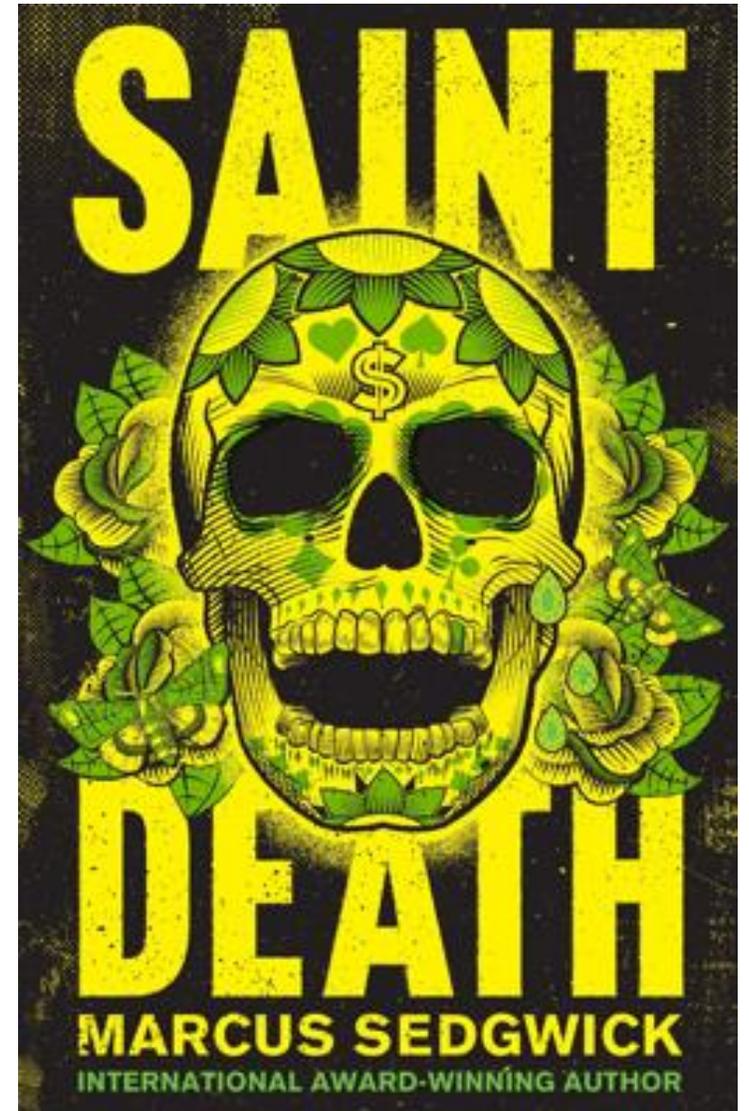


“Saint Death” by Marcus Sedgwick

Read by: Mariam Abumelih and Mr. Langan



A timely but unflinching look at the distressing impact of drugs on the U.S.-Mexico border.

*This book is about other stories that
occur over there, across the river.*

*The comfortable way to deal with these
Stories is to say they are about them.*

*The way to understand these stories
Is to say they are about us.*

“Sedgwick writes like a dream, albeit one that you wake from heart beating fast, drenched in sweat.”

The Times, Alex O’Connell

“Sedgwick’s book pulls no punches, and will leave the reader reeling.”

The Guardian, Imogen Russell Williams

“I really enjoyed Marcus Sedgwick’s strange and intriguing tale, told in rhythmical and compelling prose.”

David Almond

“The first great anti-capitalist YA novel of the 21st century.”

Teen Librarian

“A tightly plotted, dark and thrilling tale of crime, poverty and desperation.”

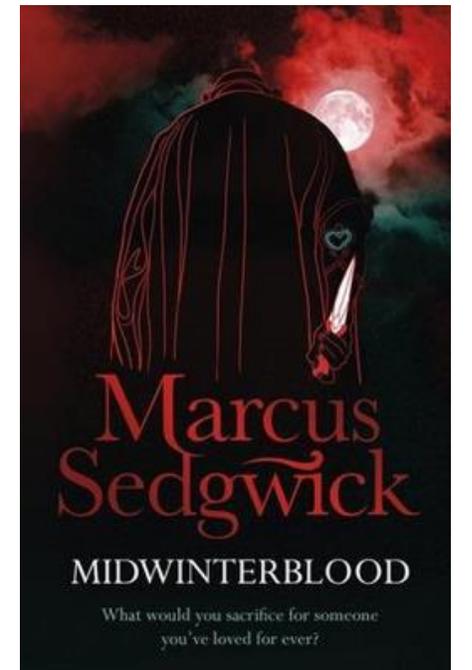
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Introduction

Context:

Marcus Sedgwick is the winner of many prizes, most notably the Michael L. Printz Award for 2014, for his novel Midwinterblood. Marcus has also received two Printz Honors, for *Revolver* in 2011 and *The Ghosts of Heaven* in 2016, giving him the most citations to date for America's most prestigious book prize for writing for young adults.

The inspiration for the writing of the book came when Marcus Sedgwick and his wife decide to move to the coast of France, where they see lots of immigrants struggling to survive. This interests Marcus. Two months later Marcus meets a Mexican lady that reveals what is happening in Mexico and all about the how people are trying to escape into America. This starts off the idea about the book "Saint Death".



Genre

- The genres of “Saint Death” are Adventure, Crime, Fiction, Mystery, Thriller, Young Adult, Realistic Fiction.

- **“Realistic Fiction” is:**

a genre consisting of stories that could have actually occurred to people in a believable setting. These stories resemble real life, and fictional characters within these stories react similarly to real people. Stories that are classified as realistic fiction have plots that highlight social or personal events or issues that mirror contemporary life, such as falling in love, marriage, finding a job, divorce, alcoholism, etc.

Characteristics of Realistic Fiction:

- Realistic fiction stories tend to take place in the present or recent past.
- Characters are involved in events that could happen.
- Characters live in places that could be or are real.
- The characters seem like real people with real issues solved in a realistic way
- The events portrayed in realistic fiction conjure questions that a reader could face in everyday life

What is “saint Death” about?

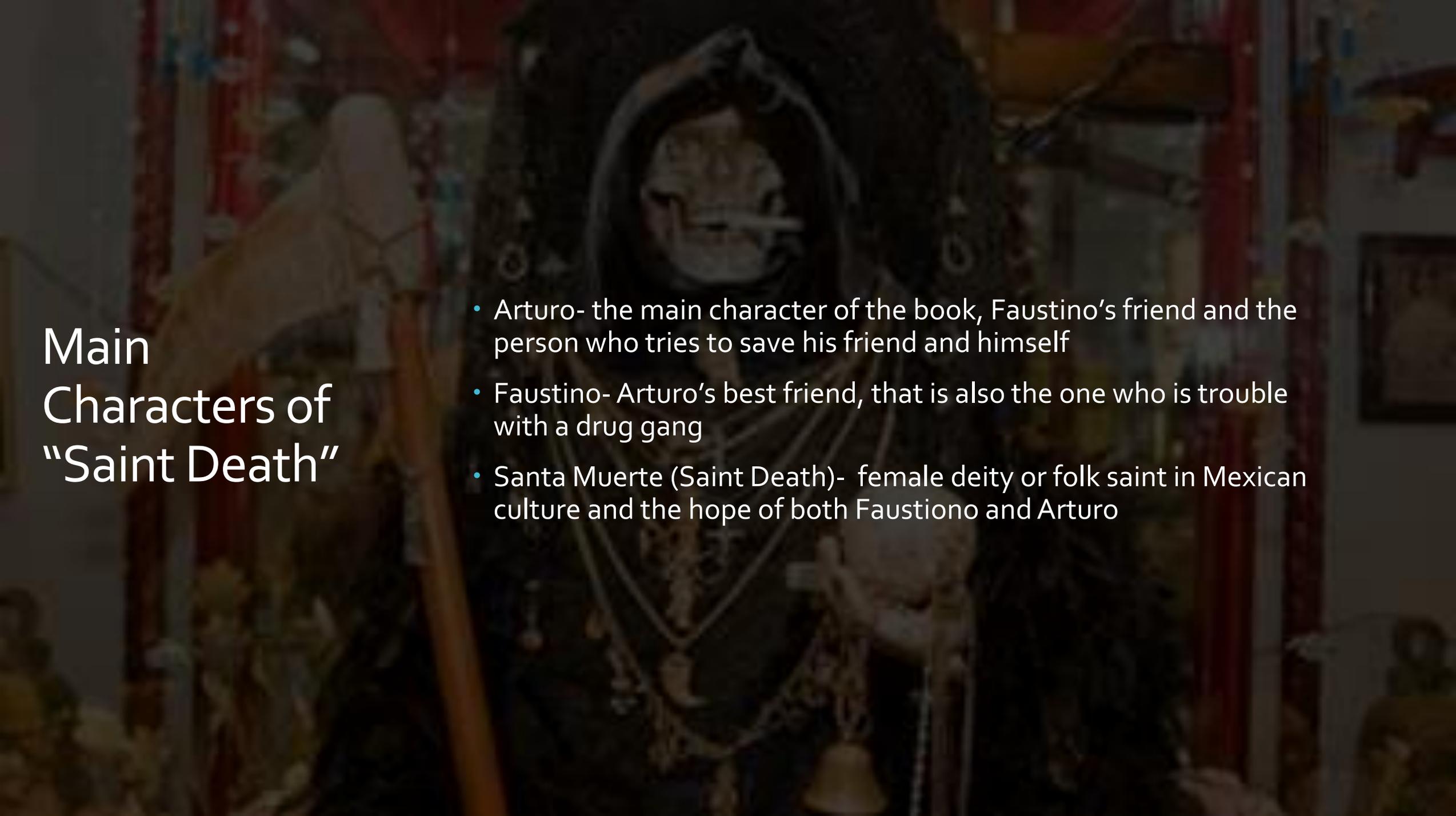
Anapra is one of the poorest neighbourhoods in the Mexican city of Juarez – twenty metres outside town lies a fence – and beyond it – America – a dream for many a migrant. Faustino is one of those migrants trying to escape from the gang he’s been working for. *Saint Death* tells the story of Arturo, whose childhood friend Faustino turns up after disappearing a year ago. Faustino is in deep trouble with the leader of his drug gang and Arturo discovers that he has only 36 hours to save his friend, gambling for his life. Watching over them is Saint Death. Saint Death (or Santissima Muerte) – she of pure bone and charcoal-black eye, she of absolute loyalty, holy patron to rich and poor, to prostitute and narco-lord, criminal and police-chief. A folk saint, a rebel angel, a sinister guardian.

It’s a story about power, lies, and friendship, and it’s about what happens when people with bad intentions are put in high positions and take advantage of the poor and weak. Its about the huge boarder between good and bad, rich and poor, life and death.



What do Mary and Mr. Langan think about the book?

- Mary:
- “In the beginning, you would think that this book is only about gangs and drugs and guns but the more I read “Saint Death” the more I saw that the book is about much more. It is brash and brutal. Its about friendship, love and growing up. It had very intense moments, like the card game, it had touching moments and unexpected plot twists. All these things added up and with the way that the book was written, make this book, for me, a must read.”
- Mr. Langan
- “I thought the book was thought provoking on the subjects of immigration, narcotics, crime and the divide between socially privileged developed societies and poor countries. I liked the thriller aspects of the book, particularly the tension of the card game and the interaction of the drug cartel gangs and the locals. Certain aspects of the book were unconvincing I thought, like the relationship between the Arturo and his former teacher, now his step mother. There was a very good twist between the first and last chapter, which I don’t want to spoil for other readers. All in all the book was well written and gripped me.”



Main Characters of “Saint Death”

- Arturo- the main character of the book, Faustino’s friend and the person who tries to save his friend and himself
- Faustino- Arturo’s best friend, that is also the one who is trouble with a drug gang
- Santa Muerte (Saint Death)- female deity or folk saint in Mexican culture and the hope of both Faustino and Arturo

Secondary Characters of "Saint Death"

Raúl- El Carnero's driver/killer

Eva- Faustino's girlfriend and the mother of his child

Margarita- Arturo's step mother and his former teacher

Gabriel- an owner of a shop, that got murdered by a gang

José- Arturo's former employer

Arturo's father

Carlos and Sigggy- a couple who own a pub and support Arturo throughout the entire book

El Carnero - the leader of the Faustino's gang, Los Libertadores



Anapra, Mexico

Predictably, things go very wrong for Arturo and Faustino but underneath the surface of what happens in just one day is a story that reaches back to the ancient gods of Mexico and stretches forward to the cults and gangs of the present.

"He is playing calavera with the man who will kill Faustino unless he can take a thousand dollars off him by the end of the night. Standing right behind him is the narco who abducted Gabriel from Anapra that morning".

Every character in *Saint Death* has a story of loss, persecution and tragedy and Sedgwick weaves these stories together in a plot that is as complex as it is fascinating . This is not a book about everyone in Mexico but it is a book about the disappearances, desperation and industrial wastelands of a strip of land on the border with the United States.

What do all characters in "Saint Death" have in common?