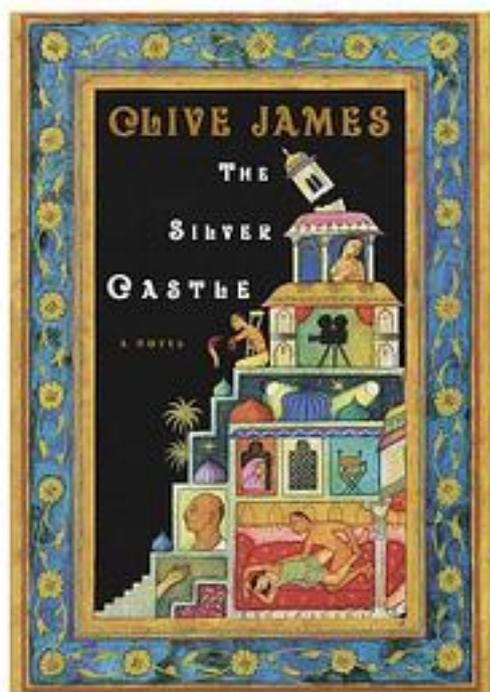


The Silver Castle



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著者:Clive James

出版者:Random House; First Edition edition (July 21, 1998)

出版时间:1996

装帧:Hard cover

isbn:9780375500930

James's (Brilliant Castle) pointed fable about India's vast misery amid its vaunted pockets of affluence falls uneasily between modern fairy tale and acid social satire. The metamorphosis of its winsome, cunning protagonist, Sanjay, from street urchin in Bombay's slums to Bollywood film star—and back again to beggar—is believable enough. Writing like an empathetic cultural anthropologist, James tracks Sanjay through successive phases: runaway from a physically abusive family; gang member; boy prostitute catering to male tourists; movie stuntman; bodyguard to a leading lady named Miranda. A critic and popular BBC talk-show host, James is, as usual, an urbane, digressive guide through the Third World's maze of customs, superstition and

self-defeating fatalism, and there are flashes of Voltairean wit. But he overdoes the cocktail-party and filmic chatter, and the satire of India's escapist movie industry palls and the steamy accounts of Sanjay's affairs with sexually voracious Miranda and with previous girlfriends cannot help but seem meretricious, stuck as they are in the middle of this nobly intentioned if not always successful look at the misery hidden underneath India's much-touted economic boom.

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