



Empire

Devi Yesodharan

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Empire

Devi Yesodharan

Empire Devi Yesodharan

‘Sumptuously detailed, beautifully imagined...Empire is an exceptional achievement and will be the mark against which later books will be measured.’

—The Wire

‘As high on adrenaline as it is on authentic detailing.’

—Firstpost

‘A gripping historical novel.’

—Hindustan Times

‘Yesodharan does a beautiful job of bringing alive a distant and dramatic past and peopling it with heroes and heroines that will intrigue, surprise and delight the readers – and stay with them long after they’ve finished reading.’ – Chitra Divakaruni

‘Perfect tapestry intricately woven with threads of history and fiction. Imaginative, intriguing and intense.’ – Ashwin Sanghi

A woman of courage, with dagger and bow, Will do countless deeds: dark and light, right and low. Her armour dark, her armour gold, Around her red rivers will flow. An Indian empire at the peak of its power. A great port heaped with spices, silks, jewellery, perfumes, weapons. Everyone wants a share of the riches of Nagapattinam. When a Greek pirate ship sails in to loot the wealth of the Cholas, it is brutally defeated by the navy and forced to pay a compensation. A payment that includes a twelve-year-old girl, Aremis. Aremis grows up to be a skilled warrior, a great asset to the Cholas. But she is a foreigner among her captors, even though the emperor trusts her to guard his person. Anantha, the man who took her captive, the supreme commander of the empire’s armies, is a wily strategist. But he no longer has the stomach for war. The emperor’s ambitions weary him. Rajendra Chola has conquered Lanka, now he wants to rule the Indian Ocean. Their future is set: a dangerous journey across the seas and a bloody, brutal war they cannot survive undamaged.

<https://www.amazon.in/Empire-Devi-Yes...>

Empire Details

Date : Published September 1st 2017 by Juggernaut Books

ISBN : 9789386228376

Author : Devi Yesodharan

Format : Hardcover

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Cultural, India, Fiction, Asian Literature, Indian Literature

 [Download Empire ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Empire ...pdf](#)



From Reader Review Empire for online ebook

????? ?????? says

3.5/5

Sukanya Mallik says

I'm currently reading it, and I am loving it so far. I specifically love the fact that Author Devi Yasho dharan has dug deep into the chola generation that hasn't been talked about much or rather we could say that as compared to the other dynasties, this particular dynasty has not been much explored in Indian literature. Also, the exact generation talked about was never focused on so much before. The same facts made it difficult for yashodharan to research on the novel (as she said in her webinar "How to research for your first novel"). However the author's research and her beautiful imagination has worked wonders and created an epic. I look forward to re reviewing it once I complete reading it.

Shweta Markandeya says

Reading it just after Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's "Palace of Illusions", I can't help but contrast the two stories, with a woman at the center stage. In the former, Draupadi – a queen born of divinity – remains an object, using her feminine charms to suit her ends but never in control of her fate. And the other, Aremis – a vassal, a nobody – creates her own destiny, in a society no less patriarchal. The male gaze, the raucous behavior, the preening and the ego could just as well be from the Mahabharata or a Bollywood or Tamil movie.

Unlike Divakaruni, Yesodharan is not lyrical. But she creates enough interest and moves from the physical to the interior world of her characters with deftness. She poses questions.

Her quest is not the black and white world of the Mahabharata, of God and God-like creatures locked in the bind of dharma and karma. Her characters are real, visceral, they bruise and burn and hurt. And they deal with the paradox of life with their own perspectives.

And finally, an emancipated heroine! One only wishes that she were Indian (whatever that means!). But the image of Aremis – flaming red hair, green eyed, fierce female warrior, ready to shoot with her bow and arrow is undeniably compelling. (It does bring to mind Princess Merida of "Brave" – a kickass heroine in her own right!). A woman who needs no man to stand tall, who is possessed by no one, even as a second-class citizen in an arrogant civilization.

Aremis is both an ascetic and a warrior. "What does it mean to possess nothing...I already possess little beyond a mostly empty stomach and my bow."

Aremis longs to be desirable as a woman and yet, she knows that she has to hide her sexuality to be taken seriously as the King's body guard in the world of men.

She also knows she has to try harder than her peers. "It's not enough to be better than everyone else...I have to be better than their fantasies." The author might as well be talking about a boardroom in the 21st century.

She is unashamedly sexual – she owns her choices and this is refreshing. She doesn't see it as a means to an end, consuming it at her will. Because there is a difference between a sexual object and a sexual being.

“They won't write about you. The songs they sing about you won't carry your name. But if you do the things that you are meant to do, that can be enough.” It rings just as true as the sermon that Krishna gave to Arjun before the Great War. And isn't this just what we should be telling all our bright young girls? You don't need to be the face that launched a thousand ships or the queen of anyone's heart. Do what your heart tells you to do; love where your heart leads you. Go forth and seek your own salvation.

Yesodharan serves new wine in an old, 11th century bottle. She is clever. She weaves individual concerns and social commentary, even spirituality, into a tapestry of senses, economic thrum and riches of the city and the empire. She conjures up a bustling port town, the sights, the sounds, the smells and the tastes. She mixes ghee with varied spices – star anise, cardamom, cinnamon, ginger. She brings alive the heat, the humidity and the sting of the sun in the 11th century world of the Coromandel coast. Trade abounds between the Cholas and the Songs of the East and Nagappatinam serves as the primary artery.

Her world is not limited to the splendour of the Chola King's palace but shifts from the port that is loading and unloading 24X7 (Shanghai or Singapore anyone?) to the streets and barracks to the washing quarters. Marriage, wealth, the struggle and bind of urban life. The use of media in perpetuating ideals of beauty. Social structures, prophecies and interpretations – shaping public opinions. Opiate addictions. Loneliness. Dance bars. She weaves all of it in – if Aremis is the warp, then the socio-economic commentary is the weft. Yesodharan hints at the complexity of a migrant and the futility of war without dwelling on it. Her concerns feel modern. But are they?

The relentless training that Aremis undergoes. And the prize? An inane job. Yesodharan might as well be writing about bright young graduates twiddling their thumbs in their first jobs, wondering when they'll be called upon to change the world.

At the end of the day, the King is also a slave to the system. In this epiphany, Yesodharan breaks down all patriarchal, brahminical hierarchies. But is so simplistic? And aren't there ways to undo this unfair fabric?

One wishes that the latter half of the book had been longer – the setting holds so many possibilities. And there are some unresolved tensions and threads.

All in all, it makes a compelling read – the pace keeping you glued till the end.

Sahil Pradhan says

ever since I have started reading Devi Yesodharan's books - the first of which was "the double" on juggernaut app, I have become a fan of her. history is a critical subject and more critical is it's retelling as if you do not know the tale properly and cannot narrate it in a gripping way then the reader would not find it interesting. I feel it is just a cup of tea for Devi mam for retelling history.

the book is the story of a greek girl, aremis who is given as war hostage to the Chola empire. the story is of her and how she strives in a male-dominated empire and makes her mark in the king's mind and palace. the best part of the book is its beauty in the simplicity of language and the complex and gripping narrative. I felt that the beauty of the enchanting narration makes the book truly a "masterpiece". one cannot put down the book in the middle if you have started once.

for the narration, it is just mind-boggling. the way she captures each character and emotions in her pen would leave you enthralled.

the book is a fiction and it totally stands for its genre. you would read new tales like the tales of the fights between the empires and the story of the king's wife being brought to the palace again.
the book is even very intensely researched for there is a lot of details about how the cholas lived, walked, talked and even what they wore and ate. the book would give you every detail about the Chola empire.
another perk of the book is its philosophy. you would see a lot of beautiful ideas of philosophy hidden within tales. the way the fight scenes are explained truly captures the full attention of the reader.
the book totally is worth reading. and if you have not read it, it is totally your huge loss. overall the book is in simple words a "masterpiece". a perfect tapestry of history and imagination.
imaginative. intrigue. intense.
I would recommend the book to all the history lovers and to everyone who loves fiction and I am sure they would love the gripping story.

Pratibha says

I am getting hooked to historical fiction genre , all thanks to books like Empire. From the very first chapter till the last scene , the author left no emotion unexplored , no character like lose end , no plot without build up and over all narrated this tale beautifully. I specially liked the way the street scenes and the events were like visuals I could easily imagine. The end was a little abrupt , as ini really wanted a welcome for Yavani. Still I loved the book.

Arun says

Enjoyed reading this - the descriptive bits are evocative, give you a sense of the Chola period and pull you into Aremis' and Anantha's stories. Both points of view are distinctive and work very well. The plot flags mid-way with the introduction of the queen (don't want to give away much, so won't say more about it) and the ending is a bit hurried. That said, the battle scenes and the speed at which things can move in battle is conveyed beautifully. The ending also makes for a great setup for the next book in the series (assuming there is one!) and hopefully, some of the unresolved parts in this book are addressed in the next one. Much of the characterization is drawn from the thoughts of the protagonists - what they think of themselves, of each other, of other major and minor characters. While that lends itself to some beautiful prose, at times it feels somewhat less natural and a touch overdone. Sharper, snappy dialogue may have aided the movement of the story, particularly in the middle section of the book.

Historical fiction in India is under-represented, and even more so, from a South Indian perspective. Am looking forward to more of this!

Sheece says

A breezy read. Is well developed at the beginning but seems to end in a hurry, a lot is left unexplored. Probably there could be more books in the series.

The book has two points of view and in my opinion is the biggest problem of the book. Both the characters are protagonists, so you don't really get other views and the greyness of the characters is unexplored. So more POVs, similar to GOT, which I am sure is a big inspiration here, or a narrator view might work better and it would be a lot more fun. I am surprised these bits were not caught by the editors.

If future books promise more characters, more complexity, and more plot I would love to read more, but I won't be compelled to read more in the format that it currently is in.

Sandhya Sekar says

The book showcases a side to Chola history that we don't get a sniff of usually. Unlike the grand imaginings of Kalki's Ponnaiyan Selvan, where the protagonists are royalty, this book takes a look at the 'normal' life -- day to day happenings, from street food to camp life to war. loved it.

Srinivas Chetti says

On the list of my favorite books this year.

Tisha says

Have read two thrillers by Indian writers recently, with female protagonists. Both interesting for utterly different reasons. Here's one.

Empire by Devi Yesodharan, a historical fiction novel, which brings alive the time of the Cholas (and coastal life at Nagapattinam, which most remember today as the place severely affected by the tsunami more than a decade ago)

The main character, an intensely observant female Greek guard/markswoman. Skilled but unsure, with growing confidence through the book's events (Somewhat like us navigating historical identity waters today) A thoughtful, empathetic, well paced long read. Many passages are just lovely, self-reflexive about history/war/kings/positions/bardic lore itself.

Some lines like this one, a real beauty - 'Toddy sits before us like captured moonlight.'

A sooper intro to Chola power. Probably deserved a more masala title, maybe, a sharper end, as arc shifts go protagonist-wise and definitely a more intelligent cover, befitting the text.

Also, this is the first desi historical fiction kitaab I've read, where the main character flirts with bisexuality.

Rakhi Jayashankar says

Mythological and historical fiction is the new trend in Indian Literature. There has been a surge of books with several definitions and versions of Ramayana, Mahabharata, Freedom Struggle, and India's wars but little has been written these days about the forgotten reign of kings of one of the longest ruling empire in the Southern India, The Chola Dynasty. Ms. Yasodharan has unveiled the era with a fictional element of Aremis.

The rich Indian port Nagapattinam is attacked by a Greek pirate ship. While they expect to loot the port and get back to their kingdom overnight, it does not occur to them how prepared and unbeatable the naval forces of their adversary has been. Defeated pathetically, the Greek are forced by Ananta, the supreme commander of the Indian Emperor, to concur to the treaty containing terms and conditions put forwards by the Cholans. Hundred gold coins, three of their undamaged ships and sixty of their able bodied young men below the age of fourteen are the conditions of the treaty. To find an unharmed soldier after a battle in which

they were brutally defeated was nearly impossible. All that the Greek commander could rustle up is twenty soldiers of their first battle, two cooks and one eleven-year old girl. To his surprise, Anantha accepts the captors including the girl.

The girls Aremis, grows in the Indian soil, trained by Shrey, to be sculpted as a fine warrior. Slowly, she makes her weakness her strength and starts fighting with brain. However talented she proves her to be, she is treated as a useless foreigner by her peers even after her emperor trusts her to guard his person.

The plot is unique and it is to be encouraged that the protagonist is a woman, contrary to the male dominated character build up seen off late in the similar genres. Author shows how a woman uses her weaknesses smartly and make them her strength. It is not easy for a girls to survive in the male world. Aremis's determination and focus is too good to be true. The story is solely about Aremis. It is also about a dynasty ruled by a king who is never satisfied with the conquest, for whom war is an intoxication. The story is not just about Rajendra Chola, Chola Dynasty and Aremis, it is also about the fights wars, Srivijayans and Song China.

The book seems to be a bit longer than required. One more round of developmental edit is required.

This review is in return of a free book from the publisher

Bala Sivashankar says

Finished this book on the weekend, enjoyed it a lot. I loved the setting, which is close to my home. and hoping for more tamil history fiction from writers.

Chittajit Mitra says

Review- 4.5/5

The story revolves around the Chola Dynasty & their quest to sustain their supremacy in their area. The protagonist of the book is Aremis, a young girl who was surrendered to the Chola army commander Anantha along with others by the Greek when they tried to attack one of their rich port Nagapattinam but failed miserably in front of Chola's power. She grew up among her captors & trained as a skilled warrior, she learned archery with all her might which ultimately got the attention of the Chola king who made her his personal guard. But can a female warrior survive among other male warriors who are jealous of her? Read about the journey of a warrior who bloomed even in unfavourable conditions.

Read the full review on [Just Another Bookaholic](#)

Tarang Sinha says

'The strangest flowers,' my brother said, 'have come out of ordinary grass.'

Even though I'm not fond of (or rather I haven't tried reading them) Historical fiction, I enjoyed reading 'Empire'!

I love women as central protagonist and Empire has Aremis, a strong and only woman warrior, who not only beat all the boys in a tournament but qualifies to be the throne guard of the Chola King.

'My Yavani protector is much too tall for me,' he says.

' She is tall yes. But she here as your guard, my King, not your dancing partner.'

Written in first person from two Points of View, this book seems very well-researched and the language neat and well-suited to this genre. Characters do (or the author make them) justice to their roles.

Just one thing - I thought, for this story, it would have been better if it was written in third person PoV.

Overall, this book was a wonderful read and it has inspired me to read more historical fiction, especially with strong female central characters.

Full review on my blog: <http://tarangsinha.blogspot.in/2017/0...>

Deepak says

Just finished reading 'Empire' authored by Devi Yesodharan and published by Juggernaut. Wished it continued for a while more. Wonderful tale spun with wonderful introduction of characters, who tell the story in first person which ensures that you get an all-round ringside view of the action as it happens.

In the author's notes she mentions that the novel is historical fiction and the characters and their stories are a work of imagination (fertile imagination, if I may add) based in an actual space and time in history. It is based in Nagapattinam during the Chola dynasty. The narration is flawless and flows with ease without any grammatical errors and neat editing. Devi has a firm grip on the tale and the actors therein, except for a bit towards the end where she seemed bored and unsure, but picks up pace with elan and rides on!

It is not a gripping novel but has a way of growing and sticking on your awake time to ensure you keep reading at a laid back pace. The story, as mentioned earlier, is not about just one person but a lot of different characters though the protagonist is Aremis who despite being a foreigner, a female, who is a part of the 'winnings' of the Chola King in a battle against invading Greeks, manages to rise a notch above just being a slave to a warrior of significance – a feat in a patriarchal and feudal society.

History buffs will love it and even history haters will enjoy it! Definitely worth a read!

Thank you Juggernaut for sending me this book for an unbiased review. Enjoyed it! Looking forward to more books from Devi Yesodharan.
