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BRAHMABHATT

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## Chapter 1

### *Dadaji (Grandfather) arrives at Voi*

Ram Vakil, Shekhar's grandfather worked in the Indian civil service and when certain friends and acquaintances began applying to go across the seas to this new and hopefully prosperous land of Eastern Africa he too applied successfully as a station master at one of the railway outposts.

Voi is a small village/railway town, approximately a hundred miles from the coast which is where Grandpa or *Dadaji* got posted. This was a couple of years before the beginning of the Second World War.

Shekhar's father and Uncle were finishing college in India and worked for a while, got married and only came to the new continent with their young families a couple of years after the war around the time of Indian independence and as *Dadaji* was approaching retirement.

'Station Master Vakil' as he was known, *Dadaji* was both admired and feared by the few Indian families residing at Voi as well as, and especially by, the native African workers. A story went that whilst returning from a neighbouring village, he and his trusted worker were confronted by a group of hyenas and it was only the former's die-hard courage which succeeded in chasing off the animals. From that day onwards, the station-master was hailed as a hero amongst all the station/village folk.

There were less complimentary stories as well, about *Dadaji's* courage, when on one occasion Shekhar's