



The Storyteller's Secret

Sejal Badani

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From the bestselling author of *Trail of Broken Wings* comes an epic story of the unrelenting force of love, the power of healing, and the invincible desire to dream.

Nothing prepares Jaya, a New York journalist, for the heartbreak of her third miscarriage and the slow unraveling of her marriage in its wake. Desperate to assuage her deep anguish, she decides to go to India to uncover answers to her family's past.

Intoxicated by the sights, smells, and sounds she experiences, Jaya becomes an eager student of the culture. But it is Ravi—her grandmother's former servant and trusted confidant—who reveals the resilience, struggles, secret love, and tragic fall of Jaya's pioneering grandmother during the British occupation. Through her courageous grandmother's arrestingly romantic and heart-wrenching story, Jaya discovers the legacy bequeathed to her and a strength that, until now, she never knew was possible.

The Storyteller's Secret Details

Date : Published September 1st 2018 by Lake Union Publishing

ISBN : 9781542048279

Author : Sejal Badani

Format : Paperback 400 pages

Genre : Fiction, Historical, Historical Fiction, Cultural, India

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From Reader Review *The Storyteller's Secret* for online ebook

Karla M. says

I had no idea what this was about except the it was historical fiction and that could never be boring in my opinion. I loved the setting and have read very little about India during WWII. The writing was mesmerizing and the story was beautiful and tragic all at the same time. I highly recommend this book!

Alaina says

When I read this synopsis, it kind of reminded me of another book. No that the title or the actual synopsis. Nope just a book mentioned in the synopsis. It's weird, but I liked it.

In *The Storyteller's Secret* you will meet Jaya. Low-key, I liked getting to know this character. She was just so freaking refreshing and likable throughout the entire book. However, before I dive into an actual review of this book I feel like I should confess something. I only really ever dove into this book because I was trying to show a co-worker how KU works. Lol it's funny and sad.. but so freaking true.

Anyhoo, Jaya is a character. She's been through hell. Went through some miscarriages, which definitely fucks with a woman's mind, but she is still so freaking strong. I loved her character from start to finish.

Overall, I loved this book. I did have some expectations walking into this book and even though it didn't meet all of them - I still enjoyed it. I would totally dive into another book from this author too.

Harley says

Rarely do we ever know the stories of our parents lives and understand what events made them who they became. And we almost never learn much about the lives of our grandparents. Jaya, the main character in this novel, has the good fortune to learn the crucial stories of both her mother and grandmother. This is an emotionally powerful novel and will touch people's hearts.

I did find the action to be very predictable. I guessed a key event long before it happened.

About a third of the way through the novel, I made the mistake of reading a few of the reviews. One mentioned how the physical details of India were inaccurate. Having never been there, I could not judge for myself, but the review colored my reading of the book. I began to question if the author had ever been there. Even if the details are not accurate, the emotional power of the story makes it worth reading. If you enjoy love stories, you will enjoy this book.

Melike says

I know I am in the minority here, but I found this book boring and most of the characters unlikable especially Jaya. The story was predictable and it read like a cheesy, badly written romance novel. I also had nagging suspicions about the author's description of India that were later confirmed. When writing about other

cultures more care needs to be taken, otherwise it ends up being a sloppy novel.

Linda says

I have never written a Goodreads review before, but I am astounded this book got 4.47 stars. It was totally predictable, trite, cheesy, melodramatic, and basically read like a cheap romance novel set in India. The writing style was hard to stomach. I normally read 6 books a month and this took me 3 weeks because I couldn't bring myself to pick it up and finish it. Spent endless hours playing FreeCell on my phone rather than pick up my Kindle. Not sure why I even finished it but if I make it halfway I usually try to finish. Thankfully I can move on to something better now.

Bette Crosby says

Absolutely awesome book. I started reading and did not stop until the very last page. Great story, beautifully told. The culture, the setting, the pace, and the emotions were perfectly on target. 5+ Stars for me.

Betsy Renzetti says

This is the book of the summer for me. I felt like i was right there in India with Jaya. I had to read this book in one day. Now i have to find a book that comes up to its excellence. Wonderful story, written sooooo well.

Ahw says

I think I must have read a different book to everyone else, looking at the ratings and reviews. I was really looking forward to it - I've read lots about India and thought it sounded like an interesting premise. The problem was it was SO predictable - I even wrote the synopsis after I'd read about 15% of the book and gave it to my husband - and I was spot on.

That wasn't the real problem - the problem with the novel is that it just couldn't have happened and it was SO inconsistent. At one point Jaya talks about going to the village to find an internet cafe to send her blog and only a couple of chapters later she's sitting on her bed and 'presses send' to upload the latest installment. There were loads of these sorts of examples.

How could a simple, ill educated girl from a small village have enough English to have a relationship with a soldier from the British Army (don't even get me started on how utterly ridiculous the two of them spending hours alone in a school is), and yet she can't write one word of it. He is able to read her poems (in Hindi)?

And then there is the 'untouchable' essentially being left to run the household of a very well respected businessman - without his wife having any male relatives of his to protect her and his children during a time of civil unrest in a volatile country.

The whole book irritated me beyond belief - I really don't understand why everyone else loved it so much! If you can totally suspend your disbelief about the period of history in which it was written, the shoe-horning of the feminist message into a character from the 1920s and the dialogue which just didn't ring true (a British public school educated officer talking about his 'mates' and his 'mum' for example), then I'm sure you'll love it.

Susan says

I love reading books about India and thought this would be a winner but unfortunately it was too predictable and I figured out early on how it was going to end.

Thank you Lake Union Publishing and Netgalley for an ARC in exchange for an honest review.

Shweta Ganesh Kumar says

This novel is a well-written train wreck. While the modern part of the novel is relatable, the British Raj part is barely researched in terms of societal set-up and even amenities available at the time. The basic writing is good, but the utter lack of research, even the basic kind, was a complete let down.

Gina says

I don't even know where to begin with this book. I didn't read it, I devoured it. I lived it. It slowly brought me in and then refused to let me go. I read until my eyes needed toothpicks to stay open, and yet I kept reading. It is that good.

The book is written from two vantage points: those of the person telling the main story, Jaya, and the second is from the viewpoint of her grandmother, Amisha.

Jaya is reeling from her third miscarriage. A writer living in New York, the third miscarriage is more than she, or her husband Patrick, can take.

Lena, Jaya's mother, has never been a close, loving mother, and when Jaya questions her about her past in India, she never really answers anything, telling her to "let it be".

One day, Jaya comes across a recent letter, begging her mother to return to India where she was born as a recent family death required her attention. Lena had refused, and Jaya decides to go to India herself and finally hear the true story of her mother and her grandmother.

Once in India, the book lavishly describes the countryside, the sights, the smells, the culture shock Jaya experiences. Nothing can prepare her for the village where her mother and grandmother lived. Finding their home, she meets Ravi, an "untouchable" who is more valuable than a pot of gold. Ravi is the one who will enlighten her about her family history - finally. It is only now that the story can be told following the death of Deepak, Jaya's grandfather who was married to Amisha.

Horried at the poverty, the division of the classes, the babies and children living in an orphanage waiting for adoption, she nonetheless falls in love with India and all its secrets and beauty.

Amisha's story is beyond heartbreaking. Ravi is the lowest class, the untouchables, and yet he is worth a million of the upper classes due to his golden heart, his loyalty, and his bravery in the face of prejudice.

I cannot say much more without introducing spoilers, and I do not want to do that. A voracious reader, this book has become one of my all-time favorite reads. It left me wanting more, and yet I was strangely satisfied that, in the end, all would be well.

Princess under cover says

it's 12 am and I've stayed up to read the whole book in 1 sitting, then spend time writing its review bc I can't wait, so you can believe that the book was good. So why just 3 stars? Actually, 3.5, rounded down. I'll explain: WARNING - SPOILERS AHEAD

What I loved about the book:

- * The details about India, the caste system and the place of women, the beauty of Amisha and Stephen's love story
- * The writing was good, though there were typos throughout that makes me feel it could have used a better, more thorough editor
- * The morals of the story, of strength and weakness and different kinds of love, choices, regrets...
- * I did like that there was at least a happy ending for Jaya and Patrick. I would have given this 1 star if that were not the case

What I REALLY didn't love:

* Stephen got a raw deal!!! He went back for his love TWICE! He never got to see his daughter!! He never got to know her even after he had to accept that he couldn't have Amisha!!! And maybe this is realism, but he died shortly after her. She died young herself, and she'd starved herself for THREE DAYS so the gods could guarantee that Stephen could live a long life! And he died shortly after her without ever knowing about their daughter or seeing her or potentially LIVING and LOVING her! Not nice at all. I don't think I can forgive the storyteller for making that decision for Amisha AND Stephen. Extremely upset at this part of the story. The Amisha torture stuff at the end, OK, whatever, dark ages and outdated beliefs and all that... but what about Stephen!!! Just NOT fair at all. And look at the effect on Lena, poor woman, how she was hated all her life by her stepmother, and a father who couldn't love her because he KNEW she wasn't his. I mean It wasn't just Stephen's life Ravi ruined he really caused lasting damage to Lena too (tho she married well and has a good life, she's SCARRED forever!)

This is pretty much why I can't give it a higher score. Just can't. I know the focus wasn't on Stephen or even Lena, but damn! I felt like the damage done to them wasn't fully addressed. And this was Jaya's REAL grandfather, whom she never met, whose family she never met. Book could have had something in there about finding the other half of her family tree, but it was totally ignored.

So I better stop writing this spoiler filled review before I rip another star off in my pissed off state.

Barbara says

This was my choice for this month's free Amazon prime book and I was very disappointed. If you know nothing about India or Indian culture and you don't mind a very predictable book with few twists or turns, then I'm sure it's an acceptable novel. If you do know even the basics about India then you'll soon spot it's a bit of a mess.

Jaya lives in America and decides to take a trip to India after suffering her third miscarriage and the breakdown of her marriage. She's responding to a letter her mother received from Jaya's grandfather asking her to return to India and learn something about his wife. If Jaya's mother won't go - and she clearly won't - then Jaya figures a bit of India might be just what she needs. By the time Jaya arrives, her grandfather has gone and she's left with her grandmother's friend and servant, Ravi, to tell her about the past.

Nothing about this book rings true. My irritation started with Jaya arriving at an airport whose description is completely unrealistic. You don't find beggars INSIDE an Indian airport (it's not a railway station) and they don't call an NRI woman 'memsahib'. She takes a 'rickshaw' for 45 minutes - even assuming she means an autorickshaw or tuk tuk, most airports don't allow them to pick up. She looks out of the 'open window' - despite autorickshaws and cycle rickshaws having no windows. She comments about scarves that would cost hundreds of dollars in the USA costing '5 rupees'. It's all just fantasy. I can't help but wonder if she has even been to India.

That's all just in the first few chapters. The errors in the grandmother's story are even more extreme. Her grandmother is supposed to be a simple girl who only had a few years of schooling in Hindi but she speaks English with a bizarre eloquence despite not being able to write or read a word of the language. She invites an untouchable into her in-laws' house and nobody makes a particularly big deal about it. She spends hours alone and unchaperoned with a British soldier and again, nobody makes a big deal about it. The whole thing is fine if you don't care that it's totally unfeasible.

Did I mention it's also completely predictable? Maybe I did.

I read a LOT of books by Indian writers and books set in India and this is third-rate. Sorry - I've read reviews that people loved it, but I didn't. I really didn't.

Stefanie says

You know those books that just leave your heart and soul satisfied after reading it? Well, *The Storyteller's Secret* was one of those books for me.

This book was one of my Kindle First picks and I'm so glad I picked this one. Not only did it keep me gripped from beginning to end it left me feeling lighthearted after reading it.

The Storyteller's Secret tells the tale of two women, grandmother and granddaughter, one set back in India when the British were ruling and one set in modern day time.

Jaya, the granddaughter, is in India trying to learn about her past and where she came from after suffering her third miscarriage and not knowing how to survive life at this point.

Amisha, the grandmother, is in the midst of India's ruling under the British during WWII and is desperate to escape the world she lives in. A world where women are only good for childbearing and running a household. No freedoms, no real life. It's the culture, but Amisha wants to be free from it all. The Storyteller's Secret shares Amisha's heart wrenching story through the voice of Ravi, her dearest friend. Jaya listens intently and throughout the story comes to find herself. This book was special. Truly special. I highly recommend it!

Sandi Mooney says

This one came up as an August Prime First Reads. I recognized the author, I loved her first book, Trail of Broken Wings so I jumped on it immediately. Read it over just a couple days and loved this one too. A story of 3 women, grandmother, daughter and granddaughter, all facing different obstacles. It drew me in and I could hardly put it down.
