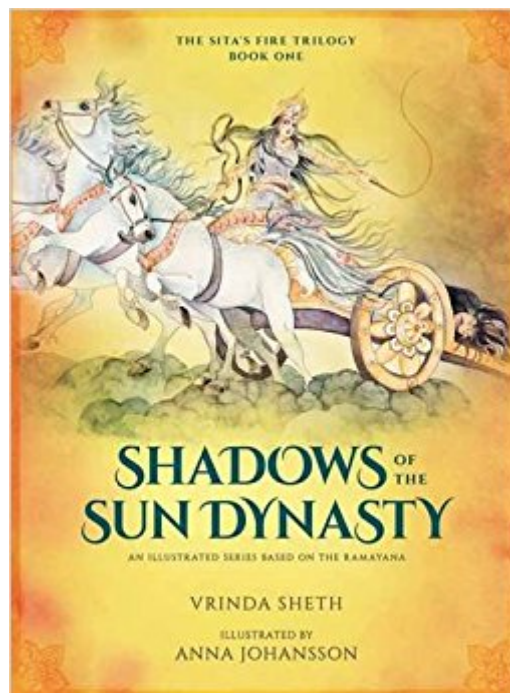




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Shadows Of The Sun Dynasty: An Illustrated Series Based On The Ramayana (Sita's Fire Trilogy)



Synopsis

This deluxe illustrated novel adaptation of the Ramayanaâthe classic Hindu epicâpairs divinely inspired art with intimate portrayals of Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Ravana, and many more.Â Welcome to the royal city of Ayodhya, a realm ruled by the Sun dynasty, where peace reigns among the citizens while discord simmers behind the palace walls. A prophecy predicts that a son of the Sun dynasty will slay the immortal Ravana and defeat his demon armyâbut how will a mere human succeed where all the gods have failed? Meanwhile, Ayodhyaâs emperor is torn between his own needs and the needs of the empire. His rebellious third wife, raised as a warrior, is haunted by her past. A defiant servant, stigmatized by her deformity, is willing to destroy the empire to achieve her own aims. A prince, unaware of his own divine origin, falls in love with a princess so extraordinary even the all-seeing sages cannot fathom her destiny. Shape-shifting blood-drinkers from the celestial realm fill the forests around the city, and the time of prophecy is drawing nearâbut will the blessings of the gods be enough to fend off the darkness growing in the heart of Ayodhya? A truly original reimagining of the classic Indian epic, the Ramayana, as told primarily through the eyes of the women behind the throne, Shadows of the Sun Dynasty reveals an entirely new perspective on an ancient story. Set in a world of kings and queens, celestial battles, invisible foes, and family rivalries, this epic tale forges legends in the fires of betrayal and prophecy.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

VRINDA SHETH was born in Sweden and was raised on stories from ancient India. She began

writing while studying classical dance in Kalakshetra, South India. Vrinda has a BA in English from the University of Florida and lives in Florida with her husband and daughter. ANNA JOHANSSON is a self-taught watercolor artist from Sweden. Her artwork is inspired by the mystical yoga tradition of ancient India. She lives in Florida with her husband. When she is not creating art, she enjoys spending time with her granddaughter. This mother-daughter team have worked together on the Sita's Fire trilogy for over a decade. Their first book won an Independent Publisher Book Award, received an honorable mention at the New York Book Show, and was a finalist in the USA Best Book Awards. Anna and Vrinda have nurtured their relationship and their respective crafts through their joint artistic ventures.

I have never been a big fan of mythology, but after reading the reviews of this book, I decided to explore and expand my horizons back into mythology. I was not disappointed. Vrinda Sheth wrote a beautiful and compelling story around the ancient poem of Ramayana. Shadows of the Sun Dynasty encompasses everything you would expect to find in a book based on the poem of Ramayana, strong and bitter women, love and war, good versus evil. I would highly recommend reading this book, even if you are not into mythology. The illustrations were colorful and beautiful and I certainly enjoyed the story. I did find the story a bit long and that is why I gave it 4 stars instead of 5. I look forward to more stories by the author and of course, more illustrations.

Let me start by saying that regardless of your background knowledge on the Ramayana (I myself had next to none when beginning), this book will captivate you. It is an epic: as grand and encompassing as the Odyssey, but not nearly as fairly recognized in mainstream American culture. The story - as told by Vrinda Sheth - begins with Manthara, a young woman turned bitter and whose soul grows as twisted as her deformed spine. She becomes the foster mother to King Ashvapati's only daughter, and is determined to make the fiercely beautiful princess the most powerful royal in the world. Her strongest lesson to her charge: love is the ruin of all. Our princess Keyi, however, is not immune to love. Despite her warrior-like skills and stubborn free spirit, she is taken as King Dasharatha's third wife. He and all his wives are barren, and after years of battles with monstrous blood-drinkers - Dasharatha is finally desperate for an heir. His desire for one is not selfish - he needs a son to carry the line of the Sun Dynasty, the line of men that are destined to defeat Ravana, the ten-headed demon king and creator of the blood-drinkers, who rapes and steals women. So begins the ritual to bring fertility to his family, from which four sons are born. One among them, Rama, is quickly fated to be the chosen heir. Mayhem, jealousy, great love and immense grief

follow from there. This is no picnic book, to be sure - this will take you a good chunk of time in a recliner to read. I can assure you, however, that it is well worth the effort. A stunning work.

This story offers an entirely new perspective on an ancient story. It is extremely well done. Not ever hearing of this story before I read it with a virgin mind. I really enjoyed the female characters being bold, strong and equal to the men in the story. The basic story is that of the prince Rama who was cheated of his throne and sent to exile. Here he battles a demon who has kidnapped his wife Sita. The pure descriptions of this battle and the beautiful story of good and evil, kings and queens and a feminist hero. Makes this a good read. Not only is this a great story but the book is illustrated beautifully. My favorite pictures being the ones of the animals (a peacock, the horses, the swans). One of my favorite characters is Manthara. She is a troublemaker. And she gets into unique situations. She has a well developed background and a lively attitude. I enjoyed the complexity of family relationships and the struggle and internal betrayal of the story. Although the book was a little on the long side, I would recommend this novel to anyone who liked myths and ancient tales of good versus evil.

Shadows of the Sun Dynasty is my first foray into Indian mythology, actually into any Indian topic at all. I was completely unaware of the story of Ramayana. I am still undecided if that was a hindrance to me or an added bonus. I was able to read the story with an untainted perspective, but I think that background might have been helpful. I did love the fact that the females were so well developed and truly drove the tale. I received a plethora of background information which made me better acquainted with the characters. It was refreshing to have the woman's perspective and to have a definable heroine to champion. An epic battle of good vs. evil is made even better with the power and strength of the female perspective. The other part of this book that must be mentioned are the illustrations. It is rare to find a non-children's book with illustrations as such, but they are extraordinary. Detailed and mystical, I feel that they greatly enhanced the reading experience and helped me understand a culture that I am unfamiliar with. Well done!

I found this book intriguing from the time I downloaded it. First, I love mythology, even if I don't know much about Indian mythology. Second, I love stories about women in history, whether as known figures, myths, or realistically fictitious characters -- (The Red Tent has long been a favorite book). So what makes this book stand out? It offers an extraordinarily well-written exploration of Indian myth, with special consideration to the women and their strengths -- as well as their weaknesses. I

also love how it delved into the main characters' backgrounds -- to understand their motivations and what truly drives each choice they make. Although it took me about 20 pages to really get into the story, as some of the unfamiliar names took a bit to sink in, and the characters began to become real to me, I found this book fascinating. And, the illustrations that are peppered throughout the story are beautiful and complex. I'm really glad to have had the opportunity to read this book -- it was not what I expected, in the best possible way.

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