



By Love Possessed

Lorna Goodison

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“A beautifully written and evocative book.”

—Danielle Evans, author of *Before You Suffocate Your Own Fool Self*, winner of the PEN/Robert W. Bingham Prize

“Written by the hand of a poet, the prose in this collection is consistently beautiful.”

—Elizabeth Nunez, author of *Prospero’s Daughter* and *Boundaries*

“I love the tender beautiful writing; I love the characters, and in many ways it felt as if I had met them before....I just love this book.”

—Uwem Akpan, author of *Say You’re One of Them*, an Oprah Book Club selection

Internationally renowned and award-winning poet Lorna Goodison brings us *By Love Possessed*, her long-anticipated collection of short fiction. Making dazzling use of the Creole patois of Jamaica, Goodison limns the beauty and despair of the human condition and explores the unique power of love to both uplift and destroy. Goodison’s powerfully moving stories explore the pain, the struggle, and the triumph of Jamaicans—particularly women—those still living on their Caribbean island and those who have emigrated elsewhere. *By Love Possessed* is a rare and beautiful gift from an extraordinary writer who was mentored by the legendary Derek Walcott and who stands with Edwidge Danticat as a brave and breathtaking voice in contemporary literature.

By Love Possessed Details

Date : Published May 29th 2012 by Amistad Books (first published January 1st 2011)

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Author : Lorna Goodison

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From Reader Review By Love Possessed for online ebook

Fran says

I absolutely adored this book of short stories. I was so impressed by the unique way each one was written tailored to its characters, moral, and individually linked to the title of the whole book. This was so much fun to discover. I can't wait to read it again a few years from now. Lorna Goodison is definitely my kind of Caribbean writer. I could feel, taste, smell, hear the Caribbean through her stories.

Emily Crowe says

I took four books of Caribbeana with me on my recent trip to Anguilla, and this was the third one that I read. I think the collection is an interesting one overall, if a little uneven, but I think it gives a great taste of Jamaica--all of the stories take place there, or feature Jamaicans in the UK or the US. Perhaps because I'd just tried (and ultimately failed) to read *The Sly Company of People Who Care*, which is very heavy in Caribbean dialects, the dialect and West Indian expressions in this story collection were quite easy for me to follow and understand.

Nah vex yuhse'f with the lingo--just read the dialogue aloud and you'll get the gist in no time.

James F says

This is a collection of mostly previously published stories by the author of *Supplying Salt and Light* and *From Harvey River*. The tone is similar; the stories are focused on characters in their personal relationships with husbands, wives, lovers, parents and other relatives, without emphasizing larger social issues, although they are present in the background. Goodison somewhat reminds me of Alice Munro in her choice of subjects, although the treatment is different. Some of the stories have a tragic outcome, while others are rather upbeat or even humorous. It was an enjoyable read but probably not a book I will remember as much as the books by Miller, Cezaire-Thompson, and James that we are reading in the same group.

faith says

For the most part of this, I didn't understand the point of the stories that were included. The last two stories were probably my favorite of the entire collection. I had a few problems with some things included in some of the stories as well; I just didn't think they were necessary at all and didn't add anything to the story. I would've just liked it better if they weren't included.

Chivon says

I have to admit, I did not read this book all the way through. I enjoyed most of the short stories that I did read. I liked learning about Jamaican culture through the stories. I did feel that some of the stories were a little hard to read because they were written in Jamaican dialect/jargon. I also thought all of the stories were going to be love stories, but they were not. Still I enjoyed them.

Missy J says

My second book by Lorna Goodison this year. The tone and atmosphere of *By Love Possessed* reminded a lot of *From Harvey River: A Memoir of My Mother and Her Island*. Even though, the former is a short story collection, the stories reflected the author's humor and "easy-goingness". From the 22 short stories, I have to say that the first few and last few were particularly strong and memorable. Special mentions for:

- The Helpweight (5 stars)
- Jamaica Hope
- Henry
- Bella Makes Life
- The Big Shot
- Angelita and Golden Days
- Shilling
- Dream Lover
- Mi Amiga Gran
- I Come Through (5 stars)

I loved the music references and the colorful characters. They all had different personalities and the author succeeded in depicting the Jamaica of her childhood to us. Unfortunately there were a few underwhelming stories in the middle of the books. But all in all, I am very glad to have read this.

Angela says

Amazingly powerful short stories. Not all were to my taste, but many just killed me. Would highly recommend.

Gail (The Knight Reader) says

It is so refreshing to read a collection of stories written in such simple yet beautiful language. It was my first time reading Ms Goodison's work and I want to read everything she has ever written and will ever write.

What did I like? A number of things but here are a few standouts:

1. The language - It was so clear and easy to read. One word: Fluid.

2. The story length - Short, sweet and just long enough to keep me interested. Real SHORT stories, not short-ish stories.
3. The endings - Though the stories were short they did not feel rushed. Every story ended where it should. Some authors either rush endings to make a page count or just keep writing to achieve their ending (Thus creating a short-ish short story). Ms Goodison wrote short stories that felt relaxed and perfectly timed.
4. The culture - I am not Jamaican but I am a Caribbean native and live in and love Jamaica. It was so lovely to read about and recognize such familiar places, words, personalities and names. If you have forgotten Jamaica, read this collection and it will jog your memory.
5. The cover - The book cover is as beautiful its content.
6. The content - Every story felt different yet important to the collection.
7. The brightness - There is a trend to show the dark side of Jamaica by authors today. Yes, Jamaica can be dark but it can also be bright and beautiful. I cannot tell you how lovely it was to just stay in the realm of light and truly just enjoy tales that feel real and familiar (with a little sprinkle of darkness here and there to add some flavor).

I am so happy to encounter a 5 star read in a world filled with 3 star reads. This kind of book is one you revisit through the years and share with your children because this is what good literature looks like. So, buy a copy, read it and keep it in a safe place for future rereads.

BookOfCinz says

For 2018 I decided to start reading more books written by West Indian Authors. I went to the Library and this was one of my picks for March.

By Love Possessed is a collection of short stories written by Lorna Goodison that perfectly captures the culture, heart and spirit of Jamaica and Jamaican people. I honestly enjoyed this collection of short stories, I could feel the Caribbean sun oozing from the page of this lovely book. Having read **"Fool-Fool- Rose is Leaving Labour in Vain Savannah"** and thoroughly enjoyed it, I decided to give this one a go. Side-note: Some of the stories in Fool-Fool Rose.. was also included in "Love Possessed"

This was such a well-rounded, perfectly executed collection of stories. I found myself laughing out loud, hissing my teeth, rolling my eyes and shaking my head at different characters. But overall my favorites included:

The Helpweight
Bella Makes Life
By Love Possessed
House Colour
Fool-Fool Rose is Leaving Labour-in-Vain Savannah
Angelita and Golden Days
Talola's Husband
Alice and the Dancing Angel

If you love short stories set in the Caribbean, this is a must read.

Rianna Jade says

Jamaican love storie, t'was cute.
:)

Analia says

This beautiful collection explores the everyday hopes and tragedies of Jamaicans. There are twenty-two stories, which concerned me at first because that many together can feel disjointed or repetitive, but this group was neither. The whole collection really hung together. The writing throughout is beautiful, tender but straightforward, invoking characters with flaws and dreams.

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A sampling: In *God's Help*, Sylvie, pregnant and alone, is unwilling to accept the patronizing words of a reverend in exchange for free food and clothes. *Shilling*, once sweet and innocent, has a bad reputation after a crush blinds her to what men can be like. In *Mi Amiga Gran*, a girl left at a boarding house by her mother suffers when the money her mother sends from the US doesn't show up. Henry is cast out of his home by his mother's new man and sells flowers on the street to get by. In *The Helpweight*, a woman's former lover returns from England with his Irish wife, expecting the woman he left behind to help the wife get settled and rekindle their relationship.

Abbie Chem says

While this is no Alice Munro, I found Goodison's short stories enjoyable and textured. Some stories are heartbreaking, some are triumphant. There was a point somewhere in the middle when the violence against women (metaphorical or not) felt unrelenting, but the collection ended with a different voice and an upward look to the sky.

Jenny says

As of right now, I am having a really hard time reading this book. I get that it is about Jamaican life, but it is very hard to follow with the way the sentences are when the characters are talking. I have tried over and over to pick it up and read it, but I'm finding it difficult. I won't give up though, I never leave a book unfinished.

Beth Asmaa says

I enjoyed this book of short stories even more than *From Harvey River: A Memoir of My Mother and Her Island*. Each one was a little gem in itself. I also learned about Jamaican culture from its musical styles and

musicians and its language and geography through incidences of narrative.

I suggest trying out this collection to see whether it does not intrigue you.

Apphia Barton says

An endearing anthology of short stories written about love and relationships. I'd describe most of the stories as cute, charming and funny. A few were touching/moving or more on the serious side but, interestingly enough, all had silver linings.

A novel to reach for if you don't have much time and you're in need of a little short story to cheer you up.
