

The Perfect Man: A Novel

Naeem Murr

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Winner of the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Europe and South Asia.

Winner of the 2008 PEN Beyond Margins Award.

Identity, friendship, and a long-hidden crime lie at the heart of Naeem Murr's captivating novel about five friends growing up in a small 1950s Missouri river town. A contender for the Man Booker Prize, this exhilarating story beautifully evokes the extreme joys, as well as the dark and shameful desires, of childhood.

Young Rajiv Travers hasn't had much luck fitting in anywhere. Born to an Indian mother who was sold to his English father for £20, Raj is abandoned by his relatives into the reluctant care of Ruth, an American romance writer living in Pisgah, Missouri. While his skin color unsettles most of the townsfolk, who are used to seeing things in black and white, the quick-witted Raj soon finds his place among a group of children his own age.

While the friends remain loyal to one another through the years, it becomes clear that their paths will veer in markedly different directions. But breaking free of the demands of their families and their community, as well as one another, comes at a devastating price: As the chilling secrets of Pisgah's residents surface, the madness that erupts will cost Raj his closest friend even as it offers him the life he always dreamed of.

Taking us into the intimate life of small-town America, *The Perfect Man* explores both the power of the secrets that shape us and the capacity of love in all its guises to heal even the most damaged of souls.



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