



The Prince of Mist

By Carlos Ruiz Zafon

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A mysterious house harbors an unimaginable secret...

It's wartime, and the Carver family decides to leave the capital where they live and move to a small coastal village. But from the minute they cross the threshold of their new home, strange things begin to happen. In that mysterious house still lurks the spirit of Jacob, the previous owners' son, who died by drowning.

With the help of their new friend Roland, Max and Alicia Carver begin to explore the strange circumstances of that death and discover the existence of a mysterious being called the Prince of Mist--a diabolical character who has returned from the shadows to collect on a debt from the past. Soon the three friends find themselves caught up in an adventure of sunken ships and an enchanted stone garden--an adventure that will change their lives forever.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

It's war time, and the Carver family decides to leave the capital where they live and move to a small coastal village where they've recently bought a home. But from the minute they cross the threshold, strange things begin to happen. In that mysterious house still lurks the spirit of Jacob, the previous owners' son, who died by drowning.

With the help of their new friend Roland, Max and Alicia Carver begin to explore the strange circumstances of that death and discover the existence of a mysterious being called the Prince of Mist--a diabolical character who has returned from the shadows to collect on a debt from the past. Soon the three friends find themselves caught up in an adventure of sunken ships and an enchanted stone garden--an adventure that will change their lives forever.

Amazon Exclusive: Interview with Carlos Ruiz Zafon, Author of *The Prince of Mist*



How did you come to write *The Prince of Mist* as your debut novel, which was first published in Spanish in 1993?

When I wrote *The Prince of Mist* I was in my mid twenties. I had written a couple of unpublished novels and a number of short stories before, published some pieces in magazines and newspapers, etc. I had been writing since I was a child, but I realized that I had never really written anything that I was completely happy with. Something was missing. I already felt that I was late in the game and that I had been wasting my time doing other things while I should have been focusing more seriously in my writing. I guess that, like many writers, I was just trying to find my own voice. Around that time I was working as a musician, although I knew that my "true" path, at least professionally, was in the writing. At some point I decided to drop everything and start working on this little novel, telling myself that this had to be "the one." Although I had never thought I would write for younger readers, the story seemed to me perfectly suited for that genre and, I suppose, I still hoped to be able to write something that would appeal to readers of all ages. I decided to try to write the book I would have liked to read when I was 12 or 13 years old. I worked quite hard on it, harder than I had worked on anything before. I remember writing at night over the summer of 1992 in Barcelona, from midnight till dawn. It was the summer of the Barcelona Olympics and it was hot and humid as hell. You can say I really sweated this one. I ended up having to buy this portable AC machine that I would point at my face while I was writing. I was fortunate in that the novel won an important literary award and became quite successful. It was the book that allowed me to become a professional writer and to start my career as a

novelist, and I've always been fond of it.

What do you think are the most important differences when writing for adult readers and young adult readers?

I don't think there're that many differences, really. You just have to write the best possible story in the most efficient way you are capable of. It is all about the language, the style, the atmosphere, the characters, the plot, the images and textures... If anything, I believe that younger readers are even more demanding and sincere about their feelings about what they're reading, and you have to be honest, never condescending. I don't think younger readers are an ounce less smart than adult ones. I think they are able to understand anything intellectually but perhaps there're emotional elements that they have not experienced in their lives yet, although they will eventually. Because of this, I think it is important to include a perspective in the work that allows them to find an emotional core that they can relate to not just intellectually. Other than that, I think you should work as hard as you can for your audience, respect them and try to bring the best of your craft to the table. My own personal view is that there's just good writing and bad writing. All other labels are, at least to me, irrelevant.

In the novel, there are many references to watches, clocks and the passage of time. For instance, Max Carver, the central character, receives a pocket watch as a birthday gift from his watchmaker father. Its case is engraved with the words "Max's Time Machine." When the Carver family moves to a coastal town and arrives at the train station, Max observes that the train station clock is turning backwards. Why is the theme of time so important in the novel?

Time is the thread of our lives, and in this story we see how events in the past, actions in our lives, have consequences later on. In some ways, we are the sum of our actions, our choices, our deeds. Life hands us a number of cards at the beginning of the game. We cannot choose them, but we can choose how we play them. That is an aspect that interests me very much and I try to explore it through the stories I write. I also believe that we are, to a certain extent, what we remember and the novel tries to reflect on these ideas as it jumps back and forth in time exploring the mystery at the heart of the novel.

Without revealing too many secrets of your craft, what do you feel are the key ingredients of a spellbinding mystery?

I think a good mystery story is just a good story, period. The key ingredients are the same as for any kind of good story: language, style, atmosphere, characterization, structure, imagery, subtext, etc. Good mysteries tend to be based on character rather than just on plot, but at the end of the day it is all in the writing actually.

Max, Alicia and Roland are all teenagers, who are confronted with extraordinary and bewildering situations, and yet they don't immediately turn to adults for answers. Why not?

Because I think that teenagers want their own answers. They need them. They need to understand the world around, and inside, themselves and they can only do that by finding out themselves the truth. Children rely on adults to tell them what the world is, and they usually get taken for a ride. A teenager knows, feels, the world is something she or he has to figure out.

The novel's setting--a coastal town in a time of war—is not very specific. Why not?

I guess if you read between the lines you could guess the town is on the south coast of England during World War II. In the original version that was the case, but while I was revising the translation I decided to rewrite and redone certain parts and details and opted for a more generic location. I feel that what is important is that this is a story that happens in a place that we all can remember in our lives, and I wanted to emphasize that.

***The Prince of Mist* was an award winner and a bestseller in Spain, and has only recently reached an English-reading audience. What is the translation process and how were you involved in it?**

I am very involved in the translation process. I've been very lucky in that I've been working with the extremely talented Lucia Graves on the English translations of my novels. Lucia, who's a very accomplished novelist on her own, grew up in Spain and is completely bilingual. Our goal is to bring the reader a text that is exactly the same as the original in terms of flow, of texture, of pacing, of the music the prose makes. To that end we work very hard with Lucia and I often I'll rewrite sections or retouch things here and there to ensure that what you read in English is almost 100% what you would read in Spanish, without losing anything of the rhythm or the nuances in the flow of the language. I've noticed that sometimes readers, especially readers in English who are not very used to reading translations, tend to mystify the process and think that a translation is a rewrite or a reinvention of the original. It is not. A good translation is invisible and bring you exactly what was in the original, nothing more, nothing less.

You divide your time between Barcelona and LA. Are the two cities reflected in your work?

I think so. Barcelona is my hometown, the place I was born and grew up in. It is in my blood and I am very much a product of it. On the other hand, I've spent quite some time in California and I believe that a lot of my experiences here find their ways into the books. Writers use what they have at hand to write, what they have inside of them and what they see outside. We write about life, trying to figure it out and, hopefully, come up with something of value and beauty that we can share with the reader along the way.

From Publishers Weekly

When 13-year-old Max Carver and his family move into a long-unoccupied--and possibly haunted--house on the Spanish coast during WWII, they learn of the evil magician known as the Prince of Mist, who went down in the ship that can be seen below the coastal cliffs. Jonathan Davis is excellently cast; his voice throbs with understated menace, which slowly intensifies toward the dramatic conclusion. Sound effects subtly add to the suspense and pleasure of listening. The audio performance is also accompanied by haunting original music written and performed by the author. A Little, Brown hardcover (Reviews, Apr. 12).

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From School Library Journal

Starred Review. Grade 5-8 In 1943, Max, 13, and his older sister Alicia are befriended by Roland, the grandson of a reclusive lighthouse keeper, when their family moves to a house on the coast to avoid the war. Max discovers a strange garden of sinister statues and a series of home movies showing that the statues change positions and expressions. Then, when his younger sister is hospitalized after an encounter with a strange presence that precipitates a fall down the stairs, he becomes aware that something sinister is afoot. The mystery deepens as Roland takes Alicia and Max diving to the ruins of an old shipwreck and the story of the ship and its mysterious passengers is revealed by the lighthouse keeper. Max begins to realize that something from beyond the grave is active in their midst and that it has an agenda that nothing on Earth can stop. In the end, someone will have to pay the price for a bargain made with the evil one long ago. *The Prince of Mist* hooks readers from page one. It is a combination of mystery, suspense, and supernatural thriller. The author keeps readers guessing all the way till the end in a story that's fresh, frightening, and beautifully translated. Awesome. *Debra Banna, Sharon Public Library, MA*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Alyssa Cox:

Book is definitely written, printed, or highlighted for everything. You can realize everything you want by a e-book. Book has a different type. We all know that that book is important issue to bring us around the world. Next to that you can your reading skill was fluently. A reserve The Prince of Mist will make you to end up being smarter. You can feel much more confidence if you can know about almost everything. But some of you think in which open or reading the book make you bored. It is not necessarily make you fun. Why they could be thought like that? Have you seeking best book or suited book with you?

Alma Hillyer:

Information is provisions for those to get better life, information today can get by anyone on everywhere. The information can be a understanding or any news even a problem. What people must be consider when those information which is from the former life are difficult to be find than now could be taking seriously which one is appropriate to believe or which one often the resource are convinced. If you find the unstable resource then you understand it as your main information we will see huge disadvantage for you. All of those possibilities will not happen in you if you take The Prince of Mist as the daily resource information.

Carlos Tabor:

The book untitled The Prince of Mist contain a lot of information on that. The writer explains your ex idea with easy way. The language is very simple to implement all the people, so do not worry, you can easy to read the idea. The book was published by famous author. The author provides you in the new era of literary works. You can easily read this book because you can please read on your smart phone, or program, so you can read the book with anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can wide open their official web-site along with order it. Have a nice learn.

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