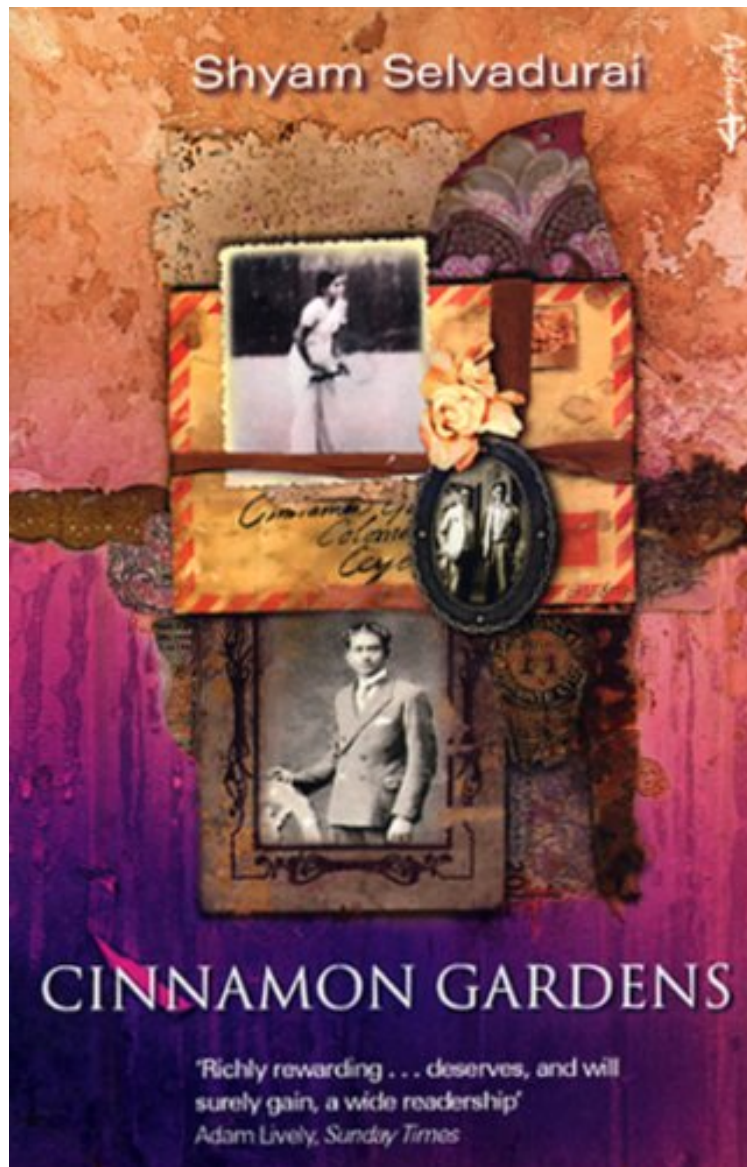


Cinnamon Gardens

Von *Shyam Selvadurai*
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Von Shyam Selvadurai : Cinnamon Gardens before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cinnamon Gardens:

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Cinnamon Gardens - something to in indulge inVon BookwormI just finished rereading the book after 18 years or so. And again, I couldn't put it down, just loved it. Wonderful story with lots of Sri Lankan history and beautiful diction.0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Like a smooth spiced cup of tea...Von Edward Alexander

Gerster A lush and tropical story by one of the best new authors to come along in the past decade. Imagery and characters are handled superbly. If you like Merchant/Ivory films, this is one book that should be made into one! Although this book may not be everybody's cup of tea, it is certainly a nice laid back example of fine prose and excellent style. 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Grips You After The First Half Von deepikag@hotmail.com After reading 'Funny Boy', I was eagerly awaiting Selvadurai's second offering. It is a very well written novel contrary to the reviews I had read. Selvadurai truly has the talent of a good writer. I picked up Funny Boy out of curiosity and events in my personal life and was hooked at his way of narrating a story. The characters of Annalakshmi and Balendran captivated me as much as that of Radha Aunty and Arjie in Funny Boy. I don't if it is just me, but I seemed to have noticed that Selvadurai has a way of emphasizing the relationship between the main characters in an Aunt-Nephew role (Radha Aunty-Arjie) or Uncle-Niece role (Balendran-Annalakshmi). The first half of the book dealt with a little too much history, but I think that was necessary to establish the mood of the period. I really liked the way the book ended, however the romantic in me would have preferred a different ending for Annalakshmi's character. All in all, it is a must read. And here's hoping that Selvadurai continues to enthrall readers.

Kurzbeschreibung Selvadurai has captured horrifyingly well the airlessness of a society in which only a few are truly able to breathe, and deeply' Mary Loudon, The Times In Shyam Selvadurai's masterful second novel, set in repressive and complex 1920s Ceylon, the Cinnamon Gardens is a residential enclave of wealthy Ceylonese. Among them is Annalakshmi, an independent and high-spirited young teacher intent on thwarting her parents' plans to arrange her marriage. In a parallel narrative, her uncle, Balendran Navaratnam, respectably married but secretly homosexual, has his life disrupted by the arrival in Ceylon of Richard, a lover from long ago. 'Richly rewarding . . . this is, in many ways, an old-fashioned novel, brimming with old-fashioned virtues. The characters and setting are established in a measured, finely judged manner, allowing us to feel at home with them. Annalakshmi's Jane Austen-ish domestic life -- anxious mother, bossy aunt, catty sisters, endless talk of prospective husbands -- is brought to life with glancing humour. Not least of the novel's virtues is the way he seems to conjure up a whole social panorama. With its vivid evocation of time and place, its wise characterisation, its involving emotional dramas, this is a novel that deserves, and will surely gain, a wide readership' Adam Lively, Sunday Times 'Subtle and deeply humane . . . a fine novel that is both delicately written and very, very wise . . . Selvadurai has established himself firmly as an important chronicler of the complexities of social and cultural difference' Books in Canada 'This is a distinctive voice and the author is a talent to be reckoned with' Telegraph, India From Booklist The evocative title comes from the name of a suburb of Colombo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), in 1927. This world, of Tamil Christians and Hindus, of heated discussions over self-rule and suffrage, of class divisions and control, and of the place of women, is both wildly exotic and oddly modern. Selvadurai has written an almost Victorian novel, with the lives of his characters intertwined and interrelated, rich with the heat and scent of British colonial overlay on an ancient society. He has tied together the bloodlines and relations of the two main characters: Annalakshmi, who at 22 has qualified as a teacher despite the strong objections of her well-placed family, and her uncle Balendran, who suffers under his father's heavy and powerful hand and who struggles with the love that dare not speak its name. When Balendran's first love, a man named Richard whom he has not seen in 20 years, arrives from England to study Ceylon's political situation, a delicate and bittersweet reunion rings a chord of romance and longing that echoes throughout the story. Meanwhile, Annalakshmi takes strength from her studies, her reading, and her growing insights into the choices made by her school headmistress and her mother, sisters, and friends, to extricate herself from the compromises of marriage. Uncle's and niece's paths cross naturally in the telling of their tales. Wry references to love, always in terms of fever or illness, grace notes of description for a lock of hair or the fold of a sari, and elegant chapter headings taken from the Tirukkural, the famed work of Tamil philosophy, add to the ambience generated by this beguiling novel. Grace Anne A. DeCandido From Kirkus s An ambitious, often moving, but ultimately unsatisfying second novel set in the former Ceylon in the 1920s by the Sri Lankan born (now Canadian) author (Funny Boy, 1996). Selvadurai's frustratingly lax narrative juxtaposes two personal stories of oppression and lost opportunities that reflect the experience of their homeland ('a complex society with numerous horizontal and vertical divisions'), poised between colonization by the British and separate (and opposed) religious faiths (Hindu and Tamil) and independence movements. Annalakshmi Kandiah is a spirited young woman who prefers her teaching career in a mission school, and her friendships with a freethinking teacher and the latter's ward, to her father's plans to arrange her marriage. Annalakshmi's Uncle Balendran has been even more rigidly controlled by his father, the Mudliyar Navaratnam, a British-appointed official whose estate his son dutifully manages, 20 years after the Mudliyar had "rescued" Balendran from a homosexual relationship, steering him into marriage, and respectability. Selvadurai moves confidently among these major characters and their numerous relations and acquaintances, most of whom live in comparative luxury in the upper-class "Cinnamon Gardens" section of the city of Colombo and are variously affected by the spirit of rebellion seeping slowly into their hitherto complacent, enclosed little world. But the story is mired in complicated, overextended exposition its characters' byzantine personal, political, and religious affiliations

require a good deal of sorting out and we're rushed rather too summarily through an otherwise very moving double climax, in which Annalukshmi at last understands and accepts the consequences of her defiance, and Balendran finds the courage to emerge from his father's domineering shadow. An impressive near-miss. Selvadurai appears to be still learning his craft, but his gifts for compassionate characterization and clarity of statement augur well, and suggest that this very interesting new writer may be on the verge of producing major work. -- Copyright 1999, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.