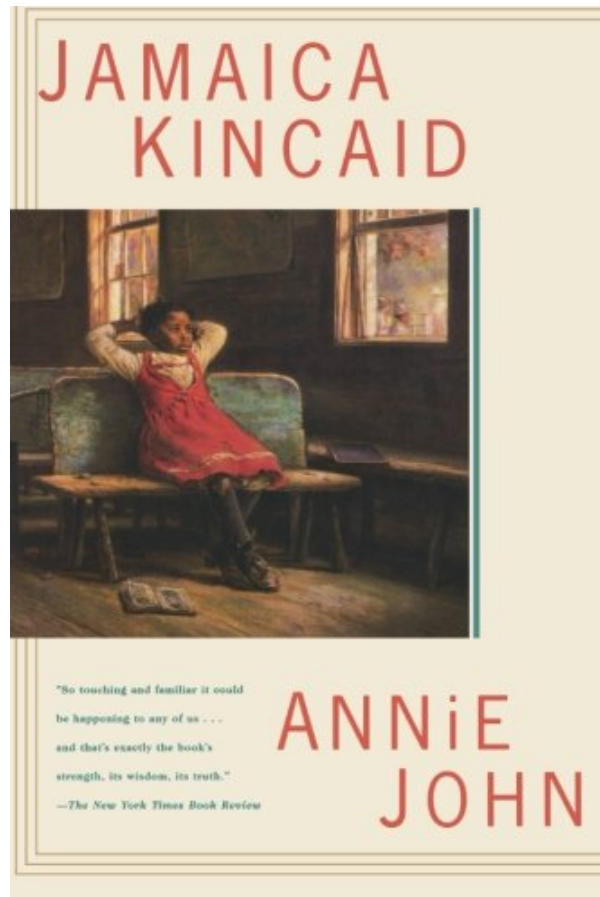


# ANNIE JOHN: A NOVEL BY JAMAICA KINCAID



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JAMAICA  
KINCAID



"So touching and familiar it could  
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—*The New York Times Book Review*

ANNIE  
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## Amazon.com Review

Jamaica Kincaid beautifully delineates hatred and fear, because she knows they are often a step away from love and obsession. At the start of Annie John, her 10-year-old heroine is engulfed in family happiness and safety. Though Annie loves her father, she is all eyes for her mother. When she is almost 12, however, the idyll ends and she falls into deep disfavor. This inexplicable loss mars both lives, as each grows adept at public falsity and silent betrayal. The pattern is set, and extended: "And now I started a new series of betrayals of people and things I would have sworn only minutes before to die for." In front of Annie's father and the world, "We were politeness and kindness and love and laughter." Alone they are linked in loathing. Annie tries to imagine herself as someone in a book--an orphan or a girl with a wicked stepmother. The trouble is, she finds, those characters' lives always end happily. Luckily for us, though not perhaps for her alter ego, Kincaid is too truthful a writer to provide such a finale.

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## About the Author

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Annie John is a haunting and provocative story of a young girl growing up on the island of Antigua. A classic coming-of-age story in the tradition of *The Catcher in the Rye* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Kincaid's novel focuses on a universal, tragic, and often comic theme: the loss of childhood. Annie's voice—urgent, demanding to be heard—is one that will not soon be forgotten by readers.

An adored only child, Annie has until recently lived an idyllic life. She is inseparable from her beautiful mother, a powerful presence, who is the very center of the little girl's existence. Loved and cherished, Annie grows and thrives within her mother's benign shadow. Looking back on her childhood, she reflects, "It was in such a paradise that I lived." When she turns twelve, however, Annie's life changes, in ways that are often mysterious to her. She begins to question the cultural assumptions of her island world; at school she instinctively rebels against authority; and most frighteningly, her mother, seeing Annie as a "young lady," ceases to be the source of unconditional adoration and takes on the new and unfamiliar guise of adversary. At the end of her school years, Annie decides to leave Antigua and her family, but not without a measure of sorrow, especially for the mother she once knew and never ceases to mourn. "For I could not be sure," she reflects, "whether for the rest of my life I would be able to tell when it was really my mother and when it was really her shadow standing between me and the rest of the world."

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- Original language: English
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- Dimensions: 8.26" h x .44" w x 5.46" l, .32 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 160 pages

## Features

- Great product!

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## Most helpful customer reviews

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Five Stars

By Seraphina

*Annie John* by Jamaica Kincaid arrived early so I was able to complete my class project Thank You.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

*A Girl Created In Her Own Image: Jamaica Kincaid*

By sara dinges

A young girl's relationship with her mother can be an intimate and trying experience. In *Annie John*, Jamaica Kincaid relives intimate experiences and explicitly describes "intense emotional bonds between mother and daughter" (Draper 1164). The novel takes place in the small town of Antigua, where the young girl, Annie John grows, learns and experiences many different relationships. As *Annie John* goes through childhood into becoming a young adult, the reader grows and learns along with her. The reader gets a feeling that Kincaid copied this novel from one of her journals as an adolescent. The feelings portrayed are so in tune with that of a young girl. Kincaid's relationships are so believable and real because they directly parallel her own life at that age. Annie John first experiences a surreal, unbreakable bond with her mother. Kincaid uses unique dialect to illustrate their beautiful connection. When Annie John's mother begins to encourage her to become her own person, Annie John feels her mother is pushing her away and begins to resent her for it. As Annie John begins to meet other girls her age she indulges into new and more exciting relationships. As her new bonds become more prevalent the bond with her mother begins to fade. Annie John begins to question her mother's rules and craves her own identity. This journey for her identity ultimately destroys their relationship and a hatred begins to fester. Annie John soon realizes that her small town of Antigua is only holding her back, she decides to leave for England. Kincaid's imagery and storytelling is absolutely enticing. This story will teach a range of readers about the sacred relationship between mothers and daughters. Kincaid makes the reader question or relive their own experiences. This semi-autobiographical work delivers an emotional journey concerning the hardships of living in a post-colonial society while trying to establish your own identity separate from that of your mother.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

A simple but complex little girl

By Nichelle Bailey

Annie John, a novel by Jamaica Kincaid, covers a young girl's coming of age, from the age of ten through the age of seventeen. Annie John is a very angry, confused young black girl growing up Antigua. Annie's mother encourages her to take on more responsibility as she grows older, but Annie fights her maturity. She wants to continue her early childhood relationship she has had with her mother. In Annie John, Kincaid takes the simple subject of a young girl's coming of age and turns it into a profound, sensitive novel. She effectively lets her audience have a bird's eye view of the changing relationship between a young girl and her mother and the turmoil related to these changes in roles. When the audience finishes reading Annie John, they are not only familiar with what it was like to grow up in Antigua, but they leave with the knowledge of the complexity of the mother-daughter relationship. Kincaid clearly tells us the advantages and disadvantages of life in Antigua and how most girls hold their mother in such a high esteem. Most novels are written either for men or women or girls or boys but this novel is interchangeable; any person of any age or gender can identify with the characters and their situations in this novel. Traditionally, Jamaica Kincaid writes about her life in Antigua; however, this book, although not autobiographical, is possibly a comparison of her life and the life of the character, Annie. Jamaica Kincaid, in Annie John, is able to effectively combine aspects of culture and history to illustrate the complexity of Annie John's relationship with her mother and how her relationship with her mother affected her relationships with others.

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