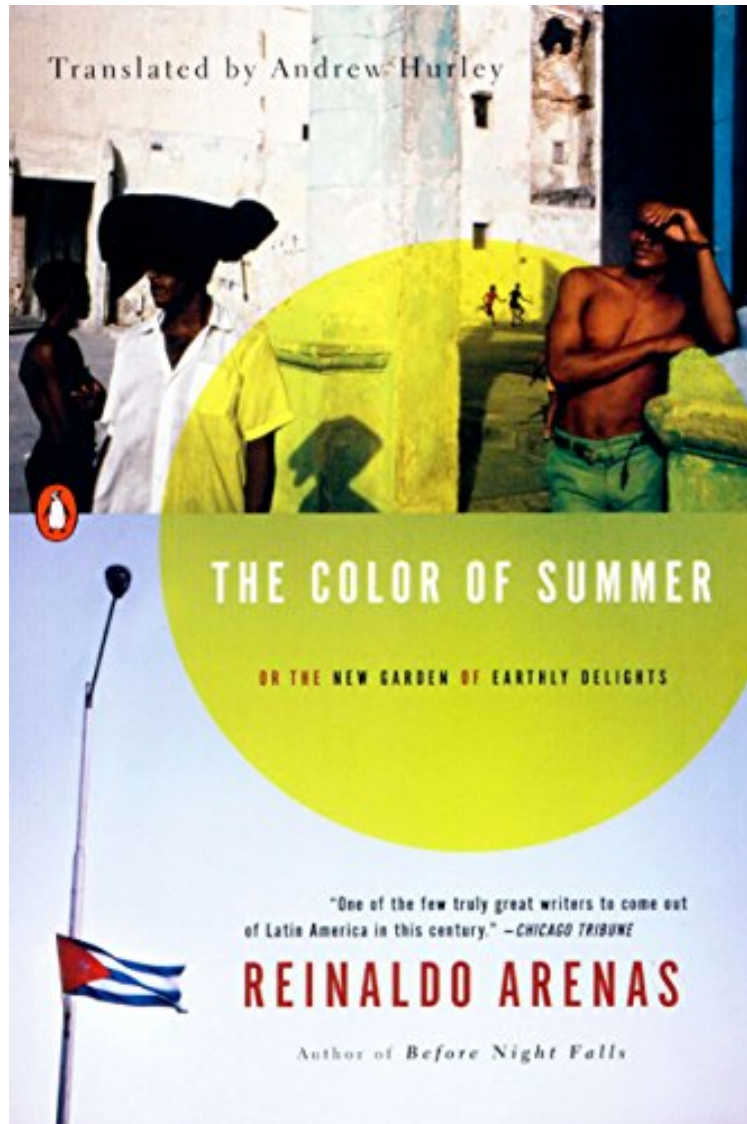


[Download] The Color of Summer: or The New Garden of Earthly Delights (Pentagonia)

The Color of Summer: or The New Garden of Earthly Delights (Pentagonia)

Von Reinaldo Arenas
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Von Reinaldo Arenas : The Color of Summer: or The New Garden of Earthly Delights (Pentagonia) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Color of Summer: or The New Garden of Earthly Delights (Pentagonia):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich.
FabulousVon Mary E. GarrisonTragic yet hilarious, "The Color of Summer" is a bitter frolic through the lives of

homosexuals in Fidel Castro's Cuba. Opening with a stunning 50-page play, the farce continues to sing throughout the remaining pages. The ill-fated sojourns of so many characters are detailed, but always with a willingness to see the humor within the suffering of men who seek pleasure despite the risk of punishment by a tyrant and his faithful firing squads. A nice piece of political commentary aimed at the seat of Castro's olive-green pants, "The Color of Summer" reveals the leaks in the dictator's "air-tight" oppressive regime, leaving Castro at the center of ridicule. With wonderful character development, gleaming threads of honesty appear within the blanket of mischievous men whose tales are told in the most amusingly crass manner.

Kurzbeschreibung Critics worldwide have praised Reinaldo Arenas's writing. His extraordinary memoir, *Before Night Falls*, was named one of the fourteen "Best Books of 1993" by the editors of *The New York Times Book* and has now been made into a major motion picture. *The Color of Summer*, Arenas's finest comic achievement, is also the fulfillment of his life's work, the *Pentagona*, a five-volume cycle of novels he began writing in his early twenties. Although it is the penultimate installment in his "secret history of Cuba," it was, in fact, the last book Arenas wrote before his death in 1990. A Rabelaisian tale of survival by wits and wit, *The Color of Summer* is ultimately a powerful and passionate story about the triumph of the human spirit over the forces of political and sexual repression. From *Publishers Weekly* Reinaldo Arenas was the cursed visionary of late 20th-century Cuban literature, imprisoned by Castro and shunned by pro-Cuba leftist intellectuals in this country after he came over in the Mariel boatlift. His open queerness shocked his contemporaries. This novel is the fourth in a cycle of five novels, dubbed the *Pentagonia* (the fifth in the series, *The Assault*, was published in 1994). It operates on a number of levels, like a noisy and particularly chaotic party. The most straightforward segment of the plot concerns the tyrant Fifo's 50th-anniversary celebration. It is typical of the grandiose, bloated Fifo that it is actually the 40th anniversary of the revolution. Fifo even lies about arithmetic. The island over which Fifo presides is a vast, groaning prison, dotted by real prisons, like El Morro, where Arenas was actually imprisoned. Fifo keeps control with an army of midgets and a flotilla of sharks that circle the island and prevent anyone from escaping. However, the island queens (mercilessly hunted by Fifo's minions, although Fifo and most of his court have dabbled in men) have been nibbling away at the base of the island, trying to unmoor it. On another level, this is Arenas's autobiography. His character has three names: Skunk in a Funk, his queer nom de guerre; Gabriel, the writer; and Reinaldo, the real person. The tripartite division of his character, and of others, entails dizzying changes of gender and jumps between levels of reality. Arenas has a nice vaudevillian touch, scattering scabrous reference to recent events and people as he bounces from skit to skit. A chapter entitled "The Confession of H. Puntilla" is modeled on the real recantation of Heberto Padilla in 1971, with anatomically impossible flourishes. Unfortunately, the flood of Cuban marginalia makes this book, at times, almost indecipherable for the non-Cuban reader. (July) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Kirkus* sFourth volume of the late (1943-90) Cuban writer's semiautobiographical pentagon (Arenas's word), written in 1991 as part of a five-volume sequence (*The Palace of White Skunks*, 1990, etc.). The rambling, free-form fantasy begins--smashingly--with a 50-page verse play, *The Flight of Gertrudis Gomez de Avellaneda*. The premise of this hilariously obscene set piece is the attempted escape to Miami of its eponymous heroine, a politically suspect poet, from the clutches of an island dictator named Fifo--who's celebrating the 40th anniversary of his reign (declared the 50th, because that round number pleases the vainglorious tyrant). Fifo orders all his late political enemies recalled to life (for publicity purposes, but also for the pleasure of murdering them again)--and Arenas is off to the races: sketching the literary and (homo)sexual adventures of several locally famous queens and also his own several alter egos (Gabriel, Skunk in a Funk, et al); tossing off miscellaneous metafictional inventions (*Penses*, *Tongue-Twisters*, interpolated satirical broadsides); reinventing traditional structure (the novel's Foreword appears in its midsection)--all the while subjecting Fifo's megalomaniacal posturing to elegant and devastating abuse. Examples: upon being informed that California apples can't be grown on his island, Fifo declares this agricultural injustice is another illustration of capitalist aggression; a specially bred Bloodthirsty Shark patrols nearby waters, sniffing out would-be emigrants; a saint (Nelly) reputed to have been gay is marked for decanonization; the assassinations of rival heads of state are accomplished via anal intercourse, with that ultimate sexual weapon, *The Electric Venus*: on and on the scurrilous merriment goes. Yet beneath the grotesqueries, it's plaintively clear that the story offers (as do all Arenas's books, in some measure) a detailed history of the horrors to which queer men of all stripes . . . [have] been subjected through the ages, and especially in Fidel Castro's Cuba. Excessive, redundant, chaotic, and absolutely necessary. And if Fifo ever gets hold of a copy, he'll be swallowing his cigars. -- Copyright 2000 Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.