The Wedding is a love story, of sorts, set in East, South and North. That is, set in India, South Africa and America. Through two narrators – Khateja, the “most beautiful woman in the world”, and her grandson, two generations later – the story of her marriage and voyage to Durban from Bombay is told.

Coovadia’s writing is funny, sharp-witted and unusual. Peppered with Indian names for food and people, his dialogue is so three-dimensional it leaps off the page. In fact, it is this razor sharp style which pushes the story forward, as we learn of Ismet Nassin, a humble, peaceful clerk who is hit on the side of the head (by an angel) and decides to marry Khateja, a feisty village girl.

We are given glimpses into Khateja’s thinking, her dismay at being married off “like a box of vegetables to be given to any passing stranger on the street,” her loneliness in their new country, her desire to be more than her culture allows her to be. But at heart The Wedding is a tale of two people thrown together and forced to make a life from their circumstances. It is a parody of marriage, a nod to Shakespeare’s The Taming of the Shrew, and a very Durban novel.

In short, a treat for anyone who enjoys clever humour and wry observations about human nature.

Have you read this book? Leave a comment at our blog...