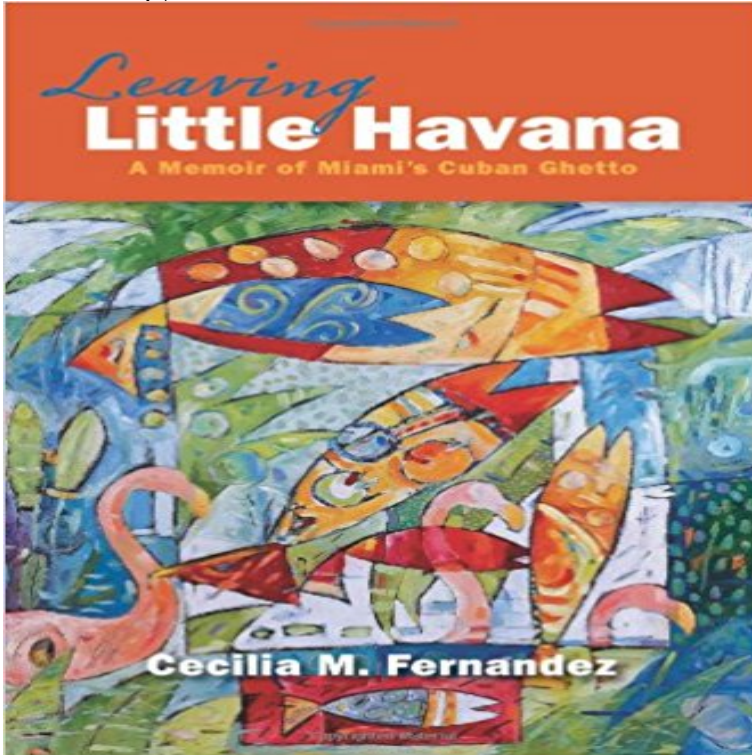


# Leaving Little Havana: A Memoir of Miamis Cuban Ghetto



Literary Nonfiction. Latino/Latina Studies. Womens Studies. Revolution uprooted six-year-old Cecilia from her comfortable middle-class Cuban home and dropped her into the low-income Miami neighborhood of Little Havana. Her philandering father all but abandoned his family to focus on his mistress and rebuilding his career, chasing the American promise of wealth and freedom from the past. Her mother spiraled into madness trying to hold the family together and get him back. Neglected and trapped, Cecilia rebelled against her conservative heritage and embraced the 1960s counter-culture, seeking love and attention anywhere she could get it. And just maybe a place of her own in America. But immigrant children either thrive or self-destruct in a new land. How will Cecilia beat the odds? While most memoirs by Cuban-Americans revolve around childhood scenes in Cuba and explore the experiences of a young man, LEAVING LITTLE HAVANA is the first refugee memoir to focus on a Cuban girl growing up in America, rising above the obstacles and clearing a path to her dream. LEAVING LITTLE HAVANA is the compelling story of a Cuban girl seeking a new life in the U.S. with her family as the Cuban revolution unfolds in the early sixties. Cecilitas personal account, and sexual awakening, is transparent, sad, and triumphant, sprinkled with anecdotes of an emerging Cuban- American landscape. In short, this book is a colorful reminiscence of historical

scenes on both sides of the Straits of Florida, providing closure to a Cuban American journalist coming to terms with her turbulent past.”Guarione M. Diaz LEAVING LITTLE HAVANA is a candid, touching, and engaging memoir of a young Cuban exiles coming of age. Cecilia Fernandez writes with passion and intensity, both of her missteps and her triumphs, casting fresh light on the American experience in the process.”Les Standiford Every so often along comes a book that seizes you by the collar and arrests you on the spot. From page one, LEAVING LITTLE HAVANA is a brilliant, voice-driven book that will make your heart skip a few beats. My experience reading this book was similar to the first time I read The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros when you instantly know you are reading a classic, a story so achingly beautiful and unforgettable you relish every last word as if it were the buzzing of a hummingbird at your lips feeding you honey. This book is about family, about what happens to family in exile, about how people come into a great world of struggle and manage to get by and survive. The author has a great gift for capturing that world-known enclave of Miami we love and call Little Havana. This might be the book that puts it on the literary map for good and forever.”Virgil Suarez

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