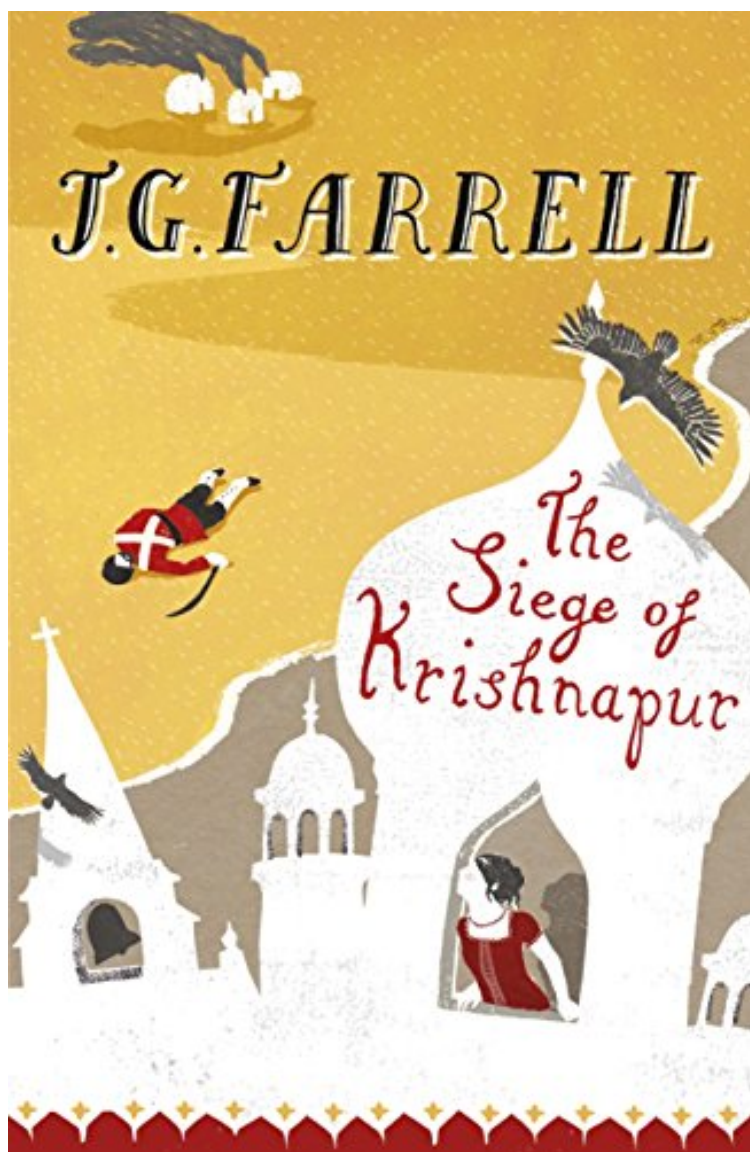


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# The Siege Of Krishnapur



*Par J. G. Farrell*  
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**Description :** Description du produitA darkly humorous picture of the follies of empire, still as relevant as ever, *The Siege of Krishnapur* is thought by many to be J. G. Farrell's finest book. Set in India in 1857 (the year of the Great Mutiny, when the Indian sepoys rose in bloody rebellion against their complacent British overlords), Farrell's novel concerns a remote Victorian outpost in the subcontinent. Rumors of strife filter in from afar, but the colonial community remains confident of its superior values, culture, and, of course, military strength - that is, until it is actually under siege. Then gaping cracks begin to open in the veneer of civilization.

Prsentation de l'diteurIn the Spring of 1857, with India on the brink of a violent and bloody mutiny, Krishnapur is a remote town on the vast North Indian plain. For the British there, life is orderly and genteel.

Then the sepoys at the nearest military cantonment rise in revolt and the British community retreats with shock into the Residency. They prepare to fight for their lives with what weapons they can muster. As food and ammunition grow short, the Residency, its defences battered by shot and shell and eroded by the rains, becomes ever more vulnerable. The Siege of Krishnapur is a modern classic of narrative excitement that also digs deep to explore some fundamental questions of civilisation and life..com "The first sign of trouble at Krishnapur came with a mysterious distribution of chapatis, made of coarse flour and about the size and thickness of a biscuit; towards the end of February 1857, they swept the countryside like an epidemic." Students of history will recognize 1857 as the year of the Sepoy rebellion in India--an uprising of native soldiers against the British, brought on by Hindu and Muslim recruits' belief that the rifle cartridges they were provided had been greased with pig or cow fat. This seminal event in Anglo-Indian relations provides the backdrop for J.G. Farrell's Booker Prize-winning exploration of race, culture, and class, *The Siege of Krishnapur*. Like the mysteriously appearing chapatis, life in British India seems, on the surface, innocuous enough. Farrell introduces us gradually to a large cast of characters as he paints a vivid portrait of the Victorians' daily routines that are accompanied by heat, boredom, class consciousness, and the pursuit of genteel pastimes intended for cooler climates. Even the siege begins slowly, with disquieting news of massacres in cities far away. When Krishnapur itself is finally attacked, the Europeans withdraw inside the grounds of the Residency where very soon conditions begin to deteriorate: food and water run out, disease is rampant, people begin to go a little mad. Soon the very proper British are reduced to eating insects and consorting across class lines. Farrell's descriptions of life inside the Residency are simultaneously horrifying and blackly humorous. The siege, for example, is conducted under the avid eyes of the local populace, who clearly anticipate an enjoyable massacre and thus arrive every morning laden with picnic lunches (plainly visible to the starving Europeans). By turns witty and compassionate, *The Siege of Krishnapur* comprises the best of all fictional worlds: unforgettable characters, an epic adventure, and at its heart a cultural clash for the ages. Quite simply, this is a splendid novel. --Alix Wilber *Revue de presse* While I can't categorically state it's the best book ever, I find it hard to think of one that I prefer. One that does more as a work of fiction, or that says more about our flawed humanity . . . *The Siege of Krishnapur* is a superb portrayal of physical horrors and psychological fallout . . . [It] is wonderfully funny, written with devastating wit and rambunctious humanity. I can't praise it enough - and I can't push it enough (Sam Jordison *Guardian*) Inspired, funny but ultimately tragic look at colonialism in India. It has an unusual exuberance (Mariella Frostrup) For a novel to be witty is one thing, to tell a good story is another, to be serious is yet another, but to be all three is surely enough to make it a masterpiece (New Statesman) A novel of quite outstanding quality (The Times)