



## THE SECRET SONG OF THE WORLD

A fantasy novel by José Antonio Cotrina

### **Her name is Ariadna.**

Four years ago, police found her in a burning house full of corpses and mutilated bodies. She was the only survivor among the massacre. And the only thing she could remember was her name.

Four years later, she's rebuilt her life. She's happy with her adoptive family and her perfect boyfriend. Everything's fine, everything's working out. So what if she never dreams? So what if her left eye is totally black, without a trace of iris or pupil? Ariadna is happy.

Until her past comes back to claim her.

And now, Ariadna begins her descent into the depths of hell, on a terrifying journey that will lead her to the other side of reality, to the secret world that hides behind shadows and mirrors. To a place where monsters dwell and cruelty is rampant, a place where she will be forced to confront her true identity.

# THE SECRET SONG OF THE WORLD

## From the book reviews:

"One of the best books I've read in a long time. The journey was spectacular. I cried, I laughed, I was afraid, and I was full of wonder. A masterpiece."

*Alexander Páez*

"Dark, oppressive, addictive, bursting with imagination. Cotrina at his best. This is a novel that grabs you and turns you inside out, spun with a mastery that leaves no loose ends."

*Virginia McKenzie*

"If you like the fantasy genre then *The Secret Song of the World* is for you. But if you suffer from a delicate stomach, then you better keep your distance."

*César Mallorquí*

"It's not just that I enjoyed the book, it's way more than that. I was totally hooked; suffering along with the main character. I got so worked up I felt like ripping my skin off! I experienced both horror and sadness. I felt compelled to reread entire passages because they were so powerful... I have been captivated by Cotrina."

*L. M. Mateo*

"This book traps you, stabs you in the guts with a dagger made of ice; and then you need to finish the book to get rid of that feeling, that urge to read it, to know it all, to reach the end and realize that you haven't finished the book: it is the book that's finished you."

*The Best Read Yet*

"The reader is forced to make a dreadful decision: to either follow the urge to devour one page after the other, or take small occasional breaks and savor each scene properly. I think I've never experienced this feeling before – between yearning to know more and needing to digest so many different emotions – but I loved it."

*Elías F. Combarro*

"Planning this book must have taken a titanic effort, because, despite its complexity, it doesn't have a single plot hole. Not one."

*Libros Prohibidos*



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## The Story

Ariadna remembers nothing of her past. She doesn't remember that she was born dead, and that a ghastly creature breathed life back into her. She doesn't remember her master, the dark magician Count Sagrada; she doesn't remember the Umbra, a dark dimension that coexists with our normal world.

Now she lives in Madrid, with her adopted family. She adores her boyfriend, Marc. She's just an ordinary eighteen-year-old and her life is perfect.

Until Evan comes back into her life.

He belongs to her past. When they were part of *The Carrion*, a brotherhood of thieves and assassins. He recalls how one night, four years ago, they were ambushed during a robbery and Ariadna cast a forgetting spell on herself to protect the brotherhood's secrets. Evan left the brotherhood because he suspected that someone in their own group had betrayed them.

But now Evan is in danger, pursued by a relentless monster that can only be defeated with a sword named Slaughter. This very sword is soon to be auctioned off, and Evan needs Ariadna to steal it. With her help, he can elude *Elias's Six*, a band of mercenaries hired to protect the sword.

The plan works. But what was supposed to be a simple heist turns into a bloodbath: Evan's cruelty and violence are without mercy. Once it's all over, Ariadna rejects Evan and her past.

*Elias's Six* takes Ariadna's family hostage until she tells them where Evan and the sword are. Ariadna's father intervenes, assuring them that he and his family are under the protection of Edgar Müller, a powerful sorcerer. But his words are wasted. The mercenaries kill Ariadna's family... and then they kill her.

However, death is not the end for Ariadna.

She's not human. She's a Vhirago, same as Evan: a creature made with dark magic by Count Sagrada, master of *The House without Windows* and leader of *The Carrion*. Vhiragoes can die, but they return to life shortly after. This is their curse.

Ariadna decides to search for this sorcerer, Edgar Müller. She finds him and his wife, Sonia, and discovers they've been searching for her! They tell her how the police found her four years ago, in a mansion where a great battle had been fought, and there was only one survivor: Ariadna. Edgar and Sonia were part of the investigation. They knew that the mysterious *Carrion* was involved, and that Ariadna was their golden opportunity to take the brotherhood down. But without her memories, she was of little use when they found her.

Now Müller and Sonia ask Ariadna for any information she can give them that can be used against *The Carrion*. Before she can help, they are attacked by the monsters from *The House without Windows*. Ariadna dies once again.

She resurrects in Umbra, land of shadows, where more memories start flooding back to her. She remembers the frustration she and Evan felt under the power of *The House without Windows* – where they were little more than tools in the Count's hands. Once they tried to escape, but quickly understood they weren't yet strong enough to break those bonds.

She recalls that shortly after their failed escape, *The Carrion* were assigned to steal the Aazardian Fist, a necklace of pure dark magic. Unfortunately, they weren't the only ones interested in the necklace, and the mansion turned into a colossal battleground. Somehow, the Fist ended up in Evan's hands, and he saw the opportunity for he and Ariadna to fight for their freedom and finally break the chains that bound them to Sagrada. But Evan, maddened by the Fist's power, unleashed the artifact's magic onto friends and foes, laying waste to everything.

Now, back in *The House without Windows*, the place that used to be Ariadna's home, Evan contacts her. He threatens to kill her boyfriend Marc if she won't meet with him. Ariadna feels she must first talk to her former master, Sagrada, who assures her they can reach an agreement. Ariadna is wary of the dark magician, but realizes she has no choice.

She meets up with Evan, who tells her he now has accumulated enough power to destroy *The House without Windows*. Nothing is out of their reach, they're free! But she holds no love for her old companion and lets him know she despises him. He realizes he has lost her and, much to her surprise, decides to let both her and Marc go.

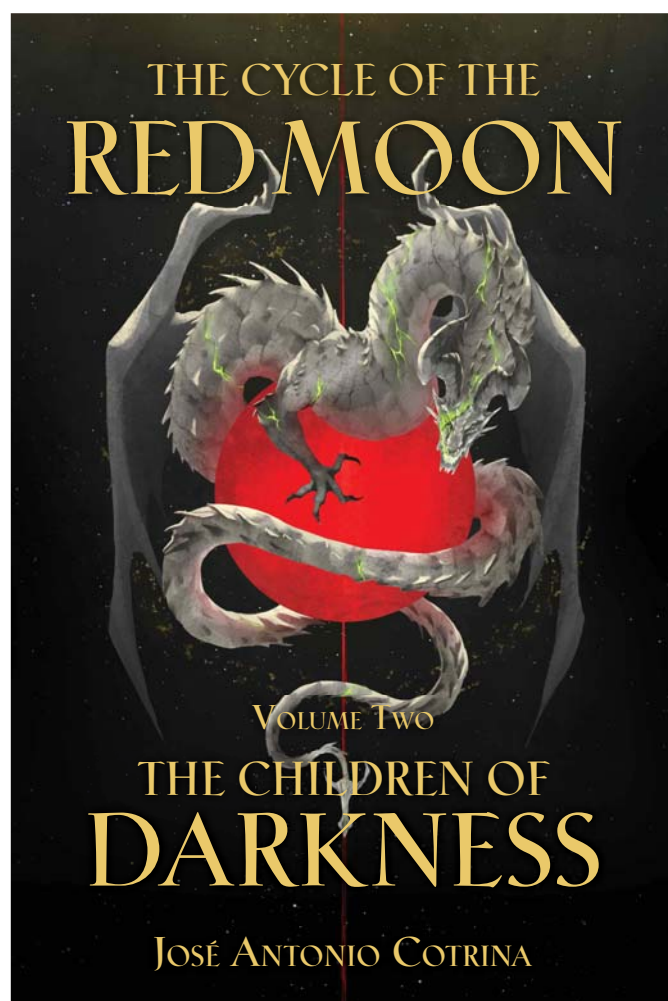
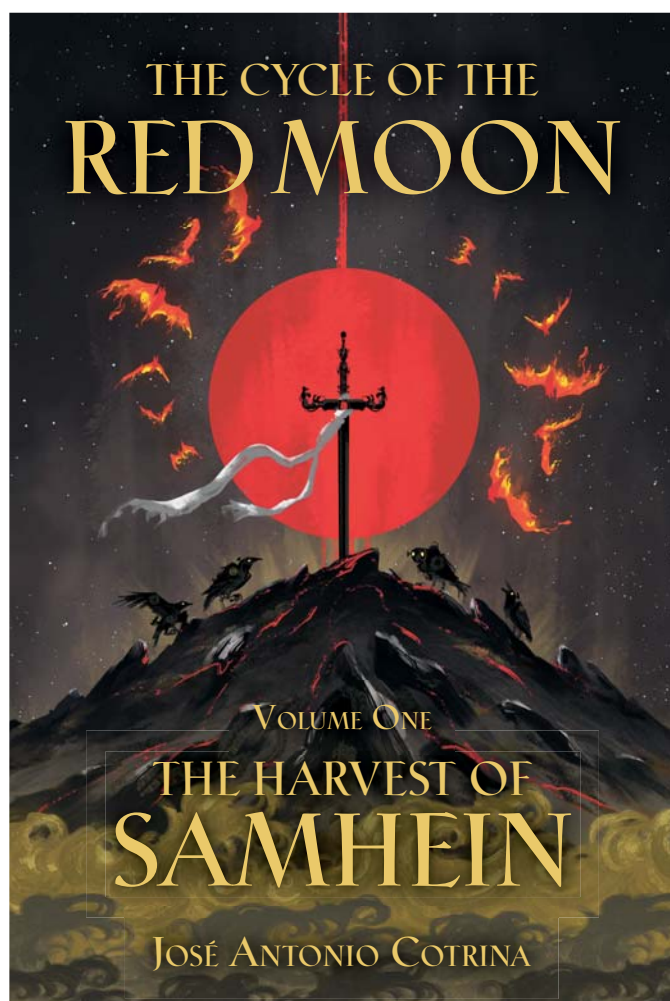
Marc and Ariadna return to the normal world where she explains the agreement she made with Count Sagrada. He will allow her to live a normal life with Marc, but only one life: once Ariadna dies and resurrects she must return to take her place in *The Carrion*. Ariadna accepted but knows that something is not quite right, something doesn't fit.

Is she still tied to her past, or is she free to maybe have a future? Nothing is what it seems in this world of dark magic.

And nothing in this book happens the way you think it might.



**José Antonio Cotrina**, the author of *The Secret Song of the World*, is Spain's bestselling fantasy novel writer. The first volume of his YA fantasy trilogy, *The Cycle of the Red Moon*, was released in the United States by Dark Horse Books, and distributed by Penguin Random House, on September 1, 2020.



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