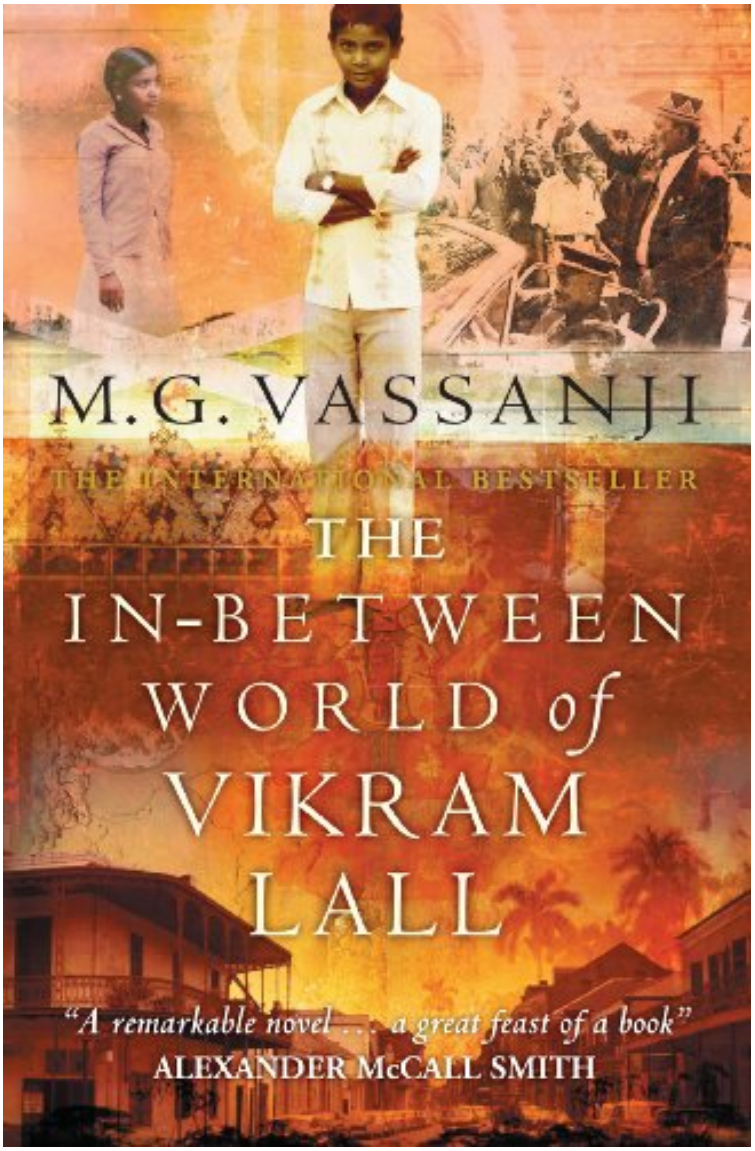
The In-Between World Of Vikram Lall



Par M. G. Vassanji
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[DOWNLOAD] The In-Between World Of Vikram Lall

Par M. G. Vassanji : The In-Between World Of Vikram Lall before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The In-Between World Of Vikram Lall:

Description : Description du produitDouble Giller Prize winner M.G. Vassanji's The In-Between World of Vikram Lall is a haunting novel of corruption and regret that brings to life the complexity and turbulence of Kenyan society in the last five decades. Rich in sensuous detail and historical insight, this is a powerful story of passionate betrayals and political violence, racial tension and the strictures of tradition, told in elegant, assured prose.The novel begins in 1953, with eight-year-old Vikram Lall a witness to the celebrations around the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, just as the Mau Mau guerilla war for independence from Britain begins to gain strength. In a land torn apart by idealism, doubt, political upheaval and terrible acts of violence, Vic and his sister Deepa must find their place among a new generation. Neither colonists nor African, neither white nor black, the Indian brother and sister find themselves somewhere in between in their band of playmates: Bill and Annie, British children, and Njoroge, an African boy. These are the relationships

that will shape the rest of their lives.We follow Vikram through the changes in East African society, the immense promise of the fifties and sixties. But when that hope is betrayed by the corruption and violence of the following decades, Vic is drawn into the Kenyatta government's orbit of graft and power-broking. Njoroge, his childhood friend, can abandon neither the idealism of his youth nor his love for Vic's sister Deepa. But neither the idealism of the one nor the passive cynicism of the other can avert the tragedies that await them.In interviews given when the novel was published, Vassanji commented that The In-Between World of Vikram Lall is the first of his books to deal with his memories of Kenya, where he spent the first 5 years of his life: "I remember these images of fear, of terror. And I thought I had to come back to that and see the whole Mau Mau episode from the Asian point of view. I had never written a book set in Kenya, where my father was from. And when I did, I just felt good about it, because I was going back to one part, one of many homes."The In-Between World of Vikram Lall, a compelling record in the voice of a character described as "a cheat of monstrous and reptilian cunning," took three years to write. After research in Kenya and Britain, M.G. Vassanji devoted himself to the novel in a dark office at the University of Toronto. It was a hard process of creation and discovery, especially as Vassanji is an assiduous editor of his own work: "I come back to it over and over. For me, it's like working on a sculpture. You sort of chip away a bit at a time until you tell yourself it's as perfect as you can make it." Vassanji's fifth novel met with immense Canadian and international success. As well as making him the first author to win the Giller Prize twice, the book was a #1 national bestseller. The In-Between World of Vikram Lall is a profound and careful examination of one man's search for his place in the world; it also takes up themes that have run through Vassanji's work, such as the nature of community in a volatile society, the relations between colony and colonizer, and the inescapable presence of the past. It is also, finally, a deeply personal book: "The major thing that stands out in the book is people who are in-between. The feeling of belonging and not belonging is very central to the book. And that also played out in my life. When we lived in Tanzania we belonged and did not belong because we had come from Kenya. That has been a major thread in my life."

Prsentation de l'diteurSweeping in scope, both historically and geographically, Vassanji weaves a rich tapestry of vivid characters (real and imagined) in a Kenya poised between colonialism and independence. Vikram Lall, like his adopted country, inhabits an 'in-between world': between the pull of his ancestral home in India and the Kenya he loves passionately; between his tragic past in Africa and an unclear future in Canada; between escape from political terror and a seemingly inevitable return home . . . a return that may cost him dearly. A master storyteller, Vassanji intertwines the political and the personal - the rise of the Mau Mau in the last days of colonialism looms large over a plot centring on two love stories and a deep friendship. The result is a sumptuous novel that brilliantly explores the tyranny of history and memory, and questions the individual's role and responsibility in lawless times.ExtraitWho is the third who walks always beside you? -- T.S. Eliot, The Waste LandNeti, neti. (Not this, not that.) -- Brihadaranyaka UpanishadPo pote niendapo anifuata. (Wherever I go he follows me.) -- Swahili riddle; answer: shadowMy name is Vikram Lall. I have the distinction of having been numbered one of Africas most corrupt men, a cheat of monstrous and reptilian cunning. To me has been attributed the emptying of a large part of my troubled countrys treasury in recent years. I head my countrys List of Shame. These and other descriptions actually flatter my intelligence, if not my moral sensibility. But I do not intend here to defend myself or even seek redemption through confession; I simply crave to tell my story. In this clement retreat to which I have withdrawn myself, away from the torrid current temper of my country, I find myself with all the time and seclusion I may ever need for my purpose. I have even come upon a small revelation -- and as I proceed daily to recall and reflect, and lay out on the page, it is with an increasing conviction of its truth, that if more of us told our stories to each other, where I come from, we would be a far happier and less nervous people.I am quite an ordinary man, as you will discover, and moderate almost to a fault. How I came upon my career and my distinction is a surprise even to me. But my times were exceptional and they would leave no one unscathed.Part 1 -- The Year of Our Loves and FriendshipsOneNjoroge who was also called William loved my sister Deepa; I was infatuated with another whose name I cannot utter yet, whose brother was another William; we called him Bill. We had all become playmates recently. It was 1953, the coronation year of our new monarch who looked upon us from afar, a cold England of pastel, watery shades, and I was eight years old.I call forth for you here my beginning, the world of my childhood, in that fateful year of our friendships. It was a world of innocence and play, under a guileless constant sun; as well, of barbarous cruelty and terror lurking in darkest night; a colonial world of repressive, undignified subjecthood, as also of seductive order

and security -- so that long afterwards we would be tempted to wonder if we did not hurry forth too fast straight into the morass that is now our malformed freedom.Imagine an outdoor mall, the type we still call a shopping centre there, a plain stubby strip of shops on open land, with unpaved parking in front. It was accessible from a side road that left the highway, less than a mile away, at the railway station. Far out in the distance, the farthest that you could see through the haze over the flat yellow plains, rose the steep green slopes of the great Rift Valley, down which both the railway and the highway descended to reach us at the floor. Behind us lay most of the rest of Nakuru, the principal town of our province.My family ran a provision store at this Valley Shopping Centre, which was ten minutes walk from the Asian development where we lived. We sold Ovaltine and Milo and Waterburys Compound and Horlicks -- how they roll past memorys roadblocks, these trademarks of a childhood -- and macaroni and marmalade, cheeses and olives, and other such items that the Europeans and the rich Indians who emulated them were used to. Beside us was a small bakery-caf run by a Greek woman, Mrs. Arnauti, for the Europeans -- as all the whites were called -- who trundled down from their farms in their dust-draped vans and pickups to stop by for tea or coffee and colourful iced cakes and neat white sandwiches. Next to it was Alidina Greengrocers. On Saturday mornings, with the schools closed, my sister and I went down to the shop with our parents. Sun-drenched Saturdays is how I think of those days, what memorys trapped for me: days of play. Though it could get cold at times, and in the morning the ground might be covered in frost. At the other end of the mall from us, Lakshmi Sweets was always bustling at midmorning, Indian families having stopped over in their cars for bhajias, samosas, dhokras, bhel-puri, and tea, which they consumed noisily and with gusto. By comparison our end was sedate, orderly: a few vehicles parked, a few rickety white tables outside Arnautis occupied by Europeans on a good day. My father and mother always ordered tea and snacks from Lakshmi, and my sister and I could go to Arnautis, where we were allowed a corner table outside, though not our black friend Njoroge, who with quite a straight face, head in the air and hands in his pockets, would proudly wander off.After hastily consuming sticky Swiss rolls and doughy cheese or spinach pies, Deepa and I ran out to play. There were two handcarts outside the shop for pulling loads, one of them had its handle broken and no one usually minded when we took it out to give each other rides. Deepa, who was seven, ran along beside Njoroge and me, and habitually, in domineering big-brother fashion, I refused her a place in our conveyance, became annoyed at her for running after us, a girl in her two long pigtails and Punjabi pyjama and long shirt. She cried, and every time she did that Njoroge would give her a ride, obligingly push the cart for her all around the parking lot, and I believed they had more fun together than he had with me. That was why I thought he was in love with my sister. Every time I said that, Mother would have a fit, but she never objected to our playing with our friend.One morning just before noon a green Ford pickup drove up and parked outside our store; from it emerged a tall and slim white woman, with brown curls to her shoulders and trousers that seemed rather broad at the hips. She had a long and ruddy face with a pointed chin. She paused to scrutinize the shops in the mall and, I thought, stared severely for a moment at me and my companions, before bending to say something to the two children who were in the passenger seat. The door opened on the other side and out tumbled a boy of my age and a young girl who could have been six; from the back jumped out with some flair an African servantwell dressed in expensive hand-me-downs, as the more favoured servants of the Europeans usually were, much to the envy of other servants. This one sported a brown woollen vest and a tweed jacket. The woman escorted her two children to Arnautis, where they sat at a table outside and in loud voices ordered from the waiter who had come running out to attend, and then she went over to my fathers shop. Soon our own barefoot servant hurried out to hand the European womans servant a bottle of Coke.When she had finished her shopping, her servant was called and he carried her two cartons of purchases to the back of the pickup. Then Mrs. Bruce, as was her name, returned to Arnautis patio and joined a table with two other women and a man. Her two children came out, where Njoroge, Deepa, and I, upon seeing them, now somewhat self-consciously continued our preoccupations with each other and our cart. The boy and girl stood quite still, outside the guardrail, staring at us.Do you want a ride? I asked the boy suddenly.Without a word he came and sat in the cart and we pushed him away at top speed with hoots and growls to simulate various engine sounds. When we stopped, after a distance, having gathered up a cloud of dust across the parking lot, the boy got out and dusted himself off as his sister whined, Now me, Willie, its my turn now.He paid her no attention but shook Njoroges and my hands solemnly, saying, William -- call me Bill, and pleased to meet you.We shook hands wordlessly, then I pointed to my friend and said hesitantly: Njoroge.That day Deepa and I stopped calling Njoroge by his English name. And I believe he also stopped using it for himself.Now he in his turn pointed at me and said: Vic--Vikram.Well then --

jolly good, Bill said. Lets give those two girls a ride --He wore shorts of grey wool, with a rather fine blue checked shirt. His hair, like that of his sister, was a light brown. And both wore black shoes and white socks. The girl was in red overalls, and two ribbons of a like colour tied her hair in clumps at the back. We drove the two girls with speed right up to the line of shops, as they hung on, clutching for dear life, screaming with joy.From the Hardcover edition.From Publishers WeeklyAs an Indian child growing up in 1950s Kenya, Vikram Lall is at the center of two warring worldsone of childhood innocence, the other "a colonial world of repressive, undignified subjecthood" in which the innocent often meet with the cruelest of fates. He passes his early days in Nakuru playing with his sister, Deepa, their neighborhood friend Njoroge, and English expatriates Annie and Bill Bruce. Though Vic is third-generation African, he understands that Njo is somehow more Kenyan than he or his family will ever be. Police regularly raid Nakuru looking for Mau Mau rebels, who are terrorists in the eyes of Europeans, but freedom fighters to native Kenyans; one day tragedy strikes the Lall family's English friends. Haunted by a grisly description of the crime scene, the Lalls eventually pick up and move to Nairobi. Fast-forward to 1965, when Kenya has achieved independence and Mau Mau sympathizer Jomo Kenyatta is now the president of the nation. Njo, who worshipped Jomo from an early age, is a rising star in the new government. He tracks down the Lalls in Nairobi and begins an innocent courtship of Deepa, much to her parents' chagrin. Meanwhile, Vic continues to allow his memory of young Annie to define his life and, as a result, makes some morally ambiguous judgments when he lands a position in the new government. Telling his story from Canada, where he fled after getting top billing on Kenya's "List of Shame" as one of the most financially corrupt men in his country, Vic is a voice for all those who wonder about the price of the struggle for freedom. Vassanji, who was the 2003 winner of Canada's Giller Prize, explores a conflict of epic proportions from the perspective of a man trapped in "the perilous in-between," writing with a deftness and evenhandedness that distinguish him as a diligent student of political and historical complexities and a riveting storyteller.