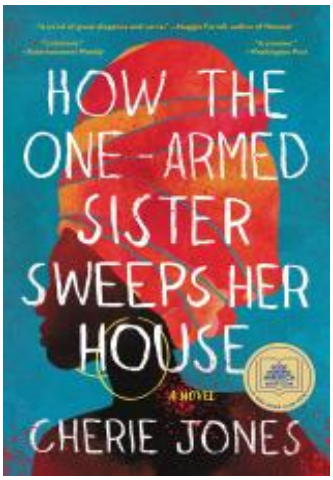
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How the One-Armed Sister Sweeps Her House

by Cherie Jones



About the Book

In Baxter?s Beach, Barbados, Lala?s grandmother Wilma tells the story of the one-armed sister. It?s a cautionary tale, about what happens to girls who disobey their mothers and go into the Baxter?s Tunnels. When she?s grown, Lala lives on the beach with her husband, Adan, a petty criminal with endless charisma whose thwarted burglary of one of the beach mansions sets off a chain of events with terrible consequences. A gunshot no one was meant to witness. A new mother whose baby is found lifeless on the beach. A woman torn between two worlds and incapacitated by grief. And two men driven into the Tunnels by desperation and greed who attempt a crime that will risk their freedom --- and their lives.

HOW THE ONE-ARMED SISTER SWEEPS HER HOUSE is an intimate and visceral portrayal of interconnected lives, across race and class, in a rapidly changing resort town, told by an astonishing new author of literary fiction.

Discussion Guide

1. How does HOW THE ONE-ARMED SISTER SWEEPS HER HOUSE portray women and the roles of women on Paradise island? What does the book say about the role of men?

2. In this book, women struggle against violence, as well as the silence that enables violence. When do Wilma, Esme and Lala decide to be silent, and when do they decide they must speak?

3. What is your interpretation of the phrase ?as man?? How is this phrase important to Adan and Tone?

4. What was your first impression of the way Wilma treats her daughter and granddaughter? Did your opinion change as you read further?

5. Do you believe it is Lala?s fault that Baby died? Why do you think Adan puts all the blame on her?

6. Why do you think Mira is so plagued by her husband?s death?

7. How does the past haunt Lala, Wilma and Mira? Do you think any of them are victims of fate? Which character do you think has the most control over their life?

8. Discuss the similarities and differences between Adan and Tone.

9. What does Lala?s name mean to the characters in this novel? How do the other characters (Esme, Wilma, Tone and Adan) respond to her sing-song title? How does Lala feel about her own name?

10. How do Sergeant Beckles? interactions with Sheba affect the way he investigates Baby?s death? What does this book have to say about the relationship between crime and law enforcement?

11. Why does Lala decide to run away instead of calling the police when Mira is found bleeding out on the patio?

12. Throughout the book, Tone struggles to suppress ?The Thing That Eats Him.? Do certain people bring it out in him? What kinds of interactions make it harder for him to keep it under control?

13. What is the significance of the tunnels that Tone, Adan and Lala enter at the end of the book?

14. Do you believe that there is a happy conclusion for Mira, Lala and Tone? Discuss the ways they have they been freed or shackled in the ending of this story.

15. What role does the parable of the ?One-Arm Sister? play in this novel?

Author Bio

Cherie Jones is a writer, lawyer and mom of four. Her short stories have variously been published in *PANK*, *Cadenza*, *Eclectica*, *The Feminist Wire* and broadcast on BBC Radio 4. She?s a fellowship awardee of the Vermont Studio Centre and completed her MA with distinction at Sheffield Hallam University, where she was awarded the Archie Markham Award and the A.M Heath prize. Cherie?s debut novel is HOW THE ONE-ARMED SISTER SWEEPS HER HOUSE.

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