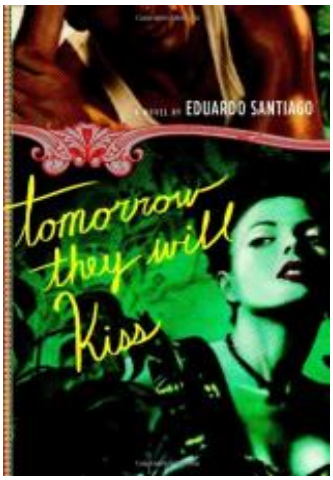
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Tomorrow They Will Kiss: A Novel

by Eduardo Santiago



About the Book

Like her native Cuba, Graciela Altamira is beautiful, defiant, passionate, and constantly threatened with some kind of trouble.

Far from her tropical home, toiling in a New Jersey doll factory, Graciela longs for the same happy ending that seems always to come in her beloved telenovelas-a kiss powerful enough to erase the sins of her past and the haunting memory of her homeland.

But how can she forget when she lives among the ghosts of that little Cuban town? With Caridad and Imperio-two women Graciela has known since girlhood-by her side in the factory, it seems she'll never be free of her past, never truly able to pursue the possibility of love she finds quite unexpectedly in the cold, gray New Jersey winter. **Tomorrow They Will Kiss** is a novel as irresistible as gossip, as addictive as a soap opera-a tale of love pursued at any cost, of how friendship and history unite us for better or worse, and of the hope for that redemptive kiss capable of reconciling estranged lovers and countries.

Discussion Guide

1. What do you think is the significance of the novel's title? What information does the title convey? What function do the telenovelas serve in the novel? What function do they serve for its characters?

2. Graciela's frame of mind changes over time. Identify at least three significant moments of such change. How do you feel about Graciela at these points in the story? Did you sometimes sense your loyalties shifting as you read?

3. Caridad and Imperio rarely describe their own problems, while they focus intently on Graciela's shortcomings and scandals. Did it change your understanding of Caridad and Imperio when, at the end of the novel, Graciela provides a

window into the dramatic hardships that they both suffer? What does the author make us understand about Caridad and Imperio by allowing their secrets to come to light in this manner?

4. How does Tomorrow They Will Kiss change or contextualize your understanding of Cuban American identity? Do you see this story as representative of the experience of many Cubans who came to the United States in the early 1960s?

5. What did you know about the Cuban Revolution before reading this book? What do you think you gain from reading a novel built around such an event, as opposed to reading a more strictly historical account?

6. Why do you think the men in this story are so absent from the plot? What do you take from that?

7. In the penultimate chapter of Tomorrow They Will Kiss, Caridad says, "I had never seen Graciela laugh so much, she could hardly stand from laughing. Is that what happiness looks like? I wondered. Like insanity?" What did those few lines make you feel?

8. What lessons do we draw from Graciela - at an individual level, and also in terms of the larger ideas of assimilation and acceptance?

Author Bio

Eduardo Santiago was born Cuba and grew up in Los Angeles and Miami. He holds a BFA in Film and Television from California Institute of the Arts and was a 2004 PEN Emerging Voices Rosenthal Fellow. He has worked as an event organizer at independent bookstores and currently writes for CBS2 News in Los Angeles, where he lives with his dog, Lyon.

Critical Praise

"A feast of splendidly drawn characters-of anxious dreamers, lost souls, and gritty survivors-Tomorrow They Will Kiss is a work of gentle loveliness, sometimes searing and often hilarious."

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Publication Date: July 3, 2006
Paperback: 304 pages
Publisher: Back Bay Books
ISBN-10: 0316014125
ISBN-13: 9780316014120