

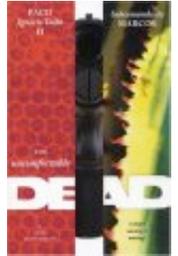


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REVIEW

Book Review: *The Uncomfortable Dead: A Novel by Four Hands - What's Missing is Missing* by Subcomandante Marcos and Paco Ignacio Taibo III



Written by [Gina Ruiz](#)

Published March 10, 2007

I'm a big fan of both Subcomandante Marcos, that mysterious Zapatista storyteller living in the jungles high in the mountains of Chiapas, and Paco Ignacio Taibo, III or PIT 3 as he is affectionately called by his many fans.

I fell in love with Marcos' writing back in 1994 when the first comunicados started working their way to *La Jornada*, a Mexican newspaper I read almost religiously, although now I find myself reading it on the Internet. PIT 3 swept me away with the first Héctor Belascoarán Shayne novel I read, *No Happy Ending*. The idea of both of these iconic figures writing a book together was just too exciting.

I had read parts of *The Uncomfortable Dead* in Spanish when it was published in *La Jornada* in alternating chapters, and it drove me crazy waiting for the next week's installment. It was the talk of our danza circle with everyone printing out the week's installment on their computers and then passing them around and excitedly jabbering away in Nahuatl, Spanish, and English about it. It was more exciting than waiting for our last dance presentation of the night at Zamora Brothers in East L.A. on Virgen de Guadalupe day.

The Uncomfortable Dead is an insanely funny murder mystery. It's all about good, evil, and the crazy politics of Mexico. The book touches on the disappearances of people over the years and of one man's (Morales) involvement in them all. The chapters written by Marcos originate in the mountains of Chiapas, Mexico. His investigator, Elias Contreras just happens to be dead, while those written by Taibo are mostly based in Mexico City starring his famous cigarette smoking,

coca cola guzzling, one-eyed detective Shayne.

After having had the opportunity to read at Mexico's Vicente Fox's oh so casually released [report](#) admitting to over 30 years of murder, torture, and rape (among other atrocities the government has been responsible for), the book really made a bigger impact upon me than I think it would have if I had read it in its entirety sooner.

I loved how, at times, the characters would discuss their roles in the book, even critiquing it and finding it wanting. I found that to be simply hilarious.

Taibo's Shayne finds more questions than answers as he digs deeper into the search for Morales, which started with a late night answering machine from a dead guy. The cast of characters in the book is a comical jumble. There's a Tijaunero porn star paid to masquerade as Osama Bin Laden in terrorist videos, Pancho Villa, Barney, various ghosts, and Gustav Mahler.

I'm not saying any more because it will just seem weirder and weirder. The book is political, funny, wry, and insanely entertaining. You'll just have to read it to find out more.

Gina MarySol Ruiz has worked in the entertainment industry for the past 15 years including the completely online publication group specializing in the animation and visual effects industry worldwide, AWN.com.

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