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Auszug aus:

"The Grass-Eaters" von Krishnan Varma

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Thema:	The Grass-Eaters – Krishnan Varma
TMD: 36583	
Kurzvorstellung des Materials:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The short story is interpreted in regard to the cultural characteristics of the Indian subcontinent. • Translations, explanations and etymology are included as well as sources for further information.
Übersicht über die Teile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short biographical information on the author • Background information • Plot • Interpretation • Reflection of the title • Point of view • Tips for further reading <p>(Ohne Primärtext!)</p>
Information zum Dokument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ca. 6 Seiten
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Interpretation

In this material, the short story “The Grasseaters” by Krishnan Varma will be analyzed.

The story takes place in Calcutta, West Bengal. The protagonist of the story, Ajit, works as a tutor at the municipal primary school. One day a student’s father asks Ajit about where he lives. When he responds, he lives in a pipe, his colloquist, Mr. Misrilal, cannot believe it. This is what makes the protagonist remember the last homes he and his wife Swapna, as well as his son Prodeep, had occupied in Calcutta:

- ➔ at first they lived on a sidewalk (they escaped from there because another woman attacked Ajit)
- ➔ then they lived in an old freight wagon; because Swapna was pregnant and demanded a stationary home they moved again.
- ➔ at this time Ajit considered the school as a place to live for the first time, but because he was ashamed his students could take notice of his family’s poverty, he rejected the idea
- ➔ this is when they found a cement concrete pipe they occupied.

From this point on the story continues with the student’s father, Mr. Misrilal, offering Ajit to live in one of his houses where the roof originally was used to store coal tar.

If the reader is aware of the issues Moslem and Hindu people, especially in the metropolis of Calcutta faced at that time, he understands the circumstances more as a symbol, the author uses to illustrate a picture of hope and friendship between the two religions, rather than pure coincidence.

Subsequently, Ajit tells the reader about how on the one hand they shared their home with rats and mice, on the other hand their son had more space for himself there than he had before. He also states, that Prodeep now is not living with them anymore since he is active in the Naxalit underground. For the parents this is not so tragic after all, even though they miss him. The following reasons explain why Ajit and Swapna would be ashamed today still living with Prodeep:

- ➔ at home they do not wear clothes in order to save the clothes they own and make them last longer. They only wear clothing when leaving the house.
- ➔ they eat grass. The two of them live of grass since rice is not affordable for them anymore. Before Prodeep was born the couple could at least afford some rice and curry. Considering the present day, they are actually planning on reducing the amount of food they need in order to save money.
- ➔ Ajit has just one leg after he had an accident by falling off the roof of a tram. Now he is marked as a cripple.



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