



Dirty Havana Trilogy: A Novel in Stories

By Pedro Juan Gutierrez

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Banned in Cuba but celebrated throughout the Spanish-speaking world, this picaresque novel in stories chronicles the misadventures of Pedro Juan, a former Cuban journalist living from hand to mouth in the squalor of contemporary Havana, half disgusted and half fascinated by the depths to which he has sunk. Like the lives of so many of his neighbors in the crumbling, once-elegant apartment houses that line Havana's waterfront, Pedro Juan's days and nights have been reduced by the so-called special times - the harsh recession that followed the Soviet Union's collapse - to the struggle of surviving the daily grit through the escapist pursuit of sex. Pedro Juan scrapes by under the shadow of hunger - all the while observing his lovers and friends, strangers on the street, and their suffering with an unsentimental, mocking, yet sympathetic eye.

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Dirty Havana Trilogy: A Novel in Stories By Pedro Juan Gutierrez Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The streetwise gutsiness of Bukowski and Miller pervades Cuban poet Gutiérrez's raunchy, symbolic, semi-autobiographical debut novel of life in 1990s Havana. Although the title suggests a triptych, the work more closely resembles a mosaic of short stories bursting with vivid images of exhilaration, depravity, desire and isolation. Narrator Pedro Juan, middle-aged and fed up, has rejected his career as a journalist because "I always had to write as if stupid people were reading me." Resisting the mass exodus from Cuba of August 1994, Pedro Juan now wanders the streets of Havana like a footloose Bacchus, indulging himself with women, marijuana and rum. He survives through a series of menial jobs. His rooftop apartment in central Havana has a spectacular Caribbean view but is, like all dwellings in the decaying economy, frequently without water. Pedro Juan is imprisoned more than once for minor crimes; after one lengthy sentence, he returns home to discover that his lover has replaced him with another man. He eventually drifts back into the urban maelstrom. Prolific, explicit sex scenes reinforce the plight of the artist, and thus a society, limited to physical pleasures where life offers no intellectual or creative rewards. "It's been years since I expected anything, anything at all, of women, or of friends, or even of myself, of anyone." Gutiérrez's talent lies in creating a macho, self-abusive protagonist who remains engagingly sympathetic. This searing, no-holds-barred portrait of modern Cuba, expertly translated by Wimmer into prose strong in the rhythms and vulgar beauty of the city, comes complete with a sexy jacket photo. It will attract readers who like their fiction down, dirty and literate. (Jan.)

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Review

"Grotesquely compelling...Pedro Juan Gutierrez appears destined to become a cult writer.' TLS 'A tale of human ingenuity and hidden hopefulness overcoming near-insuperable odds.' Guardian 'One of the sexiest books I have read in a long time.' David Profumo, Literary Review

Language Notes

Text: English (translation)

Original Language: Spanish

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Phyllis Richards:

Why don't make it to be your habit? Right now, try to prepare your time to do the important behave, like looking for your favorite book and reading a guide. Beside you can solve your short lived problem; you can add your knowledge by the publication entitled Dirty Havana Trilogy: A Novel in Stories. Try to make the book Dirty Havana Trilogy: A Novel in Stories as your buddy. It means that it can to be your friend when you truly feel alone and beside associated with course make you smarter than in the past. Yeah, it is very fortuned in your case. The book makes you more confidence because you can know everything by the book. So , we need to make new experience and also knowledge with this book.

Charles Wright:

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Cherry Simard:

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Gary Lund:

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