



One Point Two Billion

Mahesh Rao

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There are 1.2 billion people living in India; more than 1.2 billion stories in one country. A man living on a tea plantation in the Nilgiri Hills realises he's in love with his daughter-in-law; a young family eagerly awaits the launch of Shakti-Cola; a chronically anxious yoga retreat manager struggles with the demands of her enlightenment-seeking Western patrons; and a family legacy hangs in the balance when a horrifying discovery is unearthed on their Rajasthani estate. Traversing thirteen Indian states, One Point Two Billion illuminates the exhilarating diversity of the second most populous nation in the world. Moving from towering megacity to remote detention camp, from the canals of rural Punjab to an exclusive club in Delhi, these remarkable stories offer glimpses into the loves, triumphs, and tragedies of everyday life in a world torn between tradition and the shock of modernity. Laced with biting humour and injected with subtlety and emotion, the stories in this mesmerising collection portray the vast array of lives co-existing within the uneasy imbalance of Indian society. 'Varied in range, concentrated in power - these stories are a deeply satisfying read.' - Kamila Shamsie 'This is a wonderful collection, slicing and dicing India in thirteen unexpected ways.' - Siddhartha Deb 'One of the finest books to come out of India this year. Rao zooms in on forgotten lives - ordinary, extraordinary, absurd, tragic. His writing is subtle, delightfully wry. I loved it.' - Mirza Waheed 'Sometimes a novel is so good that you don't want it to end. I wanted each story to be expanded into a novel, which I then wouldn't have wanted to end.' - Sandra Newman 'These are deft, anxious, and haunting stories of a people caught between two chasms, the medieval and the modern.' - Jeet Thayil



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