



At Night We Walk in Circles: A Novel

By Daniel Alarcón

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At Night We Walk in Circles: A Novel By Daniel Alarcón

The breakout novel from a prizewinning young writer: a “surrealistic tour de force” (O, *The Oprah Magazine*) about one man’s obsessive search to find the truth of another man’s downfall.

Nelson’s life is not turning out the way he hoped. His girlfriend is sleeping with another man; his brother has left their South American country, leaving Nelson to care for their widowed mother; and his acting career can’t seem to get off the ground. That is, until he lands a starring role in a touring revival of *The Idiot President*, a legendary play by Nelson’s hero, Henry Nuñez, leader of the storied guerrilla theater troupe Diciembre. And that’s when the real trouble begins.

Nelson’s fate is slowly revealed through the investigation of the narrator, a young man obsessed with Nelson’s story—and perhaps closer to it than he lets on. In sharp, vivid, and beautiful prose, Alarcón delivers a compulsively readable narrative and a provocative meditation on fate, identity, and the large consequences that can result from even our smallest choices.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

An Amazon Best Book of the Month, November 2013: A young man, hopelessly in love with his ex-girlfriend, lands a part in a revival of a controversial political drama. He journeys with his childhood hero, the playwright, through tiny towns scattered along the sparsely-populated mountainside. This hardly seems like the normal territory of a thriller but *At Night We Walk in Circles* delivers suspense to spare with tightly-written narratives, modern phrasing, and crisp character studies by Peruvian-born author Daniel Alarcón. Told through the eyes of a narrator who sprinkles in knowing tidbits about the ultimate fate of the young man, the story builds in momentum while simultaneously taking quiet forays into a world of dashed dreams, complex family obligations, and everyday dilemmas that are relatable even when set in an unnamed, Latin American metropolis or an eerily empty village. *At Night We Walk in Circles* pointedly delves into universal themes: life as merely a series of performances and small gestures that have inexplicable consequences. Like moths to a flame, it's the desire to blindly follow that will ultimately lead to our downfall. --*Bora McAtee*

From Publishers Weekly

In Alarcón's (*Lost City Radio*) novel, Nelson is a young actor living in a nameless Latin American country. He is happy to learn that he has been selected to join Diciembre, a guerrilla theatre troupe. He will be performing in a politically incendiary play called *The Idiot President*. Accompanying him is the playwright, Henry Nuñez, who was jailed for the original production. Nelson says goodbye to his widowed mother and his girlfriend, Ixta, and embarks on his theatrical journey. In one town, Henry pays a visit to the family of his former cellmate and lover, Rogelio, and commits an incredible faux pas, which presents Nelson with the opportunity to play the part of a lifetime. He eventually returns to the city, where he finds that Ixta is pregnant by his rival, Mindo. What follows is a series of misunderstandings that leads to the book's final, ironic act. Nelson's story is told by an unnamed narrator whose intrusions telegraph that the protagonist's story might not end well. Much of the book reads like a needlessly protracted warm-up for Nelson's coup de théâtre, and what follows is too melodramatic for the reader to take entirely seriously. Still, Alarcón recreates the tense atmosphere of what it is like to live in a country where words have consequences. Agent: Eric Simonoff, WME Entertainment. (Nov.)

From Booklist

Starred Review After the stunning, metropolitan sprawl of *Lost City Radio* (2007), Alarcón situates his riveting second novel in the backwaters of an unnamed South American nation. For Nelson, an out-of-work actor, it seems as if everyone has moved on: his one-time lover lives with another man, his brother long ago left for the U.S., and he's stuck at home with his widowed mother. But when the newly revived, controversial theater company Diciembre casts Nelson in a traveling remount of *The Idiot President*, he joins Patalarga, a founding member, and Henry Nuñez, a playwright imprisoned during the show's original run. At first, Nelson immerses himself in the world of the play, performing in taverns and city squares, until the tour brings the trio to the hometown of Rogelio, Henry's former cellmate and confidante. Henry's past and Nelson's future converge, setting the stage for a fast-unraveling mystery of role-playing and retribution, told in compelling prose that is smart, subtle, and totally engrossing. Alarcón possesses Alejo Carpentier's gift for evocative descriptions of anonymous geography, and one sees shades of Manuel Puig in the passages that recount Henry's incarceration, both of which bode well for this native Peruvian's bright literary future. --
Diego Báez

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Andrew Fogarty:

What do you regarding book? It is not important along? Or just adding material when you really need something to explain what the ones you have problem? How about your extra time? Or are you busy person? If you don't have spare time to perform others business, it is gives you the sense of being bored faster. And you have spare time? What did you do? Every person has many questions above. They need to answer that question due to the fact just their can do this. It said that about e-book. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is suitable. Because start from on kindergarten until university need this specific At Night We Walk in Circles: A Novel to read.

Michael Hale:

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