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Cuba. Music. Love. Theft. An out-of-work actress travels to Havana in search of purpose. Her entanglements there are filled with mixed motivations, selfishness and altruism, love and peril, faith and disaster.

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Mockingbird Details

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From Reader Review Mockingbird for online ebook

Marilyn says

It was enjoyable reading a first novel from a talented author who was a student in a school where you worked as a counselor. Julie has a great deal of talent with words as she describes her character's life during her Cuba adventure in relationship to her inner world. Told in the first person, I had to get used to the metaphoric language that could be overwhelming. The main character's inner world was heavy with analysis and past issues, but once I got past the first pages, I couldn't put it down. It was an interesting story, and one where I was both cheering the protagonist on and worrying about the ethics of her decisions.

I might say that it is a curious book, and one worth pursuing.

Scott says

Self-absorbed narrator visiting Cuba commits to adopting an infant who is seemingly abandoned. There is tangible color in the setting and poetic passion in the telling. Bellingham Book Club (BBC) January 2014.

Diane says

I won a copy of this from the First Reads Giveaway. I have mixed feelings about this book.. The book is written as a letter to a child, telling a story of how she came to her mother. The author takes awhile to get to the point. I was almost as bored with Cuba as Mia. Alex is a jerk, Carlos a mystery and Mia a middle aged wreck. However,once the child enters the story it was hard to put the book down. It reminds me of a poem I saw years ago: "Not flesh of my flesh" by Fleur Conkling Heyliger

"Not flesh of my flesh

Nor bone of my bone,

But still miraculously my own.

Never forget for a single minute,

You didn't grow under my heart,

But in it."

I'm happy for Mia and Amelia, wish Carlos well and hope Alex finally finishes his book.

Erna says

This book reads so beautifully that it seems to have just slid right off of the pen. It is lyrical and refined and graceful yes all of this and in equal part, very funny. Mia, the main character, is written to posses quite a dry wit - how else to tolerate the ridiculous situation in which she finds herself in Cuba with her hapless and ineffectual boyfriend Alex. But Mia "gets" it - she sees where she is and who she is surrounded by, and comments, quite wryly at times, on the absurdity of her life - and then everything changes when she meets...well - you just must READ it.

I loved the end and the visual of Alex with the one leg of the bed and the scene in the passport office and the

simplicity of why that scene works. An absolutely beautiful read. Another review compared it to a painting and it is very visually evocative (read: screen treatment anyone?!) The writing just cuts right to the bone. Read it!

Lisa says

Without giving too much away, this book left me feeling saddened. The language is fluid and colorful. However, the storyline exploits the Cuban culture instead of letting the characters experience the life around them.

Europa says

Rating: 4.5 stars

First Impressions: Well first of all I must mention that I received this free book through a Goodreads First Reads giveaway (my first win!). I want to thank the author for her kindness for the book, but also the unpublicized lovely bookmark and personalized autograph. Just to clarify, my review is my own opinion and uninfluenced by any of the above.

Some of the first things I noted about this book was the lyrical prose. I loved the way it read like a painting, with smooth sentences and lots of sensory depth. It was interesting that there were no defined chapters, but that style worked well in this book.

Overall: This book was a wonderful read and I felt the characters realistic and plot perfectly timed. I enjoyed the allusions given throughout and the detailed look into Cuba. The only less positive things I have to say were the use of repetition with the word 'velocity' and the slight predictability of plot with the baby. Maybe it's because I come from a scientific background, but it kind of grates on me when people use scientific words that don't always make the most sense within the context. Overall, I highly recommend this book for anybody, especially people interested about Cuban culture/music.

Tori says

I LOVED this book. The author did a fantastic job writing this novel and to think this was her FIRST novel written! I couldn't believe this was a fictional story, it was incredibly easy to picture and very realistic. I felt for Mia. The whole story through she seemed as if she was stuck in a rut letting her youth go day by day. She didn't know her true self, wasn't sure of a future, and just did not know what she wanted from life aside from getting lost in it. Getting stuck in the party phase of life she was losing track of her personal self and giving everything to Alex. Only when she stumbles upon Amelia and finds love in Carlos does she finally become comfortable in her own skin and see what true love is.

The lengths she goes for Amelia risking herself but acting upon her natural instincts is very admirable. I'm sure many a women (myself included) would have reacted the way she did when finding a poor little baby laying in a car. I would have wanted to save her from the life her mother lived and give her something more. Sadly even though this book is fiction that life is had by many children all across the world and if only we could save each one of them.

Once I started reading this novel I could not put it down. I had no idea what was to happen next, it kept me guessing and kept me at the edge of my seat. I read it in a matter of a couple of days I was so eager to see how it would end.

I loved seeing a little into another countries customs and ways, the scenes were easy to picture in my head and I felt as if I was there at times.

I hated Magdalena, Amelia's mother, sadly she was very self absorbed and money hungry. Even though there are mothers out there in the world such as her I cannot for myself imagine it. Putting prostitution over your own child, leaving your child without knowing who she is with or how she is.

My only gripe about this book is I wish it would have given a little more at the end. But since it is a first book maybe the author will write another one giving us a glimpse of what happens next involving both Mia, and Amelia. I would love to see how they both end up and how things go. It definitely ended with me craving more.

I would definitely recommend this book, and I will be on the lookout for more titles from this very talented author!

Aditi says

Cuba is such a beautiful country, and everywhere you go, there's music and people dancing - especially in Havana.

----Julia Sawalha, an English actress

Julie Trimingham, a Canadian author, penned her debut novel, *Mockingbird*, that explores motherhood, ghosts from the past, inner turmoil and the Cuban culture.

Synopsis:

Cuba. Music. Love. Theft. An out-of-work actress travels to Havana in search of purpose. Her entanglements there are filled with mixed motivations, selfishness and altruism, love and peril, faith and disaster.

Mockingbird charts the hurricane-fraught course of Mia's journey back home. As Mia says, "Legal and moral are hardly the same."

Being a debut author, Trimingham has given her full effort to make it an interesting novel for her readers and I applaud her for her talent and hard-work.

The story is about Mia, a failing Canadian actress, who takes a trip to Havana with her partner, Alex. But their relationship is drifting apart with passing day, even their trip to Cuba isn't working out, eventually falling apart. However, Mia goes on her own to explore the Cuban culture when suddenly she stumbles upon a lost and crying child inside an abandoned car thus breaking her heart into millions of pieces for this lost child. She even explores true love with Carlos, motherhood and a deep touching relationship with that lost child.

The plot that the author created is fantastic featuring many dimensions of a heart-broken woman in a foreign land. Mia carries a baggage of her past events, misfortunes and sadness inside her heart. Carlos, Alex's driver, is a local Cuban man, and the author portrayed him as someone who is determined and caring and he is just the opposite of Mia's boyfriend, Alex, a careless professor. That lost child is called Amelia and the way the author described her fate is really heart-breaking to read it. Amelia's birth-mother, Magdalena, is a teenager who is broke and poor and grasp anything on her way to survive even if it means to push her own flesh into prostitution. But somehow, the characters felt like they lost their depth and very hazy in

description, in one word, felt very obscure.

Whereas the one thing that left me awestruck was the author's style of writing. Her writing is absolutely poetic and picturesque. Her articulate and eloquent prose made it easier for me to read the book. It is very rare that you get to see some exotic location just by meager words. Yes, Trimingham had done it. The author laid out her descriptions about Cuban culture very intricately, thus making us easily feel the Cuban music into our ears, the Cuban language, food and that picturesue landscape. Yes, in a nutshell, you will be transported right on to the streets of Havana and can see the Cuban music floating into the air. Thus the author painted the picture of Havana very vividly.

Verdict: *Read this book just to feel and see Cuba with the author's evocative words.*

Courtesy: *Thanks to the author, Julie Trimingham, for giving me an opportunity to read and review her debut novel.*

Brenda Ayala says

While there was a great deal of similes spanning throughout the pages of this book, I found that I didn't really care; they were usually acceptable and warranted, and even if they hadn't been the story was captivating enough that I probably wouldn't have noticed.

It's a literary journey that kept my interest the entire time. Set against the backdrop of Cuba's history and dereliction, our protagonist Mia marvels at each notion she observes. Including the beauty and crumbling nature of Havana, as well as the crumbling nature of her relationship with Alex. I found her attitude towards him hard to grasp; for every perfunctory action he bestowed upon her, she would return with one equally detached. To take from Mia's own experiences, it was as if they both knew they were supposed to be playing one half of a couple, and so went through the motions, except without feeling any of what they were meant to. For Alex, I know the reason--as much as he may not want to admit to it, he relies on Mia's money, even more so as his book dwindles away. Mia, though, I can't quite figure out. Aside from needing someone who could speak Spanish, what was the point of her keeping Alex around? Simply for kicks? Maybe because it was easier to pretend the part than deal with a breakup in a foreign country? Perhaps; this seems most logical to me.

Her interactions with Carlos were probably my favorite. It felt forbidden (for a couple reasons, of course) and he served to be the rallying point for me as he helped Mia every step of the way, starting with simple acts--driving them around--and progressing to the more important and plot-changing ones.

Magdalena was someone I got frustrated with, even if I could understand her actions. She, borne out of circumstance no doubt, has learned to grasp onto anything that can be gotten with little to no effort. Free diapers, food and care for her child? Money to buy new clothes? Of course she was going to jump on the chance, and I do not begrudge her that. However, as a general rule I dislike people who are so blatantly materialistic, and it grated on my nerves that she cared so little for a human being and so much for a bag--knock-off or not.

The story overall was touching. It is absolutely a story of family, albeit an unusual one, and finding the people you love, including those you love long-term and those you love fleetingly.

(I received this in a First Reads giveaway.)

Elizabeth says

Mockingbird has a simple premise but tackles complex issues of love, loss, morality, and identity. This slim novel is written in refreshingly clean, clear prose and Trumingham does not neglect a single sense in her beautiful descriptions. The novel reads like a love letter with many recipients. A tribute to a child, an exploration of motherhood, and a struggle to identify her place in the world and in the world she has stumbled into. Trumingham's characters are well drawn and fully realized and the plot well crafted and makes for an addictive read. Well done.

In compliance with FTC guidelines, I am obligated to disclose in my review that I have received the book for free through Goodreads First Reads. This in no way effected the views expressed or influenced the nature of the review of the book received.

Colleen Story says

When reading Julie's book, you feel almost like you're experiencing the work of a painter at the canvas rather than a writer with her pen. She has a brilliant gift for description the likes I've rarely seen. An example:

"I remember an early date with one of my exes, a hurricane ex. It's a bistro in Vienna, and we have the place to ourselves. He starts taking my picture. I'm in a black turtleneck and the sun backlights me. Crumbs from my croissant dust the table. The first frames show a smear of chocolate by my lip; then he enters the picture, his face pressing up against mine, then you see me smudge-less. He has licked the chocolate off."

It's almost like reading poetry in places, yet the story carries you along with a stronger current. By the time you've finished, you've almost felt it in your breath and on your skin. A treasure of a little book the perfect size for a summer vacation read.

Lara Kleinschroth says

This is a neat little study of one woman's journey, of her opening up to possibilities beyond her current narrow definition of herself. Mia is at loose ends, personally and professionally. Her relationship with Alex is stale and she knows it, but tags along with him on his working trip to Cuba anyway. Most of us think of going somewhere like Cuba or elsewhere in the Caribbean as a romantic getaway, a chance to spend time with and reconnect with our spouses. The beaches, sunsets, luxurious resorts... Mia and Alex's one trip to the beach together ends rather disastrously, and that sets the stage for the gradual but inevitable ending of their

relationship. While Alex is busy working, Mia is exploring, not just Havana and its culture and history, but also its people. She makes several interesting connections. And when she hears a baby crying, alone in a hot car, her heart breaks wide open. Told lovingly, and with poetic language and style, Julie Trimingham brings Havana to life for the reader. You can feel the sticky heat, see the vibrant colors shimmering through the humidity, smell the spicy foods. The juxtaposition of the impending hurricane following the path of Mia's journey is nicely done. A little bit of academia, some subtle references to philosophy, keep it feeling smart.

Martina says

Mockingbird was ok. I quite enjoyed reading it but I dont think it's the kind of book I'd ever want to read again. The story was enjoyable, my main problems were the characters. I didn't really like any of them as I found them all boring. Mia annoyed me and I found her sort of bit selfish.

The reason I gave this book 4 stars is because the language and the way it was written was simply beautiful. I mean I could clearly imagine myself walking through the streets of Havana. The descriptions were so poetic and enchanting. For some reason lots of books these days lack descriptions so it was nice to see a book which concentrates on them so much.

I also enjoyed Mia's flashbacks because it added sort of mystery to the story but I got lost in them few times and wasn't sure what exactly happened.

Overall the story was nice but that's as far as it goes for me. On the other hand the language was great and made me enjoy the book.

Randy says

I'm always anxious when I sit down to read something authored by a person I know. If I don't like it, what will I say when I'm faced with saying something?

Fortunately, with Mockingbird there is nothing but good to report. The writing is terrific and the story compelling.

A Canadian actress, failing in her career, but supported with a trust fund, travels to Cuba with her academic boyfriend who is researching a book on Cuban music. While there, in this foreign place, a strange set of circumstances, a trip to an outlying town, an affair, a relationship losing steam, an imaginary pregnancy and an infant, thought to be abandoned, cause her biological clock alarm to go off like a klaxon.

A hurricane looms symbolizing, I suppose, the maelstrom of emotion the main character Mia feels as her decisions move her with the force of barometric pressure to manifest motherhood, albeit in the form of a felony.

The minor characters are detailed etchings. Dolores: "Prickly, frowsy, dolorous, Delores." Magdalena: "She was so tiny. The yellow dress teased out her innocence." An old flame: "...he opened his mouth and glistening words dripped from his lips. Hip, cryptic, viscous. It was like talking to a spoonful of cough syrup." Havana: "Everywhere there is sex, bright colors and touching; the people are always touching each other."

The writing is really the star of the book. One would think that all writers have "a way with words." Not the

case. But, Julie Trimingham does. A favorite: "At times, in a fit of recrimination, I'd list my loves in alphabetical order as if they were storms: Alan, Byron, David, Ken, Maurice, Michael, Paul, Ric, Suzette, Taras. By the time I hit my early thirties, I was looking for a safe harbor."

And, there is a nice collision of soft and hard language: "Fear makes assholes of men."

I had to look up lots of words which usually makes me resentful, but not in this case. I learned something and took a trip to Cuba.

Mockingbird is an engaging, cinematic, entertaining read.

Sue says

I won a copy of "Mockingbird" by Julie Trimingham through the Goodreads Giveaway Contest. Mockingbird is written in the first person, a love letter to the baby, a lullaby for the heart.

Mia, an actress currently out of work, but financially stable, had accepted an invitation from her boyfriend, Alex, a professor, currently writing a book on the appeal of Cuba and its music, to take a trip to Havana, Cuba, while he finished his book. They left Montreal for Havana to stay in Miramar under official accommodation at The Residence. Alex was fluent in Spanish but Mia spoke only a few words.

Mia and Alex had been together for five years, but the relationship was in a cool-off period. She was still waiting for their relationship to take hold, taking a backdoor to Alex finishing his book. Alex was a creature of habit...same old...same old.

While Alex worked at the University, Mia strolled through the streets, taking pictures of the landscape and historical buildings, and in the heat of the day, she headed back to Miramar for a swim. The days were long, and she was very much alone, and at a disadvantage as she wasn't fluent in the language.

Then one day, when Alex was out at a function, and his driver, Carlos, was waiting for them both, Mia came across an abandoned baby screaming in a car, like a dog left in a car on a hot day. But there was no one around except her. She rescued the baby girl, dressed only in a soiled pink t-shirt. The baby had been left in a broken down car in the middle of nowhere. When Mia reunited with Alex and Carlos, Carlos advised her that he had a friend, a piano teacher, that could look after the baby, and see if the mother comes forward. Carlos left a note on the abandoned car, with directions as to where she can get her baby.

But Mia's mind still drifted off to the little baby girl she had rescued. She contacted Carlos to find out the status of the baby girl. Mia started spending more time with Carlos than she did with Alex...and there was no tomorrow...Only now. She suddenly felt very much alive. They lived for the moment...and the affair continued. Alex, she suspected was having an affair, as he was never home or always taking off.

Carlos finds the mother of the baby, Magdalena, a young and broke teenager in Havana. He brought her to meet Mia. Mia fed an clothed her...but when her back was turned, Magdalena stole some money from her, and left her baby girl with Mia. Mia must decide what is best for the baby, and how this will effect her. To what lengths would she go to save this baby?

This was a beautiful piece of fiction, a love story set within scenic and historical Cuba with its bright colourful beauty, friendly people and music to soothe the soul. This was a very fast-paced moving story that will be remembered and appreciated for its message.
