



ROSSO AVANA

by
Gianni Morelli

ADV Publishing House

We are in the dying days of 1958, at the great Habana Hilton, which has just opened. A dramatic incident forces the maid Alicia to make an amazing escape through the quarters of a city poised between a present that is already past and a future that many cannot yet perceive. The world of roulette, of Cosa Nostra, of brothels, of corruption, of the glitter hiding extreme poverty, is in fact threatened by a handful of idealistic revolutionaries marching on Havana.

The same hotel becomes the set of the second story related in *Rosso Avana*: that of a so-called Prince of Constantinople, who stages a bizarre, high-sounding swindle.

Among the characters of the novel and the real news events, Alicia's adventure and the story of the Prince proceed in parallel, while in the background run images of crowded sidewalks, Christmas decorations in department stores, bodies thrown into streets on the outskirts, new color televisions in the shop windows, stalls that smell of frying, French *tailleurs* in fashion magazines, run-down rooms in the old city, lottery tickets on sale at every intersection.

The stories alternate and intertwine at an ever more breathtaking pace until New Year's Eve, when the scene changes to a house with lilac walls and to a closed cinema besieged by Batista's paramilitaries.

Once more, in this new novel, Gianni Morelli, who knows Latin America deeply, blends lightness and depth, realism and poetry, into rich, ironic writing which manages to draw a smile.

Gianni Morelli is a writer, traveler, and geographer. He writes short stories, novels, and cinema scripts. Garzanti has published his novel *Amori, altopiani e macchine parlanti* (2009). He has recently published *Masters of the Swindle. True Stories of Con Men, Cheaters & Scam Artists* (White Star, 2016), translated into English and French, on the themes of deception and the swindle, which are also central to *Rosso Avana*. He has also written articles on travel, geography, history, and society for the main Italian publishing houses; some of them have been translated into several languages.

He jointly conceived the ClupGuides series, and was its editor for more than twenty years.

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