

The Same Earth

Kei Miller



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From the WINNER OF THE FORWARD PRIZE FOR BEST COLLECTION 2014, a 'humorous, bittersweet fiction, combin[ing] the fantastical realism of Marquez with the domestic comedy of Andrea Levy' *INDEPENDENT*

It all begins with the theft of Tessa Walcott's panties...

After the hurricane of 1974, Jamaica is devastated. Imelda Richardson is sent to England, without a place to stay or a plan of what to do. Luckily sheis taken in by Purletta Johnson, a member of the ex-pat bourgeoisie who has decided to become more Jamaican than any Jamaican: sucking her teeth, sporting a gold tooth, and growing ganja on her balcony.

But when her mother dies Imelda returns to Jamaica. When Tessa Walcott's panties are stolen, she and Imelda set up a Neighbourhood Watch. But they haven't counted on Pastor Braithwaite who denounces them in Church. The church-goers turn on Imelda, and when the river suddenly floods her home it is seen as a punishment from God. A Pentecostal fervour sweeps through the village of Watersgate, fuelled by Evangelist Millie. In her last great crusade, Miss Millie organises 'fire to burn their sins away', equipping the villagers with kerosene as they set about burning everything. Now they are marching on the gay man's house and only Imelda can save him.



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