

Le cÅ“ur Å rire et Å pleurer

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✓ Verified Book of Le cÅ“ur Å rire et Å pleurer

Summary:

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With the clarity of Caribbean sunshine and no trace of nostalgia, novelist Maryse Condé recalls her youth in Guadeloupe and in Paris. As a retired civil servant and a schoolteacher, Condé's father and his much younger wife were entitled to regular paid vacations in the City of Light; as a child making her first trip in 1946, young Maryse was upset to see white waiters condescending to her well-educated parents, "as much French as they are." It was her first taste of the colonial contradictions that would increasingly trouble this intelligent, rebellious girl, born on a Mardi Gras afternoon to the rowdy beat of gwoka drums, an audible manifestation of the low-class island culture her parents disdained. Condé's 17 impressionistic autobiographical sketches cast a pointed glance over the racial hierarchy of Guadeloupe, but it's not a bitter book. Her parents were proud to be French but also proud to be examples of black achievement; they raised their daughter to excel, and she did, though perhaps not as they would have preferred. Condé is the first to appreciate the irony of discovering "the real Caribbean" as a student in a Parisian lycée, where she was encouraged by a communist teacher to give her class "a presentation of a book from your island.

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