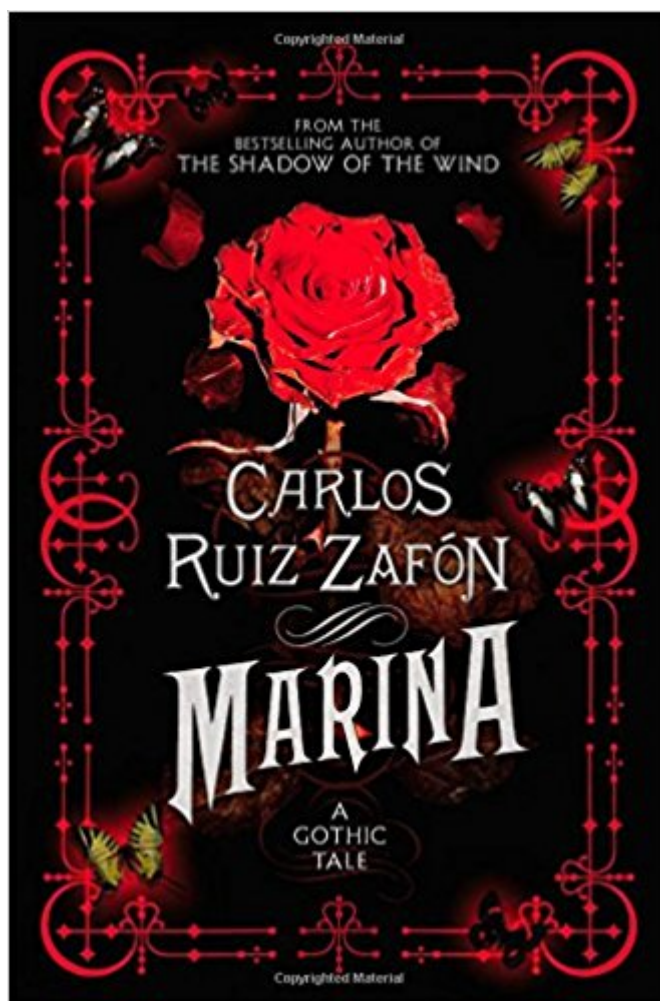


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# Marina



## Synopsis

"We all have a secret buried under lock and key in the attic of our soul. This is mine." When Fifteen-year-old Oscar Draï suddenly vanishes from his boarding school in Barcelona, no one knows his whereabouts for seven days and seven nights. His story begins when he meets the strange Marina while he's exploring an old quarter of the city. She leads Oscar to a cemetery, where they watch a macabre ritual that occurs on the last Sunday of each month. At exactly ten o'clock in the morning, a woman shrouded in a black velvet cloak descends from her carriage to place a single rose on an unmarked grave. When Oscar and Marina decide to follow her, they begin a journey that transports them to a forgotten postwar Barcelona--a world of aristocrats and actresses, inventors and tycoons--and reveals a dark secret that lies waiting in the mysterious labyrinth beneath the city streets. Carlos Ruiz Zafon's haunting *Marina* has long been a cult classic in Spain and is now an international bestseller.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 8 Up  
Set in Barcelona, Spain from late 1979 to May 1980, this gothic novel centers around 15-year-old boarding school student Oscar Draï. Instead of studying during his free time, the teen explores the city, and one day ends up in an area that seems deserted. Drawn in by music coming from an old dilapidated house, Oscar is given a scare by the owner, an eccentric and haunted German artist. Having accidentally taken a watch from the house, the boy returns to bring the valuable item back and meets the enigmatic Marina. Realizing that they both like mysteries, Marina

invites Oscar on an escapade to a graveyard to observe a woman who leaves a red rose on an unmarked grave. The two follow this woman, lose her, but eventually wander into an abandoned greenhouse filled with sinister marionettes and grotesque photos. Soon, the narrator becomes embroiled in the lives and histories of a presumed dead actress, recluse tycoon, and mad scientist obsessed with escaping death. From the very first page, this beautifully written work of historical fiction is impossible to put down. With elements of romance, mystery, and horror, none of them overwhelming the other, this complex volume that hints at Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* manages to weave together three separate stories for a cohesive and eerie result. —Jesten Ray, Seattle Public Library, WA

While wandering the streets of Barcelona, Oscar hears a haunting song and follows it to an ancient mansion overgrown with weeds. There he meets the entrancing, ethereal Marina and her painter father, who live a quiet, antiquated life in the ramshackle, candle-lit building. Soon Oscar spends almost all his free time with Marina, and when they follow a black-veiled woman home from a cemetery, they begin to uncover a series of increasingly disturbing clues about her, the unmarked grave she regularly visits, and the black butterfly symbol that seems to appear everywhere. It all leads to the unsettling history of one of Barcelona's industrial giants, Mijail Kolvenik, a prosthetics designer who gained renown in the aftermath of WWI and became obsessed with healing deformity and disease — a fixation that led to his horrific fall from grace and left behind terrifying secrets. Originally published in Spain in 1999, this sweeping gothic mystery from Zafon (The Watcher in the Shadows, 2013) delivers gritty atmosphere, perilous action, propulsive storytelling, and ghastly body horror, all tempered by a bittersweet romance. Grades 8-11. --Sarah Hunter

I enjoyed reading *Marina* because of the intricate plot and how Zafon drew me into his story as if I were a voyeuristic shadow in the alleys of Barcelona. I was intrigued by the Mary Shelley reference. The twist of bringing death back to life had a more macabre gothic feel than Shelley's tale. I believe this book will appeal to young audiences who themselves feel lost, trying to fit in, the loss of a friend or how times those who are different can be misunderstood. I will recommend this book to my ELL students, especially my Spanish speaking students because I want to expose them to the works of Zafon.

I liked the author's development of each character, and how he wove the storyline with each

background tale. I enjoyed the suspense and mystery as well as the descriptions of the places in Barcelona as seen through the eyes of Oscar. I disliked the ending....I felt like Oscar would have learned from his experience with Marina to appreciate the few friends he had, especially Germaine. I felt that because he had found this new family to be part of, out of love for Marina, he would have taken care of her father, not said goodbye. A good book for discussion.

Having first gone through "The Shadow of the Wind ", I was hooked by Carlos Ruis Zafon. Although this book is for younger readers, or young at heart. It is very well written. I read it in Spanish, the Author's language. This is a story about the first love of your life, and the tragic circumstances that followed, and what I would translate into a real life setting. Tragedy is around the corner, for all of us, we do not know when it will show up, hopefully, it never will. The pain of living is what we go through; on the bright side, the marvelous love of young adults, what we once experienced as "puppy love". Quoting Paul Anka . . ." Is it really Puppy Love". . .

What silly questions they ask: this a classic written by one of the great authors of our time.

Good story and entertaining, especially for kids.

Zafon is the master. It has some fantastical elements that perhaps appeal to a more youthful spirit but is still a quality and thoroughly enjoyable read that is on par with the cemetery of forgotten books series.

I ordered the wrong book. I meant to order the English edition, which I did buy and read I have a Spanish language version still in the box because I forgot to ship it back.

Still trying to get through this book. Initially caught my interest, but couldn't keep it. Lots of characters but confusing story line. Don't waste your money.

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