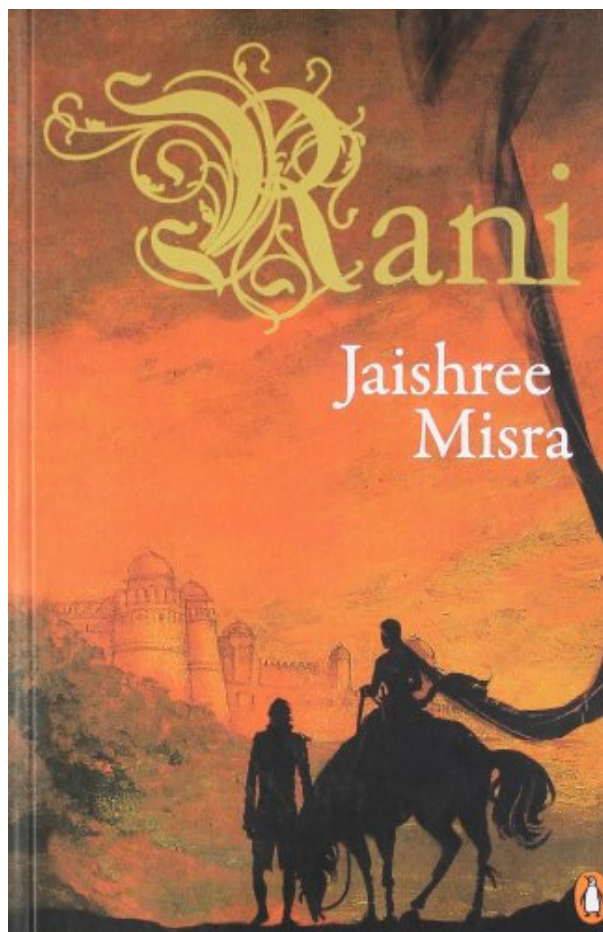
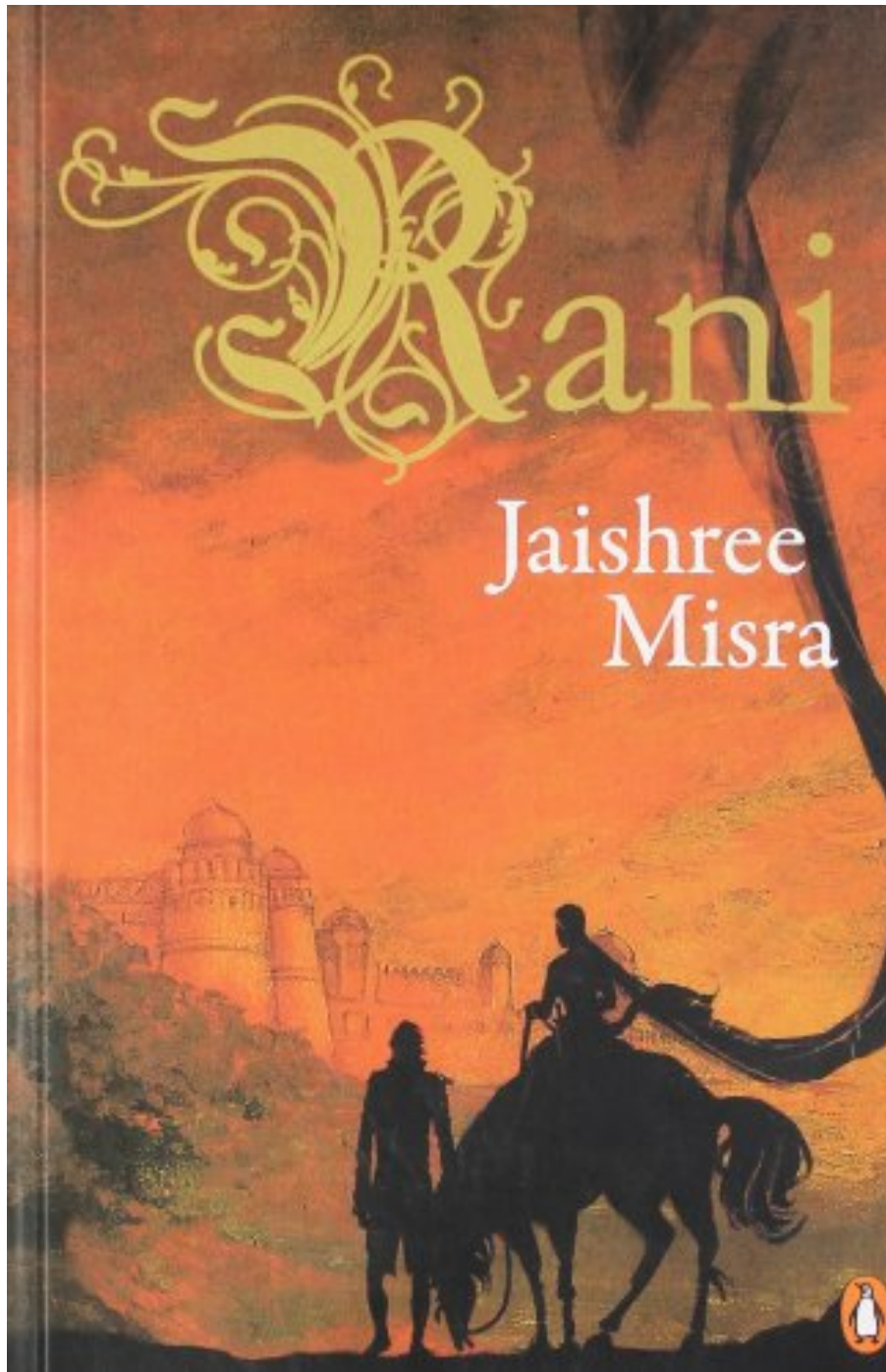


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When thirteen-year-old manikarnika leaves her father's court-in-exile to marry the king of jhansi, little does she realize the burden of greatness awaiting her as she grows from a headstrong and spirited girl into a young woman wise beyond her years, learning to put aside personal disappointments and desires to emerge as a capable queen beloved of her people, she watches the political landscape around her shift and change chillingly under the control of the powerful east india company when the british annex jhansi after the tragic deaths of her infant son and husband, rani lakshmibai turns for help to robert ellis, an officer in the east india company and jhansi's political agent but as war clouds gather and they find themselves ranged on either side of an impassable divide, his attempts to assist her, while staying loyal to his own government, are as destined to falter as is their increasing emotional attachment doomed love becomes a dramatic and unforgettable metaphor for empire even as lord dalhousie's doctrine of lapse is all set to alter forever the contours of not only their lives but also the land they have both come to love while ellis is sent away in disgrace, lakshmibai, in the company of her comrades-in-arms and childhood playmates tantia tope and nanasahib, is inexorably drawn into the vortex of the great mutiny of 1857, with catastrophic consequences

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Enchanting and Informative

By BooksatVioletCrush

As a review for a book, this might contain spoilers but since Rani Lakshmibai is a historic figure, the time line and major events in her life are well known.

As an Indian I know that Rani Lakshmibai is known as one of the greatest warriors in India and the fact that she was a woman gives her an entirely different status altogether. It is sad to know that not many people outside India know who she was.

Rani Lakshmibai was born in 1828 with the name Manikarnika and grew up under her fathers love and care. He taught her different languages and horsemanship and everything that was accessible only to a man in those days. She married at the tender age of 14 to the Raja Gangadhar Rao Nevalkar of Jhansi who was almost her fathers age. Manikarna became the Rani of Jhansi and her name was changed to Lakshmibai.

She gave birth to a son 8 years into the marriage but unfortunately he died when he was 4 months old. Her husband died soon after because of poor health. Barely in her 20's, Rani Lakshmibai had to take over the reign's of Jhansi. She adopted a boy whom she named Damodar as she had no son of her own. But the

British, who had taken control over many provinces in India in the same pretext, refused to acknowledge Damodar as an heir.

As Rani Lakshmibai was trying to find a way out of her predicament, discontent was brewing among the natives in the British army. The discontent reached its peak when British wanted the sepoys to open the new Enfield rifles that were coated with beef and pork fat by biting them. As cows are sacred to the Hindu's and pork not eaten by Muslims, it was the last straw along with the other problems the native army was facing. This led to the famous mutiny also known as India's first war of Independence which started in May 1857 in Meerut after which it spread to various parts of India. Many English men and their families were slaughtered and a few of the territories taken back from the British.

Rani Lakshmibai was one of the leaders of the revolt and marched along with an army with her childhood friends Nanasahib and Tantia Tope to Gwalior. Rani Lakshmibai died in battle on June 17th 1858.

The author Jaishree Misra has not only managed to capture the warrior spirit that the Rani was reknown for but has also effectively managed to captured the woman in her. Ms. Misra shows us the child that Manikarnika would have been, the apprehension of a young girl that was married and made a Queen and the fear and helplessness that the woman and ruler of Jhansi felt. Along with this she also captured the loneliness caused by her husband's and son's early death and the kind of mother she would have been to her adopted son Damodar.

Rani is not just about Rani Lakshmibai's life and rule as a Queen. It is, as every good historical novel should be, a story that is intermingled with the circumstances of that time-the British occupation of India and neighboring countries and the 1857 uprising. So the reader does get to know a lot about that time period. I was enraged by the British who conveniently changed policies to suit themselves. Although we were taught all this in school, the details in the book made me feel like I was learning everything all over again.

The only thing I didn't like about the book is that Rani Lakshmi and Robert Ellis (the British political agent of Jhansi) were shown to have romantic inclinations towards each other, which not only seems absurd but could also hurt the sentiments of a few people (considering Ellis was British and hence enemy). I get what the author was trying to project but she should have taken into account how sensitive some Indians can be about their heroes. But I really do wish that the real Rani found some love with Robert Ellis in reality too. Other than that this book could be a little tedious for someone not interested in the Indian Freedom struggle or someone who is not aware of India and it's freedom struggle at all.

This book deserves to be read just because it is one of the very few novels on Rani Lakshmibai. The fact that it is beautifully and sensitively written is a major plus point. Highly Recommended.

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Manikarnika

By Sumita Chavli

'Rani' by Jaishree Misra explores the transformation of an intelligent girl Manikarnika, into the queen of Jhansi, Rani Lakshmibai. Manikarnika is married to Raja Gangadhar Rao of Jhansi at the age of 13. After marriage, she is renamed Laxmibai. Laxmibai, as the queen of Jhansi takes interest in the affairs of the state. She is fearless to question the policies laid down by the British and open to voice her opinions.

In this book, Rani Laxmibai upholds the undying spirit as the Rani of Jhansi , while facing stiff opposition from the British officers at Calcutta headquarters. Major Robert Ellis, is one of the few trusted friends of Jhansi. Jaishree Misra has perhaps fictionalized the love that Major Ellis and Rani Laxmibai shared and this

sentiment takes the central theme of this book.

When the Rani takes on a military garb to defend her Jhansi and answer to the call of the raging times, she leads Nanasahib's forces when she faces General Rose's army on the scrubby plains of Kotah- ki -Sarai. It's during this battle that she lays down her life for the country.

Overall, this is a piece of work for people who are interested in history and wanting to know more about a Rani who played an important part in the Indian freedom movement.

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