



## Secrets of Tamarind (The Book of Tamarind)

By Nadia Aguiar

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In Tamarind, there is the mystery of the magical mineral ophalla that Red Coral is greedily mining, their old pirate ship, the Pamela Jane, and the secret of their friend Helix's parentage. This time, it is up to Simon to put the clues together, and save his sisters from the island and the nefarious Red Coral Project?and defeat Red Coral before the magnificent island is put to ruin.

Nadia Aguiar's sequel to The Lost Island of Tamarind, crafts a vivid story reminiscent of such classics as Peter Pan, full of adventure, magic, and haunting beauty.

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## Editorial Review

### Review

“This is a great adventure that sets the stage for a third book in the series.” *?School Library Journal*

“Simon Nelson and his sisters, Maya and Penny, have been living in Bermuda for four years, but they miss their life at sea and the adventures they shared with their parents in a land called Tamarind. Simon, especially, is restless. When a family friend from Tamarind, Helix, shows up with an urgent request to save Tamarind, Simon joins him--and brings his sisters along by mistake! While this is clearly the second in a series, Aguiar connects the back story deftly, so that new readers are quickly gathered into the magical land. ... In his quest to save everyone, Simon discovers that he is growing up and that although adventure is sweet, family means more. ... Rich descriptions and quirky characters will captivate fantasy genre fans.” *?Dawna Lisa Buchanan, Children's Literature*

“After rescuing their marine-biologist parents from a mysterious island in *The Lost Island of Tamarind* (2008), feisty siblings Maya, Simon and Penny encounter more amazing adventures as they return to prevent Tamarind's destruction in this hair-raising sequel. ... Replete with ecological warnings applicable to real as well as fantasy worlds and glossed with lush descriptions of imaginary flora and fauna, the rapid-fire plot bristles with danger. Like Simon, Maya and Penny, readers will find it hard to leave the magical world of Tamarind.” *?Kirkus Reviews*

“The book's magic...lies in Aguiar's precise, often lyrical descriptions. A native and resident of Bermuda, she writes with authority about daily life in the tropics....Aguiar uses her knack for realistic details equally well in the magical parts.... *The Lost Island of Tamarind* has a gentle spirit, tempering its dangers with warmth.” *?The New York Times Book Review on The Lost Island of Tamarind*

“Aguiar's exciting debut novel is a cross between Peter Pan and Lost...Developed with seeming ease, each new character advances the plot logically and fluidly. The storytelling, intricate as it is, builds to a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. All signs point to a sequel--one that readers won't want to miss.” *?Publishers Weekly, starred review on The Lost Island of Tamarind*

“Each detail of this fantasy is crafted with care; readers will be drawn into this dangerous, magical world where anything is possible and nothing can be fully explained...Young people will be transported to a world so different from the one they currently inhabit, following along as Maya and Simon escape their adversaries and struggle to survive in this hostile land.” *?School Library Journal on The Lost Island of Tamarind*

“Stranded on a lost island, a teen faces nail-biting adventures searching for her missing parents in this fantasy cliffhanger.... As she bounces from one adventure to the next, Maya forgets all about having a normal life and longs just to have her family reunited. Spunky kids, perilous pursuits and marine mystery make for a smashing good read.” *?Kirkus Reviews on The Lost Island of Tamarind*

### About the Author

**Nadia Aguiar's** first novel, *The Lost Island of Tamarind*, was called "a smashing good read" by *Kirkus Reviews*. Nadia holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Columbia University. She lives with her husband in Bermuda, where she was born and raised.

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## Chapter One

*The Watchers • Granny Pearl's House • The PAMELA JANE • A Gloomy Illumination • "It was unmistakable"*

Simon's school bag bounced on his back as he ran. When he reached the bend in the road he stopped and looked back. His sisters had gotten off the bus with him but they were lagging behind. With a running leap he vaulted onto the mossy boulder that sat on the verge of the road and climbed quickly to its top. From there he could see out to the choppy winter sea around Bermuda and hear the whistle of the wind. The slate gray sky was heavy with clouds and the day was already growing dark. He wished that Maya and Penny would hurry up. Recently their parents had forbidden them to walk home alone, so Simon had no choice but to wait, even though he was impatient to get to the boatyard. He and his friends had spent the past month rebuilding an old speedboat and it was almost ready to put in the water. It was all he had thought about all day as he endured the slow crawl of the hands around the big round clock at the front of the classroom.

Through the treetops Simon could see the crisp white limestone roof of Granny Pearl's house. Even though they had lived there for nearly four years now—and it was the only real house any of them had ever lived in—they all still called it Granny Pearl's house. If he stood on his tiptoes he could just see the kitchen garden with parsley, thyme and the frothy green tops of carrots, and lettuce that grew crisp and cool deep inside the ice green heads. Around the side of the house was a milkweed patch where flocks of monarch butterflies massed in the summer. The house overlooked a small green cove, sheltered from the open ocean, with a narrow slip of sandy beach and a mat of rubbery sea daisies. The family's boat, the fifty-two-foot schooner, the *Pamela Jane*, rocked on her mooring, her yellow hull the brightest thing on this gloomy afternoon. Something stirred in a nearby tree and Simon instantly thought of Helix, happier in trees than with his bare feet on the ground. But it was just a branch bobbing after a bird took flight. Their friend had disappeared so suddenly and had been gone for so many weeks now that Simon wondered if he was ever coming back. Maya and Penny finally appeared—Penny hopping ponderously on one foot—and Simon slid down from the boulder and went to meet them.

"You should have waited for us," Maya said crossly when they reached him. "What'd you need to go rushing off for?" Maya was sixteen, which meant she thought that she was in charge of Simon and Penny. Simon had just turned thirteen and he hated anyone telling him what to do, most of all Maya. Since nothing irritated her as much as being ignored, he didn't answer and instead swung five-year-old Penny up onto his shoulders so fast that she squealed. He made up a silly song that made her giggle and began walking.

"Frog!" Penny shouted, catching sight of a muddy-backed bullfrog on the side of the road, and she wriggled until Simon put her back on the ground.

Maya dawdled with Penny, who was prodding the reluctant frog to hop in front of them, and Simon turned onto the shortcut, a narrow packed-sand path between the trees to Granny Pearl's house. Old Man's Beard hung like fog from gnarled branches. The light that managed to make it through the thick clusters of stubby palm trees and the heavy climbing creepers was dim and eerie. High in the spice trees, the wind creaked ominously, a sound that reminded Simon of the wind moaning in a ship's rigging, but the air on the path was strangely still, as if it were sealed off from the rest of the day. He stopped to wait for his sisters and peered uneasily through the trees, trying to see if he could make out one of the watchers. The strange men were here all the time now.

He looked back. "Hurry up!" he shouted.

When he saw them, Maya's scowl had fallen away and her face was lost in the hazy drift of a daydream—Maya was *always* daydreaming. The frog leaped into a clump of ferns and Simon, not liking the dark stretch of the path, took Penny's hand and pulled her firmly along.

\* \* \*

The house was cool when Simon came in, and the tiny television on the kitchen counter was spouting yet another news report about the mysterious glowing sea creatures that were being found dead in the waters all around the Caribbean and South America. Simon's mother wasn't home from the laboratory yet, but Granny Pearl was listening to the report as she chopped vegetables at the sink. Simon swooped down to give her a kiss—he had grown three inches in the past few months and he was doing a lot of swooping to low places, as well as stretching to high ones, reaching up nonchalantly to rap his knuckles on every door frame he went under.

"How was your day?" his grandmother asked

"Boring," he said. "But yesterday I figured out what was wrong with the boat engine. The old fuel had thickened to varnish and the jets were clogged. I'm going to take the carbs apart and clean them—I think we can have it in the water by this weekend." He glanced out of the window. "Are they still out there?"

His grandmother nodded. "They've been lurking around all afternoon."

"They can't just invade our yard," he muttered. "Why doesn't Papi get rid of them?"

"Sometimes things are more complicated than they seem," said Granny Pearl.

Simon's gaze fell on the television, where an old fisherman was holding up a dead octopus, its faint glow ebbing even as Simon watched. "*Found it in my nets,*" he said. "*Second this month—I been fishing here since I was ten years old with my father, in fifty-five years I've never seen a thing like this before...*"

The television still babbling tinnily, Simon went to change into his old grease-stained clothes for the boatyard, hearing the screen door bang shut as Maya came in behind him. Usually these days he breezed right by his father's study, but today he stopped and looked in.

Dr. Nelson's ear was pressed to the CB radio. With one hand he was turning the knob, listening to the series of pops and whines and static that sputtered from the speakers. With the other hand he was making notes. His beard, white since his time in the Ravaged Straits, had grown long and his skin, no longer exposed to the sun as they sailed from port to port, had faded. Frown lines deepened into grooves as he concentrated.

A year ago, the first thing Simon would have done when he got home from school would have been to head straight to Peter Nelson's study. All of them would have, Helix, too, but Simon always stayed the longest, telling his father about his day and sitting at the desk opposite his father's to do his homework. He'd browse through Papi's books, poring over the scientific illustrations. He loved the treasures on the shelves: marlin bills; exotic shells; starfish and octopus and coiled water snakes that floated in a solution in rows of big glass jars. Simon had a steady hand, and his father often asked him to sketch things he saw under microscope slides. But these days his father was preoccupied, and he rarely talked to the children except to yell at them when they were too noisy.

"Papi," said Simon. His father didn't hear him.

Messy piles of coffee-stained papers teetered precariously under sea stones and open books were stacked on top of each other on almost every inch of the floor. Behind his father's desk was a large map studded with colored drawing pins that plotted the locations of the reported sightings of dead, glowing sea life. Simon felt a sudden rush of annoyance at the shambles of his father's office.

"Papi!" he said, loudly this time.

His father looked up, startled. "Simon," he said. "Home already? What can I do for you?"

"I just saw that someone found another glowing sea creature," said Simon. "Did you hear about it?"

"I did," said his father, looking back down at his papers. "Very troubling business."

"What do you think is making them glow like that?" Simon asked. He had been hovering in the doorway but now he stepped inside, dropping his school bag to the ground.

"Anything I could say now would only be speculation," said his father. "And I'd rather not speculate."

Simon frowned. He wished his father would stop being so infuriatingly vague. He looked out of the window.

"You know those men are still out there," he said.

"Yes, I'm aware," said his father, sifting through the jumble on his desk in search of something.

"I could help, you know," said Simon. "We could go outside right now and tell them to get lost!"

His father looked at him. “That would be very foolish,” he said seriously. “Those men are dangerous—it isn’t a game. Steer clear of them, Simon. I mean it.”

“What do they want?” Simon pressed.

When his father didn’t answer Simon changed the subject. “What about Helix?” he asked. “It’s been weeks—can’t you at least tell us where he’s gone, or when he’ll be coming back?”

Dr. Nelson sat back, rubbing a bony knuckle over his bushy eyebrow. “I wish I did know where Helix was,” he said. “I’m worried about him. He took it upon himself to— Oh, never mind. He thinks he’s helping us.”

“I want to help, too,” said Simon.

“You’re too...

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