



The Island

By Victoria Hislop

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The Petrakis family lives in the small Greek seaside village of Plaka. Just off the coast is the tiny island of Spinalonga, where the nation's leper colony once was located—a place that has haunted four generations of Petrakis women. There's Eleni, ripped from her husband and two young daughters and sent to Spinalonga in 1939, and her daughters Maria, finding joy in the everyday as she dutifully cares for her father, and Anna, a wild child hungry for passion and a life anywhere but Plaka. And finally there's Alexis, Eleni's great-granddaughter, visiting modern-day Greece to unlock her family's past.

A richly enchanting novel of lives and loves unfolding against the backdrop of the Mediterranean during World War II, *The Island* is an enthralling story of dreams and desires, of secrets desperately hidden, and of leprosy's touch on an unforgettable family.

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The Island By Victoria Hislop Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Travel writer Hislop's unwieldy debut novel opens with 25-year-old Alexis leaving Britain for Crete, her mother Sofia's homeland, hoping to ferret out the secrets of Sofia's past and thereby get a handle on her own turbulent life. Sofia's friend Fortini tells Alexis of her grandmother Anna, and great-aunt Maria. Their mother (Alexis's great-grandmother) contracted leprosy in 1939 and went off to a leper colony on the nearby island of Spinalonga, leaving them with their father. Anna snags a wealthy husband, Andreas, but smolders for his renegade cousin, Manoli. When philanderer Manoli chooses Maria, Anna is furious. Conveniently, Maria also contracts leprosy and is exiled, allowing Anna to conduct an affair with Manoli. Meanwhile, Maria feels an attraction to her doctor, who may have similar feelings. Though the plot is satisfyingly twisty, the characters play one note apiece (Anna is prone to dramatic outrages, Maria is humble and kind, and their love interests are jealous and aggressive). Hislop's portrayal of leprosy—those afflicted and the evolving treatment—during the 1940s and 1950s is convincing, but readers may find the narrative's preoccupation with chronicling the minutiae of daily life tedious. (*July*)

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From [Booklist](#)

When beloved schoolteacher Eleni is diagnosed with leprosy, she is exiled to the Greek island of Spinalonga. Left behind on Crete are her husband and two beautiful daughters, headstrong Anna and dutiful Maria. Years later, Eleni's great-granddaughter Alexis returns to Crete to find answers to her family's mysteries.

Conveniently, a witness to her family history is still alive to tell her—and us—the dark story. The novel is a romantic page-turner, but a little shallow. For example, the Nazi occupation of Crete becomes a plot device to turn the boy next door into a hunk, and, after much tribulation, the good are rewarded and the bad punished. The novel, successful in Britain, will probably be a popular beach read and book club selection this summer. There's little to object to in this historical romp. Block, Marta Segal

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Review

'At last -- a beach book with a heart... Meticulous research into Cretan culture...packed with family sagas, doomed love affairs, devastating secrets... She also forces us to reflect on illness, both the nasty, narrow-mindedness of the healthy and the spirit of survival in the so-called "unclean". Her message seems as relevant today as it would have been a century ago' -- Observer 'Hislop carefully evokes the lives of Cretans between the wars and during German occupation, but most commendable is her compassionate portrayal of the outcasts' -- Guardian 20050811 'Hislop's deep research, imagination and patent love of Crete creates a convincing portrait of times on the island. She writes evocatively of the minutiae of traditional life... She...manages to milk the dramatic potential of each unexpected twist and broken engagement, of the ruined and resurrected lives of her characters... A moving and absorbing holiday read that pulls at the heart strings' - - Evening Standard 20050606 'Hislop is an exceptional writer with a strong voice who completely deserves rich success with this debut... Beautifully balanced, vivid and atmospheric prose' -- Newbury Weekly News 20050811 'A page-turning tale that reminds us that love and life continue in even the most extraordinary of circumstances' -- Sunday Express 20050811 A moving and atmospheric tale' -- The Scotsman 20050811 'War, tragedy and passion unfurl against a Mediterranean backdrop in this engrossing debut novel' -- You magazine 20050811 'Passionately engaged with its subject...the author has meticulously researched her fascinating background and medical facts' -- The Sunday Times 20050811 'Wonderful descriptions, strong characters and an intimate portrait of island existence' -- Woman & Home 20050811 'I thought this was an amazing novel... The author does not shrink from the grim details of the illness' progression and the reactions

of the healthy to those afflicted. There is a warmth about the novel and I am sure I will remember it for a long time to come. I shall have great pleasure in recommending this to customers.' -- Bookseller, Ottakars, St Albans 20060203

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Nicolas Olsen:

Information is provisions for people to get better life, information nowadays can get by anyone with everywhere. The information can be a understanding or any news even a problem. What people must be consider if those information which is inside former life are challenging to be find than now's taking seriously which one works to believe or which one the particular resource are convinced. If you get the unstable resource then you have it as your main information we will see huge disadvantage for you. All those possibilities will not happen in you if you take The Island as the daily resource information.

Hubert Smith:

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