

《KIM (ISBN=9780679443605) 》

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One of the particular pleasures of reading *Kim* is the full range of emotion, knowledge, and experience that Rudyard Kipling gives his complex hero. Kim O'Hara, the orphaned son of an Irish soldier stationed in India, is neither innocent nor victimized. Raised by an opium-addicted half-caste woman since his equally dissolute father's death, the boy has grown up in the streets of Lahore:

Though he was burned black as any native; though he spoke the vernacular by preference, and his mother-tongue in a clipped uncertain sing-song; though he consorted on terms of perfect equality with the small boys of the bazaar; Kim was white--a poor white of the very poorest.

From his father and the woman who raised him, Kim has come to believe that a great destiny awaits him. The details, however, are a bit fuzzy, consisting as they do of the woman's addled prophecies of "a great Red Bull on a green field, and the Colonel riding on his tall horse, yes, and'--dropping into English--'nine hundred devils.'"

In the meantime, Kim amuses himself with intrigues, executing "commissions by night on the crowded housetops for sleek and shiny young men of fashion." His peculiar heritage as a white child gone native, combined with his "love of the game for its own sake," makes him uniquely suited for a bigger game. And when, at last, the long-awaited colonel comes along, Kim is recruited as a spy in Britain's struggle to maintain its colonial grip on India. Kipling was, first and foremost, a man of his time; born and raised in India in the 19th century, he was a fervid supporter of the Raj. Nevertheless, his portrait of India and its people is remarkably sympathetic. Yes, there is the stereotypical Westernized Indian Babu Huree Chander with his atrocious English, but there is also Kim's friend and mentor, the Afghani horse trader Mahub Ali, and the gentle Tibetan lama with whom Kim travels along the Grand Trunk Road. The humanity of his characters consistently belies Kipling's private prejudices, and raises *Kim* above the mere ripping good yarn to the level of a timeless classic. --Alix Wilber --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

内容简介

(Book Jacket Status: Not Jacketed) Introduction by John Bayley

作者简介

Susane Colasanti lives in New York City.

媒体评论

The tale of an Irish boy raised as an Indian in imperial India. It is the story of his coming of age in a world of high adventure.

在线试读部分章节

From Jeffrey Meyers's Introduction to *Kim* In *Kim*, Kipling creates an exotic atmosphere, full of vivid characters and incidents, and immediately draws the reader into his strange world. The novel concerns a religious quest and a quest for identity, and includes both enlightenment and espionage, tranquillity and violence. It combines social, cultural, and political history with the hardships and goal of a travel book. Like Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* (1922), Somerset Maugham's *The Razor's Edge* (1944), and Iris Murdoch's *The Sea, the Sea* (1978), it is one of the rare European novels with a Buddhist theme. *Kim* and the *lama*, *Dharma Bums on the Road*, foreshadow the sprawling works of Jack Kerouac. Maugham, a great admirer of Kipling, wrote that he gives you "the tang of the East, the smell of the bazaars, the torpor of the rains, the heat of the sun-scorched earth, the rough life of the barracks."¹⁰

Kipling achieved his brilliant effects by combining his two great themes, childhood and India, and by creating a bountiful array of characters, subtle modulations of style and speech, and a carefully wrought structure that controls the series of fortuitous encounters and picaresque adventures. *Kim*, the orphaned son of a drunken Irish sergeant and a nursemaid mother, has been brought up by a Eurasian opium eater, given free run of the narrow streets and back alleys of Lahore, and become completely assimilated to Indian life. The rainbow coalition of indigenous teachers, who lead him to his true identity and real vocation, are increasingly Europeanized; his English teachers, who train him as a spy, are increasingly sophisticated and significant.

The Tibetan Buddhist lama rejects the world and searches for salvation. Mahbub Ali, the Afghan Muslim horse trader, works with the English but retains his traditional customs. Hurree Chunder Mookerjee, the Hindu Bengali and "semi-anglicized product of our Indian colleges,"¹¹ tries to adopt British behavior and speech. The Protestant and Catholic clergymen, Mr. Bennett and Father Victor, try to co-opt *Kim* into their religions. Lurgan, English but born in India, tests *Kim* and

trains him for the Great Game of espionage. Colonel Creighton, a secret agent masquerading as an ethnologist (Kim, an expert on castes and keen on mimicry, is himself an amateur ethnologist), recognizes Kim's unique potential and exploits his rare talents. Kim asks: "What am I? Mussalman, Hindu, Jain, or Buddhist?" and is none of the above. But in a brief, touching scene he combines the British, Muslim, Buddhist, and Jain elements in his character and culture and forgets "even the Great Game as he stooped, Mohammedan fashion, to touch his master's feet in the dust of the Jain temple".

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