



Jasmine

By Bharati Mukherjee

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When Jasmine is suddenly widowed at seventeen, she seems fated to a life of quiet isolation in the small Indian village where she was born. But the force of Jasmine's desires propels her explosively into a larger, more dangerous, and ultimately more life-giving world. In just a few years, Jasmine becomes Jane Ripplemeyer, happily pregnant by a middle-aged Iowa banker and the adoptive mother of a Vietnamese refugee. Jasmine's metamorphosis, with its shocking upheavals and its slow evolutionary steps, illuminates the making of an American mind; but even more powerfully, her story depicts the shifting contours of an America being transformed by her and others like her -- our new neighbors, friends, and lovers. In *Jasmine*, Bharati Mukherjee has created a heroine as exotic and unexpected as the many worlds in which she lives. "Rich...one of the most suggestive novels we have about what it is to become an American." -- The New York Times Book Review

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

"Lifetimes ago, under a banyan tree in the village of Hasnapur, an astrologer cupped his ear ... and foretold my widowhood and exile," relates Jyoti, fifth cursed daughter in a family of nine. Though she can't escape fate, Jyoti reinvents herself time and again. She leaves her dusty Punjabi village to marry as Jasmine; travels rough, hidden airways and waters to America to reemerge as Jase, an illegal "day mummy" in hip Manhattan; and lands beached in Iowa's farmlands as Jane, mother to an adopted teenage Vietnamese refugee and "wife" to a banker. Bharati Mukherjee (*The Middleman and Other Stories*) makes each world exotic, her lyrical prose broken only by the violence Jasmine almost casually recounts and survives.

From Library Journal

This novel relates both the odyssey and the metamorphosis of a young immigrant from rural India. Her story is often shocking: the violence of the rape that greets her on her first night in America is certainly no greater than that of the crazed Sikh extremists who made her a widow at age 17 in India. Yet neither the character nor her story is held back by this violence. Along the way Jaze acquires three children, including Du, a Vietnamese boy who like herself is an immigrant. Finally, still only in her early twenties, Jaze takes off to pursue her own version of the American dream. The novel has a delicious humor and sexiness that make it a treat to read. The author is this year's winner of the National Book Critics Circle fiction award for *The Middleman and Other Stories* (LJ 6/1/88).

- Mary Margaret Benson, Linfield Coll. Lib., McMinnville, Ore.

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Review

An adept chronicler of the times and places where improbable worlds meet...She also captures the moments when lives change, by violence or passion...few could record them with Mukherjee's clarity, tenderness and humour - Evening Standard Tough and voluptuous...she has tapped a source which she converts to a light so bright it dazzles Candida McWilliam

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Nicole Oneal:

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