



Portrait of a Lady: Collected Stories

By Khushwant Singh

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When the red lilies bloom on the waterlogged fields, the birds panic that the water is on fire. They fly helter-skelter trying to guard their nestlings under their wings.

Red Lilies and Frightened Birds is a collection of poems in praise of the three ancient Tamil royal dynasties Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas. Translated from the early medieval Tamil classic Muttollayiram, these beautifully crafted verses retain a surprisingly contemporary tone a testament to their enduring appeal over the centuries. While some of them are odes to the splendour of the king's country and city, his prowess in war, and the ruining of the enemy country, others reveal how young women, deeply infatuated with the king, pine and long for him.

M.L. Thangappa's translation brilliantly brings to life the playful inventiveness and heady imagery of the original verses. This edition also includes an illuminating introduction by A.R. Venkatachalapathy which places this classic in its historical and cultural context.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

A Khushwant Singh short story is not flamboyant but modest, restrained, well-crafted-Perhaps his greatest gift as a writer is a wonderful particularity of description"London Magazine

Khushwant Singh first established his reputation as a writer through the short story. His stories "wry, poignant, erotic and, above all, human" bear testimony to Khushwant Singh's remarkable range and his ability to create an unforgettable world. Spanning over half a century, this volume contains all the short stories Khushwant Singh has ever written, including the delightfully tongue-in-cheek-'The Maharani of Chootiapuram', written in 2008. -Khushwant's stories enthrall-[He has] an ability akin to that of Somerset Maugham-the ability to entertain intelligently"India Today

-His stories are better than [those of] any Indian writing in English"Times of India

-The Collected Short Stories leaves the reader in a delightful, inebriated trance"Sunday Chronicle

-He is not an ordinary short story writer-[Collected Stories] is delightful reading"Hindustan Times

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