



Cuba

By Stephen Coonts

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Rear Admiral Jake Grafton is back! The hero of six *New York Times* bestsellers by Stephen Coonts, author of *Flight of the Intruder* and *Fortunes of War*, returns as the United States and Cuba engage in a terrifying game of brinksmanship, a gamble that could break the last military taboo and destroy both countries.

In *Cuba*, an ailing Fidel Castro lies dying. Across the Straits of Florida, an anxious US awaits the inevitable power struggle, determined to have a say in who controls this strategically invaluable island. And the American President has an added reason for concern: an Arms Control Conference has just begun in Paris and, unbeknownst to either the American public or Cuba, the US has hidden secret weapons inside the American base on Cuba's Guantanamo Bay. But no secret remains one for long, and when one of the Cuban factions finds out about the weapons, the excitement begins.

Only Admiral Grafton, on an aircraft carrier off the coast of Cuba, knows the impending danger. Only Grafton can save America from a disaster that would make the Bay of Pigs look like child's play. In *Cuba*, Stephen Coonts captures the ominous feel of a tropical powderkeg about to explode in a novel filled with the action and drama for which he is famous.

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Cuba By Stephen Coonts Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

When a North Korean freighter carrying a cargo of biological weapons runs aground in international waters off Cuba--Rear Admiral Jake Grafton wants go aboard, taking just one other man with him. His new chief of staff, Capt. Pascal, is skeptical and suggests that he takes along a half-dozen well-armed marines. Jake's reply is patient and succinct: "I don't know what's on that ship.... It just makes sense to have a point man explore the unknown before we risk very many lives. I am going to be the point man because I want to personally see what is there, and I make the rules. Understand?" Had Capt. Pascal been one of the millions of readers of Coonts's six previous books about Grafton, he wouldn't have raised the issue. Jake is a take-charge guy, the kind of believable hero trusted by his military superiors (if occasionally viewed as a loose cannon by politicians), and not even the possibility of an all-out war with Cuba is going to make him start playing it safe.

Fidel Castro is very close to death from cancer, and his chief aide plans to win the hearts of the Cuban population and gain control of the government by using a 40-year-old secret weapon against an American city. Meanwhile, Adm. Grafton and his carrier fleet have been sent to Guantánamo Bay in Cuba to supervise the removal of some U.S. biological weapons there. Very soon, Grafton and other Coonts regulars are up to their helmets in action on the air, land, and sea. Along the way, we meet a large cast of vivid supporting players: a Cuban family whose fate is closely linked to Castro's rise and fall and a CIA agent with the perfect cover--a lawyer for giant tobacco companies who want to make cigarettes in Cuba. We also increase our knowledge of military jargon: "strangling the parrot" means turning off a radar transponder. *Cuba* is an intriguing and surprisingly compassionate scenario, in which superb military action alternates with high family drama and political in-fighting. --*Dick Adler*

From Publishers Weekly

The future of Cuba is up for grabs in this crackerjack speculative thriller by the author of *Flight of the Intruder* and *Fortunes of War*. Coonts regulars Rear Admiral Jake Grafton and staff operations officer Toad Tarkington are providing military cover for a shipment of American chemical and biological weaponsAweapons that should have been destroyed long agoAout of Guant namo Bay, where they have been in storage. When the shipment goes missing, it's Grafton's job to find it and get those weapons back. But that's the least of his worries, because Cuba is developing its own biological weapons; as soon as they are ready, they will be loaded onto missiles already aimed at American cities. Meanwhile, an aged Castro is dying of cancer, and even if he lives long enough to name a successor, Alejo Vargas, head of the Cuban secret police, has his own plans for the future of the country. While there's little doubt that Grafton will save the day, Coonts's sharply drawn charactersAincluding dapper CIA operative and biological weapons expert William Henry Chance and his safe-cracking sidekick, Tommy CarmelliniAand a plethora of intersecting plot lines take what one character calls "another Cuban missile crisis" to a rousing action finale. But the surprise pleasure here is how clearly Coonts paints a picture of Cuba by focusing on the three Soldano brothersAHector, a Jesuit priest who may be Castro's chosen successor; Ocho, the handsome ballplayer who has the chance to sail to Florida with the woman he got pregnant; and Maximo, the finance minister who is more interested in money than the revolution. This gripping and intelligent thriller is a standout for Coonts, taking the death of Castro as a starting point for an all-too-possible scenario of political turmoil and military brinkmanship. \$325,000 ad/promo; author tour. (Aug.) FYI: In one of this season's more interesting coincidences, Coonts chooses for his epigraph the same poem by Jos? Mart! as does Amy Ephron in her book *White Rose*, reviewed above.

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From Library Journal

Fidel Castro is dying of cancer just as the United States decides to move its cache of chemical weapons from its Cuban base. On the way to Norfolk, the freighter carrying the warheads disappears. When the navy discovers it aground on a Cuban island, the weapons and the crew are gone. Rear Admiral Jake Grafton is given the job of figuring out what happened. In the course of the investigation, he finds that Cuba has missiles left over from the Soviet Union's involvement with Castro, and the Cuban government is manufacturing a new strain of polio for which there is no cure. Coonts has perfected the art of the high-tech adventure story. He juggles a multivoiced narrative with action taking place in a number of different locations but seldom loses sight of the direction of the story. This tale of what could happen when Castro dies grips the imagination from first to last. For all libraries. [Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 4/15/99; Cuba is currently a popular topic with thriller writers, as seen in Martin Cruz Smith's Havana Bay, LJ 5/1/99.AEd.]AJo Ann Vicarel, Cleveland Heights-University Heights P.L., O.

-AJo Ann Vicarel, Cleveland Heights-University Heights P.L., OH

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Arlene Miller:

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Doris Avey:

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