



## Lime Tree Can't Bear Orange

*Amanda Smyth*

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*Men will want you like they want a glass of rum...One man will love you. But you won't love him. You will destroy his life. The one you love will break your heart in two.*

So says the soothsayer, when predicting young Celia's future. Raised in the tropics of Tobago by an aunt she loves and an uncle she fears, Celia has never felt that she belonged. When her uncle—a man the neighbors call Allah because he thinks himself mightier than God—does something unforgivable, Celia escapes to the bustling capital city.

There she quickly embraces her burgeoning independence, but her search for a place to call home is soon complicated by an affectionate friendship with William, a thoughtful gardener, and a strong sexual tension with her employer. All too quickly, Celia finds herself fulfilling the soothsayer's predictions and living a life of tangled desperation—trapped between the man who offers her passion and the one who offers his heart.

## Lime Tree Can't Bear Orange Details

Date : Published June 30th 2009 by Broadway Books (first published 2009)

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Author : Amanda Smyth

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## From Reader Review Lime Tree Can't Bear Orange for online ebook

### Kinga says

Drama, drama, drama. This reads like a Brazilian soap opera.

I quite liked it even if I knew exactly where it was going around the page 120. This is your typical story about women with its usual themes of love, betrayal, pregnancy, motherhood.

What I liked most about the book is probably the setting which is Trinidad and Tobago. It was written in the first person in a rather simple style but the descriptions were captivating.

It definitely calls for a sequel.

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### Danna says

Lime Tree Can't Bear Orange takes place in Trinidad. The story follows a young woman as she comes of age. After she is assaulted by her step-father, she flees her home and embarks on a tumultuous journey. She engages in cliche love affair with her new boss (father of the household she nannies for), and becomes pregnant. Overall, I found the book very enjoyable, although somewhat predictable (the author lays clues throughout the story) and cliche up until the end. Even though I had guessed one of the surprise revelations, I was still thrown by the ending. It was one of the rare occasions for me, where the surprise ending actually made me feel like I enjoyed the book more (usually they annoy me and make me like a book less).

Absolutely worth a read. Also, was fun reading a story that took place in Trinidad, getting a tiny taste of the culture (as I have never read a story based there before).

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### Alan says

I've read a proof copy of this, it isn't out yet. It's full of lovely writing. She's a mate (in my writer's group) so of course I'm very biased. And I'm going to the launch in March in the Trinidad & Tobago embassy in London. I'll add more later.

Later:

It is out now. I think in America it will be called something different.(ah found it - Lime Tree Can't Bear Orange). The Guardian gave it a good review on Saturday:

There are hints of Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea throughout Smyth's hypnotic, eerie novel. The setting is colonial 1950s West Indies. Celia d'Abadie is 16, a promising pupil in Black Rock, Tobago, living uneasily with secretive, superstitious Aunt Tassi and Tassi's predatory partner Roman. Celia's original parentage is vague - a mother dead in childbirth, an unknown father in England. After being raped by Roman, she escapes to Trinidad, where she later takes a job as nanny to the wealthy Dr Rodriguez and his unstable, homesick English wife. Celia begins a feverish affair with Rodriguez and reveals herself as a complex character, simultaneously trapped and powerful; Smyth writes entrancingly on tropical heat and light, indolence, vengeance and desire.

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### **Janet says**

Celia knows that her mother died in childbirth and that her father, a white Englishman, wanted nothing to do with her, but she daydreams about one day taking the long trip to Southampton, England, to track her father down. Surely once he meets her he'll want to get to know her?

When Celia has to deliver limes to Mrs Jeremiah, who is rumoured to be clairvoyant, she's warned that she will be hurt by her Aunt's husband Roman. Mrs Jeremiah also issues the following prophesy. "Men will want you like they want a glass of rum - to drink you up and pee you out. One man will love you. But you won't love him. You will harm him. You will destroy his life. The one you love will break your heart in two. You'll die in a foreign place". She tosses Celia a lump of black rock to act as a talisman and Celia runs away as Mrs Jeremiah tries to exorcise her.

When Mrs Jeremiah's warning about Roman comes true, Celia flees Tobago. There she starts to rebuild her life helped by the kindness of a young man she meets on the boat who looks after her and finds her employment with an English family who live in Trinidad. Celia soon finds happiness - but how long will it last?

I chose this book on my Book Spa day, because Amanda Smyth appeared at the Bath Literature Festival talking about this, her debut novel, and the shop's owner, Nic said the book had been selling out as soon as it came in which is always encouraging. I liked the sound of it, plus the added benefit of it being eligible for one of my book challenges!

The 'blurb' mentions a "vivid sense of the supernatural" but to my mind it was really more about local superstition. However, it was an enjoyable story and the writing style is easy to read and reasonably descriptive - I really felt a sense of the Islands. As a debut I thought it was very promising and I hope she writes more.

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### **Crystal Belle says**

definitely some good writing throughout the novel and it takes place in trinidad and tobago. it was nice to read about an island that is so close to home for me. however, the main character goes through so many "bad luck" phases, it is hard to read this book and have one moment of happiness. towards the end there were many, many twists and turns which turned a novel that started off so strong into an intense soap opera. but according to my mother, this is the epitome of island life...i guess so. a good beach read.

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### **Theresa Powers says**

This was very compelling. The content created some mixed emotions toward the main character. She seemed like a lost soul to me just trying to find her way through life. I did not always agree with the choices she made, because there was a lot of hurt created for the characters around her. However, that was precisely what made this book interesting. I was riveted throughout. The setting was in the tropics so I became fascinated

with the culture, food, and landscape as well.

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### **cardulelia carduelis says**

You should know, going in, that Black Rock is tremendously difficult to read.

It's not the writing, the language, or the setting - all are ok, some nice descriptions of scenery and the dialogue gives a sense of place that other islanders have commented is representative.

The difficulty comes with both our heroine, her voice, and the plot.

If nothing else Black Rock is a story of manipulation, entrapment, and abuse of women (of both races but honestly the physical abuse and debasement of black women in the novel far exceeds that of their white neighbours).

The author (interviewed here) describes her novel as a 'coming-of-age story' but there is very little growth shown in Celia over the three years we follow her. Before the horrendous (view spoiler) trauma that causes her to flee her hometown Celia is described as bright, with a good future, and recommended to set on a track for university.

Her health and physical/mental wellbeing are not only taken from her but also any chance of her following this academic future and leaving her family's poverty. This aspect of the story is never touched again when she leaves Black Rock - her attractiveness, height, lush skin and hair being her sole descriptors thereafter.

Celia is reduced from a bright, thoughtful, and wary young woman to one who exists only to serve: the men who desire her, the women who outrank her socially.

The odd thing is that after this first incident of abuse we never hear Celia's thoughts again.

(view spoiler)

The outcome of the novel: that she fulfills the divinations of the local witch-woman, that she follows in the footsteps of the generations of women before her, without job, with a family she doesn't trust, partnerless (view spoiler) was massively depressing.

That there was no closure for her, her aunt, her father, her mother and when so much conflict could have been cleared up by a few conversations... it's enough to make you go mad. But Celia remains cold and composed and plods on and so, too, does the reader.

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### **Jonathan says**

Debut novel by Irish-Trinidadian writer Amanda Smyth, about a young, mixed-race Tobago girl who leaves her home for Trinidad in the 1950s to make something of her life. A skillfully written and engaging book, if a little too careful, and therefore ultimately somewhat bloodless and underwhelming. With a detail of the haunting painting "Grande Riviere" by Peter Doig as its cover illustration.

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### **Mary says**

"I believe you follow your life, Celia. You don't lead your life. It's a mistake people make. We're not that powerful or important." (p. 99)

This was a good novel, but not a great one. The life that Celia follows was easily predicted from the beginning of the book.

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### **Champaign Public Library says**

Lovely Celia leaves an unbearable situation in her home on Tobago to make her way on Trinidad. Hardworking and intelligent in some ways, she still permits herself to be used by those with power granted by their race and privilege. A soothsayer's predictions come true leading to a possibly tragic conclusion. Only three stars because I found much of the plot to be fairly predictable, but still really appreciated the simple yet vivid writing and the setting in Trinidad and Tobago. Having visited this country, I was able to clearly imagine the carefully described sights and sounds, the accents of the characters and the calls of the birds.

Reviewed by Linda.

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### **Debbie Dindial says**

The book is interesting, you're compelled to go further but I find the vocabulary and writing style simple and basic. Feels like I am just reading it because I like the setting of Trinidad and Tobago but mostly because I bought it. Later into the book, the story picks up. I enjoyed it. Worth a read if you like West Indian stories and can wait for the novel to become less like a long essay and more like a novel.

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### **innae says**

A tragedy for sure - at least it ends with a glimmer of hope.

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### **Sarah says**

This book told a story that I've read many times before. The only difference was it took place in Tabago and the main character Celia was brave enough in the beginning to leave her home after she was raped.

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### **Arlene says**

This book was another one of my Read Around the World selections. It is set in Trinidad Tobago and tells

the story of a young woman who is alone except for her aunt, cousins and evil uncle. As Celia grows up it seems that bad luck follows her like a shadow. But how much of the bad luck is caused by Celia herself? Sometimes I wanted to just shake this character and say, "Wake Up, these people are using you!" A short but engaging book, I found myself musing over Celia and wondering if she ever learned to take care of herself.

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### **carpe librorum :) says**

Foi pelo título que veio até mim, uma amiga gostou e ofereceu-me. Gostei da tropicalidade, da descrição das paisagens, dos cheiros e dos sabores, mais do que a história. Apesar das inúmeras descrições, é uma leitura rápida, não fossem alguns acontecimentos que me parecem demasiado detalhados e irrelevantes para a história e seria uma leitura bastante fluída. Ela é capaz de gostar, vou partilhar.

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