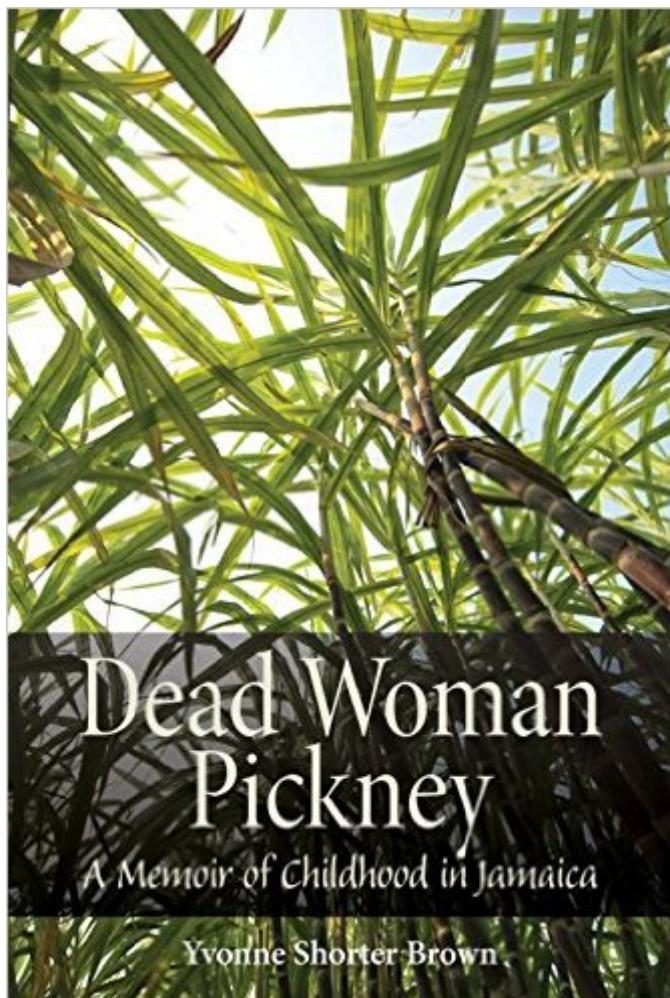


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Dead Woman Pickney: A Memoir Of Childhood In Jamaica (Life Writing)



Synopsis

Dead Woman Pickney chronicles life stories of growing up in Jamaica from 1943 to 1965 and contains both personal experience and history, told with stridency and humour. The authorâ™s coming of age parallels the political stages of Jamaicaâ™s moving from the richest Crown colony of Great Britain to an independent nation within the British Commonwealth of Nations. Taking up the haunting memories of childhood, along with her astonishment at persistent racial marginalization, both locally and globally, the author sets out to construct a narrative that at once explains her own origins in the former slave society of Jamaica and traces the outsider status of Africa and its peoples. The authorâ™s quest to understand the absence of her mother and her motherâ™s people from her life is at the heart of this narrative. The title, Dead Woman Pickney, is in Jamaican patois, and its meaning unfolds throughout the narrative. It begins with the authorâ™s childhood question of what a mother is, followed by the realization of the vulnerability of a child without its motherâ™s protection. The term âœpickneyâ• was the name for slave children on sugar plantations, and post-emancipation the term was retained for the descendants of enslaved Africans and the children of black women fathered by slavers. The author struggles through her life to discover the identity of her mother in the face of silence from her fatherâ™s brutal family. A wonderful resource for teachers of history, social studies, cultural studies, and literature, this work could be used as a starting point to discuss issues of diasporic identities, colonialism, racism, impact of slavery, and Western imperialism around the world. It is also an engaging read for those interested in memoir and life writing.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Yvonne's depiction of childhood and early adulthood in the rural areas of Jamaican is a rather courageous work because it removes the glamor with which many tend to flavor their recollections of life in this Caribbean island. She pines for her mother to the end of her story and it is perhaps this missing link in her life that helps her to uncover and aptly explain the master-servant, colonialist-colonized relationships that are present in many families in the island. Her stories are wonderfully and vividly written bringing into full focus many terms that I had long forgotten or that I rarely hear used. The book is an easy read and highly recommended. Sections are tear-jerking and others bring explosive chuckles.

Once I started reading this book, I could not put it down. Yvonne is an excellent story teller. She writes with such vivid imagery that I could "see" and feel her emotions as if I were experiencing them myself.

Perfect condition

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