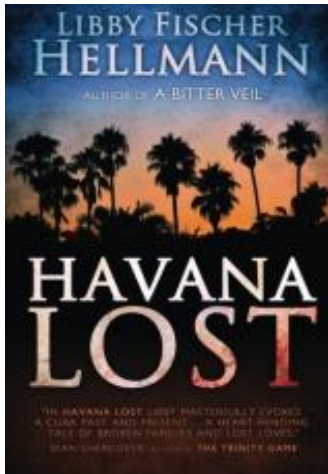


Havana Lost

by Libby Fischer Hellmann



About the Book

On the eve of the Cuban Revolution, headstrong 18-year-old Francesca Pacelli flees from her ruthless Mafia-boss father in Havana to the arms of her lover, a rebel fighting with Fidel Castro. Her father, desperate to send her to safety in the US, resorts to torture and blackmail as he searches the island for her.

So begins the first part of a spellbinding saga that spans three generations of the same family. Decades later, the family is lured back to Cuba by the promise of untold riches. But pursuing those riches brings danger as well as opportunity, and ultimately, Francesca's family must confront the lethal consequences of their choices. From the troubled streets of Havana to the mean streets of Chicago, HAVANA LOST reveals the true cost of chasing power instead of love.

HAVANA LOST is award-winning author Libby Fischer Hellmann's 10th novel and third thriller that explores how strife and revolution affect the human spirit. The novel is a testament to Hellmann's gift for authentic historical detail as well as her talent for writing compulsively readable thrillers.

Discussion Guide

1. Do you remember/or have you studied the Cuban Revolution that brought Fidel Castro to power? If so, what is your opinion? How do you explain the cold war?
2. Did you know the Mafia (Meyer Lansky et al) had such a significant presence in Havana? What do you think about their relationship with Batista? What about their casino and resort operations?
3. Did the US exploit Cuba in the 1950s? Were the revolutionaries justified in their actions?

4. How does revolution affect individuals? Families? Cities? Culture?
5. Should Luis have forgiven Ramon for telling Tony Pacelli where Luis and Francesca were? Was Luis wise or foolish?
6. If you had to use five words to describe Cuban society during their Special Period in the 1990's, what would they be? Do you think these words are different from the ones you would have used before reading this book?
7. Were you surprised by Francesca Pacelli's actions, particularly in Part 3? Do you think her behavior was influenced by what happened to her as a young woman and mother, or was it simply her inbred personality?
8. The theme of family is key to this book. If Francesca and Michael had not had such difficult relationships with their parents, how might the story have been different?
9. Is there a hero or heroine in this book? Who is it? Why?
10. Do you think that American authors should write novels about other countries? How do you think their perspective as an author flavors their work?
11. Francesca and Carla were very different people. Why was Michael attracted to Carla? Did Francesca treat her well?
12. How would you handle yourself had you been in Francesca's situation? What about Carla's?
13. How do you think Francesca will feel about her life when she looks back on it? What other choices could she have made? Why didn't she?
14. Did Ramon change over the years? How?
15. What is the significance of the title HAVANA LOST?
16. Many Americans know Cubans who were forced to leave their homeland when Castro assumed power. How have the exiles' attitudes affected American policy toward Cuba? Are they justified or simply 'sore losers'?
17. Has this novel given you any appreciation for Cuba's 100% literacy rate, their national health care system, subsidized housing, and free education system? Or are the problems inherent in a socialist system too harsh? Would you like to learn more about Cuba? In what areas?
18. Should the US drop the embargo? Should American corporations be allowed to set up operations in Cuba once again?
19. What do you know about African natural resources and the struggles to control them? How important is that part of the world to you?

20. If your computer could only function with coltan from Africa, and it was acquired in an illegal way, would that bother you? Why or why not?

21. Who was your favorite character in HAVANA LOST? Why?

Author Bio

Libby Fischer Hellmann left a career in broadcast news in Washington, DC and moved to Chicago 35 years ago, where she, naturally, began to write gritty crime fiction. Fifteen novels and 25 short stories later, she claims they'll take her out of the Windy City feet first.

She has been nominated for many awards in the mystery and crime writing community and has even won a few. She has been a finalist twice for the Anthony, three times for *Foreword Magazine's* Book of the Year, the Agatha, the Shamus, the Daphne, and has won the IPPY and the Readers Choice Award multiple times.

Her novels include the now six-volume Ellie Foreman series, which she describes as a cross between *Desperate Housewives* and *24*; the hard-boiled six-volume *Georgia Davis PI* series, and five stand-alone historical thrillers set during Revolutionary Iran, Cuba, the Sixties, Vietnam and WWII. Her short stories have been published in a dozen anthologies, the *Saturday Evening Post*, and Ed Gorman's *25 Criminally Good Short Stories* collection.

In 2005 Libby was the national president of Sisters In Crime, a 3,500-member organization dedicated to the advancement of female crime fiction authors. She also hosts both an internet TV and radio interview show and conducts writing workshops at libraries and other venues.

Her books have been translated into Spanish, German, Italian and Chinese. All her books are available in print, e-book and audiobook formats.

Critical Praise

"Libby Fischer Hellmann is already an icon of the Chicago mystery scene. In **Havana Lost** she heads in a bold new direction and masterfully evokes a Cuba past and present in a heartrending tale of broken families and lost loves."

— Sean Chercover, author of **The Trinity Game**

"In **Havana Lost**, Libby Hellmann offers readers a literary tour de force. It's a story lush with the details of another place and time—Cuba on the cusp of revolution and after—and full of lovers whose stars are tragically crossed with the complicated politics of the cold war. The writing in this thriller will take your breath away."

— William Kent Krueger, author of **Ordinary Grace** and the *Cork O'Connor* series

"Libby Hellmann is a master at crafting an engrossing read. **Havana Lost** is exceptional; the novel intrigues you from the get-go and keeps you turning pages 'til the last."

? Heather Graham, *New York Times* Bestselling author of the *Krewe Of Hunter* series

"**Havana Lost** is an engrossing tale of love, betrayal and revenge that spans three generations of remarkable women. Libby Fischer Hellmann beautifully captures the scents sounds and feel of Cuba before and after the revolution."

? Zoë Sharp, author of the *Charlie Fox* series

"**Havana Lost** has it all?a tropical thrill ride that never lets up and a love affair for the ages! I loved it!"

? Joel Goldman, Author of the *Alex Stone* and *Lou Mason* series

"A sweeping saga exploring a fascinating event and its impact on future generations."

? *New York Times* Bestselling Author CJ Lyons

Havana Lost

by Libby Fischer Hellmann

Publication Date: May 1, 2013

Genres: Fiction, Historical Fiction, Historical Thriller, Suspense, Thriller

Paperback: 300 pages

Publisher: The Red Herrings Press

ISBN-10: 193873338X

ISBN-13: 9781938733383