



Talwar

Robert Carter

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Imagine a corporation so powerful that it rules trade across the globe, fuels the first truly world war, creates governments and even gives birth to new countries . The year is 1746, and the corporation is the East India Company. The War of the Austrian Succession has been blazing for six years. In India, Warring French and British trade interests are fighting for control of the decaying Moghul empire. Into this maelstrom steps trader's son, Hayden Flint, and Company clerk, Robert Clive. Love and war on a spectacular scale. A magnificent blend of historical adventure and romance "in the great tradition of James Clavell."

"Talwar" is a novel set against the history-making events of those early days, entwined with the mystery surrounding one of the world's greatest jewels, the Koh-i-Noor diamond.

Much has been written about the end of the British Raj in India, but how did British influence there start? In fact, the Raj -- direct rule by the British crown -- only began in the mid-19th Century. During the hundred years before that, various parts of India were annexed and administered by the East India Company which filled a power vacuum created by the collapse of the Moghul empire.

War came to the trading ports of the Bay of Bengal, alliances were formed with various local leaders and conflict was carried inexorably into the interior. One of the foremost names associated with the Anglo-French disputes in India at this time was Robert Clive, who did much to prevent India from becoming French. Clive went out to India as a humble clerk, and the story of his transformation into the most successful soldier of his time is astonishing.

Clive was a driven individual and a would-be suicide. He was certainly not a paradigm of selflessness. As a young man, he worked as a clerk for the East India Company. Fortunately, for him, war broke out – otherwise he would have died young and poor. War gives people an opportunity to excel and there are many examples of people who are good at war and make a name for themselves. Clive was the right man at the right place and the right time. He was probably not a particularly nice person and might have been a gang leader in another world, but he was a great figure in military history not a faultless messiah and he did what he was good at.

The Flint family are fiction but there would have been plenty of people around engaged in doing the same kind of things that I have them doing in Talwar. All the Moghuls, on the other hand, are real, as are all the battles, and all the political machinations described in the novel are as close as possible to what actually happened. Anyone so minded can track down the various facets of my work and find the origins and primary source material that I used to construct the narrative.

Thematically, Talwar explores the clash between pre- and post-Enlightenment modes of thought. Beyond that, is there a message for today in the book? Yes. I believe that the “then” illuminates the “now”, and that those who remain unaware of our history are like people who have no memory. They are doomed to repeat their mistakes. Also, it’s good to correct simple-minded misconceptions about how British control of the Indian subcontinent arose, and why.

I want my readers to enjoy their visit to the past. If a story of love and war against a backdrop of the history appeals to you, if you want to see how people meet circumstances beyond their control and, by their actions, fashion the turning points of history, then come along. When you finish reading every one of my books I want you to feel that you have visited a place you’d like to return to.

Talwar Details

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From Reader Review Talwar for online ebook

Jim Galford says

Talwar deals with the East India Company's power period. It is a fascinating read of the historic events of the 1700's set in a fictional storyline.

Christoph Fischer says

"Talwar" by Robert Carter is an excellent historic novel set in a time and place I knew next to nothing about. The India of 1746, the East India Company and the battle between rival traders and political forces at the time were a real eye opener for me. Carter does an excellent job at ornating the well plotted story with amazing details that bring the times alive.

This book seems incredibly well researched and taught me a lot about the Indian / Hindustan culture of the times. It also gives great insight into shipping and trading customs of the period.

Based on real people this book illustrates a time that was changing in its predominant philosophies as well as politically. Warlords, businessmen and lovers are the well chosen vehicles to carry this epic historic piece to its conclusion and the well written epilogue. A very insightful read.

Vikas Datta says

A rather too bloody for my taste but nothing less than the norm in a turbulent time when the destiny of India was being fashioned in the south. Knowing what would happen doesn't stop this from being an enthralling read

Lyn Stapleton says

Talwar is an excellent historic novel set in India in 1746 at the time the East India Company of Britain was making its mark on Indian history and the Moghul Empire was declining. The East India Company and the battle between rival traders and political forces at the time were a real eye opener for me as I didn't have a lot of knowledge about the history of India in these times. Carter does an excellent job of bringing those times alive. I was especially interested in the rise of Robert Clive from lowly writer (clerk) in The Company to military commander.

This book seems to be well researched and taught me a lot about the Indian / Hindustan culture of the times. It also gives great insight into shipping and trading customs of the period.

Based on real people the book illustrates a time that was changing in its predominant philosophies as well as politically and it also illustrates the ruthlessness of the British in taking over a country and its people.

Balaji Soundararajan says

The origins of an empire documented and told like a fiction. I had always wanted to know the origins of Robert Clive, the celebrated soldier of the company, but a ruthless gangster in practical terms. A connoisseur of war, Clive was the force behind the the company's expansion in the 18th century in Madras and Bengal presidencies. He led the British to establish territorial dominions in the Carnatic, Nawab and Plassey wars. This warlord's story is combined with a fictional romantic account of Flint to dive into the deep political knots, cultural paradigms and strategies during the period.

I give it 4 stars since the narrative gets boring sometimes with sputters in the middle. Overall, this is a read I will remember.

Ryan says

I liked the fact that this book covered the progression of the infamous Robert Clive of England's East India Company from a low level clerk to battle hardened military commander before the battle of Plassey put his name into the history books. No idea if it's actually based on historical fact or how much was speculative on the part of the author, but it was interesting nonetheless. The book also provides a glimpse into the politicking during the rule of Mughals, the infighting between different fiefdoms, and how they were on the decline by the time the British and French arrived in numbers during the mid 18th century. Up against European scientific logic and military engineering, the fabled exotic mysticism of the orientals just could not hold for long, notwithstanding their luxurious riches and cultural splendor.

So why only 2 stars when many have rated it so highly a work of historical fiction? In a word - execution. The plot was plodding, the intricacies of court intrigue and petty succession quarrels and backstabbing proved unexciting. The romances were unrealistic, and what action there was too few and far between. Evocative description of what should have been a beautiful setting was also lacking and paled in comparison to other writers of the genre like M.M. Kaye and Valerie Fitzgerald.

Christine says

Although this appears to be well-researched, there is so little plot and such unbelievable characters that I found the book incredibly tedious. There is a lot of information about India, which was interesting. I read it because I loved *The Language of Stones*. I don't recommend this book.
