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Hummingbirds In My Hair



Synopsis

When Pamela O’Cuneen heard her diplomat husband was being transferred to Suriname, her first reaction was: ‘Suri-where?’ Neither she nor anyone she spoke to had heard of the country. Having spent sixteen years in Africa - a story told in her first book, *Culture Shock and Canapes* - she was prepared for surprises, but Suriname, the mysterious land of seven cultures, proved to be a multi-layered experience that tested all her powers of cultural adaptation. *Hummingbirds in My Hair* describes Pamela’s move from rainforest Suriname to carnivalesque Trinidad where, beneath the sound of steel pans and soca music, a dark and violent history of enslaved people still influences politics today. Those who read and enjoyed *Culture Shock and Canapes* will welcome this second episode of diplomatic travels and travails, revealing that what goes on inside embassy walls in developing countries is not just endless champagne and silver spoons. The book unrolls with humour, delighting in a lively procession of multicultural characters and animals, and includes a variety of recipes collected along the way...

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

‘The writing is excellent, natural and graceful. There is a comfortably old-fashioned feel with warmth, humour and an amazingly vivid eye for detail. Those with perception will see what I saw: a completely modern story of the human heart riding a roller-coaster of happiness and hardship with timeless humour and wisdom. At least I hope so’ Richard Addis ‘A vividly drawn journey into the characters, customs and sumptuous food of the Caribbean, you can almost smell the exotic flowers and spices. The story is intoxicating’ Anna Stothard --.

Pamela O'Cuneen was born in Perth, Western Australia. After training as a teacher and working for the British Council in London, she spent twenty-five years in Africa and the Caribbean as a diplomatic wife. A vivacious and charismatic public speaker, Pamela offers lectures and workshops on 'culture shock'. As well as writing she sings, plays the piano and harp, paints in watercolour and teaches meditation. She now lives in Kent.

I liked that the author's words allowed me to truly experience both the tangible and intangible. This book is filled with such important details. I kept turning pages . . . Wanting to know more and more about the goings on in this exclusively different life of a diplomat's wife. Humour, warmth, love, grieving, food and the personalities we get to meet, make this a good read.

Pamela O'Cuneen writes in an engaging and humorous way about her years as a diplomatic lady in Suriname, South America and Trinidad & Tobago. Born and raised in Suriname, I was curious to see what an outsider experienced in my country. O'Cuneen manages to get the atmosphere, the vibrations of the Caribbean and the melting pot and the oddities of the different cultures and races of both countries just right. While Trinidad & Tobago has the typical Caribbean exuberance, Suriname is a bit of an outcast. We belong to both the Caribbean and South America, but are sort of squished in between them. South America is predominantly Spanish, we 'only' speak Dutch. Imagine Caribbean islands, a picture of white beaches, blue skies and turquoise waters pops up. We have cola colored creeks and rivers, mud banks as beaches and everywhere you look there is jungle sprouting. Certain things did bother me however. The book was in bad need of a few more editing rounds. Besides some grammar and spelling errors, many names of people, places and things were misspelt. The national airline and the veterinarian come to mind. Some inconsistencies like her seeing rice paddies, where I know there are none. As a diplomatic wife, she should know it is the Netherlands and not Holland when talking about the country. And trying to be humorous, vegetables like tayerblad and places like Poelepantje were mentioned several times by how they are pronounced instead of their common names. Irritating. Once is fine. Twice is too much. Thrice is condescending.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. Pamela was the wife of a diplomat. She and her husband, KJ were sent to Suriname, then on to Trinidad. Pam gives a beautiful picture of these countries, along with snapshots of history and culture.

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