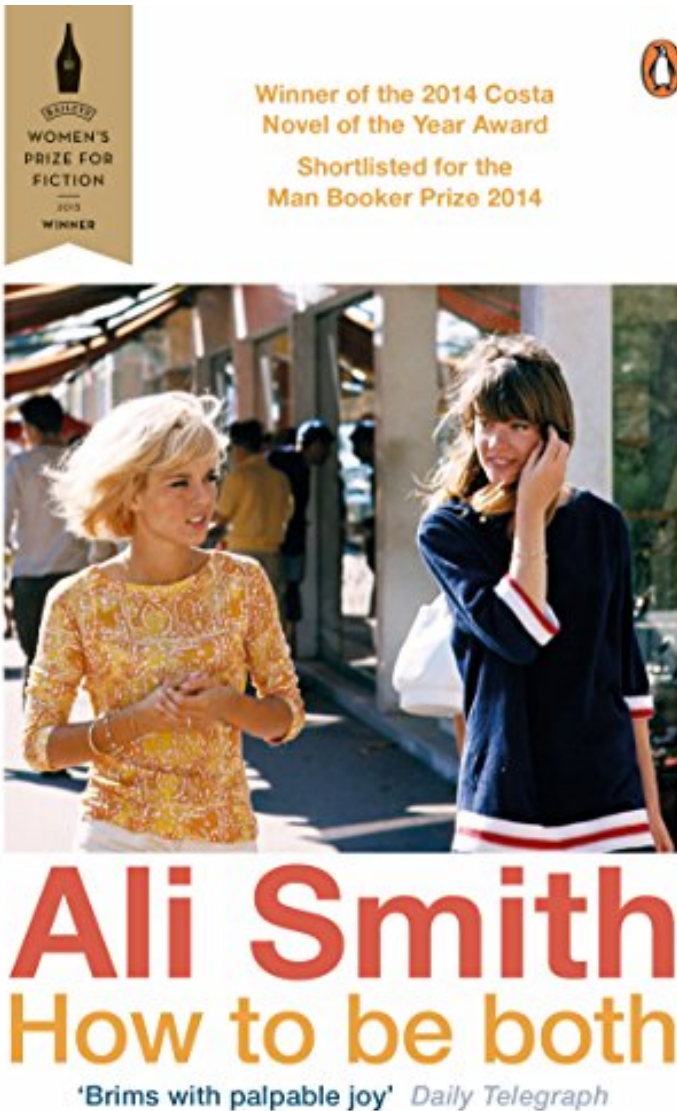


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How to be Both



Par Ali Smith
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteur
WINNER OF THE BAILEYS WOMEN'S PRIZE FOR FICTION 2015
WINNER OF THE GOLDSMITHS PRIZE 2014
SHORTLISTED FOR THE MAN BOOKER PRIZE 2014
WINNER OF THE 2014 COSTA NOVEL AWARD
WINNER OF THE SALTIRE SOCIETY LITERARY BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARD 2014
NOMINATED FOR THE FOLIO PRIZE 2015
How to be both is the dazzling new novel by Ali Smith
Passionate, compassionate, vitally inventive and scrupulously playful, Ali Smith's novels are like nothing else. How to be both is a novel all about art's versatility. Borrowing from painting's fresco technique to make an original literary double-take, it's a fast-moving genre-bending conversation between forms, times, truths and fictions. There's a renaissance artist of the 1460s. There's the child of a

child of the 1960s. Two tales of love and injustice twist into a singular yarn where time gets timeless, structural gets playful, knowing gets mysterious, fictional gets real - and all life's givens get given a second chance. 'Brims with palpable joy' Daily Telegraph 'She's a genius, genuinely modern in the heroic, glorious sense' Alain de Botton 'I take my hat off to Ali Smith. Her writing lifts the soul' Evening Standard Ali Smith was born in Inverness in 1962 and lives in Cambridge. She is the author of *Artful*, *There but for the, Free Love*, *Like, Hotel World*, *Other Stories* and *Other Stories*, *The Whole Story* and *Other Stories*, *The Accidental*, *Girl Meets Boy* and *The First Person* and *Other Stories*.

Extrait Consider this moral conundrum for a moment, Georges mother says to George whos sitting in the front passenger seat. Not says. Said. Georges mother is dead. What moral conundrum? George says. The passenger seat in the hire car is strange, being on the side the drivers seat is on at home. This must be a bit like driving is, except without the actual, you know, driving. Okay. Youre an artist, her mother says. Am I? George says. Since when? And is that a moral conundrum? Ha ha, her mother says. Humour me. Imagine it. Youre an artist. This conversation is happening last May, when Georges mother is still alive, obviously. Shes been dead since September. Now its January, to be more precise its just past midnight on New Years Eve, which means it has just become the year after the year in which Georges mother died. Georges father is out. It is better than him being at home, standing maudlin in the kitchen or going round the house switching things off and on. Henry is asleep. She just went in and checked on him; he was dead to the world, though not as dead as the word dead literally means when it means, you know, dead. This will be the first year her mother hasnt been alive since the year her mother was born. That is so obvious that it is stupid even to think it and yet so terrible that you cant not think it. Both at once. Anyway George is spending the first minutes of the new year looking up the lyrics of an old song. Lets Twist Again. Lyrics by Kal Mann. The words are pretty bad. Lets twist again like we did last summer. Lets twist again like we did last year. Then theres a really bad rhyme, a rhyme that isnt, properly speaking, even a rhyme. Do you remember when Things were really hummin. Hummin doesnt rhyme with summer, the line doesnt end in a question mark, and is it meant to mean, literally, do you remember that time when things smelt really bad? Then Lets twist again, twisting time is here. Or, as all the sites say, twistin time. At least theyve used an apostrophe, the George from before her mother died says. I do not give a fuck about whether some site on the internet attends to grammatical correctness, the George from after says. That before and after thing is about mourning, is what people keep saying. They keep talking about how grief has stages. Theres some dispute about how many stages of grief there are. There are three, or five, or some people say seven. Its quite like the songwriter actually couldnt be bothered to think of words. Maybe he was in one of the three, five or seven stages of mourning too. Stage nine (or twenty three or a hundred and twenty three or ad infinitum, because nothing will ever not be like this again): in this stage you will no longer be bothered with whether songwords mean anything. In fact you will hate almost all songs. But George has to find a song to which you can do this specific dance. It being so apparently contradictory and meaningless is no doubt a bonus. It will be precisely why the song sold so many copies and was such a big deal at the time. People like things not to be too meaningful. Okay, Im imagining, George in the passenger seat last May in Italy says at exactly the same time as George at home in England the following January stares at the meaninglessness of the words of an old song. Outside the car window Italy unfurls round and over them so hot and yellow it looks like its been sandblasted. In the back Henry snuffles lightly, his eyes closed, his mouth open. The band of the seatbelt is over his forehead because he is so small. Youre an artist, her mother says, and youre working on a project with a lot of other artists. And everybody on the project is getting the same amount, salary-wise. But you believe that what youre doing is worth more than everyone on the project, including you, is getting paid. So you write a letter to the man whos commissioned the work and you ask him to give you more money than everyone else is getting. Am I worth more? George says. Am I better than the other artists? Does that matter? her mother says. Is that what matters? Is it me or is it the work thats worth more? George says. Good. Keep going, her mother says. Is this real? George says. Is it hypothetical? Does that matter? her mother says.

Revue de presse *Magical* (Sunday Times) *Radical, dazzling . . .* Those writers making doomy predictions about the death of the novel should read Smith's re-imagined novel/s, and take note of the life it contains (Independent) How to be both is a demanding, restless, brain-ache of a book that is simultaneously a delight and a challenge... What happens here is that you have to let go and revel in life's poetry. The effect is magical (Sunday Times) Ali Smith is an unrepentant stylist... How to be both reads as if she has summoned words from some region of the unconscious and released them in a trance... Smith's fervent, vital, incantatory prose is entirely her own (Joanna Kavenna Prospect) Dealing with grief, obsession, sexuality and the versatility of art itself, Smith has

created a stunning work that is as rewarding as it is challenging (The List)Dazzling (Independent)Stunning (The List)This warm, funny, subtle, layered, intelligent book deserves to be read at least one-and-a-half times (Honor Clerk Spectator)Utterly contemporary and vividly historical (Holly Williams The Independent)Vital (Prospect)One of the most inventive writers alive and when she starts to have fun with language, and even the idea of what a book should be, the result is exciting, full of joy and wryly funny (Emerald Street)Ali Smith is a one-off. Her imagination and originality make her one of the most exciting novelists of her generation and for such a profound book this is a remarkably easy and immensely enjoyable read. Both George and Francesco touch the heart and their thoughts and ideas linger on in the mind long after the final page. (Daily Express)Smith is the brightest spark in a recent explosion of female novelists taking dizzying risks with form and voice . . . most contemporary male authors feel Jurassic by comparison. (Metro)A marvellous exploration of what it means to look, then look again. Spiralling and twisting stories suggest the ways in which we can transcend walls and barriers - not only between people but between emotions, art forms and historical periods. It is a jeu d'esprit about a girl coming of age and coming to terms with her mother's death, a ghosting of a Renaissance fresco painter in a twenty-first-century frame and an exhortation to do the twist (Sarah Churchwell New Statesman Books of the Year 2014)Brilliant. No one combines experimentalism and soulfulness like Ali Smith (Craig Taylor Observer Books of the Year)Dizzingly good and so clever that it makes you want to dance (New Statesman)Ali Smith's novels soar higher every time and How to be both doesn't disappoint (Julie Myerson Observer)Two of the most rewarding reads of the year were wrapped up in one book: Ali Smith's How to Be Both (Hamish Hamilton), a novel in two sections published to be read in either order. Bringing together the effervescent narratives of an Italian Renaissance fresco painter and a modern teenager, the book explored love, art and possibility with an extraordinary freshness that won it a Booker shortlisting and the Goldsmiths prize for originality. (Guardian)I've decided - and I do not write this flippantly - that Ali Smith is a genius (LA of Books)Many of this novel's great joys derive from Smith's ability to tie together the two seemingly disparate stories in wonderful and unexpected ways. It's a meditative book, steeped in the voices of these characters. . . . Ali Smith is a master storyteller, and How to Be Both is a charming and erudite novel that can quite literally make us rethink the way we read (Andrew Ervin The Philadelphia Inquirer)Captivating. . . . Your experience of the novel will be different depending on which story you start with. But either way, the revelations and conclusions will be the same. How to Be Both indeed works both ways, demonstrating not only the power of art itself but also the mastery of Smith's prose (San Francisco Chronicle)A synthesis of questions long contemplated by an extraordinarily thoughtful author, who succeeds quite well in implanting those questions into well-drawn, memorable people (The New York Times)An entirely delightful and moving story with characters so endearing and human that you want to remark, as Francesco's mother does about her daughter's drawing, 'It's very good. Well seen.' . . . When you reach the end of this playful and wise novel, you want to turn to the beginning and read it again to piece together its mysteries and keep both halves simultaneously in mind. Reading Ali Smith's How to Be Both is like finishing a cake and having another delicious one still before you to enjoy (The Dallas Morning News)How to be both celebrates the gift of surprise. . . . I found myself smiling again and again, caught unawares by how well and how beautifully Smith ties together so many seemingly disparate elements. . . . The past and present are connected through an Internet search, themes of death and memory are explored, pop culture and high art swirl together, and careful research allows the line between fiction and history to blur (Betty Scott Bookslut)Inventive, playful, compassionate. An immensely enjoyable read. (Daily Express)