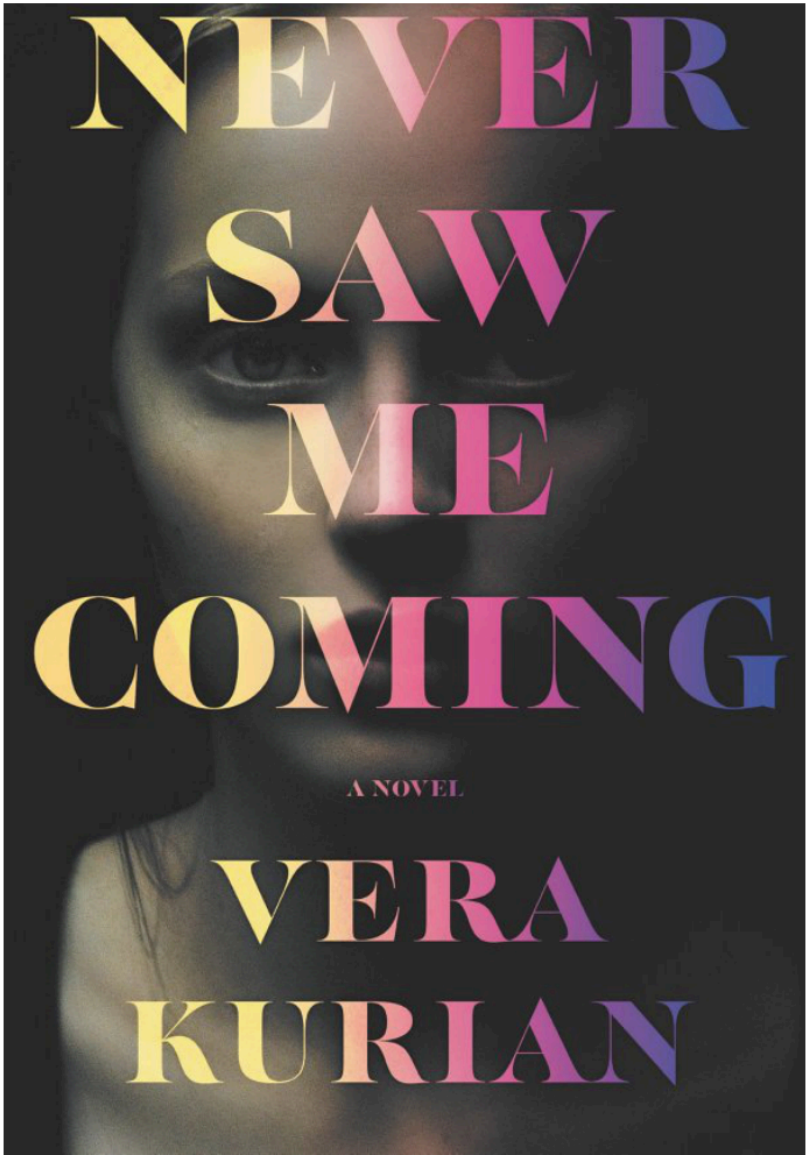
Kurian)



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NEVER
SAW
ME
COMING
A NOVEL
VERA
KURIAN

inch. She was born and raised in the mid-Atlantic region, before tints in NYC and LA returned her to her rightful home of DC, here she's lived for most of her adult life. She has a PhD in social sychology. *Never Saw Me Coming* is her first novel.

A completely original, clever whodunit from a talented new arriva to the world of psychological suspense. Vera Kurian is one to watch!"

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Vera Kurian



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s soon as the door to my new dorm room closed, I went to the indow, scanning across the quad for him. It wasn't like there was ny possibility he would just happen to be out there among the amilies lugging moving boxes or the handful of students sprawled n the grass.

But there! A head of dirty-blond waves. Will. My mouth opened. hen the person turned and I saw it was only a girl with an nfortunate haircut. Seriously, you'd think she'd put in more of an ffort for move-in day.

I turned and faced my empty dorm room with its sad linoleum oors, mentally going through my to-do list. 1. Get rid of Mom. heck. She had already left and was probably speeding up the I-95, opping open a bottle of champagne now that she was finally rid of e. 2. Claim the most advantageous space before my roommate, essica, arrived. 3. Make six to eight friends before 4. My andatory check-in appointment at the psychology department. 5. ind Will.

We had a double with two bedrooms, one clearly larger than the ther. While my normal instinct was to claim the larger one, I mmediately saw the problem with that. The larger bedroom had indows that overlooked the quad. What if I wanted to crawl in or ut of my window in the middle of the night? People will record nything even remotely interesting on their phones these days, and could be easily seen from the other dorms and academic halls that ined the quad—too much of an audience for my liking.

I took the smaller room. My generosity would score me points ith my new roomie, but more importantly, the room had a view o he brick wall of the building next to us and there was a metal fire scape attached directly to the window. Easy access in and out of y room without detection—perfect. I dumped some of my boxes

eapplying my lip gloss and fixing my hair. The hair had to be just ight—a loose, effortless side French braid that actually wasn't ffortless. You have to be the kind of girl who "doesn't put any ffort in" but naturally rolls out of bed looking like a horny but omehow demure starlet. If you meet some standard of objective ttractiveness, people think you're better than you actually are—marter, more interesting, worthier of existing. Combined with the ight personality, this can be powerful.

Brewser had one long hallway with rooms shooting off on either ide. I peeked into the room next door where two brunettes were restling a duvet out of a plastic package. "Hi!" I chirped. "I'm hloe!" I could be whatever they wanted me to be. A fun girl, a otential best friend, someone to tell secrets to over midnight nacks. This type of socializing was just me playing little roles for a ew moments, but when I need to go all in, I can. I can make myself ounger when I want to, opting for looser clothes that hide my ody and making my eyes shiny with dumbness—a whole costume f innocence. I can look older with makeup and carefully selected lothes, showing skin when necessary. It's easy because people tend o see what they want to.

I went door to door. Room 202. "Omigod I *love* your hair," I said o a bubbly blonde I suspect will end up popular.

Room 206. "You're not brothers, are you?" I said shyly to two oys on the crew team (nice bodies but baby faces—not my taste). hey grinned at me, looked at my boobs, and each vied to say omething clever. Neither was clever.

Room 212 was a pair of awkward girls. I was friendly to them bu idn't linger long because I knew they would never be key players.

While I met a few more people, I was simultaneously assessing ho seemed like they were going to be part of Greek life. Will was n a frat—SAE—and one of my first orders of business was to get in ith that frat. The crew boys were already in the hallway loudly alking about going out to a club that night. That was good—an uting, and the crew boys seemed like they would be the type to ledge a frat. "I love dancing," I said to what's-his-name, the taller f the two, fingering the end of my braid. "It's the best way to get o know people." He smiled down at me, his eyes crinkling. If high chool taught me anything, it's that social life is a game that evolves around navigating hierarchies. Be someone guys want to uck or you will be invisible to them. Be someone the girls want