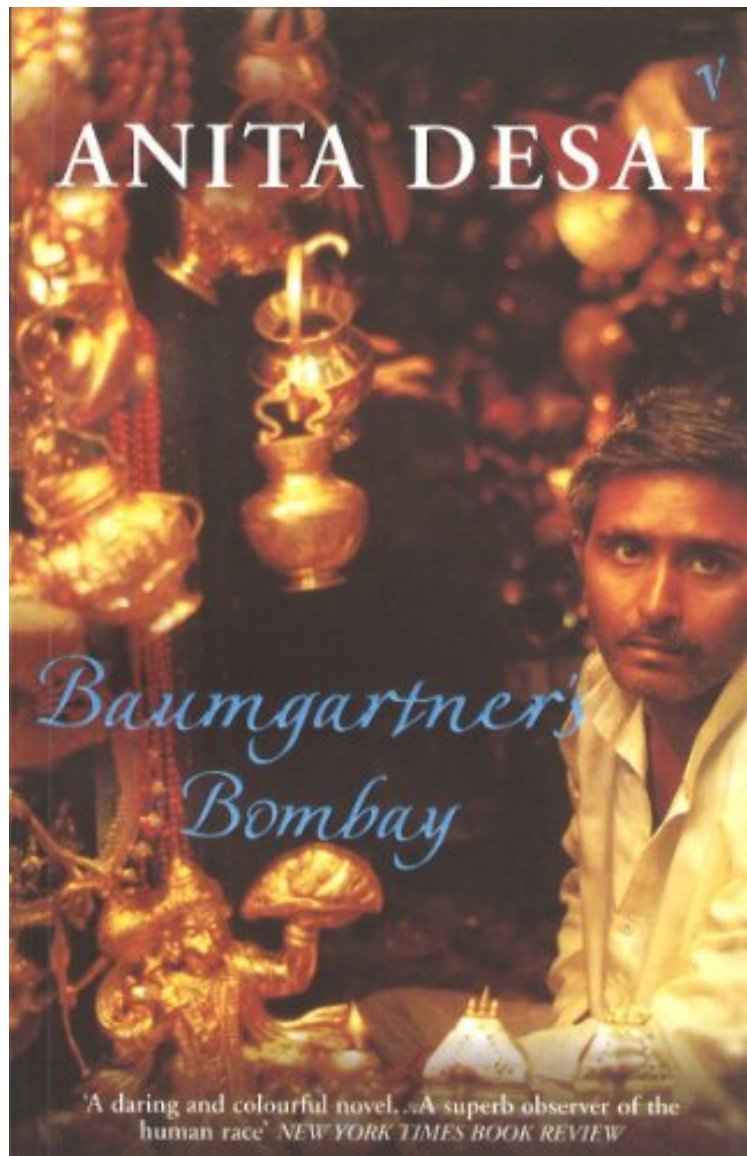


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## Baumgartner's Bombay

Von Anita Desai

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**Von Anita Desai : Baumgartner's Bombay** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Baumgartner's Bombay:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen3 von 3 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Anita Desai at her bestVon HORAKMrs Desai's novel opens with a lady called Lotte fleeing the scene of a murder. She's just lost a close friend, Hugo Baumgartner. When she gets back home, all that is left of Baumgartner's life are a few postcards sent by his mother during the Second World War. The German text on these postcards is always cryptic:

"Meine kleine Maus," "Mein Hschen," "Liebchen..." "Do not worry, my rabbit, I am well. Are you well? Keep well, my mouse, and do not worry - I am well..." and they're signed "Mama", "Mutti" or "M". And so the reader begins to follow Hugo Baumgartner's life, starting with his childhood in Berlin. At the age of about eight, his father, a Jewish furniture retailer, soon loses his business, his store is ransacked by the Nazis and he is taken to a concentration camp. Baumgartner and his mother are forced to leave their beautifully furnished apartment and hide in the former office of the shop. At school, Baumgartner's situation becomes unbearable: his classmates chant to him: "Baumgartner, Baum, hat eine Nase wie ein Daum" (Baumgartner's dumb, has a nose like a thumb.) Eventually, his survival in Germany becoming a matter of days, his mother agrees to Herr Pfuehl's idea to send his son to India, since he has a few connections there in the furniture production business. There are many moving scenes as the reader discovers, along with Hugo, the sights, sounds and smells of Calcutta and Bombay. And moving too, the life of this pathetic and insignificant man Baumgartner who simply does not belong. Neither to Hitler's Germany nor to India's society, where he is a perpetual "firanghi", foreigner, a wounded survivor. This novel is the achievement of a superior writer with a sharp perception about human nature, loss, solitude. Philippe Horak / phorak@gibz.ch 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Heartrending story about loss, humanity and humankind Von Pentimental I was very moved by Hugo Baumgartner's story. Though terribly damaged by history he's always at its sidelines. He's looked down upon by all but very few other humans all his life. Never fitting in anywhere, he's nevertheless established for himself an existence which, though very precariously balanced, lets him be content with very little. He's timid and unassuming, he's good hearted, he's the essential anti hero. And then some turd comes along and shatters his frail existence thoughtlessly and cruelly. I could hardly endure the parts featuring that hippie, I was so angry on behalf of Baumgartner, I wanted to shake him and urge him to throw that guy out, or pitch the hippie down Baumgartner's stairs myself. Desai crafted this cleverly and in beautiful language and draws you in with multicolored scenes and characters. History is mad, insane. Friends of mine were interned for years in Japan during WWII as enemy aliens. This xenophobia and insanity all over the world: Hugo Baumgartner's life is a memorial to many thousands. Desai says that chapters of this book were read over by Prof. Alex Aronson, who too spent WWII in India; in the 90ies he was my teacher. He could leave India, Baumgartner could not. (One vignette in the story seems to owe to Felice Benuzzi and his book "No Picnic on Mt. Kenya - three Italians who escaped a British enemy alien camp in East Africa to climb a mountain) Whoever liked this book might also like "Two Lives" by Vikram Seth. 0 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Well... Von sunflower Had to read this book for a class in university. It was okay but not enjoyable. Most of the time I got very confused with the whereabouts of the character, Hugo Baumgartner. However, it picks up an important topic or rather interesting angle on World War 2

Kurzbeschreibung A perceptive observation about the human race cleverly constructed and told with Desai's opulent vocabulary. Pressestimmen Beautifully observed... Recovers a lost slice of history in its portrayal of a wounded survivor. Observer Hugo Baumgartner, the central character of Anita Desai's dazzling novel, is a wandering Jew all his life. From the agonizing scenes of his childhood in pre-war Berlin, through his spell in business in Calcutta and then Bombay, he simply does not belong. Too dark for Hitler's society, he is too fair for India; he remains a firanghi, a foreigner, wherever he goes. Daily Telegraph Cleverly constructed, and full of sharp perceptions about human nature under the skin, whatever the colour. The Times From the Trade Paperback edition. Werbetext 'A daring and colourful novel. A superb observer of the human race' New York Times Book