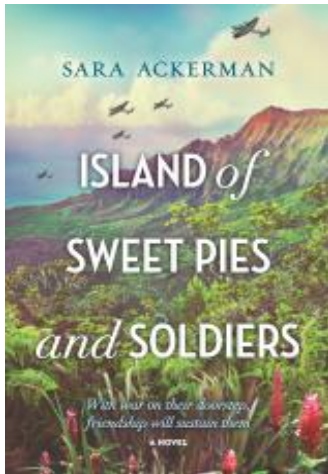


Island of Sweet Pies and Soldiers

by Sara Ackerman



About the Book

Hawaii, 1944. The Pacific battles of World War II continue to threaten American soil, and on the home front, the bonds of friendship and the strength of love are tested.

Violet Iverson and her young daughter, Ella, are piecing their lives together one year after the disappearance of her husband. As rumors swirl and questions about his loyalties surface, Violet believes Ella knows something. But Ella is stubbornly silent. Something --- or someone --- has scared her. And with the island overrun by troops training for a secret mission, tension and suspicion between neighbors is rising.

Violet bands together with her close friends to get through the difficult days. To support themselves, they open a pie stand near the military base, offering the soldiers a little homemade comfort. Try as she might, Violet can't ignore her attraction to the brash marine who comes to her aid when the women are accused of spying. Desperate to discover the truth behind what happened to her husband, while keeping her friends and daughter safe, Violet is torn by guilt, fear and longing as she faces losing everything. Again.

Discussion Guide

1. What did you think Ella was afraid of? Did you have any theories as to who or what was threatening her?
2. In the 1940s, for a single woman like Violet, traveling from Minnesota to a tiny island in the Pacific was quite a big deal. Do you think you would have been up for an adventure like this? And might you have said yes to Herman's proposal or returned home?

3. At the government's urging, many Hawaii residents left for the Mainland soon after Pearl Harbor, but Violet and Herman chose to stay. With so much fear and uncertainty, would you have wanted to stay or go? And why?
4. Violet couldn't let herself fall for another man until she was certain of what happened to Herman. Do you understand her decision, even though Herman might have betrayed her?
5. Would you put yourself in potential danger of being arrested in order to protect your neighbors and friends against prejudice, as Violet did with Setsuko?
6. What might you have done to make a difference for the soldiers before they sailed into battle?
7. Do you think Ella is resilient enough to move past her trauma? How do you think you would have handled the knowledge had you been in her shoes?

Author Bio

Born and raised in Hawaii, Sara Ackerman studied journalism and earned graduate degrees in psychology and Chinese medicine. When she's not writing or practicing acupuncture, you'll find her in the mountains or in the ocean.

Photo Credit: Tracy Wright-Corvo

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