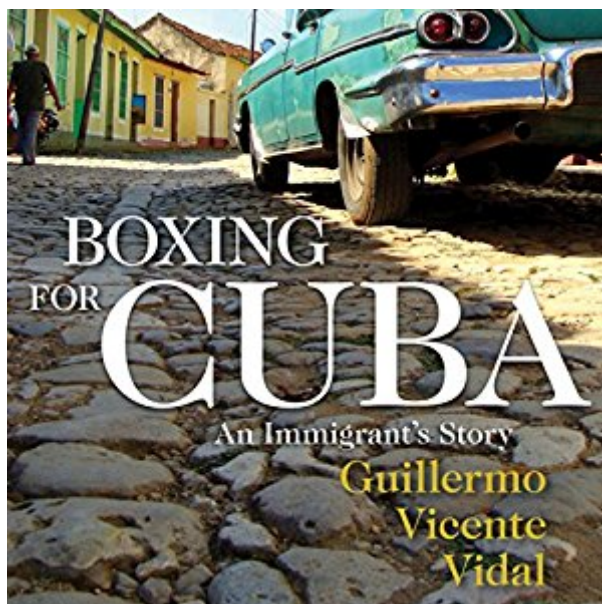


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Boxing For Cuba: An Immigrant's Story



Synopsis

Guillermo Vicente Vidal's memoir chronicles his journey from Castro's Cuba to the United States - a tapestry of his coming of age, a broken family, and disorientation of political unrest. Vidal was barely 10 years old when he proudly shook the hand of Fidel Castro. Although Vidal's parents were once staunch supporters of La Revolucion, they soon found they could no longer keep their sons safe in the new face of Castro's reign, making the difficult decision to send Vidal and his brothers to the US via Operation Peter Pan in 1961. Vidal was on his way to Sacred Heart Orphanage in Pueblo, Colorado, when a chance encounter in the airport led to shaking the hand of Robert Kennedy. Years later, Vidal graduated from the University of Colorado at Denver. He went on to become executive director of the state department of transportation and head of the Denver Regional Council of Governments before he was tapped by Mayor John Hickenlooper to become Deputy Mayor. When Hickenlooper became the Colorado Governor, Vidal became the mayor of Denver. Despite his fears, as an adult Guillermo returns to his beloved Camagüey and delivers truths that shows the beauty and struggles that remain to this day. Boxing for Cuba is not just a story. It is a tale of faith, hope, and a family who becomes more than Operation Peter Pan could have ever dreamed.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This memoir is like a rollercoaster ride as you follow the chaotic, and sometimes violent, life of a

family that emigrates to the US from Cuba after Castro takes power. It is written by the youngest son and is mostly from his perspective. He and his two brothers were sent to the US as part of "Operation Peter Pan," in which the US allowed children from Cuba to escape communism. The three brother were some of the 1500 or so children brought over during a small window of time. The parents followed, several years later. The story is about how this event shaped the writer and the hardships his family encountered as immigrants to the US. It is sad & poignant, while also uplifting and ultimately a story of survival. The glimpse it gives into immigration makes you respect those that go through it.

Guillermo Vidal's richly detailed writing makes the heart ache as he recounts his family's immigration from Cuba to the United States. An intimate family portrait emerges from the struggle and conflicts this family endures and ultimately overcomes. A worthwhile and inspiring read.

I was moved by both Vidal's life story as a Cuban immigrant to the US as well as how magically he used words to share the complex emotions of his journey. Having grown up as a US expatriate in San Juan, Puerto Rico where many displaced Cubanos found a new home. I have always suspected that many of my childhood Cuban friends had similarly challenging experiences, and this story enabled me to better imagine the loss they endured along with the grit they exercised as they created in their adopted home. Thank-you Guille! Bob -- Vero Beach, FL

Wonderful insight into the life and struggles of a refugee child, his relationship to the parents who had to send him on alone to a new land, and his thoughts on both Cuba and the US. Very personal and open.

Great Book - very readable. Since Mr. Vidal is our interim Mayor and attended the same high school, albeit 10 years later, I could really relate to his description of our local area and life in general in Denver. It was an eye opening story about national events that were occurring during my youth and the immense impact on Cuba immigrants - something of which I was totally unaware. I congratulate him for his courage to record some very painful memories.

I really enjoyed this book telling of a child's journey from pre and post Castro's Cuba to being an adult professional in Denver, CO. His point of view of what it was like growing up in pre-Castro's Cuba and then his strange journey airlifted out of Cuba to an orphanage in Colorado was fascinating

reading.

Bill Vidal's portrait of pre-Castro Cuba compellingly reveals how the regime change of 60 years ago affected both his family and the island's other well-to-do residents. Initially supportive of the new government, his father lost both his property and his livelihood, resulting in a decision by him and his wife to send their three boys to the U.S. on one of the so-called Peter Pan flights, along with 14,000 other Cuban children. Despite their parents' very dysfunctional relationship, life without family and homeland proved an almost overwhelming challenge. Instead of the promised foster home, the children ended up in the startlingly abusive environment of a Catholic orphanage in Pueblo, Colorado, until their parents were able to rescue them and once again establish a home. Readers will empathize strongly with the efforts of the boys' father to reestablish himself in an alien environment, and with their mother, who finally leaves the family to be near family in Miami. Bill's eventual success as Deputy Mayor and Manager of Public Works for the City and County of Denver offers hope and inspiration. The rapprochement between Bill and his complicated parents before their deaths is a poignant testimony to the power of family and the character of the man. Reminiscent of Carlos Eire's moving memoir, "Waiting for Snow in Havana," Vidal's book is more gritty, more personal, more frank, more open.

"Boxing for Cuba" was an interesting story about Cuban immigrants from the Castro takeover. The story of the Peter Pan children was particularly interesting as I had never heard about it before. I also liked his description of returning to Cuba many years later. Gave me a new perspective about Cuban immigrants. My book club enjoyed the book and it gave us lots to talk about.

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