



A Beautiful Lie

By Irfan Master

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An extraordinarily rich debut novel, set in India in 1947 at the time of Partition. Although the backdrop is this key event in Indian history, the novel is even more far-reaching, touching on the importance of tolerance, love and family.

The main character is Bilal, a boy determined to protect his dying father from the news of Partition - news that he knows will break his father's heart. With great spirit and determination, and with the help of his good friends, Bilal persuades others to collude with him in this deception, even printing false pages of the local newspaper to hide the ravages of unrest from his father. All that Bilal wants is for his father to die in peace. But that means Bilal has a very complicated relationship with the truth...

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 5-9-It is the summer of 1947 and India is to be partitioned. Tensions are mounting between religious factions and violence is reaching even the smallest villages. Thirteen-year-old Bilal's beloved father is dying, and since he is convinced the news would kill him even more quickly, Bilal decides to lie about the political situation. With the help of his three closest friends, he keeps well-wishers, family friends, even his radical brother at bay, all to "save" his father the grief of knowing the truth. Master's writing is lovely and descriptive. He expertly conveys the poverty of Bilal's village. Readers can smell the mangos in the marketplace, as well as the filth, and taste the dust in their throats. But the tale is not all dark; the author captures the joy of being with friends and family, playing tricks on people, and laughing-all things that people of any socioeconomic status can enjoy and relate to. Since the story is told through Bilal's eyes, readers begin as he does, not completely understanding the reasons for the partition and violence surrounding it. As the tale progresses and readers share his experiences, the situation becomes a bit clearer, though it is never crystalline. The book's pace is slow, perhaps reflecting the pace of life in a poor village. With its unusual historical point of view, this novel is great for thoughtful readers who will give it the consideration it deserves.-Geri Diorio, Ridgefield Library, CTα(c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

From [Booklist](#)

As his father lies dying from cancer, 13-year-old Bilal is afraid that the news of their beloved India's impending partition will hasten his father's death. Bilal vows, with the help of his three best friends, to keep the facts secret from his bapuji. Everybody lies, the boy reasons, but is telling a single lie different from living a lie? As his untruth grows ever more complex and onerous, violence becomes an increasing part of everyday life. Set in 1947, Master's insightful examination of a country at war with itself is made more powerful by young Bilal's point of view. Less realistic is Bilal's attempt to keep the truth from his father; indeed, it requires a willing suspension of disbelief on the part of the reader. However, the setting is so vivid and the boys' friendship so emotionally involving that most readers will overlook any missteps. An engaging debut novel that will also find classroom use. Grades 6-9. --Michael Cart

Review

'Another memorable debut novel ... Beautifully told this debut is set in 1940's India at the time of the Partition, with themes of tolerance that still resonate today' The Bookseller 'A challenging but extremely rewarding book dealing with big themes of truth, prejudice, and friendship, but also the simple love of a boy for his father. The Indian setting conjures up a society on the brink of change, rich in period detail and geographical beauty, and the characters are attractive and vividly drawn. A fascinating introduction to a vital moment in history. Though beware - the ending will make you cry' Daily Mail 'This is a refreshing first novel, simply and expertly told. A great debut' Ink Pellet 'Irfan Master has created a richly detailed portrait of India in 1947 and peopled it with a collection of well realised characters, each of them almost strong enough to merit a novel in their own right' Guardian

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Sheila Gallagher:

As people who live in typically the modest era should be up-date about what going on or details even knowledge to make these individuals keep up with the era which is always change and move ahead. Some of you maybe may update themselves by examining books. It is a good choice for you personally but the problems coming to an individual is you don't know what kind you should start with. This A Beautiful Lie is our recommendation so you keep up with the world. Why, because book serves what you want and want in this era.

Bradley Smith:

Would you one of the book lovers? If yes, do you ever feeling doubt when you are in the book store? Make an effort to pick one book that you just dont know the inside because don't assess book by its protect may doesn't work this is difficult job because you are scared that the inside maybe not while fantastic as in the outside look likes. Maybe you answer can be A Beautiful Lie why because the amazing cover that make you consider regarding the content will not disappoint an individual. The inside or content will be fantastic as the outside as well as cover. Your reading 6th sense will directly guide you to pick up this book.

Joseph Southard:

In this particular era which is the greater man or woman or who has ability in doing something more are more special than other. Do you want to become certainly one of it? It is just simple approach to have that. What you must do is just spending your time almost no but quite enough to get a look at some books. One of the books in the top collection in your reading list is A Beautiful Lie. This book that is certainly qualified as The Hungry Hillside can get you closer in growing to be precious person. By looking way up and review this book you can get many advantages.

Alexander Goodman:

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