



The Ground Beneath Her Feet: A Novel

By Salman Rushdie

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The Ground Beneath Her Feet: A Novel By Salman Rushdie

Salman Rushdie's most ambitious and accomplished novel, sure to be hailed as his masterpiece.

At the beginning of this stunning novel, Vina Apsara, a famous and much-loved singer, is caught up in a devastating earthquake and never seen again by human eyes. This is her story, and that of Ormus Cama, the lover who finds, loses, seeks, and again finds her, over and over, throughout his own extraordinary life in music. Their epic romance is narrated by Ormus's childhood friend and Vina's sometime lover, her "back-door man," the photographer Rai, whose astonishing voice, filled with stories, images, myths, anger, wisdom, humor, and love, is perhaps the book's true hero. Telling the story of Ormus and Vina, he finds that he is also revealing his own truths: his human failings, his immortal longings. He is a man caught up in the loves and quarrels of the age's goddesses and gods, but dares to have ambitions of his own. And lives to tell the tale.

Around these three, the uncertain world itself is beginning to tremble and break. Cracks and tears have begun to appear in the fabric of the real. There are glimpses of abysses below the surfaces of things. The Ground Beneath Her Feet is Salman Rushdie's most gripping novel and his boldest imaginative act, a vision of our shaken, mutating times, an engagement with the whole of what is and what might be, an account of the intimate, flawed encounter between the East and the West, a brilliant remaking of the myth of Orpheus, a novel of high (and low) comedy, high (and low) passions, high (and low) culture. It is a tale of love, death, and rock 'n' roll.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

The ground shifts repeatedly beneath the reader's feet during the course of Salman Rushdie's sixth novel, a riff on the Orpheus and Eurydice myth set in the high-octane world of rock & roll. Readers get their first clues early on that the universe Rushdie is creating here is not quite the one we know: Jesse Aron Parker, for example, wrote "Heartbreak Hotel"; Carly Simon and Guinevere Garfunkel sang "Bridge over Troubled Water"; and Shirley Jones and Gordon McRae starred in "South Pacific." And as the novel progresses, Rushdie adds unmistakable elements of science fiction to his already patented magical realism, with occasionally uneven results.

Rushdie's cunning musician is Ormus Cana, the Bombay-born founder of the most popular group in the world. Ormus's Eurydice (and lead singer) is Vina Apsara, the daughter of a Greek American woman and an Indian father who abandoned the family. What these two share, besides amazing musical talent, is a decidedly twisted family life: Ormus's twin brother died at birth and communicates to him from "the other side"; his older brothers, also twins, are, respectively, brain-damaged and a serial killer. Vina, on the other hand, grew up in rural West Virginia where she returned home one day to find her stepfather and sisters shot to death and her mother hanging from a rafter in the barn. No wonder these two believe they were made for each other.

Narrated by Rai Merchant, a childhood friend of both Vina and Ormus, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* begins with a terrible earthquake in 1989 that swallows Vina whole, then moves back in time to chronicle the tangled histories of all the main characters and a host of minor ones as well. Rushdie's canvas is huge, stretching from India to London to New York and beyond--and there's plenty of room for him to punctuate this epic tale with pointed commentary on his own situation: Muslim-born Rai, for example, remarks that "my parents gave me the gift of irreligion, of growing up without bothering to ask people what gods they held dear.... You may argue that the gift was a poisoned chalice, but even if so, that's a cup from which I'd happily drink again." Despite earthquakes, heartbreaks, and a rip in the time-space continuum, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* may be the most optimistic, accessible novel Rushdie has yet written. --Alix Wilber

From Publishers Weekly

Time and space, understood conventionally, have never been enough for Rushdie's antic imagination, and here he needs two parallel universes to contain this playful, highly allusive journey through the last 40 years of pop culture. Ormus Cama, a supernaturally gifted musician, and his beloved, Vina Apsara, a half-Indian woman with a soul-thrilling voice, meet in Bombay in the late '50s, discover rock and roll, and form a band that goes on to become the world's most popular musical act. Narrator Rai Merchant, their lifelong friend, is a world-famous photographer and Vina's "backdoor man." Rai tells the story of their great, abiding love (both are named for love gods: Cama as in Kama Sutra, and Vina for Venus), which thrives on obstacles. At first Vina is underage, and Ormus swears not to touch her until she turns 16; then, after one night of love, she disappears for a decade, returning only to rescue Ormus from a near fatal coma. While he swears chastity for a decade, Vina tests their commitment with a string of other lovers, of whom only Rai is kept secret.

Ultimately, Ormus and Vina reenact the Orpheus myth, not once but twice. And this is only the heart of a plot whose action moves from Bombay to London to Manhattan. Rai's work as photographer underwrites meditations on 20th-century art and journalism. Rock and roll inspires endless fun, as Rushdie sprinkles lyrics into his narrative, and scrambles pop music names and history. Elvis Presley becomes Jesse Garon Parker, for instance. History is scrambled, too: Watergate turns out to be nothing more than a pulp thriller. The reader slowly discovers that the novel is set in a universe parallel to our own, and the characters catch

glimpses of an alternate reality that looks more like our actual world. Despite many comic and dazzling passages, the hyperbole, the scrambled allusions and the parallel universes eventually become wearying. While not one of his masterpieces, this flawed giant is a spirited, head-spinning entertainment from a writer of undeniable genius. Agent: The Wylie Agency. Rights sold in Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the U.K.

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From Library Journal

Vina Apsara, a charismatic singer, and Ormus Cama, a visionary songwriter, unite in the late 1960s to form VTO, the world's greatest rocknroll band. Jetset photographer Rai Merchant, who grew up with both stars in Bombay, recounts the band's history, using the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice as a frame story. The text is a mosaic of 1960s trivia. Rock lyrics are embedded in every photograph. There are caricatures of industry moguls like Ahmet Ertegun, and cameo appearances by pop culture icons like the Jean Seberg character from Godard's *Breathless*. All inhabit a parallel universe where *The Watergate Affair* is a best-selling thriller and both Kennedy brothers are killed by the same magic bullet. Ormuss' *Earthquake* song cycle actually predicts an endtime catastrophe where the VTO world collides with our own. Rushdie's irreverent but respectful take on the counterculture is pitch perfect. U2's decision to include a VTO song on their next CD should generate a lot of interest in this book. Highly recommended.

-Edward B. St. John, Loyola Law Sch., Los Angeles

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Anthony Pisano:

Here thing why that *The Ground Beneath Her Feet: A Novel* are different and dependable to be yours. First of all reading through a book is good nevertheless it depends in the content of it which is the content is as scrumptious as food or not. *The Ground Beneath Her Feet: A Novel* giving you information deeper since different ways, you can find any book out there but there is no guide that similar with *The Ground Beneath Her Feet: A Novel*. It gives you thrill reading through journey, it's open up your personal eyes about the thing that happened in the world which is probably can be happened around you. You can actually bring everywhere like in park, café, or even in your approach home by train. In case you are having difficulties in bringing the imprinted book maybe the form of *The Ground Beneath Her Feet: A Novel* in e-book can be your choice.

Janice Smith:

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Ryan Barrett:

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Thelma Cobb:

The Ground Beneath Her Feet: A Novel can be one of your starter books that are good idea. Many of us recommend that straight away because this reserve has good vocabulary that can increase your knowledge in vocab, easy to understand, bit entertaining but still delivering the information. The article author giving his/her effort that will put every word into delight arrangement in writing *The Ground Beneath Her Feet: A Novel* although doesn't forget the main place, giving the reader the hottest in addition to based confirm resource information that maybe you can be one among it. This great information can drawn you into completely new stage of crucial considering.

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