

**S**TELLA MARTIN MEETS SEAN ANDERSSON, A LOCAL PASTOR, WHEN SHE'S JUST 21. HE BECOMES HER SPIRITUAL GUIDE... UNTIL HE ARRANGES A DISTURBING BAPTISM IN A MOUNTAIN STREAM.

AFTER A STEADY PURSUIT BY SEAN FOR OVER A YEAR, HOWEVER, STELLA AGREES TO MARRY HIM. HE HAS ARDENTLY PROMISED TO ENCOURAGE ALL HER CAREER DREAMS. SHE ASSUMES THE ROLE, WITH RESERVATIONS, OF CLERGY WIFE. BUT WHEN SHE DECIDES TO GO TO GRADUATE SCHOOL TO BECOME AN ACADEMIC, SEAN RESENTS HER ESCAPING HIS CONTROL.

AS STELLA PROGRESSES UP THE PROFESSORIAL LADDER, SHE ASPIRES TO MENTOR OTHERS. ALTHOUGH SHE HAS DIVORCED HIM AND MAINTAINED SPORADIC CONTACT ONLY WITH HIS EX-WIFE AND TWO CHILDREN, STELLA DOESN'T REALIZE HOW MUCH SHE HAS BECOME LIKE SEAN.

THROUGH A SERIES OF INCREASINGLY RESPONSIBLE UNIVERSITY POSTS AND SHORT-LIVED AFFILIATIONS WITH LOCAL CHURCHES, SHE SEES HERSELF AS A KIND PERSON WHO SIMPLY WANTS TO HELP THOSE AROUND HER "ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE." BUT THAT IMPULSE TO MENTOR—AND TO END RELATIONSHIPS IN A BURST OF ANGER WHENEVER INSIGHTS INTO HER PERSONALITY ARE OFFERED—LEAVES HER ISOLATED... A STATE SHE RECOGNIZES BUT DOESN'T UNDERSTAND.

WHO'S LEFT IN HER WORLD?



**T**HIS IS CHRISTINE LEIGH-TAYLOR'S SECOND NOVEL. SHE IS A RETIRED EPISCOPAL PRIEST, BUT SHE POINTS OUT THAT THIS STORY COULD HAPPEN IN MANY RELIGIOUS FAITHS, OR NOT. SHE NOW LIVES ON AN OAK-STUDDED HILL WEST OF PLACERVILLE, CALIFORNIA WITH HER HUSBAND, NOVELIST DAVID OLLIER WEBER, HER STANDARD POODLE, SHADOW, HER TABBY CAT, GEORGIE, AND A SUPPORTING CAST OF DEER, COYOTES, FOXES, MOUNTAIN LIONS, BEARS AND THE NEIGHBORING RANCHER'S CATTLE.

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