



## The Adventure of the Busts of Eva Peron

**Carlos Gamerro**

**Ian Barnett, Translator**

And Other Stories (March 2015)

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*Gamerro navigates extreme situations of war and crime with a practiced hand and plenty of humor.*

*The Adventure of the Busts of Eva Perón* details Ernesto Marroné's quest to rescue his boss, Faust Tamerlán, who is kidnapped by the Montoneros. Carlos Gamerro's novel—translated by Ian Barnett—is a macabre farce on an executive turned revolutionary. With its eccentric mixture of politics, terror, domestic minutiae, and business rhetoric, the story of Marroné's entrance to the guerrilla echelons is a biting commentary on Argentina's Dirty War.

When the Montoneros demand the installation of ninety-two busts at Tamerlán & Sons, a determined Marroné greets the challenge. The violent reality of the mid-1970s is confronted with sharply imagined gallows humor as well as insightful observations. The plot unfolds in tense events interrupted by a running gag involving Marroné's escapes to the commode. An everyman guided by his bathroom reading—notably *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, and the fictional *Don Quixote: The Executive Errant*—Marroné uses his business sense to surprising effect. He secures the busts only to realize, too late, that the effort is futile.

Whether he finds himself swept along in an occupation, rallies the “proletariat” with an improvised speech that unfolds into a motivational exercise, sympathizes with the Evita depicted in a photonovel, or makes a narrow escape from the police, Marroné emerges as a fascinating character whose intelligence combines with luck. He can't help thinking as the head of procurement for Tamerlán & Sons—not even when discussing a bazooka. His strait-laced, optimistic seriousness in the face of absurd predicaments is genuinely funny, and it makes up for the unnerving moments in the novel, including scenes of sexual coarseness.

Marroné's journey leads to untamed, hypnagogic landscapes: a plasterwork factory, the shanties, and a brothel populated with Evas especially resound in their excess. Here, the mythology of one of history's controversial women folds expertly into the story of Marroné. A welcome translation, a thorough probe at the uglier seams in society, and ultimately, the making of an unlikely hero, *The Adventure of the Busts of Eva Peron* is satire at its finest.

KAREN RIGBY (Spring 2015)

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