

The Boatman: An Indian Love Story

JOHN BURBIDGE

The six years John Burbidge spent in India as a community development worker changed him in many ways, but one stands out from all the rest. It led him to confront a deeply personal secret—his attraction to his own sex. After taking the plunge with masseurs on a Bombay beach, he found himself on a rollercoaster ride of sexual adventuring. A complicating factor in his journey of self-discovery was the tightly knit community in which he lived and worked, with its highly regimented schedule and minimal privacy that forced him to live a double life.

Written with passion, integrity and humour, *The Boatman* is packed with incident, anecdote, adventure and above all, real and memorable people. Burbidge takes hold of India as few have done before, deftly interweaving the search for selfhood with an intimate exploration of Indian life and society. His story shows us how, when we dare to immerse ourselves in a culture radically different from our own, we may discover parts of ourselves we never knew existed.

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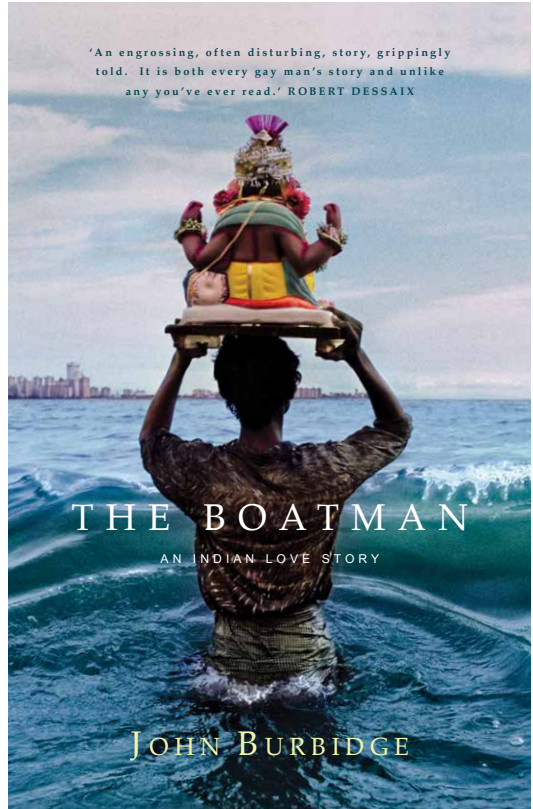
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AN ENGROSSING,
OFTEN DISTURBING,
STORY, GRIPPINGLY
TOLD. IT IS BOTH EVERY
GAY MAN'S STORY AND
UNLIKE ANY YOU'VE
EVER READ.

ROBERT DESSAIX

A VIVIDLY DRAWN
PORTRAIT OF LIFE
IN INDIA, FULL
OF CHARACTERS,
INCIDENTS. ANECDOTES
AND MISADVENTURES.

TRAVELLER SYDNEY
MORNING HERALD



Praise for *The Boatman*

A tender story of naked lust and obsessive craving as intoxicating as India itself. It made me want to return there. Benjamin Law

Unexpectedly contemporaneous, while still managing to evoke the ethos of a country in flux—the early profusion of exotica giving way to a more observed understanding of India. Vikram Phukan, *TimeOut Mumbai*

For a country that still criminalises homosexuality, *The Boatman* chronicles its own cities that defy the law every night as spaces morph, people emerge and all types of liaisons are made and broken. Priyanka Kotamraju, *The Hindu*



Australian-born John Burbidge has lived and worked in Belgium, Canada, India and the United States. For many years, he was communications director for an international NGO engaged in community and organisational development, before becoming an independent writer/editor. He lives in Washington State.