



Local Customs

Audrey Thomas

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Nominated for the 2016 Forest of Reading Evergreen Award

Nominated for the 2014 Victoria Book Prize

An Englishwoman's mysterious death in 19th-century West Africa haunts those left behind.

Letitia Landon, "Letty" to her friends, is an intelligent, witty, successful writer, much sought after for dinner parties and soirées in the London of the 1830s. But, still single at thirty-six, she fears ending up as a wizened crone in a dilapidated country cottage, a cat her only companion.

Just as she is beginning to believe she will never marry, she meets George Maclean, home on leave from his position as the governor of Cape Coast Castle on the Gold Coast of West Africa. George and Letty marry quietly and set sail for Cape Coast. Eight weeks later she is dead — not from malaria or dysentery or any of the multitude of dangers in her new home, but by her own hand. Or so it would seem.

Local Customs examines, in poetic detail, a way of life that has faded into history. It was a time when religious and cultural assimilation in the British colonies gave rise to a new, strange social order. Letty speaks from beyond the grave to let the reader see the world through her eyes and explore the mystery of her death. Was she disturbed enough to kill herself, or was someone — or something — else involved?

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