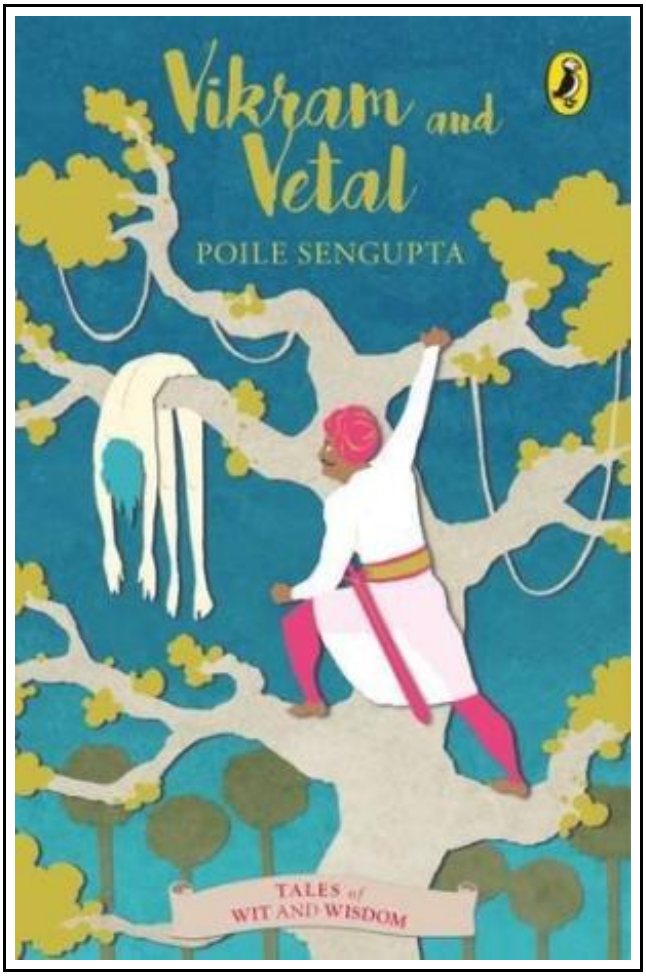
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(Marlin Bergstrom)

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Puffin, New Delhi, India, 2005. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Dipankar Bhattacharya (illustrator). First Edition. The king slashes his way through the forest, his sword cutting down the terrifying rings of leaves and branches. He climbs a tamarind tree and brings down a corpse hanging from its highest branch. Just as he turns to make his way out of the gloomy forest, an eerie voice cackles in his ear . . . Thus begins the saga of Vikramaditya, the brave and noble king, and the Vetal, his tormentor from the spirit world. As Vikramaditya trudges through the forest, the Vetal narrates stories to him, ending each with a riddle that tests the kings famed sense of justice, his ideas of right and wrong. Many centuries later, a twelve-year-old girl, disgusted at the way her summer holiday is turning out, runs away to a dusty field where she meets a strange old man sitting under a large tree. The man tells her stories about kings and queens and people of long ago, tales of generosity, courage and wisdom as well as of treachery, deceit and great stupidity. Incredibly, each of the stories deals with ideas and issues that are being debated at home by her eccentric grandmother. She also learns that these are the ancient Vikram and Vetal stories, and that King Vikramaditya had asked for a boon wanting these tales to be handed down generations. But who is the old man? And what connects the girl to a king from ancient times? Deftly weaving together the age-old Vikram and Vetal stories with the mysterious happenings of a summer holiday, Poile Sengupta brings alive these classic tales in a new, energetic way. Funny, sad, serious and weird, this unique retelling proves how relevant these tales remain even today. Printed Pages: 163 with...

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