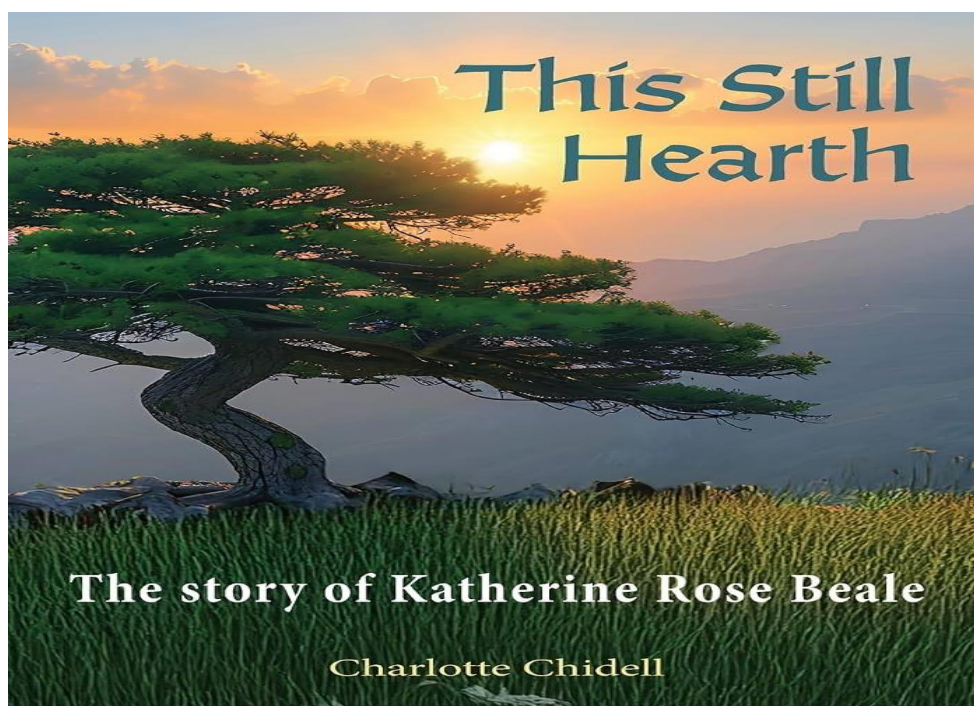


Book of the Week



This Still Hearth – The Story of Katherine Rose Beale by Charlotte Chidell

Katherine Young, born into a family of master mariners, leaves her East London home in Regency England to travel to distant St Helena. She meets Anthony Beale at a Plantation House ball. They marry in June 1814.

For the Europeans, the South Atlantic Island is a veritable Garden of Eden, remote from world affairs and run with soldier-like precision under the direction of the Honourable East India Company. The men are employed in a civilian or military capacity and receive generous rewards. The women spend time in the congenial company of friends and family.

All is not well in Paradise. Introduced goats and wild boar run wild and have destroyed large swathes of native vegetation. Ineffective farming practices ensure the islanders are dependent on imported foodstuffs. Underemployed drunken soldiers occupy scarce hospital beds. Hard labour is undertaken by Chinese imported workers or slaves whose lives are wretched. The catalyst, when it comes, is unexpected. Individual and organisational responses create an irrevocable ripple effect. The Beale's do not remain unscathed.

Employing an epistolary narrative style and drawing inspiration from Katherine's own writing, *This Still Hearth* uses metaphors and poetry to recreate Katherine Beale's unique story in a biographical novel that's sure to keep you engaged until the very last page.

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