



The Collector's Daughter

S.K. Das

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The book is set in the background of the famine of 1866 that killed a third of Orissa's population and left many others destitute. The famine was so severe that women sold their children, men ate each other and bodies had to be dragged stark naked from the towns to lie by the roadside. There was an acute scarcity of food and most people were famished with hunger. William Stewart, the British Collector, rapes the young daughter of his native chuprassi and impregnates her but does not acknowledge his guilt. A girl is born, with telling Anglo features. When famine comes to the village, the mother and daughter embark on a journey in search of food. The mother dies on the road and the daughter eventually reaches Puri to find work as a keeper of pigs in the palace. The young king, who has a passion for pigs, falls in love with the girl. And, then, things begin to happen. Narrated in the first person, the book tells the story of that dark period in Orissa's colonial history when people died like flies, hunger lingered in the bones but there was no end to the desire of the flesh. A moving story set in Orissa Combines fact and fiction, history and personal narratives. Skillfully Well sketched characters.

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