



Ilustrado: A Novel

Miguel Syjuco

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Garnering international prizes and acclaim before its publication, *Ilustrado* has been called "brilliantly conceived and stylishly executed . . . It is also ceaselessly entertaining, frequently raunchy, and effervescent with humor" (2008 Man Asian Literary Prize panel of judges).

It begins with a body. On a clear day in winter, the battered corpse of Crispin Salvador is pulled from the Hudson River—taken from the world is the controversial lion of Philippine literature. Gone, too, is the only manuscript of his final book, a work meant to rescue him from obscurity by exposing the crimes of the Filipino ruling families. Miguel, his student and only remaining friend, sets out for Manila to investigate.

To understand the death, Miguel scours the life, piecing together Salvador's story through his poetry, interviews, novels, polemics, and memoirs. The result is a rich and dramatic family saga of four generations, tracing 150 years of Philippine history forged under the Spanish, the Americans, and the Filipinos themselves. Finally, we are surprised to learn that this story belongs to young Miguel as much as to his lost mentor, and we are treated to an unhindered view of a society caught between reckless decay and hopeful progress.

Exuberant and wise, wildly funny and deeply moving, *Ilustrado* explores the hidden truths that haunt every family. It is a daring and inventive debut by a new writer of astonishing talent.

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