

For Mom, who teaches us everyday what strength looks like.

Hannah

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www.lantanapublishing.com | info@lantanapublishing.com

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ANITA AND THE DRAGONS

HANNAH CARMONA
ANNA CUNHA

 Lantana

A young girl with dark skin and hair in pigtails, wearing a red dress, stands on a wooden crate. She has her eyes closed and a serene expression. The background is a lush garden with various plants, including a large tree with green leaves and orange fruit, and a potted plant with large green leaves. A brown chicken is visible in the background, and a small blue object is on the ground. The overall style is a soft, painterly illustration.

“They aren’t real dragons,” my brother Juan reminds me.
“They’re just planes in the sky.”

“Humph,” I say. “Leave my palace at once. You servants
can be such a nuisance.”

“We don’t live in a palace!” my older brother Tony retorts.

“Of course *you* don’t! I, *Princesa Anita*, would never
allow a toad like you inside my walls.”



I breathe in the sea salt-drenched
air deeply. I send a silent message
to my island. A message filled with
mango-sweet kisses; black, stormy
nights; glassy, blue waves; spicy,
hot heat—and sandy, snug hugs.
I will see you again.