

The background features a complex network of white nodes connected by thin purple lines, set against a gradient background that transitions from dark purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. The nodes are scattered across the frame, with some forming distinct geometric shapes like triangles and polygons. The overall aesthetic is modern and digital.

Nocturna

Written by Maya Motayne

Published by sanmarco-sf

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Nocturna

Nocturna

By Maya Motayne

Nocturnal

Set in a Latinx-inspired world, a face-changing thief and a risk-taking prince must team up to defeat a powerful evil they accidentally unleashed.

Nocturnal Animals

To Finn Voy, magic is two things: a knife to hold under the chin of anyone who crosses her and a disguise she shrugs on as easily as others pull on cloaks.

Nocturnal Wonderland

As a talented faceshifter, it's been years since Finn has seen her own face, and that's exactly how she likes it. But when Finn gets caught by a powerful mobster, she's forced into an impossible mission: steal a legendary treasure from Castellan's royal palace or be stripped of her magic forever.

Nocturnal Enuresis

After the murder of his older brother, Prince Alfehr is first in line for the Castellan throne. But Alfie can't help but feel that he will never live up to his brother's legacy. Riddled with grief, Alfie is obsessed with finding a way to bring his brother back, even if it means dabbling in forbidden magic.

Nocturnal Definition

But when Finn and Alfie's fates collide, they accidentally unlock a terrible, ancient power which, if not contained, will devour the world. And with Castellan's fate in their hands, Alfie and Finn must race to vanquish what they have unleashed, even if it means facing the deepest darkness in their pasts.

“ The book trailer is out and you can watch it here! ”

The day may come when I stumble upon a book with a pretty cover and not immediately add it to my TBR but it is not this day.

Also, this is set in a Latinx-inspired world and it's about a face-shifting thief and a prince with a magical doorknob that could lead him anywhere he desires. Take. My. Money.

Nocturnal Wonderland 2019

The writing is so lyrical and the magic in this book is so vivid – also Finn and Alfie are simply perfect. I never wanted this story to end; it was one of those books that made me want to read as slow as possible to savour every word.

April Fairyloot Box. Click on the link under picture to see all of the goodies!

THE GOODIES

Nocturnal Animals List

I had hoped to love this book. And yet, somewhere deep in my little heart I knew, knew almost for certain, that I wouldn't. That it was almost too good to be true.

Now I've read it and lo and behold, I did not, in fact, love this book.

Some of you may or may not know this about me, but I am Dominican. I was born and partially raised in The Dominican Republic, a small, Spanish speaking island in the Caribbean, where the sun always shines and the beaches are always blue. So, to hear that an author who I had hoped to love this book. And yet, somewhere deep in my little heart I knew, knew almost for certain, that I wouldn't. That it was almost too good to be true.

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Some of you may or may not know this about me, but I am Dominican. I was born and partially raised in The Dominican Republic, a small, Spanish speaking island in the Caribbean, where the sun always shines and the beaches are always blue. So, to hear that an author was going to write a fantasy novel based on her Dominican heritage I was nothing if not completely on board.

So, you can only imagine how disappointed I was when this book was only superficially Latinx and could have otherwise been set in any generic European-esque kingdom.

The book talked about some Hispanic foods: sweet plantains, which I love, the adobo seasoned chicken, and some other things. It used Spanish words for magic, which I gotta say, doesn't sound as magical when you actually speak the language. Alfie would say magic words like, "Alargar" and "Parar" and magic would happen, except that these are the Spanish verbs "to elongate" and "to stop" and those don't sound all that magical when you think about it. But it can't be helped, I suppose. It's not the book's fault that I'm not impressed by Spanish words. Overall culturally, there wasn't much to distinguish it from every other fantasy out there.

The bible says that there is "no new thing under the sun". So, I don't so much look for originality in plot lines but rather for the execution of said plots because let's be real, most books fall under the same plotlines and the same tropes, and character outlines, and still, we read them.

That said, there has been an overwhelming amount of people comparing this book to *A Darker Shade of Magic* by V.E. Schwab, to the point that they claim that *Nocturna* is nothing more than a blatant rip-off.

I read *ADSOM* a few years ago and didn't love it. It was an ok book for me and I really didn't like *Laila Bard*. I had barely remembered that book while reading this one if I'm honest. It wasn't until I started reading some people's reviews that I began to think back on the other story and point

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out some similarities. And trust me, there are many similarities in plot, characterization, magic, and even the ending.

But, as I mentioned, there is no new thing under the sun. Had this book executed that plot in a more enjoyable way, I wouldn't have minded as much. But alas, it did not.

The writing in this book is pretty decent. It's not amazing, but it was easy to read. There were some moments that felt a little info-dumpish but that's the way it is with fantasy sometimes. The characters are alright. I found that their motivations shifted rather quickly though. They also made a lot of questionable choices, but what YA character doesn't.

There is a shift in the plot that I didn't expect. It started out as being about one thing, mostly Alfie finding his brother, but then that takes a back seat and the plot became about something else. This is also a thing that happens a lot in books and doesn't really bother me so long as the change in the plot is engaging and it all connects in the end. I'm not sure how well this book pulled that off.

Overall, I liked that this was a Latinx fantasy, or that it tried to be. Latin American culture is extremely diverse. The Caribbean Islands have a culture unlike Central America, which is different in culture from South America and all the individual countries are so rich with history and culture and traditions and it's beautiful. We've seen a lot of Asian fantasy lately, and African fantasy is on the rise and I'm so happy about it. Now I want to see some Latin American fantasy take the stage. I want a book that fully throws you into the culture it's depicting, not just brushes the surface as I feel this book did.

So yeah, there you have it. I don't think this book lived up to what it could have been. But maybe I'm just a hater? Oh, well.

Also, y'all gotta check out this book trailer. No offense, but it's actually kind of ridiculous how cringy it is. It's like a bad video game upload, but with overly dramatic yet anticlimactic narration. To see the trailer click [HERE](#)

I received an ARC of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review. All opinions are my own.

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ARC provided in exchange for honest review ðŸ™¸®

Nocturnal Leg Cramps

Any unabashedly good reviews of this book must be from people who either have never read V.E. Schwab's *Shades of Magic* Trilogy, or who do not care when a book's entire plot is lifted from another source.

Several sources, in fact. Because beyond the egregious ripping-off of Schwab's trilogy, even the tiny, different details are often easily traceable back to other sources, from which they have just as blatantly been stolen and cobbled.

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I've been annoyed at books before for stealing basic plot from popular series. *Wicked Saints*, for one, reminded me too much of Bardugo's *Grisha* series, as did *Red Queen*. There were dozens of teen vampire books that flooded bookshelves after *Twilight*, and after the *Harry Potter* series there were yet more dozens of magic school books.

But those books, while sometimes coming too obviously close to the line, for the most part were "inspired" by the worlds they copped from. The plot as a whole tended to be new, or the characters were different, or the magic system had been very changed, or the whole thematic point of the book had been shifted.

Nocturna not only steps right up to that line, it barrels across it in ways that are just unforgivable.

I have never read a book that stole so much from its source material. It's not just that the main characters, Alfie, Finn, and Luka, are essentially copy-paste Kell, Lila, and Rhy. It's not just that the magic system is eerily similar, except for a few teensy tweaks. It's not just that the dark magic villain comes to power in exactly the same way, moves through human hosts in exactly the same way, and is defeated in exactly the same way. And it's not just that the thematic points of the book are overwhelmingly the same. It is all of these and much more.

And it's absolutely deliberate. I spent over half the book dreaming of having a PDF version where I could search-and-find and count all of the many, many times this novel uses the phrase "shades." "Shades of magic." "Different shades." "Darker shades." Over and over and over, as if Motayne wanted you to know that she plagiarized from another author's series. But yet couldn't, apparently, be bothered to even

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mention that series in her acknowledgements (I checked, not that I expected her really to admit it).

As for the rest of it? The stuff that's not copped from *Shades of Magic*?

Well, you have a prison breakout scene that could be straight out of a Bardugo book.

You also have a relationship between two main characters that is almost exactly Jessica Jones and Kilgrave.

Other than that, there's not much different to be honest. And it got to the point where those things that were, I did not trust to be unique from Motayne's mind either. If I didn't recognize it immediately from another person's work, I started assuming it must just be because I hadn't read the work it was stolen from yet. It's that bad.

And the worst, truly the worst, part of all of this is...Despite lifting things from so many sources, not perfect ones of course but ones that nevertheless got the literary job done...

This book was legitimately terrible.

The character motivations constantly shifted for no reason: "I want to find my brother who maybe isn't dead, but then again I guess he's dead and I never have to think about him again womp;" "I want my daughter to be dead for what she did to me but then I guess I want her to be alive and love me again but then I guess I want her dead but maybe also alive." It was nearly impossible to keep track of anyone's arc in this thing because no one had a clear one, and the backgrounds of every character became so jumbled and lost that you started just expecting to have nothing be satisfying at the end by about a third of the way through.

The plot was also an incoherent mess. The main characters all had what I can only describe as a Harry Potter complex - the need to do everything by themselves, because they were the only ones who could stop the evil!...but, in fact, literally none of them had even the basic qualifications for fighting off the "evil," and there were I assume hundreds of actual military members and powerful magic-users who would have been much better suited to helping. The whole thing took place over what actually seemed to be 2-3 days, and felt that quick, too, as the characters mostly just jumped from plot-contrived scene to plot-contrived scene. Nothing felt earned, nothing felt connected, and by the end I was literally rolling my eyes as I read it because I could not believe that the reader could be expected to actually believe anything that was happening or care.

At the beginning of this book, I was fine with it. It was refreshing to see a YA fantasy world from a Latinx author, based on her Dominican heritage. It was quite cool to have the magic system work with Spanish words, instead of the typical Latin. It was clearly similar to *Shades of Magic*, but wasn't a blatant ripoff.

But by the middle, everything I had liked was gone. The world-building becomes shoddy at best, with

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mentions of sangria and sugarcane really the only things that separate it from any other typical fantasy world. By the end of the book, the references to these actually seemed out of place and jarring, that's how directly like *Shades of Magic* it had become. The Spanish continues throughout, which is fine, but without a rich culture to back it up, it starts to feel more like a gimmick than anything else.

The back of my ARC has a picture of Motayne, smiling. When I turned to look at it, that's when I really knew how much this book angered me. Because all I could think was, You haven't earned the right to smile. This isn't your book. It's other people's books. And I hope you don't earn a cent more for it.

Kirkus Reviews has already commented that getting a second book out of this world will be difficult, because of the lack of culture and world-building.

But I think I can tell you exactly how Motayne is going to pull out a second book. And a third.

There's going to be a magic tournament. And then the dark magic is going to come back from the void.

Maybe after, they'll all go to Red London for drinks. ...more

Welcome to San Cristobal, a Latinx kingdom laced with magic and grappling with homegrown treachery and a colonial past. When the true heir to the throne is assassinated, reluctant Prince Alfehr joins forces with a chameleon of a street thief to save the kingdom from an ancient evil. In the process, they may find a way to save each other.

Fantasy fans will embrace the creative worldbuilding and welcome these flawed and multi-layered characters into their hearts.

Nocturnal Meaning

FASCINATING!

i always wanted to read a latino-inspired ya fantasy. there are lots of fantasies inspired in europe or the us. even arabic-inspired. but i searched and searched for something latino, something like nocturna, and i never found it.

thankfully, maya motayne exists. and her book is AMAZING!

the world-building is incredible. iâ€™m gonna be honest with you: when i started reading it, i couldnâ€™t stop thinking that nocturna is actually a darker shade of magic, but in south america. but, as the FASCINATING!

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the world-building is incredible. iâ€™m gonna be honest with you: when i started reading it, i couldnâ€™t stop thinking that nocturna is actually a darker shade of magic, but in south america. but, as the story progressed, the more the world was well-built and it completely showed for what it came for.

the characters were well-written and flawed. i loved all of them. period. except the villain, of course, i wanted him to choke.

the writing was lyrical, metaphorical and deep. i am a huge fan of metaphorical writing and, not only she gave me what i always wanted, maya delivered it in That Writing!!!! ICONIC.

the plot was perfectly sewed. everything happened for a reason. and all this events were tied in the end, even stuff that happened pre-book. just amazing.

the main characters had such chemistry. the romanceâ€™or the start of itâ€™was soooooo good. i want them to marry and have babies.

the light-dark duality was so interestingly built. there is a plot in this book about light and dark, and it works around showing was that we are actually built with both inside of us. i just love it.

That Latinoâ€™ Stuff. WOW. thatâ€™s what iâ€™m talking about. castellan is a country that is clearly a mixture of south american countries. including brazil. i said in an update that itâ€™s very common for foreign stuff to talk about latino countries and completely ignore brazil in that matter. we are mostly not

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considered latinos because we don't speak spanish. but maya included us and i couldn't be more thankful.

the characters speak mostly spanish, but castellan had sugarcane fields. the magical words were in spanish, but there were dueños (spanish) and bruxos (portuguese). i think you get my point.

reading this book was a delight. an embrace. i highly recommend!

pre-review.

release date: july (brazilian edition)

A LATINX-INSPIRED FANTASY????? IS IT CHRISTMAS????? ...more

A face-shifting thief, who steals more than just food and coin to survive but also the faces of those she meets, and a prince, with a magical doorknob to lead him directly to wherever he wants in the world, combine in an unprecedented interweaving of fates.

The former, Finn Voy, seeks to escape the dark shadow dominating her past but finds herself with a new foe to duel with, when she aligns her plight with the Prince's. Prince Alfehr is not concerned with ruling the kingdom but only in seeking t A face-shifting thief, who steals more than just food and coin to survive but also the faces of those she meets, and a prince, with a magical doorknob to lead him directly to wherever he wants in the world, combine in an unprecedented interweaving of fates.

The former, Finn Voy, seeks to escape the dark shadow dominating her past but finds herself with a new foe to duel with, when she aligns her plight with the Prince's. Prince Alfehr is not concerned with ruling the kingdom but only in seeking the brother who was stolen from him and now considered dead. He disbelieves these rumours and searches for answers in dark and forgotten magic. But instead of finding a brother returned he unwittingly unleashes an ancient magic, which seeks to take the kingdom and his people for its own.

This magic system is the most inventive and unique I have experienced for such a long time. The initial portion was a little dense, because of this, but Motayne ensured her readers were provided a proper basis in which to understand this complex system, before the action truly started.

I also loved both central characters. They were disparate in personality but both were aligned in the instant adoration I felt for them. Finn is an unapologetic badass whilst Alfie is a precious little cinnamon roll, and seeing these polar opposites interact provided some hilarious incidents that nicely offset the surrounding tension. Their dialogue was sarcastic as they continually sought to test their wits against each other and both proved stubborn and spiteful, at first. These feelings slowly thawed, as the novel progressed, and this was one of the best instances of enemies to lovers I have seen documented.

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The only slight mar in this otherwise stellar read was the slightly stodgy pace, I have already mentioned. However, the unique magic system, intriguing world, and authentic characters all made this undoubtedly one fantasy book to keep on your radar, for 2019, and ensured Maya Motayne a future auto-buy author for me, from now on.

I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. Thank you to the author, Maya Motayne, and the publisher, Hodder & Stoughton, for this opportunity. ...more

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Nocturnal Seizures

DO. NOT. MISS. THIS.

“This searing, magical Latinx-inspired fantasy pulled me in from the first page and did not let me go. I loved adventuring with brave Alfie and brash Finn, and I held my breath until the end. NOCTURNA is a magnificent debut, powerful and true.”

- Julie C. Dao, author of FOREST OF A THOUSAND LANTERNS

Just got this book in my fairyloot box ðŸ• ðŸ•