



# NADA

Carmen Laforet (1944)



## INFORMATION

Nothing is a novel written by Carmen Laforet in 1944 that won the Nadal Prize on the 6th of January 1945. Later, in 1948, it obtained the Fastenrath prize from the Real Spanish Academy (Real Academia Española). The work attracted attention not only for the youthfulness of the writer, who was 23 at the time, but also for Laforet's description of society at that time. Addressing those who said that the novel was autobiographical, the author wrote the following in the introduction to the compilation entitled Novels (First Edition of 1957, Barcelona, Editorial Planet): "Like all of my novels, it is not autobiographical despite the fact the story is of a student girl, as I was in Barcelona, and even the circumstances of living on a street in this city where I lived, this has raised this question more than once."

Nothing is a novel of existentialist character in which Carmen Laforet reflects the stagnation and the poverty in which Spain found itself during the postwar period. The writer was able to portray through this work, written with a literary style that supposed a renewal in the prose of the time, the slow disappearance of the petty bourgeoisie after the Civil War.

This novel was included in the list of the 100 best novels in Spanish of century XX of the Spanish newspaper "The World".

## SYNOPSIS

The protagonist of the novel is a young woman, named Andrea, who just after the Spanish Civil War moves to the city of Barcelona to study and start a new life. When Andrea arrives at her grandmother's home, where she only has memories of her childhood, her illusions are broken. In the flat in Aribau street lives her aunt Augustias, her uncle Román, her uncle Juan, his wife, Gloria, and Antonia, the maid, in an environment characterized by Hunger, filth, violence and hatred. Andrea, who lives her life oppressed by her Aunt Augustias, feels that her life will change when her aunt leaves, but things do not just go as she would like. However, at university she meets Ena, a girl who will go on to become an intimate friend and play an important role in her life, because together with her she will learn what the outside world can offer.

The novel comes to create an atmosphere so suffocating that it manages to cross the paper and reach the reader. When, in the oppressive environment of this dark, closed, dirty and smelly house, some of the characters are asked what's up, what they think, what they feel, they often get the same answer: "nothing".

Carmen Laforet is ahead of her time with an intimate and photographic prose, which perfectly describes the Barcelona of the time. The author uses her own resources for impressionism. As a sample of these impressionist resources, description predominates in Nothing. The protagonist notices everything that surrounds her

when she arrives in Barcelona; she presents a totally subjective vision, given that she not describe the objects as they are, but rather as she perceives them, giving us her sensations and emotions. Rosa Navarro, professor of literature, affirms that it is characteristic the large number of times the author uses the verb “parecer” (to appear, to seem). Also, phrases like “having the impression”, “having the feeling” or similar appear abundantly in the novel. In addition, one of the most repeated rhetorical techniques in the work is comparison.

## ESSAY QUESTIONS

- Describe one of the protagonists of the book you have studied and explain its role in the development of one of the themes.
- How do Stylistic techniques help us to understand more deeply the main theme of the text?
- Examine the importance of the social and cultural environment in the text you have studied.
- Describe the character of one of the protagonists in the text. Evaluate its importance in the development of the work.
- What do you think is the main theme of the work you have studied? What relevance does it have for us today?

## REFERENCES

[https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nada\\_\(novela\)](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nada_(novela))

Edexcel Past Papers, Available: <http://qualifications.pearson.com/content/demo/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/spanish-2008.coursematerials.html#filterQuery=category:Pearson-UK:-Category%2FExam-materials>