



**In the Flicker of an Eyelid: A Novel (CARAF
Books: Caribbean and African Literature
translated from the French)**

Jacques Stephen Alexis

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In his third novel, Jacques Stephen Alexis brings his characteristically vivid scenes, political consciousness, and powerful characters to the dramatic age-old question of whether a prostitute can leave "the life" to find her own identity and true love. La Niña Estrellita is pursuing her trade against the colorful backdrop of Holy Week 1948 in Port-au-Prince. Amid the rowdy street festivals and pious celebrations of the liturgical season, she notices a fellow Cuban exile, El Caucho, ship mechanic and union organizer, hanging around the Sensation Bar, and she begins to explore her attraction to him.

In the Flicker of an Eyelid, first published in French as L'espace d'un cillement in 1959, appears here in English for the first time in a graceful, expert translation by the veteran critic Carrol F. Coates and the award-winning Haitian American writer Edwidge Danticat. Alexis offers a highly sympathetic look into the daily lives and tribulations of the Haitian people through the eyes of La Niña and the humane, searching worker El Caucho. The racism of the U.S. military, the selfish and profit-oriented machinations of Haitian politicians, the oppression of workers by the Cuban dictator Batista, the exploitation of women, and the particularly noteworthy links between Haiti and Cuba all form the figurative backdrop for a novel driven by unforgettable characters.

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