



Sins: A Novel

By F. Sionil José

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Sins: A Novel By F. Sionil José

Don Carlos lies on his deathbed, determined to tell all. Don Carlos lies, as they say, through his teeth.

in this slim, powerful novel, F. Sionil Jose, one of the leading literary voices of Asia and the Pacific, tells all. Don Carlos Cobello, a worldly man, has been a diplomat, entrepreneur, gourmand, and sinner. Like other memoirists, he reveals more than he intends. Born to wealth, he was determined to increase it. Born to corruption, he sees no reason to give up too much of a good thing. Born of woman, he sets about seducing -- or simply taking -- every woman he sees, starting with his sister.

He is a prince of accommodation; his family has drawn close to power no matter who dominated their islands, be it the Spanish, the Japanese, or the Americans. (A woman shared with a Japanese colonel in a family-owned brothel returns their favors by passing on to one the disease of the other.)

The colorful cast includes a "hero of the Revolution" who purchased land with revolutionary funds, a close poker-playing friend of General Douglas MacArthur, and the illegitimate son of a maid who later becomes a lawyer destined for greatness.

Cobello's wealth, incest, and casual infidelities are no hindrance to an upwardly mobile career. In the "incredible reality that is the Philippines," says Jose, "the higher one goes, the whiter one becomes." For, as Cobello puts it, "here, sin is a social definition, not a moral one."

Sins will add to the stature of F. Sionil Jose and to his growing reputation in the United States.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

"Thank God for exceptions like myself" says filthy rich Don Carlos Cobello, for the rest of his country "is silly." The country in question is the Philippines, where corruption is strictly the rule. From his deathbed, Don Carlos looks back on the life he has led, from his initiation at the family's private bordello to his reign as head of a worldwide family business empire and then on to an appointment as ambassador to Peru. But--wonder of wonders--it turns out that money can't always buy love and happiness. In the end it is the barefoot servant girl of his youth that the mighty Don Carlos pines for.

From Publishers Weekly

Flamboyantly injecting an aristocratic family chronicle into Philippine history, Jose (Three Filipino Women) brings a novelistic authority to match the worldly authority of his lustful, patrician protagonist. Corrupt and exploitative, Don Carlos Corbello, aka C.C., is a general of international industry, the illustrious son of one of the country's canniest mestizo families, one whose members have a tradition of furthering their ambitions through expedient service to political masters?the Spanish, the Americans, the Japanese and President Marcos. Reviewing his life in a deathbed confession, C.C., in the way of unreliable and morally obtuse narrators, tries to bury a sense of regret under boasts of lineage, power and amorous exploits. "Sin," he says, "is a social definition, not a moral one." In his formative youth, Carlos forces himself on a housemaid, Severina, manages his father's wartime bordello for Japanese officers (on whom he spies) and fathers a daughter, Angela, with his sister, Corito (passing on brothel-contracted syphilis to both). In adulthood, he conducts strangely bittersweet romances during his business travels in Korea, Japan and Hong Kong. But when his power seems consolidated under Marcos, he learns that Severina had a son, Delfin, who has arrived in Manila to study law and fight for reform. Avoiding any political resolution, Jose orchestrates a swift climax for Carlos, Delfin, Corito and Angela, as the sins of the fathers are visited on the sons in an ironic twist.

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From Library Journal

Though among the preeminent novelists of the Philippines, Jose has published only two books in the United States: Three Filipino Women (LJ 6/1/92) and the present work. (His five-part "Rosales" saga will be available here soon.) Sins gives us the memoirs of the dying Carlos Corbello. A wealthy and corrupt Filipino, Carlos has lived for profit and seduced countless women, even his sister. As Carlos reveals his past, Jose reveals his writing strengths, creating an unsympathetic, even despicable character whom readers will relish if only because the wicked always inspire the most interest. The reader's pleasure ultimately comes from indulging Jose's mocking of his own self-deluded character, who wants the uninitiated to believe, "I used my wealth and my power in my best moral lights." Recommended for Asian literary collections.?Faye A. Chadwell, Univ. of Oregon, Eugene

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Barbara Marburger:

As people who live in the particular modest era should be revise about what going on or information even

knowledge to make these people keep up with the era that is always change and make progress. Some of you maybe will probably update themselves by looking at books. It is a good choice to suit your needs but the problems coming to an individual is you don't know what kind you should start with. This Sins: A Novel is our recommendation to cause you to keep up with the world. Why, because this book serves what you want and wish in this era.

Gerard Brand:

Now a day those who Living in the era just where everything reachable by interact with the internet and the resources in it can be true or not need people to be aware of each details they get. How a lot more to be smart in getting any information nowadays? Of course the reply is reading a book. Reading through a book can help persons out of this uncertainty Information specially this Sins: A Novel book as this book offers you rich information and knowledge. Of course the info in this book hundred per cent guarantees there is no doubt in it you know.

Paul Otoole:

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