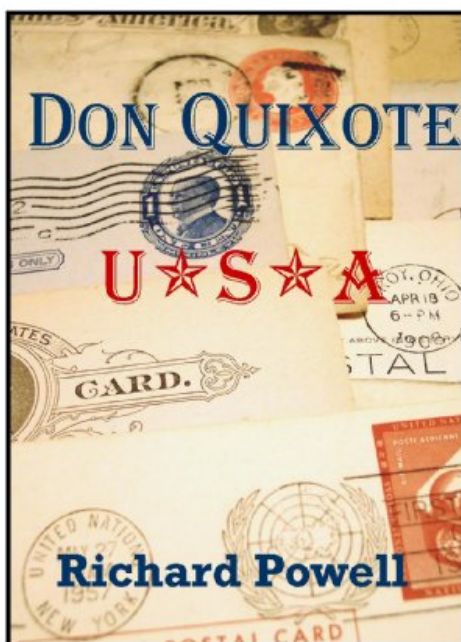


DON QUIXOTE, USA BY RICHARD POWELL



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Arthur Peabody Goodpasture is a young Bostonian who joins the Peace Corps and gets involved in the Republic of San Marco revolution. Only, there is Republic of San Marco. Not really. This political satire takes aim at the values many Vietnam War-era Americans held dear, and continues to make readers laugh and think about our political system.

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8 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

A Gem of a Book

By Sigfried Weston

This is one of the funniest books I have ever read. An idealistic young American, who finds botany more compelling than his family's desires for status and wealth, goes to a Caribbean island to teach the locals how to grow Dwarf Cavendish bananas. He get kidnapped by the local revolution; there is an island custom: "One son goes into law, one goes into the priesthood, and one into the revolution; so the family is insured against everything, including the Second Coming." Disturbed by the inefficiency of his captors, he uses his Boy Scout training to teach them woodcraft and organizational skills. As his beard grows out, he starts looking more and more like the leader of the revolution, who is not at all pleased by this. I don't want to give away the whole plot, but I've read this many times over several decades and it remains hilarious throughout. Woody Allen took some of the plot - without attribution - for his movie "Bananas"; he would have done better to have made a straight adaptation, because this book is far funnier than that movie.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Fun read for readers of all age groups

By Kirati Laisathit

Richard Powell's books have been out of print for some time. Thanks to the e-book revolution, the (almost) complete collection is now made available to all Kindle users. I read a few of the author's books, the Thai language translation, in my younger days. Among those was Don Quixote, USA. For some reasons, the Thai book title was changed to "New Dawn in San Marco" causing me no end of grief tracking down the original English version.

Richard Powell was an amazing writer in view of the range of subject matters he covered. Though wry humor seems to permeate most of his work. "Don Quixote, USA" went to the extreme as a light-hearted satire that made fun of the American relation with the rest of the world.

The story revolves around a newly graduate and rather naive Arthur with a degree in agriculture, banana plantation to be exact. He joined the Peace Corps out of desire to better the lot of humankind by revolutionizing banana plantation. Unfortunately for Arthur, San Marco, the fictitious island nation presumably in the

Caribbean, to which he was sent, was predictably under the thumb of a military despot. The Generalismo thought Peace Corps was just a front for CIA and didn't have banana in mind when he thought the American government had sent him a CIA agent. Arthur was caught between the bumbling and crooked military and the Fidel Castro-inspired, but equally clueless, revolutionary force, the leader of which looked remarkably like a more muscular and fierce version of our Arthur. All the fun ensues as Arthur's wide-eyed good-natured innocence and naivete inevitably led him to always do the unexpected.

The pacing of the story is tight to the point of being too short. If the book had been written maybe 20 years later than it was, I would have thought the author had a comedy movie adaptation in mind. But this is not really a criticism, not really. The book must have been written with younger audience in mind. Characters are mostly caricatures of the respective stereotypes to the point of being cartoonish. If you're looking for a fun read you can pass around to younger members in your family, I can highly recommend this book.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

El Stupendo

By CentralCoastReader

I read this book as a kid. My grandma had it, and I remember laughing my head off. In my personal vernacular are the terms El Stupido and El Stupendo, from those years ago. The basic plot of a dork turning into a superhero way out of his comfort zone (a novice Peace Corp vol in a banana republic beset with revolutionaries) is both funny and inspiring. And the name Arthur Peabody Goodpasture in itself is a winner.

When I saw this available for Kindle a few weeks ago, I snapped it up and will re-read it far sooner than this last time!

See all 38 customer reviews...

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