



**The Best of the Booker**

## **Readers' Guides**

# **The Siege of Krishnapur by J. G. Farrell**

**Publisher Orion**

**Paperback RRP £7.99**

### **Winning year 1973**

#### **Other shortlisted titles in 1973**

Beryl Bainbridge – *The Dressmaker*

Elizabeth Mavor – *The Green Equinox*

Iris Murdoch – *The Black Prince*

#### **1973 Judges**

Karl Miller (Chair), Mary McCarthy, Edna O'Brien



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### About the author

JG Farrell was born in Liverpool in January 1935. In 1956 he went to study at Brasenose College, Oxford; it was while there he contracted polio. He drew heavily on his experience for his second novel, *The Lung* (1965). His novel, *Troubles* (1970), the first in the Empire trilogy, won the Faber Memorial Prize in 1971. A film version of *Troubles* was made for British television in 1988. The second in the Empire trilogy, *The Siege of Krishnapur* (1973) won the Booker Prize. JG Farrell died in 1979.

### The Siege of Krishnapur

India, 1857 – the year of the Great Mutiny, when Muslim soldiers turned into bloody rebellion on their British overlords. The Siege of Krishnapur is set in an isolated Victorian outpost on the subcontinent. Rumours of strife filter in from afar and yet the members of the colonial community remains confident of their military and above all, moral superiority. But when they find themselves under actual siege, the true character of their dominion – at once brutal, blundering, and wistful – is soon revealed.

### Discussion points

- Do you agree with a recent review of *The Siege of Krishnapur* that said “A novel set in India in 1857, the year of the Mutiny, in which the points of view of the Indians are almost nonexistent, would be unlikely to win the Man Booker prize these days.”
- To what extent do you think that Fleury’s character is a symbol of the changing times in which he lives?
- What parallels can be drawn, as the siege progresses, between the behaviour of the domesticated dogs and the British Community members?
- *The Siege of Krishnapur* has a more formal style of writing compared to that of many contemporary novels, with long sentences and descriptive passages. Did this have an impact on your approach to reading the novel?
- What does the JG Farrell feel about bureaucracy? How does he demonstrate his feelings?

### Other books by JG Farrell

A Man From Elsewhere  
The Lung  
A Girl in the Head  
Troubles  
The Singapore Grip  
The Hill Station

### Further Reading

Staying On – Paul Scott  
Ladysmith – Giles Foden  
White Moghuls – William Dalrymple

### Useful links

<http://www.themanbookerprize.com/prize/books/11>