



Havana Dreams: A Story of a Cuban Family

Wendy Gimbel

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A fascinating, powerfully evocative story of four generations of Cuban women, through whose lives the author illuminates a vivid picture--both personal and historical--of Cuba in our century.

"When I want to read a culture," writes Wendy Gimbel in her prologue, "I listen to stories about families, sensing in their contours the substance of larger mysteries." And certainly in the Revuelta family she has found a source of both mystery and revelation.

At its center is Naty: born in 1925, educated in the United States, a socialite during the Batista era, who after marriage to a prominent doctor and the birth of a daughter became intoxicated with Castro and his revolution (here, published for the first time, are the letters they exchanged while he was in jail). Though her husband and daughter immigrated to the United States after Castro's victory, Naty remained in Cuba to raise her second child, Castro's unacknowledged daughter, only to be ultimately confronted by his dismissive, withering judgment: "Naty missed the train." Her two daughters, one of whom settles well into life in America, while the other never recovers from her father's intransigent repudiation of her; her granddaughter, who Naty desperately believes will return to Cuba when--not if--Castro is removed from the island; and her mother, an unregenerate reactionary: these are the lives that complete this extraordinary story.

Each of the women is irrevocably marked with a part of the island's terrible and poignant tale, and Wendy Gimbel has created a rich and intense narrative of their lives and times. Havana Dreams leaves us with an indelible impression of familial obligation and illicit love; of the heady but doomed romanticism of revolution; and of the profound consequences of Cuba's contemporary history for the ordinary and most intimate lives of its people.

From the Hardcover edition.

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