



The White Family

Maggie Gee

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Alfred White, a London park keeper, rules his home with a mixture of ferocity and tenderness that has estranged his three children. But family ties are strong, and when Alfred collapses on duty one day, they rush to be with him. His daughter's partner, Elroy, a black social worker, is brought face to face with Alfred's younger son Dirk, who hates and fears all black people, and the scene is set for violence, forcing Alfred's wife May to choose between justice and kinship. This groundbreaking novel takes on the taboo subject of racial hatred as it looks at love, hatred, sex, comedy and death in an ordinary British family. The White Family points to new directions in British writing. Full of power and passion, as well as some timely warnings, this is one of the year's finest novels, and it deserves the widest possible readership.' Literary Review Intensely touching, full of ironies, situational and verbal, [and] brilliantly connected with contemporary society.' Financial Times The White Family tackles an unspeakable subject with quiet courage. Beautifully written, it tells the complex story of racism from the point of view of the perpetrators. The result is an astonishing examination of the changes, complexities and difficulties at the heart of a multi-ethnic suburban community.' The Big Issue A transcendent work, splitting open a family to bare the rough edges of prejudice, self-righteousness and petulant self-justification that we all recognise. The words of James Baldwin resonate throughout: "Books taught me that the things that tormented me the most were the things that connected me to everyone who was alive and who had ever been alive.' Daily Telegraph Gee's book is bold because of her willingness to write about the living, shifting present. An unashamedly contemporary novel – a millennium novel, if you like – that embraces the ideological and emotional chaos of our times. The Independent Skilful structure and tender, precise prose.' The Observer Picking up where Toni Morrison leaves off, Gee reminds us that racism not only devastates the lives of its victims, but also those of its perpetrators. Like Eugene O'Neill, Maggie Gee moves skilfully between compassion and disgust.' TLS Elegant style and an expert ear for dialogue ... courageous, honest, powerfully real and not a little disturbing.' The Times Full of good writing.' The Spectator Maggie Gee is one of our most ambitious and challenging novelists.' The Spectator The White Family is an audacious, groundbreaking condition-of-England novel which tilts expertly at a middle class fallacy that racism is something "out there", in the football terraces or the sink estates ... Finely judged and compulsively readable.' The Guardian Outstanding ... tender, sexy and alarming.' Jim Crace A brilliant depiction of British society.' Bernardine Evaristo

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