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Heretics: A Novel

Leonardo Padura

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Heretics: A Novel

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Heretics: A Novel Leonardo Padura

A sweeping novel of art theft, anti-Semitism, contemporary Cuba, and crime from a renowned Cuban author

In 1939, the *Saint Louis* sails from Hamburg into Havana's port with hundreds of Jewish refugees seeking asylum from the Nazi regime. From the docks, nine-year-old Daniel Kaminsky watches as the passengers, including his mother, father, and sister, become embroiled in a fiasco of Cuban corruption. But the Kaminskys have a treasure that they hope will save them: a small Rembrandt portrait of Christ. Yet six days later the vessel is forced to leave the harbor with the family, bound for the horrors of Europe. The Kaminskys, along with their priceless heirloom, disappear.

Nearly seven decades later, the Rembrandt reappears in an auction house in London, prompting Daniel's son to travel to Cuba to track down the story of his family's lost masterpiece. He hires the down-on-his-luck private detective Mario Conde, and together they navigate a web of deception and violence in the morally complex city of Havana.

In *Heretics*, Leonardo Padura takes us from the tenements and beaches of Cuba to Rembrandt's gloomy studio in seventeenth-century Amsterdam, telling the story of people forced to choose between the tenets of their faith and the realities of the world, between their personal desires and the demands of their times. A grand detective story and a moving historical drama, Padura's novel is as compelling, mysterious, and enduring as the painting at its center.

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