

Online Reviews and Comments on

Island in the Clouds

Posted to Amazon.com – Kindle Store:

5.0 out of 5 stars **Excellent book - Island in the Clouds by Susan M. Toy (Kindle version)**,
August 3, 2013

By [Jcz](#) - [See all my reviews](#)

Amazon Verified Purchase([What's this?](#))

This review is from: Island in the Clouds (Kindle Edition)

With *Island in the Clouds*, Ms. Toy has succeeded in the difficult task of capturing the true atmosphere, spirit of the people, and the way of life in the Caribbean. She accomplished this rare feat by writing about the real essence of one Caribbean island— Bequia, one of tiny islands that comprise the country of St. Vincent & the Grenadines.

Ms. Toy's book is not a tourist guide per se, but *Island in the Clouds* will guide you in a way no other book or blog or magazine can offer. *Island in the Clouds* is a mystery novel with Bequia staring as its backdrop. This is a work of fiction firmly that is firmly grounded in the reality of life on any Caribbean island, whether it's Bequia or Cayman Islands or Barbados. And the fictional nature of this gem of literary work is what sets it apart from countless other books that attempt to capture the spirit and history of the Caribbean region. If you have ever travelled to any islands in the Caribbean, or even if you have never visited the Caribbean but are considering a vacation there at some time, then I strongly recommend you pick up a copy of *Island in the Clouds*--in addition to the traditional "tourist guide/practical info" books. And, should you be embarking on your Caribbean adventure soon, I suggest you bring along a copy of this novel (either in a print edition or as an eBook) to read during your flight or while you relax on a white sandy beach. *Island in the Clouds* will make your Caribbean experience even more special.

There is good reason why the author, Canadian-born Susan M. Toy, has succeeded in creating this rare literary gem: Ms. Toy has spent the past seventeen years living in the Bequia house she built with her partner. Their hillside home overlooks one of the most scenic and serene bays in the Caribbean. Over the years, the verandah of her island hideaway has offered more than a perfect view of this tiny seven-square-mile island. The verandah has also served as her "office" where Ms. Toy was inspired by the island's sounds, sights, and the gentle Caribbean breeze to create this treasure, *Island in the Clouds*.

By [Larks](#) - [See all my reviews](#)

Amazon Verified Purchase([What's this?](#))

This review is from: Island in the Clouds (Kindle Edition)

This book is pure delight, and I'm seriously trying to figure out why. Is it the hero's voice, which dominates the narrative, because he's so human, so knowable, so blessedly NOT full of himself? Or am I swayed by a story bathed in tropical sunshine which treats human foibles like heavenly dispensations? I'm still pondering, because this book stole into my heart and brushed it with joy.

By sheer coincidence, I share some of Ms. Toy's moorings. I'm from Calgary and have spent years dividing my time between that city and the Caribbean. Therefore, while I read her book, I kept asking myself - would someone who didn't share this personal history enjoy her book as much? I eventually answered that question with a resounding "Yes!" Because this book is a treasure.

But it's a treasure with edge. I gasped from time to time at her audacity as I asked myself, "Did she really just write that? OMG! Whatever happened to political correctness?" It's that courage and honesty which elevate this seemingly little murder mystery to the level of a standard bearer. Susan Toy's got something to say, and By Golly! she comes out and says it.

I await her next novel as I would the long-overdue visit of a very good friend.

By [Michael Fay](#) (Minden, On Canada) - [See all my reviews](#)
(REAL NAME)

This review is from: Island in the Clouds (Kindle Edition)

Island in the Clouds is a wondrous mystery, set on the lush island of Bequia in the Caribbean. A Canadian with a secret past becomes both suspect and investigator for two murders on the island. Along the way, he shares sharp insights into the history and life of this gleaming gem of a place. Susan M. Toy is a keen stylist, who never fails to drive her story forward with a sure hand. As in all well-crafted mysteries, the solution to the crimes is both thoroughly surprising and perfectly logical. Ms. Toy shows us the sights and lets us hear the rhythms of the islanders and, cunningly, lets us peek into the lives of a sexy set of expats.

By [Glenna Jenkins](#) (Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, Canada) - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: Island in the Clouds (Kindle Edition)

Island in the Clouds by Susan Toy - A Review

Geoffrey shows up for work, on Monday morning, late, dishevelled, and with a hangover to find the body of a naked woman floating face down in a swimming pool. First, he has a drink. Then he calls `Doc.' And only after explaining the situation to his trusted friend, does Geoffrey call the

local police. This makes us wonder at his logic. But it takes repeated attempts to get an answer at the police station, and when they finally do arrive, they contaminate the scene, fail to take photographs and implicate our protagonist in the murder. Even his pothead Rastafarian gardeners warn him about the local authorities: "Dey no knows. Dey no helps ... you no trust nobody." Uh, oh, Geoffrey, what have you happened upon?

Geoffrey soon discovers that the dead woman is Sara Wilson, the ex-wife of the owner of the estate he is looking after. When Mr. Wilson tells Geoffrey that he doesn't trust the Bequia police to do a competent job and asks him to find the killer, we know that Geoffrey's ideal life on the island of Bequia, "where nothing ever happens," is about to change in a drastic and potentially dangerous way.

Part murder mystery, part travelogue, Susan Toy's "Island in the Clouds" introduces us to an eclectic cast of characters and takes us from luxury vacation homes and up-scale hotels to seedy bars and a high-seas chase as her protagonist searches for Sara's killer. My immediate impression of this novel is that Ms. Toy knows this island well--its history, its people, its lore--and she blends its beauty and diversity into a ripping good tale. "Island in the Clouds" is an excellent representation of its genre and Susan Toy is a wonderful new talent. I can't wait to read her next installment, but for now I highly recommend this read.

By [CM](#) - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: *Island in the Clouds* (Kindle Edition)

Island in the Clouds is a wonderful murder mystery, set on Caribbean island of Bequia.

After finding a dead body in a pool, property manager Geoff finds himself the main suspect, and also the lead amateur investigator on the case. Geoff, like many of the lively characters in this story, has a hidden past that threatens to catch up with him at some point.

This story moves at a fast clip, and (like all good mysteries) doesn't reveal its secrets a moment too soon. Highly recommended for a weekend read!

By [Hermine Robinson](#) - [See all my reviews](#)

Amazon Verified Purchase([What's this?](#))

This review is from: *Island in the Clouds* (Kindle Edition)

I chose this book in the interest of supporting local authors. It was well written with great descriptive details and an underlying current of social responsibility for the setting of the story (the Caribbean island of Bequia). The mystery starts off with a bang (or maybe it was a splash) and carries well through to the conclusion.

By [Peter Learn "edvic"](#) (Columbia) - [See all my reviews](#)
(REAL NAME)

This review is from: Island in the Clouds (Kindle Edition)

Great read. Interesting characters and beautiful descriptions. Susan's love of the islands shines clearly throughout the book. A must read!

By [G. Dixon "writer"](#) (Canada) - [See all my reviews](#)
(REAL NAME)

This review is from: Island in the Clouds (Kindle Edition)

You find a dead body floating in your pool. All of a sudden, your little island is not such a Caribbean dream anymore. Island in the Clouds takes the readers through a great story - the plot tumbles forward and each predicament gets worse and worse for the protagonist. Through it all, you also discover lovely Bequia Island with all its old world Caribbean charm and dark hidden secrets. The locals and the ex-pat community and the sadly inept police force all come alive here. And the author should know. She does actually live - at least some of the time - on this remote island in the clouds.

By [Lyle Nicholson](#) - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: Island in the Clouds (Kindle Edition)

This is a lovely summer (or winter) mystery. The author sets up a great background of Bequia, a place I have only been to once from a sail boat. Great images, nice pace, and the bodies keep dropping. Get your favourite beverage, and kick off your flip fops, as this is a classic whodunit set on a Caribbean Island. You can almost taste the rum!

By [Felicity Harley](#) - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: Island in the Clouds (Kindle Edition)

"As part of a family that has had over a hundred year relationship with the island of Bequia, I really enjoyed reading Island in the Clouds. I loved all the references to the familiar places there, such as Nandos and the Frangi and the descriptions of downtown Port Elizabeth. I also loved the author's ability to capture the particular feel and topography of the island. The book also accurately shows the ex-pat community in all its informality. I have found that Bequia is a community, unlike most others, which does not use socio-economic or racial divisions to keep its various inhabitants apart. One is free, as my family frequently does, to move from the most magnificent villa owned by ex-pats, to a cottage in South Side to visit Grannie Trimmingham, as one wishes. As Susan Toy has so aptly stated, this is the Caribbean thirty years ago before it became over-developed and touristified. I found myself laughing out loud at the descriptions of the local police force. I also found myself deeply saddened by her accurate description of the drug trade and how it has adversely influenced lives there. Once Bill Clinton killed the banana trade without assisting the locals with viable economic alternatives, then he and the US opened

the door to all of this. I highly recommend *Island in the Clouds* and will be suggesting it as a book anyone, even those who aren't familiar with Bequia, can enjoy. It is a fun, ironic and hugely entertaining look at a small Caribbean island with all of its beauty and all of its warts left intact".

Posted to Amazon – Print Edition

4.0 out of 5 stars Racy, pacy fun, Sep 16 2012

By [Bernard McGonigle](#) - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: *Island in the Clouds: a Bequia Perspectives novel (Paperback)*

After a long week at work, I retreated to bed in my pyjamas and devoured this book in an evening. A racy, pacy read that draws the reader in and leaves them wanting to know more about the characters and Bequia alike. I really enjoyed finding out about this island society I knew nothing about before - I wonder if Susan Toy's next venture might be some non-fictional travel writing, since she definitely has a talent for conveying a vivid sense of people and place.

4.0 out of 5 stars fun, sun, rum, September 5, 2012

By [Darcie Friesen Hossack "mennogirl"](#) (Canada) - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: *Island in the Clouds: a Bequia Perspectives novel (Paperback)*

"Wilson had mentioned he'd be interested in buying [a copper] for his garden, if Al could find something in good condition..."

A few pages later, a pair of expats are off on an adventure, with a rum-soaked driver, in a truck riddled with mechanical gremlins, up the leeward coast of St. Vincent.

There are banana plantations along the way. Coconuts and tropical fruits and vegetables. Rain forest. Mountainous terrain. Treacherous coastline roads perched above the postcard scenery featured in "*Island In the Clouds*," a murder mystery set on the Caribbean island of Bequia.

4.0 out of 5 stars Lovely travel read, September 5, 2012

By [HumberREADERGRRL](#) - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: *Island in the Clouds: a Bequia Perspectives novel (Paperback)*

If you are looking for a fun vacation book, look no further, this is such an easy breezy murder story that is sure to entertain. Even if you aren't headed for a beach vacation, the descriptions of Bequia will make you feel as though you are there, but glad you aren't just in case you end up dead in a swimming pool like some unlucky characters in the novel! I highly recommend this book for anyone who loves a good mystery.

Posted to Goodreads:

[Elle Maxwell](#)'s review

Aug 18, 13

5 of 5 stars

Read from July 09 to 20, 2013

I loved this book. It was highly entertaining, yet at the same time shockingly honest about life in "paradise." That really appealed to me because I spend a lot of time in the Caribbean and understand the misconceptions most people hold about Caribbean culture. Written in the first person, the author was able to convey the main character's attitudes and feelings without inconveniencing the reader. The writing was clear and effective and the characters were eminently lovable. I highly recommend it.

[Feb 27, 2012](#)

[Glenna Jenkins](#) rated it ★★★★★

Island in the Clouds by Susan Toy - Review

Geoffrey shows up for work, on Monday morning, late, dishevelled, and with a hangover to find the body of a naked woman floating face down in a swimming pool. First, he has a drink. Then he calls 'Doc.' And only after explaining the situation to his trusted friend, does Geoffrey call the local police. This makes us wonder at his logic. But it takes repeated attempts to get an answer at the police station, and when they finally do arrive, they contaminat...[more](#)

[Sep 16, 2012](#)

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After a long week at work, I retreated to bed in my pyjamas and devoured this book in an evening. A racy, pacy read that draws the reader in and leaves them wanting to know more about the characters and Bequia alike. I really enjoyed finding out about this island society I knew nothing about before - I wonder if Susan Toy's next venture might be some non-fictional travel writing, since she definitely has a talent for conveying a vivid sense of people and place.

[Feb 07, 2012](#)

[Dejo](#) added it · [review of another edition](#) Recommended to Dejo by: the author Susan M Toy

I met the author and she lived on the island of Bequia. Although the novel is in the form of a crime story, you could also read it as a travellog, due to the description of local events.

The novel is now available as an E-book, and will appear in paperback in the summer of 2012.

[Feb 12, 2013](#)

[Cheryl Schenk](#) rated it 3 of 5 stars

Murder, mystery and a Caribbean island. All elements for a good read. I enjoyed this story and Susan's portrayal of island life and the people that live their. I always think it brave when a writer takes on an opposite gender for their protagonist. Susan has done a fine job with this novel.

Posted to Amazon.com (print edition):

By [Darcie Friesen Hossack "mennogirl"](#) (Canada) - [See all my reviews](#)

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Posted to Apple iTunes.ca:

First rate!

by VCVet

I read *Island in the Clouds* between James Patterson's *Private Games*, and one of Clive Cussler's ubiquitous thrillers, and Susan Toy's first book stands up to the competition.

The Island in question is Bequia, part of St. Vincent & the Grenadines, and a short flight from Barbados. The book features a compelling plot line, some great characters (ex-pats living in a Caribbean paradise, and a cast of local islanders with names like Chopper, Big Fly, Pig-Face, Boney, and Jolly Boy), a fantastic setting, and a terrific English-Bequia dictionary scattered through the book that has fully prepared me to converse fluently in the island dialect whenever I finally get to Bequia. Best of all, *Island* is not a cookie-cutter mystery that reminds you of dozens

of other summer reads.

I highly recommend this book. And some good news for new Susan Toy fans is embedded in clues hidden on the book's print cover. A number 1 on the spine, and the sub-title, "A Bequia Perspectives novel" suggests more Bequia –based mysteries are in the works. I can hardly wait!

From Readers' emails and blog comments:

I read "Island in the Clouds" over my July 4th holiday and enjoyed every moment. I was so reminded of being in Bequia. I can't wait to return someday. I hope another novel set in Bequia is in the works....the island is almost like a character in the book and makes for such enjoyable reading. Thanks, Susan, for sending the book.

~ Susan in Pennsylvania

After having spent some time in the Grenadines, and, especially on the island of Bequia, I picked up this book, sat down, and didn't get up again till I finished it. For few/several hours (or about 300 pages later 😊), I felt like I have just re-visited Bequia. Ms. Toy accomplished a difficult task for any writer: she succeeding in "transporting" me back to Bequia/SVG...the sounds, the smells, the harbor, the greatest little bookstore that I frequented on Bequia....Truly fantastic feat. I felt like jumping back on the plane (& boat 😊) for this little, special island. You'll love the book if you DID or DIDN'T visit Bequia/Grenadines. And, to be clear: Bequia is not your typical Caribbean island with sandy beaches, etc. It's a only about 7 sq miles, and 4-5,000 people. And only few beaches 😊.

~ bfy123 in Florida

.....I was in Bequia earlier this month (April). I'd been once before when on an Windjammer Barefoot Cruise many years ago; 'needed' to return :~}. I remembered the book store on Bequia as I'd bought a replica of an antique map of the Caribbean and still have it hanging in my study. Yup, I'm a Caribbean groupie! I bought Island In the Clouds and loved it! I paged right through! Thank you for a good read. I'd be most interested in reading any other book (s) you've published.

~ Margee in Seattle

I had never heard of Bequia before I read the book and it sounds absolutely beautiful there. I would like to go there some day and I feel I would have no trouble finding my way around with the images I have created in my head. Can't wait to see if there is a sequel!

~ Karen in Alberta

Susan, thanks for the fun read. Despite the dead bodies, I'm terribly drawn to this fantastic island. I've passed your book along to a bookclub here in Lacombe. They'll love it!

~ Fran in Alberta

I've read "Clouds", hmmm, about 8 times (maybe more, but I'm not admitting it or you'll think it's my only book). I call it "my happy place" book because I'm instantly transported to Bequia and the homes of friends I have there (although they aren't characters in the book, there are a few

similarities). When the snow flies in Toronto, I hunker down and read my “Clouds”. Thank you, Susan Toy, for bringing the sunshine into my life through your books and your spirit.
~ Suse in Ontario

I won your book in a contest that my friend Gwen had on her blog. Loved it!! She’s from Dominica and I’m from Fredericton, New Brunswick so it seems like your book has certainly become an international sensation!
~ Judy in New Brunswick

Both of us have read the book and it was left on a river cruise boat in France so perhaps someone there has enjoyed it as well!
~ Penny & Chris in Alberta

If you have ever been to Bequia, you should read this book – you will happily revisit this wonderful place and smile as you are reminded of the diverse characters that make it so special. If you have never been to Bequia, you should read this book – it will make you want to cancel your trip to Mexico, head straight for this sweet island, with *Island in the Clouds* packed to read again on Princess Margaret Beach. Sue weaves a wonderful tale about local culture and life on this unspoiled Caribbean island.
~ Patricia in Newfoundland/Bequia

I really enjoyed *Clouds* – I’ve read it twice! I do not hesitate to recommend it to others. I’ll be re-reading it again soon so that I can write a decent review of it for the media.
~ Gwen in Dominica

Susan, among other charms, I like the fact that “*Island in the Clouds*” introduced me to Bequia, and a part of the Caribbean I didn’t know existed. Thanks!
~ Alice in Alberta

Susan M. Toy, if she ever thinks inside the box, never closes the flaps. Back when we first met through the Humber School for Writers online WebCT, we very quickly connected over food memories, recipes, *Firefly* episodes, school and writing. Oh, and a mutual sense of isolation in two very different places: She on the island of Bequia in the Caribbean, and at my desk in Kelowna, British Columbia.

Since Humber, Susan moved to Calgary and for a time resumed a former life as a book rep. Until she went rogue, that is, and began promoting books and authors under her own banner, Alberta Books Canada.

“When *Mennonites Don’t Dance* gets published, I’ll do everything I can to help it get off the ground,” Susan told me. And oh! Susan has been such a friend, to me and my book. Not only helping me get my kite the air, but taking turns running to keep that kite flying between gusts of wind. (Susan has even chauffeured me on more than one occasion, making sure I arrived at no fewer than five speaking engagements that she arranged for me in Alberta.)

Having just e-published her first novel, *Island in the Clouds* (print edition to follow), I'm so happy to celebrate with her. I'm no chauffeur, and spend most of my time with my box flaps down, but I can cheer her on and so that's what I'm doing.

I'm just glad she, also, has Susan M. Toy on her side, with the clever (enviously so) idea to let her readers join her in marking up the map with some of the places *Island in the Clouds* has already been.

~ Darcie in British Columbia

Reviews

[Book Gossips](#)

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[Write Out of My Mind](#)

[Gwen Whitford](#)

[Carrie Mumford](#)

[Cottage Country Kisses the Caribbean](#) in *The Minden Times*

[Queen's University Alumni Review](#) online issue – review by Jeff Chan