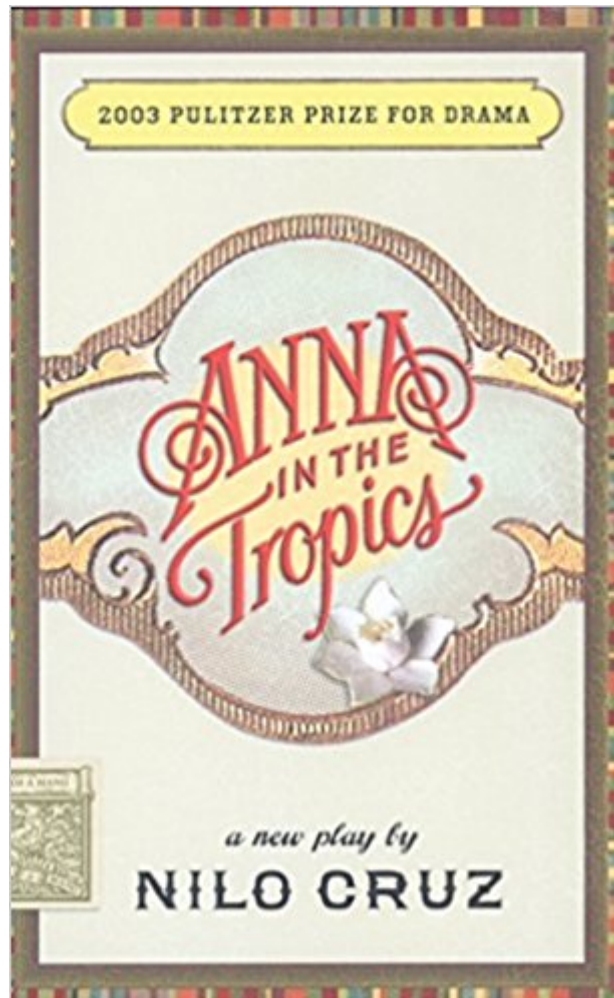




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# Anna In The Tropics (TCG Edition)



## Synopsis

Winner of the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. . . there are many kinds of light. The light of fires. The light of stars. The light that reflects off rivers. Light that penetrates through cracks. Then there's the type of light that reflects off the skin. Nilo Cruz, *Anna in the Tropics* This lush romantic drama depicts a family of cigar makers whose loves and lives are played out against the backdrop of Depression-era America. Set in Ybor City (Tampa) in 1930, Cruz imagines the catalytic effect the arrival of a new "lector" (who reads Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* to the workers as they toil in the cigar factory) has on a Cuban-American family. Cruz celebrates the search for identity in a new land. Reviews: "The words of Nilo Cruz waft from the stage like a scented breeze. They sparkle and prickle and swirl, enveloping those who listen in both specific place and time . . . and in timeless passions that touch us all. In *Anna in the Tropics*, Cruz claims his place as a storyteller of intricate craftsmanship and poetic power." Miami Herald; Deeply engrossing. Robert Hurwitt, San Francisco Chronicle; Earnestly poetic; Mr. Cruz has created a work as wistful and affectingly ambitious as its characters. *Anna in the Tropics* reaches for the artistic heavens -- specifically, that corner of eternity occupied by the plays of Anton Chekhov, where yearning is an existential condition. Ben Brantley, New York Times Nilo Cruz is a young Cuban-American playwright whose work has been produced widely around the United States, including the Public Theater (New York, NY), South Coast Repertory (Costa Mesa, CA), Magic Theatre (San Francisco, CA), Oregon Shakespeare Festival, McCarter Theater (Princeton, NJ) and New Theatre (Coral Gables, FL). His other plays include *Night Train to Bolina*, *Two Sisters and a Piano*, *Hortensia* and *the Museum of Dreams*, and *Anna in the Tropics* (Winner of 2003 Pulitzer Prize). Mr. Cruz teaches playwriting at Yale University and lives in New York City.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When Juan Julian, a new lector, arrives at the tobacco shop, lives will inexorably be changed as he navigates through the prose of Anna Karenina for the edification of the cigar rollers. Set in Florida in 1929, the characters battle each other and themselves about the changing times as they confront technology, equality, money and love, reflected in the passages read by Julian. Though provocative and provoking in its suggestions and themes, this performance doesn't have much to beyond that. Jimmy Smits's performance peaks with his charged passages from Tolstoy's novel, but throughout the rest of the play his performance proves less than stellar. Some memorable performances include Winston Rocha as Santiago and Onahoua Rodriguez as Marela, but overall, the building tension in the short play feels forced and the performers seem to know this. L.A. Theatre Works, perhaps recognizing the brevity of the performance of this surprise Pulitzer Prize winner, provides an interview with Jimmy Smits to round out the production. The interview provides some insight to the decisions and the motivations of the cast as well as the director and writer. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

“Earnestly poetic. In evoking the lost Cuban-American world of a Florida cigar factory in 1929, Mr. Cruz has created a work as wistful and affectingly ambitious as its characters.” Anna in the Tropics” reaches for the artistic heavens -- specifically, that corner of eternity occupied by the plays of Anton Chekhov, where yearning is an existential condition. — Ben Brantley, New York Times “The first Pulitzer winner by a Latino playwright, Anna also does something common to many great works of art, new or old: It makes an unfamiliar place feel familiar. Anna in the Tropics makes a strong case for the transformative powers of literature. Willingly or not, all the characters absorb Anna Karenina, and their lives are changed by it. Cruz is also writing, however, about the importance of making time to savor the small things in life — taking walks and sitting on park benches, smoking a cigar slowly and calmly, as the lector puts it. — J. Wynn Rousuck, Baltimore Sun “In Anna in the Tropics, Cruz claims his place as a storyteller of intricate

craftsmanship and poetic power [Cruz] has turned out many wonderful plays but none more shimmeringly beautiful. *Miami Herald*; "Deeply engrossing." *Robert Hurwitt, San Francisco Chronicle*; "Earnestly poetic. In evoking the lost Cuban-American world of a Florida cigar factory in 1929, Mr. Cruz has created a work as wistful and affectingly ambitious as its characters. 'Anna in the Tropics' reaches for the artistic heavens -- specifically, that corner of eternity occupied by the plays of Anton Chekhov, where yearning is an existential condition." *Ben Brantley, New York Times*; "The first Pulitzer winner by a Latino playwright, Anna also does something common to many great works of art, new or old: It makes an unfamiliar place feel familiar. Anna in the Tropics makes a strong case for the transformative powers of literature. Willingly or not, all the characters absorb Anna Karenina, and their lives are changed by it. Cruz is also writing, however, about the importance of making time to savor the small things in life -- taking walks and sitting on park benches, smoking a cigar slowly and calmly," as the lector puts it. *J. Wynn Rousuck, Baltimore Sun*; "In Anna in the Tropics, Cruz claims his place as a storyteller of intricate craftsmanship and poetic power [Cruz] has turned out many wonderful plays; but none more shimmeringly beautiful." *Miami Herald*; "Deeply engrossing." *Robert Hurwitt, San Francisco Chronicle*

The dialogue is decent and the characters are fine. The strength of the story is how the reading of Anna Karenina by the lector inside the cigar factory both effects and reflects the characters' lives. This won the the 2003 Pulitzer Prize. That's pretty surprising to me, as this play, while decent, doesn't have anything that comes off as exemplary. Now, I've only read it, and there is an excellent chance that it is transformed into something different on the stage with the proper actors...but still, the dialogue and the plot are just not very strong. It's a play about family and romantic love, yet there are no "a-ha" moments, nor are there any lyrical lines that cause you to swoon over language use.

This play has an interesting setting and a lot of beautiful language, but Cruz does not successfully use these to create a memorable piece. The history of the cigar factory lectors is one I did not know; I read up on it a bit after reading this play. If nothing else, Cruz gets credit for reviving interest in this bit of history. The language of the characters belies their backgrounds, but this can be chalked up to literary license, and even to a touch of magical realism. But the story just lies there, and once their florid language is stripped away, the characters are mainly archetypes in a battle of ruthless

progress versus the way we've always done things, and leaves little to remember.

Great addition to our library

Excellent play for play reading group or book club

I liked the play and will probably end up using it for a scene design project in Grad school, but it just ends. Without spoilers, something big happens and then it ends. It is never explained and you never get to see the consequences of the event. Left me wanting more.

very good

The play was a great play to read about, and the book was in good condition. This play I enjoy reading because it was on how the cigar industry was coming to a declined.

Love it

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