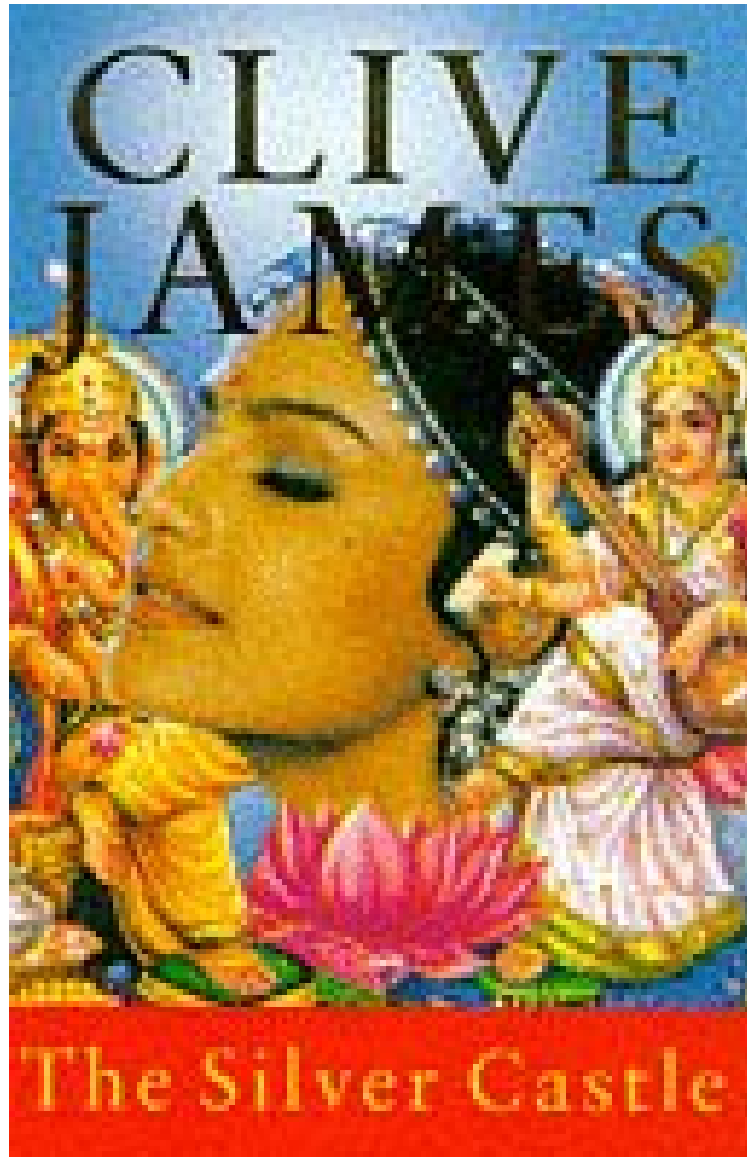


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## The Silver Castle

*Clive James*

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**Clive James : The Silver Castle** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Silver Castle:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. India...Incredible India!By illamaWhat an amazing book! An insight into the poverty and caste system of India.....just returned from there and Clive James descriptions of Mumbai were so vivid that he transported me back there page after page!2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Silver Castle With Golden ProseBy A CustomerForget Patrick White; Clive James is the best writer to ever emerge from our

post-colonial back woods. Like Joseph Heller who has never been able to match his stunning debut *Catch 22* (possibly the greatest novel of the century) it appeared as though Clive James would have trouble living up to the genius of his autobiographical trilogy, *Unreliable Memoirs*, *Falling Towards England*, and *May Week* was in June. If Brrrrmmmm Brrrrmmmm, *The Remake*, and *Brilliant Creatures* however saw the emergence of a talented novelist, then *The Silver Castle* has seen the birth of a great one. Clive James sent us a Postcard from Bombay and stayed around long enough to really capture the taste, smell and feel of the place. He gives us a sense of this wonderfully vibrant yet equally appalling city from the dirt up - you can literally feel the grit between your teeth. From the poorest slums where having a deformity is a career, to the glass sparkle of the ludicrous Bollywood, *The Silver Castle* is an absolute gem of a novel. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A sad story told with humour  
By A Customer  
This was my first Clive James book. I loved it. I've not yet been to Bombay, or any part of India, but having read the book, I feel like it's a place that I must (but not necessarily want to) visit. It's a sad story about the life a young boy growing up in poverty in Bombay. It is tragic, but it is told with such objectiveness that you cannot cast judgment upon any of the characters involved. This is a brilliant display of James' talent of telling things how they are, without imposing a moralistic slant. You'll even laugh a lot. This book is definitely worth reading.

A dark fairy tale by one of Britain's wittiest and most popular personalities that plays to the fascination with India. Imagine Voltaire writing *Candide* in Calcutta in 1997. In this magical novel, which has been acclaimed as his finest fiction to date, James tells the heartbreaking yet hysterically funny story of a young Indian boy named Sanjay who escapes from the world of abject poverty and cons his way into India's lavish and decadent film scene. James appeals to all emotions in an affectionate, sexy, and ultimately tragic comedy written with his trademark dry wit. *The Silver Castle* is both entertaining and perceptive. He touches on the heartfelt issues in modern-day India, such as class and the clash between the traditional and the secular. "The most gripping, entertaining, funny and moving novel I've read for a long time...a novel which held me in tears and laughter and back again to tears, throughout its pages". -- *Sunday Telegraph* (London) "There is much to enjoy here, flair, colour, a real feel for the country... We all know about Clive James the great wit. This book confirms the wit has a sensitive heart". -- *Daily Express* (London)

From Publishers Weekly James's (*Brilliant Castle*) pointed fable about India's vast misery amid its vaunted pockets of affluence falls uneasily between modern fairy tale and acid social satire. The metamorphosis of its winsome, cunning protagonist, Sanjay, from street urchin in Bombay's slums to Bollywood film star?and back again to beggar?is believable enough. Writing like an empathetic cultural anthropologist, James tracks Sanjay through successive phases: runaway from a physically abusive family; gang member; boy prostitute catering to male tourists; movie stuntman; bodyguard to a leading lady named Miranda. A critic and popular BBC talk-show host, James is, as usual, an urbane, digressive guide through the Third World's maze of customs, superstition and self-defeating fatalism, and there are flashes of Voltairian wit. But he overdoes the cocktail-party and filmic chatter, and the satire of India's escapist movie industry palls and the steamy accounts of Sanjay's affairs with sexually voracious Miranda and with previous girlfriends cannot help but seem meretricious, stuck as they are in the middle of this nobly intentioned if not always successful look at the misery hidden underneath India's much-touted economic boom. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. ...a remarkable cocktail of a novel, a documentary of manners, equal parts John Berger and Martin Amis, didactic and comic and finally as dry and caustic as his best TV. -- *The Los Angeles Times*, Jonathan Levi  
*The Silver Castle* is amusing, energetic and oddly condescending. It aspires to be a kind of *Candide* set in contemporary India. It reads more like a comic book, penned with a self-satisfied sneer. -- *The New York Times*, Michiko Kakutani  
His witty voice bounces off the pages of *The Silver Castle*.... Mr. James succeeds in holding his audience throughout most of this unlikely fairy tale thanks to a keen eye and ear.... -- *The Wall Street Journal*, Sara Webb  
From the Inside Flap  
Sanjay is a Bombay street child who scales the dizzying heights of the "Silver Castle," the Indian film world, to stand at the parapet of success. Unfortunately for Sanjay, he is required to jump. Told with Clive James's trademark dry wit, *The Silver Castle* is a tragicomic morality tale for our time. Part *Candide*, part *Oliver Twist*, part *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Silver Castle* defies its reader to remain aloof from the suffering of the world's swarming poor while it inspires laughter over the human condition generally. It is a novel of wonder despite its unrelenting realism--indeed, only wonderment is possible in the face of Sanjay's knack for survival and more than occasional good fortune. In his astonishing odyssey from the gutter to the soundstages and salons of Bollywood, Sanjay meets up with every variant of sinner and would-be savior, and along the way he trades on his "heart-breaking" physical beauty and canny lingual facility to grab at luck wherever it may be had--in the pocket of a tourist, as a guide for the Western news crews who regularly descend on Bombay to update their stock footage of grinding poverty, or in the bed of an older male protector or a past-her-prime cinema princess. Throughout, Sanjay's spirit is sustained by the movies, and by his first behind-the-scenes glimpse, as a young trespasser on the set of the *Silver Castle*, of the magical artifice of filmmaking. It is a true vision of an utterly false reality, the source of Sanjay's subsequent triumphs and of his ultimate misfortune. But what happens to Sanjay in the end is not a singular event. As this deeply humane novel convincingly argues, Sanjay's fate is the world's. Back Ad: Perhaps it would have been better for [Sanjay] if he had never seen the

Silver Castle, never felt a guiding hand, never blinked at an unstained smile. Then he would not have missed these things. It is just possible, however, that the memory of his first visit to Long Ago sustained him. Imagination and energy are part of each other, and few of us, even though we live in circumstances far more favourable, would ever get to where we are going unless a picture of it, however inaccurate, was already in our minds. If we had to, we too would have to dodge the rain between rubbish dumps, on the long journey back to the taste of a cheese roll, the tang of sparkling water, trumpets that crackle and toe-nails stained with plums. We don't have to, but Sanjay did.