



## Island Life Sentence

*Carrie Jo Howe*

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Peg Savage has contractually agreed to move to Key West, Florida. The smudged signatures on the damp cocktail napkin are irrefutable proof.

“An adventure...” her husband Clark says.

Peg can’t swim; she’s afraid of bridges (there are 42 of them); and she doesn’t want to leave her friends. However, after a bottle of Cabernet, a move from Chicago to the southernmost city in the United States seems like the best decision ever.

But now Clark has taken a long term job in Cuba and she’s on her own.

Neither her dog Nipper, nor the ghosts in the attic, offer up any good advice. But how hard can it be living in paradise?

Peg dives into island life but the more effort she makes, the wider her wake of catastrophes. She is tortured by a paddle board, a giant poisonous toad, the local Conservation group, and the patron saint of hurricanes. Not to mention the persistent sweat rash under her left breast.

A tropical depression descends on the island – one that can’t be cured with medication. Peg must gather her strength if she has any hope of surviving the storm.

## **Island Life Sentence Details**

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Author : Carrie Jo Howe

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## From Reader Review Island Life Sentence for online ebook

### **Kristina says**

Fun Fun FUN! Just what I needed during a stressful time.

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### **Steph Warren says**

\*I received a free copy of this book. The decision to review and my opinions are my own.\*

Island Life Sentence is a chick-lit style fish-out-of-water tale, in which an anxious married woman finds herself alone (except for Nipper the dog) and uncomfortable in a variety of increasingly bizarre situations. And heat. It's very hot. I nearly broke into a sympathy rash myself reading about the sticky, wet, way-too-warm weather!

The humour is of the self-deprecating and slapstick kind: embarrassingly placed sweat stains and falling in the water; misunderstandings and drunken shenanigans. The plot is nominally a character development journey, but Peg doesn't actually change much internally, which feels realistic given her age and life experience. Her escapades should be taken with a heaping pile of salt, as they are more for comedy effect than plot realism (no spoilers, so I'll just say Ernest and Tennessee!).

As a main character, Peg is a frumpy hot-mess, similar to the middle-aged strugglers you find in Jilly Cooper novels (Daisy from *Polo*?), but Peg shows much more resilience than the average aging *Bridget Jones*. No matter how high the trials and humiliations pile upon her, Peg tackles everything with a blind optimism that things will turn out alright, despite a crippling fear that they won't. She is almost inspirational in the way she repeatedly throws herself back out there, despite showing no evidence she is capable of anything other than first-class dog-cuddling! There is also a blundering innocence to Peg which led me to feel as benevolently towards her as I would Nipper if he peed on my leg. Neither seem capable of the levels of control and intelligence required to do any better than they are managing, bless them!

This is definitely not a book for the easily offended. There are some pretty un-PC comments ('stinky street person') and stereotypes (" . . . Cher, or Barbra Streisand, or Bette Midler or – ALL THREE"), which fit with the small-world mindset of Peg and her suspicion of the new and 'other'. There were times when her nervous distaste for certain people (like the island moving men, or the homeless man) made her an unsympathetic character; almost unlikable at these times.

In general the book was a fun romp and would be especially enjoyable to those who are fond of *Bridget Jones* style cringe-humour.

Ever since they bought the house all those years ago, she thought the house looked like a surprised cartoon character. The top two windows opened wide-eyed, and the oval door gave the lip-like impression of someone getting goosed from behind. As she replaced the sign, she looked up at the windows. Icicles had formed tears under the shutters.

"You are not going to make me cry, Mr. House," she said as she climbed back into the car. "But thank you for reminding me that I need to schedule Clark's colonoscopy."

– Carrie Jo Howe, Island Life Sentence

(Review by Steph Warren of Bookshine and Readbows blog)

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### **Jamie Holzberg / Fluff Smut & Murder says**

Thank you to NetGalley.com for the opportunity to read an Advanced Reader Copy of this book in exchange for my honest opinion.

While a cute little novella about a woman and her dog adjusting to life in the Florida Keys, its no love letter to the tourism board. Let's see...based on the bugs, humidity, hurricanes, parking issues, rampant manatees, and assorted haints – its not a love letter to the region but it is a cute, quick read which qualifies it as Tropical Fluff!

What I loved: The haints were actually my favorite characters in the book. Their insights/Peg's delirium were on point, honest, and hysterical. My favorite part (I actually laughed outloud) is when Shel Silverstein visits Peg's home because he saw a light in the attic. C'mon people – Shel Silverstein. A Light in the Attic. Its funny.

What I didn't love: I don't care for how Clark takes advantage of Peg's head for numbers/facts/contracts by getting her drunk and making her sign contracts that she feels morally obligated to uphold. At only 183 pages, I would have also loved to have seen more of Peg tutoring the high schoolers in Finance – maybe paving the way for her for a new career transition.

What I learned: Since I don't like seafood, this may not be the place for me.

Overall Grade: B

[www.FluffSmutandMurder.com](http://www.FluffSmutandMurder.com)

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### **Dash fan says**

4? A Fun engaging story

Island Life Sentence is a nice and short story.

Peg is having a tough time. She finds herself having to deal with things alone when she moves with her husband to a new home and country.

Peg isn't the bravest or confident of people, but she does have a fair bit thrown at her. What with poisonous frog, her fear of bridges, the weather, her fear of water.

What follows is a slapstick comedy adventure as we follow Peg on her journey to overcome her fears.

Peg isn't the most likeable character. She comes across as selfish, whiny, petrified of everything. But she does redeem herself as she grows in strength and confidence so does her personality.

Oh and I forgot to mention Pegs adorable fur Baby Nipper, any book that features a gorgeous fur Baby is a winner for me!

Island Life Sentence is a quick and pleasant read, the writing style is lovely, the storyline was interesting and engaging, with plenty of slapstick humour.

Thank you to Random Things Tours for this copy which I reviewed honestly and voluntarily.

My Review is also on my Blog Website:-

<https://dashfan81.blogspot.com/2018/0...>

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### **Susan Kasza says**

To begin with, I had a hard time identifying with a character who thought that living in downtown Chicago was preferable to living on Key West. Then as the book progressed, she just got worse. It's hard to sympathize with someone who was so incredibly incompetent at life. How does a whiny, neurotic, spineless idiot appeal to readers? The only good thing she did was finally kick her no-good cheating husband to the curb.

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### **Julie Morris says**

Like the Key West book I reviewed a couple of weeks ago, Florida Straits, this is the story of a person from a northern US city transplanted to the alien world of Key West. This time, instead of New York the protagonist is moving from Chicago and rather than a low level gangster eager to start a new life we are following the story of a mid-life, Mid-Western woman who doesn't want to move.

Peg is happy in Chicago with her dog, her friends and the money she and her husband have realised from the sale of their successful business. However, following a bribe, a lot of alcohol and a drunken contract written on a damp cocktail napkin (which seems to be a regular occurrence for this couple), she is persuaded to up sticks for a relaxed retirement in the Florida Keys by her beloved husband, Clark.

They find themselves in an old, Key West Conch house which may be haunted but, no sooner than they move in, Clark jets off to work in Cuba leaving Peg to adjust to their new surroundings and life alone. This is no easy feat since Peg is fairly incompetent and afraid of everything – bridges, swimming – and seems incapable of coping with the simplest every day task. Hence a flurry of mishaps involving poisonous frogs, paddleboard yoga, deadly coconuts and a disastrous attempt to participate in Fantasy Fest. Even an attempt to go swimming becomes a laugh-out-loud incident and the scenario involving humidity and a clothing mishap on the way to Mass had me howling.

To begin with, Peg is a complete drip who is in total thrall to her inconsiderate husband and is incapable of doing anything on her own. She manages to alienate the very few friends she has made in Key West with her

unreliability and I found her immensely frustrating but this is an important part of the story arc. Her personal journey would not have been so emotive if she had been less incompetent to begin with and I was glad by the end that she has managed to find her feet, her backbone and a way forward in her life. The culmination of Peg's journey in her survival of a hurricane, standing up to her selfish spouse and finding her place in Key West was suitably satisfying. Her best friend, Trudy, was possibly my favourite character and I would have liked to have seen more of her. Also, gotta have a chihuahua in a tutu!

The surreal involvement of a trio of notable Key Westians in Peg's life in spectral form may have been a strange step too far but, hey, none of this book is grounded firmly in reality so if you suspend your disbelief as far as you can and take this book for what it is – a tongue-in-cheek comedy of errors – it is a very enjoyable way to spend a couple of hours.

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### **Ange H says**

[I was in the Florida Keys once with friends who grew up there and were excellent swimmers. They dove into the ocean to catch lobsters which they threw into the boat with me. The lobsters were PISSED. They skittered and clacked all over the place waving their creepy antennae around. Keys lobsters don't have claws so they weren't dangerous, but they scared the

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### **Les says**

i absolutely loved this book!

i thought it was so funny and could not believe everything that Peg got into / had happened to her but she still kicked butt and i just absolutely loved her.

full review up on my blog.

<https://lovewhatyouread14.blogspot.co...>

thank you to Carrie for an ARC of this book. will definitely be buying a hard copy! <3

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### **Niki says**

Nope. DNF at about 30%. Not gonna happen.

The characters aren't interesting, the plot is bland, and it *just ain't funny*. The protagonist is annoying, paranoid, and, frankly, rather unintelligent (also the quote "it's so hard being PC these days!!!!" had me rolling my eyes so far back into my head I almost saw my brain), and her husband is a sleazeball who is probably cheating on her (and I'm not going to keep reading to find out, I don't care about either of these people). I could tell that the book was going in a certain "wacky hijinks in an ~exotic~ place!!!" direction, that I wasn't even slightly interested in.

Not going to waste any more of my time with it. I expected something a lot funnier.

\*\*A big thank you to NetGalley, still, for providing me with a free copy of this book\*\*

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### **Lisa Nevins says**

When we are first introduced to Peg, she is a bit unsure of herself. She seems to have lived a pretty nice, and uneventful, life in suburban Chicago. This all changes when life takes her to live in Key West. Here Peg has an opportunity to find out who she really is. There are a lot of bumps along the way, but Peg shows her resilience. Her world is turned upside down and she shows the strength to reinvent herself to the person she needs to be and probably always was. Her friends Trudy and Randolph are perfect partners to support her in this process. Peg is a person that I would love to sit down and have a few drinks with and maybe even share a bag of Cheetos.

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### **Maria says**

Peg Savage loves her husband Clark, so she lets herself convinced that living in a remote island and leaving all of her life behind will be a good idea... She just wants to make her marriage happier and stronger, sadly this will be far from reality, she will have to face solitude and a hurricane... Ready for a life sentence?

I know what it is leaving your comfort place and change it for a strange place without anyone known or anything you like, it would seem a beautiful place, a beautiful prison...

This had been a funny read, of how life could surprise you in the worst ways but if you fight for your beliefs (and your life) you could resurface again, stronger and braver. Peg will not only have to face her worst fears on this book (let me say that she has some quite weird fears) but also to survive a hurricane, easy said that done!

The story is told by Peg, but her best friend Trudy is always with her, the conscience voice that Peg really needs to face the prison she is living in. Lucky for Peg, Nipper, her cute dog is always on Peg's side too, no matter what happens! And of course we have the fantastic husband, I can't say anything good about him... While reading the story, sometimes I felt sad for Peg, she left everything she cared behind to make her husband happy, and when they arrived at the "beautiful" island he left for a job to Cuba (a long, long job...). And Peg, instead of getting angry with his delay and excuses, accepts his messages without complaining... is she too mad in love or too naïve?

This had been a fresh read, perfect for a good laugh sitting on the sun while reading the disastrous life of Peg...

Ready to move to an island?

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### **Yvonne says**

Peg and Clark live in Chicago, when Clark suggests they move to one of the Key West islands Peg is a little reticent to say the least, not only to leave her friend, her home but also the thought of crossing the 42 bridges leaves her in a cold sweat.

Oh Peg! What a character she is. Funny without meaning to be, dramatic, easily swayed and an ability to

attract trouble without even trying. Once in Key West she has to get used to the unfamiliar climate, people, language and local wildlife. She is left to unpack and find her feet while Clark has to go to Cuba to set up an important business opportunity. During this time mishap and misadventure are her close friends. She has little confidence and finds the whole experience stressful.

Peg is the narrator of her own story and I admit to getting hooked straight away. The chapters are quick and quirky, with humorous little tales of her experiences. There are also some terrifying moments, some are definitely justified and some are just Peg being Peg.

This book for me was pure escapism and an absolute joy to read, a simple story with observations told in a fun and at times hilarious way. I can honestly say I really did not want this to end. I would love to think the author is considering a follow-up to this book as I would buy it in a heartbeat. As a character Peg is brilliant with her own style and way of approaching life.

This is a book you can escape into, one that gives a different perspective on the idyllic island lifestyle. A fabulous book to escape into for a few hours and one I would highly recommend. Yep I loved it

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### **Heather Christie says**

Put Carrie Jo Howe's fun novel on your to-be-read, beach book list. Root for Peg as her marriage unravels and she has to overcome her fears of bridges and make friends in a new town far away from home. Lots to like in this zany, mid-life comedy.

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### **Lisa says**

*Island Life Sentence* is an un-put-downable escape into the hilarious new (accidental) tropical world of Peg Savage (some call it paradise—Peg does not). Peg reluctantly leaves her comfortable Chicago life, the seasons, and best friend, Trudy, to indulge her husband Clark's pining for "an adventure" in Key West. No sooner have they made the move than Clark has bee lined for a different adventure 90 miles south in Cuba leaving Peg to navigate the southernmost city all alone. Each chapter illuminates the realization of yet another one of Peg's long listed fears amid laugh-out-loud antics (what woman out there hasn't wrestled with her first bathing-suit-try-on of the season?). Peg is an authentic and likeable heroine and her loyalty to Clark is superseded only by her voice-of-reason, cyclone of a friend, Trudy. While some readers may shake their heads at the kooky Key Wester's life described in flamboyant detail, others who have witnessed this lifestyle know that paddleboard yoga, lobster mini-season, and Fantasy Fest are all-too real. Despite the slapstick humor, Peg's story is one of facing fears, finding strength and developing self. Treat yourself and read *Island Life Sentence* and you'll not soon forget Peg Savage.

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### **Rachel Gilbey says**

This was a reasonable easy book to read once I got into the swing of it, and thankfully it wasn't too long. For although I did sort of enjoy reading it, I also found myself rolling my eyes more and more at the book.

I really wasn't keen on Peg the main character, she was whiny, spineless, seemed scared of everything and

despite moving across country on her husbands wishes, she just had no real oomph about her for most of the book. That being said she was responsible for all the funny moments in the book while she tries to break out of her comfort zone and tries to make friends.

There are some fabulous descriptions of Key West, and I did believe Peg was genuinely frightened at various points, especially of storms and hurricanes and water, and the scenes that involved her seeing possible ghosts were a bit freaky.

However for anyone that knows me, I do love animals in books, and Nipper and his new friend Lulu are fabulous dogs, and I loved the interactions between their owners too.

Island Life Sentence is a pleasant way to spend a few hours reading a book, and if you know nothing about life in Key West, or what Cuba is like then you will most probably love this book. Had I felt more empathy with Peg I may have enjoyed it a lot more.

Thank you to the author for supplying a copy of this book which I have reviewed honestly and voluntarily.

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