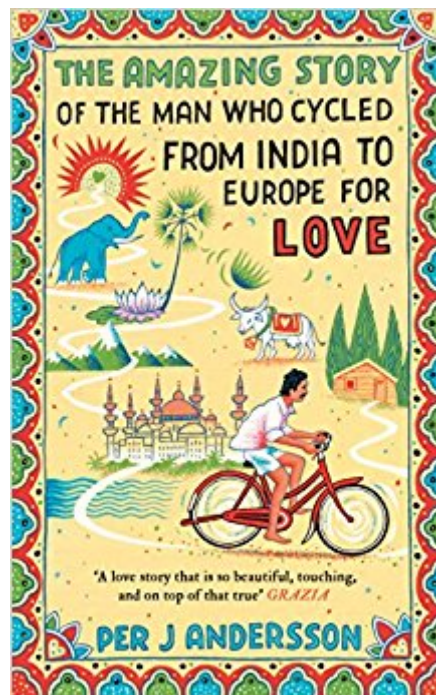




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The Amazing Story Of The Man Who Cycled From India To Europe For Love



Synopsis

“A romance, a travelogue, and a cultural critique” filled with sumptuous prose. [PK’s] determination is more than enough to keep readers enthralled. Publishers Weekly “This book will appeal to the optimistic, the romantic, and the armchair traveler. This is a story of human connection that spans continents, class, and race.” Library Journal “A beautiful, epic tale of love and perseverance.” Booklist Pradyumna Kumar, known as PK, was born into a poor, untouchable family in a small village in eastern India. All his life he has kept a palm leaf bearing an astrologer’s prophecy: “You will marry a girl who is not from the village, not from the district, not even from our country; she will be musical, own a jungle and be born under the sign of the ox.” But not until PK attends art school in New Delhi do his stars begin to align. One evening, while drawing portraits in a park, he meets a young Swedish woman, Lotta von Schendin; and this brief meeting will change the courses of their lives forever. This is the remarkable true story of how a young Indian man armed with nothing more than a handful of paintbrushes and a secondhand Raleigh bicycle made his way across Asia and Europe in search of the woman he loves.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Swedish travel-journalist Andersson tells a story of adventure, transcendence, and, best of all, uncompromising love. Born under a rainbow, Pradyumna Kumar, known as PK, grew up poor but was prophesied for greatness in spite of the limitations of his caste. An astrologer foretold that

PK would study, work with color, marry a girl not from the village, not even from India; that she would also be an artist, and would, improbably, own a jungle. Before beginning school, PK had no understanding of the caste system that both defined and excluded him. He and his family were Dalit, the so-called untouchables. After surviving many years of prejudice, PK attends art school in the 1970s, always pushed along by the prophecy. He earns acclaim drawing portraits in a park, which is where he meets a Swedish woman, Charlotte von Schending. Love blooms quickly, but Lotta must return home. With nothing but his meager art supplies and his secondhand bicycle, PK sets out across Asia, bound for Sweden and the woman he loves. A beautiful, epic tale of love and perseverance. *Charming* is an epic journey repeatedly facilitated by the kindness of strangers, but also fraught with danger and pitfalls. A 7,000-mile journey across continents, lasting almost five months – all in the name of love. *The Daily Mail* “A romance, a travelogue, and a cultural critique filled with sumptuous prose. [PK’s] determination is more than enough to keep readers enthralled. *Publishers Weekly*

Per J Andersson is a writer and journalist. He is the co-founder of Sweden’s most well-known traveler’s magazine *Vagabond*, and has been visiting India for the last 30 years. Anna Holmwood is a translator and academic specializing in the study of classical and modern Chinese literature. She lives in England.

This was well written and researched. The love story was compelling and kept the reader interested all along. The writer is to be complemented for the story line and manner in which he presented chapter after chapter. However, I think the name of the book did not really reflect the gist of the information presented.

Loved it! My book club choice - looking forward to discussion

Loved this book!

Our book club enjoyed it. We recommend it.

I am recommending this book to my book club, because it is so very unusual and has a good message.

It is an amazing story which is filled with information about what life in India.

This was a very informative and interesting read. I really enjoyed the story, which is a true one. It is about a young Indian boy Pradyumna Kumar, known as PK, who was born into a poor, untouchable family in a small village in eastern India. An astrologer's prophecy stated that, he PK would marry a girl who is not from the village, not from the district, not even from our country; she will be musical, own a jungle and be born under the sign of the ox. He always had this information in the back of his mind. PK grew up with a lot of prejudice surrounding him and his family because of their caste (untouchables, also called Dalit, who are a member of the lowest social class in India) It was amazing to learn about all of the different caste systems and all of the sub divisions of them at well. PK, grew up with this prejudice and when young did not really understand why people treated him and his family the way they did. This did not stop PK from going forth in his life and making something of himself. He found he was good at art and wanted to study that rather than what his father would have chosen for him. He goes to a couple of different schools but eventually settles into an art school in New Delhi and here his life begins to turn around. When not in school, he draws peoples portrait in a local park, where he got quite a reputation and even did portraits for well known people. One day he met a Swedish woman named Lotta, who was traveling around India with some friends, and after spending time with her and remembering his prophecy, he knew she was the one he was to end up with. We don't really get to connect with her or her story, like we do with PK, so for me I did not really feel that love, although I know it is there. Lotta, ends up having to go back to Sweden and the two make plans to reunite, but PK not having the money to just fly to Sweden, decides that he must get there any way that he can, saving up money from his portraits and doing more of them en route, PK buys an old bicycle and decides to ride all of the way to Sweden to reunite with his love. He follows, (The hippie trail, which is the name given to the overland journey taken by members of the hippie subculture and others from the mid-1950s to the late 1970s between Europe and South Asia, mainly Pakistan, India and Nepal) He had many hippy friends that he had met when he did his art in the park, and he knew this route would take him in the direction he needed. His journey to be reunited with his love has many adventures and once there a life of learning how to adapt, and how to assimilate into a new culture. This book was well written and was a great read, I would like to thank: NetGalley and Oneworld Publications for an advanced reader copy .

Following an astrological prediction given to him at birth, the enamored Pradyumna Kumar, alias PK, decided to leave behind his life in India and cycle as far as Sweden to meet his beloved Lotta, a hippy girl he shortly met in Delhi. This is just the end of a story, which has also a lot to say about the discriminatory caste-based system in India and PK's first hand encounters as an 'intouchable', the lowest caste according to the Hindu-imposed ideology. The stories about his isolation are coming up and again into the story - after a while I felt slightly annoyed by the repetition -, which has also an interesting travel-related dimension, as it features the passage through Afghanistan and Iran, on the way to Europe. It looks like an open world, welcoming hippies from all over the world mesmerized by the lights and miraculous visions of the Far East, a world that in the last 3 decades closed progressively until becoming hermetic to most of the free-minded Europeans. The book succeeds to portray very well the personality of PK, from his hard early university years of sleeping on the stone floors of the train station in Delhi, until his unique encounters with the likes of Indira Gandhi and the cream of the Indian society. Thanks to his artistic talent, he succeeds to undo his socially assigned status, showing to himself and the rest of the Indian society how unjust and ridiculous the religious limitations are. There is a little bit of everything in this book: sad stories of a situation that seems so overwhelming that only suicide looks like the only solution out; hope and delivery as he sees how the work of his hands brings him comfort and fame, one drawing at a time; hilarious situations as when he realized, a couple of days already into his biking adventure, that his final destination is Sweden, not Switzerland; resilience and courage to start a new life despite the obvious dramatic cultural, linguistic and personal challenges. This book can offer motivation and some travel writing insights and also an interesting historical background. Strongly recommended to anyone longing for far away 'exotic' destinations - warning: things in the mind mirror might be exaggeratedly magnified - or trying to start over a new life in a new country. Disclaimer: Book offered by the publisher in exchange for an honest review

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