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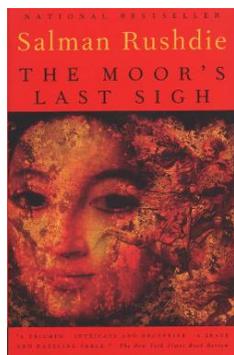
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Preview

The Moor's last sigh (#36348F1)

by Rushdie, Salman

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Overview

From Follett

Originally published: London : J. Cape. Novel in which Moraes Zogoiby, known as Moor, the only male heir to the family's spice business fortune, tells the story of his life in India and his tempestuous relationship with his eccentric artist mother.

From the Publisher

Time Magazine's Best Book of the Year

Booker Prize-winning author Salman Rushdie combines a ferociously witty family saga with a surreally imagined and sometimes blasphemous chronicle of modern India and flavors the mixture with peppery soliloquies on art, ethnicity, religious fanaticism, and the terrifying power of love. Moraes "Moor" Zogoiby, the last surviving scion of a dynasty of Cochinese spice merchants and crime lords, is also a compulsive storyteller and an exile. As he travels a route that takes him from India to Spain, he leaves behind a tale of mad passions and volcanic family hatreds, of titanic matriarchs and their mesmerized offspring, of premature deaths and curses that strike beyond the grave.

Product Details

Publisher: [Vintage Books](#)

Publication Date: January 14, 1997

Format: Paperback (mass market)

Edition: 1st Vintage International ed.

Dewey: [823](#)

Classifications: Fiction

Description: 435 pages : genealogical tables table ; 21 cm

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Interest Level: AD

ATOS Book Level: 8.3

AR Interest Level: UG

AR Points: 29

AR Quiz: 66094EN

Reviews & Awards

Kirkus Reviews starred, 10/15/95

Library Journal starred, 12/01/95

Full-Text Reviews

Booklist (Vol. 92, No. 5 (November 1, 1995))

Rushdie's first novel since the fateful *Satanic Verses* (1989) is about hybridization of cultures, and itself seems a hybrid between William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County novels and *The Thousand and One Nights*. This four-generational family saga takes place in Rushdie's native southern India and witnesses the decline of a spice-trading dynasty, a century-long drama of "family rifts and premature deaths and thwarted loves and mad passions and weak chests and power and money and the even more morally dubious seductions and mysteries of art." The fanciful tale is related by the last of the exhausted family line, Moraes Zogoiby, son of a pair of Indians of far different backgrounds and persuasions, his father Jewish and a Mob leader in Bombay, his mother Catholic and celebrated for her artistry. The "Moor," as he is called, was born physically precocious; in fact, he ages at twice the normal rate. The plot does not unfold—it floods like a river gone over its banks, exploding with incredible events and larger-than-life characters, and to be carried along is to ride beautiful prose through the colliding and conjoining of races and religions that have gone into the making of the fabric of Indian history and culture. A marvelously wrought novel, guaranteed to entrance.

Kirkus Reviews starred (1995)

This amazingly inventive fiction is—as all the world knows—its Indian-born author's first adult novel since Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini put a price on Rushdie's head in 1990 for the "offense" against Islam perceived in *The Satanic Verses* (1989). And, by the time you read this, it will almost certainly have won Britain's 1995 Booker Prize. It's the story of a deliriously mixed and conflicted, helplessly self-destructive family, the da Gama-Zogoiby clan of Cochin in South India, and later Bombay, whose herculean appetites and Machiavellian dealings mockingly embody the history of 20th-century India. That story is told by Moraes (a.k.a. "the Moor"), fourth child and only son of wealthy businessman and reputed crime boss Abraham Zogoiby (a Cochin Jew) and celebrated painter Aurora da Gama (a Portuguese Catholic), heiress to her family's spice fortune and a prominent figure in the Indian independence movement. "Moor," a veritable Scheherazade, records the tangled history of his multiform family—including, among other bizarre persons and events, his great-grandfather's philosophical mysticism, his maternal grandfather's "comic-opera efforts at importing the Soviet Revolution" to Cochin, and his homosexual great-uncle's misadventures as a transvestite—during what seem his last days: for Moor was born afflicted, not just with a deformed right hand, but also with a unique condition causing him to age at twice the normal rate (i.e., at 36, he's physically a 72-year-old); furthermore, he's being held hostage by his mother's rejected lover, an inferior artist who means to obliterate the aesthetic gap between them. That's the real point of this Rabelaisian extravaganza: That distinctions—between Catholic and Jew, Muslim and Hindu, even human and animal—are what set us at one another's throats and threaten to undo us. For sheer headlong inexhaustible inventive force and fury, there's been nothing like this in English since Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* in 1973. It's Nobel Prize time.

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