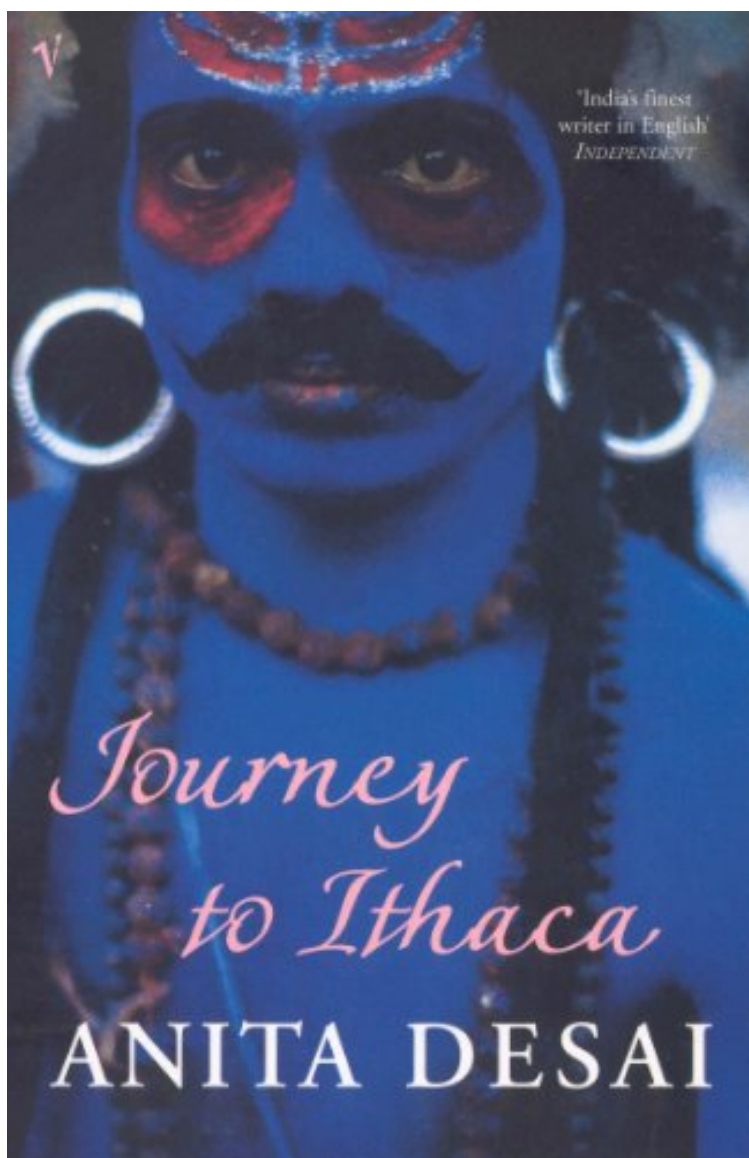


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Journey To Ithaca



Par Anita Desai
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Par Anita Desai : Journey To Ithaca before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Journey To Ithaca:

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Description : Description du produitIn her first novel since the widely praised Baumgartner's Bombay, Anita Desai brilliantly evokes spiritual India in all its endless complexity, and examines the nature of pilgrimage through the aspirations and adventures of three superbly realized characters.Matteo and Sophie join the 1970s flight of young Europeans to India. Matteo -- Italian, raised in the luscious countryside around Lake Como, restless since childhood -- has been introduced by a tutor to Hermann Hesse's The Journey to the East, and it opens in him a desperate longing. Sophie -- German, practical, worldly -- is willing to follow him to the ends of the earth.In India, together they visit swamis, gurus, ashrams -- always searching. Matteo is seeking spiritual enlightenment, but for Sophie fulfillment lies in earthly love. And when they meet a holy woman known as the Mother, the differences between them seem to explode.When we learn the Mother's story, we see it as an earlier version of their own -- the story of a young girl growing up in Cairo and finding

her way East by joining a troupe of Indian dancers she has met in Europe. Her journey, a young woman's daring progress through Paris and Venice and New York, until she finds her moment of transcendence in India, comments on, and gives added breadth to, the young couple's quest. In telling what happens to Matteo and Sophie and the mother, Anita Desai gives us a novel of great richness, an extraordinary vision of a country, and a compassionate portrait of people struggling to find a spiritual home. *Journey to Ithaca* is her most powerful and most involving novel.

Prsentation de l'diteur Like so many other young Westerners in the 1960s and 1970s, Matteo leaves home to search for spiritual enlightenment in the ashrams of India. He believes he finds it at the feet of 'the Mother', but down-to-earth Sophie, who accompanies him, does not find her inspiring so much as mysterious, and decides to trace the Mother's own story - from her travels with an Indian dance troupe in Paris, Venice and New York, to her search for divine love in India. From Publishers Weekly Desai's exquisite, exotic 10th novel follows well-to-do European newlyweds who, in 1975, embark on a spiritual search in India. The husband, an Italian named Matteo, joins an ashram and becomes a fervent devotee of an aged, solitary guru known as "the Mother." But to his skeptical German wife, Sophie, the Mother is not a fount of Eastern wisdom but a "monster spider" who catches "silly flies" like the deluded Matteo. After giving birth to a son and a daughter, both of whom she raises in the ashram, Sophie flees with her children to her in-laws' Italian villa. Vowing to unmask the Mother's true identity, she then sets off to Alexandria. There, through flashbacks, we meet Laila, a free-spirited teenager, half-Egyptian, half-French, who moves to Paris, rebels against her bourgeois aunt and joins an Indian dance troupe. Falling in love with Krishna, the troupe's charismatic, aloof leader, Laila tours Venice and 1920s New York before moving with him to India, where she later renounces dance for enlightenment and transforms herself into the Mother. The story closes with excerpts from Laila's India diary and with Sophie's confrontation with the wizened, aged Krishna, whom she tracks down in Bombay. Desai (Baumgartner's Bombay) magically evokes the collision and melding of cultures and ideas as she maps the hazards and rewards of spiritual quest. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal The author of Baumgartner's Bombay (LJ 3/15/89) offers another intriguing novel of India. During a seriocomic search for Eastern enlightenment, European newlyweds Matteo and Sophie encounter a living saint, the Mother. Matteo becomes a disciple, but Sophie resists, even as their stay in the Mother's model ashram stretches into years. As Matteo increasingly withdraws from a previously passionate marriage, Sophie vows to destroy her husband's spiritual obsession. To prove that the Mother is less than holy, Sophie explores the saint's past, beginning with rumors about a colorful dancing career. The quest leads Sophie along strange roads to even stranger characters in Egypt, France, Italy, and the United States. Back in India with assorted facts but few answers, she finds shocking news and a challenge waiting. An ambiguous denouement reiterates the haunting questions about sacred and profane love that echo throughout the book. Fine fare for thoughtful readers with a taste for exotic settings. ?Starr E. Smith, Marymount Univ., Arlington, Va. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.