



Colonel Lágrimas

Carlos Fonseca Suárez

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A dazzling debut about the demented final project of a brilliant mathematician, recalling the best of Bolaño, Borges, and Calvino, *Colonel Lágrimas* is an allegory of our hyper-informed age and of the clash between European and Latin American history.

Holed away in a cabin in the Pyrenees, the world-famous and enigmatic mathematician Alexander Grothendieck is working furiously on a final project. But what exactly *is* this monumental, mysterious undertaking? Why did this man, one of the greatest geniuses of the century, a politically militant man himself, suddenly decide to abandon politics and society altogether? As the reader pursues the answer to these questions, two layered narratives emerge. One is a series of unforgettable characters that have transfixed the mathematician's imagination: Chana Abramov, a woman obsessed with painting the same Mexican volcano a thousand times, Vladimir Vostokov, an anarchist in battle with technological modernity, and Maximiliano Cienfuegos, a simple man who will nonetheless become the symbol for the Colonel's as well as Europe's restless political conscience. The other is the protagonist's life story: a picaresque journey that traverses the 20th century: from the Russia of the October Revolution to the Mexico of the anarchic 1920s, from the Spanish Civil War to Vietnam, all the way back to France and from there to the Caribbean islands. Out of this Borgesian web emerges a tragicomic allegory for the political arch of the past century, one that began addicted to political action and ended up hooked on big data.

Loosely based on the fascinating life story of the eccentric mathematician Alexander Grothendieck, *Colonel Lágrimas* is a world-spanning tour de force of history, politics, literature, mathematics, and philosophy that wears its learning lightly, forming an appealingly human story of the forces that have created the modern world.

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