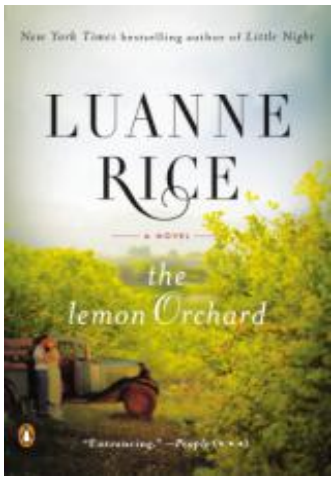
The Lemon Orchard

by Luanne Rice



About the Book

Year after year, Luanne Rice?s fans eagerly await her next book. Their enthusiasm is soon to be rewarded with THE LEMON ORCHARD, Rice?s romantic new love story between two people from seemingly different worlds.

In the five years since Julia last visited her aunt and uncle?s home in Malibu, her life has been turned upside down by her daughter?s death. She expects to find nothing more than peace and solitude as she house-sits with only her dog, Bonnie, for company. But she finds herself drawn to the handsome man who oversees the lemon orchard. Roberto expertly tends the trees, using the money to support his extended Mexican family. What connection could these two people share? The answer comes as Roberto reveals the heartbreaking story of his own loss --- a pain Julia knows all too well, but for one striking difference: Roberto?s daughter was lost but never found. And despite the odds he cannot bear to give up hope.

Set in the sea and citrus-scented air of the breathtaking Santa Monica Mountains, THE LEMON ORCHARD is an affirming story about the redemptive power of compassion and the kind of love that seems to find us when we need it most.

Discussion Guide

1. Julia and Peter?s marriage was strained long before Jenny?s death, but Julia felt guilty about the impending divorce because Jenny wanted them to stay together. Is staying in a marriage for the sake of your children ever a good idea?

2. Do you think Jenny?s death was a suicide? If so, why might she have decided to take her father?s life as well as her own?

3. How do Lion?s feelings for Graciela change the way you feel about him?

4. Roberto chose to take Rosa with him on the difficult desert crossing rather than leave her behind to grow up without him. In hindsight, he realized that he had underestimated the dangers they would face. Do you sympathize with his decision? What would you have done in his place?

5. Julia loves her dog, Bonnie, all the more because Jenny loved her, too. And Roberto is overjoyed to find Rosa?s beloved doll at Found Objects because she belonged to Rosa. Is there an object that you cherish because it belonged to a lost loved one?

6. Jack Leary decides to help Julia because he understands that it?s her way of staying close to Jenny, but he comes to feel that his late wife, Louella, would approve of his mission. How might Roberto and Julia?s story have turned out if Jack hadn?t become involved?

7. Ronnie sends Jack on a wild-goose chase to Tucson, hoping that he won?t come back and learn the truth about Rosa. Is she right to mistrust him? Do you condone Ronnie?s decision to make Rosa ?disappear? from the system?

8. THE LEMON ORCHARD ends on an ambiguous note with Roberto and Rosa reunited and Julia returning to California alone. Do you think that Roberto and Julia?s story will end here, too?

9. There are many Cinderella stories about women who are ?rescued? from their less privileged lives by wealthier men. And --- even in the twenty first century --- relationships like Julia and Roberto?s give many people pause. Why is it more socially acceptable for the man in a given couple to have a better education and more money than the woman?

10. Have you ever been involved with someone who came from a radically different socio-economic background than your own? How conscious were you of your differences?

11. America is the land of immigrants. Did Roberto?s experience resonate with what you know about your family?s journey to America?

12. What is your opinion on the United States? current immigration policies? Do you think that most would-be immigrants have a clear picture of what life in the States is really like?

Author Bio

Luanne Rice is the *New York Times* bestselling author of 37 novels, including three YA novels, that have been translated into 30 languages.

Rice?s books often center on love, family, nature and the sea. THE BEAUTIFUL LOST deals with teen depression, something Rice

Several of Rice's novels have been adapted for television, including CRAZY IN LOVE for TNT, BLUE MOON for CBS, FOLLOW

In 2002, Connecticut College awarded Rice an honorary degree. Her papers are located in the college's Special Collections Library. A profile of Rice appeared in *Connecticut College Magazine*, Fall 2014.

She was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from St. Joseph College in West Hartford, Connecticut.

In June 2014, she received the 2014 Connecticut Governor?s Arts Award for excellence and lifetime achievement as a literary artist

Rice, an avid environmentalist, is honored to be a creative affiliate of the Safina Center.

Critical Praise

"Poetic and stirring?beautifully combines [Rice?s] love of nature and the power of family."
? *Publishers Weekly*, starred review

"Best-selling author Rice?s 30th book is an outstanding read that both chills and warms the soul...highly recommended."
? *Library Journal*, starred review

"Never rushing her story or revelations, Rice reaches the satisfying conclusion that while wounds run deep, love runs deeper."
? *Booklist*

"A classic Rice page-turner."
? *Good Housekeeping*

"In LITTLE NIGHT, Rice plumbs the depths of the damage that physical and mental abuse cause the recipients and allows us into the heads of those who suffer these situations. In spite of the serious nature of the subject matter, the story is filled with happy moments and an undying hope for future happiness."
? Bookreporter.com

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