

## Damnificados (Review)

Written by Administrator

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amnificados is one of those weird little books that edge over from the real world into serendipitous fantasy. The real story behind this involves an abandoned office/apartmen Caracas, Venezuela, one which was taken over by the city's abandoned people, the trash pickers, the beggars, the squatters, the panhandlers, the crimples, the outcasts, and likely the review writers. Lead by Necho, a little cripple, the hordes are stymied by their first impediment to occupation, namely a pack of wolves denning in the entry. Once these large feral creatures are removed, the tower can fulfil its primary function, providing a place for the people of this world.

I don't know how close this really followed history (not very close, I suspect). There are elements of whimsy and fantasy, quests, mysterious brothers arriving, women falling in love at first sight. But some rings true – that the people without home or community establish both, living in their towers, managing things by floor, even (as I found out) establishing an actual scooter taxi service up the stairs. The story contains just enough reality to ground it and just enough fantasy to make it fly. I know that will cheese a lot of historians out there but I liked it. It opens the possibilities to what might happen. After all, as a director said (sorta) in *The Great Waldo Pepper*,  
“Historians provide accuracy. Artists provide truth.”

But the story cannot end there, of course. First there is a horrific flood that maroons the tower dwellers and nearly bring their fledgling community to naught. Then, the rightful owners of the tower, the Torres dynasty with all their corrupt South American political and military power, want it back. The DAM (as they are referred to) only have a handful of weapons and turn into trembling piles of panic when the bullets start flying, certainly unable to provide any resistance. But miracles happen, as unlikely as they are wondrous (not telling what), and the attack fails. But there are other brothers, meaner and even more powerful brothers, and the tower finds itself in more danger. Will they survive? Will they become a new utopia? You'll need to read it to find me.

I really liked this one. I reminded me of the one-foot-in-fantasy storytelling of Neil Gaiman where the world runs along its usual course of poverty and sadness, yet sometimes it doesn't. Romance can blossom, love can flourish, miracles can happen, all those things. Fun read, very

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punchy, very creative. Worth a look (or even a purchase).

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