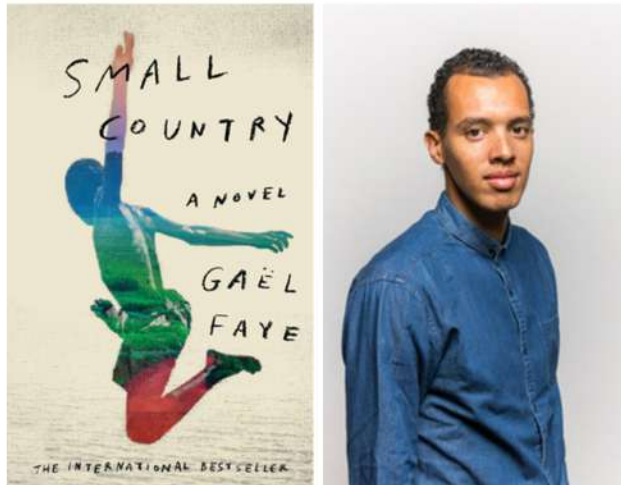


Why you should read Gaël Faye's

# Small Country

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Gaël Faye's *Small Country* (*Petit Pays*) is much more than a novel. It contains a much deeper meaning and reflection on humanity, a poignant exploration of identity issues and a reminder of the residual consequences of war. Set in Burundi during the 1990s, this book tells the story of Gabriel's journey into manhood through the landmines of ethnic tensions and political instability.

At its heart, *Small Country* is an intimate tale that immerses readers in the characters' worlds—their joys and sorrows, dreams, and anxieties. Through Gabriel's eyes, we can watch his community deteriorate with the gradual elimination of long-term ethnic differences resulting from violence and mass murder. Faye employs a language that compels readers into his vividly portrayed yet immediate and timeless world.

One of the most striking accomplishments of this novel is its ability to make those caught up in conflict look human again. When Gabriel interacts with his kin, friends, or other people around him, it becomes apparent how serious violence can be for any ordinary person. Faye has given the characters of *Small Country* an imperfect life, throughout which they must grapple with the circumstances that have been thrust upon them.

More than anything else, this novel shows how changeable and complicated identities can be. Gabriel, trying to come to terms with his mixed blood and the changing loyalties of those around him, urges us to think about our own experiences of being insiders or outsiders. Faye's work deftly handles the intricate aspects of racial and ethnic identity, revealing how social structures and historical roots shape individual self-perception and community.

This aside, *Small Country* is a powerful reminder that political violence comes at a heavy human cost. Using Gabriel's narrative, Faye brings to light the horrific toll that children bear in wars, which make them the most vulnerable casualties. This brave record of despair, suffering, loss and

bouncing back from trauma attests to the incredible toughness of humankind in times when life seems unbearable.

Additionally, through its immediate storytelling impact, *Small Country* exposes readers to modern society and forces them to grapple with complex realities about lingering colonial effects, apartheid divisions based on tribes' affiliation, and geopolitics. Faye meshes the lives of individuals with their politics so that readers think critically about issues relating to a fair distribution of resources and power struggles between communities with varied notions regarding justice.

In *Small Country*, Faye doesn't just narrate a story: He immerses the audience in grappling with deep inquiries on identity,

post-conflict legacies, and possibilities for reconciliation and healing. Gabriel's journey forces readers to contemplate their experiences and how the world influences them.

Ultimately, *Small Country* affirms how literature can illuminate human complexity. With sympathy and insight, Faye investigates general human themes, creating a narrative that traverses all boundaries and addresses universal problems that connect us all. It is an unmatched piece of writing that must be read and confronted. Through its heartrending depiction of issues surrounding identity and resistance, this novel gives readers a profound reading experience that will not fade after closing its last page.

### Other notable works by Gaël Faye

