



## Aztec Autumn

By Gary Jennings



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Tenamxtli's courageous quest takes us through high adventure, passionate women, unlikely allies, bright hope, bitter tragedy, and the essence of 16th century Mexico. This incredible rebellion has been little remembered, perhaps because it shed no glory on the men who would write the history book, but on its outcome depended the future of all North America. *Aztec Autumn* recreates this forgotten chapter of history in all its splendor and unforgettable passion.

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## Aztec Autumn By Gary Jennings Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

Historical novelist Gary Jennings returns to the time and place of his international bestseller *Aztec* one generation after the conquistadors have all but destroyed the culture. The once-shining capital city of Tenochtitlan has been renamed Mexico City. Eighteen-year-old Tenamaxtli, the novel's hero, has traveled with his mother from the northern region, where they have been kept abreast of the progress of the malignant, marauding, disease-bearing Spanish. In the course of witnessing the execution of an old Aztec, Tenamaxtli's mother reveals that the victim is, in fact, her son's father. Everything is in place for vengeance, and over the novel's next several years, Tenamaxtli organizes an ill-fated insurrection, enjoying many sexual adventures along the way.

Told plainly and at some remove, Jennings has reserved the fancier footwork for an excursion into Aztec culture, creating a detailed tapestry of a struggling, vanquished race. Readers familiar with Mexican history will welcome the rich details of this vengeance drama; those new to it will be impressed by Jennings's exhaustive research.

The narrative reads like a journal, its language meant to evoke some generic past. Perhaps this is a distancing device, allowing readers to focus on the rich weave of cultural and historic elements rather than the carnage, cruelty, and genocide that characterize this unhappy piece of Mexican history.

#### From [Booklist](#)

The sequel to the author's internationally best-selling *Aztec* (1982) returns to the Mexico of the conquistadors. The previous novel enveloped the reader in the traditions and customs of Aztec society before and during the bloody Spanish conquest. The story as it now unfolds finds us in postconquest Mexico, events now narrated by a young Aztec man whose uncle is an esteemed nobleman. The Spanish conquerors have settled in to run a tightly controlled enterprise, and the novel springs into action when the young hero decides no other course is available to him than to seek revenge for the foul murder of his father by the conquerors. What the reader is witness to in these compelling pages, then, is the avenger's careful gathering together of an insurrectionary movement. Jennings' ability to marshal the results of considerable research into a smoothly flowing, never sluggish narrative is remarkable; here he gives appreciators of historical fiction something to relish. *Brad Hooper*

#### From Kirkus Reviews

Uneven, comparatively brief sequel to Jennings's epic historical tale *Aztec* (1980). Having watched the gruesome auto-da-fé of Dark Cloud, the doomed, conflicted hero of *Aztec*, Tenam xтли, Dark Cloud's son, vows revenge on the Spaniards who have conquered and destroyed the Aztec empire. He befriends a Spanish notary who understands the Aztec language and begins to learn Spanish in a mission in the former imperial capital of Tenochtitlan (the "The Heart of the One World," contemporary Mexico City). Jennings uses Tenam xтли's Candide-like innocence to poke fun at the bearded, brutal Europeans with their booming arquebuses, their appetite for cruelty and gold, and their odd religion, which compels them to "eat their god" during communion. Daunted by the contradictions of Christianity, Tenam xтли puzzles out the recipe for gunpowder, procures a copy of a Spanish arquebus, and makes a decisive terrorist strike against a Spanish garrison before returning to his native Aztlan. Along the way, he finds a utopian settlement ruled by a kindly Spanish priest, tarries lustfully in a village of women whose men have been slaughtered, befriends a fierce, bald-headed female warrior named Tiptoe, tangles with a seemingly immortal sorceress named G'nda Ke', and mounts the throne of his ancestral homestead as the ultimate ruler. Jennings's relentlessly talky narrative

doesn't achieve the momentum of his earlier masterpiece, and, despite numerous references to divine coincidences, his twisted plot depends on too many trite devices. Characters thought to be lost, dead, incompetent, or merely far away are forever popping up to either save the day or ruin it for Tenam xtlí, whose rigid concept of honor compels him to lead a rebellion that even he realizes he can't win. A bumpy, meandering, wryly tragic tale, graced with delightful moments of passion and insight into the ancient culture that still haunts (and influences) modern Mexico. (First printing of 250,000) -- *Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Earl Austin:**

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