

# NEW MOON

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***Local Cuban-American Author with newly released middle-grade fiction book is partnering with Barnes and Noble on November 12, 2022 for the FIRST ever local author event at Barnes and Noble Plantation.***

**Following the 1950s Cuban revolution, a young boy from Havana takes part in the famed “Freedom Flights” to start a new life in America.**

*One family sacrifices everything to protect their son and provide hope for his future.*

**FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida, October 26, 2022--** When the Cuban revolutionary movement in the late 1950s becomes an ominous danger for its citizens, Pedro’s family makes the difficult decision to obtain a precious waiver that sends him on a journey to an Iowa farm to study English and keep safe.

Masterfully written by Michelle McNiff, *Pedro Pan: One Boy’s Journey to America*, explores an imaginative boy’s story of emigration, flying away like Peter Pan from the villainous pirate revolutionaries and their Captain Hook-like leader.

Twelve-year-old Pedro loves living in Havana near the shoreline where he imagines he is the captain of a ship, searching for mermaids from his home’s balcony. With a happy life making *flan* custard with his loving Abuela and eating traditional Cuban dinners together every night with his parents, a doctor and a homemaker, the



imaginative boy revels in the adventures of his picture books and dreams of playing baseball one day for the New York Yankees.

Some of the mean local boys call Pedro *cinnamon boy* and other names. But Pedro knows that Cuba is the paradise land of his ancestors' dreams. He is able to trace his mother's heritage from a small village in Africa and a township in Spain. His father's ancestors were natives from the Taíno Native American tribe.

Soon, things change drastically in Havana for Pedro and his family. The roads and sidewalks become empty and their Havana *barrio* silent as people begin to stay inside, close the curtains, and lock their doors every day. Pedro's school closes and he is no longer allowed to play outside. Some of their neighbors start to go missing. His father can no longer work at the hospital. Tension permeates the city as soldiers patrol the streets in giant trucks, their search lights illuminating the houses. Pedro's parents are frightened and know that the revolutionaries' recent control over the government and his school closure will only mean a dark future for their only son. They vow to sacrifice anything and everything to give their son a life of opportunity.

*His mom arrived ... with a special waiver that would allow Pedro to travel to study English in America. A family in Iowa had answered a church bulletin to sponsor his study abroad with a scholarship that would cover accommodation. His mother packed a large suitcase with family photos, a rosary, books, paper, and pens so he could write letters home.*

As Pedro boards a Pan Am jet bound for Miami on a *vuelo de la libertad*, or Freedom Flight, he feels like Peter Pan, escaping the pirates, yet he feels sad and guilty at leaving his Abuela and parents behind. When he arrives on the large farm in Iowa where he settles into a contented routine with Mrs. Kelley and Farmer Kelley, and the young boy learns the ways of the farm, doing his part with chores, feeding the animals, planting seeds, and cutting hay and bale.

With his only friend being his little pet lizard, Pepe, that he brought from Havana, Pedro is dually surprised and excited when he befriends the farm animals who help him to adjust to his new environment. The animals speak to him, explaining how everyone has a job to do on the farm, whether it's winning blue ribbons at the state fair, like Tucker the Pig, or running pest control, like Senor Owl. Soon, with the help of his new friends, Pedro learns how to take care of himself, observe the world around him, study hard, and never gives up hope of seeing his family again.

Author Michelle McNiff's own family risked their lives and fled communist control in Cuba. Her mother, then a young adult, left Havana in 1961 without her parents, consoling children who were part of the secret Pedro Pan Operation that brought more than 14,000 unaccompanied

Cuban children to escape the tyranny and oppression of the Cuban revolution, leaving their homes, family, and culture behind. In 1994, on assignment with WSVN 7, McNiff interviewed Monsignor Walsh, a key figure in the Pedro Pan historical exodus, and she was inspired by his heroic efforts to help Cuban children emigrate to the United States of America. Many years later, as she began writing stories of survival, she interviewed her relatives and Cuban immigrants on life before and after Fidel Castro took power. With *Pedro Pan: One Boy's Journey to America*, McNiff shares a heartwarming tale of sacrifice, generosity, and perseverance. The paperback with new illustrations by Kurt Huggins, a Best-selling New York Times Comic Artist, is available now wherever books are sold. **McNiff will be attending the FIRST ever local author event at Barnes and Noble Plantation, Saturday, November 12, 2022 at 1pm. A percentage of the sales from the event will go towards the Friends of Helen B. Hoffman Plantation Public Library.**

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If you would like more information about author Michelle McNiff and *Pedro Pan: One Boy's Journey to America*, please contact [Michellem@newmoonmediagroup.com](mailto:Michellem@newmoonmediagroup.com) or visit <https://pedropanbook.com/>.