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Jose Marti: Cuba's Greatest Hero



Synopsis

All Cubans agree on one thing: José Martí is the "Father of Cuba." He was and remains Cuba's national hero. Cubans from all walks of life simply call him "The Apostle." Poet, political philosopher, statesman, novelist, journalist, translator, and firebrand revolutionary, Martí was the driving force behind the final Cuban insurrection against Spanish rule in the late nineteenth century. This young adult biography begins with Martí's origins in the mid-nineteenth century Cuba, which was then among the last of Spain's New World possessions. Next, the narrative traces his one-track mission into adulthood as a firebrand, intellectual radical who dies a martyr's death while fighting in Cuba. Martí's remarkable talents emerged in his boyhood. A revulsion against slavery in Cuba and Spain's oppressive rule evoked powerful moral response in him. Havana's revolutionary circles drew him in and turned him into a radical in his early teens. Unjustly convicted, imprisoned, and exiled for treason against Spain at 17, he dedicated his life to the ousting of Spanish rule in Cuba. As an adult, he lived as an expatriate in four nations, honing his skills as journalist, poet, political thinker, and organizer of revolution. More than any other Cuban he motivated the Cuban émigré population, especially in Florida, to take up arms against Spain. He conducted much of the war planning, fund raising, and troop-recruiting in Florida, including cities such as Key West, Tampa, Jacksonville, and Ocala. The book relates Martí's personal story - both his strengths and weaknesses - culminating in a depiction of how at 42 he was killed in action and became a martyr. His legacy remains powerful. Today, both Castro's regime and his opponents in exile claim Martí as their own. For the past 120 years, his standard for leadership has endured. No other Cuban reaches his stature. No one probably ever will.

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Customer Reviews

"As an activist, poet, revolutionary, and philosopher whose actions helped to spark the beginning of Cuba's war for independence at the end of the 1800s, it is clear that Jose Marti: Cuba's Greatest Hero earned the honorific. Marti's revolutionary life and martyr's death have made him an iconic figure, but John Dunn's biography is careful to avoid mythologizing him. Dunn takes readers from Marti's birth through his activist years in Florida and his life as an organizer for Cuban freedom in four different countries. Dunn provides historical context and plenty of rich back matter for the curious, making this biography also a great introduction to recent Cuban history." — Courtney Burtraw, Politics and Prose

The only paperback young adult biography of the famous Cuban patriot in print.

This biography offers the reader a concise biography of José Martí. It gave me general knowledge of Martí's life and has motivated me to read more about him. I recommend this book for anyone who only knows Martí by name and wants to gain a better understanding of his major accomplishments and failures. The author separates the man from the myth and makes Martí seem much more genuine and relatable.

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