

The Last Durbar



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Reviews

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(Dr. Kayden Gerlach)

THE LAST DURBAR



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Lotus/Roli Books, New Delhi, India. Softcover. Book Condition: New. The existing histories of the Partition of British India have very little chance of capturing the moods and mindsets, the helplessness and the frustration of those who steered the course. The histories written thus far have either focused on political narratives or on the ideological analysis. More recently, the spotlight has turned towards the madness and pathology of hatred and mass murders. The Last Durbar tells it as it was - without the epic quality of conventional writing filled with the rhetoric of freedom and greatness, and without the legalese and constitution-making vocabulary of the Transfer of Power. The personal and political meet and separate at the last durbar, with Louis Mountbatten on the throne, and the modern, constitutional 'durbars' hail the advent of freedom and bid farewell to each other. The play is based on private papers of Mountbatten, including verbatim records, testimonies, and discussions of the leading political figures. It is a nuanced and multi-layered account of the months and days that eventually led to the independent nations of India and Pakistan. Drama is the only genre of written history that allows us to fully portray the complexity of such a process and frame the atmosphere to the concentrated moment. The history of Partition has never before been told in this way. Printed Pages: 194.



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