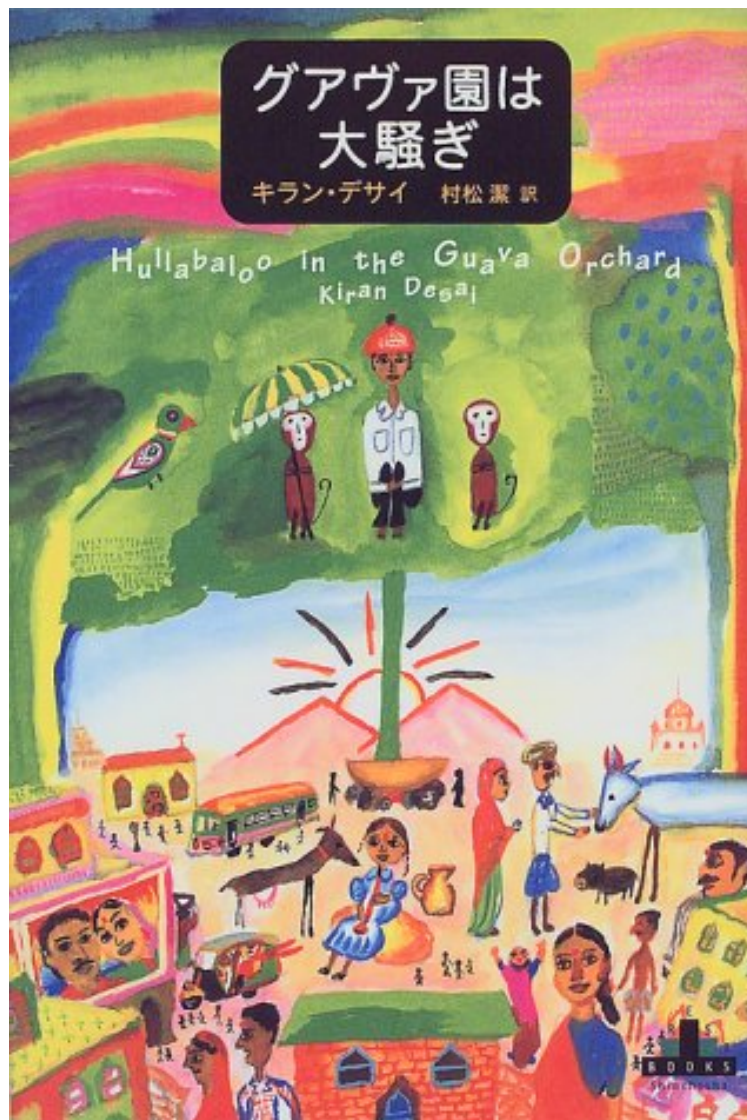


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## Fuss Guavu~a Garden (Mass Market Crest Books) (1999) ISBN: 4105900137 [Japanese Import]

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**From Shinchosha : Fuss Guavu~a Garden (Mass Market Crest Books) (1999) ISBN: 4105900137 [Japanese Import]** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fuss Guavu~a Garden (Mass Market Crest Books) (1999) ISBN: 4105900137 [Japanese Import]:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A marathon read with no finish line.By Diane BI kept reading it because our novel discussion group was reading it. I enjoyed the insights into some aspects of India, for sure. Some

parts were humorous, most were just plain silly. It was tedious to read without any real narrative. The ending was open ended. I felt that surely, the end of the book is missing OR the author had a publisher deadline to meet - so just stopped writing.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. How to lose your job and live in a tree: a primer By D. Cloyce Smith Behind every prophet is a trickster. In Sampath Chawla's case, he loses his job as a postal clerk after performing an impulsive striptease at the wedding of his boss's daughter. "How he hated his life. It was a never-ending flow of misery. It was a prison he had been born into. The one time he has a little bit of fun, he was curtailed and punished." And so, when his family attends another wedding, they leave Sampath at home "to be sure he would not pull down his pants at yet another important event." And that's when the young man decides to live in a guava tree and eventually convinces his neighbors that he's a mind-reading guru by publicly revealing their most closely held secrets. Little do they know: he's been steaming open their mail for months.

The basic story--boy gets sick of family, boy heads up a tree, boy decides to live in the trees, young man becomes famous as a guru of sorts--shares much with Italo Calvino's "The Baron in the Trees." In spite of the addition of monkeys and the change of setting to India, it's almost impossible for readers who have read Calvino to not think of his 1957 parable. (Note to authors: I do think the genre of satirical bildungsroman featuring a tree-living renegade-boy turned prophet is pretty much tapped out at this point.)

Calvino sets his tale on a broader canvas: the adventures of his tree-guru provide a sardonic window on the Age of Enlightenment. For her part, Desai keeps her story local, poking fun at village life in India and portraying elected officials and the police as a postmodern version of the Keystone Kops. Unlike Calvino's fantasy, there are few grandiose metaphysical or historical themes here, and Desai's prose, at times, feels light--almost as if it were meant to be young-adult fiction. But her novel surpasses Calvino's in one notable respect. In "Baron," Cosimo's farcical family leaves the stage relatively early in the book, but in "Hullabaloo," Sampath's relatives not only share equal billing but also become the targets of the author's finest mockery. The scheming father realizes his son can be the source of a fortune from gullible disciples; the addled mother sees her son's truancy as an opportunity to cook increasingly elaborate meals with increasingly exotic ingredients; his sister takes advantage of their parents' neglect to (literally--and violently) hunt down a boyfriend; the grandmother dispenses wisdom and dentures with equal aplomb.

Meanwhile, the tribe of tree-dwelling simians serving as Sampath's most fervent acolytes becomes an alcohol-fueled menace to the entire region--although certainly it's hard to say which group of primates is behaving more like a bunch of monkeys.

The distance between this debut and Desai's second, more mature novel, "The Inheritance of Loss," is vast. Although I believe the latter is nearly a masterpiece, both novels are excellent in their own way--yet it's staggering to think they are by the same author, written only eight years apart. I can't wait to see what Desai, like Sampath's mother, testing new ingredients and inventing new recipes, cooks up next.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. laugh out loud outrageous By fredthekatz Enjoyable. Kiran Desai has a way with words. Her ability to take every little nuance of every day life and blow it up to a big balloon of laughter while weaving a story of a holy man phenom is to be enjoyed. Our hero just wants to be alone, and eventually takes up residence in a large guava tree, eventually joined by a horde of monkeys, including Cinema Monkey who has been known to vandalize young women going to the movies. Huh? what? yes, you read it and it all culminates in what could best be described as a Pink Panther rout. Don't expect anything from this book. There's no overlying moralistic question to be answered. It is a good read, an occasional laugh out loud, and an easy way to spend some time curled up.