



The Splendor of Silence

Indu Sundaresan

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When Sam Hawthorne, a twenty-five-year-old U.S. Army captain, arrives at the princely state of Rudrakot in May of 1942, it is on a personal quest to find his missing brother. But Sam's mission is soon threatened by the unlikely of sources -- he falls hopelessly in love with Mila, daughter of the local political agent. And Mila, unexpectedly attracted to Sam, finds herself torn between loyalty to her family and the man she loves. A sweeping and poignant story of forbidden love, *The Splendor of Silence* opens twenty-one years later with Olivia, Sam's daughter, receiving a trunk of treasures from India, along with an anonymous letter that finally fills the silences of her childhood. She finally learns the heartrending story of her parents' passionate and enduring love affair -- throwing them in the path of racial prejudice, nationalist intrigue, and the explosive circumstances of a country on the brink of independence from British rule.

The Splendor of Silence Details

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From Reader Review The Splendor of Silence for online ebook

kP says

seemingly common story line of a traditional girl bethroated by her father but falls for another guy (from a different nationality of all things) is done extremely spendidly by the author!!

The time period and the historical details make the story so much more exciting and beautiful.

Loved it!!!

Nina says

This was a soppy romance set at the end of the british raj. I never felt connected to the main characters, and the story just seamed to long. On the whole the story was mildly interesting so I give it 3 stars. Also, the book has all the ingredients of an epic romance/blockbuster type movie.

Selma says

Ljubavna pri?a koja je trajala samo ?etiri dana promijenila je sve. Na 500 strana Indu je uspjela smjestiti prekrasnu pri?u, prelijepe opise Indije, njihove obi?aje i sukobe. Upravo sam završila sa ?itanjem a ve? znam da ?e mi dugo nedostajati ovi likovi iz knjige.

Natasa says

I enjoyed reading this book. The captivating story is excellently narrated with so much ease by the author!

Susan says

I give the story, it's rich history, the colorful nature of the narrative, the depth a 3.5-4 start rating. The narration of the audio book is amazing. Simply amazing. The middle of the story seems lost, stuck as if the author had a page count in mind and set about to stretch and bloat the story to achieve it. Much of the middle of the this book is not needed. I almost gave up. I'm glad I didn't. This book hooked me early-- but almost lost me during the boring middle...

Carol Meissner says

What a satisfying experience to hear this book read by Sneha Mathan on the audio version of this well

written book. Since the story takes place in India I appreciated the Indian accent and lilting quality of the the reader's voice. That, coupled, with a well orchestrated, interesting, and well researched story provided the basis for my high opinion.

Every chapter begins with a quote about "The Raj experience" either from a British or Indian perspective. This background information added to the depth of the book by providing information that the reader might not have previously known. It also helped to set the backdrop for the struggles each of the main characters faced.

I hate reviews that give away the story line, and unfortunately, the synopsis of the book, on the back cover, gives most everything away. How I wish that practice would end! That being said, if you like an intricately woven book that challenges your own perceptions about race, caste, history, and life; this book is for you. Just don't read the other reviews that share the plot.

Cynthia says

The ending in this book made me mad (I kind of naively wanted a happy ending) otherwise I would give it four stars. I did appreciate how all the characters came together in the end though. I wasn't too sure why Marianne was given so much attention until the end. I really ended up loving her character.

I loved Sam's character and his devotion to finding his lost brother. And of course I loved Mila and their tragic love story. Why does it have to be tragic? Argh!!

For my conservative type friends, there is brief sexuality in this book. I totally didn't appreciate it but I can skim quicky over gross parts. I guess I'm conservative too.

Jacqueline says

By far my favorite read last year. The characters were developed well and the description of India was realistically romantic. The story is set in India during the decline of British rule. This love story is mixed well with historic events beginning in the 1940s. I've never read 400 pages so fast!

Bethany says

At the moment I'm devouring books about India, and this one definitely satisfied. Overall, the time covered in the book is no more than a week (spread over April/May 1942 and April 1963), but the author skilfully packs a lot into such a short amount of time.

Primarily, it is a book about infatuation and obsession. These are things such as money (Ken), lust and sex (Mila, Sam and others), power (Vimal), reputation (Kiran) and human companionship (Jai). The collision of these obsessions drives the events forward in a snowball motion towards the climax of the book.

It's a very delicious book. The attention to detail is superb and doesn't jar at all. Even the constant switching between the events in Burma and those in Rudrakot is done so well that it didn't annoy me - it was like peeling away layers piece by piece until the truth was revealed.

I will say that it was quite a predictable plot in many ways, though there were some surprises (I won't

mention which).

The reason it doesn't get 5 stars is that I'm not a fan of "omniscient" narrative - ie where the narrator is clearly part of the story but knows absolutely everything, even the things he shouldn't. I also felt that there was one loose end left untied, and that was how Raman (the father) reacted to all the events. His character is wonderfully fleshed out in the beginning of the the book, but by the end he is hardly mentioned. Even so, I enjoyed reading it and I would heartily recommend it.

Samia says

About 3/4 into the book, I didn't know how Sundaresan was going to reconcile all the different storylines, but she was able to do so beautifully by the end of the book. This novel took a fascinating period of history (British occupation of India and the established nationalist movement), and combined it with personal story of one family and how this period in India's history affected them all. Though fiction, I learned a lot about the struggle for freedom, and fragility of human relations in India at that time.

Shama says

I really enjoyed this book. I read the author's first book, Twentieth Wife, which has a sequel but did not feel compelled enough to read the sequel. I'm glad I read this one though (the author's third). It shows how the author is growing in her writing skills and was just a very nice book to read. I enjoyed it. I can't give it a 5 because there were some things I felt were missing from the story, but overall, it was very enjoyable.

Donna says

In 1963 Seattle a grieving daughter opens a mysterious trunk. There she finds buried among silk saris, jewelry, and trinkets, a story. The story she has been waiting all her life to hear. The story of the American father who raised her and the Indian mother she never knew. In the early days of Americas involvement in WWII Captain Sam Hawthorne of the 3rd Burma Rangers embarks on a dangerous mission behind enemy lines to locate a stranded American missionary and escort her through the jungles of Burma to the relative safety of India. Sam arrives in India exahusted and injured but he has another mission; to find his brother, an enlistee with the British Rudrakot Rifles, who has been missing for over 2 months. We soon learn that "Captain Hawthorne" is an officer of the fledgling OSS and plans to use the skills he's learned in the OSS to discover the fate of his brother. He has just 4 days in Rudrakot to accomplish his goal but finds himself drawn into the lives of his hosts family and falling desperately in love with Mila, the daughter of the Indian political agent with whom he is staying. Although the consumation of thier love is a foregone conclusion, after all we meet their daughter in the opening passages, the author so expertly builds the sexual tension between them that it is nearly unbearable. Sam and Mila are like two halves of the same coin, both torn between their feelings and desires, and their familial obligations. The story of their growing love is set against the backdrop of the casual cruelty and bigotry of the British Raj, the growing nationalistic movement for India's independence, and Sam's increasing fear for his brother who he now believes is a prisoner in the nearby Field Punishment Center. The threads of all these stories are expertly woven together, the characters richly and sympathetically drawn, and the writing lyrical. A beautiful story and tremendously satisfying

read! I would also highly recommend the authors earlier books: *The Twentieth Wife* and *The Feast of Roses*.

Heidi says

I really enjoyed this book. Most of the book is a flashback to 1942 India and Burma, where an American soldier and a fairly privileged young Indian woman form a brief attachment that results in the birth of a daughter. It is played out against the backdrop of WWII and the Indian Nationalist movement. There's a lot of historical and cultural detail, as well as very good writing.

Smitha says

The Splendor of Silence is a sweet romantic story, woven into the period where India was still under British Rule.

It starts off with Olivia, an American girl, getting a trunk filled with her Indian mother's belongings. She has grown up with her grandmother and father, who has always been curiously quiet about her mother. In the trunk, she finds a letter which begins to tell her the story of her parents.

It was 1942, Mila, the daughter of the Political Resident, Raman, is betrothed to Jai, the Prince of Rudrakot. Raman, is a widower, with 3 children, 2 boys and a girl – Mila. He dotes upon Mila, giving her opportunities that most Indian parents would have balked at, in those times. He is determined that his daughter has the opportunities that his wife did not. More here - <http://wordsndreamz.wordpress.com/201...>

Kathleen Hagen says

The Splendor of Silence, by Indu Sundarisan narrated by Sneha Mathan, produced by Blackstone Audio, downloaded from audible.com.

Most of the story of this book took place in 1942 WW II India where the battle between British imperialism and Indian nationalism was beginning to come to the fore, and in fact held more interest for the Indians, at least, than the war with Japan. Sam Hawthorne, an American army captain, comes to India on a secret mission, to find his brother, Mike, who people say has gone AWOL. Mike has gotten himself involved with the nationalist movement and is being held prisoner by some rogue British officers. Sam's objectives were interrupted when he met and fell in love with Mila, a middle-class Indian girl educated in England. But Mila's father has arranged a marriage for Mila. So Mila's and Sam's love was doomed from the first. This is a story of passions leading to tragedy. It reminds me in many ways of the Raj quartet by Paul Scott, written also about 1942. Very good, and very well narrated.
