



Midnight Rumba: Novel

Eduardo Santiago

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“Eduardo Santiago Is On Fire!” – David Sedaris *Midnight Rumba* takes you to Cuba before the revolution and spans the years 1940 to 1959, when Fidel Castro came to power. The novel features six main characters, and takes you to Havana, where most of the action takes place, and also Madrid, Paris and Mexico City. *Midnight Rumba* is the second novel from Eduardo Santiago, the award-winning author of *Tomorrow They Will Kiss*. Cuba is Mr. Santiago's topic, and no one does it better. For more than a century, the island nation has fascinated Americans and tempted our politicians and our businesses. What is it about this place that still inspires the imagination? Mr. Santiago takes his cue from those gripping, sprawling 1950s novels that deftly combine personal passions with social and political upheaval (Edna Ferber's *Giant*, Leon Uris's *Exodus*). *Midnight Rumba* weaves together fact and fiction to tell the stories of average Cubans trying to live their lives in the midst of escalating turmoil. His characters anticipate bright futures, but what happens when they are all dreaming of and striving for radically different futures? *Midnight Rumba* centers on the Estelita de la Cruz, a young girl seeking to find her voice and her way in late '50s Havana. She is Cuba personified, such beauty, such potential, such hope, and yet, so many obstacles stand in her way, so many potential wrong turns. Which way to go? But Mr. Santiago doesn't stop there, he gives the reader a lively supporting cast of fully formed characters, all people who have a stake in the new Cuba and are making their own gambles to get there – Delfino, the haberdasher in love with a revolutionary; Asperrina, a peasant whose improbable goal is to become the Cuban Isadora Duncan; Sor Maria, who eschews her aristocratic background only to discover that her convent can't hide her from the world; Esteban de la Cruz, a romantic rumba singer fallen into dissolution and desperate for redemption; Juan Carlos Talente, an orphan in Havana who believes he's found the golden ticket out of poverty and into power. They weave in and out of each other's lives and their stories intertwine with the movers and shakers of the era – Meyer Lansky, Fulgencio Batista, Fidel Castro, and even the masked Mexican wrestling legend, Santos. A gripping read on its own, *Midnight Rumba* also rips a page out of history to offer readers keen and unique insight into the decisions currently facing everyday people in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and other societies wrestling with their futures. How do you choose between gangsters, crooks, corrupt politicians and wild-eyed revolutionaries? How do you tear down a broken society in order to build a better one? Can you ever know for sure which decision is right? Or do you just keep singing, just keep dancing, just keep praying and hope for a better world? *Midnight Rumba* is a page-turning epic story that readers will be unable to put down.

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