



Fighting for Tara

Sunanda J. Chatterjee

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How far will a mother go to save her child?

"I have no use for a baby girl. Get rid of her tonight!" He towered over her as she cringed in fear.

But Hansa, a thirteen-year-old child-bride in rural India, refuses to remain a victim of the oppressive society where a female child is an unwanted burden. Instead of drowning her baby, Hansa escapes from her village with three-month-old Tara.

Hansa soon discovers that life as a teenage mother is fraught with danger. But a single lie opens the door to a promising opportunity far from home.

Just seven years later, Hansa finds herself fighting for Tara's life once more, this time in an American court, with a woman she calls 'Mother.'

Will the lie upon which Hansa built her life, defeat its own purpose? How can she succeed when no one believes the truth?

A story of two mothers, two daughters and a fight to save a child, *Fighting for Tara* explores the depth of love and motherhood.

Fighting for Tara Details

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Author : Sunanda J. Chatterjee

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From Reader Review Fighting for Tara for online ebook

Sunita Saldhana says

It has been a long time since a book actually made me so impatient to know what was going to happen, that I skipped pages and went ahead and then came back to read the pages I had missed. But I could not leave Hansa alone with her baby Tara, while the author took us off on a tangent from Rajasthan to San Francisco. With nail biting anxiety I followed the journey of the 13 year old child bride and mother as she struggled to keep her baby safe.

I have a new favourite author to add to my list! Sunanda Chaterjee has managed to bring out both the woman and the child in Hansa so beautifully. At thirteen she is a mother and her instinct to protect her baby gives her a maturity far beyond her years. Yet, it comes about so naturally as part of the story that when Hansa finally gets to act like the teenager she is, your heart just goes “aww my baby!”

A beautifully written story, it combines the traditional with the modern. On one hand it showcases the plight of the women in traditional cultures and on the other hand it throws light on the absurd demands that modern religions make on us as well. At the end of the day, it all depends on what one wants to follow and believe in and where you draw the line. Hansa refused to let tradition dictate whether her baby girl lived or not and years later, Anne would have to decide if she would allow her religion to choose if her baby lived or died. After reading Fighting for Tara, I heaved a deep sigh of satisfaction! Finally a book that made me feel replete!

Swarnalatha says

Originally posted in reflectionsofmindblog.wordpress.com

The main reason I signed up for this book review was the book cover. Something about it captured my attention. Fighting for Tara is the story of Hansa, a child bride who is also a mother and her daughter Tara, the ill-fated child. The language was simple and the characters have been beautifully created. But it is the plot which stood out for me. A poignant tale of two mothers fighting for their child tugged at my heart strings. The book has brought out raw emotions of pain, maternal love, heartbreak, religious beliefs, love, hatred, friendship and so on.

I simply could not put down the book before finishing. Every character has its own importance in the story. And I liked that. There were many favorites in this story. But if I had to pick one particular scene from the lot, it has to be the one where Hansa has been ordered by her brother-in-law to kill Tara and she is debating with her conscience. I loved how the author has played out the scene. I could feel the pain Hansa had to endure at the mere thought of killing her baby.

Though I loved the book, there was minor glitch which disappointed me. I felt the pace of the story slowed down after Hansa migrates to America with Tara. The drama element made me lose interest in the book for while. Nevertheless, this is a must read for everyone. I would definitely recommend this book for its language, story and Hansa character's courage, determination and grit that could actually inspire many, like me.

My verdict – This fight is definitely successful.

Rating – 4.5/5.

Reshma Ranjan says

A tight, emotional read.

Very intense fight of a mother who herself is too young to not have her own mother to cuddle her. The sadness, the belief, the strength a mother has in her to fight for her child without thinking twice about her own needs.

The story is so intricately woven in a remote village to America back to India. The village, women's center, adoption, America, parents, sisters, jealousy, friend, enemy, boyfriend, date rape, engagement, court, religion, beliefs, anger, leukemia, DNA, righteousness, love, trust, sacrifice. A saga worth every moment of reading. For more detailed review check book reviews by Reshma Ranjan.

Ranjani Iyengar says

Nicely written

Sunanda writes well and tells a compelling story of a child bride who with great enterprise manages to get herself and her infant adopted by an American family when she is widowed at 13. She grows up like any other American teenager in a new culture with her very unusual past threatening to reveal itself. Sunanda weaves in and out of two worlds, rural Rajasthan and a suburban Pleasanton family of Jehovah's Witnesses and somehow manages to make it all work together with a clever plot and great storytelling.

Shilpa Garg says

I had read great reviews about Fighting for Tara and that evoked my curiosity. And the cover sealed the deal for me. Yes, sometimes I judge a book by its cover.

Fighting for Tara sucked me in fast, and kept me interested right from page one! It's a story of a 13-year old child bride, Hansa and her daughter Tara. Hansa is left alone with her few months old daughter after the death of her old husband. Her brother-in-law wants to marry her and wants her to get rid of little Tara as he has no use for a baby girl. Instead of drowning her baby, Hansa escapes from her village with three-month-old Tara.

As Hansa runs from one place to another to save herself and her daughter, she meets danger at every step. The instinct to survive compels her to tell a lie and that lie changes her world. An American couple adopt not only little Tara but Hansa too and thus starts their new journey from a small village in Rajasthan to Pleasanton in America.

Life sails smoothly for Hansa for 7 years and then she finds herself Tara's life once more, this time in an American court, with a woman she calls 'Mother.' Will the lie upon which Hansa built her life, defeat its own purpose? How can she succeed when no one believes the truth? How far will a mother go to save her child?

Fighting for Tara is a story of grit and determination of a teenage girl who fights all odds. It's a story that explores the depth of love and motherhood, friendships and relationships, religious beliefs and practices.

Sunanda J. Chatterjee tells the story of Hansa and Tara with language and characters that break out of the page... very realistic and vivid. And she shares a story that explores the depth of love and motherhood, friendships and relationships, religious beliefs. The writing is clean, crisp, stunningly vivid and flooded me with a bucket load of emotion. There were moments when my heart was in my mouth and I was stricken with fear for Hansa and Tara. There are heart-breaking and sad moments as well as instances that warmed my heart.

I was not aware of the religious group called Jehovah Witnesses. Reading about their beliefs and practices was interesting. The court room scene was masterful, and on edge, it was a demonstration of courtroom drama at its finest.

While the initial chapters were pretty gripping, the story became a bit dramatic for my taste. But nevertheless, it kept me interested till the very end.

Fighting for Tara is a beautifully woven tale of love and relationships and also of hope and faith. I enjoyed the book and would recommend it.

A.B Penner says

What a lovely tale about how far a mother will go to provide for and protect her child. The author has done a beautiful job in weaving the lives of Hansa and Tara with whom they meet along the way in their incredible journey to find peace, security, and the means of a better life, as well as capturing the essence of how powerful a mother's love is for their child. The characters and their motives are believable, each evoking emotion within the reader making them easy to connect and fall in love with. The pacing of this novel was perfect, holding my attention from start to finish, and the ending was heartwarming and satisfying. I would definitely recommend this story to anyone. You will not be disappointed!

Inderpreet Uppal says

Fighting for Tara is a book filled with love, restrictions and odds that women face each day. Hansa is a child bride and a mother at 13, her journey starts when she decides to save her daughter Tara and herself in the process. This book is an emotional journey of a thirteen-year-old girl and the odds she overcomes to save her daughter in a world where they are easily disposable and unwanted. The book brings to light the rampant child marriage, female infanticide, prostitution, and date rape that our girls routinely go through. "What would she tell people for who would believe her?" – Is the greatest doubt Hansa faces. Hansa finds a wonderful family with Anne in the USA yet she still lacks something, searching within and around her. She has friends yet lacks companionship and attachment so fixated she is on Tara. Yet it is Tara who finally frees her.

That Hansa has a thirst for life, learning and uses her meager education and a lot of spunk to get across the seven seas. Her journey is fraught with dangers and obstacles and she barely holds on with her sheer tenacity. The author has penned the characters with such depth and insight into human emotions and what drives them.

Whether it was the evil, conniving Baldev or the Aunty of the orphanage, in a few words Sunanda has etched them and their vices. The people come to life as I felt the revulsion Hansa felt or the anger Wolfy feels and

hatred and disgust Vikram feels. The book's strong suit is the emotions and feelings it explores and brings forth. Excellent language and flow keep the words flying and the story flowing.

For the kind of topics the book covers, it could have been a heavy read but the author has woven the issues of a young girl with that of an adult girl in the USA. How a woman is quite disposable and replaceable even in the most advanced country in the world. But it is in the USA that Hansa finds the freedom and support to be truly liberated. Shelia, Bela, and Rani Sahiba both bring so much reality and depth to the story. The book made me think, feel and fume yet as it ended it left me with renewed hope and faith. Bela especially was heart warming until the end.

A feel good book with a message that has enough twists and surprises to keep you glued to the book.

Renita D'Silva says

I read and loved Shadowed Promise by this author and thought it perfect but this book... Wow! It is even better! Poignant, heart-rending, compelling, this is an addictive, beautiful story peopled with characters who grabbed hold of my heart and still haven't let go. I feel I know Tara and Wolfy, Anne and Liam, Sheila and Vikram, Sabina and Rani Sahiba, and especially the wonderful, brave and indomitable Hansa. A brilliant story with a powerful message. One that will appeal to everybody and one that will definitely stay with me. A must read.

Sundari Venkatraman says

Disclaimer: I downloaded a kindle version of this book in return for my honest review. I received no monetary compensation for the same.

Fighting for Tara is the story of 13-year-old Hansa, who is also the mother of Tara, a month-old baby. Hansa had been married when she was barely eleven, to a very old man. Not aware of any other life, she accepts her role as his wife and later as Tara's mother. The only highlight in her life is the time she spends with Rani Champawati, who teaches Hansa to read and write.

Her simple life is shaken when her husband Gyani dies. His brother Baldev comes from another village and offers to marry Hansa. But his offer comes with a condition – that she kills her girl child. Well, Hansa does consider it as she doesn't have a choice. But when push comes to shove, she's unable to kill her sweet little baby. That's when she decides to run away...

The author takes the reader from the small village in Rajasthan to a big city in the USA, the tale flowing in many threads, over the next decade. Tara is adopted by an American couple. But the story doesn't end there. There's more...

I fell in love with the courageous little Hansa, who's so protective of her little child. Beautifully penned by Sunanda Chatterjee, Hansa's character surpasses all else. The next on my list is Wolfgang. He's so real and I loved him only next to Hansa. All the other characters, Vikram, Rani sahiba, Baldev, the Stuarts, Tara and a host of others – all were well sketched.

The author has woven a beautiful tale that's extremely plausible. What I liked best is the hope it gives the reader - that life can turn positive when we put the right effort into it.

VERDICT: A must read!

Anjali says

This book slowly gripped me to the point where I didn't want to put it down. The different subplots were interwoven well and came together seamlessly. I found myself rooting for each main character to get their happy ending, especially Hansa. The writing wasn't flowery or drawn out, it was grittier and concise. It moved at a fast enough pace to make the story move forward while pulling the reader in. My favorite part of the story is the beginning, where you read about what Hansa goes through to create a better life for her and Tara. .

Anil Swarup says

Another remarkably well written novel by Sunanda Chatterjee. The story does meander a bit in the middle after an explosive start but gathers momentum in the end to keep the reader riveted. The plight of a girl child in certain parts of this country and women in general comes out beautifully in the book. The chief protagonist, Hansa, conclusively demonstrates how this so called "weak gender" can take the world on and shape her own and her daughter's destiny despite extremely adverse set of circumstances.

Amanda Drover-Hartwick says

At first glance, Fighting For Tara's beautiful cover art shows a heart locket, and for me that implied I would be reading a story about love and secrets. I was certainly not led astray. As a mother myself, the back cover blurb tugged at my heart-strings, making me want to find out more about Hansa and Tara's story.

Fighting For Tara is a story showing that no matter what your culture, geographical location, education, or up-bringing, motherhood is always a unique and challenging experience. We meet Hansa as she makes the decision to save her baby's life by leaving her village. She finds herself moving to America, living with a couple, and her baby Tara. All is well, until secrets can remain secrets no more.

After the first chapter broke my heart, I found myself holding my breath throughout quite a few tense scenes, especially when baby Tara got sick, and when Vikram figured out Hansa's secret.

Read the rest of my review on my blog: <https://amandadroverhartwick.wordpress...>

Usha Narayanan says

How far will a mother go to save her child? How will thirteen-year old Hansa save her daughter Tara from a cruel society that views daughters as burdens to be killed at birth? One lie that Hansa utters helps her save Tara. Seven years later, the truth she speaks snatches her loved ones from her. 'Fighting for Tara' is a heart-wrenching story of luminous love that transcends all boundaries. You share every moment of Hansa's laughter and tears, her hope and despair. Kudos to Sunanda Chatterjee for weaving a magnificent tapestry of love, hope and the triumph of the human spirit.

Adite says

Fighting for Tara is a gripping tale of a mother who will do anything to keep her child safe. While that doesn't seem like much of a premise to hang a gripping tale on, the author gives a fascinating twist to the story by making the mother a teen-mother. Hansa, the teen-mother, is a child bride who was married off to an old man in a remote village in Rajasthan. The book begins at a breathtaking pace as Hansa's life turns upside down when her husband dies. 13 year old Hansa is to be married off to her husband's brother, as per the village custom, who orders her to kill Hansa's new born girl child, Tara. Hansa escapes in the middle of the night. Hansa finds herself in Jaipur where she faces many a difficult moment before she finally makes it to the US and a safe haven. However, her safe haven is built on a foundation of lies. Can Hansa protect Tara or will her struggles be all in vain?

While I thoroughly enjoyed the story I wish the middle of the book was tighter and dealt more with Hansa's relationship with Tara and her adopted family. The sub-plots (though interesting on their own) take away from the main plot and the relationship between the central characters (Hansa, Tara, Anne and Liam). The dramatic resolution of the story would have been much stronger, emotionally, for all of them had the author focused more on developing their relationship. Overall, though the book is a great read, there were many opportunities the author missed in telling a more emotionally powerful story.

I would give Fighting for Tara 3.5 stars.

*I received a copy of this book, courtesy The Book Club (TBC), in exchange for an honest review.

Wander Girl Life says

This book is about a child bride Hansa, married off to a man thrice her age who dies leaving Hansa and his baby girl at the mercy of his brother Baldev. To protect her baby Tara, Hansa flees away from her hometown Dharni, to start a new life. After facing traumatic experiences, Hansa and Tara end up being adopted by nurturing parents Anne and Liam. The story starts from a small village in Rajasthan and navigates to San Francisco.

It is sad to see that in today's age where women are hitting new milestones every day, customs like child marriages, female feticides, etc still prevail in our country. The author has done a great job highlighting this issue. I loved the way Hansa's character was empowered. A strong, willfully determined woman, ready to go lengths to save her daughter. It's true that motherhood is accompanied by the vigor to shield the child from any danger. The essence of motherhood is captured phenomenally well in both Hansa's and Anne's characters. The story was heartwarming and fast paced. I simply love the books that bring out the female strength and determination and this was definitely one of them. The writing was simple and easy flowing. The book was such a page turner.

I would recommend this book to those who are looking out for a heartwarming story with a strong female protagonist.

PS: – Thanks to the author for sending a copy of the book for an honest review.
