



Exile: According to Julia (Caribbean and African Literature) (CARAF Books: Caribbean and African Literature translated from the French)

By Gisele Pineau

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Exile: According to Julia (Caribbean and African Literature) (CARAF Books: Caribbean and African Literature translated from the French) By Gisele Pineau

Gisèle Pineau was born, and spent the first fourteen years of her life, in Paris. Her parents, originally from the island of Guadeloupe, were part of the massive transplantation of Antilleans to the métropole after World War II. Most had left their homeland hoping to improve their lives and their children's prospects. Born French nationals, all theoretically enjoyed equal footing with the Parisian French. The color of their skin, however, meant a far different reality for Pineau's family and their fellow émigrés. They lived on the outskirts of the city and on the margins of French society and culture.

L'exil selon Julia, Gisèle Pineau's compelling portrait of alienation and exile, was born of that experience. The critically acclaimed 1996 autobiographical novel, now available in its first English translation, explores the alienation of a girl and her grandmother contending with life between two identities. As a young woman of color and Caribbean ancestry?even though Paris-born?the girl is not accepted, not French enough, for her fellow Parisians. Yet she is too cosmopolitan to fit into Guadeloupean society upon returning to the island for a visit. And since her parents have virtually silenced their Creole legacy hoping to become better assimilated, she has no base of traditional knowledge to fall back on for strength or guidance as she contends with her identity crisis. When her grandmother Julia moves in with the family, the stories, the culture, and the strong sense of cultural identity the older woman brings finally provide the girl with a sense of belonging that transforms her life.

Powerful and accessible, Exile according to Julia is above all a moving and beautiful story of childhood, survival, and heritage that will speak to readers of all ages.

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Editorial Review

Review

[Pineau is] among the best of women writers from the Third World. *L'exil selon Julia* is one of the richest, most enjoyable books to appear recently from the group of remarkable women novelists from Guadeloupe.

(World Literature Today)

An exercise in humor and lucidity, *L'exil selon Julia* is a discreet invitation to reflect on today's fundamental issues, the uprooting, acceptance, and mixing of populations.

(Le Monde)

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Helen Samuel:

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