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Fiji And Me



Synopsis

Chicago was my home town, but I grew up in Green Bay, Wisconsin. We all loved those Packers. I went back to Chicago to study nursing. This was during WWII, when we all wanted to help in the war to end wars. What I had wanted to be was an English professor so I could read and write all the time. I found that nursing was a magic carpet in many ways. I married a doctor from North Carolina. We moved to Southern Pines and I was glad to raise my six children in a place where the winter wasn't nine months long. My first vision of North Carolina was in April. Everything was in full bloom and I remember feeling that I had died and gone to heaven. People have said that it must have been difficult to have six children, but my memories are of enjoying it-- most of the time. My husband's midlife crisis ended our marriage. At forty five, I went back to college to finish a graduate degree. I began a career in nursing which included teaching. My writing during my nursing career had more to do with work sheets and constructing tests than fun. I did enjoy writing long letters to my children and grandchildren as they came along. In those days people wrote letters. I have always loved to travel. When an opportunity came to circumnavigate the globe with a friend, I took it. We spent a wonderful month in Japan, Thailand, Nepal, India, Dubai, UK and Canada before returning. I remember well how grateful I was to be home in the US. I'd heard about people kissing the soil of their homeland and I understood. I married a former Duke art professor who had decided to paint full time. He said he would find a place where a nurse and an artist could live happily. He found Key West. I rented my house, packed my car and started driving down the Keys. When I got there I found a houseboat named Miss Maggie and we lived on her. It was a real adventure for me. I worked in a mental health clinic and met some of the unusual people who inhabit Key West. A lot of stories were there to tell. After a year my story didn't include the artist. I returned to North Carolina and went back to Duke Medical Center where I was head nurse of the Family Medicine Center. Residents were there learning to be family docs, something I admired. After three years, I found myself ready for a change. My children were all self sufficient. I met a Peace Corps recruiter at a party and when I found I could go to Fiji I said, "Yes, please don't give that place to anyone else." It was a wonderful two years of my life. I loved the people and the beauty everywhere. I taught a bit and learned a lot. One of the things I learned in Fiji was what they called "diridiri." It meant slow down and enjoy the moment. When I returned I went back to Duke to work in psychiatry, but never full time. I arranged my work so I could take classes at the Duke school for older people, now called OLLI. I also facilitated classes on Reading Shakespeare and Great Books. I taught English as a second language at our library. Doing these things, slow and easy, gave me joy. OLLI gave me more than

a place to teach and learn. A classmate, Mal, and I shared a number of classes. Finally we decided to share life. Mal and I traveled to many places. He had been in the diplomatic service and knew Europe well, so I got to see some special places off the beaten path. He left for heaven on a train in Budapest after saying that our three week river cruise had been the happiest time of his life. Now, I live in a wonderful village called the Forest. I enjoy reading, writing, a bit of bridge, friends and family. This family now includes my four wonderful children, ten grandchildren with spouses, and twenty great grandchildren. Life is good

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Customer Reviews

Couldn't put this book down! From insight into living with native Fijians to riding out a hurricane on a ship, this book was both interesting and well crafted.

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