

Outcast



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(Camilla Kub)

OUTCAST

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William Morrow & Company, Scranton, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., 2001. Hard Cover. Book Condition: New. Dust Jacket Condition: Good. Dust jacket wear, small rip on the back of dust jacket. The first Cuban crime novel to be written in English and published in the U.S., *Outcast* is a smart, multi-voiced, savagely unsentimental tale that blends cultural critique, personal discovery, and explosive violence to reveal the callous, impersonal dysfunction of both contemporary Cuban socialism and its self-congratulatory, free-market alternative in Miami. The son of a Cuban mother and a U.S. laborer stationed on the island before the Revolution, the novel's protagonist, Elliot Steil, is a down-and-out school teacher in Havana. Quietly resigned to the tedium and simplicity of his life, he has, like many of his fellow Havanans, systematically distanced himself from all aspirations for a better future. Steil's hopes suddenly resurface when he is offered a "once-in-a-lifetime" chance to escape his current situation by a mysterious visitor to the island who claims to be a friend of Steil's late father. When the stranger quickly turns from savior to would-be assassin, Steil finds himself perilously immersed in the waters of the Florida Straits and in the images of a past that he had spent most of his adult life trying to forget. Steil survives the ordeal, but his journey to find his betrayer and to discover the mystery of his bicultural past lure him into the heart of Miami's Cuban underworld. In the end, the tangle of deceit, corruption, and mutual interest that binds Steil and his enemies results in a dramatic stalemate that perfectly embodies the complexity, and the cynicism, of late twentieth century capitalism.

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