

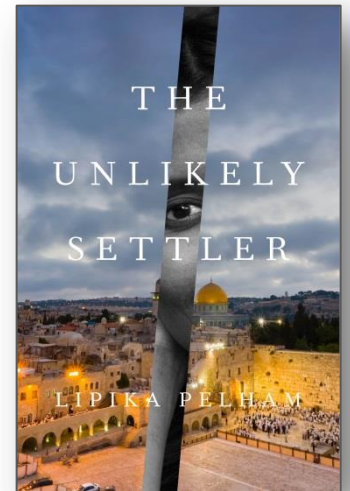


# THE UNLIKELY SETTLER

## LIPIKA PELHAM

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In the tradition of classic memoirs such as Alexandra Fuller's *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, this is a book that takes you deep into the heart of a place and a person. As Lipika Pelham lays bare the emotions and fallibilities of her life over eight years spent living in Jerusalem, she explores the conflict in the Middle East with inspiring subtlety and understanding.



*The Unlikely Settler* is the story of a young Bengali journalist who moves to Jerusalem with her English-Jewish husband and two children. He speaks Arabic and is an ardent believer in conflict resolution in the Middle East. She leaves her career behind in the BBC's London newsroom to follow his dream. But Jerusalem catapults her into a world of tribal allegiance where an outsider's viewpoint is constantly challenged. From the school you choose for your children to the wine you buy, you must take sides at every turn. The question becomes - which side?

Lipika tries to navigate these decisions with integrity. She chooses an Orthodox Jewish doctor to deliver her baby and a Palestinian cameraman to help her make documentary films. She delights in the Arab culinary traditions that inform Jewish food. Her complicated relationship with her husband Leo is as emotive as the city she lives in, as full of energy, life, pain and contradiction. Increasingly, though, the Middle East conflict starts to spill over into their family life, immersing them in a sense of displacement and disconnection in the segregated city. Only compromise can keep them together, but, as this book shows so brilliantly, peace-making is harder in reality than in the abstract.



**About the author:** Lipika Pelham is an award-winning documentary filmmaker and journalist who spent her childhood in a dusty Bengali village in the 1970s. A Bengali-Indian-Bangladeshi with a Hindu-Muslim background, she has learned to speak Hebrew during her eight years in Jerusalem.

Her films have been screened in numerous festivals and TV channels around the world. "Deadly Honour", a film on honour killing among the urbanised Bedouins living in Israel won her, among other awards, the prestigious CMCA Prix de Jury in Marseille, 2010. A second film, "Land for the Nomads", about a soul-searching Israeli lawyer's campaign to secure land for the Arab nomadic communities in the Judean desert, was premiered in Germany last year and has since been shown in ethnographic film festivals in Taiwan, Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia and the USA.

Lipika has travelled extensively in the Middle East. She previously reported for the BBC from the Indian Sub-Continent, South-East Asia, North Africa and the Middle East. She has been South Asia editor for the BBC World Service, and reported for a range of BBC programmes from *Outlook*, *Assignment* and *From Our Own Correspondent* to *Woman's Hour*. Lipika has, during the past twenty years, lived in Rabat, Amman and Jerusalem. She currently divides her time between London and Jerusalem.

LIPIKA PELHAM is available for interview

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