

## **Next Year in Havana**

by Chanel Cleeton

Only ninety miles separates the island of Cuba from Key West, Florida, but what a difference in the conditions of the two countries. Author Chanel Cleeton wrote a historical fiction, *Next year in Havana*, in which the political history of Cuba in the late 1950's is played out.

The story has two different timelines, 1958 and 2017. In 2017 Marisol Ferrera, a free-lance journalist, travels from Miami to Havana to fulfill her beloved grandmother's last wish to scatter her ashes in the country of her birth. Marisol grew up listening to endless storytelling from her grandmother Elisa about the beautiful country she grew up in and which she was forced to flee with her family during the revolution in 1958.

Elisa was the daughter of a sugar baron in Cuba's high society. They were very affluent people while outside their district ordinary Cubans were suffering. At age nineteen, Elisa was largely sheltered from the growing political unrest until she had an affair with a revolutionary.

Arriving in Miami, Marisol comes face to face with Cuba's beautiful landscape and surroundings, and the dangerous political climate. She discovers a lot about the roots of her family and uncovers family secrets that her grandmother never told her. Marisol wonders if she even knew her grandmother at all.

In 1958 before nineteen year old Elisa flees Cuba with her family, she buries a box of keepsakes in the back yard with the help of her best friend Ana. When Marisol arrives in Havana in 2017 Ana gives her the box which she has been saving all these years. Marisol is astonished what the box reveals about her grandmother and she is determined to find all the pieces to the puzzle.

As Marisol is searching for her family history and is trying to find a perfect place to spread her grandmother's ashes she finds herself attracted to a man with secrets of his own.

Will Marisol's love affair have a happier ending than her grandmother's? Towards the end of the story my heart is aching for the dangers that the Cuban people still face on a daily basis and I have to admire their courage and the pride they have in their country. Marisol finally finds the place to scatter Elisa's ashes. To me it was the perfect place.

Check out "*Next year in Havana*" by Chanel Cleeton and see if you agree with me.

**Happy Reading!**