



Havana and Other Missing Fathers (Camino del Sol)

Mia Leonin

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Mia Leonin spent the first sixteen years of her life believing her father was dead. All she knew of the man came through stories told by her mother. At times he had been a surgeon, at others a psychiatrist. In truth, he had been a fantasy.

Shortly after her sixteenth birthday, Leonin learned from her mother that her father, a Cuban exile, was very much alive and living in Florida. Her attempts to contact him, however, were thwarted until four years later, when she left home in search of her roots.

She meets her father, but trying to discover the truth behind him proves to be a more daunting task. Her journey takes her to Miami, Colombia, and Cuba, and her search for cultural identity leads her to create memories, friendships, and romances. She finds moments of connection and redemption, ending up in Havana not as a cultural tourist but as an illegitimate daughter of Cuba looking for validation. What she discovers is an island bereft of fathers and brimming with paternalism. As she becomes entangled with two different men, she descends further into the Havana of poverty, humiliation, and despair, as well as the ever-inventive city that is as passionate as it is contradictory.

Insightful, imaginative, and often poetic, *Havana and Other Missing Fathers* is Mia Leonin's recollection of this journey and her longing to learn more about her origins. In the end, she must learn to accept the answers she discovers as well as the questions that remain.

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