

## ABSTRACT

### Vickram's Money Trees and Other Stories

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The tumultuous nature of relationships and the inescapable thrust of human interconnectivity are the two main themes, which unify the seven short stories in this fictional collection. Categorized as literary realism, the stories delve deeply into familial bonds and the struggles that test the resilience of the human spirit. Each character is challenged to balance the need for a relationship: be it familial, internal, interpersonal or spiritual, with the ideals of self-preservation and growth in an ever changing, evolving society. Whilst each character and story can stand on its own, there is a subtle reminder that all things are connected, through an interwoven web of narratives whereby a secondary character becomes the main character in another story. The objective of this construct is to highlight the never-ending cycle of life that links space, place, people and time. On the surface, the language may seem overtly simple allowing for scrutiny even by younger readers. However, the vast variety of styles, forms and narrative techniques combine to create a multi-layered emotional complexity that can intrigue even seasoned intellectuals. Additionally, the use of Trinidadian vernacular and setting does not deter the universality of the work as the themes presented transcend the barriers of place by commenting on the many afflictions common to the human condition. The hope is that by blending the art of storytelling with empathetic characters and thematic diversity, this collection would serve to entertain and inform, thereby transforming personal perspectives and evoking societal change.

Keywords: relationships; interconnectivity; literary realism; Trinidadian short stories; character-driven.