



Lion Island: Cuba's Warrior of Words

Margarita Engle

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In a haunting yet hopeful novel in verse, award-winning author Margarita Engle tells the story of Antonio Chuffat, a young man of African, Chinese, and Cuban descent who became a champion of civil rights.

Asia, Africa, Europe—Antonio Chuffat’s ancestors clashed and blended on the beautiful island of Cuba. Yet for most Cubans in the nineteenth century, life is anything but beautiful. The country is fighting for freedom from Spain. Enslaved Africans and nearly-enslaved Chinese indentured servants are forced to work long, backbreaking hours in the fields.

So Antonio feels lucky to have found a good job as a messenger, where his richly blended cultural background is an asset. Through his work he meets Wing, a young Chinese fruit seller who barely escaped the anti-Asian riots in San Francisco, and his sister Fan, a talented singer. With injustice all around them, the three friends are determined that violence will not be the only way to gain liberty.

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