

DARK

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UK panel's choice Year 2016

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What strange impulse feeds the friendship between a teenager—a good student, the son parents with no connection to eccentricity, indifferent to his literary aspirations—with a man of no fixed abode who throws money of dubious origins about and introduces him into a world of completely new, risky, ever sordid experiences? Bonds of ambiguous friendship develop between a kid looking for danger, impatient to enter terrains he has only ever read about, and the indecipherable character of a man marked by a life that seems marginal; bonds of manipulations and fascination that will survive their shared adventure. "What his parents would have called bad habits had been what formed him, and if that education had taken forms considered aberrant by society, it can only be judged by its results."

UK panellists opinion:

Against a backdrop of the seedy, bohemian underworld of 1950s Buenos Aires, *Dark* tells the engaging and sometimes disturbing tale of a teenager's sentimental education at the hands of an enigmatic older man.

The protagonist is a middle-class teenager and aspiring writer, desperate to escape his sheltered existence with his parents in a wealthy area of the city. In search of the sort of adventure he spends all his time reading about in novels by Thomas de Quincey – something exotic, dangerous and absolutely forbidden by his parents – he sneaks out one night to a legendary tango venue. Here, he is approached by the mysterious, middle-aged Andrés and, on a whim, introduces himself falsely as Victor. Throughout the novel, we never know him by any other name.

In short chapters and simple yet elegant prose, *Dark* traces the development of Victor's ambiguous friendship with Andrés...

As well as being a gripping story, *Dark* is a study of how memory and imagination form and deform our understanding of the past...

... although its atmosphere is heavy with unspoken desire and unanswered questions, it is fast-moving and action-packed...

From the reader's report by [Annie MacDermott](#) [3]

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