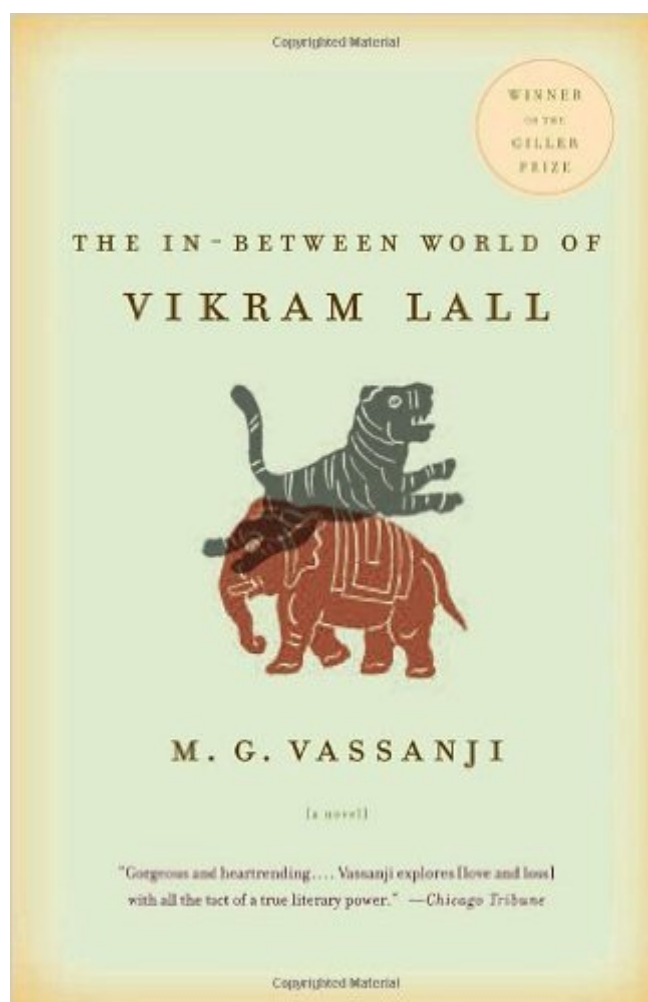


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The In-Between World Of Vikram Lall



Synopsis

Vikram Lall comes of age in 1950s Kenya, at the same time that the colony is struggling towards independence. Against the unsettling backdrop of Mau Mau violence, Vic and his sister Deepa, the grandchildren of an Indian railroad worker, search for their place in a world sharply divided between Kenyans and the British. We follow Vic from a changing Africa in the fifties, to the hope of the sixties, and through the corruption and fear of the seventies and eighties. Hauntingly told in the voice of the now exiled Vic, *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* is an acute and bittersweet novel of identity and family, of lost love and abiding friendship, and of the insidious legacy of the British Empire.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Growing up in Nakuru, Kenya, in the 1950s, Vikram Lall and his sister Deepa, the children of Indian merchants, become friends with British children Bill Bruce and his sister Annie, and with Njoroge, a Kikuyu who lives with his grandfather, the family's gardener. While Vic is secretly in love with Annie, Njoroge is secretly in love with Deepa, both childhood relationships ignoring the cultural and color barriers of the times. The Mau Mau, a Kikuyu group dedicated to ridding the country of the British, are on the march, attacking and killing British men, women, and children. To Lall and his friends, who live in an area where violence has not yet struck, however, they are almost mythic creatures, until the violence strikes close to home, and Vic's life and perceptions are altered forever. Alternating points of view between the present, when Vikram Lall is in his fifties and living outside Toronto, Canada, where he is "numbered one of Africa's most corrupt men," and the early 1950s, when he

lived in a diverse Kenyan community, Vassanji shows how the Lalls are doubly alienated, first from their family in India, whose village, thanks to the British Partition of India, is now part of Pakistan, and from the majority population of Kenya. His depiction of the Lall family, the Indian merchant community, and the African community's hostility towards British rule sets the scene for the action during the next forty years. When Vic, as a young man living in the ultimately independent Kenya, works in the Ministry of Transport and moves up the political ladder, he is powerless to resist orders from his superiors, even though his job is to launder cash coming in as bribes.

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