

Chapter 1 : A Suitable Boy (ebook) by Vikram Seth |

A Suitable boy is a very suitable book for both boys & girls.. When I borrowed this book from the library I found it surprisingly huge and scary, everyone who saw me carrying it was equally astounded.

Share via Email There is a sense of conviction about Vikram Seth, of purpose, that has enabled him as a writer to take the road less travelled and arrive triumphant. His first novel, *The Golden Gate*, a story of love and loss among Californian yuppies, written when he was supposed to be studying economics at Stanford University, was composed entirely of rhyming sonnets. Feted in America, flowers thrown at him at readings, Seth might have been expected to stay in the land of opportunity. Instead, he saw more opportunity back home in India. In the novel he was working on, *A Suitable Boy*, he mocks himself in the guise of Amit Chatterji, a loose self-portrait, for sitting about all day staring out of the window. We went to stay with the family in Simla, where his mother was a judge, and he was closeted all day in his room. He would only emerge in the evening in his dressing gown clutching a batch of new pages. It was written with the clarity and leisureliness, the almost forgotten confidence, of a Victorian novel. It is a love story with little love and no sex. At two feet high in typescript, and 1, pages when published in hardback, it was the longest novel ever written in the English language. Seth is indeed very small, 1. He speaks in a soft Indian accent that seems to promise both an Oriental dreaminess and old-fashioned, even Old-World India being the last repository of such values, manners. He gently likes to encourage this view of himself as an unworldly poet and eastern eccentric. With various interviewers he has rolled out a carpet to sit on, played with his bare feet, and, begging silence because of a sore throat, written his answers on a paper napkin. When he grew bored he wrote them backwards. In India, when he goes out to supper, he is notorious for falling asleep. When he stays awake everyone says what a good evening it must have been, Vikram stayed awake. Bissell describes him as a very astute businessman: After the publication of *The Golden Gate* he decided he needed a British agent, and though he had nothing to sell he drew up a shortlist of agencies and interviewed them one by one. Giles Gordon, whom he eventually chose, recounted in an interview a few years ago how "Vikram sat at one end of a long table and began to grill us. It was quite incredible. He wanted to know our literary tastes, our views on poetry, our views on plays, which novelists we liked. So I decided to take it away and revise it and then see what would happen. Even then Seth maintained control. He wanted the book published first in India, and insisted on it being typeset there, under his own supervision. Seth was obsessed with detail, such as ending the book at the bottom of the last page. It was great fun, in retrospect. His mother, Leila, is acknowledged to have the brains. But "her confidence is quieter, despite her cleverness," Seth says. It is from his father, Prem, who rose from comparatively humble beginnings to a position of such respect in the Indian shoe business that he is known in Delhi as Mr Shoe, that he appears to have inherited his conviction, his certainty in himself. Trying to force his way into the management of a Czech shoe company, Haresh is given the apparently impossible task of making a pair of shoes from start to finish in three days: He was sent away to boarding school at the age of six and suffered from desperate shyness. The school was too far to visit, it took two days to get there from home, and I only saw my family for four months a year. Sometimes at lights out I wished I would never wake up," he told a startled audience. Although unhappy he succeeded academically. A school report from , when he was 13 calls him "super excellent" and records that his friends dubbed him "genius". After O levels, he won a scholarship to Tonbridge School in Kent, from where, despite taking only one A level, he won another scholarship, to Oxford. He read PPE, but mostly he read what he wanted. By now he had also started writing poetry in English more seriously. There were two poets there, and the one nearest the door was Timothy Steele, who writes with rhyme and metre. He was looking for guidance, and Steele - whom Michael Schmidt describes as "a very fine formal poet," - and Donald Davie - the English poet and critic, also at Stanford at the time - guided him towards the formal rhyme and metre that has characterised his poetry since. Unabashed, though, he published these "first fruits of my self-determined genius" himself, touting them around bookshops and forcing them on friends and anyone else he could think of, including Philip Larkin, to whom he sent a typescript of this first collection. It kept me going for five years. The freedom, the sense of ease in the

personalities. I learned how to have fun. In *A Suitable Boy*, he writes how his alter ego Amit rebuffs "all the efforts of his female admirers or their mothers to get to know him better. He had remained faithful to Jane Austen. He appeared to be content to lead a life of contemplation. In *The Golden Gate*, too, there is a bisexual character who is generally believed to be another loose self-portrait. Certainly, in California, Seth found a freedom he had not known before, and which he enjoyed, though while there are some happy love poems in his early work, there are more recording rejection and misery. By this point Seth was disenchanted with his academic studies, but without any other obvious path to take in life he took off for two years to study economics in China. He seems to have spent most of this time reading Chinese poems, a skill he later used in praised translations. Towards the end of his stay, during an organised tourist trip to the north west, he managed to charm a Chinese policeman with a sentimental song from an old Indian film, with unexpected results. After the tour group had been entertained by a troupe of local musicians, the tourists were asked to contribute performances. Seth sang *The Wanderer*, the theme song from a s Indian film popular in China, and was cheered back to his seat. The next day his singing was the talk of the local police station and after a lengthy debate about the merits of various Indian film stars he managed to wangle a rare pass to Lhasa, the Tibetan capital, and decided to return to India by hitch-hiking overland through western China and Tibet to the Nepal border. Back in Delhi, his father suggested his journeys might make a book, and the resulting travelogue, *From Heaven Lake*, is a charming and easy read. Writers can be notoriously cagey about their influences. Seth, though, is happy to admit he was "enraptured" by Eugene Onegin. It does not have a single Indian character in it and Seth has resisted being classified as an Indian writer. Seth can be as funny in person as he is in writing. But this irreverence does not mean Seth is not serious about his writing. *A Suitable Boy* "gouged out" his thirties, he says, with pride rather than regret. The first section of *A Suitable Boy*, beginning with the wedding of the older sister of Lata, whose search for a husband is the heart of the book, was written quite quickly. But then Seth found himself blocked and, realising he did not know enough about India in the s, concentrated on research for a year. He buried himself in piles of old newspapers, records of legislative debates, gazetteers and memoirs, spent weeks in a village in rural Uttar Pradesh and with leather workers in Agra, and talked to "musicians, judges, owners of parrots". When I saw him he only wanted to talk about our dog, Cuddles, who had a habit of biting people whose star was on the rise. Vikram wanted lists of all the people Cuddles had bitten. *India Today* called in "bland" and "mundane" and the *Economic Times* complained it lacked "the sweep, the majesty, the range and the insights of the great books". In London, Orion watched the Indian publication nervously. The reviews, with the odd exception, were extraordinary; not merely favourable but adoring. Readers loved it too. The row was heated even by Booker standards, Anthony Cheetham, the boss of Orion, calling the judges "a bunch of wankers". It was also curiously revealing. Most novels when they are published are praised or criticised, and that is that. But there was something about *A Suitable Boy* that demanded more. The novel is very happy and consoling, but it is reluctant to commit itself, perhaps not to depth, but to exegesis. On the other hand, perhaps *A Suitable Boy* shows that what is seen as a prerequisite of this kind of literature, the particular quality of searching and intensity, is possibly not so essential. He tries to engage them, talking of the darkness in *The Golden Gate*, and in his own life. Metaphysical struggles, if you like. At times I was acutely incapable of doing anything. For Seth, writing is a simple business that has been muddied by academic critics and diverted from its original course by an obsession with style and modernist knowingness. Writers come out of university courses and carry into their writing academic concerns rather than the concerns of the general reader. As well as his poems, translations, travel book and novels, he has also written a libretto about dolphins and poems for children, and his new book, *An Equal Music*, is an ordinary-sized novel about classical musicians set in London, Vienna and Venice. Again there is not an Indian in sight, but Seth does not see this as an issue. All his books are different, one-offs, he says, though there is a sense in which *An Equal Music* is more of a departure, a risk even. Most of his previous work is characterised by a wry, humorous, ironic third-person narrative that observes the action from a distance. But *An Equal Music* is told in the first person and the playfulness of the earlier works, the wit and comedy and gentle mocking of the characters, is missing. It makes for a curiously un-Seth-like book, a book that might disappoint. At the age of 46 he has already written two of the more remarkable books of the past 20 years, is

financially secure, and seems to have few demons. Some find him a little unreachable, passionless even. In the Indian press he has been called "selfish" and "bloody-minded" and "friendless," of which he denies only the last. And he is capable of acts of generosity. Moreover he has his family. In adulthood, Seth has also grown close to his father, as he has recorded in a moving poem, *Departure Lounge*. I told Philippe that this image was stirring thoughts in me. But the idea was planted, and that scene is how the novel begins. A new project is beginning to take shape in his mind, another departure, a biography of his great uncle, an Indian dentist who lost his arm at Monte Cassino during the second world war, and his German Jewish wife. But perhaps a story about Lata when she is a grandmother.

Chapter 2 : Vikram Seth - Wikipedia

A Suitable Boy is a novel by Vikram Seth, published in At 1, pages (1, pages softcover) and , words, the book is one of the longest novels ever published in a single volume in the English language.

But such an enjoyable read. It reminded me a bit of an Indian Middlemarch. GaylaBassham May 27, My nickname for this book is "Behemoth". I am pleased to have read this Behemoth. I regret that it took me 13 months to do so, but life happens. One cannot account for the unexpected. Similarly, life happens in "A Suitable Boy". In the early s, India was trying to regain its footing after British rule. I knew so little about Indian culture. The history and culture are what motivated me to keep reading. Long narratives and several characters appear throughout "A Suitable Boy". I had a friend who began the book with me. She stopped reading it due to the lengthy narratives claiming she did not have time for it. I saw other reviews where readers stopped because the characters held little interest. I will not deny that the editing could have been improved. Yet, I am pleased by the knowledge I gained from the historical aspect. Its teeming, overpopulated cities, the sacred cows, its caste system with its untouchables, and more. And of course there is the sheer bulk of the book, with its 1, pages, which took exactly three weeks of my reading time to get through. Because I am not a speed reader, or even a particularly fast reader. Oh, the core story is fairly straightforward: Mrs Rupa Mehra, a widowed mother of four wants to find a suitable husband for her younger daughter, Lata. And this is the quest that takes over a thousand pages to accomplish. Because of all the other characters, both Hindu and Muslim, in this sprawling novel - the Mehras, the Kapoors, the Chatterjis, the Khans, the Durrans and more. Hence the four stars, vs. There are family arguments and feuds, bloody riots between Hindus and Muslims, a shocking crime of passion which nearly nullifies a lifetime friendship. But best of all are the characters, especially Lata and her various suitors, finally narrowed to a field of three, which will keep you turning the pages late into the night. And then, if you are like me, you will dream about them too. More than once here, this sprawling novel is likened to a banyan tree with its many roots and branches, or to the mighty Ganges with its tributaries and plain. There are multiple incidents here which still seem relevant today - subplots of anti-Muslim sentiment and prejudice, or thousands of striking school teachers demanding better pay. It is worth the time invested.

Chapter 3 : BBC to adapt Vikram Seth's A Suitable Boy as its first period drama with a non-white cast

A sweeping panoramic portrait of a complex, multiethnic society in flux, A Suitable Boy remains the story of ordinary people caught up in a web of love and ambition, humor and sadness, prejudice and reconciliation, the most delicate social etiquette and the most appalling violence.

At that time only a handful of novels in English by Indians had appeared, so those who foresaw the demise of this foreign language assumed that such a hybrid form would fade as well. Yet they have been proved wrong time and again. Since several Indian writers of English- language fiction have gained international stature. Not only is A Suitable Boy a novel written in a Western language about an Eastern culture, but it is also a massive book-1, pages-more reminiscent of nineteenth century British fiction than faithful to the fashionable dictates of postmodernism. The narrative centers on the Mehra family, headed by the widowed Mrs. The first marriage connects the Mehras to the Kapoors and indirectly links them to friends of the Kapoors, the Khans. To appreciate this novel it is necessary to understand the paramount place in India of the extended family, including distant relatives and in-laws. In the course of events that cover little more than a year, the four families share birth and death, scandal, minor disagreements, disappointments and accomplishments, trials and triumphs. If a theme does emerge from A Suitable Boy, it suggests that the family must remain strong and united in order to withstand the outside forces that affect Indian life. At this point in Indian history the ancient land had existed for only a few years as a modern nation. In , parts of it were carved away to form the Muslim nation of Pakistan, while India was designated as the Hindu homeland. Shifting millions of people from one place to another during the Partition riots not only fired renewed enmity between the religious groups but also left many Muslims adrift in India, where their families had lived for hundreds of years but where they were often no longer welcome. This young nation, for two centuries fragmented and ruled by the British, faced endless problems; its newly elected Indian rulers tended to turn government into chaos when they set aside the noble ideals of the freedom movement in favor of personal ambition. As a result, little had been done to correct poverty and injustice, conditions aggravated by the religious caste system within Hinduism as well as by the conflict between the Hindu and Islamic communities. Such was the historical and social backdrop in against which the narrative unfolds. While Delhi and Calcutta figure at some points, most of the story takes place in the imaginary city of Brahmpur, a state capital in the central part of Northern India on the banks of the sacred Ganges River. First, these larger events are framed by a major occurrence in an Indian family, a wedding. Then they are intersected, reduced, and made human through the record of day-to-day family life. A Suitable Boy opens with a traditional Hindu wedding in a garden and closes with another such ceremony in a different garden. The wedding and the garden stand as important symbols; the marriage ceremony assures family continuity, and the garden provides a protective barrier-like that of the family-against the turbulence of the world beyond its walls. This circular structure also stresses another aspect of Hindu thought: As the novel closes, Mrs. Rupa Mehra, who has successfully guided two daughters into arranged marriages, starts plotting ways to find a suitable girl for her younger son. A year later yet another wedding may be celebrated. A Suitable Boy might be considered limited in its depiction of Indian life because it focuses mainly on sophisticated, well-educated, English-speaking, middle- and upper-class Indians, who appear to have little concern for the poverty and suffering all around them. The novel could also be faulted for dwelling too extensively on the minor tribulations of these families and ignoring the greater problems faced by millions without the means that the Mehras, Kapoors, The entire section is 2, words.

Chapter 4 : A Suitable Boy (TV Mini-Series ") - IMDb

A Suitable Boy is both social satire and social history, a novel whose scope ranges from the politics of a great man to the maneuvering of a mother, from an epic account of a nation at infancy to the torment of a young girl in love.

Chapter 5 : A Suitable Boy (Dramatised) (Audiobook) by Vikram Seth | theinnatdunvilla.com

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A Suitable Boy is set in a newly post-independence, post-partition India. Follows the story of four families over a period of 18 months, and centuries on Mrs. Rupa Mehra's efforts to arrange the marriage of her younger daughter, Lata, to a "suitable boy".

Chapter 6 : Book A Suitable Boy PDF Free Download

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Chapter 7 : A Suitable Boy Analysis - theinnatdunvilla.com

*Seth previously made a splash with his novel in verse, *The Golden Gate*. Here he abandons the compression of poetry to produce an enormous novel that will enthrall most readers; those who are faz.*

Chapter 8 : A Suitable Boy | Revolv

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"A Suitable Boy" is in some sense the story of this family. The main action takes place in the same year, , that Prem and Leila Seth were married and conceived their first son: Vikram.