



Sister of My Heart: A Novel

By Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

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From the award-winning author of **Mistress of Spices**, the bestselling novel about the extraordinary bond between two women, and the family secrets and romantic jealousies that threaten to tear them apart.

Anju is the daughter of an upper-caste Calcutta family of distinction. Her cousin Sudha is the daughter of the black sheep of that same family. Sudha is startlingly beautiful; Anju is not. Despite those differences, since the day on which the two girls were born, the same day their fathers died--mysteriously and violently--Sudha and Anju have been sisters of the heart. Bonded in ways even their mothers cannot comprehend, the two girls grow into womanhood as if their fates as well as their hearts were merged.

But, when Sudha learns a dark family secret, that connection is shattered. For the first time in their lives, the girls know what it is to feel suspicion and distrust. Urged into arranged marriages, Sudha and Anju's lives take opposite turns. Sudha becomes the dutiful daughter-in-law of a rigid small-town household. Anju goes to America with her new husband and learns to live her own life of secrets. When tragedy strikes each of them, however, they discover that despite distance and marriage, they have only each other to turn to.

Set in the two worlds of San Francisco and India, this exceptionally moving novel tells a story at once familiar and exotic, seducing readers from the first page with the lush prose we have come to expect from Divakaruni. **Sister of My Heart** is a novel destined to become as widely beloved as it is acclaimed.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni made an indelible impression on the literary world with her first novel, *The Mistress of Spices*, a magical tale of love and herbs. *Sister of My Heart* is less reliant on enchantment but no less enchanting as it tells the tale of two cousins born on the same day, their premature births brought on by a mysterious occurrence that claims the lives of both their fathers. Sudha is beautiful, Anju is not; yet the girls love each other as sisters, the bond between them so strong it seems nothing can break it. When both are pushed into arranged marriages, however, each discovers a devastating secret that changes their relationship forever.

Sister of My Heart spans many years and zigzags between India and America as the cousins first grow apart and then eventually reunite. Divakaruni invests this domestic drama with poetry as she traces her heroines' lives from infancy to motherhood, but it is Sudha and Anju who give the story its backbone. Anju might speak for both when she says, "In spite of all my insecurities, in spite of the oceans that'll be between us soon and the men that are between us already, I can never stop loving Sudha. It's my habit, and it's my fate." Book lovers may well discover that reading Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is habit-forming as well. --*Margaret Prior*

From Publishers Weekly

Like the old tales of India that are filled with emotional filigree and flowery prose, Divakaruni's (*The Mistress of Spices*) latest work is a masterful allegory of unfulfilled desire and sacrificial love. It is also an intricate modern drama in which generations and castes struggle over old and new mores. Anju and Sudha are cousins, born in the same household in Calcutta on the same day?which is also the day on which their mothers learn that both their husbands have been killed in a reckless quest for a cave full of rubies. Sudha grows up believing her father was a no-good schemer who brought ruin on his cousin, Anju's upper-class father. As they mature, Anju dreams of college, Sudha of children, but arranged marriages divide and thwart them. Anju adjusts to life in California with a man who lusts after Sudha; Sudha grapples with a mother-in-law who turns to the goddess Shasti to fill Sudha's barren womb rather than to a doctor for her sterile son. Ultimately, the tie between Anju and Sudha supersedes all other love, as each sustains painful loss to save the other. When Sudha learns the truth about her father and no longer needs to right his wrongs, she sees that all along her affection for Anju has not been dictated by necessity. An inspired and imaginative raconteur, Divakaruni is sure to engender comparisons with Arundhati Roy (*The God of Small Things*), but Divakaruni's novel stands in its own right as a compelling read. If her prose sometimes veers toward the purple, her mesmerizing narrative sustains it well. Agent, Sandra Dijkstra; author tour.

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From Library Journal

Like Rebecca Wells's *Divine Secrets of the Ya Ya Sisterhood* (LJ 5/1/96), Divakaruni's debut novel, *The Mistress of Spices* (LJ 2/1/97), was a word-of-mouth hit; its blend of magical realism and culinary sensuality also appealed to fans of Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate* (LJ 9/1/92). This second novel is a bit more earth-bound. Born on the same day their fathers die in a mysterious accident, Sudha and Anju are more than just cousins; although Anju is the daughter of an upper-caste Calcutta family and Sudha the daughter of a black-sheep renegade, they are sisters of the heart, bound by a deep love. Narrated by Sudha and Anju in alternate chapters, this is the tale of their relationship over the years, a friendship that is almost destroyed by jealousy and family secrets. Although much of the plot is contrived (the final revelation is no big surprise) and the male characters are stock cliches, this is still an engaging read, filled with tender, moving moments. For popular fiction collections.

-?Wilda Williams, "Library Journal"
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Elias Rosser:

Do you have favorite book? When you have, what is your favorite's book? Reserve is very important thing for us to learn everything in the world. Each book has different aim or maybe goal; it means that book has different type. Some people sense enjoy to spend their time to read a book. They are reading whatever they get because their hobby is definitely reading a book. Consider the person who don't like looking at a book? Sometime, man feel need book after they found difficult problem or maybe exercise. Well, probably you'll have this Sister of My Heart: A Novel.

Sabra Fitzgerald:

Hey guys, do you wants to finds a new book to see? May be the book with the headline Sister of My Heart: A Novel suitable to you? The book was written by popular writer in this era. Often the book untitled Sister of My Heart: A Novel is the main of several books which everyone read now. This book was inspired many men and women in the world. When you read this guide you will enter the new shape that you ever know just before. The author explained their thought in the simple way, thus all of people can easily to recognise the core of this reserve. This book will give you a wide range of information about this world now. In order to see the represented of the world in this book.

Tara Smith:

Do you like reading a book? Confuse to looking for your chosen book? Or your book was rare? Why so many question for the book? But virtually any people feel that they enjoy for reading. Some people likes reading, not only science book but novel and Sister of My Heart: A Novel or maybe others sources were given expertise for you. After you know how the truly amazing a book, you feel want to read more and more. Science publication was created for teacher or even students especially. Those books are helping them to include their knowledge. In other case, beside science guide, any other book likes Sister of My Heart: A Novel to make your spare time a lot more colorful. Many types of book like this.

Richard Diller:

What is your hobby? Have you heard that will question when you got learners? We believe that that query was given by teacher with their students. Many kinds of hobby, Every person has different hobby. And also you know that little person just like reading or as examining become their hobby. You need to understand that reading is very important and book as to be the thing. Book is important thing to provide you knowledge, except your own personal teacher or lecturer. You find good news or update about something by book. Numerous books that can you take to be your object. One of them is this Sister of My Heart: A Novel.

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