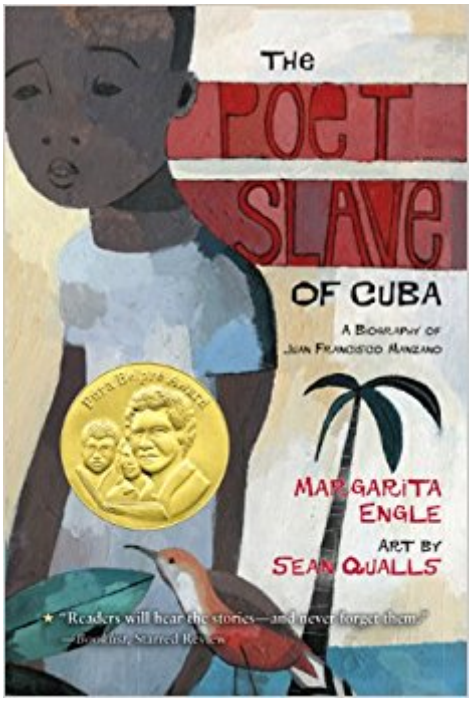
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The Poet Slave Of Cuba: A Biography Of Juan Francisco Manzano



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Synopsis

A lyrical biography of a Cuban slave who escaped to become a celebrated poet. Born into the household of a wealthy slave owner in Cuba in 1797, Juan Francisco Manzano spent his early years by the side of a woman who made him call her Mama, even though he had a mama of his own. Denied an education, young Juan still showed an exceptional talent for poetry. His verses reflect the beauty of his world, but they also expose its hideous cruelty. Powerful, haunting poems and breathtaking illustrations create a portrait of a life in which even the pain of slavery could not extinguish the capacity for hope.The Poet Slave of Cuba is the winner of the 2008 Pura Belpre Medal for Narrative and a 2007 Bank Street - Best Children's Book of the Year. Latino Interest.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: NP (What's this?)

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 11 customer reviews

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Age Range: 12 - 18 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

Customer Reviews

Grade 7 Up-This is an absolutely lovely book about the unlovely subject of slavery. It is the biography of an extraordinary young man, with extraordinary intellectual powers, who was born into slavery in Cuba in 1797. Told in verse, it recounts the sufferings and trials of Manzano. As a boy, he was capable of memorizing and reciting poetic verses in many different languages. He could recount epic tales read to him, and in this way served as the entertainment for his mistress and her many guests. Later, when he became the property of a crueler mistress, his talents helped him endure numerous beatings and confinements. It is amazing that he was able to survive, and even

more astonishing that he was able to maintain his humanity and his sensitive poetic nature. Manzano's sufferings are almost too painful to read about, but the experience is made bearable by Engle's skillful use of verse. Qualls's drawings are suitably stark and compelling, wonderfully complementing the text. This is an exceptional book on two levels. First, it introduces Manzano to an American public. Second, it introduces readers to slavery as it was practiced in a country other than the United States. Both are noteworthy. This is a book that should be read by young and old, black and white, Anglo and Latino.-Carol Jones Collins, Columbia High School, Maplewood, NJ Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Starred Review Gr. 7-10. In plain, stirring free verse, Engle dramatizes the boyhood of the nineteenth-century Cuban slave Juan Francisco Manzano, who secretly learned to read and wrote poetry about beauty and courage in his world of unspeakable brutality. His present-tense narrative begins when he is six, when his parents are set free. He remains behind with a mistress who treats him like a pet, making him perform for guests. When she dies, five years later, he is given to a cruel, crazy woman, who has him beaten and locked up at whim. He doesn't escape until he is nearly 16. Side-by-side with Juan's anguished voice are the narratives of other characters, including his mother, his demonic owners, and the white child who secretly tries to help. Qualls' occasional black-and-white sketches express Juan's suffering and strength, and a brief afterword fills in historical background. Related in fast-moving poetry, the cruelty is vivid, as is the boy's amazing inner power: tied, gagged, and beaten, Juan knows his owner "can't hear the stories I tell myself." Today's readers will hear the stories, though--and never forget them. Hazel RochmanCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This was delivered today and I devoured this book. I cried like a baby and wished this brilliant man found peace and happiness at some point in his life. A fantastically written book.

Fun book, a lot of interest for my son!

Interesting book, i like his poetry, and it is very intellectual and witty.

In The Poet Slave of Cuba: A Biography of Juan Francisco Manzano, Margarita Engle beautifully

captures the life of Juanito, a slave in Cuba with a talent and passion for words. Juanito is smart. He can memorize verses, songs, plays simply by listening. He can then recite them off the top of his head. His owner, DoÃƒÂ a Beatriz, keeps him as an entertaining pet. The other slave owners call him the ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Golden BeakÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• because of his amazing ability to recite from memory. After DoÃƒÂ a Beatriz dies, Juanito is given to La Marquesa de Prado Ameno, a woman who does not find him amusing and is instead bent on punishing him. JuanitoÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s family is given freedom, but he remains enslaved. The violence he endures eventually forces him to escape. Throughout all the time, JuanitoÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s love for words never wavered, but instead, he taught himself to read and write.Juan Francisco ManzanoÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s biography in verse is an important contribution to the retelling of Latin American history. At first, his owners found his recitations entertaining because they did not believe that he understood what he repeated, but eventually Manzano learned the power of words and would construct his own poems and stories. However, this new understanding of words led to many years of physical and emotional abuse. Engle does not romanticize slavery in this text. Her verses help readers feel JuanitoÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s innocence and his genuine interest for words. At the same time, EngleÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s verses feel painful when Juanito gets whipped. JuanitoÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s life story is told through the voices of those in his life. The different voices paint a bigger picture of JuanitoÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s life. His motherÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s death is more sorrowful, for example, because their voices formed a part in telling JuanitoÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s story.
EngleÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s verses are accompanied by artwork by Sean Qualls. There is something about the art that is also beautiful and sad.The Poet Slave of Cuba broaches the subject of slavery in Latin America unlike any other text IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ve come across in Latinx childrenÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s and young adult literature. EngleÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s verses helps put a human face to those who were oppressed, abused, and killed by slavery. Through her verses, Engle has immortalized ManzanoÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s story, and, at least in this one way, readers of this text can begin or continue to have conversations about slavery in Latin America.

Seriously I have to read this for school don’t have time to write a review I need to get this report done

The Poet Slave of Cuba by Margarita Engle is a touching young adult novel that is written in verse. The story of the young poet slave is definitely not a happy one; but the ending will leave you feeling inspired to cherish the life you have. The novel is based on a true story about the life of Juan

Francisco Manzano. Juan is a young man who was born into slavery in the late 1700's. He was blessed with a rare intelligence for the arts, especially for poetry. While young he could not read, but he could memorize beautiful sonnets, plays, verses and sermons with ease and then recite them with perfection. The upper class loved him, and his owners forced him to recite at parties all around, all the while treating him worse than the dirt they trod on. Although Juan had great parents who gave everything to have him free, all they gave was disregarded by the upper class and he was beat and tortured to the amusement of those that had money and power This book had a way of putting my life into prospective more than any other book that I have read. The book is written in many different voices. As the reader hops from character to character and their point of view about the young Juan and his gift, they will see a cruelty in this world unlike any other. Yet on the other hand they will see courage and an unyielding love within the family of this young man. The art in this book is great too. The expressions on the faces of the characters, and the symbols of death and sadness were explicitly shown by the illustrator. Anyone that enjoys literature about other cultures must read this book. Anyone that feels like they were dealt a tough lot in life should read this book. If you need help persevering trials in life, look to Juan as an example of faith and hope and read this book.

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