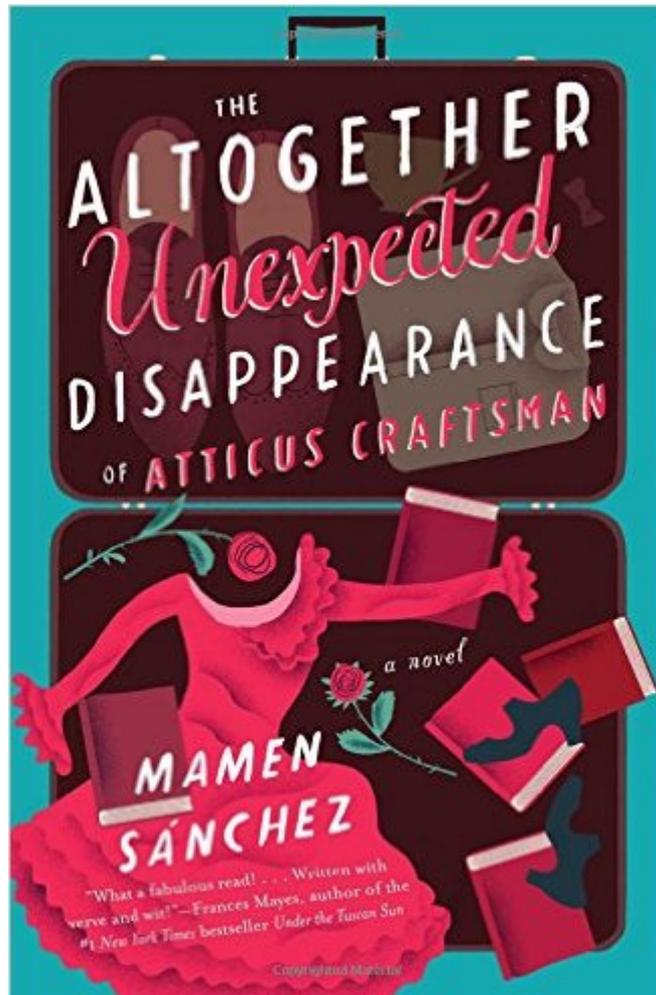


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# The Altogether Unexpected Disappearance Of Atticus Craftsman: A Novel



## Synopsis

A fiendishly fun and charming novel echoing the quirky works of brilliant director Pedro Almod var, *The Altogether Unexpected Disappearance of Atticus Craftsman* follows an uptight Englishman who is sent to Madrid to close a literary magazine and the five fiery, close-knit Spanish women who must devise a plan in order to keep the jobs they love. Atticus Craftsman never travels without a supply of Earl Grey, an electric kettle, and a teacup so he makes sure he has packed all three after his father, distinguished publisher of Craftsman & Co., sends him to Madrid to shut down a failing literary magazine, Librarte. But when nobody has heard from him in three months, his father knows something must be very wrong. Fortunately, Inspector Manchego is on the case. Manchego gets to work unraveling the mystery of the Englishman's disappearance, but there to block him at every turn are the five fiery and close-knit Spanish women who run Librarte and who will do anything to keep their jobs. From a kidnapping to the rediscovery of the long-lost poems of Federico Garc a Lorca, Manchego and Atticus are taken on a madcap journey through the narrow streets of Madrid and down to the bohemian heart of Andalusia. A charming tale with linguistic mishaps, literary intrigue, a clash of cultures, and an unexpected romance, *The Altogether Unexpected Disappearance of Atticus Craftsman* is at once a humorous literary caper and a touching love story, making for an altogether clever and delightfully different read.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When a Spanish magazine run by four Spanish women starts showing dramatic losses, Atticus

Craftsman, an upper crust son of a publishing scion, is sent to Spain to shut down the magazine and fire them all. Atticus is an interesting character: a reader of the most romantic novels of all time who never travels without an ample supply of Earl Grey tea, which he believes to be the cure for everything. The four women, a tightly-knit and hard-working crew, know they must somehow stop him. When he goes missing, Craftsman Senior and his terribly proper British wife, travel to Spain to launch an investigation. And there the fun... and romance... and magical mysticism...and dancing and singing and witchery... begin. Not at all my usual genre of reading material (I was perhaps lured in by the "missing Brit" angle), I enjoyed the book far more than I anticipated. Why? Well... here are the top ten things that are great about THE ALTOGETHER UNEXPECTED DISAPPEARANCE OF ATTICUS CRAFTSMAN.<sup>10</sup> It has much magical mysticism, but it's woven with so much humor that it's a lot easier for realist readers to take.<sup>9</sup> Character, character, character. Besides Atticus who, in addition to the tea, always travels with an electric kettle, a teacup and his four favorite erotic novels, there are the women: Berta, the maternal ex-librarian boss, Solea the writer enchantress, Maria with her wastrel husband and ever-expanding litter of children, Asuncion (who firmly believes croissants and buns help swallow sorrow), and Gabriela, in love and constantly trying to conceive.<sup>8</sup> For those who fear/avoid travel (spoken by someone who once did Europe on \$5 a day), one of the best explanations ever.

Based on the publisher's description, I was really looking forward to a fun read in The Altogether Unexpected Disappearance of Atticus Craftsman. In particular, I thought a book that was considered good enough to be translated was likely to be of high quality. Boy, was I disappointed! My first unease came in Chapter 1 when Marlow Craftsman comes to Inspector Manchego's office to report his son's disappearance and Manchego takes the son's name and address but does not ask for additional information like a photo, bank details, or the son's car license tag number, even when Marlow prompts him to do so. The bumbling cop is a staple of light-hearted fiction, but Manchego seemed to represent a new low. The book continued to go downhill after that opening. I did not laugh once and hardly smiled. Maybe my sense of humor is inadequately developed, but I did not find it amusing when Atticus discovers that the glassware in his furnished apartment, if broken, shatters into many little crystals that look so much like confetti that he throws a half dozen of them on the floor just for fun. I was even less amused when a man with whom Maria is having an extramarital affair beats her savagely, again, apparently, just for fun. The book description stresses Atticus's disappearance, the event that touches off the plot line, but The Altogether Unexpected Disappearance of Atticus Craftsman is really about the five women who work for the magazine

Librarte, especially in the first half of the book. In addition to Maria, who enters an extramarital affair because of an unhappy marriage, there is Berta, whose only love interest was a boy she observed from afar for five years when she was a schoolgirl, the overweight menopausal divorcee Asuncion, and Gaby, who fervently wants a baby and can't get pregnant.

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