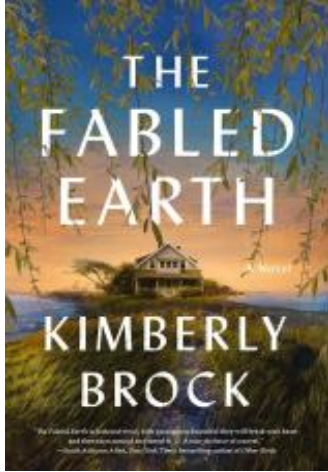


# The Fabled Earth

by Kimberly Brock

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## About the Book

**Sometimes the truth is found in a folktale.**

*1932.* Cumberland Island off the coast of Southern Georgia is a strange place to encounter the opulence of the Gilded Age, but the last vestiges of the famed philanthropic Carnegie family still take up brief seasonal residence in their grand mansions there. This year's party at Plum Orchard is a lively group: young men from some of America's finest families who come to experience the area's hunting beside a local guide, a beautiful debutante expecting to be engaged by the week's end, and a promising female artist who believes she has meaningful ties to her wealthy hosts. But when temptations arise and passions flare, an evening of revelry and storytelling goes horribly awry. Lives are both lost and ruined.

*1959.* Reclusive painter Cleo Woodbine has lived alone for decades on Kingdom Come, a tiny strip of land once occupied by the servants for the great houses on nearby Cumberland. When she is visited by the man who saved her life nearly 30 years earlier, a tempest is unleashed as the stories of the past gather and begin to regain their strength. Frances Flood is a folklorist who has come to Cumberland Island seeking the source of a legend --- and also information about her mother, who was among the guests at a long-ago hunting party. Audrey Howell, briefly a newlywed and now newly widowed, is running a local inn. When she develops an eerie double exposure photograph, some believe she's raised a ghost --- someone who hasn't been seen since that fateful night in 1932.

Southern mythology and personal reckoning collide in this sweeping story inspired by the little-known history of Cumberland Island when a once-in-a-century storm threatens the natural landscape. Faced with a changing world, two timelines and the perspectives of three women intersect where a folktale meets the truth to reveal what Cumberland Island has hidden all along.

## Discussion Guide

1. Great emphasis is placed on stories, myths and legends. What is your favorite myth or legend? Is it one you read or one that was passed down to you by family? Why do you like it?
2. What did you think of Cleo using the morning glory concoction on Ellis and Joanna? Do you think she deserved her exile to Woodbine Cottage? Why or why not?
3. How would you have handled living alone for decades in Woodbine Cottage like Cleo did?
4. The book touches on many of the issues facing the United States, and particularly the South, in the first half of the 20th century --- racism, gender inequality, classism. Did any particular narrative on one of these issues affect you more than the others? Did you notice any parallels between the events in the book and events in the world today?
5. What did you think of Dr. Johnston, who did not have much dialogue in the story, yet whose presence and authority weighed heavily throughout the book?
6. Who was your favorite character, or which character had the most affecting story arc and growth, in your opinion? Why?
7. Frances believed that "stories could change people." Do you agree or disagree with her? Why?
8. Do you think Will Tremmons will ever come back to Revery and to Audrey? Why or why not?
9. What do you envision for the future of the characters in this book?

## Author Bio

Kimberly Brock is the bestselling author of *THE LOST BOOK OF ELEANOR DARE*, which was shortlisted for the prestigious Townsend Prize for Fiction, and *THE RIVER WITCH*, recipient of the Georgia Author of the Year Award. She is the founder of Tinderbox Writers Workshop and has served as a guest lecturer for many regional and national writing workshops including at the Pat Conroy Literary Center. A native of North Georgia, she now lives near Atlanta. Her latest novel is *THE FABLED EARTH*.

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