



Victoria & Abdul: The True Story of the Queen's Closest Confidant

Shrabani Basu

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The tall, handsome Abdul Karim was just twenty-four years old when he arrived in England from Agra to wait at tables during Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. An assistant clerk at Agra Central Jail, he suddenly found himself a personal attendant to the Empress of India herself. Within a year, he was established as a powerful figure at court, becoming the queen's teacher, or Munshi, and instructing her in Urdu and Indian affairs. Devastated by the death of John Brown, her Scottish ghillie, the queen had at last found his replacement. But her intense and controversial relationship with the Munshi led to a near-revolt in the royal household. Victoria & Abdul examines how a young Indian Muslim came to play a central role at the heart of the empire, and his influence over the queen at a time when independence movements in the sub-continent were growing in force. Yet, at the heart, it is a tender love story between an ordinary Indian and his elderly queen, a relationship that survived the best attempts to destroy it.



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