



Almost Paradise

Laurie Hanan

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Louise, a mail carrier in Kaneohe, Hawaii, searches for Conchita Santos, an elderly customer on her delivery route who has mysteriously vanished. Louise encounters a murderer, who stalks her, but she gets the better of him and solves the mystery of the missing woman...and two other unsolved police cases.

Almost Paradise Details

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From Reader Review Almost Paradise for online ebook

Sheryl says

Lousie Golden is a great fun character. Someone I would like to be friends with. It is always fun to read a book about the place where you live...it feels so familiar and comfortable and it seems that you get all the inside jokes-like one of the characters almost.

Marge says

I picked this book because it reminded me of my first trip to Hawaii last February. I read a chapter or two every morning and often before I fell asleep at night. It is a mystery with a very likable heroine. Louise is a mail carrier who actually cares about the people on her route. And when one old lady goes missing, Louise starts investigating on her spare time.

The ending is especially touching. The description so detailed that I could imagine myself on that beach with her. She is such a tender hearted person. I was sorry when the book ended.

Colleen Ray says

Yawn. This book is written with true Hawaiian spirit, and is full of scenic description. As mainland visitors to the beautiful islands have found, the culture is relaxed, and seldom in a hurry to get anywhere.

This book embodies that culture, but In a bad way. It moves at a snails pace, providing tedious, unending descriptions of EVERYTHING. Do we really need to know which minor characters danced with each other, or what everyone had for lunch? Pages and pages are wasted on unimportant detail that add nothing to the story.

The reason for all the filler may be that there was actually very little "sleuthing" happening. The main character primarily waits around for the police officers to do their job, while she talks to friends and neighbors about her daily activities. The occasional spot of action is too little to save this book.

Brenda Todd says

Almost Paradise is a wonderful book. It provides a glimpse into the life of Louise, a middle-aged lady trying to rebuild her life after the death of her soul mate Amos. She has found friendship in her landlords, her 10 year old neighbor, Emmeline, a tenuous relationship with Brian, and so many others. She has a job with the Postal Service which provides her with a routine schedule allowing her time to get to know the people on her route. Many are elderly and alone, so when one elderly lady breaks the routine Louise worries that something is seriously wrong.

Mrs. Santos has disappeared leaving her faithful dog, Pipsqueak, behind. Louise cares too much about others to ignore the situation and begins to search for answers. She encounters several individuals along the way, some good and some bad. The bad have put her in grave danger. Louise finds strength far beyond her expectations. Her love and care for those around her make her even stronger. We learn more about her past life along the way, defining who she is. I would love to have neighbors like Louise and Emmeline. A fast read and one I didn't want to put down until the end! Laurie Hanan has created a wonderful character in Louise that is easy to connect with!

Lehua Parker says

As a mail carrier in Kaneohe, Hawaii, Louise Golden brings a little aloha to the people along her route. When elderly Conchita Santos doesn't meet her at the mailbox for the first time in two years, Louise goes looking. The house is unlocked, Pipsqueak the dog is unfed, and Mrs. Santo's purse is still inside. Fearing the worst, Louise files a missing persons report and begins her own investigation, an investigation that leads to murder, a movie set, new shoes, a French manicure, and a hand-carved tiki with a secret.

Not your everyday week in paradise no matter how stellar the weather.

Almost Paradise, a Louise Golden Mystery by Laurie Hanan is a breezy afternoon beach read, an entertaining escape to sunny Hawaii. The protagonist, Louise Golden, is unmoored, drifting through life after a devastating loss. Nothing seems very permanent in Louise's life. Through routines that include folk dance groups, piano sing along dates, Scrabble games, and peanut butter sandwiches Louise connects to the world through the family she creates. It's busy, but not really fulfilling until she reaches out of her comfort zone and begins to grow. I've got the feeling that learning to make plumeria leis is just the start.

Cathy Connolly says

I really enjoyed this book! Laurie has wonderful character development, which I look for in books I read. Laurie's writing style makes the reader feel as though they are walking along side of Louise.

Her style allows the reader to get to know the characters personalities and their idiosyncrasies. I enjoyed the interactions with the neighborhood children, Emmeline and her dog Dazy along with Emmeline's little brother Jackie, on a daily basis!

The story line keeps you wondering just what did happen to Mrs. Santos, and then what a surprise ending!

Her talent for describing the scene puts the reader right there in beautiful Hawaii right along with characters.

I highly recommend this book to anyone looking for a good read!

Jinx Schwartz says

When an O'ahu mail carrier turns amateur sleuth in order to help an elderly patron, she uncovers the harsh underbelly of paradise. Oh, sure, there are elements of a cozy in the daily village life, but make no mistake,

this is a whodunit. The Tower of Babel-ish cast of characters in this first novel reveal the complex makeup of the islanders themselves. Hawaii: it ain't all hula-hula, ukuleles and leis. I'm looking forward to the next book.

A.J. Llewellyn says

I totally loved this book. I enjoyed the many threads, including the two mysteries at heart and Louise Golden herself. Her relationship with Brian seems real and heart-breaking. I hope he returns in the second book, which I've just purchased.

I love Louise and adore her job as a mail carrier! What an unusual protagonist. She provides some interesting observations about how you can tell a lot about people by the mail they receive ring true.

I loved the secondary characters, particularly Emmeline, the pet-rescuing neighbor. I can't stop thinking about the blind kitten, Ash, and hope he rallied. Yes, I am talking about a fictional kitty but that's how resonant this author's work is.

This is not the Hawaii for those who think it's all lei greetings and rum drinks. It's gritty, real, violent, beautiful, friendly, sad...it's almost paradise.

But it all comes back to Louise, who is recovering from the death of her true love and trying to find a measure of comfort with Brian. I love that she's not a girly girl and laughed out loud at the end results of her first mani ped.

A wonderful start to an intriguing and original crime series and a character I already cherish. Not to be missed!

Sally Guillen says

This book is a murder mystery and it keeps you guessing all the way to the end. Just when you think you have it figured out, you're totally wrong. The story takes place in Hawaii and has some great Hawaiian words, which are explained in the glossary. The main character is a woman named Louise Golden who is a postal worker. She takes her job seriously and really gets to know her "customers". Things start to go bad when one of the older women she takes mail to goes missing. Louise just can't let it go and with every step she gets closer to solving the case...or does she?

This was a great read and I actually read it in about 2 days because I just couldn't put it down. There were a couple of areas where it was just a little bit unbelievable, but then again it's a book! If you're into murder mysteries this is a good book to pick up and read.

Kathleen Downey says

I didn't think I was going to enjoy this book, but I couldn't put it down. Wow what a great read. Don't judge a book by its cover.

Gail Baugniet says

Local flavor, tradition, and a bit of the pidgin Posted on Amazon: December 21, 2011
By Gail M Baugniet, Author of For Every Action

Recently, I purchased a trade book copy of author Laurie Hanan's mystery novel from her display table at a craft fair. This is the first in her Louise Golden series. With my obsession for e-books, print copies usually end up on a shelf unread. But, a mystery, set in Hawaii, on the island of O'ahu? I couldn't wait to start reading **ALMOST PARADISE**.

Postal mail carrier Louise Golden lives on the island of O'ahu and enjoys a friendly camaraderie with the people on her mail route. When she notices elderly Mrs. Santos missing from her home one day, Louise becomes concerned and talks to neighbors in an attempt of learn what happened to her. Off the job, while visiting a movie set on the North Shore, Louise inadvertently overhears a man bragging about a murder, and finds herself spiraling through a labyrinth of dangerous encounters as he begins to stalk her. Is the man just a loudmouth or a dangerous killer? How is the disappearance of Mrs. Santos related to the stalker? These are only two of the many questions that kept me reading right up to the inspired conclusion.

Though I've lived on O'ahu for years, Hanan's novel offered a new perspective on several Hawai'ian landmarks. Her descriptions are authentic and she keeps the reader involved in the story by illustrating the essence of a scene with minimal explanation. Louise Golden and the novel's other major characters come fully realized, bearing ethnic names and unique personality traits that can be found in most local neighborhoods.

Laced throughout the novel is a humor that is reminiscent of Janet Evanovich's early books in the Stephanie Plum series. Some of the scenes in Almost Paradise were written so true to Hawai'ian character that, often, the subtle humor of a situation almost escaped me.

The story's plot action intertwines with local flavor, tradition, and a bit of the pidgin language. There are even a couple of bonuses: a quick language lesson at the beginning of the book and a glossary at the end, which includes definitions for a mix of Hawai'ian, Yiddish, and Japanese words.

Rick Ludwig says

In her first novel, Laurie Hanan hits one out of the park. Her main character, Louise Golden is not typical for the genre. She's a mail carrier on Oahu who happens to care about the people on her route. When one of her regulars disappears, she doesn't just assume everything is okay. She checks on her and finds significant evidence that something is wrong. Despite putting herself in peril, she refuses to let this woman's disappearance be ignored. Louise is an individual with an intriguing past and a collection of interesting and engaging friends and acquaintances who provide an honest and vivid view of life in modern Hawai'i. A considerate author, Laurie Hanan makes sure her readers understand what she is describing by including a valuable introduction and a glossary of terms that might be unfamiliar to non-Hawaiian readers.

But, the best part of the novel is the rich and tightly crafted story. Beginning with the contrast between the pleasant, laid-back environment of life in paradise and the danger Louise uncovers, the pace accelerates to a

surprising and exciting conclusion. In Laurie Hanan, we have a writer of wonderful skill, exceptional humor, and warm accessibility. In Louise Golden, we have a heroine who offers a unique and accessible entree into the mystery genre for all readers. Through Ms. Hanan's Louise Golden, we discover that mail carriers are in a unique position to see everything that goes on around them, while being virtually invisible to most simply because they wear a familiar uniform. I look forward to learning more about Louise in future stories in this series and to enjoying the writing talents of Ms. Hanan for years to come.

Maris says

The kind of mystery that I like!

Vicki says

Hooked from the first page, I didn't want to stop reading until the end. The book has murder, suspense, romance, star struck characters and friends that couldn't be different from each other. I loved it!

The author takes you on a journey to find a killer, and just when you think you know who it is...it isn't. Well written, it ends with a shocker that I didn't see coming. Everyone and everything isn't what it appears to be.

This is the first book by this author I've read. Her 2nd book, which happens to be the 2nd book in the Louise Golden Mystery Series, is How Far Is Heaven and just came out in February. I plan on reading it as soon as I can.

Kerstin Lampert says

The debut novel of promising author, Laurie Hanan....a lot of insights into everyday life in Hawaii, and also special insights into what makes it special. Take this on your next vacation!
