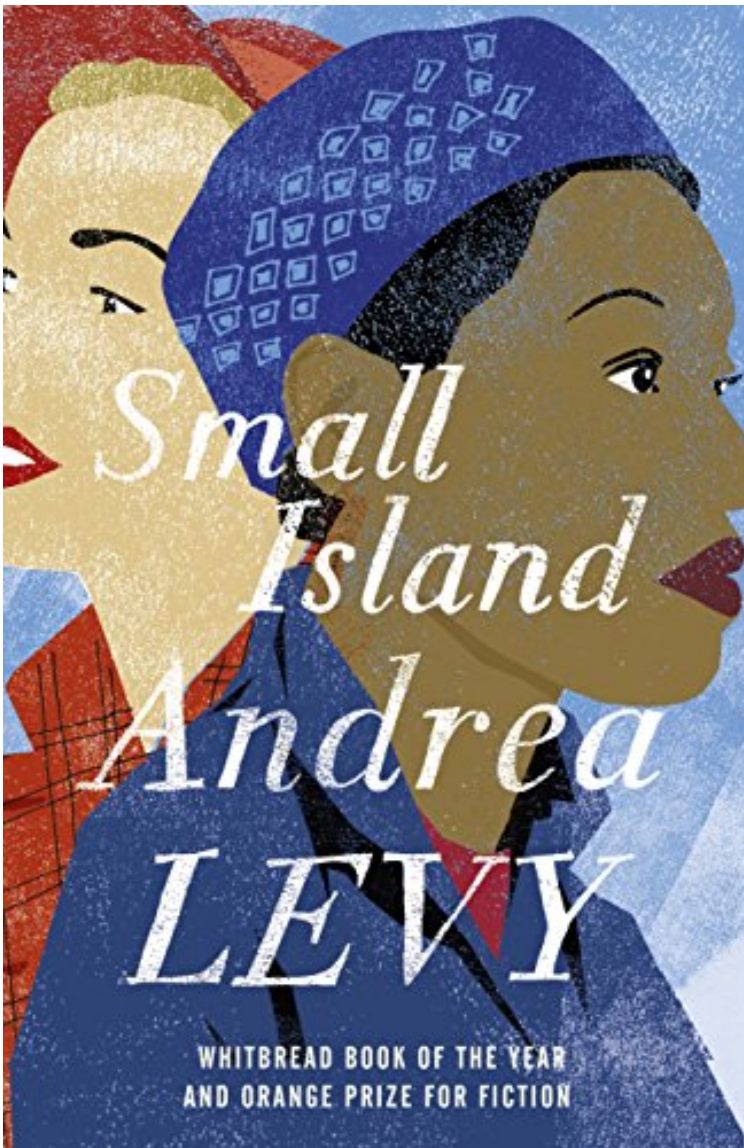


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Small Island (English Edition)



Par Andrea Levy
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurSmall Island by bestselling author Andrea Levy won the Orange Prize for Fiction, as well as many other awards, including the Commonwealth Writers' Prize and the Whitbread. Now a major BBC drama starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Naomie Harris, its enduring appeal will captivate fans of Maya Angelou and Zadie Smith. 'A great read... honest, skilful, thoughtful and important' - GuardianIt is 1948, and England is recovering from a war. But at 21 Nevern Street, London, the conflict has only just begun. Queenie Bligh's neighbours do not approve when she agrees to take in Jamaican lodgers, but Queenie doesn't know when her husband will return, or if he will come back at all. What else can she do? Gilbert Joseph was one of the several thousand Jamaican men who joined the RAF to fight against Hitler. Returning

to England as a civilian he finds himself treated very differently. It's desperation that makes him remember a wartime friendship with Queenie and knock at her door. Gilbert's wife Hortense, too, had longed to leave Jamaica and start a better life in England. But when she joins him she is shocked to find London shabby, decrepit, and far from the golden city of her dreams. Even Gilbert is not the man she thought he was....com

Andrea Levy's award-winning novel, *Small Island*, deftly brings two bleak families into crisp focus. First a Jamaican family, including the well-intentioned Gilbert, who can never manage to say or do exactly the right thing; Romeo Michael, who leaves a wake of women in his path; and finally, Hortense, whose primness belies her huge ambition to become English in every way possible. The other unhappy family is English, starting with Queenie, who escapes the drudgery of being a butcher's daughter only to marry a dull banker. As the chapters reverse chronology and the two groups collide and finally mesh, the book unfolds through time like a photo album, and Levy captures the struggle between class, race, and sex with a humor and tenderness that is both authentic and bracing. The book is cinematic in the best way-- lighting up London's bombed-out houses and wartime existence with clarity and verve while never losing her character's voice or story. --Meg Halverson

From Publishers Weekly Starred . After winning the Orange Prize and the Whitbread Book of the Year Award, Levy's captivating fourth novel sweeps into a U.S. edition with much-deserved literary fanfare. Set mainly in the British Empire of 1948, this story of emigration, loss and love follows four characters two Jamaicans and two Britons as they struggle to find peace in postwar England. After serving in the RAF, Jamaican Gilbert Joseph finds life in his native country has become too small for him. But in order to return to England, he must marry Hortense Roberts she's got enough money for his passage and then set up house for them in London. The pair move in with Queenie Bligh, whose husband, Bernard, hasn't returned from his wartime post in India. But when does Bernard turn up, he is not pleased to find black immigrants living in his house. This deceptively simple plot poises the characters over a yawning abyss of colonialism, racism, war and the everyday pain that people inflict on one another. Levy allows readers to see events from each of the four character's' point of view, lightly demonstrating both the subjectivity of truth and the rationalizing lies that people tell themselves when they are doing wrong. None of the characters is perfectly sympathetic, but all are achingly human. When Gilbert realizes that his pride in the British Empire is not reciprocated, he wonders, "How come England did not know me?" His question haunts the story as it moves back and forth in time and space to show how the people of two small islands become inextricably bound together. Agent, David Grossman. (Apr.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.