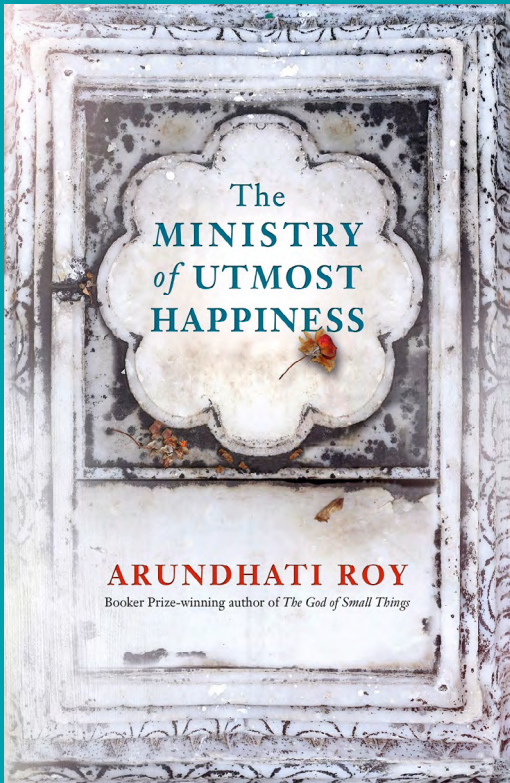




# Reader's Guide



Other novels by Arundhati Roy  
*The God of Small Things* (1997)

# The Ministry of Utmost Happiness Arundhati Roy

Hamish Hamilton

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## About the author

Arundhati Roy is the author of *The God of Small Things*, which won the Booker Prize in 1997 and has been translated into more than 40 languages. Since then she has published several works of non-fiction, including *The Algebra of Infinite Justice*, *Listening to Grasshoppers* and *Broken Republic*. She was born in 1961 and now lives in New Delhi, India.

## About the book

In a city graveyard, a resident unrolls a threadbare Persian carpet between two graves. On a concrete sidewalk, a baby appears quite suddenly, a little after midnight, in a crib of litter. In a snowy valley, a father writes to his five-year-old daughter about the number of people who attended her funeral. And in the Jannat Guest House, two people who've known each other all their lives sleep with their arms wrapped around one another as though they have only just met.

Here is a cast of unforgettable characters caught up in the tide of history. Told with a whisper, with a shout, with tears and with laughter, it is a love story and a provocation. Its heroes, present and departed, human and animal, have been broken by the world we live in and then mended by love – and for this reason, they will never surrender.

## What the judges thought

'A rich and vital book' that 'comes from the bowels of India', *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* was thought by the judges to be of 'remarkable scale' and to have 'extraordinary style and intelligence'.

## Discussion points

The novel takes us on a journey across the Indian subcontinent. How well does Roy transport you to the places she describes?

To which of the characters Anjum, Tilo and Musa did you feel most connected? Why do you think this is?

Did you enjoy the different styles of narrative, the letters, notebook entries and similar? What did they bring to the story?

How is the role of motherhood explored in the novel?

After reading the novel, how did you interpret the meaning of its title?

## Useful links

[www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/the-ministry-of-utmost-happiness-by-arundhati-roy-book-review-a7791941](http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/the-ministry-of-utmost-happiness-by-arundhati-roy-book-review-a7791941)

[www.theguardian.com/books/2017/may/27/arundhati-roy-fiction-takes-time-second-novel-ministry-utmost-happiness](http://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/may/27/arundhati-roy-fiction-takes-time-second-novel-ministry-utmost-happiness)

[www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/07/arundhati-roys-fascinating-mess/528684/](http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/07/arundhati-roys-fascinating-mess/528684/)