

My brother, my executioner



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

My Brother, My Executioner was set on a time when the Hukbalhap was still fighting their questionable fight, and in two places, namely Manila and of course in the little town of Rosales. The book is one of the Rosales series after all. The Rosales part of the setting shows us a world torn in half: one is seemingly blissfully prosperous part that is under the shadow of the great Don Vicente Asperri, and the other one being the epitome of blight who's farming community decided to oppose the evil feudal system. The latter part of course is where the Huks set up shop.

The Manila part of the story represents modern life far away from the hardships of the rural areas and far away from deadly troubles of the feudal system warring with armed revolutionaries. This is the set of city lights, university life and luxury cars upon which the main character unknowingly falls in love with in spite of his grand ambitions. The two places in the story seem to reflect the two worlds the writer grew up in. He did grow up experiencing the affliction of the feudal system and the poverty it brought. He experienced living with freedom fighters when the Japanese invaded this country.

He also experienced city life when he came to study collage. It is also a great way for city folk to be introduced to the main character's plight if they ever find him some one to relate to. The characters have been said to be unrealistic by those of the internet who found time reviewing this classic. The main characters came from unusual backgrounds and have unusual character development. Added to that, the cruel circumstances they've endured should warrant their less than conventional personalities. Luis Asperri, the illegitimate son of Don Vicente.

He aspires vengeance upon his father for what he has done to his mother, for the sad situation that has befallen his childhood neighborhood and for his birth. He was picked up by his father some time in his adolescence when the resemblance became apparent - both his "father" and his maid mother, whom Don Vicente had paid bonuses for "special service" had dark skin. He was sent to Manila by his father to go to collage which he then quit to be a full time writer for a liberal magazine. He uses his writing to get back at his father but is unknowingly falling to the dark side. After all, Luxury, once sampled, becomes necessity.

Trining is Luis' cousin. She is also destined to be his wife. She witnessed the massacre of her family in some kind of great arson fire when she was young. She acted as Luis's sister in their younger days. She advised Luis to go get himself a girlfriend but when he does she felt irritated. She doesn't seem to be any typical female character from other famous Filipino stories from what she does with his cousin alone. Some people in the internet think that her feelings toward his cousin are unrealistic but he was the only thing that she could hold on to after what that terrible incident.

Ester is Luis' "girlfriend" in Manila. She is the daughter of his boss. He dated her, had a barbecue in the shore on a sunset. She is strong willed like Trining but maybe not as much. She maybe a spoiled brat and have issues with attention and family problems but she really wanted to become her own woman. Luis was not very much loving toward her as he was with Trining and this might have been the straw that broke the camel's back and drove her into going out like Marilyn Monroe: death by sleeping pills.

It is implied that she knew about Luis and Trining. Victor is Luis' half brother with their mother. He recently became a leader of the revolutionary group Hukbalhap. He was an inspiring figure to Luis when they were young. They kept in touch by snail mail. Though both of them hate Don Vicente but only Victor managed to make things happen. Luis wanted to work his rebellion from the inside but the dark side is very tempting indeed. Finally, Don Vicente Asperri, he is generally the big bad of the story.

He caused generally everyone besides himself great suffering and despair. He is a feudal lord on a time which it is suppose to be illegal. He has studied in Europe thus making him a don. His tentacles of power are far reaching with influences to the police, military, the justice system and even the church. He is friend to a bishop which helped a lot to make the marriage of his son with his nephew hassle free. If that was not evil enough, he keeps his wife in the tallest tower of the Asperri manor which he drove clinically insane.

He is a typical example of the evil father which is popular in many ground breaking stories. He is rich and therefore very powerful in a land defined by poverty. He wanted his son to inherit his world of pride, power and deception to his son indicating that he really was as proud of his devious work as any decent villain would. The story is set in a world that the writer wanted to point out, there are evil people out there and they make this world excruciatingly inconvenient for most of the people. It shows how people are driven to wage war even at piece time.

He has seen this happen with his own eyes most definitely but if he said it out loud he might have been shot dead. He showed how evil land lords are

very capable and are very willing to wipe out an entire village for the sake of power. Whether that is based on fact remains as speculation and revolutionary rhetoric these scenes are the reason why the book was banned in the martial law era. The book also points out how large companies milk out great revenue from liberalist writings such as what the character Luis has done but are themselves like land lords and out of control capitalist giants.

The Magazine and paper company Luis worked for was the media wing of an economic giant that itself was linked to his father's. Its like throwing a turtle into a river; you thought you gave it a killing blow but it was just riding with the current. The book was a great read really makes you empathize with the characters especially in the end when everything was bursting into flames. The genocide that Don Vicente orchestrated was either lethally unsuccessful or may have triggered the arrival mass reinforcements from the huks.

Everybody is dead or against him, his wife got shot and his child turned up wrong, Luis might as well have strapped a bomb on himself and went for a kamikaze attack on the huks, that would have been a very poetic end for that character and would have been a fitting enemy for the huks. A final thought about procreation with once cousin: it is generally considered safer to have a child with the daughter of the male's aunt than with the uncle's, a fact that was not available to the Asperries which resulted in a tragic and ironic but predictable result.