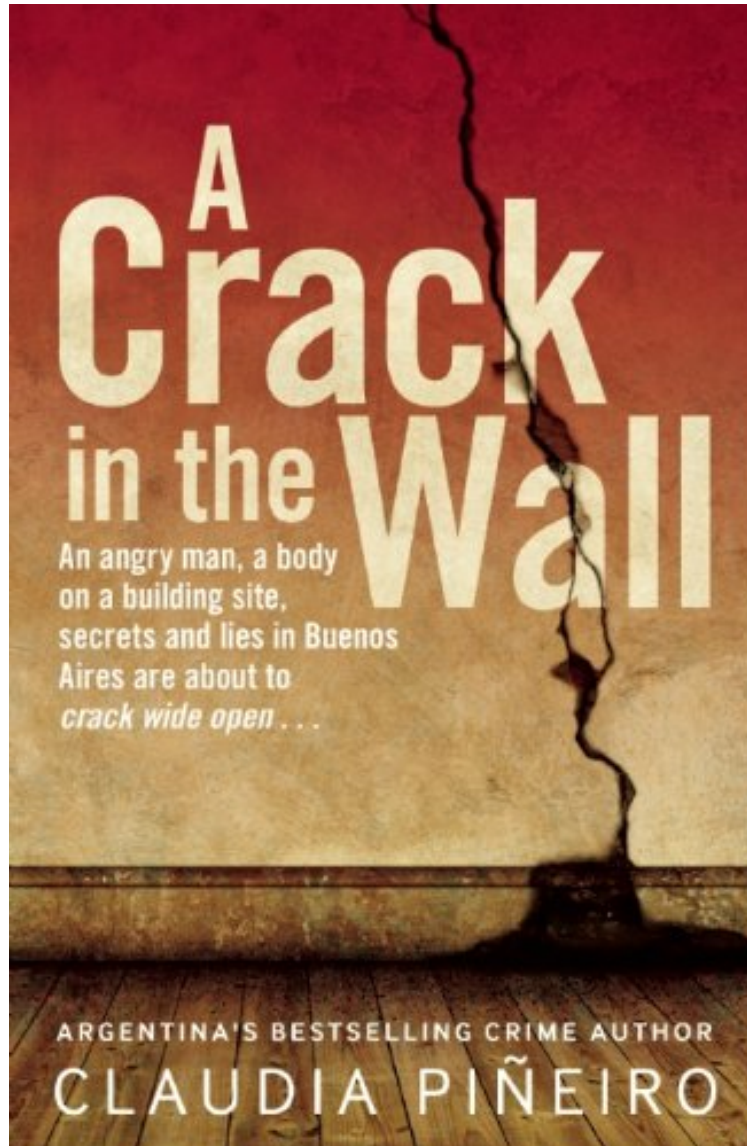


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A Crack in the Wall

Claudia Piëro

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Claudia Piëro : A Crack in the Wall before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Crack in the Wall:

1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A wonderful mystery by a South American author. By Morris L. Greb Pineiro's style is wonderful. He exposes layers upon layers of mystery till the most surprising conclusion A very good read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. 3.5 Stars Looking forward to more By F Mundo More like 3.5 stars because I really did like the book and the writing (especially the ending, which are tough in crime fiction) -

and it did remind me of Patricia Highsmith, which is a good thing. It just felt a little dated to me for some reason. I am definitely going to read more books from this writer (I already bought Thursday Night Widows), and I do recommend this book, I just hope the next book (maybe it was the translation) feels a little fresher and more contemporary. I don't want this to sound like a bad review. It's not supposed to be. I really did like it. It's smart, thought-provoking, and well crafted. And, if you like Patricia Highsmith, then definitely check out this book and this writer. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. "Everybody's played the system...and if they haven't done it, they're going to one day...nobody wants to be the chump." By Mary Whipple

In this deliciously wicked new novel, her best one yet, Argentinian author Claudia Pineiro, focuses once again on the evil that lurks within the hearts of men, even those who seem innocent or numbed by their own circumstances. Honestly does not seem to enter the equation here, as Pineiro once again mines a theme which also appears in her two previous novels in translation. As dark (even cynical) as the theme seems to be, the author works it with a light hand, employing surprisingly little violence (which usually takes place "offstage") and creating characters who often bumble their way through the complex mazes of their lives and into situations over which they believe they have little control. Life in Buenos Aires may appear dark here, but Pineiro's characters take their circumstances for granted and do what they believe they must do to succeed. In the process, they become understandable - and all too human in their weaknesses.

Pablo Simo, the forty-five-year-old architect and main character, has been married to Laura for eleven thousand seven hundred and thirty-five days. Though he does not believe he is in love with her any longer, neither has he strayed much farther than the realms of imagination. Though the architectural firm where he works has been extremely successful and Pablo Simo has been there for almost twenty years, he is not a partner, for reasons that he never even bothers to question. He spends his spare time at his desk making hundreds of designs for an imagined eleven-story apartment tower which he hopes that one day he will be able to build on his own. When attractive, 28-year-old Leonor comes to the office looking for Nelson Jara, someone with whom she says she has business, the firm's two partners pretend that they have no idea who Jara is, and Pablo just keeps his mouth shut. By page twelve, however, the reader learns that Nelson Jara is dead - "buried a few feet beneath the concrete floor...exactly where they [all] left him that night, three years ago." Jara had approached the firm when a huge crack developed in the wall of his apartment, located beside the firm's biggest building project. He has threatened to report the architects for not working to code, though he is willing to come to some "accommodation" with them for a fee. Pablo is assigned to put Jara off for a week, but when it ends, so does Jara. Author Pineiro provides one surprise after another in the aftermath of the murder, many of them the result of coincidences which, while unlikely, make the story much more fun to read and imagine. Irony piles on top of irony as Pablo's predictable life becomes more and more crazy. In addition to his residual guilt about his role in the murder, he is dealing with a teenage daughter who is out of control, a wife who may have a lover, and a strong desire to find out what love really is. The action is fast and furious, Pablo is suitably dense as a protagonist, and few readers will predict the grand outcomes of this clever and very amusing novel. Beautifully paced, despite an architectural side trip to photograph Buenos Aires's most interesting buildings, this exciting novel goes on to show that the biggest crack of all ultimately appears in the "wall" of Pablo's own stultifying life.

Praise for Claudio Pieiro: "An agile novel, a ruthless dissection of a fast decaying society." Jos Saramago, winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature

Thursday Night Widows is a gripping story. The dystopia portrayed is an indictment not solely of an assassin but of Argentina's class structure and the willful blindness of its petty bourgeoisie. "The Times Literary Supplement

Pablo Sim's life is a mess. His career as an architect is at a deadend; reduced to designing soulless office buildings desecrating the heart of Buenos Aires. His marriage seems to be one endless argument with his wife over the theatrics of their rebellious teenage daughter. To complicate matters, Pablo has long been attracted to sexy office secretary Marta Horvat, who is probably having an affair with his boss. Everything changes with the unexpected appearance of Leonor, a beautiful young woman who brings to light a crime that happened years before, a crime that everyone in the office wants forgotten, at all costs.

Claudia Pieiro once again demonstrates her capacity to reveal the things hidden behind the facades of our existence; human relationships based on habit and cowardice, rather than love; on excessive ambition and personal gain, rather than morality.

Claudia Pieiro, formerly a journalist and playwright, is the author of literary crime novels that are all bestsellers in Latin America and have been translated into many languages. A Crack in the Wall follows on the success of All Yours and Thursday Night Widows, both previously published by Bitter Lemon Press.

From Publishers Weekly

Starred . An old secret comes back to haunt 45-year-old Buenos Aires architect Pablo Sim in Argentinian author Pieiro's best crime novel yet. One day, an attractive woman of about 25, Leonor, stops by Sim's office and asks him and his two coworkers, Borla and Marta, if they know Nelson Jara. Sim, Borla, and Marta are aware that Jara is dead, buried under the concrete floor of the parking lot, exactly where they left him that night, three years ago, but the three deny knowing him or his whereabouts. Later, Leonor runs into Sim at a cafe, where she asks him for help with a photography assignment. The development of the relationship between the architect and Leonor plays out against the backstory of how Jara wound up under the parking lot. Pieiro (All Yours) keeps the reader

hooked right up to the wicked, if logical, ending. (Aug.) From Booklist Pieiros moody, immersive thriller explores personal integrity with an ironic twist, calling to mind Patricia Highsmiths Ripley series. Pablo Sim, a Willy Lomanesque Buenos Aires architect, is burdened with a fouled marriage, dead-end job, and the futility of clinging to his architecture dreams. Young, beautiful Leonor enters Pablos Buenos Aires office seeking Nelson Jara, a man at the center of a dark act that binds Pablo and his coworkers together. Of course, they send Leonor away with lies, but Pablo later encounters her in the neighborhood, and they develop a chemistry-laden friendship that fuels his obsessive reliving of the Jara incident. Soon Pablo has convinced Leonor to explain her mysterious connection to Jara and her move into the neighborhood. Simultaneously, through Pablos recollections, Pieiro reveals why Jara is such an obsession, and none of these revelations is what youd expect. Usually, readers dread the narrators doom as the threat of past misdeeds being discovered grows, but Pablos beautifully painful story somehow cries out for a disaster to divert its trajectory. --Christine Tran An old secret comes back to haunt 45-year-old Buenos Aires architect Pablo Sim in Argentinian author Pieiros best crime novel yet. One day, an attractive woman of about 25, Leonor, stops by Sims office and asks him and his two coworkers, Borla and Marta, if they know Nelson Jara. Sim, Borla, and Marta are aware that Jara is dead, buried under the concrete floor of the parking lot, exactly where they left him that night, three years ago, but the three deny knowing him or his whereabouts. Later, Leonor runs into Sim at a cafe, where she asks him for help with a photography assignment. The development of the relationship between the architect and Leonor plays out against the backstory of how Jara wound up under the parking lot. Pieiro (All Yours) keeps the reader hooked right up to the wicked, if logical, ending. Publishers Weekly (starred review) A highly metaphorical crack in a wall that isnt even his splits open the middle-class facade of a Buenos Aires architects life. Nothing moves very fast at Borla and Associates, where Pablo Sim still hasnt made associate after 20 years. The one time the firm skated close to the wind was when crabby old Nelson Jara, who lived next door to the Calle Girbone project, claimed that the construction had produced a widening crack in his interior wall. Pablo listened to his complaint, put him off with vague promises, then showed up at the construction site to find his boss, Borla, and their secretary Marta Horvat, standing over Jaras corpse. An accident, insisted Borla; instead of risking the long delays that a police investigation would entail, it would be better for everyone if they simply buried the body and let the unwitting cement contractors pour the foundation over the impromptu gravesite. But that was three years ago, and the only disturbances to Pablos humdrum work life and marriage have been his wife Lauras occasional bad moods, his daughter Franciscas growth into a teenager and his constant sexual fantasies about Marta. Everything changes when photography student Leonor Corell walks into the office of Borla and Associates asking to see Jara. As if in a trance, Pablo, whos already had frequent daydreams in which hes advised by his old school friend Tano Berletta and haunted by Jara, lets Leonor seduce him, loosening his last bonds to a perfectly ordinary life he suddenly realizes has never been his to begin with. Pieiro (All Yours, 2011, etc.) unfolds her story, and the social indictment behind it, as placidly as an Argentine Patricia Highsmith at her gentlest. Kirkus Pieiros moody, immersive thriller explores personal integrity with an ironic twist, calling to mind Patricia Highsmiths Ripley series. Pablo Sim, a Willy Lomanesque Buenos Aires architect, is burdened with a fouled marriage, dead-end job, and the futility of clinging to his architecture dreams. Young, beautiful Leonor enters Pablos Buenos Aires office seeking Nelson Jara, a man at the center of a dark act that binds Pablo and his coworkers together. Of course, they send Leonor away with lies, but Pablo later encounters her in the neighborhood, and they develop a chemistry-laden friendship that fuels his obsessive reliving of the Jara incident. Soon Pablo has convinced Leonor to explain her mysterious connection to Jara and her move into the neighborhood. Simultaneously, through Pablos recollections, Pieiro reveals why Jara is such an obsession, and none of these revelations is what youd expect. Usually, readers dread the narrators doom as the threat of past misdeeds being discovered grows, but Pablos beautifully painful story somehow cries out for a disaster to divert its trajectory. Booklist