



The Moor's Last Sigh

Salman Rushdie

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

The Moor's Last Sigh

Salman Rushdie

The Moor's Last Sigh Salman Rushdie

Alternate cover for this ISBN can be found here

Moraes 'Moor' Zogoiby is a 'high-born crossbreed', the last surviving scion of a dynasty of Cochinise spice merchants and crime lords. He is also a compulsive storyteller and an exile. As he travels a route that takes him from India to Spain, he leaves behind a labyrinthine tale of mad passions and volcanic family hatreds, of titanic matriarchs and their mesmerised offspring, of premature deaths and curses that strike beyond the grave. *The Moor's Last Sigh* is a spectacularly ambitious, funny, satirical and compassionate novel. It is a love song to a vanishing world, but also its last hurrah.

~from the back cover

The Moor's Last Sigh Details

Date : Published July 4th 1996 by Vintage (first published 1995)

ISBN : 9780099592419

Author : Salman Rushdie

Format : Paperback 434 pages

Genre : Fiction, Cultural, India, Magical Realism, Literature

 [Download The Moor's Last Sigh ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Moor's Last Sigh ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Moor's Last Sigh Salman Rushdie

From Reader Review The Moor's Last Sigh for online ebook

Robert says

This is my favorite of Rushdie's. It combines the lyrical mysticism of *Midnight's Children* with the hard-nosed magical-realism of the "present-day" sections of *The Satanic Verses*. I found *Midnight's Children* to have an almost apocalyptic feeling about it, especially in the later chapters -- this is hardly a knock against it. But I feel like *The Moor's Last Sigh*, while it certainly comes to a climactic head much as *Midnight's Children*, does so in a way that you feel is, I suppose, more thematically complete. In this way, *Midnight's Children* might be subtitled, "The Amazing Adventures of Saleem Sinai in Post-Colonial India" whereas *The Moor's Last Sigh* requires no subtitle whatsoever.

D says

A rich epic tale describing the rise and fall, and recovery, and meteoric rise again until its annihilation, of a business dynasty in colonial India, up to the end of the 1980's. The family claims to count Vasco Da Gama among its ancestors and generates or attracts plenty of interesting and eccentric characters with each generation, whose lives sometimes intertwine with historical figures and movements such as the Ghandi's, Nehru, the painter Amrita Sher-Gil, Hindu fanaticism, corruption etc.

The title refers to the last descendant, called "Moor". His mother was a genius painter and the heiress of the business while his father was a Cochin Jew whose own mother claimed to be a descendant of the Jews fleeing Spain together with the last Moorish ruler of Granada.

I found the book never boring, and hard to put down,

Ashley Sperling says

I found this book really hard to get into for a few reasons. I would read some and then put it down for a few days, then try to resume and be entirely confused about who was who because there are so many characters and relationships introduced at the beginning, it's very hard to keep track. Also, Rushdie's wordiness made it much harder to get into the storytelling. At first the story seemed confusing and meandering until I got all the characters and relationships figured out. The last half seemed to pick up a lot, but I almost put the book down before I got there (which I never do).

Once I got into it I found the characters and their relationships very intriguing. Plus the social and political commentary was woven fully and fairly seamlessly into the story and characters, which was really interesting. The concept of Moor aging twice as fast as anyone else also presents an unusual framework for the events that take place.

So I guess my advice on this one is don't stop and start read it, because you may find it harder to enjoy. This was my first Rushdie book, not sure if I'll read another anytime soon.

Kamal Anwar says

It's a long and rough read. As far as magic realism goes, it's not quite *Midnight's Children* - more just interesting, rather than compelling. Would still recommend giving it a try, but with checked expectations.
3,8/5

Giedre says

I admit that I had already given *The Moor's Last Sigh* by Salman Rushdie a couple of unsuccessful tries before I finally challenged myself to reading it in one go a couple of weeks ago. It seemed just the right time to plunge into something by Rushdie after I unexpectedly met him at a conference he was giving in Madrid as part of the World Book Day celebration.

And yes, it was a big challenge. If one can love and hate a book at the same time, admire and despise it, crave for more and wish to finish it immediately, then I experienced it as well while turning the pages of *The Moor's Last Sigh*. I couldn't but admire Rushdie's genius, his boundless imagination and his capacity to interweave the lives of the characters of the book and the historical facts into one single fabric full of new colors. And at the same time I hated the slowness of the plot, which became even slower mixed with my incapacity to read Rusdhie's ornate language faster.

I loved how the author's experienced hand mixed classes, religions, ethnic groups, politics, business, crime and art. And I pitied my lack of knowledge of the historical and political context, which made me miss a lot of allusions and connotations that would have made more sense for somebody living in India.

I was tired of long sentences. And I relished the poetry of the language.

I chose to quote one single sentence, which resumes everything I tried to say in this review, and everything I was not able to express:

"And if the flies buzzed in through the opened netting-windows, and the naughty gusts through the parted panes of leaded glass, then opening of the shutters let in everything else: the dust and the tumult of boats in Cochin harbour, the horns of freighters and tugboat chugs, the fishermen's dirty jokes and the throb of their jellyfish stings, the sunlight as sharp as a knife, the heat that could choke you like a damp cloth pulled tightly around your head, the calls of floating hawkers, the wafting sadness of the unmarried Jews across the water in Mattancherri, the menace of emerald smugglers, the machinations of business rivals, the growing nervousness of the British colony in Fort Cochin, the cash demands of the staff and of the plantation workers in the Spice Mountains, the tales of Communist troublemaking and Congresswallah politics, the names Gandhi and Nehru, the rumours of famine in the east and hunger strikes in the north, the songs and drum-beats of the oral storytellers, and the heavy rolling sound (as they broke against Cabral Island's rickety jetty) of the incoming tides of history."

Give it a try. Or a few. You'll love it or you'll hate it. Or both.

Oh, and if you are not sure what a palimpsest is, this book will teach you everything you need to know about

it, I promise.

Andy Jacobs says

Gripping and whimsical story spanning a century of one Indian family's business, artistic, and leisure endeavors. Rushdie's writing is like candy, with sweet turns-of-phrase and quirky Dickensian characters, leaving the reader craving the next page. With Garcia Marquez-ish elements of magical realism and a pervading sinister feeling, like Dumas.

Inderjit Sanghera says

Amongst the pantheon of great Indian writers- Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, R.K Narayan, Vikram Seth and Rohinton Mistry, none of them explore the fantastical nature of Indian society like Rushdie-whereas the Indian narrative form is often too deeply-rooted in Anglo-Saxon realism, Rushdie's imagination is far more febrile and free-wheeling, like Marquez, Rushdie's stories focus on social and political commentary via the form of magical realism and no other Indian author's novels are populated with as an eccentric (though not necessarily well-rounded) case of characters as Rushdie-perhaps the word 'character' is incorrect, rather Rushdie's characters serve as caricatures by which he is able to explore the social dynamics of Indian society.

The story follows Moraes 'Moor' Zogoiby, scion of a wealthy Indian Jewish-Christian family; deformed and club-handed and left tumescent by story-telling, Moor's metabolic rate causes him to age twice faster than normal and so the narrative races through the history of Moor's family-from his great-grandparents the de Gamas, to his father, Abraham, a shadowy character with tenuous links to the Mumbai underworld and his mother, Aurora, a painter of macabre, Goya-esque paintings and whose belligerence and indifference to motherhood upend typical Indian conventions on motherhood. In fact most of the novel counteracts conventions on Indian women; the two avant-garde Indian artists, Aurora and Uma, are both female and the novel is dominated by matriarchal characters-however their form of matriarchy is domineering and selfish as much as it is protective or maternal-Abraham's mother, Flory, forces him to sell his male heir to her in exchange for cash and the vindictive witch-like spectre of Epefania Menezes hovers over the early pages of the novel. Even the peripheral characters-from Moor's gay great-uncle Aires, to the insouciant beauty queen Nadia Wadia, defy conventions and indeed as with many other Rushdie novels, the subject of post-colonialism and religious extremism are the dominant themes within the novel. In this case Hindu fundamentalism is castigated via the character of Raman Fielding, an erstwhile cartoonist transformed into a Hindu nationalist, Rushdie explores the seeds of the nationalistic fervour which is increasingly dominating Indian society, in the early stages of the independence movement and the affect their dogmatic and parochial views have on the minorities they persecuted-in this case the Jewish, Christian and Islamic communities of southern India.

'The Moor's Last Sigh' is probably Rushdie's most well-rounded and profound book and one of the greatest works of modern Indian literature.

Agnes says

Review part 1 - <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

So don't let Rushdie fool you into thinking that "it is Moor/Zogoiby's story and heck!, they're somewhat flat, or Rushdie makes an allegory and fails on both counts – both the upperstory and understorey are not well-developed – happens when you want to ride two horses at once." But, oh, dear, it is one horse, not two.

***sigh* this review just doesn't end. But Rushdie is a crazy fellow, maker of an atom bomb – large scale destruction squeezed into a bomb the size of a fist. But I should end now, though I have a lot more to babble-o-fy about, I know...**

What all did I like in this Rushdie, let me sum up fast – the blasphemy, the profanity, the creativity, the chutneyfication of language, the masterly interweaving of fact and fiction, the literary references generously peppered all over the hot, spicy dish, the scathing political references that only a bold, fearless, audacious and blasphemous person can dare to make. (Dear Indian, do you have the guts to call Hindustan *Dumpistan*?)

I'm quite surprised, (not really, when the readers do not have EXTENSIVE knowledge of India) that the book is rated badly or averagely. Let me tell you, even if it sounds pompous. I've read this book the 10th time today in 5 years. I read it for the first time just after I read *To Kill A Mockingbird* for the first time. (*How vastly different the tone, the manners, of the two books!*) Then in two years, I read it 8 more times, until I got used to it. I've picked it up again after a gap of three years and am actually amazed by the fact that I've got a lot more out of this reading than any of those before. Simply because I am far better-armed with Indian History now than I was three years back. My recent obsession with Indian history, mythology and politics paid off today in very unexpected ways.

And yet, I still know I have failed to understand some points he made, and will need to read more history still. And much more of global popular and literary culture as well. I mean, I was introduced to the legendary Johnny Cash and his civil war songs only two years back – how could I have discerned the reference 4-5 years ago when Rushdie brings in a new character, a businessman-cum-charming musician/guitarist singing country songs about trains, named Jimmy Cash (Cashondeliveri)?

So I still don't know who Kekoo Mody is in real life, or Justice Kachrawala is (the Bofors scandal judge, I think) This little book, didn't I say, is a dynamite filled to the brim with everything Rushdie could squeeze in...?

If *A Fine Balance*, a book I love immensely, is one of the finest pictures of the contradictions of modern India, *A Moor's Last Sigh* too shares the pedestal. While AFB is stoic, serious and mournful, MLS is loud-mouthed, comic and mocking. AFB is the incarnation of naked, unadulterated pain, but MLS is the incarnation of pain masquerading as comic, insincere blasphemy – the only way left to tell honestly one's sordid saga without making someone flinch. AFB is the ultimate Indian tragedy. MLS is the ultimate Indian tragi-comedy. Take away from it what you will.

(The review has ended. Don't roll-o-fy your biggie eyes at me, you chose to read it, Sir-or-Madam, I

So I still don't know who Kekoo Mody is in real life, or Justice Kachrawala is (the Bofors scandal judge, I think) This little book, didn't I say, is a dynamite filled to the brim with everything Rushdie could squeeze in...?

If *A Fine Balance*, a book I love immensely, is one of the finest pictures of the contradictions of modern India, *A Moor's Last Sigh* too shares the pedestal. While AFB is stoic, serious and mournful, MLS is loud-mouthed, comic and mocking. AFB is the incarnation of naked, unadulterated pain, but MLS is the incarnation of pain masquerading as comic, insincere blasphemy – the only way left to tell honestly one's sordid saga without making someone flinch. AFB is the ultimate Indian tragedy. MLS is the ultimate Indian tragi-comedy. Take away from it what you will.

(The review has ended. Don't roll-o-fy your biggie eyes at me, you chose to read it, Sir-or-Madam, I didn't force-o-fy your decision. I'm not the impotent Jaw-Jaw all-bark-no-bite-bitch, I bite-o-fy real hard, and I won't bite so fast, and like little 13-year old Aurora who bide-o-fied her time to kill her grandma Epifania, I will bide-o my time too, to bite-o you. I'm no sweet Mother India).

Jelena says

Mislím da je kraj malo zbrzan, sto je totalno nevažno, samo mi je malo umanjilo uzivanje. Ovo epsko putovanje kroz meni totalno nepoznatu kulturu itekako zaslužuje max. ocenu. Jedva čekam da se ponovo družim sa Rusdijem!

Jelena says

“The Moor's Last Sigh” has about everything you would expect from one of Rushdie's novels. The story of several generations of a dysfunctional Bombay family, their eccentricities and decadence, is full raw emotion and set into the colourful development of India's history.

With its carnival of temper, madness, prophecy, allusions and several detours like the one set in Alhambra or the world of pictures, this novel is still rather linear for the author's terms. But even so some threads simply get lost or never picked up again, some of the characters introduced and then dropped. That would be the first of my main reproaches. Not that this problem is unheard of, but it is bigger a deal coming from an author who has shown that he can do better. The second is the frenzied and rushed end, evoking the feeling you get when trying to finish off something you have grown tired of.

Illustrating social, political, ethnical and religious conflicts, this is equally the story of a city as it is a family saga. Throughout a great portion of the novel Bombay itself is not only the setting but as equally a protagonist as the human characters.

I found it interesting to notice that despite the male narrator in a patriarchal culture, the tale is governed by women (grandmother, mother, sisters, lover). All of these women are strong and complex, but they are also demonic, unpredictable and destructive, so that their high position is based on force rather than wisdom. Even the character of the family father seems eaten up by them, since he is either the shadow of a man or a

typical modern bad guy, but never acquires a second or a third dimension.

You could, as always, tell the author at once by his style, syntax and trademark structure. I did enjoy reading “The Moor’s Last Sigh” even though is surely not Rushdie at his best. But also not at his worst.

Pewterbreath says

Honestly, I remember almost nothing about this book---something about a man who ages at twice the age that normal people are supposed to, something about his mother (who I found to be the most interesting character in the book--actually the women in this book leave the most enduring memories)--a spice plantation and fights about money.

This began my love affair with magic realism--which has since somehow curdled. At the time, I thought this is IT, this is what writing should be---but since then magic realism has become somewhat over-used---as a sort of crutch to make boring ideas interesting--similar to stream-of-consciousness rambling a generation earlier (oh yes, when it's good it's very good, but oh-so-often it is a cover for poor writing).

I'm not saying that Rushdie does this HERE however---as I recall this is a solid read, though by no means a point of entry to Rushdie's work (Midnight's Children would be a much better gateway in my opinion). I probably should read this again--but I just don't have the heart.

Orionisgray says

I almost stopped reading this a number of times, but I have a thing about finishing books. Salman Rushdie is one wordy motherfucker, the opposite of what I tend to enjoy. He's all for the word play, the linguistic jokes, the rhyming slang and colorful Indian colloquialisms, which are cute for a while but wear thin. His narrative is baroque, dripping with dramatic asides and rhetorical questions to the reader, teasing hooks, and a number of other devices I don't enjoy.

Still, I am interested in India, and there was enough about Indian culture and history to allow me to finish it out. I read a good introduction by him to an Anglea Carter book that was more restrained and concise. But are all his full-length books like _Moor_? If so, I'm going to pass on the Salman.

Kalliope says

This is another hard book to rate and review. Rushdie is a smart, ingenious and purposeful writer. Everything is cleverly thought out and his use of language is magical. He bends the words with ease and brings out richer meanings. The plot is an original story that unfolds as a series of riddles to a satirical account of modern India.

Yet, in spite of all that, the book did not click with me.

The characters remain puppets. As exotic cartoons they act out a sort of fable that sometimes appears without

direction. The novel seems another example of what is by now a well-established genre in the literature of the subcontinent, that of magical allegories of the history of its Independence. Rushdie may have been the pioneer of this trend with his "Midnight Children". I preferred the earlier novel.

In this genre I also liked Shashi Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel*, in which he mixes the Mahabharata with the account of the Partition.

Since Rushdie's *Enchantress of Florence* is on my bookshelves anyway, I will certainly read one more of his books and hopefully will like it better.

But here is a brilliant review of the Moor that does the book better justice:

<http://www.nytimes.com/books/99/04/18...>

Adina says

The novel was an anomaly for me. 5* for a book that I abandoned when I reached the middle and resumed reading after more than a year. It was probably the only book that I've abandoned and continued after some time. So glad I did it. Magical realism at its best.

Agnes says

The Moor's Last Sigh is a colorful, hard-hitting excursion into India. Squeezed into a paperback, it spans nearly a century, and through the tumultuous history of the Zogoibys as they enlarge their pepper trade in Cochin (wasn't it with spices, the 'hot' pepper that it all started?) to a national scale diversification of all kinds of 'spices' of life, cruising through the intense political scenes of Independence movement to newly-acquired freedom to communal bloodshed to Indira Gandhi-led Emergency to the proliferation of the Mumbai Underworld Mafia in the 1980s and the 1990s with a parallel Upperworld Political communal Mafia, Rushdie, the master puppeteer creates a show where the Zogoibys, as Kalliope rightly points out, are the puppets of Mother India, the various myths that Mother India is, the various false myths Mother India is, and also the children of that passionately loving, passionately cruel Mother that are entranced and entrapped, approaching their doom with double the speed they are supposed to travel, and all by their own terrified consent.

Like the Moor's tale, my own take on the tale is anything but coherent, scattered like Moor's loose pages all over the place, messy and chaotic. Allegorical to Mother India. Full of magical-realism, it is a realism that seems magical to the onlookers, a tragi-comedy, a tragedy to the characters, a farce to the readers, a drudge to the living. Written in 1995, this is Rushdie's first novel after *The Satanic Verses*, that forced an author underground because he chose to speak of his mind not in hush-hush barely-decipherable ambiguous impotent tones but in an in-your-face to-hell-with-you don't-ask-of-if-you-don't-want-the-bleddy-truth profane potent portent loudspeaker style. It was not Moor who was exiled by his Mother Aurora da-Gama Zogoiby, but the Unlucky (*Zogoiby in Arabic*) Rushdie, the Indian bastard (or as Rushdie-Moor likes it, *baas stink*, *turd no translation needed*) of a non-Indian community who was disowned and thrown out by Mother

India, hurtling towards an imminent death perhaps at double the speed of his biological life-span, cursed by another Mother-Rumpelstiltskin who wanted him all for herself.

The Moor's tale, then, is not just an allegory to Modern Mother India, or to her unfortunate children, but also particularly to one special crippled child Rushdie himself, betrayed by his mother, his housekeeper Miss Jaya He (*see the point? It is a phrase in the National Anthem, loosely meaning Victory/Hail! -to who-else-but-Mom-India?*), by his only lover artist Uma Sarasvati (Two Indian Goddesses in one – *Uma*, the wife of Shiv-who-destroys *Sarasvati*, the incarnation of knowledge, therefore, the brilliant girl who destroyed Moor), and lastly, by his own Muse Vasco Miranda (an allusion to another profane blasphemous Indian artist M.F. Hussain, exiled by our Mom?) for whom Moor's mother Aurora was once his own Muse.

Where to start? After all this long dithering, I haven't startofied my review yet. When Moor's own tale is all over the place, how do I know where to begin? When the tale itself is a pastiche, a random sticking of images and histories that has its own method to madness, when there is no clear beginning but only a vertigo where anything can come first, beware, O Readers, I too will stick-o-fy my point wherever I wish, like Moor stickofies one page of his tale to a tree and the other to a wall and a third to a well until they're all over Benengeli, and don't point-o-fy your fingers at me if you don't like my jabberings lest I Jaw-Jaw at you like that now-stuffed dog.

Ah, but it all began with the spicy "spices" trade, didn't it? The Portuguese had the hots for all our hot stuff and came here crossing half the world for a pinch of pepper. And then the Jews, the exiles from their own Mothers came sailing and sat down in Cochin, becoming the Cochin Jews, and also came all the Portuguese Christians, all of them with their hidden mysteries that led them here, and went into the pepper trade. So here we come to the Portuguese Epifania and Francisco da Gama in the early 1900s with their children -Aires who married Carmen-*Aunt Sahara*, the flat barren desert who was never touched by her homo husband and so never reaped the fortune that lay between her legs, a legal heir, and Camoens, who married Belle who made both boobies and babies with her hubby to bring forth Mother Aurora who would marry a Cochin Jew who.... But, like Moor, I'm getting ahead of my tale.

While we witness the interesting, hilarious events of the da-Gama family as Belle wages war against the dominating matriarch epiphany Epifania, what we witness in the in-house separation (Belle, Camoens, Francisco going anti-British-Simon-go-back, Epifania-Aires-Carmen going The-Brits-gave-us-what-all-we-have) is a microcosm of an India torn into two factions – an elite pro-British bunch, especially Christians/Portuguese afraid of giving up their pretty Anglican ways simultaneously rightly fearing Indians in charge of India, and an optimistic pro-Independence pro-equality, softly flirtatiously Marxist, heavily nationalistic euphoric duds bunch rallying under the suave charm of the English-pruned Nehru and the rustic-once-upon a-time-Angrezi-imitator-now-desi-by-choice little naked man Gandhi in-a-loin-cloth.

The ballistic warfare in the da-Gama family that ends with Belle taking charge of the house and the business when national chaos descends and Aires and Camoens are dumped into jail for 15 years signals the victory of the INC, the Nehru-led Congress party that would replace the British in 1947. But as everyone knows, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru screwed up the nation that was put in his hands, that dilettante child of Macaulay who finally produced his dream Minuteman, *Indians in blood and color, but English in choices and opinions*, daydreaming of progress as the country burned and got beaten up in front of his closed sleeping dreaming eyes.

For all his failures, I now think, Rushdie has been really kind to him, only mocking him with semi-seriousness (Aires, out of contempt, names his bulldog Jawaharlal Jaw-Jaw to annoy the pro-Nehru family-members):

Shut up, Jaw-Jaw, you all-bark-no-bite-mutt...

Like Jaw-Jaw Jawaharlal, they made plenty of noise but didn't draw much blood.

Panditji, Congress-tho is always chickening out in the face of radical acts. No soft options will be takeofied round here.

Once, indeed, there were giants on our stage; but at the fag-end of an age, Madam History must make do with what she can get. Jawaharlal, in these latter days, was just the name of a stuffed dog. (At this point in the story, the dog is dead and is stuffed by Aires to keep him "alive", a brilliant metaphor by Rushdie.

While the World Wars rage and the Independence movement gains momentum, Aurora grows up motherless, not so much as motherless, as her Mummy Belle hunts business deals during the day and tigers to feed upon at night, with Camoens tucked away in jail. And when Belle dies after Camoens is released, Aurora, the 13-year old kid unleashes her week-long mourning in isolation by maddeningly painting her room, pouring forth vivid confusing images of the family yarn and weaving them onto a carpet of colors. At 15, she chooses the quiet Arab-Jew clerk Abraham Zogoiby, as old as her father as her lover, and while her father dies, she moves in with him, because she cannot marry him. In the book, this is quite an interesting, roaring episode, a great commentary on religious/cultural clashes, of standing up to one's family for one's right to love, of the great complicated affair a family is within the even more complicated nuances of age-old cultural rivalries, building upon *Romeo and Juliet* but our lovers are no Romeo or Juliet – if they cannot marry, they will not. But they will love. Not in their sacred hearts, but in their scandalous bodies. Not from their respective captive homes, but in the freedom of their house.

Let them make their own yarn. But welcome back to India. It's an independent country now. Aurora has taken V. Miranda the artist under her wing and at the dinner table, newly-found freedom is being celebrated while Hindus and Muslims massacre each other in Kashmir. Miranda lashes out at the self-deceived foolery around him:

'Useless fucking art-johnny clever-dicks,' he jeered. 'Circular sexualist India my foot. No. Bleddy tongue-twister came out wrong. Secular socialist. That's it. Bleddy bunk. Panditji sold you that stuff like a cheap watch salesman and you all bought one and now you wonder why it doesn't work. Bleddy Congress party full of bleddy fake Rolex Salesman. You think India'll just roll over, all those bloodthirsty bloodsoaked gods'll just roll over and die [...]

[...]And I'll tell **you** something, Mr. Big Businessman Abie, let me give you a tip. Only one power in this damn country is strong enough to stand up against those gods and it isn't blanket blank sockular specialism. It isn't blanket blank Pandit Nehru and his blanket blank protection-of-minorities Congress watch-wallahs. You know what it is? I'll tell you what it is.

Corruption. You get me? Bribery [...]

[...]One more thing, piece of good advice for you all. Get on the boats with the British! Just get on the bleddy boats and buggeroff. This place has no use for you. It'll beat you and eat you. Get out! Get out while the getting's good.

Why is Kashmir the point of contention between India and Pakistan, and not any other state, when there were and are so many other probable candidates too? It is because immediately after Independence when many states/kingdoms (Junagadh, Hyderabad, Kashmir...) wanted to be independent nations, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was appointed to unite them under India by hook or crook. Patel succeeded, but Nehru intervened. Instead of Sardar, Nehru wanted to be the one to convince Kashmir's Hindu king, who ruled the state's majority population of Muslims, to join India. **Bleddy Reason:** Nehru was a Kashmiri Pandit. He was so much in *love* with his state, the dudhead wanted the glory of salvaging his darling state and he messed it up with his ineptitude. And Hindus and Muslims, torn between India and Pakistan and the chance of becoming an independent entity, slaughtered each other, sending the nation into yet another bout of shock, paranoia, enmity and accusations. The riots haven't yet ended – they have become more frequent, all over the country. And Vasco was right. Gods are useless. Money speaks. Bleddy money speaks and bleddy gods listen.

It was not an inebriated Miranda's senseless tirade – it was a spectacular summing up of how India was doomed from the very start, and would pay heavily for the foundation it had achieved its Independence on. And the consequences, in Moor's words, as we jump momentarily to the end of the novel which alludes to the turning points in India's Communal history (the demolition of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in December 1992 by BJP-RSS-VHP political right-wing Hindu party, and the subsequent terror attacks by Muslim extremists in Mumbai particularly and riots all over the twin countries) are:

Violence was violence, murder was murder, two wrongs did not make one right: these are truths of which I was fully cognizant. Also: by sinking to your adversary's level you lose the high ground. In the days after the destruction of the Babri Masjid, 'justly enraged Muslims'/'fanatical killers' smashed up Hindu temples, and killed Hindus, across India and Pakistan as well. There comes a point in the unfurling of communal violence in which it becomes irrelevant to ask, 'Who started it?' The lethal conjugations of death part company with any possibility of justification, let alone justice. They surge among us, left and right, Hindu and Muslim, knife and pistol, killing, burning, looting, and raising into the smoky air their clenched and bloody fists. Both their houses are damned by their deeds; both sides sacrifice the right to any shred of virtue; they are each other's plagues.

But warnings were given even earlier, when Aurora wasn't even born, by Camoens, referring to the hymn beloved to Gandhi, that says Ram/Ishwar and Allah are one, the Hindu and Islamic gods are but different names for one god, predicting the events of 1992 when the Mosque was partially demolished on the argument that Lord Ram was born there 5000 years ago, where the 400 years old mosque now stood:

And they say Ishwar and Allah is your name but they don't mean it, they mean only Ram himself, king of the Raghu clan, purifier of sinners along with Sita. In the end I am afraid [...] people like us will have to lock our doors and there will come a Battering Ram.'

But back to old India, to the two Mothers that captured the imagination of real India, while Aurora takes hold of Moor and Moor's life, in the middle of the 20th century. From Cochin, the story swiftly moves to Bombay as the Zogoiby family relocates there and the nation transitions from political babysteps to an *enfant terrible*, a socio-political menace in the dexterous, able hands of Rushdie's flawlessly executed introduction – Aurora's rebellious high-parapet frenzy blasphemous scandalizing dance in contempt of Maharashtra's

beloved Hindu festival, *Ganesh Chaturthi*, the celebration of the Elephant-headed god first used as a pretext for banned large-scale meetings by the freedom-fighter Lokmanya Tilak who fanned the flames of armed resistance against British Raj, then recently appropriated by the notorious political hard-liner party Shiv Sena to drive out poor non-Marathi migrant workers from the state, turning an innocent festival into the hotbed of religious frenzy and fanaticism and filthy opportunistic politics, where the two make unlikely but highly-compatible bedfellows.

Rushdie takes a dig at Shiv Sena founder, the cartoonist-turned-militant Bal Thackeray, mocking his ugliness by adding a nickname “Mainduck” (*Frog* in Hindi) to his fictitious name Raman Fielding, blatantly accusing his party of all the dirty politics they have played, transitioning from champions of Marathi culture and people to moral policing (read: lathi-charging young couples, married or unmarried, for holding hands in public on Valentine’s Day and beating the hell out of them if they become a bit cozy on other days too) to aligning with BJP-RSS-VHP and inciting communal hatred.

And coming to Bombay, (oops! *Mumbai* now, unless you want Shiv Sena pulping you for the indiscretion) how can we forget our silver screen Mother now, *Mother India*, the quintessential tale of the Indian mother, Indian bride, Indian wife, Indian woman (she doesn’t exist on her own, does she?), the quintessential tale of rural agricultural India, the quintessential tale of common man which gripped the country’s imagination, with its spectacular pair of mother (played by Nargis) and rebellious son Birju (played by Sunil Dutt) who married soon in real life. The movie becomes a source of discussion for India, a metaphor for the imagined India that was so far removed from metropolitan India and yet survived through popular myth, through Metanarratives, as the essence of India. Juxtaposing the rural movie with the metro city, the fictional mother-son with real-life lovers, Aurora says, as Nargis and Sunil Dutt visit her home:

‘The first time I saw that picture’, she (Aurora) confided to the famous movie star (Nargis) on the high terrace at Elephanta, ‘I took one look at your Bad Son, Birju, and I thought, O boy, what a handsome guy – too much sizzle, too much chilli, bring water. He may be a thief and a bounder, but that is some A-class loverboy goods. And now look – you have gone and marry-o’ed him! What sexy lives you movie people leadofy: to marry your own son, I swear, wowie.’

‘Even in the picture, but,’ Aurora went relentlessly on, ‘I knew right off that bad Birju had the hots for his gorgeous ma.’

And now, Rushdie’s own careful comment on the movie, which can be seen both in and out of context of the novel:

In *Mother India*, a piece of Hindu myth-making directed by a Muslim socialist, Mehboob Khan, the Indian peasant woman is idealized as bride, mother and producer of sons; as long-suffering, stoical, loving, redemptive, and conservatively wedded to the maintenance of the status-quo. But for Bad Birju, cast out from his mother’s love, she becomes, as one critic has mentioned, ‘that image of an aggressive, treacherous, annihilating mother who haunts the fantasy life of Indian males.’

And what about the other *Mother India*, the one that haunted real-life India? Indira Gandhi, daughter of

Nehru, first female PM of India, the one who boldly broke the sanctions on India and went ahead to test India's first nuclear device in Pokhran, and in 1975 she imposed the Emergency when it became clear that she would be removed from her post. Like Aurora, she is the heroine and the antiheroine, the mother and the anti-mother figure of India's story. While the poor and the honest beg and die, or are executed, the rich and the corrupt oil each other and reap its dirty wealth. Abraham Zogoiby enters the Underworld negotiations and his business grows exponentially, while Aurora's stars as the beloved Indian artist rise and sink and rise.

With Uma Sarasvati's machinations that drive mother-and-son apart, Moor's foray into Mainduck's clan, his prodigal return to his father who then has no use for him and discards him for the second time, it is India we see, everywhere, everywhere. This isn't a story about the Moor or the Zogoibys at all. It is Rushdie's impeccable skills that make you think that it is about the characters caught up in a particularly eventful century.

Even though it is about India, the surface story never flags; the two are so closely intertwined together that they cannot be told without either going missing. Each one tells the other's tale. And so, when the characters aren't likeable enough, or deep enough, it is because they aren't meant to be. Generalizations are never finely woven -like a summary, they have to span over a large slice of time and eschew much of finesse. And yet, the characters are deep enough, nuanced enough to keep the reader gripped in the surface story and not just let him/her slip into the metaphorical story of India.

And like the titular painting '*The moor's last sigh*', the final act of forgiveness that Aurora bestows upon her son Moor -India, and the Moor's tale too is a palimpsest, a painting upon a painting, a superimposition of one tale over the other. Two tales that have merged into one, even though they are different.

Why this deeper story masquerading so convincingly as the surface story, or vice-versa? Because, my dears, this is what India is. A visual deception, a deception nuanced, fine enough to send the unwary casual stroller on the wrong path. The Upperworld and the Underworld don't just co-exist as allegories, they are the same story itself. They are not two sides of the same coin. It is not you-or-me, it is you-and-me. Their threads are so finely enmeshed that to destroy one is to destroy the other too. And so, readers, is Rushdie's tale. The Zogoibys and India don't just co-exist. The Zogoibys are not a metaphor for India, a microcosm, a summary of India, a representative of the land. It is not India simplified, India-for-Dummies guidebook. They and India are different, but part of the same story.

Review part 2 - <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

Michael Finocchiaro says

This was a beautiful book about the end of Arab rule of Spain and has made me dream for years (unfulfilled as of yet :(to visit Alhambra in Andalusia. Full of melancholy and some eye-opening facts, it is one of Rushdie's finest efforts and a worthy read after *Midnight's Children*.

Lit Bug says

The Moor's Last Sigh is a colorful, hard-hitting excursion into India. Squeezed into a paperback, it spans

nearly a century, and through the tumultuous history of the Zogoibys as they enlarge their pepper trade in Cochin (wasn't it with spices, the 'hot' pepper that it all started?) to a national scale diversification of all kinds of 'spices' of life, cruising through the intense political scenes of Independence movement to newly-acquired freedom to communal bloodshed to Indira Gandhi-led Emergency to the proliferation of the Mumbai Underworld Mafia in the 1980s and the 1990s with a parallel Upperworld Political communal Mafia, Rushdie, the master puppeteer creates a show where the Zogoibys, as Kalliope rightly points out, are the puppets of Mother India, the various myths that Mother India is, the various false myths Mother India is, and also the children of that passionately loving, passionately cruel Mother that are entranced and entrapped, approaching their doom with double the speed they are supposed to travel, and all by their own terrified consent.

Like the Moor's tale, my own take on the tale is anything but coherent, scattered like Moor's loose pages all over the place, messy and chaotic. Allegorical to Mother India. Full of magical-realism, it is a realism that seems magical to the onlookers, a tragi-comedy, a tragedy to the characters, a farce to the readers, a drudge to the living. Written in 1995, this is Rushdie's first novel after *The Satanic Verses*, that forced an author underground because he chose to speakify his mind not in hush-hush barely-decipherable ambiguous impotent tones but in an in-your-face to-hell-with-you don't-askify-if-you-don't-want-the-bleddy-truth profane potent portent loudspeaker style. It was not Moor who was exiled by his Mother Aurora da-Gama Zogoiby, but the Unlucky (*Zogoiby in Arabic*) Rushdie, the Indian bastard (or as Rushdie-Moor likes it, *baas stink*, *turd no translation needed*) of a non-Indian community who was disowned and thrown out by Mother India, hurtling towards an imminent death perhaps at double the speed of his biological life-span, cursed by another Mother-Rumpelstiltskin who wanted him all for herself.

The Moor's tale, then, is not just an allegory to Modern Mother India, or to her unfortunate children, but also particularly to one special crippled child Rushdie himself, betrayed by his mother, his housekeeper Miss Jaya He (*see the point? It is a phrase in the National Anthem, loosely meaning Victory/Hail! -to who-else-but-Mom-India?*), by his only lover artist Uma Sarasvati (Two Indian Goddesses in one – *Uma*, the wife of Shiv-who-destroys *Sarasvati*, the incarnation of knowledge, therefore, the brilliant girl who destroyed Moor), and lastly, by his own Muse Vasco Miranda (an allusion to another profane blasphemous Indian artist M.F. Hussain, exiled by our Mom?) for whom Moor's mother Aurora was once his own Muse.

Where to start? After all this long dithering, I haven't startofied my review yet. When Moor's own tale is all over the place, how do I know where to begin? When the tale itself is a pastiche, a random sticking of images and histories that has its own method to madness, when there is no clear beginning but only a vertigo where anything can come first, beware, O Readers, I too will stick-o-fy my point wherever I wish, like Moor stickofies one page of his tale to a tree and the other to a wall and a third to a well until they're all over Benengeli, and don't point-o-fy your fingers at me if you don't like my jabberings lest I Jaw-Jaw at you like that now-stuffed dog.

Ah, but it all began with the spicy "spices" trade, didn't it? The Portuguese had the hots for all our hot stuff and came here crossing half the world for a pinch of pepper. And then the Jews, the exiles from their own Mothers came sailing and sat down in Cochin, becoming the Cochin Jews, and also came all the Portuguese Christians, all of them with their hidden mysteries that led them here, and went into the pepper trade. So here we come to the Portuguese Epifania and Francisco da Gama in the early 1900s with their children -Aires who married Carmen-*Aunt Sahara*, the flat barren desert who was never touched by her homo husband and so never reaped the fortune that lay between her legs, a legal heir, and Camoens, who married Belle who made both boobies and babies with her hubby to bring forth Mother Aurora who would marry a Cochin Jew who.... But, like Moor, I'm getting ahead of my tale.

While we witness the interesting, hilarious events of the da-Gama family as Belle wages war against the dominating matriarch epiphany Epifania, what we witness in the in-house separation (Belle, Camoens, Francisco going anti-British-Simon-go-back, Epifania-Aires-Carmen going The-Brits-gave-us-what-all-we-have) is a microcosm of an India torn into two factions – an elite pro-British bunch, especially Christians/Portuguese afraid of giving up their pretty Anglican ways simultaneously rightly fearing Indians in charge of India, and an optimistic pro-Independence pro-equality, softly flirtatiously Marxist, heavily nationalistic euphoric duds bunch rallying under the suave charm of the English-pruned Nehru and the rustic-once-upon-a-time-Angrezi-imitator-now-desi-by-choice little naked man Gandhi in-a-loin-cloth.

The ballistic warfare in the da-Gama family that ends with Belle taking charge of the house and the business when national chaos descends and Aires and Camoens are dumped into jail for 15 years signals the victory of the INC, the Nehru-led Congress party that would replace the British in 1947. But as everyone knows, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru screwed up the nation that was put in his hands, that dilettante child of Macaulay who finally produced his dream Minuteman, *Indians in blood and color, but English in choices and opinions*, daydreaming of progress as the country burned and got beaten up in front of his closed sleeping dreaming eyes.

For all his failures, I now think, Rushdie has been really kind to him, only mocking him with semi-seriousness (Aires, out of contempt, names his bulldog Jawaharlal Jaw-Jaw to annoy the pro-Nehru family-members):

Shut up, Jaw-Jaw, you all-bark-no-bite-mutt...

Like Jaw-Jaw Jawaharlal, they made plenty of noise but didn't draw much blood.

Panditji, Congress-tho is always chickening out in the face of radical acts. No soft options will be takeofied round here.

Once, indeed, there were giants on our stage; but at the fag-end of an age, Madam History must make do with what she can get. Jawaharlal, in these latter days, was just the name of a stuffed dog. (At this point in the story, the dog is dead and is stuffed by Aires to keep him "alive", a brilliant metaphor by Rushdie.

While the World Wars rage and the Independence movement gains momentum, Aurora grows up motherless, not so much as motherless, as her Mummy Belle hunts business deals during the day and tigers to feed upon at night, with Camoens tucked away in jail. And when Belle dies after Camoens is released, Aurora, the 13-year old kid unleashes her week-long mourning in isolation by maddeningly painting her room, pouring forth vivid confusing images of the family yarn and weaving them onto a carpet of colors. At 15, she chooses the quiet Arab-Jew clerk Abraham Zogoiby, as old as her father as her lover, and while her father dies, she moves in with him, because she cannot marry him. In the book, this is quite an interesting, roaring episode, a great commentary on religious/cultural clashes, of standing up to one's family for one's right to love, of the great complicated affair a family is within the even more complicated nuances of age-old cultural rivalries, building upon *Romeo and Juliet* but our lovers are no Romeo or Juliet – if they cannot marry, they will not. But they will love. Not in their sacred hearts, but in their scandalous bodies. Not from their respective captive homes, but in the freedom of their house.

Let them make their own yarn. But welcome back to India. It's an independent country now. Aurora has

taken V. Miranda the artist under her wing and at the dinner table, newly-found freedom is being celebrated while Hindus and Muslims massacre each other in Kashmir. Miranda lashes out at the self-deceived foolery around him:

'Useless fucking art-johnny clever-dicks,' he jeered. 'Circular sexualist India my foot. No. Bleddy tongue-twister came out wrong. Secular socialist. That's it. Bleddy bunk. Panditji sold you that stuff like a cheap watch salesman and you all bought one and now you wonder why it doesn't work. Bleddy Congress party full of bleddy fake Rolex Salesman. You think India'll just roll over, all those bloodthirsty bloodsoaked gods'll just roll over and die [...]

[...]And I'll tell **you** something, Mr. Big Businessman Abie, let me give you a tip. Only one power in this damn country is strong enough to stand up against those gods and it isn't blanket blank sockular specialism. It isn't blanket blank Pandit Nehru and his blanket blank protection-of-minorities Congress watch-wallahs. You know what it is? I'll tell you what it is.

Corruption. You get me? Bribery [...]

[...]One more thing, piece of good advice for you all. Get on the boats with the British! Just get on the bleddy boats and buggeroff. This place has no use for you. It'll beat you and eat you. Get out! Get out while the getting's good.

Why is Kashmir the point of contention between India and Pakistan, and not any other state, when there were and are so many other probable candidates too? It is because immediately after Independence when many states/kingdoms (Junagadh, Hyderabad, Kashmir...) wanted to be independent nations, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was appointed to unite them under India by hook or crook. Patel succeeded, but Nehru intervened. Instead of Sardar, Nehru wanted to be the one to convince Kashmir's Hindu king, who ruled the state's majority population of Muslims, to join India. **Bleddy Reason:** Nehru was a Kashmiri Pandit. He was so much in *love* with his state, the dudhead wanted the glory of salvaging his darling state and he messed it up with his ineptitude. And Hindus and Muslims, torn between India and Pakistan and the chance of becoming an independent entity, slaughtered each other, sending the nation into yet another bout of shock, paranoia, enmity and accusations. The riots haven't yet ended – they have become more frequent, all over the country. And Vasco was right. Gods are useless. Money speaks. Bleddy money speaks and bleddy gods listen.

It was not an inebriated Miranda's senseless tirade – it was a spectacular summing up of how India was doomed from the very start, and would pay heavily for the foundation it had achieved its Independence on. And the consequences, in Moor's words, as we jump momentarily to the end of the novel which alludes to the turning points in India's Communal history (the demolition of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in December 1992 by BJP-RSS-VHP political right-wing Hindu party, and the subsequent terror attacks by Muslim extremists in Mumbai particularly and riots all over the twin countries) are:

Violence was violence, murder was murder, two wrongs did not make one right: these are truths of which I was fully cognizant. Also: by sinking to your adversary's level you lose the high ground. In the days after the destruction of the Babri Masjid, 'justly enraged Muslims'/'fanatical killers' smashed up Hindu temples, and killed Hindus, across India and Pakistan as well. There comes a point in the unfurling of communal violence in which it becomes irrelevant to ask, 'Who started it?' The lethal conjugations of death part company with

any possibility of justification, let alone justice. They surge among us, left and right, Hindu and Muslim, knife and pistol, killing, burning, looting, and raising into the smoky air their clenched and bloody fists. Both their houses are damned by their deeds; both sides sacrifice the right to any shred of virtue; they are each other's plagues.

But warnings were given even earlier, when Aurora wasn't even born, by Camoens, referring to the hymn beloved to Gandhi, that says Ram/Ishwar and Allah are one, the Hindu and Islamic gods are but different names for one god, predicting the events of 1992 when the Mosque was partially demolished on the argument that Lord Ram was born there 5000 years ago, where the 400 years old mosque now stood:

And they say Ishwar and Allah is your name but they don't mean it, they mean only Ram himself, king of the Raghu clan, purifier of sinners along with Sita. In the end I am afraid [...] people like us will have to lock our doors and there will come a Battering Ram.'

But back to old India, to the two Mothers that captured the imagination of real India, while Aurora takes hold of Moor and Moor's life, in the middle of the 20th century. From Cochin, the story swiftly moves to Bombay as the Zogoiby family relocates there and the nation transitions from political babysteps to an *enfant terrible*, a socio-political menace in the dexterous, able hands of Rushdie's flawlessly executed introduction – Aurora's rebellious high-parapet frenzy blasphemous scandalizing dance in contempt of Maharashtra's beloved Hindu festival, *Ganesh Chaturthi*, the celebration of the Elephant-headed god first used as a pretext for banned large-scale meetings by the freedom-fighter Lokmanya Tilak who fanned the flames of armed resistance against British Raj, then recently appropriated by the notorious political hard-liner party Shiv Sena to drive out poor non-Marathi migrant workers from the state, turning an innocent festival into the hotbed of religious frenzy and fanaticism and filthy opportunistic politics, where the two make unlikely but highly-compatible bedfellows.

Rushdie takes a dig at Shiv Sena founder, the cartoonist-turned-militant Bal Thackeray, mocking his ugliness by adding a nickname "Mainduck" (*Frog* in Hindi) to his fictitious name Raman Fielding, blatantly accusing his party of all the dirty politics they have played, transitioning from champions of Marathi culture and people to moral policing (read: lathi-charging young couples, married or unmarried, for holding hands in public on Valentine's Day and beating the hell out of them if they become a bit cozy on other days too) to aligning with BJP-RSS-VHP and inciting communal hatred.

And coming to Bombay, (ooops! *Mumbai* now, unless you want Shiv Sena pulping you for the indiscretion) how can we forget our silver screen Mother now, *Mother India*, the quintessential tale of the Indian mother, Indian bride, Indian wife, Indian woman (she doesn't exist on her own, does she?), the quintessential tale of rural agricultural India, the quintessential tale of common man which gripped the country's imagination, with its spectacular pair of mother (played by Nargis) and rebellious son Birju (played by Sunil Dutt) who married soon in real life. The movie becomes a source of discussion for India, a metaphor for the imagined India that was so far removed from metropolitan India and yet survived through popular myth, through Metanarratives, as the essence of India. Juxtaposing the rural movie with the metro city, the fictional mother-son with real-life lovers, Aurora says, as Nargis and Sunil Dutt visit her home:

'The first time I saw that picture', she (Aurora) confided to the famous movie star (Nargis) on

the high terrace at Elephanta, 'I took one look at your Bad Son, Birju, and I thought, O boy, what a handsome guy – too much sizzle, too much chilli, bring water. He may be a thief and a bounder, but that is some A-class loverboy goods. And now look – you have gone and marry-o'ed him! What sexy lives you movie people leadofy: to marry your own son, I swear, wowie.'

'Even in the picture, but,' Aurora went relentlessly on, 'I knew right off that bad Birju had the hots for his gorgeous ma.'

And now, Rushdie's own careful comment on the movie, which can be seen both in and out of context of the novel:

In *Mother India*, a piece of Hindu myth-making directed by a Muslim socialist, Mehboob Khan, the Indian peasant woman is idealized as bride, mother and producer of sons; as long-suffering, stoical, loving, redemptive, and conservatively wedded to the maintenance of the status-quo. But for *Bad Birju*, cast out from his mother's love, she becomes, as one critic has mentioned, 'that image of an aggressive, treacherous, annihilating mother who haunts the fantasy life of Indian males.'

And what about the other Mother India, the one that haunted real-life India? Indira Gandhi, daughter of Nehru, first female PM of India, the one who boldly broke the sanctions on India and went ahead to test India's first nuclear device in Pokhran, and in 1975 she imposed the Emergency when it became clear that she would be removed from her post. Like Aurora, she is the heroine and the antiheroine, the mother and the anti-mother figure of India's story. While the poor and the honest beg and die, or are executed, the rich and the corrupt oil each other and reap its dirty wealth. Abraham Zogoiby enters the Underworld negotiations and his business grows exponentially, while Aurora's stars as the beloved Indian artist rise and sink and rise.

With Uma Sarasvati's machinations that drive mother-and-son apart, Moor's foray into Mainduck's clan, his prodigal return to his father who then has no use for him and discards him for the second time, it is India we see, everywhere, everywhere. This isn't a story about the Moor or the Zogoibys at all. It is Rushdie's impeccable skills that make you think that it is about the characters caught up in a particularly eventful century.

Even though it is about India, the surface story never flags; the two are so closely intertwined together that they cannot be told without either going missing. Each one tells the other's tale. And so, when the characters aren't likeable enough, or deep enough, it is because they aren't meant to be. Generalizations are never finely woven -like a summary, they have to span over a large slice of time and eschew much of finesse. And yet, the characters are deep enough, nuanced enough to keep the reader gripped in the surface story and not just let him/her slip into the metaphorical story of India.

And like the titular painting '*The moor's last sigh*', the final act of forgiveness that Aurora bestows upon her son Moor -India, and the Moor's tale too is a palimpsest, a painting upon a painting, a superimposition of one tale over the other. Two tales that have merged into one, even though they are different.

Why this deeper story masquerading so convincingly as the surface story, or vice-versa? Because, my dears,

this is what India is. A visual deception, a deception nuanced, fine enough to send the unwary casual stroller on the wrong path. The Upperworld and the Underworld don't just co-exist as allegories, they are the same story itself. They are not two sides of the same coin. It is not you-or-me, it is you-and-me. Their threads are so finely enmeshed that to destroy one is to destroy the other too. And so, readers, is Rushdie's tale. The Zogoibys and India don't just co-exist. The Zogoibys are not a metaphor for India, a microcosm, a summary of India, a representative of the land. It is not India simplified, India-for-Dummies guidebook. They and India are different, but part of the same story.

2nd part of the review - <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

Russ says

The Moor's Last Sigh is Rushdie's best book since *Midnight's Children* and is superior to *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*. Rushdie puts his spin on the multi-generational family novel. Like most such novels, it takes awhile to get the characters and families straight, but once you have the whole picture, you can begin to enjoy the magic that Rushdie is weaving through this genre. His first-person narrator ranges from funny to absurd to cruel, and Rushdie's playfulness with language is in full force here. As in *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie's characters are set in the context of India's turbulent history, and in typical Rushdie fashion, it isn't clear whether history is affecting the family or the family is molding history. The very end of the book seems a bit over-blown, but it's one of the few weaknesses in this very good novel.
