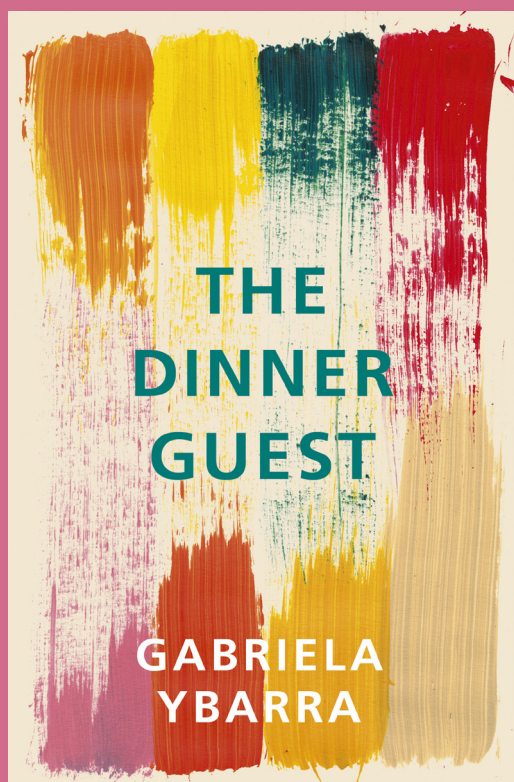




# Reader's Guide



## The Dinner Guest Gabriela Ybarra

Translated by Natasha Wimmer

Harvill Secker

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### About the author

Gabriela Ybarra was born in Bilbao, Spain, in 1983. She currently lives in Madrid, where she writes and works in social media analysis. *The Dinner Guest* is her first novel and was published to critical acclaim in Spain, where it won the Euskadi Literature Prize 2016. Her work has appeared in publications such as *El País*, *ABC* and *Revista Eñe*.

### About the translator

Natasha Wimmer was born in Iowa, USA, in 1973. She is the translator of Gabriela Ybarra's *The Dinner Guest* and Roberto Bolaño's *The Savage Detectives* and *2666*. She lives in New York City.

### About the book

In 1977, three terrorists broke into Gabriela Ybarra's grandfather's home and pointed a gun at him in the shower. This was the last time his family saw him alive, and his kidnapping played out in the press, culminating in his murder. Ybarra first heard the story when she was eight, but it was only after her mother's death, years later, that she felt the need to go deeper and discover more about her family's past. *The Dinner Guest* is a novel inspired by what she found. It connects two life-changing events – the very public death of Ybarra's grandfather and the more private pain as her mother dies from cancer and Gabriela cares for her.

### Discussion points

Ybarra uses true family stories about her mother and grandfather in the book – discuss the choice to fictionalise these events rather than writing their story as non-fiction

The historical background of the Basque region during a period of conflict adds another dimension to the book. What did you learn?

The kidnapping and murder of Ybarra's grandfather took place six years before she was born – do you think the story would have been different if she had known her grandfather?

Discuss how you felt about the intimacy of Ybarra's story about her mother. Did it cause an emotional reaction?

### Themed reading

Zinzi Clemmons *What We Lose*  
Ramon Saizarbitoria *Martutene*  
Will Schwalbe *The End of Your Life Book Club*  
Claire Bidwell Smith *The Rules of Inheritance*

### Useful links

<https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/the-dinner-guest-review-an-angel-at-the-table-1.3407362>

<http://quarterlyconversation.com/the-natasha-wimmer-interview>

<https://winstonsdad.wordpress.com/2018/03/12/the-dinner-guest-by-gabriela-ybarra/>