

NEW TITLE November 2014

ISBN: 978-93-83098-63-7

FICTION

₹495/£9.99/\$15 PB

THE COPPER SKY

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Published by

NIYOGI BOOKS

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THE COPPER SKY

by Abhijit Gupta

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ISBN: 978-93-83098-63-7

Size: 216 x 140mm

408pp, Black and white

Paperback

I have found power in the mysteries of thought,
exaltation in the changing of the Muses;
I have been versed in the reasonings of men;
but Fate is stronger than anything I have known.

Euripides, *Alcestis*, 438 BC

London. 1950s. Naïve Amar Das arrives to study at the LSE. The release from the war-torn skies and the daily threat of death had unleashed a tide of unprecedented pleasure-seeking which swept over hidebound English society. Gone was the Victorian prudery the British rulers had exported to middle-class India, Amar realises, as he stumbles over coupled bodies in his walk through Hyde Park. He has to struggle with the new mores, the pervading permissiveness.

At the same time he thrills to the intellectual freedom which he senses all around, the challenge of ideas, the encouragement to question orthodoxy. Casting a dark shadow over all this, though, are his bitter memories of British rule and anguish at having been treated as second-class citizen in his own country. His restless anger at the colonisers spills over from time to time.

Along the way, a lonely wife offers him her ambiguous friendship, an attractive single mother her love, a manipulative student her bed and an enigmatic girl his romantic focus. How does the unworldly youngster deal with the challenges that adulthood and autonomy confront him with?

A universal issue that transcends both time and space.



Retiring from a multinational and a subsequent HR consultancy, Abhijit Gupta submitted to a lifelong desire to write, creating a novel influenced by the three eventful years he spent getting his second degree at the London School of Economics, having obtained his first degree from St. Stephens College, Delhi. In those years he found a new intellectual and emotional liberation and grew to love London for it. While at the LSE, he also captained the Fencing Team.

A passion for travel has taken him and his wife all over the world. Unable to follow tourist itineraries, his idea of bliss is to sit with a glass of wine in a tree-shaded square in Barcelona and watch the world go by. Or wander through his beloved forests and hills in India. Two of his travel articles were published in the *Economic Times* and the *Business Line* respectively.

He loves to paint, write and read, often while listening to music. That is, when the boisterous grandchildren and children are not visiting. Sometimes, he is allowed to indulge his other passion – cricket.

1. One of the few books from the subcontinent to explore post-war England through the eyes of an Indian who grew up under British rule.

2. The book reveals that the Fifties, not the Sixties as popularly believed, heralded the swinging era. How does a naïve Indian student cope with this over-heated milieu?

3. This book highlights the struggle an Indian student faces in post-war London—between two cultures, two value systems, two ways of life—and love. “We’re the lost generation,” he cries in anguish.