

[PDF] Why The Cocks Fight: Dominicans, Haitians, And The Struggle For Hispaniola

Michele Wucker - pdf download free book



Books Details:

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Description:

The Caribbean island of Hispaniola is home to historic, ongoing strife between two countries deeply divided by race, language, and history yet forced constantly into confrontation by their shared geography. In her first book, American journalist Michele Wucker reports from both Haiti and the Dominican Republic on the complex relations between these two cultures and sheds light on the sources of their struggles both in their island home and in the United States.

This book is charged from the start with the violence and posturing of blood sport, as Wucker observes her first Haitian cockfight: "The air cracks with the impact of stiffened feathers as each bird tries to push the other to the ground. Around the ring, the Haitian men shout to one another and wave dirty wads of gourdes in the air, seeking bets.... Soon, the feathers of both cocks are slick with blood." Popular in both countries, these fights become a totemic image for the author, who finds in them, as in the many clashes between Hispaniola's two cultures, "both division and community, opposite sides of the same coin." This is a fine historical primer, buoyed along by Wucker's graceful, observant prose style. --*Maria Dolan* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From Publishers Weekly The U.S. has sent troops to Haiti and the Dominican Republic four times in this century, twice to each country. In the last 20 years, reports Wucker, one-eighth of the population of the island of Hispaniola has emigrated to the U.S. Wucker, a freelance journalist, delves much deeper than mere numbers and chronology, supplementing her knowledge of the island's history with a great sense of the fabric of everyday life in the two countries. While each chapter is discrete enough to stand alone, cumulatively they create a passionate mural of the often bloody relationship between wary neighbors. Among the critical issues and events Wucker addresses are the role of geography as a barrier, European settlement, slave revolts, the role of the sugar industry and the experience of Dominican and Haitian immigrants in the U.S. Wucker's treatment of Dominican racism toward Haitians is particularly good, capturing the nuance and ambivalence at work when two peoples who are not nearly as different as they would sometimes like to believe are stuck together on a small piece of land with limited resources. Throughout the book, Wucker uses the metaphor of cockfighting, presenting the countries as two roosters forced (sometimes by the U.S.) to battle in a small, enclosed ring. If she relies a bit too heavily on this trope, Wucker more than makes up for the minor indulgence with her insightful treatment of many cultural issues, particularly the politicized nature of language, to which she brings an understanding of Creole, Spanish and French. Clear prose and vivid scenes of life at street level make Wucker's first book a marvelous immersion experience in the clash and conciliation of cultures on a small, embattled island next door. (Jan.) FYI: Why the Cocks Fight makes good companion reading to Edwidge Danticat's novel, *The Farming of Bones* (Forecasts, June 8.)

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