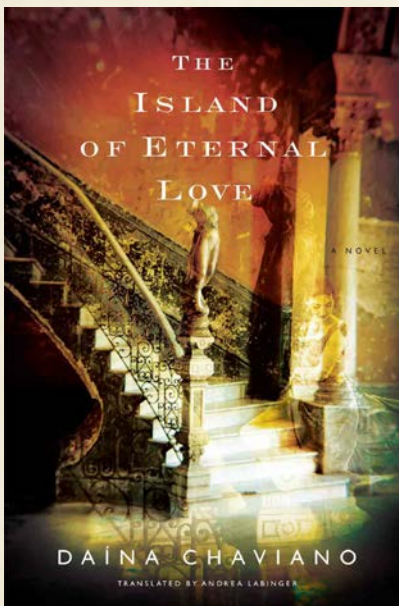


The Island Of Eternal Love: An Enchanting Story

by Lisa Carter

Originally posted at Críticas Magazine online (11/15/2006)

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Award-winning Cuban novelist Chaviano brings us the third and final novel in her *La Habana oculta (The Occult Side of Havana)* series, a family saga with clairvoyant women and social history, reminiscent of Isabel Allende's *La casa de los espíritus (The House of the Spirits)* and *Hija de la fortuna (Daughter of Fortune)*. Cecilia is a lonely, displaced Cuban in Miami. In the darkness of a bar in Little Havana, surrounded by the beat of Cuban music, she is captivated by a series of love stories told to her by Amalia, a shadowy older woman. These separate chronicles have different points of departure (China, Africa, Spain) but all lead to the island and seem to follow Cecilia to the United States. By weaving together the history of immigration to Cuba, the distinct cultures, the political changes, and the resulting migration abroad, Chaviano delivers both an enchanting story and a sociological study. Music and magic play significant roles; each chapter carries the title of a bolero, and lyrics are used to express characters' feelings. Chaviano's writing is just as melodious as the songs themselves: goblins, ancestral spirits, and a dream-like haze hang over the novel from start to finish. Strongly recommended for public libraries and bookstores with an interest in Cuba and fantasy. ★

