

Brighton & Hove City Reads 2006

2 March - 9 May
www.cityreads.co.uk

Hotel World Ali Smith

Shortlisted for the Booker Prize 2001
Shortlisted for the Orange Prize for Fiction 2001

*Being read. Right now.
In Brighton & Hove.*

WHAT IS CITY READS?

Imagine sharing a book with your neighbour, with your hairdresser, with your bus driver, and your friends. The one book for one city idea brings readers together.

In 2005, along with seven other cities, Brighton & Hove was chosen to take part in Penguin Books' 70th anniversary celebrations, and encouraged the whole community to delve into Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

After last year's huge success, City Reads looks set to become Brighton & Hove's annual collective read, and this year we invite you to check into *Hotel World* by Ali Smith.

Who is it for?

City Reads is for everyone: whether you're an occasional reader, a confirmed bibliophile or a serial book group hound. It doesn't matter what you do, where you live or what you read: City Reads is about opening up the world of words and ideas to everyone.

How does it work?

It couldn't be simpler. The idea is to get the whole city reading Ali Smith's *Hotel World* between now and the closing event on 9 May at this year's Brighton Festival. There will be special events, workshops, chat forums, reading groups, and book crossings focusing on *Hotel World*. All you need to do to get involved is pick up a copy from your local library, bookshop or book drop point and start reading.

The guide

This guide provides everything you need to know about City Reads. It also takes you on a whistle-stop tour of Ali Smith's *Hotel World*, providing background information, reading hints, biographical facts and ideas for further reading. For more up-to-the-minute information visit www.cityreads.co.uk.

Minibar (generously stocked)

Help yourself to minibar mini facts throughout, but remember: *'This minibar is laser set. Anything removed from the minibar for more than 20 seconds will automatically register on your room account.'*

Book Release

Throughout the reading period free copies of *Hotel World* will be 'released' all over the city. Look for them in cafes and laundrettes, on buses and benches, in parks and playgrounds. Register free on www.bookcrossing.com to receive alerts when a copy is released.

Book groups

If you're part of a book group, or would like to set one up, the City library service can arrange for you to borrow a set of *Hotel World* books to read. Contact the Reader Development librarian on 01273 296932, or e-mail: libraries@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

Visit the Lounge Bar for a glimpse of a book group in action on page 15.

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'A brave, brilliant and breathtaking book.'
Maggie O'Farrell,
Independent on Sunday





'Ali Smith has got style,
ideas, and punch. Read her.'
Jeanette Winterson

Registration

About Ali Smith

Thank you for taking the time to complete the registration form. Please leave any valuables including major awards, literary prizes and film tie-in options in the hotel safe.

Name: Ali Smith

Born: Inverness, 1962.

Current address: Cambridge

Profession: Award-winning novelist and short story writer.

Previous professions: Teacher

First book: *Free Love and Other Stories* (1995)

Awards: Won the Saltire Society Scottish First Book of the Year Award and a Scottish Arts Council Award.

First novel: *Like* (1997), Published to great critical acclaim followed by a second collection of short stories, *Other Stories* and *Other Stories* (1999).

Second novel: *Hotel World* (2001)

Awards: Won the Encore Award, a Scottish Arts Council Book Award and the inaugural Scottish Arts Council Book of the Year Award. Also shortlisted for both the Orange Prize for Fiction and the Booker Prize for Fiction. Followed by *The Whole Story* and *Other Stories* (2003).

Third novel: *The Accidental* (2004)

Awards: Beat Salman Rushdie, Nick Hornby and Christopher Wilson to win the 2005 Whitbread Novel Award.

Extracurricular activities: A regular contributor to *The Guardian*, *The Scotsman* and the *Times Literary Supplement*.

CHECK-IN

About the Book

Hotel World by Ali Smith

Shortlisted for the Booker Prize 2001

Shortlisted for the Orange Prize for Fiction 2001

Winner of the Arts Foundation Award 2001

Woooooooooooo.....hoooooooooo!

...what a **fall** what a **soar** what a **plummet** what a **dash** into dark into light what a **plunge** what a glide **THUD** crash what a **drop** what a rush what a **SWOOP** what a fright what a mad **hushed** skirl what a **smash** mash-up broke and **gashed** what a **♥** in my mouth what an **END**.

What a **life**.

What a **time**.

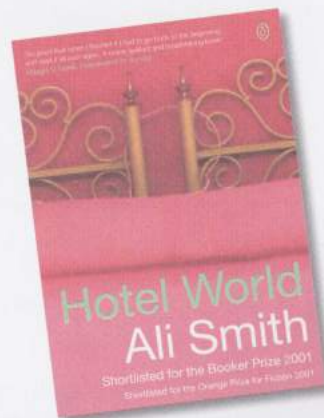
What I **felt**. Then. **Gone.**

Welcome to *Hotel World*. You are about to embark on a dazzlingly inventive dark night of the soul. Prepare for free fall...

One hotel. One night. Five characters. Four living, one dead. Set in the luxurious anonymity of the upmarket yet lacklustre Global Hotel chain, Ali Smith's second novel offers a compelling glimpse into the lives of five women, each connected in some way to a bizarre and tragic death.

Each chapter takes a new perspective on the events of those 24 hours, as seemingly unconnected worlds collide in a dizzying meditation on love, loss, fate, chance, grief and redemption.

www.cityreads.co.uk



Though it takes on big elegiac themes, *Hotel World* is ultimately a spirited celebration of life, offering an invigorating riposte to Muriel Spark's *memento mori* 'Remember You Must Die' with the uplifting 'Remember You Must Live, Remember You Must Love'.

WHO? WHAT? WHEN? WHERE?



Meanwhile, Sara's grieving sister Clare sits outside the Global Hotel, plucking up courage to visit the scene of death, searching for truth and reconciliation.

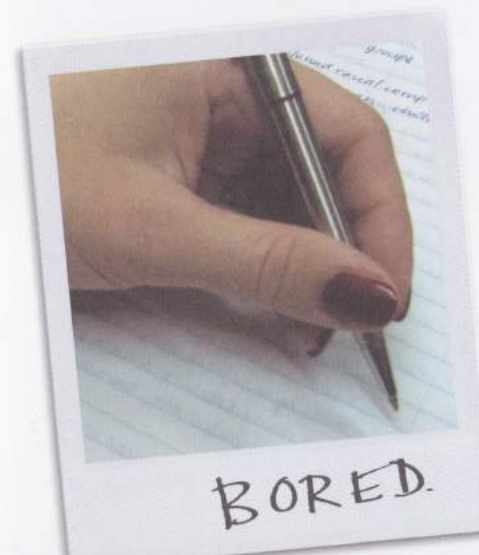
A homeless street girl Else, who begs outside in the lee of the hotel entrance, is taken under the wing of a young receptionist Lise, who looks back from her sick bed at the consequences of a random act of kindness.

A young chambermaid Sara Wilby plummets to her death in a freak accident involving the hotel's dumb waiter. Her restless ghost tries to reassemble the facts of her sudden and violent death in a desperate attempt to impart the meaning of her exit from one world to another.



A freelance style journalist Penny, 'bored out of her mind', seeks out a story from her hotel room, and becomes an unwitting player in a drama that has already played itself out.

Between them, these five disparate voices, flung together by chance, usher Clare towards a greater understanding of her tragic loss.



ROOM SERVICE - Reading Hints

Hotel World is a dizzying rush of language: words, symbols, voices and exuberantly playful literary techniques careening off the page like a dumb waiter hurtling through space and time. To help you negotiate your way around its linguistic corridors, the next few pages offer an à la carte menu of ideas, points to ponder and reading hints.

Simply order up your critical perspective of choice...

Hint 1. Mind the gaps

'We live on a surface that we think is controllable... we are all living on this crazy surface pretending that nothing very much is happening. Whereas, really, everything is happening and we can't even see it, and it's so spun that we can't get off the surface.'

Ali Smith, *The Scotsman*, April 2003

Like many great novels *Hotel World* plays with our expectations of conventional storytelling, where the stepping stones of narrative lay conveniently on the surface. In *Hotel World*, the novel's heart might as easily lie in the gaps between words and stories; revealed in what is left unsaid, what is unknown, and what is ultimately unknowable.

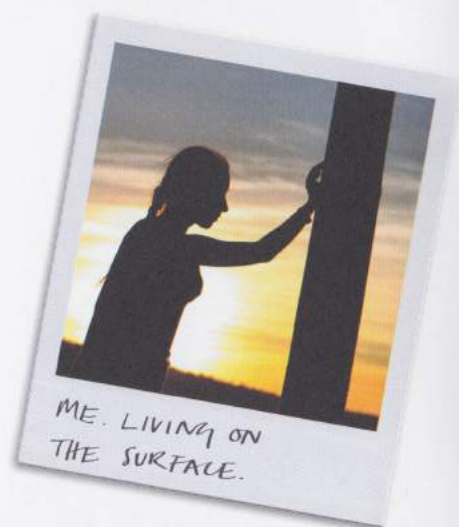
The 'hotel' is the perfect metaphor for such an undertaking. Behind the faceless anonymity and the marketing spin (*Global Hotels. We Think the World of You*) lies another story: secrets, lies and quiet rebellion. Chamber maids rifle through guests' unpacked luggage. Staff are fired for petty misdemeanours. Behind the gilt façade of the Global

Hotel is played out in miniature all the injustice, power imbalance, and class struggle of the world outside. As the stricken receptionist Lise has learned: *'It presses you hard, with your nose squashed and your face distorted and ugly, right up against the window of other people's wealth.'*

In this way what on one level is a novel of personal love and loss, reveals a powerful political subtext, taking a covert glimpse at corporate capitalism, globalisation and those whose lives slip through the gaps in our social hierarchies.

MINIBAR mini facts

Jeanette Winterson, Jackie Kay, Jonathan Safran Foer, Kate Atkinson, Joyce Carol Oates and Maggie O'Farrell are all self-confessed Ali Smith addicts.



ROOM SERVICE - Reading Hints

Hint 2. Time bends

'Because time seems to move in more or less simple linear chronology, from one moment, second, minute, hour, day, week, etc to the next, the shapes of our lives in time tend to be translated into common linear sequence which itself translates into easily recognisable significance, or meaning.'

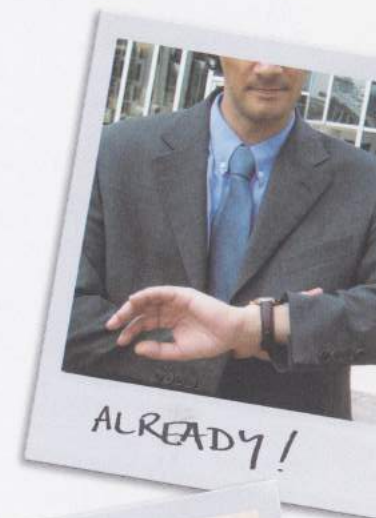
Hotel World

Hotel World is a novel which seems to refute this notion wholeheartedly; in which time bends and appears to obey no rules other than those of the chaos principle. The narrative itself starts at the end and works backwards, hurtling through chapters entitled *past*, *present*, *historic*, *future conditional*, *perfect*, *future in the past*, and then back to the present. As Lise acknowledges: *'Time is notoriously deceptive. Everybody knows this (though it is one of the easiest things to forget).'*

Hotel World is a universe in which a single word, phrase or image – a speckled egg; a bathroom tap; a corn oil bottle – can trigger a great quantum leap forwards into the unknown or open a trapdoor into the past. It is a novel of stopped watches and suspended animation, where *'a second of time was stretched so long and so thin that you could see veins in it'*. It is a novel in which a fatal fall in a dumb waiter takes exactly 0.45 seconds but whose consequences reverberate for all eternity. Even in death time refuses to lay down, as ghosts walk the earth in a restless quest for self-knowledge.

MINIBAR mini facts

Ali Smith's favourite reads include: *Collected Stories*, by Grace Paley; *A Scots Quair*, by Lewis Grassie Gibbon; *Wise Children*, by Angela Carter; *The Summer Book*, by Tove Jansson; *Black Gold of the Sun*, by Ekow Eshun; *Digging the Dirt*, by Jennifer Wallace



ROOM SERVICE - Reading Hints

Hint 5. Identity Parade

Hotel World is also a novel about how we construct identities for ourselves and others. What is it that makes us who we are? Our jobs? Our homes? (If we have neither do we cease to exist?) Are we defined by the way we are treated? Or by the way we treat others? Whether we are employed or unemployed? Well or sick? Each character is in their own way trying to piece together their own sense of self or glean the genetic makeup of those around them from a collection of stories, memories, fantasies and experiences.

Else

Elspeth grounds her sense of self in the odds and ends of an emptied out pocket for a lifestyle photo shoot: fusewire, matches, a teaspoon, a comb, a ten pence piece.

Lise

Stricken down by illness, Lise is losing her power of memory and hence her sense of self. Completing the 'About Us' section of an incapacity benefit form, she hovers between the statements: 'I am a nice person' and 'I am a sick person', unsure where her own story lies.

Penny

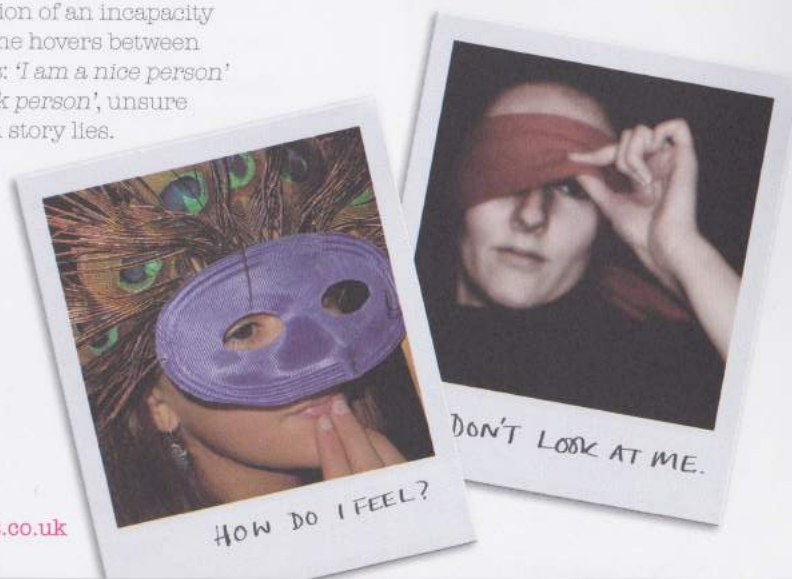
Penny - freelance style writer and perpetual fantasist - lives in a world where she can afford the luxury of trying on identities to see which fit she likes best for any given scenario.

Sara

In a sense the book itself is a process of trying to piece together the splintered fragments of Sara Wilby. From the opening chapter, where she is press-ganged by her own ghost into revealing the story of her fall - to her sister Clare's frantic interior monologue, Sara Wilby is reassembled piece by piece in a random collage of memories and stories.

MINIBAR mini facts

You can trace **Ali Smith's** experimental style and love of language from **James Joyce** and **Virginia Woolf** to **William Faulkner** and **William Carlos Williams**.



ROOM SERVICE - Reading Hints

Hint 6. The voices, the voices...

'For me there's no story without voice, no voice without story, and no single story that doesn't imply another one right next to it, or behind it, or in front of it - there's always another story.'

Ali Smith, interview with encompassculture.com

Whatever we experience, whatever we witness, whatever we participate in, there is always another way of looking at it, another voice to tell the tale. From William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* to Barbara Kingsolver's *Poisonwood Bible*, authors have expressed the great chaotic multiplicity of life through the use of serial narrators, breaking free of the bonds of the all seeing omniscient viewpoint. Each of the five voices in *Hotel World* has its own distinctive personality and vantage point. The narrative shifts subtly in tone - from poignant to humorous to tragic - as the different voices take their turn to offer up fragments of the story. Between them they provide a multilayered perspective on the nature of truth and the human condition.



Top Ten Books with Multiple Narrators

1. *As I Lay Dying*, William Faulkner

Dead men do tell tales in this classic slice of American modernism.

2. *The Poisonwood Bible*, Barbara Kingsolver

Familial Congo nightmares in a multi-voiced rumble in the jungle.

3. *Trumpet*, Jackie Kay

Secrets, lies and bebop jazz in a compelling study of identity crisis.

4. *My Name is Red*, Orhan Pamuk

More voices than you can shake a stick at in the ultimate Ottoman murder wrap.

5. *The Moonstone*, Wilkie Collins

A forensic exercise in multiple viewpoints from the author of *The Woman in White*.

6. *The Collector*, John Fowles

A chilling tale of obsession and powerplay: first from the captor; then the captive.

7. *Falling Angels*, Tracy Chevalier

An aching lament to lost innocence from she of the Pearl Earring fame.

8. *Hey Nostradamus*, Douglas Coupland

Alienation and apocalypse in the aftermath of a Columbine style massacre.

9. *Clarissa*, Samuel Richardson

A profoundly suggestive interplay of opposed voices from an 18th-century innovator.

10. *Cloud Atlas*, David Mitchell

Genre-defying head-trip voiced through the ages and across continents.

LEFT LUGGAGE

Biographical Baggage and Blind Alleys

'The biographical trail is always a false trail. It may seem interesting, but it doesn't lead anywhere.'

Ali Smith, *The Scotsman* (2003)

Just as Lise and her fellow conspirators might rifle through a guest's luggage for a secret glimpse of its owner's life, there is a well subscribed branch of literary investigation, which holds that the quickest route to the heart of a novel is through its author's own biographical baggage.

Working along these lines it might be tempting to try to pin down Ali Smith as a lesbian writer; for instance; tracing a lineage from Vita Sackville West via Jackie Kay, Carol Ann Duffy, Joanna Briscoe and Sarah Waters to her door. Or, perhaps, as a Scottish writer, locating her work in the company of Muriel Spark, James Kelman, Irvine Welsh or AL Kennedy? How might her own experiences as a sufferer of chronic fatigue syndrome have shaped her writing? Or her teaching? Her childhood experiences? Her relationships?

'Emotionally charged and compassionate, Ali Smith's second novel bristles with inventiveness.'
Scotsman

Ali Smith holds little truck with these sorts of inquiry. For her, such biographical detective work can only lead down literary cul-de-sacs. The secret to the writing is in the writing. As she explains in an interview in *The Big Issue* from 2005:

'The idea that you are a person who produces writing gets in the way of the process. How are you supposed to get rid of yourself to get to the voice on the page? The less there is of you, the better the writing will be.'



HOTEL WORLD EXCURSIONS

The Hotel World Guided Walk

Did you know that the Metropole plays a walk on part in TS Eliot's *The Wasteland*? Or that JFK once stayed at The Grand? Join local historian (and ex West Pier guide) Sarah Tobias for a guided pier to pier hotel walk, culminating with afternoon tea at one of the seafront hotels.

Fri 21 April, 2.30pm.

(Duration approx 1.5 hrs)

Tickets £5 (includes refreshments)

Tickets must be purchased in advance as places are limited. Available from the Booklover Store at Jubilee Library. Or telephone **01273 294071**

BBC Radio 4 Book Club

Want to meet Ali Smith and talk about *Hotel World* on BBC Radio 4's *Book Club* programme? All you need is to have read the book and come armed with questions.

FREE TICKETS

and complimentary glass of wine.

**Recording Thursday 6 April, 6pm
Jubilee Library, Brighton.**

To apply visit: www.bbc.co.uk/bookclub

Tel: **Katy 0207 765 3202**

or email: katy.thompson@bbc.co.uk

Writing Workshop

Alison MacLeod

City Reads is about reading, but it is also a celebration of innovative and inventive writing. This special workshop, run by Canadian-born novelist and creative writing teacher Alison MacLeod provides practical advice and inspiration for writers of all levels.

Alison MacLeod is the author of two highly acclaimed novels: *The Changeling* (1996), and the recently

published *The Wave Theory of Angels* (2005). Her short fiction has appeared in a variety of literary magazines including *Prospect* and *London Magazine*. Alison teaches on the MA in Creative Writing at University of Chichester and lives in Brighton.

Tues 25 April, 2-5pm,

Tickets £10, Jubilee Library

Tickets available from **Booklover Store at Jubilee Library.**

Or telephone **01273 294071**

Ali Smith at Brighton Festival plus Jackie Kay and Francine Stock

In a fitting finale to this citywide celebration of Ali Smith's *Hotel World*, the author is joined by award-winning poet and novelist Jackie Kay and presenter of BBC Radio 4's *Film Programme* Francine Stock for a special Brighton Festival appraisal of one of our most exuberant and inventive stylists. Chaired by David Kendall.

**Thurs 9 May, 7.30pm. Tickets £7
Pavilion Theatre, Brighton Dome
Box office 01273 709709**

Online Book Group

Join our special City Reads online book group, which will be discussing *Hotel World* in the company of Ali Smith over the next few weeks. See www.cityreads.co.uk for further details.

Freebies!

Keep an eye out on the City Reads website for special competitions, book giveaways and other freebies over the next eight weeks.

LOUNGE BAR

Quiet please: book group in session

Book groups are the perfect chance to share your thoughts, ideas, loves and hates about all things bookish with like-minded readers. Throughout City Reads, book groups will be reading *Hotel World* together from cafes, book shops, bars and living rooms across the city. If you want to join in or find out more about forming your own book group check out www.bookgroup.info

In the meantime grab a drink from the bar, pull up a pew and join **Helen, Hilary, Kate, Loreto, Karl** and **John** from Waterstone's Book Group, Deansgate as they get down to the nitty-gritty of *Hotel World*.

The following book group discussion took place in 2001 at Waterstone's, Deansgate, Manchester and was originally featured on Penguin Books' website:



General comments

This novel touched a lot of chords and generated much discussion, about both style and themes. There was, inevitably, a particular focus on bereavement and memory, the kind of inconsequential things people often do want to know, or remember after a traumatic loss, and the way in which memory can be quite random.

Despite the experimental narrative style and structure people spoke of it as a 'good read' and felt carried along by the rhythm of the voices. We unanimously found the use of voice very effective.

Helen said that the novel would work brilliantly well as a radio play, though she found that the fifth section slowed her down as a reader when she wanted to speed up/feel more involved.

Hilary said that what she always admired about Ali Smith's writing was the economy and intensity of the narration. This led to a discussion about the end of the third section, where the perspective switches from Lise to Deirdre. People unanimously found this intensely moving. Helen said that it said everything about mothering and mother-love.

Kate said that the love of the dead girl for the girl selling watches was beautifully evoked and the sense of awakening of her own sexuality very powerful. She liked the fact that it was given full value in the novel and yet treated as just a part of the life of the novel without being made a central issue.

Loreto said that it worked on so many levels she would have to read it several times.

Helen felt that it was very bleak in places – the sense of the ghost disintegrating and undergoing a further death was quite horrific, and for her the sense of the words disappearing was very disturbing.

Kate said that it was more true to life, memory and grieving than novels with a traditional story, and compared it to novels by James Joyce and Virginia Woolf.

Helen especially liked the way in which the hotel and the metaphor of the hotel as a corporate 'global' body was worked through the narrative – that there were different levels and ways in which this could be read.

Summing up

Karl: A compulsive read – life affirming in that one must value the everyday things, but troubling because of the randomness of life.

Hilary: I personally love the way Ali uses her descriptive words so well, covering so much in such a short space and yet one can read it so easily. I have enjoyed her short stories in the past and look forward eagerly to her next novel.

John: I admire *Hotel World* more than I like it. I feel that it's the novel of a story writer; some brilliantly written stories joined together in a rather unnatural way – by symbolism rather than plot.

Loreto: I am enjoying what I have read of this book and feel that there is a depth to be uncovered with a second reading. I love the melancholy, poetic feel.

In Conclusion

There was a very positive feeling about the novel – time ran out and there was still a lot more to say. People said they were glad they had read it. They were not put off by the experimental approach, and thought that while it was the least conventional of the novels nominated for the Orange Prize it was also the most thought-provoking and the one they were most likely to read more than once.

MINIBAR mini facts

Given the choice, **Ali Smith** would like **Chloe Sevigny** to play her in her Hollywood biopic, with **Stockard Channing** for the later scenes.



FAQs

Part of the fallout of literary celebrity is the endless treadmill of interviews and Q&As. Here are a few choice snippets from two interviews that originally took place for Ali's publisher Penguin Books and the British Council's encompass.com website.

On the novel versus the short story:

A.S. 'I prefer writing stories, for a very practical reason – they're much more likely to provide relief, if you're writing them. Novels are years of worrying in the dark. Short stories are (when you're lucky) much quicker to ignite.'

On being nominated for prizes:

A.S. '[Getting shortlisted for the Booker Prize] meant a lot of book sales, and people at my publisher being uncannily nice to me. It meant a rise in visibility, which is never that good for a writer. It gave a small literary novel a punt out into the bigger market. It gave people who introduced me reading something to say ... it was very luxurious and very surreal. It was nothing to do with books and the writing of them.'

On reading:

A.S. '[As a child] I read voraciously, but not the usual things – there was a cupboard above the bed full of the books my brothers and sisters, all older than me, were reading at school. So by ten I'd read all sorts of things like Joyce's *Dubliners* and Orwell's novels and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. I was fascinated by *Struwwelpeter* and Lear's *Book of Nonsense*.'

On the craft of writing:

A.S. 'It is hard to analyse what you do – I'm a bit afraid that if I tell you how I do it I won't be able to do it again, because I'll be too aware of myself doing it... I imagine I am planning the story first. I think I know exactly what it will do. And then it does what it wants anyway, often in opposition to what I imagined I wanted.'

On writing routines:

A.S. 'I am not very curious really, in habit – I write in the middle of the day and the afternoons, into the early evening. If I'm editing something fully drafted I will work for longer. A lot of this time is spent staring into space or worrying that I haven't done the dishes.'

On celebrity:

A.S. 'Writing things down is, primarily, nothing to do with the self the writer happens to have or the hype that surrounds her or him or a certain book he or she might write. Why have competition and fame and shortlisting and such things become so important when it comes to writers? What is it that people think will be so much more fulfilling about a life that is really in many ways the same hard-working life as any car mechanic or piano tuner or drill-wielder for BT?'

On advice received:

A.S. 'Eat carrots for re-hydration, and Powerbars, as they're full of fibre'. Advice from Margaret Atwood, about being on the road. 'Excellent advice. I follow it.'

Advice from Joyce Carol Oates:

'Ali, when you are sixty, and a young admiring good-looking man in his twenties comes to your door carrying copies of all your books and professing admiration – whatever you do, don't let him in.'

On advice to young writers:

A.S. 'The book comes first. And, just write it. As James Joyce said, "In the writing, the good things will come."'

'Courageous and startling. I doubt that I shall read a more... affecting novel this year.'

Jim Crace



LIBRARY

Please feel free to browse the shelves of the hotel library. We have a particularly well-stocked selection of ghostly bedtime literature for your reading pleasure. Remember, at *Hotel World*: *Making You Happy, Makes Us Happy*.

Classic Literary Ghost Stories

1. *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, Washington Irving

A perfect balance of folksy whimsy and outright spookiness – an American classic.

2. *The Turn of the Screw*, Henry James

The most famous, eerily equivocal of all Victorian ghost tales.

3. *The Haunting of Hill House*, Shirley Jackson

Homage to James's classic novella and inspiration for 1963's film: *The Haunting*.

4. *The Collected Ghost Stories of MR James*

Quintessential English fright-fests from the father of the modern ghost story.

5. *Beyond Black*, Hilary Mantel

Dark secrets and supernatural forces unearthed in Blair's suburban England.

'[*Hotel World* is] as infectious as a pop song, the story bursts open from the very first page and demands to be read in one sitting.'

The Times

6. *Lost Boy Lost Girl*, Peter Straub

A sparse chilling read that mixes awe and fear in equal measures.

7. *The Woman in Black*, Susan Hill

A perfect reinvention of the Victorian ghost story.

8. *They*, Rudyard Kipling

Sussex set chiller, widely regarded as one of the best ghost stories ever written.

9. *Strangers*, Taichi Yamada

'A ghost story of the highest order' – David Mitchell

10. *The Lovely Bones*, Alice Sebold

This heaven-sent tale of heartbreak and redemption touched a literary nerve.

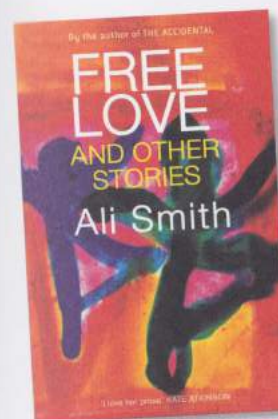


CHECK-OUT

Thank you for visiting *Hotel World*. We do hope you have enjoyed your stay. Please remember to sign out and leave your room key at reception. On departure why not check out other books by Ali Smith including her Whitbread-winning novel of the year *The Accidental*. Plus further reading suggestions.

Free Love and Other Stories

'A sweetly memorable collection... A major talent,' *The Times*



A teenage girl finds unexpected sexual freedom on a trip to Amsterdam. A woman trapped at a dinner party comes up against an ugly obsession. The stories in *Free Love* are about desire, memory,

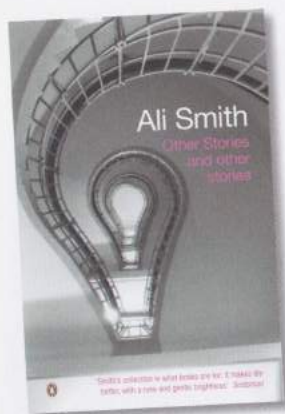
sexual ambiguity, and the imagination. In the harsh light of dislocation, the people in them still find connections, words blowing in the street, and love in unexpected places. Ali Smith shows how things come together and how they break apart. She disconcerts and affirms with the lightest touch, to make us love and live differently.

Like

'Beautifully written in precise, poetic prose that successfully evokes the love of like for like.' *Observer*

There's Amy and there's Ash. There's ice and there's fire. There's England and there's Scotland. Ali Smith evokes the twin spirits of time and place in an extraordinarily powerful first novel, which teases out the connections between people, the attractions, the ghostly repercussions. By turns funny, haunting and disconcertingly moving, *Like* soars across hidden borders between cultures, countries, families, friends and lovers. Subtle and complex, it confounds expectations about fiction and truths. A seductive story of what it means to be alive at the edge of the 20th century.





Other Stories and Other Stories

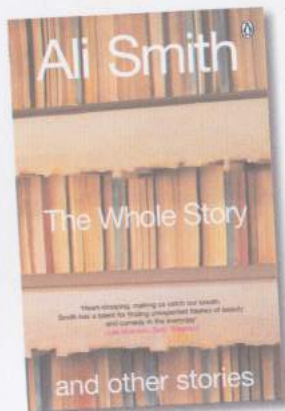
These stories – about love and loss, about ourselves and others – lightly and expertly inch us closer to the bone and unfold

in delightful and unexpected ways. Individually lucid and luminous, these formally inventive and exquisite tales resonate subtly together. In examining the distances and connections between ourselves and others, storytelling itself has never seemed so necessary, so moving or so joyous.

The Whole Story and Other Stories

How do you ever know the whole story? How do you ever know even part of the story? How do you find meaning when chance and coincidence could, after all, just be chance and coincidence? This brilliant collection of stories is a celebration of connections and missed

connections for people who've grown up being told time is running out and don't want it to. An inquiry into everything from flies and trees and books to sex, art, drunkenness and love.



The Accidental

The Smart family's lacklustre holiday in Norwich is turned upside down when a beguiling stranger called Amber appears, bringing with her love, joy, pain and upheaval. The Smarts try to make sense of their bewildering emotions as Amber tramples over family boundaries and forces them to think about their world and themselves in an entirely new way. *The Accidental* is at once a mysterious web of secret identities and a ruthlessly honest look at the silent cracks that can develop unnoticed in relationships over time.

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The Accidental

Hamish Hamilton, 2004

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'I am over the moon to imagine copies of *Hotel World* there in people's hands all over one of my favourite cities. It's such a celebratory thought – and a better destiny for a book I can't imagine.'
Ali Smith

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