



# Maps For Lost Lovers

*Nadeem Aslam*

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## **Maps For Lost Lovers** Nadeem Aslam

Set in a nameless british town that its pakistani-born immigrants have renamed dasht-e-tanhaii, the desert of solitude, maps for lost lovers is an exploration of cultural tension and religious bigotry played out in the personal breakdown of a single family. As the book begins, jugnu and chanda, whose love is both passionate and illicit, have disappeared from their home. Rumours about their disappearance abound, but five months pass before anything certain is known. Finally, on a snow-covered january morning, chanda's brothers are arrested for the murder of their sister and jugnu. Maps for lost lovers traces the year following jugnu and chanda's disappearance. Seen principally through the eyes of jugnu's brother shamas, the cultured, poetic director of the local community relations council and commission for racial equality and his wife kaukab, mother of three increasingly estranged children and devout daughter of a muslim cleric, the event marks the beginning of the unravelling of all that is sacred to them. It fills shamas's own house and life with grief and, in exploring the lovers' disappearance and its aftermath, nadeem aslam discloses a legacy of miscomprehension and regret not only for shamas and kaukab but for their children and neighbours as well. An intimate portrait of a community searingly damaged by traditions, this is a densely imagined, beautiful and deeply troubling book written in heightened prose saturated with imagery. It casts a deep gaze on themes as timeless as love, nationalism and religion, while meditating on how these forces drive us apart.

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