras. The main event around which this thriller revolves is the kidnapping of five children during the night of 5th April 1885. This is the start of J. F. Andrew's social experiment into the idea of **nature vs nurture**. What happens if five children are taken and given different upbringings? Andrew's choices of upbringing add to the chilling nature of the experiment: one child will know only violence, one will be brought up by dogs, one will be given the best education possible and the other will be given mind enhancing drugs. The final child, the experimental control, will have an "normal" upbringing.

Twenty-five years after the kidnapping, the children, now grown up, suddenly reappear on the doorsteps of their biological parents. Confused by his daughter's apparent memory loss, one of the parents hires journalist Alejandro Berg to investigate. Will Alejandro discover what has happened to Amira and the other children who disappeared that night? And why have they suddenly reappeared 25 years later?

Not only is this a thrilling story full of suspense there's a real "lightbulb moment" as everything falls into place.

Why This Book?

The Darkness of Colours is a really compelling read. I actually exclaimed out loud when the pieces all fell into place!

I have struggled to find comparison titles for this book. While there are historical novels for YA out there, unsurprisingly perhaps, none deal with this time period in Argentina. Similarly, while there are plenty of thrillers available, most deal with murder in a whodunnit style, or with supernatural powers at play. It could perhaps best be described as a cross between "The OA" and "The Silence of the Lambs". With that in mind, there could also be great opportunities here for screen adaptation.

The Darkness of Colours is a great example of a book from Latin America that is not defined by struggles for identity or "otherness". It is simply a great historical thriller set in Argentina.

Plot Spoiler:

Alejandro is one of the five children

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Themes

Nature vs Nurture

The nature vs nurture debate is one of the oldest issues in psychology. In this novel, Blasco fans our curiosity by imagining an experiment to explore how environmental factors impact us. While the characters in the main narrative are in their mid-twenties, the focus of the “experiment” is on young people. This is admittedly an extreme experiment, but the idea that your childhood can impact the adult you become is a compelling basis for a story, and one which has been successfully explored in literature, with best-selling crime author Kate Moretti claiming that much fiction “focuses on the idea of nature”, being born evil. **The Darkness of Colours** is different as the storyline focuses on the children’s upbringing – the nurture element.

Turn of the century Argentina

Blasco offers us a glimpse into life in Buenos Aires at the turn of the twentieth century as he interweaves historical fact into his fictional story. In doing so, we are given an insight into the socio-economic situation of Buenos Aires’ inhabitants, particularly focusing on the lives of immigrants, as well as learning about the attitudes, architecture and infrastructure of the times.

**For more details, full synopsis and translated extract,
please contact claire@cslanguages.co.uk**

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