

Le Prince Maurice Prize 2010

Winner Announced

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The winner of Le Prince Maurice Prize for literary love stories 2010
is announced today, 5 June 2010.



Julia Gregson - a former cowgirl, shearer's cook, foreign correspondent and house model for Hardy Amies - has been awarded this prestigious Prize for her second novel, *East of the Sun*. Set in 1928 India, *East of the Sun* tells the story of three young women on their way to India, each with a new life in mind but unprepared for what lies ahead.

Now in its eighth year, this unique Prize aims to celebrate the very best in literary love stories. These are stories of the highest literary quality that engage the heart as well as the head, and must be broadly on the theme of love in any of its forms. The prize is awarded to an English-speaking writer every second year (alternating with a French-speaking winner).

Patron of the prize, critically acclaimed author **Sebastian Faulks**, presented Julia with Le Prince Maurice Prize Trophy and a two-week Writer's Retreat at Constance Le Prince Maurice.

Sebastian Faulks commented:

'The writer and the judges have had a very successful week of cultural exchange with the people of Mauritius, and the judges have picked a worthy winner from three equally good novels.'

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President of the Prize, author and journalist **Tim Lott**, made the announcement at the awards dinner at Constance Le Prince Maurice in Mauritius. He commented:

'This was by far the most closely fought battle in the prize's history. All the past winners have been by a significant majority, whereas this time there was no space between the books. The deadlock broke after several hours' vigorous and impassioned discussion, and finally all the judges supported the decision fully. Julia Gregson's big, ambitious novel was described as 'Tolstoyan' by one judge, and in its broad canvas and huge ambition, it deserved the label. Furthermore, it is without doubt one of the most simply and profoundly enjoyable books to ever win the prize.'

The other two books shortlisted for the 2010 Le Prince Maurice Prize were *Small Wars* by Sadie Jones and *Whatever Makes you Happy* by William Sutcliffe.

On winning the prize, **Julia Gregson** said:

'I'm absolutely delighted to have won this prize. All three of us shortlisted authors agreed that even if we didn't win it would have felt as if we'd won. A week in a marvellous hotel, a chance to teach in local schools, great talks and laughs at night with all the other authors. It's been an unforgettable experience.'

Also present at the awards ceremony at Le Prince Maurice were the judging panel, which this year includes:

Esther Freud, Esther trained as an actress before writing her first novel *Hideous Kinky*, published in 1991. She has since written six more novels, including *The Sea House* and *Love Falls*.

Mike Gayle, Mike is the author of eight bestselling works of fiction and one work of non-fiction entitled *The To Do List*. His latest novel, *The Importance of Being a Bachelor* is out May 2010.

Nigel Williams, Nigel is an Emmy award-winning screenwriter - most notably for his screenplay *Elizabeth I* starring Helen Mirren. He has written twelve novels and is also a playwright, and his stage play *Class Enemy* is still being performed all over the world.

Also on the panel were the two regular Mauritian judges - authors **Carl de Souza** and **Kumari Issur**, and the President, **Tim Lott**.

Constance Le Prince Maurice is one of the world's most elegant five-star resorts. With this prize, the hotel celebrates the duality of cultures within Mauritius - both English and French, and coincides with the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the British settlement in Mauritius.

The Prize commemorated this anniversary with a short story competition for Mauritian school children on the theme of love in 1810, judged by Le Prince Maurice Prize jury.

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Notes to editors

- The judges and longlisted authors are available for interview. Please contact **Colman Getty** for more information, including images and biography.
- *We are Now Beginning our Descent* by **James Meek** (Canongate) won Le Prince Maurice Prize in 2008, *Becoming Strangers* by **Louise Dean** (Scribner) won Le Prince Maurice Prize in 2006 and *Buddha Da* by **Anne Donovan** (Canongate) won Le Prince Maurice Prize in 2004. Previous shortlisted authors include Dan Rhodes, Benjamin Markovits, Joanna Briscoe and Charlotte Mendelson.
- **Constance Le Prince Maurice** is located on the north-east of Mauritius. Le Prince Maurice, a member of Relais & Châteaux, is set within 60 acres of tropical gardens with three beaches and its own lagoon.
- The 2010 longlist was:

The Very Thought of You	Rosie Alison	<i>Alma Books</i>
Small Wars	Sadie Jones	<i>Chatto & Windus</i>
Girl in a Blue Dress	Gaynor Arnold	<i>Tindal Street Press</i>
The Madonna of the Almonds	Marina Fiorato	<i>Beautiful Books</i>
The Enemy of the Good	Michael Arditti	<i>Arcadia Books</i>
East of the Sun	Julia Gregson	<i>Orion Books</i>
Jeff in Venice, Death in Varanasi	Geoff Dyer	<i>Canongate</i>
West Coast	Kate Muir	<i>Headline</i>
Whatever Makes you Happy	William Sutcliffe	<i>Bloomsbury</i>

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The Shortlist

East of the Sun by Julia Gregson

Orion Paperback Original, £7.99

Autumn 1928. The Kaiser-i-Hind is en route to Bombay. In Cabin D38, Viva Holloway, an inexperienced chaperone, is beginning to feel as though she's made a mistake. Her advert in *The Lady* has resulted in three unsettling young charges to be escorted to India.

Rose, a beautiful, dangerously naive English girl, is about to be married to the cavalry officer she has met only a handful of times. Victoria, her bridesmaid, is determined to lose her virginity en route before finding a husband of her own. And overshadowing all else, the malevolent presence of disturbed schoolboy Guy Glover.

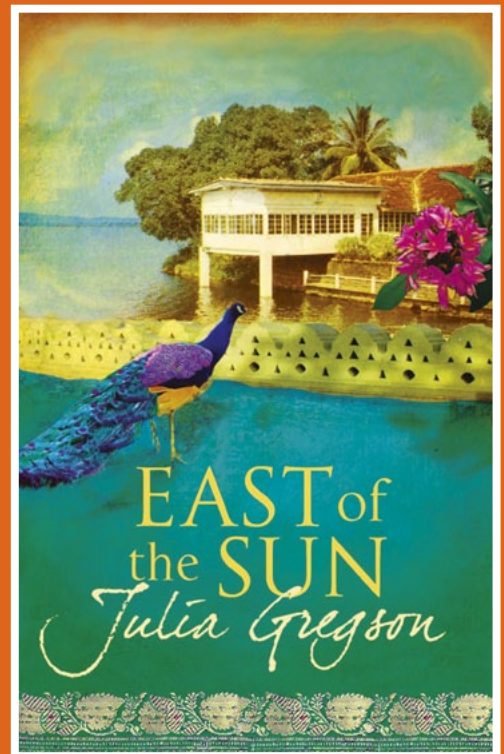
From the parties of the wealthy Bombay socialites, to the ragged orphans on Tamarind Street, *East of the Sun* is everything an historical novel should be: alive with glorious detail, fascinating characters and masterful storytelling.

Julia Gregson has worked as a jillaroo (a cowgirl in the Australian outback), a shearer's cook, and a house model for Hardy Amies before becoming a journalist. She has travelled to Vietnam and India as a foreign correspondent, and worked in New York. Her work has appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *SHE*, *Observer*, *Times* and the *Literary Review*. Her first novel, *The Water Horse*, was published in 2005, and *East of the Sun* was a Richard and Judy Summer Read.

Married with one daughter and four step-children, Julia now lives in Wales with two Welsh cobs, a Shetland and two dogs.

For further information and interview requests, please contact

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The Shortlist

Small Wars by Sadie Jones

Vintage, £7.99

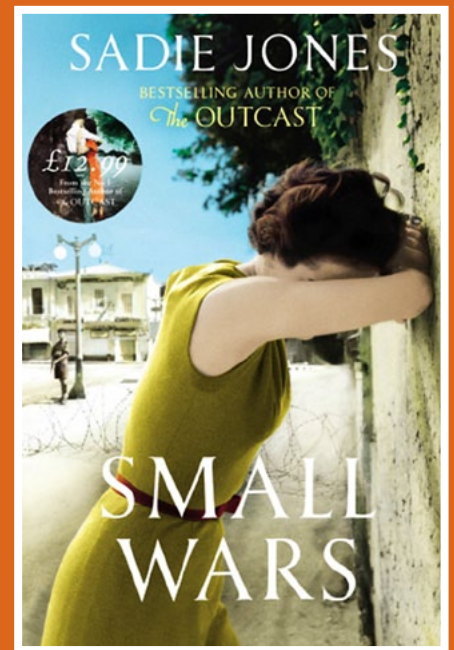
Hal Treherne is a young and dedicated soldier on the brink of a brilliant career. Impatient to see action, his other deep commitment is to Clara, his beautiful 'red, white and blue girl'.

When Hal is transferred to the Mediterranean, Clara, now his wife, and their baby daughters join him. But the stifling atmosphere of Cyprus is no 'sunshine posting' and the island is in the heat of the Emergency. The skirmishes are far from glorious and operations often rough and bloody. The atrocities Hal is drawn into take him further from Clara: a betrayal that is only part of the shocking personal crisis to come.

Small Wars is an emotionally charged, intense and spell-binding picture of a man, and his marriage, in crisis. Sadie Jones has produced a passionate, gut-wrenching and brilliantly researched depiction of a 'small war' with devastating consequences and in doing so, raises important questions that resonate profoundly today.

Sadie Jones cannot remember a time that she did not write. After travelling extensively, Sadie moved to Paris where she taught English - and wrote her first screenplay. She settled in London and spent several years as a screenwriter before writing *The Outcast* which won the Costa First Novel Award, was a Richard and Judy Summer Read and shortlisted for the Orange Prize. Sadie is married and has two children.

*For further information and interview requests, please contact
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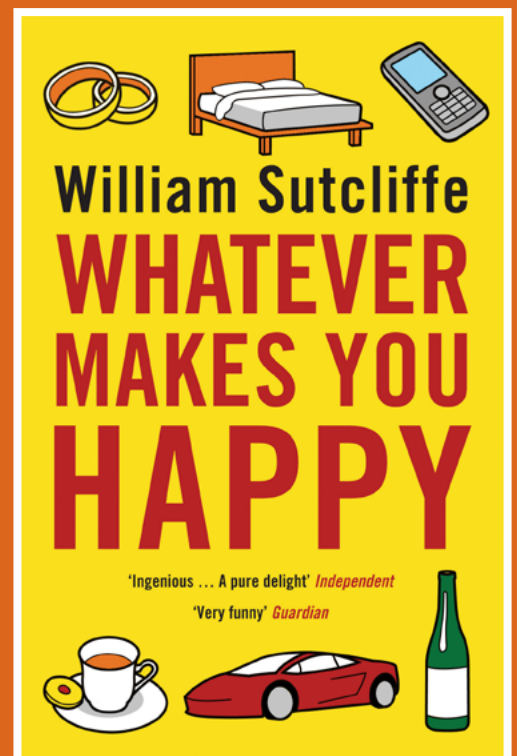
The Shortlist

Whatever makes you Happy by William Sutcliffe

Bloomsbury Paperbacks, £7.99

Matt, Daniel and Paul were childhood friends. Now in their thirties, they've lost touch and have only one thing in common: their mothers. Little do they know that, having spent a cardless Mother's Day discussing how their emotionally dysfunctional offspring should be settling down, Carol, Gillian and Helen have decided to pay their wayward sons a visit. On the same day, they turn up on their sons' doorsteps, uninvited and unannounced. Their plan is to reestablish the mother-son bond by moving in for one week. Just a week. Surely that's not a lot to ask...

William Sutcliffe is the author of four previous novels, *New Boy*, *Are You Experienced?*, *The Love Hexagon* and *Bad Influence*, which have been translated into twenty languages.



For further information and interview requests, please contact
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