


Once Upon a Time in Rio: A Novel

By Francisco Azevedo

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Once Upon a Time in Rio: A Novel By Francisco Azevedo

From well-known Brazilian playwright Francisco Azevedo, a heartwarming debut novel about three generations of a family whose kitchen contains the secret ingredient for happiness—sure to appeal to fans of *Like Water for Chocolate*.

Once upon a time there was some rice. Rice planted in the earth, fallen from the sky, and gathered up from the stone. Rice that doesn't spoil, it came from far away, by ship with three exuberant young people filled with dreams...

Once Upon a Time in Rio is a spellbinding family saga beginning with José Custódio and Maria Romana and their search for a prosperous future. As newlyweds, José and Maria immigrated to Brazil at the beginning of the twentieth century, accompanied by a special gift. During the dinner preparations to celebrate their centenary wedding anniversary, their eldest son Antonio, already a grandfather, looks back at the lives of his parents, his aunt, his brothers, their children and grandchildren, as well as his own.

Antonio knows that family is a difficult dish to get right and that happiness must be cooked up day by day; however, what separates his family from any other is its possession of a secret ingredient for happiness: the sack of magical rice given to his parents on their wedding day. With the help of the rice, whose magic is as old as fire and time, Antonio's family has been guided through the most trying of life's tribulations.

Lyricaly written, *Once Upon a Time in Rio* bares the fragile yet strong nature of the human spirit and with great insight captures the solace provided by loved ones in times of need. Already an international bestseller, this is a beautifully told tale about the wisdom of past generations and the inextricable ties of family.

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Editorial Review

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Family is a difficult dish to get right is a recurring phrase in this first novel by a noted Brazilian playwright. As he prepares a meal, the narrator, 88-year-old Antonio Custódio, recalls 100 years of family history, beginning with the marriage of his father, José, and his mother, Maria Romana, in Portugal. José's sister, Palma, presents them with an unusual wedding present, the rice that was thrown following the ceremony. This rice becomes part of the family's story as José, Maria Romana, and Palma immigrate to Brazil, where Antonio and his three siblings are born. Antonio, in turn, is presented with the rice upon his marriage to Isabel. Antonio's own two children are born in Rio, where he has opened a restaurant. As the family grows, the rice continues to symbolize love and fertility, although love is often tested, and ideas about what constitutes fertility and even family evolve. This novel evokes the flavors of Brazil and will be most appreciated by readers interested in South American fiction. --Mary Ellen Quinn

Review

"This novel evokes the flavors of Brazil and will be...appreciated by readers interested in South American fiction." (Booklist, Print review)

About the Author

Francisco Azevedo is a world-renowned scriptwriter, playwright, and poet and was a finalist for the Sao Paulo Prize in literature. *Once Upon a Time in Rio* is Azevedo's debut novel. He lives in Brazil.

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