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FORT STARLIGHT

A DEBUT NOVEL BY CLAUDIA ZULUAGA
in paperback original and ebook from Engine Books



The land is part of Starlight County, but the place itself has no name yet. The map on the plans simply says wetlands, and it feels primordial, a place where anything dripping and new could step up out of the muck and begin its existence. In the afternoons, when the rain comes, small tornadoes move across these fields, two and three together. The earth smells both fresh and rotten. Families of dull-colored catfish have, in their isolation, grown bigger and blinder than any others in the state.

There will be a town here. The plans are confidential. Aside from a supermarket built off the turnpike, it looks like nothing, but a deal between the state of Florida and four different developers is in the works. Nobody else knows what will become of these seven square miles of muddy rivers, scrubby trees, swamp, the forest hammock. Or how soon it will begin.

When she finds herself broke and stranded in a half-finished tract house in a Florida swamp, Ida Overdorff is left to abandon her plans and fend for herself. She discovers a strange community around her—a millionaire living in a treehouse, two feral child thieves—and clings to her dream of returning to New York. Meanwhile, as storms both meteorological and emotional threaten Ida's future, she comes to understand that nobody's luck—even hers—is all bad.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CLAUDIA ZULUAGA was born in White Plains, NY, grew up both there and Port St. Lucie, Florida, and now lives in New Jersey. She earned an MFA from Sarah Lawrence College. Her fiction has appeared in *Narrative Magazine*, *JMWW*, and *Lost Magazine*, and was included in Dzanc Books' *Best of the Web* series. She has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and *Best American Short Stories*. Claudia is a full time Lecturer in the English department at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City.

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