

richard's review

Richard J. Atwood with Zoraida Rosado

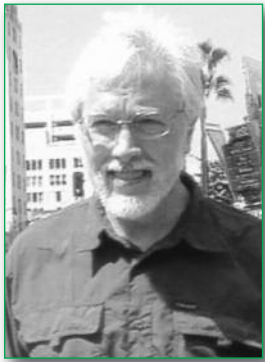
Vampiros y Hemofilia

hemofilia & vampiros

Jóvenes Vampiros: El código secreto / Young Vampires: The secret codex
Text and illustrations by José Aguilar (2007)



Ann Woodruff



What do we believe? As individuals, our beliefs vary widely. For instance, do we believe that there will be a cure for hemophilia one day? Do we believe in everlasting romance? Or perhaps even in vampires? Nothing seems impossible when we believe.

Spanish author and illustrator José Aguilar asks that we believe in all of these things, by using our imaginations. Aguilar wrote his young adult romance, *Jóvenes Vampiros*, and then drew the vivid illustrations. To pique the reader's interest, Aguilar includes a young female protagonist who has hemophilia, plus an evil vampire who foils the romantic couple's relationship.

The story is told by the monk Fray Filippo de Ansua, who somehow has acquired a notebook and drawings by Leonardo da Vinci. The romance begins when young Marco Tulio, of the noble house of Padutti de Verona, swears a

secret pledge of love with his beautiful distant cousin, Isabel. They seal their romantic ceremony by pricking their fingers on a rose stem and then mixing their blood.

Tragically, Isabel is hemophilic, with unstoppable bleeding. But fortunately, her family knows Leonardo da Vinci, who is able to stop the bleeding. Yet the evil vampire Tristán de Padua, lord of the castle of Monenero, convinces Marco that Isabel can be forever cured of hemophilia if she is bitten on the neck. This deception results in Isabel's death—and means that she is not holy, so cannot be buried in the cemetery.

Marco grieves for five years over his deceased love before plotting his revenge. He confronts the evil vampire Tristán at the carnival in Venice, accusing him of murder. When Tristán sinks his fangs into Marco's neck, the vampire

suddenly dies—because Marco has poisoned his *own* blood. To add to the tragedy, Marco then takes his own life. In their honor, Leonardo da Vinci sculpts a monument of the two young lovers holding hands over their graves surrounded by red roses.

When reading fiction, we don't have to believe everything the author writes. We can enjoy the story while also being critical. This tragic, fictional love story, which includes a character with hemophilia, is worth reading. Of course we know that Leonardo da Vinci did not have a treatment for hemophilia, though the story was more interesting with that suggestion. But there is still a lesson: for our own hemophilia care, we must make sound decisions based on scientific evidence because when we are well informed, we make better decisions. @

See PEN August 2012 for the Spanish version of Richard's Review.

