



He Drown She in the Sea: A Novel

By Shani Mootoo

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Set on a fictional Caribbean island during World War II and in modern-day Vancouver, *He Drown She in the Sea* is the spellbinding story of two childhood friends reunited late in life. As children, Rose Sangha and her housekeeper's son, Harry, are inseparable, blissfully unaware of the subtleties of class hierarchy until the night Harry is banished from the Sangha home. When Harry and Rose meet again in Canada years later, the gulf separating them is not so apparent. They have a life-affirming affair and Rose dares to reroute their destinies. This is a haunting, sensuous, and suspenseful story about love against all odds, and the sacrifice and euphoria that come with defying the life one is born into.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The fictional island of Guanagaspar is again Mootoo's primary setting in his second novel, and, like *Cereus Blooms at Night*, the story is rich in the patois and daily rhythms of the Caribbean. Half-caste Harry St. George and his childhood love, Rose, the daughter of his mother's employer, are driven apart by the island's systemic patriarchy and racism, while also shaped by its simple beauty and languorous charms. Decades after their forced separation, Harry has made a good life for himself in British Columbia, but he can't forget his homeland or Rose. One of Mootoo's real accomplishments is his portrayal of the expatriate Harry. A quiet and unassuming man who takes pride in his seaside house and landscaping work, Harry socializes infrequently and dates with shy ineptitude. He is constrained by longing and memories of Rose, but remains stoic, accepting his condition even as it continues to torment him. Meanwhile, Rose still lives in Guanagaspar, married to the powerful attorney general of the island. She lives like a minor celebrity, but her life is not fulfilling. She begins to feel that Harry was the only one to ever look past her beauty and see her real self. Rose's daughter, now residing in Vancouver, provides a ready excuse for her to travel to Canada and reconnect with Harry. The trip itself, like much of the novel, is recounted in snippets and flashbacks, from many points of view, which gives the tale a fine-grained, beautifully textured finish. *Agent, Maria Massie. (May)*

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review As childhood friends on the fictional Caribbean island of Guanagaspar, Rose Sangha and Harry St. George are blissfully unaware of the social distinctions that place them light years apart. But islanders frown upon the bond between the well-to-do Indian girl and the half-caste Indian boy whose mother works as a maid for the girl's family. When American military troops occupy the island after the outbreak of World War II, Rose's kindhearted mother becomes uneasy about Harry and his mother's safety and asks them to stay the night rather than return to their neighboring village. She never suspects her estranged husband will arrive at her door. After finding the two preadolescents asleep in the same bed, Mr. Sangha immediately banishes Harry and his mother from the house. Harry and Rose go on with their lives (Harry eventually moving to Canada when island racial tensions escalate), until an encounter in Vancouver prompts a remembrance of things past. Mootoo, who was born in Ireland and raised in Trinidad, pays tribute to her eclectic roots with a pair of pitch-perfect narratives--standard English and the colorful patter of the Caribbean. She delivers on the promise of her first novel, *Cereus Blooms at Night* (1998), with this transcendent tale of souls wounded by circumstance and rehabilitated by love. *Allison Block*

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Review

"Pitch-perfect ... [Mootoo] delivers on the promise of her first novel with this transcendent tale of souls wounded by circumstance and rehabilitated by love."

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