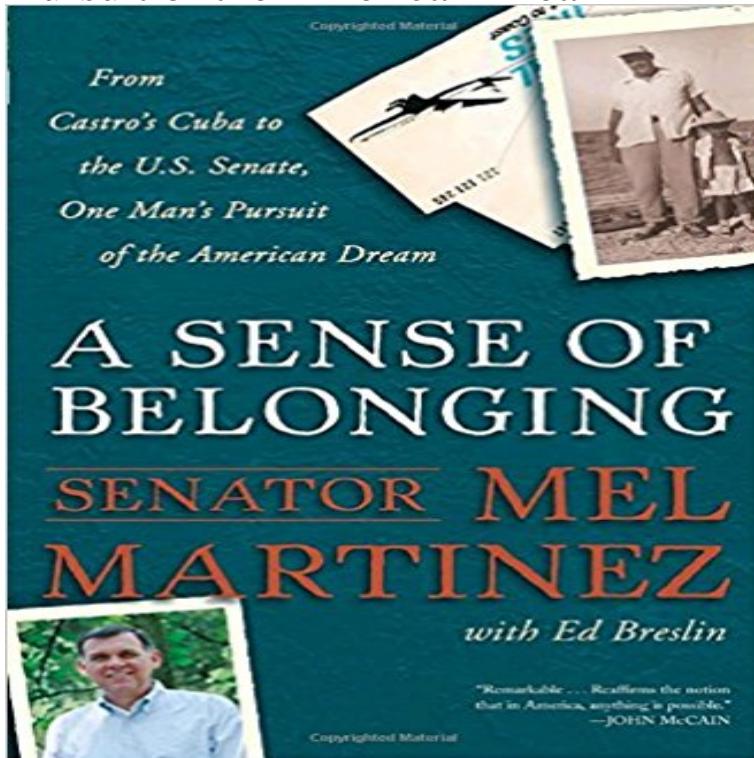


# A Sense of Belonging: From Castros Cuba to the U.S. Senate, One Mans Pursuit of the American Dream



The remarkable story of how a teenager rescued from Castro's Cuba rose to become a United States senator. The swift and improbable rise of Mel Martinez to the top echelon of America's government began not with a political race but with a burst of gunfire. In April 1958, an eleven-year-old Martinez huddled on his bedroom floor while Cuban soldiers opened fire on insurgents outside his family's home in the town of Sagua la Grande. If political unrest made daily life disturbing and at times frightening, Fidel Castro's Communist Revolution nine months later was nothing short of devastating. When armed militiamen shouted violent threats at Martinez for wearing a medallion as a sign of his Catholic faith, his parents made a heartrending decision: their son would have to escape the Castro regime alone. A Sense of Belonging is the riveting account of innocence lost, exile sustained by religious faith, and an immigrant's determination to overcome the barriers of language and culture in his adopted homeland. Though his story ends in the United States Capitol, Martinez has never forgotten the boy who experienced the loss of liberty under communism. A Sense of Belonging is a paean to the transformative power of the American dream.

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