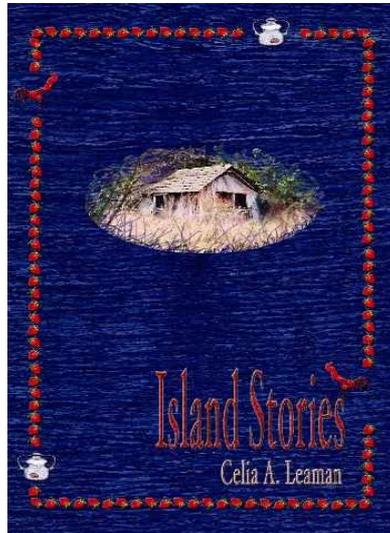


Book Review



Island Stories

by Celia A. Leaman

Reviewed by Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopes

Island Stories is a collection of three previously published fiction stories. Some of the author's stories themes repeat from other publications, but the drama and the outcomes take on a different flavour and an interesting end on this humorous collection.

Author Ms. Leaman has the ability to convert common life situations into stories that will make you laugh and wonder at the same time, "is this for real?" After reading her other book, ***"Who is Margaret? What is She?"***, I knew I was in for a plate of spaghetti with meatballs in a rich tomato sauce!

The Adventures of Oliver Turtle, and Doll is a hilarious story of a retired couple going through some type of life crisis. One day while reading the newspaper Oliver sees an ad advertising the "fixer-upper" "Strawberry Fields Farm" on Gale Island and decides to make an appointment to see the property. Doll, his wife, is not very thrilled about the idea of leaving the comfort of her conveniently located condo to move to a farm on some dubious island. However, after Oliver's insistence, she agrees to go see the property. The realtor, aware of all the downers of the property, pointed out only the highlights of the house and purposely avoided walking on the rotten wooden floor. Oliver starts day dreaming about their strawberry fields and homemade jellies. He is convinced that this farm is the last link to their happiness. He made an offer and decided to buy the property. Meanwhile, the

people in town are making bets at the post station about how long this new owner will stay at the farm and on the island.

Oliver's adventures on Gale Island begin while he is moving their belongings on a rental truck and it gets stuck between the ferry and the dock. This creates a lot of very unhappy passengers and residents who are already giving Oliver the unwelcoming Gale look. Oliver reaches the property at night and starts having some doubts about this purchase. Either way he goes around the house and is greeted by some mice and finds some other unpleasant and unknown problems in the house. After having a heck of a time getting things set, he decides to go for a walk in the forest near the house. While enjoying the fresh air and his encounters with nature, he loses track of time and gets lost. However, this leads him to discover the cheap skim of his neighbor.

Meanwhile, Doll is having her hands full at the condo trying to wrap things up. She decides to do some beauty fixer upper herself when suddenly a fire starts on one of the condos in the neighborhood. Between a face mask, a shocking pink and scarlet corset, and the fire person knocking at her door, Doll finds herself in the adventure of her lifetime. Oliver sees Doll on TV and prays she gets her natural born red-hair temper under control. Doll's encounter with the police and the TV reporters will make you laugh long and hard.

Do not think this is the end of Oliver and Doll's adventures at their new home on Gale Island. On the contrary, this is just the beginning of a new life for Oliver and Doll and for those of you who would dare to tag along with them.

She Drove a BMW. Nell is dating a younger man who is old enough to be her son. Jason wants Nell to meet his mother but she feels insecure about it. Nell decides to meet her future mother-in-law in a casual environment. She calls her friend Marcie and explains her dilemma. Marcie, who runs a daycare in her house, takes the kids on a field trip to the next town as she accompanying Nell in her scouting trip. They go to the cafe where Jason's mom always goes after finishing her shopping. Nell searches the place for a lonely old lady, finds one, and seats on her table interrupting her meal with some nonsense conversation. While looking at the woman, Nell is thinking that she must be very rich and lets her imagination go wild about her place of residence and so on. However, not everything goes as planned, and Nell and the rest of the scouting team must go home. Nell is disappointed but life's twists and turns grant her wish and she gets to meet Jason's mom in a very original way.

Be careful what you wish for!

Being Like Annie Fairfax is a story of courage, self-worth, and acceptance. Maxine and Michael have been married for a long time. Then one day he asks for a divorce because he discovered his gay side and decides to pursue it. Maxine is devastated and leaves the comfort of the island to find new sources of income. She does all type of jobs, but none pleased her. One day she finds a painting set on a yard sale and with the little money left on her pursue, she buys it. She lets all her deep emotions out on the canvas. Deep purples and black to shake out the depression. After the healing, came the colors of happiness. On one of her visits to her old friend, Annie Fairfax, she talks about herself, her new life, jobs, and her paintings. Annie listens attentively and tells Maxine about an art show coming up the following week. Annie encourages her to bring some of her paints. At first she hesitated, but then decides to participate. Maxine's former husband was the first person to purchase a painting from her. He had always admired her paintings. By the end of the day, Maxine had sold several of her other paintings.

The end of the story teaches us all to believe in ourselves and to not be afraid, to be more like Annie Fairfax, a woman who lived life at its fullest potential and brought out the best on those she met along the way.



Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés, author of *The Window to My soul; My Walk With Jesus* (ISBN 0975393359; 2004 Tate Publishing; www.tatepublishing.com).

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The author also has a blog at www.amazon.com

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Author's Comment:

“Tannia Ortiz-Lopes was very thorough and sensitive in reviewing my books. She is a flexible reviewer and pays attention to detail. Everyone's time is precious, and I appreciate the time she has given to my work.”

Celia A. Leaman (<http://www.devonshirebabe.com/>)