

---

**Blood, Elizabeth and Yasmina Moarek.**

***Intrigue: Langue, culture et mystère dans le monde francophone.* 2nd edition.**

**New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007. ISBN: 0-13-221378-8.**

*Intrigue: Langue, culture et mystère dans le monde francophone* is touted as a mystery story by its publishers, who state that “this mystery story, however,

is not written in a traditional narrative format. Rather, it evolves through the chapter dialogues, listening comprehension selections, communicative activities, and even grammar exercise in the textbook. With each episode in each chapter, the story progresses, and the students learn more about the characters' motives as they pick up clues related to the twists and turns of the story line." The publishers go on to assure us that the 5 Cs will still be addressed, just as they would in a "normal" textbook.

This is an intermediate-level text and assumes a fairly good knowledge of the language. Each of the ten chapters is structured in a similar way. There is a chapter overview called *Avant-propos*. It serves to introduce the featured cultural content and story. The next section, *Épisode 1*, introduces a new episode of the mystery story. Activities practice all language skills, but the focus is on reading and vocabulary building. *Épisode 2* focuses on grammatical skills while still taking an oral/aural approach for the most part. *Épisode 3* reinforces the grammatical concepts but focuses on speaking and writing. The final section of each chapter is the *Dénouement* where students will find activities that synthesize the material taught.

When I first read the description of the methodology, I feared a rehash of the Spanish *Destinos* series. While *Destinos* had its target audience and its strong points, the level of language soon made it seem fake. The videos quickly became dated. Although students liked *Destinos* for the most part, they often made fun of it as well. So I was pleased to see that this text had a lot more to offer.

All directions are given in French, which one would expect at the intermediate level. The cultural information is well presented and supplemented with maps, pictures and short explanations, where appropriate, of important details. The first chapter launches us right into the story, which begins at a hotel in Louisiana. We meet Claire and Jean-Louis, who are two of the main characters. Their exchanges are authentic and believable. Users are immediately interested and want to know more. I found that the dialogues stopped too soon, and I wanted to keep turning the pages to find out more. Later in the same section we learn a little more about Claire and Jean-Louis in another dialogue. This one is set up differently than the first, though. It is meant to be read aloud with students playing the roles of the characters. For example, the student who plays Claire will have some choices to make, as the dialogue presents options for what she can say. When Jean-Louis invites her to dinner, she can say "(C'est tentant/ J'aimerais beaucoup/ ???)." The question marks call for students to be creative and imagine an appropriate response. This is a quite clever presentation, which this reviewer has not seen before. Although most of the options mean the same thing, students learn more than one pat answer in a given context while also having the option of creating their own response.

Grammar is explained in English in the *Épisode 2* section of the chapter. Although the use of English may be reassuring to students, especially at the beginning of the semester, it probably could have been reduced or phased out by the end of the text. Overall the level of the activities is quite sophisticated. There are simpler activities, such as filling in the blank with the correct form and tense of a specific verb, and then there are more open-ended questions, often linking back

to the film. For example, in Chapter 7 students learn the past conditional and are asked to imagine what the characters' lives would have been like if they had not met each other. Students are asked to write a certain number of sentences on this subject and then to compare them with their classmates' answers. This approach should lead to great discussion, since students will have already thought about the topic and presumably have something to say.

In the final section, students are asked to complete tasks and activities that ask them to synthesize what they have learned in the chapter. Although the link to the topics was clearer in some chapters than in others, this section, for the most part, provides a valuable reading activity. The very first chapter has a small selection from *Les Liaisons dangereuses*, and other chapters draw their selections from a variety of French and Francophone literature, selections that are well chosen.

Overall I was intrigued by this textbook, which I guess is an appropriate response given its name. It has solid grammar and reading activities. I did not get a chance to see the workbook or the videos; however, if they are of the same caliber, I would imagine that they would be a welcome addition to the series.

Sharon Grélé  
French/Spanish Teacher  
Westwood High School  
Westwood, MA