

Exploring the depths of *Small Island*: A masterpiece of modern theater

Andrea Levy's *Small Island*, adapted for the stage by Helen Edmundson, is a powerful and moving play that delves into the complexities of race, class, and identity in post-World War II Britain.

The play follows the story of Hortense Roberts, a Jamaican woman who travels to England in 1948 to join her husband, Gilbert. However, she soon finds herself facing racism and discrimination from the white community.



Small Island (NHB Modern Plays) by Andrea Levy

★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 661 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Print length : 132 pages



Small Island is a beautifully written and deeply affecting play that explores the human cost of racism and the resilience of the human spirit.

Characters

The play features a diverse cast of characters, each of whom brings their own unique perspective to the story.

- **Hortense Roberts:** A Jamaican woman who travels to England to join her husband, Gilbert.
- **Gilbert Roberts:** A Jamaican man who fought in the British army during World War II.
- **Queen:** A Jamaican woman who works as a domestic servant in England.
- **Bernard:** A white Englishman who is Hortense's neighbor.
- **Ruth:** Bernard's wife.
- **Mr. Todd:** A white Englishman who is Hortense's employer.

Themes

Small Island explores a number of important themes, including:

- **Race and racism:** The play examines the racism that Hortense and other black immigrants face in post-World War II Britain.
- **Class and inequality:** The play also explores the class differences between the white and black characters.
- **Identity:** The play explores the different ways that the characters define their identity.
- **Resilience:** The play shows the resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity.

Critical reception

Small Island has received critical acclaim since its premiere in 2019. The play has been praised for its powerful storytelling, its nuanced characters,

and its timely themes.

In a review for *The Guardian*, Michael Billington wrote: "Helen Edmundson's adaptation of Andrea Levy's novel is a triumph. It is a beautifully written and deeply affecting play that explores the human cost of racism and the resilience of the human spirit."

In a review for *The New York Times*, Ben Brantley wrote: "Small Island is a powerful and moving play that deserves to be seen by as many people as possible. It is a reminder of the horrors of racism and the importance of fighting for equality."

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- Ben Brantley, The New York Times”



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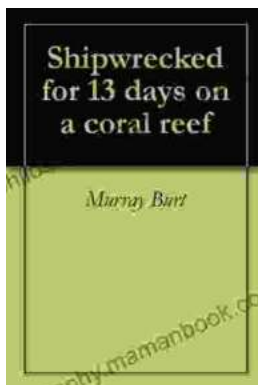
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