

praise for

THE ATHENIAN MURDERS

"Quirky, original, and impressively well informed, *The Athenian Murders* sparkles with wit and intelligence. . . . Succeeds brilliantly as a whodunit, a novel of ideas, a historical novel, and a postmodernist self-reflexive text."

—**Charles Palliser**, author of *The Unburied*

"Brilliant . . . Somoza weaves suspense, gore, a particular corner of Plato's philosophy and layer upon layer of tantalizing reflexivity with ease and obvious relish."

—*The Times* (London)

"An extremely subtle and intelligent work . . . Totally absorbing."

—**T. J. Bignon**, *The Evening Standard*

"A historical thriller in which the demons of doubt prove to be more implacable than any agent of nemesis."

—*The Independent on Sunday*



THE
ATHENIAN
MURDERS
by
José Carlos Somoza
FSG

THE
a novel
ATHENIAN
José Carlos Somoza
MURDERS

U.S.A. \$24.00

"Wonderful . . . A hurricane of fresh air . . . Heracles Pontor stands alongside William of Baskerville as comfortably as *The Athenian Murders* will take its place next to *The Name of the Rose*." — Julian Rathbone, author of *The Last English King*

A translator begins to work on an old text, a story set in ancient Athens. . . .

One of the pupils of Plato's Academy is found dead, apparently savaged by wolves. A verdict of accidental death is reached, but the boy's idealistic teacher, Diagoras, remains unconvinced. Tramachus had been behaving oddly in the month before his demise, and Diagoras believes the boy was living in fear of someone or something. He asks Heracles Pontor, the famous "Decipherer of Enigmas," to investigate.

Several more corpses are found, and the two men find themselves drawn into a dangerous web of intrigue as their quest for the truth leads them from the backstreets of Athens to the terrifying underworld of its most powerful citizens.

Simultaneously, a second plot unfolds: that of the modern-day translator of the ancient text, who becomes convinced that the original author has hidden a second meaning in the story, one which can be interpreted through certain repeated words and images. As his work progresses, the translator is alarmed to discover references to himself in the narrative—references which seem to address him personally in an increasingly menacing fashion.

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Intriguing, ingenious, and mordantly funny, *The Athenian Murders* intertwines two darkly compelling riddles, forcing us to confront the ways in which we interpret fact and fiction, and introduces a beguiling new talent to an American readership.



José Carlos Somoza

is a psychiatrist and the author of six novels. In 2000, he was short-listed for the Nadal Prize, one of the most important literary awards in Spain. *The Athenian Murders* is his first novel to be translated into English. He lives in Madrid.

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