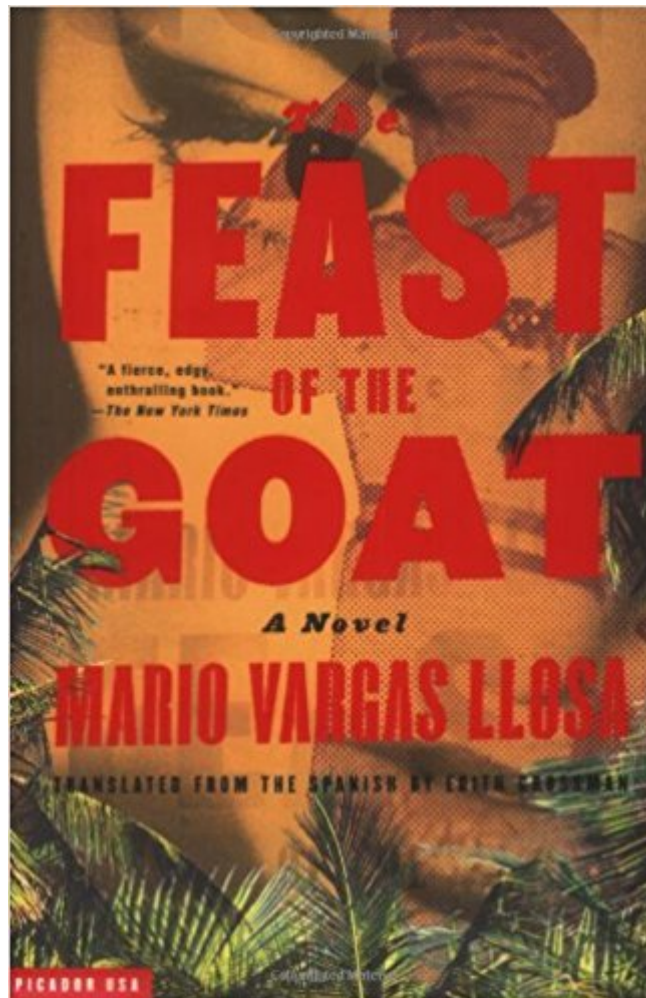




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The Feast Of The Goat: A Novel



Synopsis

Haunted all her life by feelings of terror and emptiness, forty-nine-year-old Urania Cabral returns to her native Dominican Republic - and finds herself reliving the events of 1961, when the capital was still called Trujillo City and one old man terrorized a nation of three million. Rafael Trujillo, the depraved ailing dictator whom Dominicans call the Goat, controls his inner circle with a combination of violence and blackmail. In Trujillo's gaudy palace, treachery and cowardice have become a way of life. But Trujillo's grasp is slipping. There is a conspiracy against him, and a Machiavellian revolution already underway that will have bloody consequences of its own. In this 'masterpiece of Latin American and world literature, and one of the finest political novels ever written' (Bookforum), Mario Vargas Llosa recounts the end of a regime and the birth of a terrible democracy, giving voice to the historical Trujillo and the victims, both innocent and complicit, drawn into his deadly orbit.

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Customer Reviews

Rafael Trujillo ruled the Dominican Republic with an iron hand from 1930 to 1961. His cruelty and brutality could sentence people to disgrace, torture or death on a whim. His lust for power and women was insatiable, and a climate of fear was everywhere. Mario Vargas Llosa, the prize winning Peruvian author knows his subject well. And in this novel, he uses his best storytelling talents to recreate that harsh time in history when ruthlessness ruled. The known facts are all there, re-interpreted by the author to facilitate our understanding of what it must have been like to live through those awful times. And the few fictional characters are there to help tell the story. The story is told through three different viewpoints. The first is set in the present day, when a middle-aged

female attorney who has lived in the United States since the age of 14, returns to the Dominican Republic. She's full of anger at her invalid father who was once an official in Trujillo's government, and it is only at the very end of the book that we understand why. But as she meets her relatives and finally lets them hear her personal story, two other compelling narratives are taking place in alternating chapters which are set in 1961. The reader gets a chance to see into the mind's eye of Rafael Trujillo himself. He's 70 years old now. Always immaculately well groomed, he's embarrassed by bouts of incontinence. And he's also finding it difficult to consummate his erotic encounters with young women. He's upset about these matters, but his mind is razor sharp, deeply involved in the political intrigues that are his forte, and able to force his underlings to shiver in terror at the whims of his disfavor.

If you think a novel about the Trujillo Era (1930-61) in the Dominican Republic would be boring, think again. Mario Vargas Llosa's *THE FEAST OF THE GOAT* is a work of literary brilliance. "Literature is fire," writes Vargas Llosa, a writer touted by critics to become the next Spanish-American writer to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, and his latest novel radiates with the incendiary heat of Machiavellian politics, sexual obsession, and bestial brutality. To the inhabitants of the Dominican Republic, Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina was known as Chief, Generalissimo, the Benefactor, the Father of the New Nation, and His Excellency. To his enemies, Trujillo was the Beast and the Goat. For more than three decades, Trujillo ruled the Dominican Republic with an iron fist. He had cut the Gordian knot of the "Haitian problem" by having between 10,000 and 15,000 Haitians slaughtered. In 1961, writes Vargas Llosa, "the country had touched bottom, placed under quarantine because of the excesses of a regime which, although in the past it had performed services that could never be repaid, had degenerated into a tyranny that provoked universal revulsion." On the mild, starry night of Tuesday, May 30, 1961, the 70-year-old Trujillo, suffering from bouts of incontinence and impotence, was being driven from his palace in Ciudad Trujillo (Santo Domingo de Guzman) to his Mahogany House in San Cristobal, for another of his orgies--"to prove again he was a man." On the highway to San Cristobal, seven men stationed in three cars lay in ambush to assassinate him. *THE FEAST OF THE GOAT* has three storylines: (1) The story of Urania Cabral, now 49, who returns to the Dominican Republic in 1996, after 35 years absence from her homeland.

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