ForeWord Reviews

MYSTERY

All Yours
Claudia Pineiro
Miranda France, translator
Bitter Lemon Press
978-1-904738-80-0
(January 2012)

An under-stimulated housewife and her philandering husband breed mayhem in this crime novel by best-selling Argentinean author Claudia Pineiro. Pineiro weaves a tale of intrigue and plot twists centering on Inés, a smart but bored housewife. In first-person narrative, Inés conveys an innocent charm, despite the fact that her husband Ernesto's affairs keep her constantly on edge and terrified that he will leave her—just as her father walked out on her mother. The fast-paced narrative paints a sad picture of a truly desperate housewife in under 200 pages.

Fearing Ernesto's latest exploit might be getting too serious, Inés follows him one evening and witnesses an argument between his secretary and him that results in the secretary's accidental death. Convinced by the argument that the affair was not serious, Inés takes matters into her own hands to ensure that Ernesto will not be a suspect in the disappearance of his secretary. "A man who kills a woman then goes to pieces. It's like a monkey with a gun. Really dangerous. I took the initiative; if I didn't grab the reins, we'd be lost." And so she gathers up all the letters from "truelove" she finds stashed among Ernesto's things, as well as other incriminating evidence at the secretary's home, including a pink heart inscribed "All Yours." Suddenly her life seems to be important. "Things were becoming more complicated, but also more fun."

Meanwhile, the couple's teenage daughter is struggling with an unplanned pregnancy, a boyfriend who left her, and knowledge of her father's affair. Her situation unfolds in short chapters of dialogue between her and her friends as well as strangers. Inés is so absorbed in her own soap opera that she is not even concerned when her daughter does not come home at night. And Ernesto can't even remember to buy the perfume he promised, while on a trip to Rio with his lover.

Interspersed with the narrative chapters are what appear to be legal or investigative proceedings presenting excerpts from various documents found in Inés' home and rental car. These documents are primarily from forensic reports that relate to the manner of death suffered

by the secretary and appear to incriminate Ines.

After a couple of clever plot twists, the ultimate consequences to the couple are left for the reader to ponder. As for Inés, she concludes, “When it comes down to it, nobody is innocent.”

Claudia Pineiro’s previous novel, *Thursday Night Widows*, was awarded the Clarin Prize for Fiction. *All Yours* was a finalist for the Planeta Prize and a bestseller in Argentina, Spain, and Germany.

Karen Mulvahill