



Children of Paradise: A Novel (P.S.)

Fred D'Aguiar

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Acclaimed novelist, playwright, and poet Fred D'Aguiar has been short-listed for the T.S. Eliot Prize in poetry for *Bill of Rights*, his narrative poem about the Jonestown massacre, and won the Whitbread First Novel Award for *The Longest Memory*. In this beautifully imagined work of literary fiction, he returns to the territory of Jim Jones's utopian commune, interweaving magical realism and shocking history into a resonant story of love, faith, oppression, and sacrifice in which a mother and daughter attempt to break free with the help of an extraordinary gorilla.

Joyce and her young daughter, Trina, are members of a utopian community ruled by a magnetic preacher. When Trina plays too near to the cage holding the commune's gorilla, Adam, the ape attacks and kills the child. Or so everyone believes. That night, the preacher dramatically "revives" her—an act that transforms Trina into a symbol of its charismatic leader's God-like power. Desperate to save her daughter from the preacher's control, the outspoken Joyce attempts a daring escape, a run for freedom aided by another prisoner—the remarkable Adam.

Told with a sweeping perspective in lush prose, shimmering with magic, and devastating in its clarity, *Children of Paradise* is a brilliant and evocative exploration of oppression—of both mind and body—and of the liberating power of storytelling.

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