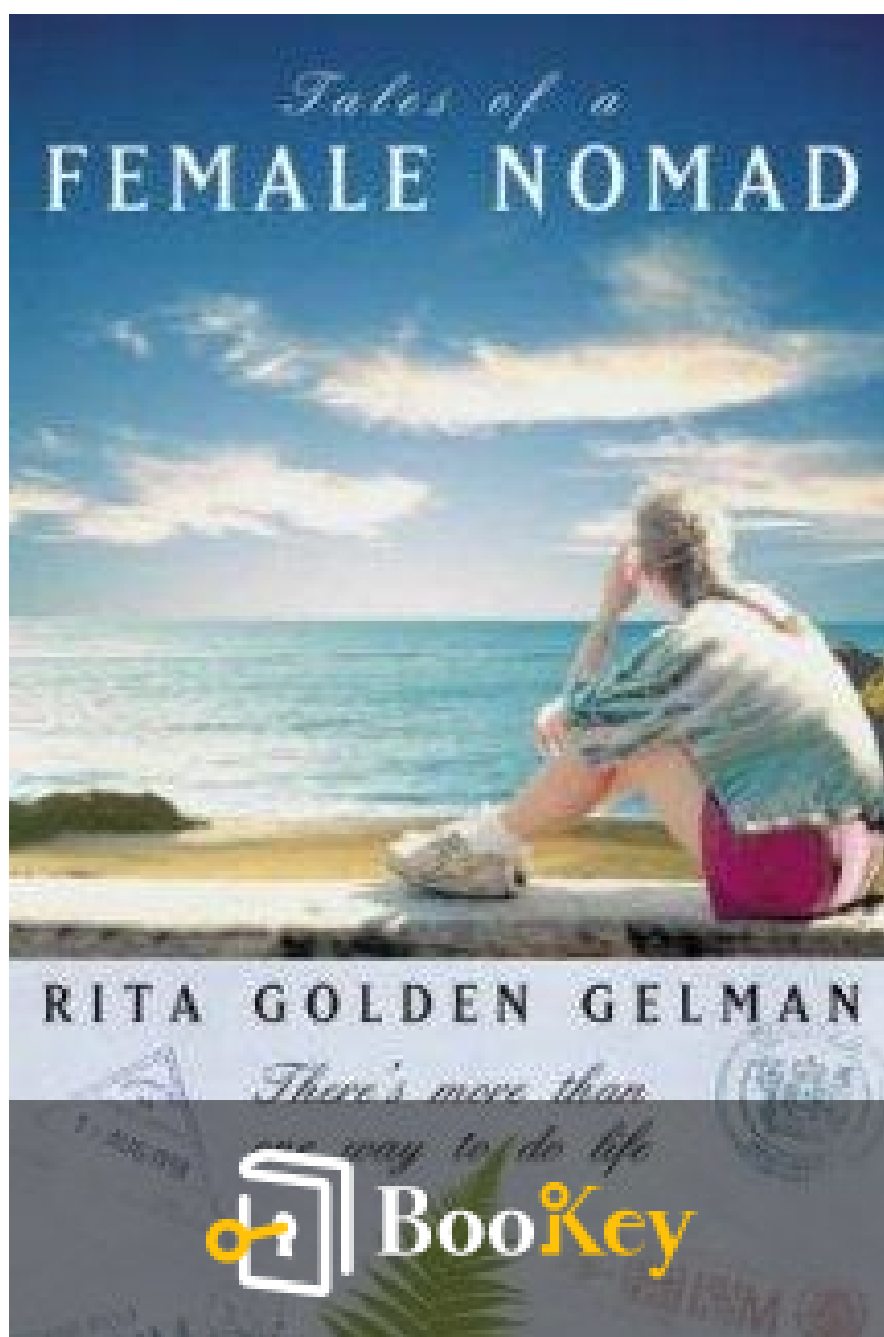


Tales Of A Female Nomad PDF (Limited Copy)

Rita Golden Gelmna



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Tales Of A Female Nomad Summary

Embrace Adventure: A Journey Beyond Comfort and Convention

Written by New York Central Park Page Turners Books Club

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About the book

"Tales of a Female Nomad" tells the inspiring story of Rita Golden Gelman, who transforms her life at the age of forty-eight in the wake of an impending divorce. Feeling trapped in her familiar Los Angeles lifestyle, Rita decides to embark on a journey of self-discovery and adventure. She takes the bold step of selling her possessions and begins her transformation into a global nomad.

Rita's travels take her to diverse and vibrant cultures around the world. One notable stop is a Zapotec village in Mexico, where she immerses herself in the local customs and daily life, embracing the sense of community and tradition. This experience deepens her understanding of cultural diversity and teaches her the value of human connection.

Her adventures continue in the Galapagos Islands, where she spends nights alongside sea lions, experiencing the raw beauty of nature and wildlife. This proximity to animals evokes a sense of wonder and inspires her to reflect on her own life choices and philosophies.

In Borneo, Rita encounters orangutans, giving her a poignant glimpse into the fascinating world of these intelligent beings. This particular journey highlights the importance of conservation and the relationships between humans and animals.

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Throughout her travels, Rita meets healers in mystical realms and women preparing meals over open fires, each encounter enriching her life with wisdom and unique perspectives. These interactions encourage readers to embrace their dreams and rekindle the adventurous spirit often subdued by the routines of adult life.

Ultimately, "Tales of a Female Nomad" serves as a powerful reminder that it's never too late to reinvent one's life. Rita's narrative inspires readers to pursue their passions, seek joy, and forge connections across cultures, reaffirming the idea that adventure is a universal journey worth undertaking.

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About the author

In "Tales of a Female Nomad," Rita Golden Gelman embarks on an extraordinary journey that intertwines her life as a writer with her deep appreciation for the diverse cultures she encounters. The book serves as a memoir of Gelman's transformation from a conventional life in the United States to one filled with adventurous exploration and cultural immersion.

The narrative begins with Gelman's decision to leave behind her comfortable home in California, compelled by a longing for authentic experiences and personal freedom. She sets off on a path less traveled, driven by her desire to connect with indigenous communities around the world. Throughout her travels, Gelman explores places such as Mexico, Indonesia, and Guatemala, immersing herself in the daily lives and traditions of the people she meets.

As she recounts her adventures, Gelman introduces several key characters—indigenous leaders, artisans, and fellow travelers—who play pivotal roles in shaping her understanding of community and belonging. Each character, with their unique stories and perspectives, offers Gelman insights into the universal human experience, bridging differences in culture with themes of friendship, resilience, and spirituality.

Gelman's writing style is notable for its vivid descriptions and emotional depth, allowing readers to feel as if they are alongside her on her journeys.

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Beyond mere travel anecdotes, the book reflects on broader themes such as the search for identity and the importance of cultural preservation. Gelman's encounters force her to confront her own beliefs and values, leading to profound personal revelations that resonate throughout the narrative.

Ultimately, "Tales of a Female Nomad" is more than just an account of travel; it is a celebration of the bonds formed across cultures, the joy of self-discovery, and the transformative power of embracing the unknown. Gelman's story inspires readers to seek their own adventures and to appreciate the rich tapestry of human experiences that connect us all. As she navigates the complexities of both her own life and the cultures she immerses herself in, Gelman leaves an indelible mark on the hearts and minds of her audience, inviting them to embark on their own journeys of exploration and connection.

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Chapter 1 Summary: THE BEGINNING

CHAPTER ONE: THE BEGINNING

In the year 1985, the narrator reflects on a life graced with privilege and glamour; yet beneath this veneer lies a profound sense of disconnection. A chance encounter on a flight with a woman sharing tales of sailing adventures sparks a realization: her adventurous spirit has long been suppressed. This moment inspires her to reignite experiences and aspirations long buried, ultimately leading her to the mesmerizing Galápagos Islands, where her thirst for discovery awakens anew.

Upon returning home, the narrator feels a growing dissatisfaction with her ostentatious lifestyle, especially as her children begin to develop their own independence. Seeking fulfillment, she decides to pursue a Ph.D. in anthropology, a move that not only aims to quench her yearning for adventure but also causes a rift in her marriage. The contrasting interests between her and her husband lead to mounting tension, culminating in an agreement to take a two-month break—a proposal that fills her with both dread and the promise of self-exploration.

Determined to embrace this critical juncture in her life, the narrator chooses to spend her break in Mexico, a destination she has often dreamt of



exploring. However, upon arrival, gnawing anxieties engulf her, particularly regarding the prospect of dining alone for the first time. Yet, as time unfolds, she begins to revel in her newfound independence, immersing herself in the rich culture and culinary landscape of Mexico.

Wandering through bustling markets, she succumbs to the sensory delights of vivid colors, enticing aromas, and vibrant sounds, gradually shedding her initial fears of solitude. Engaging with locals, she discovers joy not just in food but in the richness of shared experiences. This deepening connection to her surroundings reignites a sense of thrill within her, framing her journey as a chance to reclaim her identity, freed from previous societal roles and expectations.

As the days progress, the narrator faces unexpected challenges, including an illness that leaves her both physically weakened and emotionally vulnerable. Yet, within this struggle, she finds unexpected solace and kinship with her hosts, enhancing her understanding of herself and the broader world. Instead of viewing her sickness as merely an obstacle, she comes to regard it as a pivotal moment for shedding her old self, paving the way for personal renewal.

By the conclusion of her stay in Cuernavaca, the narrator emerges transformed, embracing the complexities of life and relinquishing the constraints of her past. Engaging deeply with local customs—particularly



the ritual of sharing traditional foods—serves as a vivid affirmation of her newly discovered identity. In this chapter of self-exploration, her journey symbolizes the act of peeling away the layers that no longer serve her, setting the stage for the adventures that still await her on the horizon.

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Chapter 2 Summary: IN A ZAPOTEC VILLAGE

CHAPTER TWO: IN A ZAPOTEC VILLAGE

As the narrator embarks on her journey through Mexico, she is introduced to a vibrant community of backpackers at a bus stop, guided by Pili and Raul. This “travelers’ network,” comprised mainly of young adventurers, offers a stark contrast to typical hotel tourists. Within this fellowship of long-term travelers, she finds companionship and camaraderie, which helps alleviate her initial feelings of loneliness.

On her bus ride to Oaxaca, the narrator meets Miguel and Ana, a couple from Colombia. Her proficiency in Spanish helps her integrate into their group, enhancing her experiences over several shared days. Eager to engage deeply with the culture, she decides to explore a nearby Zapotec village on her own, seeking an authentic experience free from the confines of tourism and academia.

Choosing a village at random, she faces challenges in hitchhiking but eventually secures a ride. However, her arrival is met with disappointment as the mayor is unavailable, hindering her plans to stay for an extended period. The villagers initially express unease toward her presence, prompting her return to Oaxaca.



Undeterred, she attempts a second visit, this time warmly welcomed by the mayor. She leases a basic living space from José, yet her interactions with the villagers remain limited, as they continue to regard her with suspicion. After several days of solitude, her experience begins to change when she connects with Juanita, a young widow. Juanita's invitation into her home and her offering of traditional clothing mark the beginning of the narrator's acceptance into village life.

Draped in the local attire, the narrator gradually bonds with the women and children, learning their language and cultural practices. These developments foster a deeper sense of belonging, enriching her experience in the village. However, the narrative shifts as she witnesses a harrowing scene of domestic violence, exposing the stark realities of life in the village. The shocking event leaves her feeling powerless, highlighting the limits of her understanding as an outsider.

As days progress, she participates in communal endeavors, including preparations for a festival, which further entwine her with the community. Cooking and dancing alongside the village women during the festivities solidify her sense of sisterhood and inclusion.

The chapter concludes with her recognition of how cultural barriers have gradually dissolved through her active participation. When the time comes to



depart, she is embraced by the community, a stark contrast to her earlier fears of rejection.

Upon returning to Oaxaca, the narrator reflects on her complex journey, grasping the notion that authentic connections require more than shallow interactions; they necessitate meaningful engagement. As she prepares to return home, she confronts the evolution of her relationship with her husband, realizing that her spontaneous experience has led her to view the world—and her life—through a transformed lens.

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Chapter 3 Summary: LETTING GO IN PALENQUE AND L.A.

Chapter Three: Letting Go in Palenque and L.A.

In this chapter, the author embarks on a profound emotional journey catalyzed by a life-altering phone call that stirs up feelings of loneliness and fear. This pivotal moment marks the beginning of her exploration and self-discovery, mirroring the complexities of navigating life's uncertainties.

As she travels to Palenque, a historic site renowned for its ancient Mayan ruins, she encounters Wolfgang, a fellow traveler who becomes a significant companion. Together, they delve into the lush jungles and majestic ruins that breathe life into the grandeur of Mayan civilization. These vibrant landscapes not only ignite her sense of adventure but also reflect her inner transformation. The rich imagery around her resonates deeply, prompting her to confront her aspirations and emotions.

Amid her travels, the author grapples with critical decisions regarding her marriage and personal identity. After learning of her husband's choice to end their marriage, she faces the stark reality of her situation. This revelation acts as a catalyst for substantial change, leading her to reevaluate her values. She chooses to let go of material possessions and societal expectations, opting



for a life rooted in authenticity and simplicity.

Ultimately, this chapter illustrates her commitment to forging her own path. With newfound courage, she embraces her independence and prepares for her next journey back to Central America, determined to live life on her own terms. The narrative of self-discovery emphasizes her readiness to face the future, unburdened by traditional constraints, embodying a spirit of adventure and resilience.

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Chapter 4: LEARNING HOW

In "Learning How," the narrator embarks on a transformative journey, liberated from familial ties that once defined her identity. With her parents, husband, and children geographically removed, she seizes the opportunity to explore diverse cultures, beginning her adventure in Antigua, Guatemala. Equipped with little more than excitement and a handful of belongings, she enrolls in Spanish classes and lives with a local family, fully immersing herself in her new environment.

As she strives to engage with the local community, the narrator becomes involved in a charity project aimed at aiding street children, led by a compassionate French woman named Brigitte. However, her commitment is abruptly cut short when Brigitte expresses concerns about the overwhelming number of foreign volunteers, resulting in her dismissal. This setback leaves the narrator feeling isolated and disheartened.

In her quest for connection, she rents her own apartment and begins to weave herself into the expatriate community. Here, she forges new friendships, participates in cultural exchanges, and develops a significant bond with an indigenous family. Through shared experiences and communal celebrations, she gains a deeper understanding of the local culture and the richness of daily life in Guatemala.



As she navigates the complexities of living abroad, the narrator reflects on her motivations and desires, which begin to crystallize. Her creative pursuits culminate in the publication of her first children's book, reinforcing her identity as a nomad. A visit back to the U.S. to reconnect with her family forces her to confront the tension between her adventurous spirit and her

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Chapter 5 Summary: THE END OF POLITICAL INNOCENCE.

Chapter Five: The End of Political Innocence

Introduction to El Salvador

In this chapter, the narrator and her companion, Henry, are transported by Andrés, a Salvadoran man whose life is deeply affected by the country's tumultuous history. As they engage in conversation, Andrés cautiously reveals his fear of discussing politics, underscoring the oppressive regime and civil strife that have plagued El Salvador. Personal tragedy strikes when he shares the heart-wrenching story of his brother's disappearance at the hands of government death squads, illustrating the pervasive fear and loss within the society.

Journey and Cuisine

Their journey leads them to the capital, San Salvador, where Andrés attempts to lighten the atmosphere by introducing the duo to *pupusas*, a beloved local dish. However, as they await their meal, a shadow falls over the moment when three young men approach, prompting Andrés to instruct the narrator and Henry to remain discreet about their plans to travel to Nicaragua, highlighting the ever-looming threat of political surveillance.



Border Crossing Concerns

The chapter paints a bleak picture of San Salvador, characterized by a heavy military presence and an air of oppression that weighs down the citizens. With the decision to cross into Honduras, the narrator reflects on the stringent border security they encounter and the sense of danger that envelops them—a sentiment compounded by the historical context of U.S. foreign policy that has shaped the region's struggles.

Arrival in Nicaragua

Upon arrival in Nicaragua, the narrator is met with a stark contrast to the bleakness of El Salvador. Here, friendly soldiers and curious local children extend warmth, welcoming her into the vibrant cultural tapestry of the country. As she engages more deeply with Nicaraguan traditions, she experiences moments of joy and connection that accentuate the resilience and spirit of the people.

Exploring Nicaraguan Life

The narrator gains insight into the transformation Nicaraguans experienced following their revolution. She learns about their aspirations and the profound social changes initiated by political upheaval, challenging the often negative media portrayals of their struggles. Her observations reveal a community filled with pride and determination, offering a richer, more complex view of their reality.



Forming Connections and Experiences

Throughout her stay, the narrator forms meaningful connections with locals, immersing herself in community activities that celebrate culture and solidarity. The rhythmic pulse of music, dance, and juggling becomes apparent, symbolizing hope and communal bonds. A street performer known as the "Juggler" becomes a cherished friend, as they journey together, spreading joy through their art.

Quibuto Visit and War Impact

Seeking a deeper understanding of the impact of war, the narrator visits Quibuto, a village ravaged by conflict. Here, she witnesses the aftermath of a Contra attack, listening to residents share their fears and the haunting consequences of violence and foreign intervention. This experience sheds light on the personal toll of war, grounding the narrative in the painful realities faced by those affected.

Farewell and Reflection

As her time in Nicaragua draws to a close, the narrator reflects on the warmth and resilience of Doña Juana's family, who embody strength despite their adversities. Their discussions on politics prompt her to reconsider her views on communism and the complexities surrounding Nicaraguan society, emphasizing the need for nuanced understanding.

Conclusion: Loss of Innocence

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By the end of the chapter, the narrator experiences a significant awakening to political realities shaped by her empathy and connections with the Nicaraguan people. Her journey deepens her understanding of social issues, affirming the importance of storytelling and the essential nature of freedom of expression. This marks a pivotal moment in her evolution from political innocence to an informed consciousness, ready to engage with the complexities of the world around her.

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Chapter 6 Summary: ROOTS

In the chapter titled "Roots," the narrator embarks on a transformative journey that highlights her quest for identity and belonging against the backdrop of familial ties and cultural heritage. Returning from Nicaragua, a place marked by intense heat and emotional farewells, she arrives at her son Mitch's apartment in New York. The role reversal between mother and son becomes evident as Mitch expresses concern for her safety as a journalist, while she arrives with her life's remnants in tow, including dirty laundry.

The realization that her children share similar worries prompts a visit to her daughter, Jan, in Colorado, where these concerns are echoed. Despite the risks associated with her travels, the narrator is compelled to explore Israel, a country deeply connected to her Jewish roots and family history, albeit with a complex relationship to her Jewish identity.

Finding solace in the international organization Servas, which promotes cultural exchange by connecting travelers with local hosts, she applies to become a member and reaches out to potential hosts in Israel. This marks a step toward a more personal exploration of her heritage.

Upon her arrival in Israel, she is warmly welcomed by Sarah, an 82-year-old woman in Sfat. Their relationship blossoms as they share meals and swimming experiences, allowing the narrator to learn about Sarah's



courageous past as a covert supporter during the British mandate.

Her next stop is a kibbutz where she meets Ruth, who has witnessed the evolution of the kibbutz since her arrival in 1937. Their exchange illuminates the historical and social changes within this communal living structure.

The narrator's journey leads her to Jerusalem, where she is immersed in the rich tapestry of the city. Eager to deepen her understanding, she ventures into the ultra-Orthodox community of Mea She'arim. However, her initial excitement quickly turns into introspection as she confronts the patriarchal norms that inhibit her sense of belonging. One poignant moment arises when she is told she cannot sing at a family gathering, starkly highlighting the cultural constraints imposed on women.

Through Sabbath dinners and explorations of traditions, the narrator experiences a mix of joy in family life and feelings of exclusion, prompting a realization about her place within this complex community.

Seeking refuge from the constraints of ultra-Orthodoxy, she visits a Druse village, where she encounters remarkable hospitality and warmth from the local people, particularly through her stay with Mohamed, who embodies the kindness of the Druse culture.



As she reflects on her Israeli experience, the narrator acknowledges the profound connections she has forged with individuals along her journey. While recognizing that her Jewish heritage is an essential part of her identity, she ultimately understands that it is her shared humanity, transcending cultural and religious boundaries, that unites her with people across the globe as she prepares to leave Israel.

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Chapter 7 Summary: TRUE FREEDOM

In Chapter 7 of "Tales Of A Female Nomad," the author contemplates the nearly three years she has spent in Mexico City, grappling with the question of whether she is running from her past. However, she comes to understand that her journey is not about escape; rather, it is a profound discovery of a new way of living that is rich in joy, learning, and diverse experiences. Embracing this sense of freedom, she chooses exploration over the mundane comforts of conventional life.

Excitement ignites within her as she prepares for a new project in the Galápagos Islands. This venture signifies a reconnection with nature and wildlife, marking a stark contrast to her previous life, which was heavily defined by materialism. She skillfully navigates the complexities of customs regulations with assistance from the Ecuadorian Embassy, leading to unexpected support that facilitates her travel arrangements in the islands.

Upon her arrival in the Galápagos, she is warmly welcomed by the locals, including a man named Felipe, who quickly becomes a friend and source of growing affection. Their burgeoning relationship encapsulates the beauty of forming new connections amidst the breathtaking wildlife of the islands.

As the author shares her journey with her friend Jan, who visits her in the Galápagos, their adventure takes unexpected turns, culminating in a richness

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that surpasses their initial plans. Together, they bond with fellow travelers, reveling in laughter and exploring the natural landscape without the constraints of luxury, deepening the friendship between Jan and the author.

The chapter culminates in a transformative experience for the author, as she gains unique insights into the islands' remarkable wildlife and forges nurturing connections, highlighted by a fortuitous chance to further explore with scientists. This profound journey leaves her feeling liberated and inspires reflections on the possibility of becoming a guide in the Galápagos. Ultimately, she embraces her transformative path, reinforcing her desire to live life freely and authentically, reveling in the beautiful tapestry of freedom that she has woven through her travels.

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Chapter 8: THE FORESTS OF BORNEO

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE FORESTS OF BORNEO

Introduction to Change

After a transformative visit to the Galápagos Islands, the author attends a college reunion, where she contemplates the impact of her adventures on her perception as a woman. Her stories evoke curiosity and admiration from her peers, particularly other women, who see her exploration as a defiance of traditional gender roles.

Journey to Indonesia

Inspired by a suggestion made during the reunion discussions, the author decides to travel to Indonesia. She recalls a prior conversation about the Indonesian language, and plans to immerse herself further while studying in Yogyakarta, fostering her passion for new cultures and languages.

Cultural Insights

At the Indonesian Consulate, the author meets Jono, who introduces her to the subtle nuances of Indonesian culture, emphasizing the significance of

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gestures of respect and the social customs essential for engaging meaningfully in local communities.

Settling in Yogyakarta

In Yogyakarta, she is welcomed by a host family of English teachers, who facilitate her cultural integration. Alongside their housekeeper, Didi, and her sister Inid, she begins to embrace her new environment, diving into language lessons that enrich both her vocabulary and her understanding of cultural context.

Learning the Language

Through innovative learning strategies, she practices Indonesian with Didi and Inid by using everyday situations, including interactions with local children. This practical approach not only enhances her language skills but also deepens her appreciation for the culture.

Community Engagement

As she grows more comfortable in her new surroundings, the author decides to teach English to the local children. This initiative fosters a sense of community, but she also faces emotional challenges, notably when Inid's dog passes away, highlighting the complexities of life in Indonesia.



Adventure in Kalimantan

Seeking further adventure, she learns about a ceremonial event in Kalimantan, the Indonesian part of Borneo. Eager to attend, she prepares with the help of her friend Hamid, who equips her with necessary phrases and insights into local customs.

Government Arrangements

Upon her arrival in Pangkalan Bun, the author requests permission to travel into the interior for the ceremony. However, the mayor stipulates that she must accompany an official delegation for her safety, emphasizing the balancing act between cultural exploration and personal security.

Ceremony Observations

Participating in the rich tapestry of the ceremony, the author witnesses a blend of traditional and modern practices. While honored to partake, she is also troubled by the violent elements of the sacrificial rituals, prompting a deep internal struggle regarding her views on cultural practices.

Connection with Nature and Humanity

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Her experiences in the ceremony force her to confront challenging questions about violence woven into cultural identity. As she reflects on these norms, she finds common ground with the women of Borneo, fostering a connection that transcends cultural differences.

Conclusion

The chapter concludes with her participation in the spiritually charged and complex ceremony, leaving her with a profound understanding of the intricate web of human culture and the nuances of her own identity. This journey not only broadens her worldview but also deepens her connection to the rich human experiences that bind us all, regardless of geography.

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Chapter 9 Summary: THE ORANGUTAN CAMP

Chapter Nine: The Orangutan Camp

In this chapter, Rita Golden Gelman recounts her transformative experience during a three-day stay at the Blue Kecubung Hotel, waiting for permission from the esteemed primatologist Dr. Biruté Galdikas to visit the orangutan camp at Camp Leakey. Dr. Galdikas is known for her groundbreaking work with orangutans, often characterized by her reserved and professional demeanor. Despite Rita's eagerness to observe and write about these magnificent creatures in their natural habitat, she grapples with Dr. Galdikas's distance.

Determined to connect, Rita takes the initiative to reach out to Dr. Galdikas, resulting in a much-anticipated visit to Camp Leakey. Upon her arrival, Rita is captivated by the lush environment surrounding the Sekonyer River and witnesses orangutans, including many ex-captives, gradually adapting to life in the wild. The camp also hosts a nursery for young orangutans, further enriching Rita's observational opportunities as she begins to gather material for her writing.

As she delves deeper into the jungle, Rita learns the importance of silence in wildlife observation and observes the complex behaviors of orangutans. This

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deepening connection enhances her appreciation for the work Dr. Galdikas does, often underlined by the challenges of caring for and rehabilitating these intelligent animals.

However, as Rita begins to translate her experiences onto paper, she finds it difficult to encapsulate Dr. Galdikas's voice without direct input. After several attempts to secure a meeting with her, Rita writes a sincere note expressing the importance of collaboration for their project. Their late-night meeting finally brings the insights Rita needs, allowing her to blend her experiences with Dr. Galdikas's expertise.

Despite her initial excitement, the journey toward publishing their envisioned children's book becomes fraught with setbacks, culminating in disappointment when they learn that their project is canceled due to scheduling conflicts with other similar works. Rita reflects on her profound experiences in the tropical rainforest, underscoring her desire to convey the beauty of this unique ecosystem to children. Her reflections serve as a poignant reminder of the urgent need to protect such precious habitats, leaving readers with a sense of both wonder and responsibility for the natural world.



Chapter 10 Summary: ARRIVING IN BALI

Chapter Ten: Arriving in Bali

Transitioning from New York to Bali

The author experiences a stark contrast between the serenity of Borneo and the frenetic pace of New York City. After a whirlwind two weeks of reconnecting with family and friends, she eagerly boards a flight to Bali, an island celebrated for its rich arts, music, and spiritual depth. This journey represents more than a mere vacation; it is a quest for belonging and understanding.

Search for Spirituality

Throughout her life, the author has sought a deeper spiritual experience across various religious contexts but has often felt a lack of fulfillment. With the dawn of her Bali journey, she holds high hopes, oblivious to the transformative impact this place will have on her life, as it evolves into her home for the next eight years.

Arrival in Biak and Bali

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After a brief stopover in Biak, the author lands in Bali and is immediately captivated by the island's vibrant culture. She meets Dr. Djelantik, a knowledgeable Balinese doctor, who, instead of sending her to Ubud, introduces her to I Gusti Ngurah Ketut Sangka—a scholar whose profound understanding of Balinese culture will open new doors for her.

First Encounters in Bali

Upon reaching Ketut Sangka's home, the author is warmly welcomed by his family, including his mother, Tu Nini, and wife, Tu Biang. Despite a language barrier, she feels a sense of belonging during these initial interactions and begins to immerse herself in her unfamiliar yet enticing surroundings.

Cultural Insights and Learning

As her journey continues, the author delves into the intricate traditions of Balinese life, exploring the caste system and the cultural importance of various rituals. Through cooking sessions with Jero Made and enlightening discussions on gender roles, she gains a deeper appreciation of the complexities that shape Balinese society.

Connecting with Community and Family

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With time, the author finds her place within the local community, participating in ceremonies and learning about the rich family histories that define her new environment. Her bond with Tu Aji and his family grows stronger, fostering her need for a connection in this culturally rich landscape.

The Plan for a Book

Inspired by the compelling stories shared by Tu Aji about his royal lineage, the author proposes collaborating on a book that captures the essence of these narratives. Tu Aji embraces the idea, viewing it as a vital effort to preserve their heritage and relay their history to future generations.

Health Concerns and Reflection

However, the joy of their project is overshadowed when Tu Aji suffers a heart attack. This crisis prompts deep conversations about the fragility of life, duty, and family secrets. As the author navigates this troubling time, she confronts her evolving feelings for Tu Aji, recognizing the profound implications should their book reach publication. The experience deepens her understanding of personal connections and the responsibilities entwined with storytelling.

Ultimately, this chapter encapsulates the author's entrance into a world steeped in culture, spirituality, and human connection—laying the

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groundwork for her transformative journey in Bali.

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Chapter 11 Summary: THE TRANCE

Chapter Eleven: The Trance

Reconnecting with Friends

Months after Tu Aji's heart attack, he and Rita maintain a strong bond, although intimate family details are now more guarded. The atmosphere buzzes with excitement as Jan returns to Bali following a year of globe-trotting. Her arrival is met with warmth from the close-knit community, characterized by various animals, including a mischievous turkey that always stirs up fun and laughter in Jan's presence.

Ceremony at Bulung Daya

Tu Aji shares the rich history behind the visit to Bulung Daya, a revered temple established by his ancestors, commemorating the discovery of swiftlet nests in a cave that brought them prosperity. This annual family tradition involves making offerings and enjoying a picnic, uniting the community in a day of joy and reflection.

Cultural Practices and Spirituality

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As the ceremony preparations unfold, it becomes clear that each offering must be painstakingly crafted, underscoring the deep cultural roots and social dynamics of the Balinese society. The significance of rituals and prayers for both protective and malevolent spirits illustrates the community's intertwining of daily life with the spiritual realm.

The Trance Dance

The ceremonial dance offers a powerful and transformative experience as Tu Biang and other women slip into a trance, embodying ancestral spirits. Tu Aji helps interpret their trance-induced movements, conveying crucial messages to the king about his familial responsibilities. This event sparks profound thoughts on the relationship between the living and the spirit world, prompting deeper reflections on spirituality.

Reflections on Family and Community

Amid the approaching end of her stay, Rita contemplates her family ties, reflecting on the moments missed with her children and the essence of community. Jan echoes these sentiments, acknowledging how her travels have widened her world while distancing her from traditional family connections yet forging meaningful new relationships along her journey.

Dealing with Loss

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After returning to Bali to face family issues in the U.S., Tu Nini's illness brings Rita face to face with the reality of mortality. Through the lens of Balinese rituals surrounding death and mourning—supported communally by the banjar—Rita experiences a stark contrast to how grief is managed in her homeland.

Final Ceremonies and Personal Growth

As the community prepares for Tu Nini's cremation, insights into life, death, and their spiritual connections deepen. The kekawin ceremony enhances this understanding, illustrating how distinct cultural practices and personal beliefs converge through ritual participation.

Conclusion

The chapter concludes with Rita recognizing the different dimensions of community in her life—from the vibrant village in Bali to her family dynamics back in the U.S. It encapsulates a reflective journey through the complexities of human relationships, the process of loss, and spirituality, while acknowledging the diverse ways in which individuals honor their experiences and connections.



Chapter 12: BACK IN THE UNITED STATES

In the chapter "Back in the United States," Rita returns home to find her mother navigating life after the loss of her husband, Rita's father. Her mother is forming new relationships and pursuing activities, notably with Amparo, a friend who helps document her life stories. Although her mother keeps her feelings largely to herself, Rita observes her mother thriving in this new chapter.

Reconnecting with friends in New York, Rita spends time with Mitch and Jan, both accomplished journalists. Mitch has recently covered a significant news story while Jan is making strides in the gossip column world. This reunion brings Rita joy, but her thoughts are soon diverted as she prepares for her imminent return to Bali.

Just before leaving, Rita receives telegrams with vital news: one from a friend and another announcing the cremation of Tu Aji, a beloved figure who played a crucial role in her life in Bali. This news plunges Rita into a deep sense of disorientation and grief, marking a significant loss that creates a void in her heart and life.

Determined to honor Tu Aji's memory, Rita chooses to stay in Kerambitan, assisting Tu Biang and Tu Aji's family during this difficult time. Her sorrow transforms into purpose, leading her to write an allegory that weaves



together her experiences in Bali and her thoughts on Tu Aji.

As she settles into life in Kerambitan, Rita begins to welcome tourists and develops a friendship with Wayan, a local who helps her delve deeper into Balinese culture. Rita continues to support Tu Aji's family, keenly observing

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Chapter 13 Summary: IRIAN JAYA: THE HIGHLANDS

Chapter Thirteen: Irian Jaya - The Highlands

In this chapter, Rita Golden Gelman shares her transformative journey to Irian Jaya, the western region of New Guinea, highlighted by her personal challenges and cultural discoveries. Her adventure begins after she meets a German guide named Michael, igniting her ambition to trek the Baliem Valley. However, despite her intentions to enhance her physical fitness, Rita grapples with maintaining a diet and exercise regime before her trip, boarding the plane feeling out of shape.

Upon landing in Jayapura, the capital of Irian Jaya, Rita encounters a warm customs official named Pak Sutrisna, who offers insights into her upcoming travels to Wamena. As she learns about the region's remarkable cultural diversity, Rita discovers that Irian Jaya is home to numerous indigenous tribes, each with their own customs and languages, many of which have faced marginalization under Indonesian rule.

After checking into a motel, Rita meets fellow travelers—Ursula, Teresia, and Elsa. They bond over shared meals and discussions while dealing with the inconvenience of canceled flights due to unfavorable weather. Eventually, after a chaotic wait at the airport, they embark on their



long-anticipated trek.

Throughout their journey, Rita confronts her physical limitations but gains encouragement from her companions. The trek becomes not just a physical challenge but also a cultural exchange, as the trekkers interact with local villagers, sharing songs and traditions while appreciating the villagers' colorful attire and friendly demeanor.

Following the trek, Rita decides to venture alone into a nearby village, deepening her connection with the local people. Here, she encounters their hospitality, which starkly contrasts with the harsh realities they face, including malnutrition and the detrimental effects of governmental policies on their culture. Despite these challenges, the warmth and kindness of the villagers leave a lasting impact on her.

As Rita navigates logistical challenges regarding her return flight, she utilizes local networks for assistance and eventually secures a means to travel back to Wamena. The chapter concludes with a heartfelt appreciation for the villagers' communal spirit and their prayers for her well-being. Rita expresses her gratitude to Esther, a missionary who played a vital role in facilitating her journey, encapsulating the profound connections she forged during her time in Irian Jaya.

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Chapter 14 Summary: IRIAN JAYA: THE ASMAT LANDS

Chapter Fourteen: Irian Jaya: The Asmat Lands

Arrival in Wamena

The narrator arrives in the remote town of Wamena, nestled in the rugged mountains of Irian Jaya, alongside her travel companions, Michael and two Germans, Hans and Horst. While Michael serves as a supportive presence, Hans's negativity causes friction, leaving the narrator frustrated. In contrast, Horst's quiet assistance provides comfort, facilitating a more pleasant group dynamic.

Silent Connection

As they embark on their journey, the narrator appreciates the unspoken bond forming among the group, echoing her experiences in Balinese culture, where silence often speaks volumes. This shared tranquility allows for reflection and connection, transcending the language barriers that separate them.

Journey through Asmat Country

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The group sets off in a canoe piloted by Joseph, a local who guides them through the labyrinthine rivers of Asmat Country. Along the way, they procure food, including the purchase of a live cassowary for dinner, highlighting the stark realities of survival in the region. Relentless mosquitoes plague their nights, prompting them to devise strategies for sleeping arrangements that offer some protection.

Cultural Observations

As they visit various carving villages renowned for their traditional artistry, the narrator is struck by the stark consequences of malnutrition on the local children, a reflection of the broader societal inequalities. One heart-wrenching encounter with a mother caring for her sick infant ignites in her a passionate desire to help those in dire need.

A Disheartening Loss

Tragedy strikes deeply when the baby succumbs during their travels, leaving the narrator haunted by the sorrowful reality of life in Irian Jaya. This overwhelming experience imprints haunting images of vulnerable children in her mind, underscoring the fragility of life in this remote region.

Exploration of Indigenous Life

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Determined to understand the lives of the indigenous Asmat, the group treks through dense, lush forests, encountering tribespeople engaged in their age-old practices of hunting and gathering. The narrator's heart races with excitement at the sight of these authentic lifestyles, deepening her appreciation for the beauty of their rich cultural heritage.

Bubbles and Connection

In a poignant encounter at a longhouse, the use of bubbles creates a magical moment of joy that transcends cultural differences. The interaction with a mother and her child emphasizes the universal language of play, fostering a connection that enriches their understanding of one another.

Challenges and Medical Emergencies

But not all encounters are joyful. A sudden injury befalls Hans, bringing tension and uncertainty to the group's dynamics. Facing the challenges of accessing medical care in these isolated areas disrupts their plans and forces them to adapt quickly, illustrating the unpredictable nature of their adventure.

Reflections on Adventure and Discomfort

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In the aftermath of both joy and sorrow, the narrator reflects on the multifaceted nature of her experience. With each challenge faced, she yearns for deeper connections and envisions a life among the tribes, learning from their ways. The adventure has taught her invaluable lessons about resilience, compassion, and the beauty of embracing the unknown.

Conclusion

The chapter concludes with the narrator grappling with a profound sense of fulfillment yet weighed down by the realities she has witnessed. Eager for her forthcoming journey to Bali, she looks ahead to the next chapter in her nomadic adventures, seeking new horizons and deeper understanding of the world around her.

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Chapter 15 Summary: ON TO MAS

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: ON TO MAS

The chapter opens with a notable shift for the protagonist as the introduction of telephones in Kerambitan brings new opportunities. She envisions a way for her and Tu Biang's family to leverage this technology, potentially increasing the puri's income by collaborating with travel agencies for tours and banquets, showcasing her entrepreneurial spirit and desire for community improvement.

Seeking to implement her idea, she approaches Tu Man, Tu Biang's son, but faces dismissal, which highlights the tension that exists within family dynamics. This exchange not only stirs frustration but also prompts the protagonist to introspectively question her role and influence within the family.

Recognizing it's time to move on, the protagonist pays a heartfelt homage to Tu Aji at his altar, expressing gratitude for her experiences. She hires a driver to take her to Ubud, reflecting on her nearly four years in Kerambitan and the personal growth she has undergone during that time.

Upon her arrival in Ubud, the protagonist is welcomed by Dayu Mayuni and



her family, who insist she stay with them rather than rent a place. Dayu Raka, a talented wood sculptor, opens her home, adorned with beautiful artwork, and this sets the stage for a new chapter of community and creativity.

In her new environment, the protagonist quickly bonds with Dayu Raka and her family. She offers to teach English to Raka's son, further integrating into the community and helping with the gallery's correspondence. Their interactions are enriched with discussions of Balinese folklore, illustrating the protagonist's eagerness to learn and connect with her surroundings.

As relationships deepen, the protagonist forms a special rapport with several young men living at Raka's house, particularly with Nyoman, an underappreciated sculptor. Torn between wanting to nurture Nyoman's artistic potential and respecting cultural traditions, she navigates the delicate balance of supporting his growth while honoring the local customs.

However, her journey takes a poignant turn when she must return to the U.S. due to her mother's declining health. This visit stirs deep feelings of guilt concerning her mother's life choices and her own goals. Following her mother's passing, she finds solace in the support of her Balinese friends, reminding her of the community she has come to cherish.

Subsequent visits to Bali highlight the changes that have occurred during her

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time away. Embracing these shifts, she resumes teaching English to new students and strengthens her connections with friends Budi and Ogi, illustrating her adaptability and resilience.

The chapter climaxes with the protagonist challenging herself through scuba diving. Driven by a desire to overcome her fears, she successfully achieves her advanced certification, while simultaneously deepening friendships with figures like Lars and Nirin, emphasizing the importance of shared experiences.

As she prepares to leave Bali after eight transformative years, the protagonist reflects on her personal growth and the love she has encountered throughout her journey. Her bittersweet departure emphasizes the lasting connections and valuable lessons learned, leaving her enriched with memories and spiritual insights that will guide her into the future.

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Chapter 16: VANCOUVER AND SEATTLE

In 1997, Rita makes a significant life decision to leave Bali after nearly a decade, drawn by a desire to connect more closely with her family in Seattle following the recent loss of her parents. This period of introspection, along with her ongoing spiritual growth, leads her to consider renting a home near her children. A friend's suggestion to explore Vancouver, known for its vibrant Asian community and proximity to Seattle, resonates with her.

Upon her arrival in Vancouver, Rita is embraced by Sue, a welcoming friend, who helps her feel at home during her week-long stay. Together, they explore various neighborhoods as Rita searches for the perfect rental. She eventually discovers a beautiful home in Belcarra, an area rich in nature and just a short drive from Seattle. Enchanted by her surroundings, she rents the house for three months, finding joy in activities such as hiking, entertaining family and friends, and enjoying the variety of offerings at the expansive T & T supermarkets. Rita relishes the visits from her family, which fosters a growing sense of community.

However, as her three-month stay comes to an end, her children suggest she find a place even closer to them. While walking with her friend Mitch, she comes across an enticing rental with a view of the lake. Acting on impulse, she secures the apartment and moves in, albeit with minimal furnishings. Here, she connects with her neighbors, John and Jip, who quickly become



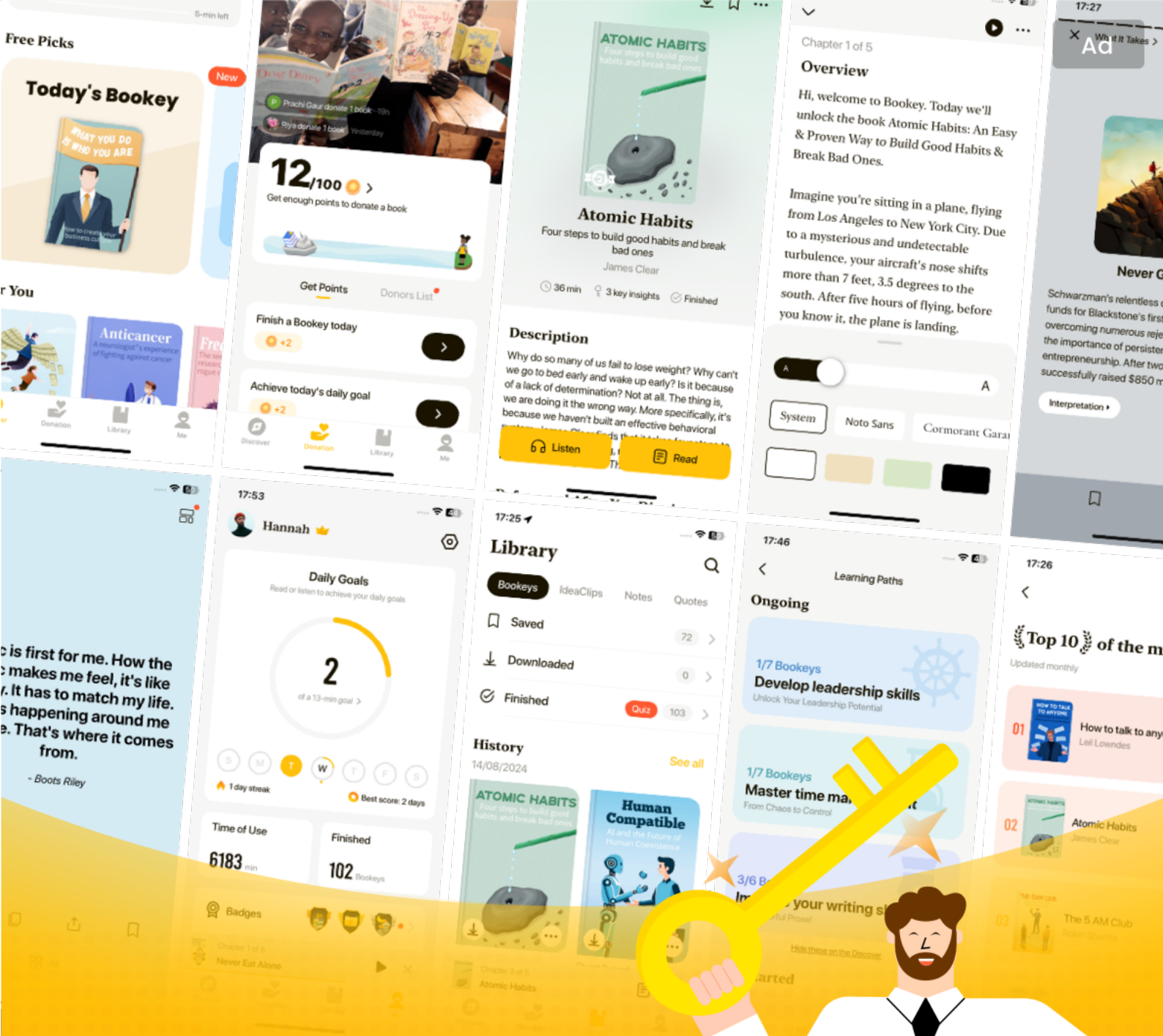
cherished friends.

As Rita settles into her new life in Seattle, she immerses herself in social activities, organizing gatherings that forge meaningful relationships and a deep sense of belonging. Yet, amid her blossoming independence, moments

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Chapter 17 Summary: NEW ZEALAND VIA BALI

In Chapter 17 of "Tales Of A Female Nomad," the author, Rita, navigates her return to Bali during a time of socio-economic instability in Indonesia, specifically in July 1998. While Bali remains comparatively safe, the local economy is reeling from a severe downturn in tourism and a rise in the cost of basic necessities, particularly rice. Despite the challenges faced by her friends and the broader community, Rita experiences an improvement in her financial situation, enabling her to provide small supports, such as helping with home improvements to accommodate tourists.

Motivated by her landlady Bron's strong ties to New Zealand, Rita decides to spend a month in Bali before heading there. She envisions finding a place where she can work on a book proposal for six months and foster deeper connections within the New Zealand literary community.

Upon her arrival in New Zealand, Rita is warmly welcomed by Bron's parents in Auckland, where she quickly adapts to her new environment. She purchases an old car, affectionately named "Old Blue," which facilitates her exploration of potential neighborhoods for renting. Her journey leads her to Rotorua, where she immerses herself in the vibrant local Maori community. Attending cultural events and deepening her understanding of Maori traditions enriches her experience.

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As Rita interacts with various locals, she reflects on the contrasts between her life in the United States and her new surroundings in New Zealand. She emphasizes the significance of community, trust, and reciprocity in forging meaningful relationships, highlighting how these elements shape her nomadic lifestyle.

Settling into life in Coromandel, Rita's engagement with local organizations and participation in community events facilitate the formation of friendships that further enhance her nomadic experience. This chapter captures her ongoing journey of exploration, cultural exchange, and the pursuit of a deeper understanding of diverse identities around the world.

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Chapter 18 Summary: IN THAILAND SPEAKING FOOD

Chapter Eighteen: In Thailand Speaking Food

In this chapter, the narrator embarks on a transformative journey to Thailand, seeking excitement and new experiences beyond her familiar life in New Zealand. As she prepares for her adventure, she is eager to delve into the country's rich culinary traditions while overcoming the challenges posed by language barriers.

Upon arriving in the tranquil village of Ban Krud, the narrator is greeted warmly at her bungalow resort, Rim Haad, by Fon, a local who becomes her guide into the heart of Thai culture. Despite her friend Jip's absence, the narrator's determination to immerse herself in the local culinary scene remains strong. She dreams of connecting with the village women through the universal language of food, which she believes can bridge their communication gap.

At breakfast, the complexity of the language barrier becomes apparent as the narrator struggles to express her desire for traditional dishes. However, she ultimately discovers the joy of a local soup, marking the beginning of her culinary adventure. As she wanders through the village, she not only savors



the flavors of Thai cuisine but also engages with local life, including participating in community elections that reveal the vibrant spirit of Ban Krud.

Motivated to break the communication barrier, the narrator makes efforts to learn basic Thai phrases. Nark, Fon's uncle, steps in as her translator, supporting her as she navigates this new world. This mutual exchange becomes a crucial part of her journey, as it allows for deeper connections with the locals.

The heart of the chapter lies in the narrator's active involvement in communal cooking sessions. She witnesses the preparation of various traditional dishes, fully immersing herself in the communal aspect of Thai food culture. A standout moment occurs when she learns to make *ho mok*, a traditional curry that captivates her with its intricate flavors, enhancing her understanding and appreciation of Thai culinary art.

Throughout her stay, the narrator participates in local festivals and explores bustling markets, further enriching her knowledge of Thailand's cultural traditions and the significance of food within the community. These experiences underline the importance of shared meals, not just as nourishment, but as vital connections that bring people together.

As her time in Ban Krud draws to a close, the narrator reflects on the deep



bonds she has forged with the locals and the culinary skills she has developed. The heartfelt gifts she receives from her hosts symbolize the lasting connections and mutual respect formed during her stay, marking a significant chapter in her life.

In closing, the narrator feels a profound sense of fulfillment from her experiences in Thailand. The skills she learned in cooking and the cultural insights she gained will undoubtedly shape her culinary journey ahead, leaving her eager to integrate these rich influences into her future endeavors.

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Chapter 19 Summary: A JOURNEY STILL IN PROCESS

A Journey Still in Process

In December, the narrator returns to New Zealand after a stay in Thailand, immersing themselves once again in the warmth of their community by participating in a beach cleanup organized by local neighbors. This event, set against the backdrop of summer's approach, evokes a deep sense of gratitude and belonging as the group diligently works to clear away the winter's debris from the coastline.

As the narrator's visa nears expiration, they face a poignant decision regarding their beloved car, Old Blue. Ultimately choosing to donate it to Manaia School, they feel fulfilled knowing the proceeds will be used to purchase books—a cause that resonates with their passion for literacy and education. This act underscores the narrator's commitment to contributing positively to their community before moving on.

Following heartfelt farewells to friends and neighbors, the narrator embarks on a journey across the United States, stopping to visit friends in Seattle, Atlanta, and New York. Their primary goal is to focus on writing a new book, embodying a mindset of living in the present and cherishing the deep



connections forged along their path. Each friendship represents a unique chapter in their life, reflecting varying levels of intimacy and growth.

During their time in Manhattan, while immersed in writing, the narrator experiences a sense of isolation typical of city life. Yet, they also treasure vivid memories from their travels—encounters that have enriched their nomadic journey. As they reflect on these experiences, they begin to envision future adventures, contemplating a cross-country trip to connect with readers and share their literary work.

To further maintain these connections, the narrator plans to create a webpage dedicated to their travels and writing endeavors, offering updates, tips, and insights for fellow travelers. With a new email address established for reader correspondence, the narrator eagerly anticipates engaging with a global audience, fostering a vibrant community centered around their shared love of storytelling and exploration.

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