

VOICES OF THE SEA

A film by Kim Hopkins



This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Susan Conlon, MLS, and Kim Dorman, Community Engagement Coordinator of Princeton Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *Voices of the Sea*.

Revealing stark realities for the poorest of rural Cubans with unique access and empathy, this is the story of a 30-something mother of four longing for a better life. The tension between wife and aging husband—one desperate to leave, the other content to stay—builds into a high stakes family drama after her brother and the couple's neighbors escape. A co-production of American Documentary | POV and ITVS.

ADULT NONFICTION

Bardach, Ann Louise. *Without Fidel: A Death Foretold in Miami, Havana and Washington*. Scribner, 2014.

Since 1959, Fidel Castro has been the supreme leader of Cuba, deftly checkmating his foes, both from within and abroad; confronting eleven American presidents; and outfoxing dozens of assassination attempts, vanquished only by collapsing health. As night descends on Castro's extraordinary fifty-year reign, Miami, Havana, and Washington are abuzz with anxious questions: What led to the lightning-bolt purge of key Cuban officials in March 2009? Who will be Raúl's heir? Will the U.S. embargo end? Bardach offers profound and surprising answers to these questions as she meticulously chronicles Castro's protracted farewell and assesses his transformative impact on the world stage and the complex legacy that will long outlive him.

Eire, Carlos M.N. *Waiting for Snow in Havana: Confessions of a Cuban Boy*. Free Press, 2003.

Waiting for Snow in Havana is both an exorcism and an ode to a paradise lost. For the Cuba of Carlos's youth—with its lizards and turquoise seas and sun-drenched siestas—becomes an island of condemnation once a cigar-smoking guerrilla named Fidel Castro ousts President Batista on January 1, 1959. Suddenly the music in the streets sounds like gunfire. Christmas is made illegal, political dissent leads to imprisonment, and too many of Carlos's friends are leaving Cuba for a place as far away and unthinkable as the United States. Carlos will end up there, too, and fulfill his mother's dreams by becoming a modern American man—even if his soul remains in the country he left behind.

Gott, Richard. *Cuba: A New History*. Yale University Press, 2004.

In this concise and up-to-date book, British journalist Richard Gott casts a fresh eye on the history of the Caribbean island from its pre-Columbian origins to the present day. He provides a European perspective on a

country that is perhaps too frequently seen solely from the American point of view. The author emphasizes such little-known aspects of Cuba's history as its tradition of racism and violence, its black rebellions, the survival of its Indian peoples, and the lasting influence of Spain. The book also offers an original look at aspects of the Revolution, including Castro's relationship with the Soviet Union, military exploits in Africa, and his attempts to promote revolution in Latin America and among American blacks.

Murphy, Dervla. *The Island that Dared*. Eland, 2010.

Take a three-generation family holiday in Cuba in the company of Dervla Murphy, her daughter and three young granddaughters and you have a Swallows-and-Amazons-like adventure in the Caribbean as they trek into the hills and along the coast as a family, camping out on empty beaches beneath the stars and relishing the ubiquitous Cuban hospitality. But this is no more than the joyful start of a fully-fledged quest to understand the unique society created by the Cuban Revolution. For Dervla returns alone to explore the mountains, coastal swamps and decaying cities, investigating the experience of modern Cuba with her particular, candid curiosity.

Perez Jr., Louisa A. *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality and Culture*. University of North Carolina Press, 2008.

Using an enormous range of Cuban and U.S. sources—from archival records and oral interviews to popular magazines, novels, and motion pictures—Pérez reveals a powerful web of everyday, bilateral connections between the United States and Cuba and shows how U.S. cultural forms had a critical influence on the development of Cubans' sense of themselves as a people and as a nation. He also articulates the cultural context for the revolution that erupted in Cuba in 1959. In the middle of the twentieth century, Pérez argues, when economic hard times and political crises combined to make Cubans painfully aware that their American-influenced expectations of prosperity and modernity would not be realized, the stage was set for revolution.

ADULT FICTION

Carpentier, Alejo. *Explosion in a Cathedral*. University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

A swashbuckling tale set in the Caribbean at the time of the French Revolution, *Explosion in a Cathedral* focuses on Victor Hugues, a historical figure who led the naval assault to take back the island of Guadeloupe from the English at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In Carpentier's telling, this piratical character walks into the lives of the wealthy orphans Esteban and Sofia and casts them abruptly into the midst of the immense changes sweeping the world outside their Havana mansion.

García, Cristina. *Dreaming in Cuban*. Ballantine Books, 1993.

Cristina García's acclaimed book is the haunting, bitter-sweet story of a family experiencing a country's revolution and the revelations that follow. The lives of Celia del Pino and her husband, daughters, and grandchildren mirror the magical realism of Cuba itself, a landscape of beauty and poverty, idealism and corruption.

Hijuelos, Oscar. *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*. Farrar, Straus Giroux, 1989.

Born to Cuban immigrant parents, the late Oscar Hijuelos became the first Hispanic writer to win the Pulitzer Prize for fiction, for his 1989 book, *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*. The novel follows Cuban brothers who make their way to the United States in search of love and fame as mambo musicians. It touches on the Cuban immigrant experience – particularly the tumult that resulted from the rise of Fidel Castro in the late 1950s.

Ley, Rosanna. *Last Dance in Havana*. Quercus Publishing, 2016.

Elisa is only sixteen years old when she meets Duardo and she knows he's the love of her life from the moment they first dance the rumba together in downtown Havana. But Duardo is a rebel, determined to fight in Castro's army, and Elisa is forced to leave behind her homeland and rebuild her life in distant England. But how can she stop longing for the warmth of Havana, when the music of the rumba still calls to her?

Yoss. *A Planet for Rent*. Restless Books, 2015.

In *A Planet for Rent*, Yoss critiques life under Castro in the '90s by drawing parallels with a possible Earth of the not-so-distant future. Wracked by economic and environmental problems, the desperate planet is rescued, for better or worse, by alien colonizers, who remake the planet as a tourist destination. Ruled over by a brutal interstellar bureaucracy, dispossessed humans seek better lives via the few routes available—working for the colonial police; eking out a living as black marketeers, drug dealers, or artists; prostituting themselves to exploitative extraterrestrial visitors—or they face the cold void of space in rickety illegal ships.

Palacio, Derek. *The Mortifications*. Tim Duggan Books, 2016.

In 1980, a rural Cuban family is torn apart during the Mariel Boatlift. Uxbal Encarnación—father, husband, political insurgent—refuses to leave behind the revolutionary ideals and lush tomato farms of his sun-soaked homeland. His wife Soledad takes young Isabel and Ulises hostage and flees with them to America, leaving behind Uxbal for the promise of a better life.

NONFICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Canetti, Yanitzia. *De la A a la Z Cuba*. León, Spain: Everest, 2011.

An alphabet book of the Spanish language which explores

the culture and history of Cuba. Text in Spanish.

Kent, Deborah. *Cuba*. Children's Press, an imprint of Scholastic Inc., 2016.

Despite its relatively small size, the island nation of Cuba has often played a major role in global politics. Readers will explore the country's fascinating and sometimes tumultuous history as they tour its beautiful beaches, rugged mountains, and bustling cities. They will also be immersed in Cuba's rich culture, from its delicious cuisine to its many contributions to the arts.

Engle, Margarita. *The Poet Slave of Cuba: A Biography of Juan Francisco Manzano*. Henry Holt, 2006.

Born into the household of a wealthy slave owner in Cuba in 1797, Juan Francisco Manzano spent his early years by the side of a woman who made him call her Mama, even though he had a mama of his own. Denied an education, young Juan still showed an exceptional talent for poetry. His verses reflect the beauty of his world, but they also expose its hideous cruelty. Powerful, haunting poems and breathtaking illustrations create a portrait of a life in which even the pain of slavery could not extinguish the capacity for hope.

FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Colón, Edie. *Goodbye, Havana! Hola, New York!* Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2011.

When six-year-old Gabriella hears talk of Castro and revolution in her home in Cuba, she doesn't understand. Soon the day comes when she and her parents move to a new place called the Bronx. Life isn't the same. It isn't warm like Havana. They have something called "snow" and food called "hot dogs" and "macaroni." What will it take for the Bronx to feel like home? Inspired by the author's childhood, this story of the immigrant experience for a child is poignant, tender, and true.

Engle, Margarita. *All the Way to Havana*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015.

Together, a boy and his parents drive to the city of Havana, Cuba, in their old family car. Along the way, they experience the sights and sounds of the streets—neighbors talking, musicians performing, and beautiful, colorful cars putt-putting and bumpety-bumping along. In the end, though, it's their old car, Cara Cara, that the boy loves best. A joyful celebration of the Cuban people and their resourceful innovation.

Engle, Margarita. *Drum Dream Girl*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015.

A girl in 1920s Cuba strives to become a drummer, despite continual reminders that there has never been a female drummer in Cuba—only boys play the drums. Includes notes about Millo Castro Zaldarriaga, who inspired the story, and Anacaona, the all-girl dance band she formed with her sisters.