FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

General

Rage
Sergio Bizzio
Bitter Lemon Press
978-1-904738-40-4
(October 31, 2009)

Protagonist José María has committed a heinous crime. Prone to violence and hungry for sex, María is accidentally self-imprisoned in the estate of the Blinders (Rosa, the maid, is María's former lover), placing him flush against the sordid activities of the household. Murder, rape, pregnancy, theft—Sergio Bizzio spares no vice in his rendering of the Blinder compound and its inhabitants. Rosa and María's relationship, begun innocently and lovingly enough, struggles to survive in the midst of this misfortune. It's no accident that Guillermo del Toro's decision to render *Rage,* Bizzio's sixth novel, as a film is plastered on the novel's front cover, back cover, *and* interior: watching María observe (and commit) act after debaucherous act will surely yield a sensational, gripping movie.

As a novel, *Rage* perhaps dwells erroneously long in the confines of María's mind—one learns only scraps of the outside world in both time and place, and as a result the book seems to float outside of its setting. The story at times endeavors to comment on the sociopolitical climate of Argentina, but merely flirts with this intention. "[María] knew who was president," the narrator states well into the novel, "because he'd heard his name used, but this was now so long ago he was unsure whether he was still in power." Television is the only source of information about the world, and the reader is granted only scant instances of respite from María's mind and eyes. At times, this lends *Rage* the sensation of gratuitousness, especially as the violence and sex become more senseless towards the novel's end.

A hyper-sensational examination of a family and culture in decay, *Rage*'s Blinder family recalls Faulkner's Compsons in the family's inability to recognize its own slide into despair. Bizzio crafts a story not meant for the faint of heart, but one that treats its subject without once flinching from its depravity.