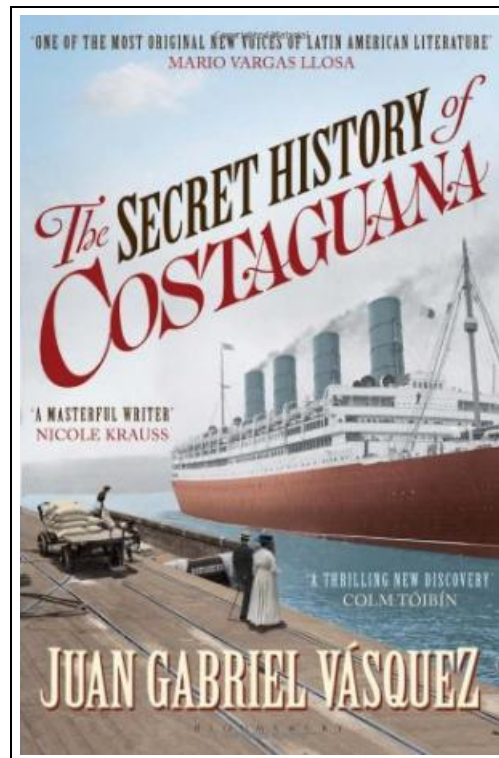


## The Secret History of Costaguana



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*(Hudson Christiansen)*

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Bloomsbury Publishing PLC. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, The Secret History of Costaguana, Juan Gabriel Vasquez, London, 1903. Joseph Conrad is struggling with his new novel ('I am placing it in South America in a Republic I call Costaguana'). Progress is slow and the great writer needs help from a native of the Caribbean coast of South America. Jose Altamirano, Colombian at birth, who has just arrived in London, answers the great writer's advertisement and tells him his life story. Jose has been witness to the most horrible things that a person or a country could suffer, and drags with him not just a guilty conscience but a story that has almost destroyed him. But when Nostromo is published the following year Jose is outraged by what he reads: 'You've eliminated me from my own life. You, Joseph Conrad, have robbed me.' I waved the Weekly in the air again, and then threw it down on his desk. 'Here,' I whispered, my back to the thief, 'I do not exist.' The Secret History of Costaguana, the second novel by Juan Gabriel Vasquez to be published in English, is Jose Altamirano's riposte to Joseph Conrad. It is a big novel, tragic and despairing, comic and insightful by turns, told by a bumptious narrator with a score to settle. It is Latin America's post-modern answer to Europe's modernist vision. It is a superb, joyful, thoughtful and rumbustious novel that will establish Juan Gabriel Vasquez's reputation as one of the leading novelists of his generation.



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