

Literature from Latin America for Younger Readers

Claire Storey

claire@cslanguages.co.uk
www.clairestoreylanguages.co.uk



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Introduction

The following document is a follow on from my Arts Council England-funded project as part of the Arts Council England **Developing Your Creative Practice** initiative.

This project has enabled me to research **YA Literature from Latin America** and to produce presentations and samples of some of the books I discovered during the project. I have also received advice and feedback on these samples and presentations from well-established colleagues.

As part of that adventure, I also encountered this culturally significant fantasy quest trilogy from Uruguay.

There are **potential grants** available to contribute towards the translation costs involved in publishing this book in English. I have included further information about funding within this document.

About me

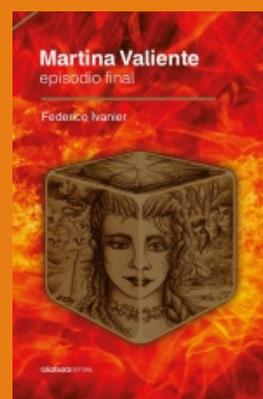
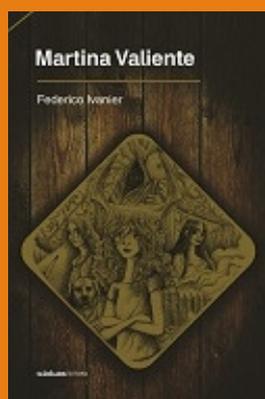
I am a **literary translator** working from Spanish and German into English. I translate for adults and children, but I have a particular interest in YA and MG. I am co-editor of **World Kid Lit**, highlighting the importance of books in translation for young readers.

My debut full-length translation of YA novel **Me, In Between** by Austrian author Julia Rabinowich was published by Andersen Press in January 2022.

I was shortlisted for the 2019 Goethe Institut New Translation Prize and the 2020 Austrian Cultural Forum London Translation Prize (category B). My translations have also been published in several international literary journals, including Latin American Literature Today and No Man's Land.



Martina Valiente *Trilogy* Federico Ivanier



| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Original Title: | Martina Valiente |
| Working Title: | Martina Valiente |
| Original Language: | Spanish / Uruguay |
| Publisher: | Alfaguara, Uruguay (2004) Criatura Editora, Uruguay (2014) |
| Number of pages: | 221 |
| Age: | 10+ |
| Book Two: | Martina Valiente: The Face of Fear (255 pages) |
| Book Three: | Martina Valiente: The Final Episode (263 pages) |

Considered a modern classic of Uruguayan children's literature

National Literature Prize
Ministry for Education and Culture, Uruguay, 2004

Bartolomé Hidalgo Prize
2004: Martina Valiente
2005: Martina Valiente II:
la cara del miedo

**A culturally significant, award-winning
fantasy quest trilogy with strong female characters**

About the author

Federico Ivanier is an acclaimed Uruguayan writer for young people. He has written over twenty books that have been published across Latin America. His works have been awarded the **National Prize for Literature** from the Uruguayan Ministry for Education and Culture as well as the **Premio Bartolomé Hidalgo**, one of the country's most important literary awards.

As well as writing books, Federico works as an high-school English language teacher and as such **speaks excellent English**. He would be happy to be involved in marketing events.

Publishing Rights

World English language rights available.

Rights holder: Federico Ivanier (the author)
Email: fedeivanier@hotmail.com

MARTINA VALIENTE
FEDERICO IVANIER // URUGUAY

claire@cslanguages.co.uk | @ClaireStorey16 | www.clairestoreylanguages.co.uk

Overview

This Uruguayan fantasy quest trilogy follows Martina Adler, a twelve year old girl who unlocks a magical world in desperate need of her help. As well as the fantasy elements, this is also a coming-of-age novel, as Martina discovers who she really is, unlocking her self-confidence and self-belief, learning who she wants to be back in the real world.

Just as this was the first fantasy book for younger readers written by a Uruguayan author, this would be the first book for this age group by a Uruguayan author to be translated into English.

Why This Book?

The Martina Valiente series is **culturally significant**. The first edition was published by the multinational publishing company Alfaguara. It was **the first novel of its kind written by a Uruguayan author** and is held as the first example of homegrown fantasy for young people.

In 2014, the trilogy was re-released by independent Uruguayan publishing house Criatura Editora. The re-publication led to several nostalgic reviews discussing the impact of these books on their younger selves, with one reviewer stating: "I discovered that it was possible to write fantasy as a Uruguayan."

Within Uruguay, the series is now considered a **modern classic** and Ivanier is proud to have readers now in their thirties who tell him they still re-read the book they first read as teenagers. Ivanier has also said that while the narration is set in a fantasy world, Martina is **profoundly Uruguayan**, with many local references, and yet she is a character to whom it is easy to relate to even if you are not Uruguayan.

MARTINA VALIENTE
FEDERICO IVANIER // URUGUAY

Themes

School and bullying

Martina has recently changed schools and is bullied by Nicole and her friends. In book one, they take her lunch, so Martina seeks revenge by putting something nasty in her sandwich, which they then eat. By Book Three, Martina has grown in confidence and has made new friends of her own. Nicole and Nadine still try to get her down, but she can now stand up to them.

Self-confidence, self-belief and courage

Martina is not a particularly willing heroine. She is not keen on the initial training, and she's annoyed that of all people, it's Matias who she has to learn from. All the way through the series, she struggles to believe in herself. However, she cares about those around her and ultimately it is this loyalty that keeps her fighting to the end. We also see the impact this has on her life in Montevideo, increasing her own self-confidence and belief, allowing her to face up to the bullies and to make her life what she wants it to be, not dictated by others.

Awkward families

Martina's parents have recently split up and her father has moved in with a new partner. Martina is finding this really difficult, especially being caught between two acrimonious parents. While she doesn't ever come to like it, she does come to accept it and manage the situation as best she can, improved by her father leaving Matias' and Nicole's mum in Book Three.

First loves

Just as all teenagers, Martina is discovering the opposite sex. While she and Matias may appear to not get on and they bicker like anything, over the course of the books, we come to realise that actually they like each other. At the end of Book Two, we think the fireworks are about to go off, but then in Book Three, another boy, Paco, becomes a spoke in the wheel. Towards the end of Book Three, Martina is fed up with playing games and confronts Matias. But as the trilogy comes to an end, back in Montevideo, we get our happy ending.

MARTINA VALIENTE

FEDERICO IVANIER // URUGUAY

Strong women

While the majority of the characters in the trilogy are men, it is interesting that Ivanier has placed women in many of the leading roles. Martina is of course the main protagonist, but we also see Emelia, Haiku (the leader of the all-female army, The Black Widows) and Katrina. In the final showdown in book three, Katrina stands up to Socrates, and it is this defiance that ultimately brings victory to Martina and the Novrogodians.

Clever narrative

In Book Two, Ivanier cleverly plays with the narrative. Martina and Matias have been separated and sent on different tasks. Ivanier links them together by switching between their narratives halfway through a sentence. For example:

“Ah,” smiled Matias. And he thought things would turn out...

...well. Even before she awoke, as she wandered in that place between wakefulness and slumber, Martina felt good, ridiculously happy even, although she would have been completely at a loss as to why. (p.153, Book Two)

MARTINA VALIENTE
FEDERICO IVANIER // URUGUAY