



Lara

Bernardine Evaristo

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Lara is a powerful semi-autobiographical novel-in-verse based on Bernardine Evaristo's own childhood and family history. The eponymous Lara is a mixed-race girl raised in Woolwich, a white suburb of London, during the 60s and 70s. Her father, Taiwo, is Nigerian, and her mother, Ellen, is white British. They marry in the 1950s, in spite of fierce opposition from Ellen's family, and quickly produce eight children in ten years. Lara is their fourth child and we follow her journey from restricted childhood to conflicted early adulthood, and then from London to Nigeria to Brazil as she seeks to understand herself and her ancestry. The novel travels back over 150 years, seven generations and three continents of Lara's ancestry. It is the story of Irish Catholics leaving generations of rural hardship behind and ascending to a rigid middle class in England; of German immigrants escaping poverty and seeking to build a new life in 19th century London; and of proud Yorubas enslaved in Brazil, free in colonial Nigeria and hopeful in post-war London. Lara explores the lives of those who leave one country in search of a better life elsewhere, but who end up struggling to be accepted even as they lay the foundations for their children and future generations. This is a new edition of Bernardine Evaristo's first novel Lara, rewritten and expanded by a third since its first publication in 1997.

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