



Hemingway in Cuba

Norberto Fuentes

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By what marvelous alchemy did Ernest Hemingway come to spend 22 of his 61 years living in Cuba? It began with a fishing expedition. It continued with his meeting Martha Gellhorn, an attractive blonde journalist, in Sloppy Joe's Bar in Key West, Florida, in December of 1936. By 1939, Hemingway was dissolving his marriage to second wife, Pauline Pfeiffer, with the aid of Gellhorn. He was just starting to write "For Whom the Bell Tolls", his novel about the Spanish Civil War. He arrived in Key West to work on the novel in the room above the pool house. Work became impossible; Pauline's guests were too noisy and intrusive. In desperation, Hemingway fled to Havana, where he isolated himself in a room in the Ambos Mundos Hotel. He appeared from time to time to descend to the Floridita to quench his thirst with his patented Papa Doble Daiquiri. Martha Gellhorn, visiting Papa in his desolate hotel room, decided that she wanted something of a different order. She located a rental house in the hills of San Francisco de Paula. At first, Hemingway resisted. He said it was too run down. Martha hastened to fix it and staff it. Thus began the saga of 'Hemingway in Cuba'. In these pages you will understand the Cuban magic that shaped the destiny of one of America's most important writers. Norberto Fuentes (b. 1943 in Havana) is a writer and journalist. Fuentes was a close friend of Fidel Castro and thus had privileged knowledge of the Cuban secret service during some of the most difficult years of the Cuban Revolution. After spending many years alongside Castro, Fuentes tried to escape the island, was detained, and eventually released with the assistance of Gabriel García Márquez and William Kennedy. He currently lives in the United States. Gabriel García Márquez (1927-2014), who wrote the introduction, was a Colombian novelist, short-story writer, screenwriter and journalist. He is considered one of the most significant authors of the 20th century.

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