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Life in the Damn Tropics

A Novel

David Unger

Foreword by Gioconda Belli

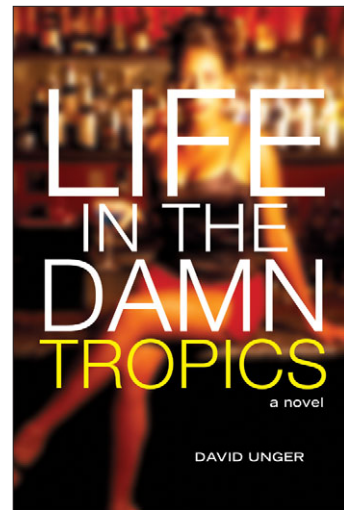
"Life in the Damn Tropics is a witty book, ebullient in its observations about the human heart and mind, and the caprices of destiny. It is a sharply intelligent, passionately written novel."

—Oscar Hijuelos, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of the *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*

Set in strife-torn Guatemala City in the early 1980s, this sophisticated, quasi-comedic tale depicts the decline and near-fall of a prominent Guatemalan Jewish family. The Eltaleph family is accused of setting up a dummy corporation in Panama in order to avoid paying Guatemalan taxes. Hence, middle-aged Marcos Eltaleph, a playboy whose lust for life is matched only by his lust for women, has been placed under "hospital arrest." As older brother Aaron tries to obtain his release, Marcos ponders his scapegoat role in the family and the two-timing machinations of his new girlfriend, Esperanza, a fiery Colombian former prostitute who, in this hour of need, Marcos believes has taken up with his former business partner. In the face of military rule, terrorism, and sabotage Marcos learns the truth about his brother, only to find that sibling secrets can be every bit as dangerous as civil unrest.

"Three Jewish brothers struggle to keep their family's business ventures alive through a period of political unrest and upheaval in Unger's satisfying debut novel, set in Guatemala in the early 1980s. . . . Unger puts his unique setting to good use as he layers his unusual story line, building the suspense."—*Publishers Weekly*

David Unger, born in Guatemala, is a prize-winning translator. He teaches translation in the M.A. program in creative writing at the City College of New York.



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