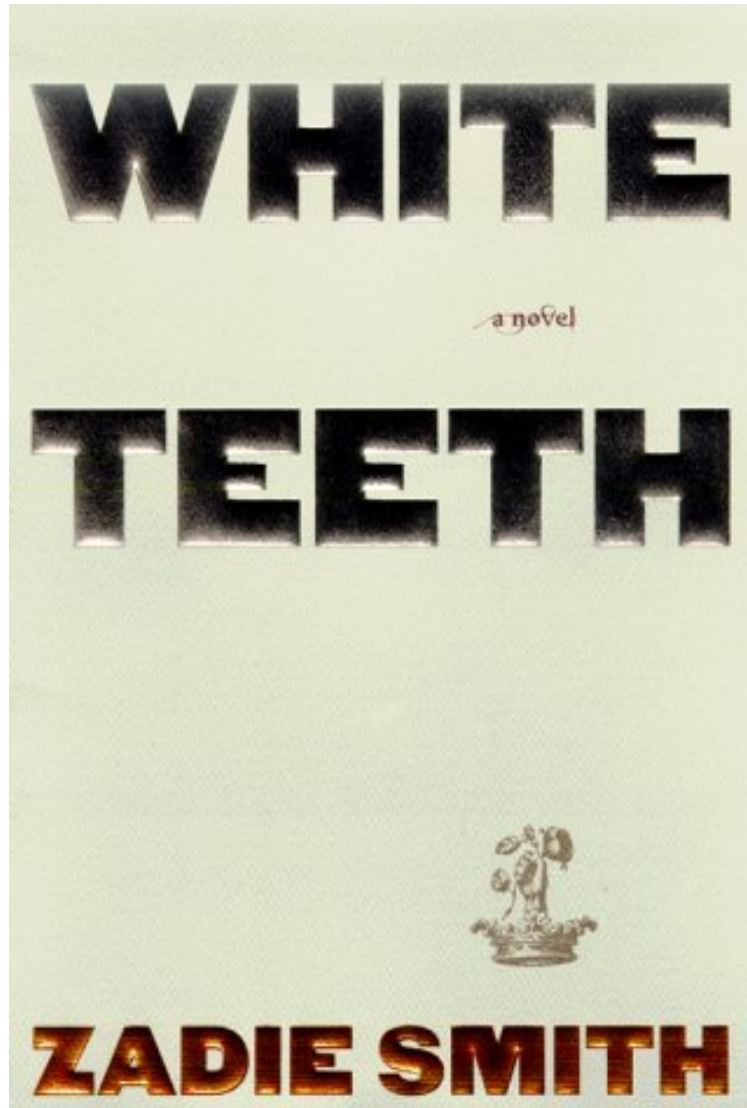


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White Teeth: A Novel

Zadie Smith

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Zadie Smith : White Teeth: A Novel before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised White Teeth: A Novel:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Zadie Smith is brilliant - brilliant in the way that her writing shines ...By lanoirAt the risk of leading with a superlative, Zadie Smith is brilliant - brilliant in the way that her writing shines and dazzles. Reading this book was an absolute joy in every conceivable way. I would recommend this to any avid reader. It's not to be missed.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Ronal N. HarveyEngaging with great dialogue!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Nice simple readBy Jo

VracaRead this over few days on holiday right after *The Goldfinch* so I can't help but compare. However there's no comparison. I have some issues with books that jump around from one pov to another, so this annoyed me a bit. That said, *White Teeth* is a nice book about cross cultural and cross generational highs and lows.

FOR USE IN SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES ONLY. At the center of this invigorating and hilarious novel are two unlikely friends, Archie Jones and Samad Iqbal, hapless veterans of World War II, negotiating the complex terrain of England's postcolonial, multicultural society.

.com Epic in scale and intimate in approach, *White Teeth* is a formidably ambitious debut. First novelist Zadie Smith takes on race, sex, class, history, and the minefield of gender politics, and such is her wit and inventiveness that these weighty subjects seem effortlessly light. She also has an impressive geographical range, guiding the reader from Jamaica to Turkey to Bangladesh and back again. Still, the book's home base is a scrubby North London borough, where we encounter Smith's unlikely heroes: prevaricating Archie Jones and intemperate Samad Iqbal, who served together in the so-called Bugged Battalion during World War II. In the ensuing decades, both have gone forth and multiplied: Archie marries beautiful, bucktoothed Clara--who's on the run from her Jehovah's Witness mother--and fathers a daughter. Samad marries stropky Alsana, who gives birth to twin sons. Here is multiculturalism in its most elemental form: "Children with first and last names on a direct collision course. Names that secrete within them mass exodus, cramped boats and planes, cold arrivals, medical checks." Big questions demand boldly drawn characters. Zadie Smith's aren't heroic, just real: warm, funny, misguided, and entirely familiar. Reading their conversations is like eavesdropping. Even a simple exchange between Alsana and Clara about their pregnancies has a comical ring of truth: "A woman has to have the private things--a husband needn't be involved in body business, in a lady's... parts." And the men, of course, have their own involvement in bodily functions: The deal was this: on January 1, 1980, like a New Year dieter who gives up cheese on the condition that he can have chocolate, Samad gave up masturbation so that he might drink. It was a deal, a business proposition, that he had made with God: Samad being the party of the first part, God being the sleeping partner. And since that day Samad had enjoyed relative spiritual peace and many a frothy Guinness with Archibald Jones; he had even developed the habit of taking his last gulp looking up at the sky like a Christian, thinking: I'm basically a good man. Not all of *White Teeth* is so amusingly carnal. The mixed blessings of assimilation, for example, are an ongoing torture for Samad as he watches his sons grow up. "They have both lost their way," he grumbles. "Strayed so far from what I had intended for them. No doubt they will both marry white women called Sheila and put me in an early grave." These classic immigrant fears--of dilution and disappearance--are no laughing matter. But in the end, they're exactly what gives *White Teeth* its lasting power and undeniable bite. --Eithne FarryFrom Publishers WeeklyThe scrambled, heterogeneous sprawl of mixed-race and immigrant family life in gritty London nearly overflows the bounds of this stunning, polymathic debut novel by 23-year-old British writer Smith. Traversing a broad swath of cultural territory with a perfect ear for the nuances of identity and social class, Smith harnesses provocative themes of science, technology, history and religion to her narrative. Hapless Archibald Jones fights alongside Bengali Muslim Samad Iqbal in the English army during WWII, and the two develop an unlikely bond that intensifies when Samad relocates to Archie's native London. Smith traces the trajectory of their friendship through marriage, parenthood and the shared disappointments of poverty and deflated dreams, widening the scope of her novel to include a cast of vibrant characters: Archie's beautiful Jamaican bride, Clara; Archie and Clara's introspective daughter, Irie; Samad's embittered wife, Alsana; and Alsana and Samad's twin sons, Millat and Magid. Torn between the pressures of his new country and the old religious traditions of his homeland, Samad sends Magid back to Bangladesh while keeping Millat in England. But Millat falls into delinquency and then religious extremism, as earnest Magid becomes an Anglophile with an interest in genetic engineering, a science that Samad and Millat repudiate. Smith contrasts Samad's faith in providence with Magid's desire to seize control of the future, involving all of her characters in a debate concerning past and present, determinism and accident. The tooth--half root, half protrusion--makes a perfect trope for the two families at the center of the narrative. A remarkable examination of the immigrant's experience in a postcolonial world, Smith's novel recalls the hyper-contemporary yet history-infused work of Rushdie, sharp-edged, fluorescent and many-faceted. Agent, Georgia Garrett. (May) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalSmith (recently profiled in an issue of *The New Yorker*) has written an epic tale of two interconnected families. It begins with the suicide attempt of hapless, coin-flipping Archibald Jones on New Year's Day, 1975, and ends, after a 100-year ramble back and forth through time, on New Year's Eve, 1992, with his accidental (or preordained?) release of a poor mutant mouse programmed to do away with the randomness of creation. Smith evokes images of teeth throughout the novel. Do they symbolize some characteristic shared by all of humanity in this novel about ethnicity, class, belonging, homeland, family, adolescence, identity, blindness, and ignorance? Or are they meant to distract the reader from the all-encompassing theme of fate? Smith's characters are tossed about by decisions made deliberately, rashly, or by the flip of a coin. As Smith pieces together this story with bits of fabric from different times and places, the reader must contemplate whether our choices determine our future or whether fate leads us to an inevitable destiny. This fine first novel from Smith is most highly recommended for all libraries.---Rebecca A.

