FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

The Mt. Pele Redemption
Stephen Hawley Martin
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Martin, a veteran writer, takes us on an amazing journey placed in the 1950s. Claire Dumont, a feisty young journalist, seeks to unlock the whys and wherefores of her father's sudden debilitation and death-drawing coma that is somehow connected to the fast-approaching date of May 8th. Claire discovers that this date is also the 50-year anniversary of the eruption of Mt. Pelée on the Caribbean island of Martinique, her father's earliest home.

Claire wants to investigate her father's fate, not to mention get a respite from the women's page beat. So she fast-talks her editor into sending her to Martinique to do a story on the volcano's eruption, 50 years past. Claire's assignment allows her to leave her archaeologist boyfriend, Jeff McDannon, in the proverbial dust postponing his ultimatum for marriage. Arriving on Martinique, the mystery rapidly deepens raising more questions than answers as Claire's inquiries unleash life-threatening dangers. Not to be put off, Jeff joins Claire's adventure and together they bring the pieces together as further intrigues unfurl around their efforts.

Claire's father had provided only a few clues: the names Angelique and Jean-Luc. Who were they? How did they fit into what happened on Martinique in 1902 to turn a healthy, fit 68-year-old man into a hollow-eyed, frail shadow of himself within days? Was there a voodoo curse on him? Who were the "black shirts" so intent on killing Claire and now Jeff? The two Americans find out that the island inhabitants—of French and African origin—have exotic beliefs and practices. They also learn that a "quimboiseur" can help people guard against possession of the spirits of the dead by leading ceremonies that pay homage where due. Crossing over to the other side, one can get advice from the ancestors. Meeting the quimboiseur is exactly what Claire has in mind and meets him she does, leading to one of the more fascinating sections of this fast-paced page-turner. Past and present life dramas, ancestral connections, agreements and connections intermingle with time and place to make The Mt. Pelée Redemption a fine reading pastime, redefining "exploring our roots."

Sophia Tarila