



Lessons in Pure Life

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Freshly minted grad Emilia Noble arrives in Costa Rica to teach English in the tropical community of Pacifica. Its carefree, pura vida lifestyle is a welcome contrast to her dark and wintry origins. Tossing caution aside like an old winter coat, she plunges headfirst into an exotic cocktail of sensory pleasure.

Diego is a local whose surfer body and cool detachment make Lia buzz with a long-lost thrill. Fascinated by her new environment, she can't help but wonder about the moody inner workings of the boy with triceps like Wolverine and a grimace to match.

Diego seems to have no problem ignoring Lia, though. Caught up in his family's conflicted attitude toward foreigners, he notices her only when it's convenient. But as Lia thrives in her new surroundings, Diego might just find reason enough to defy his embattled, insular father. When north and south are mixed together, the results are intoxicating.

Lessons in Pure Life Details

Date : Published April 6th 2015 by Tryst Books

ISBN : 9780993700385

Author : Audrey O'Connor

Format : Paperback 236 pages

Genre : Romance

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From Reader Review Lessons in Pure Life for online ebook

Kristin says

This is a book that I can't possibly explain the magic of. It's one of those that you have to read yourself and become immersed in, but is surprising in the sense that the backdrop of Costa Rica isn't overly romanticized. Audrey O'Connor found just the right amount of romantic Central American scenery without overdoing it.

Our main characters, Lia and Diego were wonderful. They came with baggage. They had pasts. They had some things to work out. But the two of them together was electric. Lia's fighting spirit and extroversion balanced incredibly well with Diego's closed off nature.

Favorite thing about Lia? Her sense of humor. I had so many moments where I was laughing out loud at some of the things she said or thought. She managed to be hilarious without pushing anyone away or using the humor as a wall to prevent getting close to anyone.

Favorite thing about Diego? I loved that he had moments where he was shy around Lia. Those moments where Lia described him looking away shyly after saying something a little suggestive were incredibly endearing and really helped me warm up to Diego in a big way.

Favorite thing about the couple? The chemistry! It was insane and built up so well. I loved that things started off a little rocky for them with Diego being rude and standoffish. It made reading about their relationship developing that much sweeter. It was very nice to read about Diego admitting to and being confused about his feelings and torn between his father's values and his attraction to Lia. It was even better to see Diego apologize for it. It wasn't an excuse for Diego's initial rudeness, but it certainly explained why he acted the way he did.

Audrey O'Connor managed to write Lia and Diego's relationship in a way that teetered on several different tropes without delving into one completely. There was a bit of a slow burn, a bit of familial conflict, and sexual chemistry that was just right. I'm trying to think of the last book I read where I was this invested in a couple, and I can't even remember, that's how long it's been. But I'm glad I finally found a couple that I could "ship" together and fully root for. I just wish we had more. I was a little disappointed where the book decided to end. Even an epilogue would have done a little something to satiate my need for more Diego and Lia.

There was also something else special about this book. The entire time reading it, I got a sense of something bigger at play behind Audrey O'Connor's writing. She wrote like a woman that cared very much about feminism and in turn wrote Lia the same way, which I thought was wonderful. It was refreshing to read a book that didn't pit women against each other or had the female protagonist resorting to thinking about herself or other women with internalized misogyny.

Between the constant social awareness this book displays and the beautiful chemistry and romance between Lia and Diego, this book was really a joy to read.

Amber says

Arc provided by netgalley for an honest review. This book is not your typical romance that most expect it was so much better there were no catty females fighting over the main guy. While reading this book the author actually made you feel like you were experiencing every single thing that Emilia aka Lia for short as she liked to be called got to experience. From the beginning I felt like I was a part of the story. All I had to do was close my eyes and open my mind up to everything that was described and it was such a pretty picture to me with such vivid color at the sights of the beach to the way the ocean smelled. I have never had the utter feeling of contentment while reading a book as peaceful as this one. All of the characters were so nice and just what made the story so amazing. Lia goes to Costa Rica to teach English and she really makes a huge difference when she is there it's like she had finally found her calling. Lia is just so sweet and wonderful. I loved her approach when she was teaching the way she did. She made it so much fun for her students. Then you have Diego. He is tall brooding and someone Lia is attracted to right away. Things start out rocky between them and then they finally become friends and get to know each other better. They don't rush their relationship with one another. They let it blossom slowly and see where it leads. Then comes the drama with Diego's papa. Man on man he sure made me angry and so did Diego at one point but in the story the puzzle falls together and then you're like oh I understand now. This story teaches you things about the culture and what it means to have pure life, I enjoyed this story so much that I would read it again just to be in that happy bubble that Lia is in. I really do hope that there will be a second book following so we can have more of the beautiful story.

Literati Literature Lovers says

it has been a long grey winter here in the uk. i have been longing for my southern sunshine and warm air with such a painful longing as spring has been relentlessly teasing its arrival for weeks. since it might be a few weeks before long sleeves and jackets can be put to bed, i thought what better way to feel the sun's rays than in the pages of a hot and summery book. audrey o'connor's debut novel *Lessons in Pure Life* provided such an opportunity.

as i had no reference point for audrey's books or writing, i wasn't sure what to expect. i merely had the pull of the synopsis and my gut pushing me to dive in. it is a story of young love softened by the fresh bloom of youth. but there was a grounding as while Lia and Diego are young they have lived and suffered at the hands of life and it brings a refreshing reality to what it means to be fallibly fragile and accepted for instead of in spite of.

there was a boozy languid ease to Lia's acclamation to this new life in the heady paradise of Pacifica. i can feel the salt on my skin and smell the hints of coconut on the breeze. it was light despite being heavy and was the perfect story to fantasize reading upon my favorite stretch of beach.

my only complaint was i felt parts with the supporting characters needed filling out. i felt Lia's cousin Kathryn seemed to disappear in the midst of Lia's blossoming romance. i wanted more of Diego's family dynamic and his close friend Jose. it felt as if i was only getting the tip of a massive iceberg, but i am hopeful there will be a followup where we might revisit some of these fascinating characters.

if you are looking for a cool drink with the sultry feel of summer, i would recommend audrey's debut novel.

as always, these are my thoughts and opinions based on my preference as a reader.

Red Cheeks Reads says

Emilia 'Lia' Noble Comes out to her cousin Kat, in Costa Rica to teach English to the community's school students,

Where she comes across the mystery that is Diego Valverde. She has a strong attraction to him immediately.

Diego Valverde is mysterious and broody. This foreign woman who has come to teach English in his sister Genesis' school, and he seems unhappy about it.

He and Lia always seem to be brought together but a past and a family grudge with foreigners holds him back.

I really liked Lia. She was a strong female, she wasn't vulnerable and whiny but she also wasn't all up in your face "I'm a bad ass" kind of strong, she was just a strong leading character in all aspects. She came to Costa Rica to teach English to the locals, in a new school. She had to get away from some things that had happened to her, she wasn't running away, it was more like a fresh start, although her time in Costa Rica is undetermined. She was hilarious too!

"Me Lia. You Diego. I can has your biceps?"

Diego Valverde?? mmmm. That man is a mystery. A hot mystery. He is the brother of Genesis, Lia's new boss. He always done work around the school for his sister, and was proud of the work they did. Although he wasn't a typical alpha, he could be shy but also quite cocky and very charming. He was an intriguing character to say the least. I wanted to dig deeper and deeper with Diego! Oh and I'm definitely going to Google some Spanish words.

"I turn back apprehensively to Diego, who's walking toward me with a challenging grin. I might do anything for that grin. 'Come on, gringa. Let's see what you've got,' he says"

One of the aspects I liked of this book was the cultural experience. It was really explored through Audrey's writing. Through all the characters. Through Lia being new there. Being in awe of all the new things she was experiencing and learning, and how in return she was also teaching and helping the locals learn. We also get to see it from the people who live there, how proud they are of their home. How they see foreigners. The culture was a very big part of this story. We experienced it as much as you possibly can through the characters. You can nearly feel the sun and taste the fruits and drinks that are described, just nearly feel the sand from the beach under your feet. Audrey's writing is very well detailed.

"Bright red strawberries, long green papayas, small round watermelons the color of winter pine needles hiding a polka-dotted secret inside. Oranges, lemons, limes, cherries, peppers, and bananas draw me with their vivid natural beauty and sweet perfume."

I disliked Diego's father, he did redeem himself though, kind of. Now while I loved the cultural experience of reading this book, and I did I loved it, sometimes, just sometimes it took over, took from the characters and their journey and story. While this book had passion and love, I really enjoyed this thoroughly, but for me something was missing, it needed a little aggressive-passion, I sometimes wanted to shout at Diego to push her up against a wall and kiss her breathlessly. It was a little fade to black in some parts too.

All in all though I enjoyed it! It was fun, sweet, romantic and had its sexy moments too. It's a good get-away book, the perfect escape book. Audrey's writing is smart and funny and her characters are intriguing and interesting. The story develops over time, is not a fast paced story, I wished it was just a little more fast paced in some parts but more so enjoyed getting to know the characters as the story developed. The story easily flowed together.

one question though? Is there more? I hope so!

I need a lot more of Diego Valverde.

- jade xx

John says

"Lessons in Pure Life" surprised me as it was not what I expected, it was way way better and ALL the FOUR and FIVE Star reviews are spot on. Great job! I won this great book on GoodReads and like I do with most my wins I will be paying it forward by giving my win either to a friend or library to enjoy.

Andrew says

I won this book through GoodReads First Reads Giveaways.

Lessons in Pure Life is about a young woman name Emilia (Lia) who has just recently graduated college, and is going to move in with her cousin Katharine in Costa Rica, taking up a job teaching English to a variety of ages. Lia becomes very curious and interested in Diego, who appears stoic and cold to foreigners, hoping to get to know him better. Lia is also still ongoing recovery from exiting an abusive relationship with a college professor back in the USA.

The book was good, but it felt very slow to me, especially given that it's fairly short in page length. The writing is great, but the story didn't captivate me much. However, the characters are all very likeable and relatable people, and you get a great taste of what life in Costa Rica is like while reading. If you're a NA Contemporary Romance fan, I would recommend it.

Nelmar says

The snappy dialogue in this novel had me laughing out loud. There are plenty of smart young women in these pages, and they've got more than just handsome hunks on their minds. While the story is fuelled by the heroine's growing attraction to a handsome, well muscled and complicated young man, she's also working

through her own anxiety issues, finding gratification in a challenging job, working with strong female role models, muddling through awkward cultural disconnects, and keeping up an amusing inner monologue through it all. The romance is slow burning, and while it's simmering the reader gets to know a little more about Costa Rica, and enjoy lots of pop culture references too. A fun and satisfying romantic read with a brain.

Sofia says

*Arc kindly provided by NetGalley *

Sofia Lazaridou says

I will begin this review stating that the only reason I finished this book is a) because I had to review it and b) because I had to read the second book in the series, which will be a novella that follows Diego and Lia. I wasn't able to get into the story while reading the first chapters, so I found it difficult to read the rest of the book. The first couple of chapters felt off to me and the author's writing wasn't something I was used to. It felt cold and sterile. It took me way too long to finish the book because of that. I felt as if the wrong things were pointed out while the ones that mattered didn't. Just when I started getting into the story the book ended. And I can't say that I was disappointed. I wasn't able to develop a connection with the book, so I cannot say anything positive about it. I am not sure if it was mentioned, but how is Lia teaching English to people whose native language is Spanish when she doesn't know the language? Did I miss that? Can someone tell me what I missed? Also, when Diego stopped being the douche and became a love interest for Lia? I missed that transition too. I hope you will like the book more than I did.

Jessica says

This is a fun romance novel! The story, about a young woman escaping to Costa Rica to start over after a damaging relationship, felt real as the author did a great job of describing the gorgeous scenery, as well as some of the struggles young adults experience. Her friendships with the other women in the story were supportive, which is a refreshing change. The main character, Lia, is fresh and hilarious. Some of her thoughts had me laughing out loud. The romance between Lia and Diego is fun, and I got excited (and frustrated!) at their flirty encounters as their romance blossomed. I would recommend this book if you are looking for a fun romance to escape into!

Martina Urbanová says

3,5

Také milé prázdninové ?ítanie, pri ktorom som nemusela premýšľať a proste som oddychovala. Len mám taký pocit, že autorka občas zabudla na fakt, že nie všetci vedia po španielsky. :D

Terri says

Review also found at <http://kristineandterri.blogspot.ca/2...>

I received an advanced copy of this book from the publisher Tryst via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review. The expected publication date is April 6th 2015.

This is essentially a story about starting over, overcoming the past and sizzling attraction between two people. Exactly what I was looking for when I picked up this book. Fans of the NA genre will probably enjoy this story although it is a little tame compared to the average.

The highlight of this story was the setting where it took place. The descriptions of Costa Rica made me want to transplant myself there instead of bundling up in the northern winter climate. The descriptions of the ocean, the smells of nature and the physical beauty captured my attention from the beginning. It was the true star of the story.

The relationship and chemistry between Emilia and Diego is typical of what you would expect. There is no twist or turn that sets the story apart from others in the genre. Both have emotional baggage and are drawn to each other but fight those feelings. You know how it goes from there. I felt like the backstory of each was underdeveloped and explored and therefore made the story lack some substance.

I do feel I have to offer some constructive criticism. Although I hate to say anything negative about any piece of writing as I know the authors pore their heart and soul in to their stories and I myself do not have enough talent to do the same, but the writing was so overly descriptive that it became annoying to me. Pretty much every adjective, verb, noun and analogy was used to describe everything and Diego in particular. It was to the point that I could no longer visualize what he was supposed to look like as I was lost in the surplus descriptive words. An example is the following that I managed to capture from the book after I had finally lost my patience.

"It burns in me like I'm Captain Haddock fizzling with whiskey, marching up the Himalayas with Tintin, singing old navy tunes". What does that mean? How is it relevant to the story? Phrases like this were in abundance.

Don't get me wrong this is a cute story if you can get past some of the surplus words (in my opinion). If you are looking for a romance that is what it is at the surface and doesn't dig too deep in to emotional issues this is a good choice

Falling In Fall Book Blog says

I gave Lessons in Pure Life 3.5 leaves! This was a good story and was very descriptive. It was set in Costa Rica and we got a really good feel for how the surroundings are really like. I actually felt like I was in this topical paradise by the way O'Connner described the surroundings. With that being said, there weren't a lot of twist and turns that this story took me on. Without being harsh, this book was quite predictable. Don't get me wrong, it was a good book. I enjoyed getting to know Emilia and Diego and loved all the other characters

but I was left wanting more. All in all, this is a good story and worth the read.

A gifted copy was provided by the author in exchange for an honest review by Lo.
