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Meanwhile, Upriver

By Chatura Rao

Penguin, New Delhi, India, 2008. Paperback. Book Condition: New. First Edition. In the bylanes and ghats of Kashi, or Banaras, Yamini and Shiva's stories unfold. Fat, sharp-tongued Yamini is thirty-eight and unmarried. By day she teaches maths in school. At night she leaves her obese self behind and takes to the skies, light as a bird in her dreams, dancing in the air above the ghats with the love of her life. The ghat is also where Shiva, now eleven years old, was found abandoned by his adoptive father, the charismatic and ambitious sadhu Bhyom Baba. Growing up in Babas ashram near Dashaswamedh Ghat, Shiva eavesdrops on the conversations of sadhus as they pass through the ashram, and hopes to some day find his mother among the women thronging the ghats. One day, Yamini meets Duncan, a researcher, who unlocks the romantic in her and suddenly she feels like the person from her dreams, light and loved. In another part of the city, Shiva is chosen to enact the role of chhota Hanuman in the Ramnagar Ramlila. There he befriends the shy, quiet Shantanu, who plays the part of Janaki, Rams wife. Against the backdrop of the Lila, where political...



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