India has many histories. To pilgrims from ancient China, India was the birthplace of the Buddha; to Alexander the Great it was a land of naked philosophers and indomitable elephant-mounted armies. At the height of the Mughal empire, India boasted nearly a quarter of the world's economy, and even under colonial rule it was the jewel in the crown of the British empire. Today it is home to one-sixth of the global population.

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ISBN 978-0-500-29825-1 £10.99