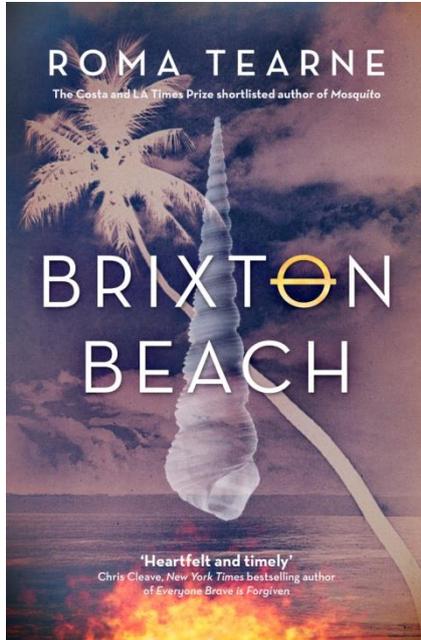


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Reading Group Guide to *Brixton Beach* by Roma Tearne



When family tragedy strikes, Alice Fonseka, the dreamy, artistic child of a Sinhalese mother and Tamil father, leaves the beautiful island of Sri Lanka. Unable to bear the injustice of what has happened, her family heads for England.

There, in a totally foreign environment, Alice builds a life for herself and finds outlets for her art. But she remains restless, haunted by memories of the past, and, even in London, the threat of violence is never far away.

Praise for Roma Tearne

'Heartfelt and timely' Chris Cleave, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Everyone Brave is Forgiven*

'Roma Tearne is an exquisite writer and captivating storyteller' Aminatta Forna, author of *The Memory of Love*

'Tearne is a vividly sensitive writer who spares her readers unnecessary sentiment and hones in on raw emotions just

below the surface' *The Independent*

About the author

Roma Tearne is a Sri Lankan-born, Oxford-based artist, film-maker and writer. Her debut novel, *Mosquito*, was shortlisted for the 2007 Costa First Novel Award and LA Times First Fiction Prize. *The Swimmer* was longlisted for the Orange Prize in 2011 and Asian Man Booker in 2012.

Discussion points

- 'Tearne brings her skills as a painter to her writing' wrote the *Sunday Telegraph*. In what way can you see the influence of Roma Tearne's art in the novel?
- The story of *Brixton Beach* is strongly autobiographical. Tearne was also born to parents across the ethnic divide in Sri Lanka, moved to England as a girl and has never returned. Many of Tearne's other novels deal with the Sri Lankan war and the migrant experience. Why do you think she keeps returning to these subjects?
- Why do you think Tearne chose to begin and end her novel with a fictionalised account of the 7/7 London bombings?
- What impression of Sri Lanka did you take from the book?
- 'The refugee in all of us can recognise the desperate desire to belong and the sometimes terrible price we pay for it' wrote *The Independent*. To what extent is this a novel about rootlessness or striving to belong?
- What do you think is the most important relationship in Alice Fonseka's life and what effect does it have on her?