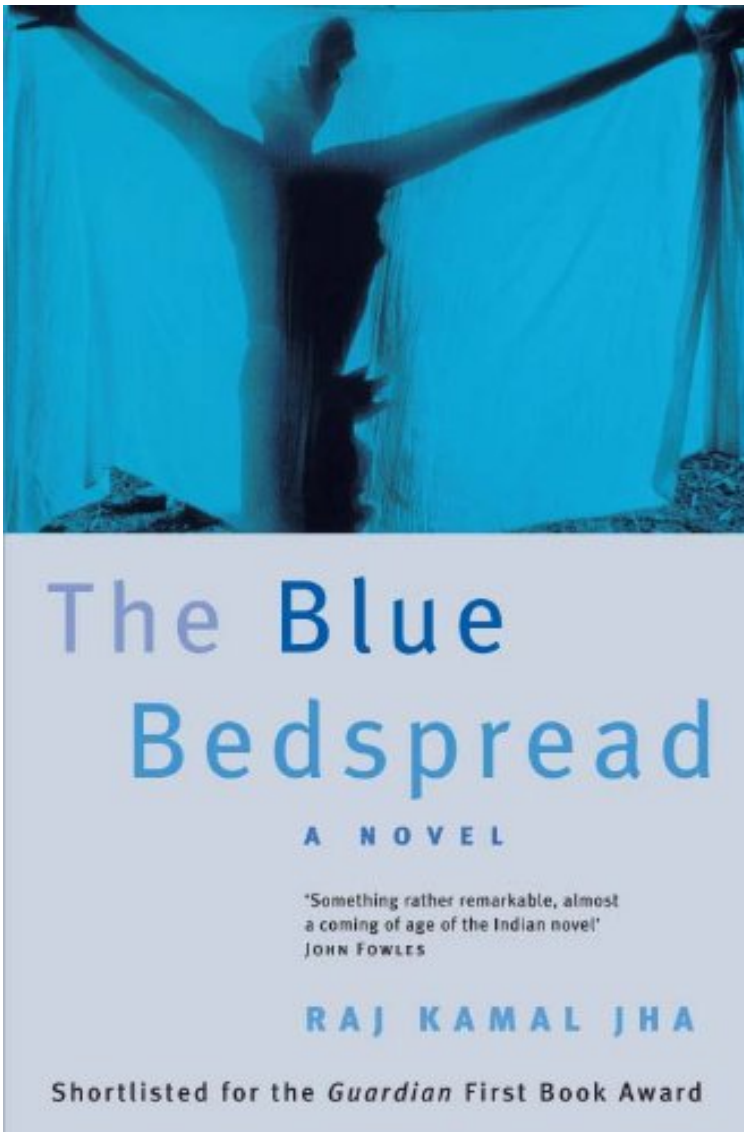


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# The Blue Bedspread (English Edition)



*Par Raj Kamal Jha*  
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**Par Raj Kamal Jha : The Blue Bedspread (English Edition)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Blue Bedspread (English Edition):

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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurIn a house on a Calcutta street, lit by the half-light of a yellow street lamp, lies a baby, one day old, wrapped in its hospital towel. In the next room sits a man, all alone, writing. Who is this man, at once frightened and determined? What is he writing? Where has the baby come from and where will it go? Tonight, these questions will be answered when the man unravels the dark secrets he has carried all his life. A ghostly, elliptical piece of prose of quite magical quality, which tells the story of one mans reconciliation with his past . . . It is undeniably powerful Edward Marriott, Evening Standard Enchanting . . . Jha is not afraid to risk emotion, but he never falls into the trap of sentimentality. That is, in itself, a considerable achievement Andrew Biswell, Daily Telegraph Jha has a real knack for narrative, alternating urgency and delay to the point where his virtuoso handling of the story becomes almost tricksy . . . He is a remarkable

writer Phil Baker, Sunday Times A powerful, haunting and sometimes shocking novel that deserves to be read at one sitting and then re-read Cormac Kinsella, Irish Times This is an incantatory, audacious book, notable for great moments of poignancy Baret Magarian, Guardian Shortlisted for the Guardian First Book Award Winner of the Best First Book Commonwealth Writers Award for the Eurasia region.com The Blue Bedsread has earned Raj Kamal Jha endless comparisons to Raymond Carver. And his first novel does tell a Carver-esque tale, in which poverty-stricken family members love and torment one another in the privacy of their home. Father drinks; mother is an absence; sister and brother find solace in each other. In addition, his voice is that unsettling combination--affectless and passionate--that characterizes the best of Carver's writing. These are writers who state plainly the difficult things people do to one another. But while Carver gave us the dead reaches of the American West, Jha's novel is set in Calcutta. And it's thrilling to read about India in this new voice that is cool, concise, and beautifully observed, as opposed to the florid, expressive writing that has come to typify this nation. Jha has chosen a neat narrative device for his tale. An unnamed man receives a call in the night. His beloved but estranged sister has died in childbirth. The baby's adoptive parents are due the next day to take the infant away. All night long, this lonely man stays up writing the history of his family, the history of the dead baby's mother. The revelations--abuse, incest--would be shocking if they weren't written with such careful tenderness. The man writes about how his sister finally left their childhood home: "In a way, it was essential that one of us should leave never to return. It saved both of us the discomfort and the pain of sitting together as adults and talking about everything except those nights on the blue bedspread, that July night on the blue bedspread, moments that were key to our survival and yet better left untouched and unsaid." Jha even throws in a little redemption for these sad characters, and we're all grateful for the relief. --Claire Dederer From Publishers Weekly A family legacy of incest, violence, alcoholism and isolation comes under sudden and unflinching scrutiny as an unnamed middle-aged man in present-day Calcutta documents his family history for the future reading of a newborn niece. When the police call late at night to tell him his sister has died in childbirth, the man collects the infant and springs into action, desperately writing down family memories and his own, which he must complete before foster parents come to collect the baby in the morning. As he writes, the tiny girl sleeps on the same blue bedspread that he remembers as a talisman from his own childhood. Shifting back and forth in time he crafts a series of telling vignettes focused principally on his sister, himself, the mother he hardly remembers and his abusive father. Probing universal mysteries of ontology as well as dark family secrets, he strives to reveal the forces that shape all of their identities. First novelist Jha writes a spare, meditative prose, largely bereft of dialogue and grounded in meticulous physical description. Rhythmic repetition and brief flourishes lend the narrative a flavor of traditional oral storytelling, despite contemporary themes. Glimpses of life in India over the narrator's lifetime and carefully selected details--white and gray pigeons, an albino cockroach, foreign magazines, old maps--color a tale that nonetheless has a timeless quality. This is an impressive debut in which Jha achieves an engaging balance between the modern and the classic, the universal and the deeply personal. (Apr.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.