



Little Star of Bela Lua

By Luana Monteiro
ISBN: 9780060899530

Introduction

A mysterious fish performs questionable miracles in a drought-plagued town. A female rhymester must battle not only her opponents but also sexism from her people and her own family. An ailing priest must come to terms with his calling to God and his deeper calling to his people. A doctor cured by a snake must now find a cure for his own dysfunctional life. A woman overwhelmed by her sexual appetite must find a way to control her urges in order to find happiness with her husband. Through Luana Monteiro's masterful, whimsical writing, these colorful characters in *Little Star of Bela Lua* come to life in stories both Brazilian to the core and universal as a whole.

Questions for Discussion

1. In "A Fish in the Desert," the story begins with a nine-month drought. After it rains, Otália finds a luminous fish in the outhouse, and after scooping the fish up, her water breaks. After all these years, her wish to have a child is "granted" in the form of fish of cursed blessings. Her very pious husband resents the fish and what it has done, and leaves his wife. Is this a cautionary tale: "Be careful what you wish for?" Did Otália long for a child more than she valued her relationship with her husband?
2. What do you think happened to Valquíria's astrologer in "Little Star of Bela Lua"? Did he leave of his own accord, or was he persuaded by Zé do Cangaço?
3. In "Little Star of Bela Lua," do you think Zé do Cangaço arranged for Caruso dos Sertões to win, or did Caruso himself decide to intervene to save Valquíria?
4. In "The Ecstasy of São Mercúrio," at what point do you think Padre Miguel Inacio became ill? Before the apparition of the silver boy playing flute, or after he drank the silver water from the river?
5. In "Ouroboros," Uriel never checks Pascoal's pulse. Do you think Pascoal may have still been alive?
6. In "Antonio de Juvita," how does Dona Juvita's release of her beloved canaries represent her relationship with her son?
7. In "Curado," how does the snake captured at the hospital cure Claudio of his "problem"?
8. Is Claudio relieved when Elisabeth leaves?
9. In "The Whirling Dove," why is Cloé fascinated by the Incredible Hulk?
10. In "The Whirling Dove," do you believe Cloé is possessed by Maria Padilha or somehow conflicted by her childhood?

About the Author

Luana Monteiro grew up in Recife on the Northeastern coast of Brazil and spent weekends in the remote, dusty town of Camaragibe. It was here along the river and in the deep woods that she lived a life she describes as rich with "abundant superstitions, stories of beasts and ghosts." She now lives in Madison, Wisconsin, where she writes from this deep well of memory. She recently received an MFA from the University of Wisconsin.