



Flight to Freedom:

Ana Veciana-Suarez

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Yara Garcia and her family live a middle-class life in Havana, Cuba. But in 1967, as Communist ruler Fidel Castro tightens his hold on Cuba, the Garcias, who do not share the political beliefs of the Communist Party, are forced to flee to Miami, Florida. There, Yara encounters a strange land with foreign customs. She knows very little English, and she finds that the other students in her new school have much more freedom than she and her sisters. Tension develops between her parents, as Mami grows more independent and Papi joins a militant anti-Castro organization.

Flight to Freedom: Details

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From Reader Review *Flight to Freedom*: for online ebook

Abraham says

At first I was kind of bored by this book, which came off as more of a history lesson about Cuban immigration to Miami than an actual novel. But once I got over my disappointment in the relative stasis of the characters, I enjoyed learning something about this culture which I know almost nothing about. I knew that Miami had lots of Cubans, but I knew very little about their experience leaving Cuba or their experience in the US. The book comes across as very pro-American (there is shockingly little about racism or anti-immigrant discrimination in the US) and very anti-communism. The author knows what she's talking about, as a Cuban immigrant herself, but I think that kids reading this should also be exposed to some information that highlights the good things about post-revolutionary Cuba as well.

For example, did you know that every year, the Cuban government gives 5,000 full med school scholarships to foreign students without the resources to go to medical school in their home country? Then, upon graduation, those students are required to...return to their home country to improve the medical programs in their own communities! Say what you want about oppressive communism, that's a pretty cool program.

Alexandria Cintron says

Flight to Freedom tells of coming to America from Cuba in 1967, on the flights from Havana to Miami. Yara Garcia and her older sister, younger sister, mother and father come to join grandparents and other family in Miami, leaving behind her brother who is in the Cuban army and many other relatives. Yara's father believes the family will return to Cuba soon. The mother and older sister are more determined to adjust to new life in America. For instance, the mother gets a job and learns to drive a car despite her husband's protests, and Yara's older sister starts seeing boys on the sly and lying to her parents, who in their minds still live in a world. Yara and her family try to get used to this language and culture of America. Yara reports all these changes, the constant arguing of her parents, her own initial shyness and fear at school, and her gradual adjustment and acceptance of the American lifestyle.

Natalie says

Flight to Freedom is a richly detailed novel about Yara's immigration from Cuba to Miami. I knew very little about Cuba and Cuban history before I read this, but Ana Veciana-Suarez did a great job of detailing everything - Yara's sorrows over leaving Cuba and learning to live in Miami were very compelling and kept the plot moving.

That being said, Yara's character felt a bit flat at times, as if the novel's purpose was teaching history instead of telling a story. I didn't see much change in her; (view spoiler)

Anne Osterlund says

Yara loves her family.

When her parents apply to leave Cuba, the decision means sacrifice. For everyone.

For Yara, it means 6 weeks at a Cuban government-run agricultural “school” where the girls wake up to ice-cold water and hours in the fields and an occasional training on reading speeches by Fidel Castro. All this to be able to travel to Miami. Where Yara doesn’t speak the language and doesn’t fit in and can’t even outperform her much younger sister in school. Where her older sister is sneaking out, marching for peace, and where Mami and Papi argue all the time—about whether Mami should be working or Papi should be attending those secret militia trainings.

Where “home” is something no one can define.

Flight to Freedom is a well-balanced mid-grade novel about a young Cuban girl’s immigrant experience during the late 1960’s. I liked the author’s attention to the small details of Yara’s daily experience against the larger backdrop of uncertainty and upheaval within both the U.S. and Cuba in 1967-68.

Jacqueline Bahena CNCA says

Flight to Freedom is about a girl named Yara and her older sister, younger sister, mother and father come to join grandparents and other family in Miami, leaving behind her brother who is in the Cuban army and many other relatives. Yara's father believes the family will return to Cuba soon. The mother and older sister think that living in America is what is best for them. The mother gets a job and learns to drive a car and Yara's older sister starts seeing boys on the sly and lying to her parents, who in their minds still live in a world where teenagers are chaperoned.

Yara reports all these changes, the constant arguing of her parents, her own shyness and fear at school, and her gradual adjustment and acceptance of the American way of life. Once Yara wrote in her diary, "There is something I have noticed about my family. Or maybe it's not just my family, but all families living in exile. It seems we can never be completely happy. Even when something good happens, something that we can laugh at or celebrate, there is still a sadness buried under our skin, flowing through our veins, because we are not living where we want to be and because we are separated from those we love."

I really like this book because even if I am not going through this situation, I can still learn about other people and how they are living. Maybe, if one day I meet somebody that may be going through this situation, I can help them. I rate this book a 4 star.

Kathryn says

it takes too long and hurts my brain too much to read in spanish. i was impressed with how much i remembered. frustrated with how it wasn't enough to read at a 10th grade reading level. maybe another time.

Karen says

Despite the fact that I don't have any Cuban students, I feel this book is a must add for my classroom library. The author touches on so many great themes, most especially the ways in which emigration can affect the relationship between parents and children. This is a book that a lot of our ESL students could relate to and would spark some great classroom discussions. The discussion guide at the end of the book, however, left a lot to be desired in my opinion and is not something that I would use.

Jose says

This book reminded me of Lost city because the actor the plays in movie is called Andy Gracia he is a salsa club owner an then Fidel told his people to get the club and turn ti to his way. He starts to get annoyed he tells his family his going to move to Miami for a better life but did have a good life no. It made think wow this reminds me of the lost city of a Cuban family in Castro time period.

Sandra Arellano says

My favorite part of the book was when Yara Garcia , and her family got a letter from her brother that stayed in Cuba .Her mom and family were very happy and anxious when they received the letter , and then her mom started crying hysterically . If i could be one character's from the book, I would be Ileana, Yara's older sister, because she wasn't as sad as Yara when moving to the U.S she actually liked it here . She made friends easily; she also wanted to go out ,and get to know the new country that she was in better . Something that I learned from this book is that not everyone likes it when they leave their home country to go to a different country , and in the beginning they are very sad , and they just think about going back to their home country . I would recommend this book to people that like realistic fiction books about people's life stories . I would read the book again , because it showed difficulties that could happen to anyone in the real world . The point of the book was to show the difficulties that immigrants face when they first arrive in a new country .

Celia says

I really liked this book. The story of Cuban-born Yara, starts out in Havana, 1967, where the regime of Castro is making life miserable for all those who oppose the Communists. Her family has decided to flee Cuba and head to Miami. This is a story based on the author's life, and it reads very true. An interesting glimpse into life during the 1960's, life for a family caught in-between two cultures--told from the heart of an 8th grade girl.

Art says

Interesting book about Cuba during the Revolution lead by Castro and the end result of the country.

About a young lady growing up in Communist Cuba and then in America.

What a contrast!

"Next year we will be in Cuba!"

Wow, How can one try to live when you are wanting to be somewhere else and the area that you live in, brings back so many memories and keep them fresh?

Alejandro says

Not the most amazing writing, but it's not written for readers my age . . . however, it really helped me to see what it must have been like for my family acclimating to the US in the 1960s. I made cafe in my cafetera this morning and I got all emotional thanks to this book.

Kisa says

This is about the courage of a young girl having to leave her country, her language, her family, and nearly all of her comforts behind. It is about a girl who had the courage to adapt which so many of us couldn't possibly do with the faith that she had.

Wedu says

“Flight to Freedom,” by Ana Veciana-Suarez, is a story about the struggle for Yara Garcia. A young girl fleeing with her family to Miami, Florida in 1967 from communist leader Fidel Castro. Yara moves to the states and struggles with not speaking the language. Standing out from other children because she's not as well off and because she's different. Most of all she struggles with how her father seems to be getting in trouble with the authorities over a country that has already been lost. In her heart she still believes her family will get back together. But her family has changed, her fathers' afraid of change, her mother is becoming spontaneous and curious. Her older sister likes to party but most of all her Abuelo the one person who likes to go on walks and tell Yara Gracia everything. While her family falls apart and also discovers new things, Yara discovers the real meaning to her name a new beginning.

Ana Veciana-Suarez, uses first point of view which is subjective to Yara's point of view Ana doesn't make you feel like Yara but rather uses the God perspective to look on Garcia's life, but also feel like your Garcia at the same time. Ana Suarez makes you feel like your the new kid in town all over again.

I would recommend this book to younger readers. This is the first book I have read about the time of Fidel Castro although I haven't read many books about it I felt like I learned much more. This experience felt great because I learned about the story first from the refugee's point of view.

Why I recommended this story for younger readers is because the words and thinking in this book are more between and 5-7 th grade level although older people can read it too.

Angela says

Yara Garcia lives in Cuba with her family in the late 1960s. The Communist Revolution of Fidel Castro has transformed the beautiful island country into a divided nation. Yara and her family flee Cuba on one of the Freedom Flights, but they are forced to leave anything of value and Yara's older brother, Pepito, must remain in Cuba with the army. Her family, one member short, struggles to make life as exiles in Miami work while still clinging to the hope that their situation is only temporary.

- No language or other issues
 - Told through Yara's diary entries
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