

The Last Song of Dusk

by Siddharth Dhanvant Shanghvi



About the Book

When the astonishingly lovely Anuradha moves to Bombay to marry Vardhmaan, a charming young doctor, their life together has all the makings of a fairy tale. But when their firstborn son dies in a terrible accident, tragedy transforms their marriage into a bleak landscape. As the pair starts fresh in a heartbroken old villa by the sea, they are joined by Nandini, a dazzling and devious artist with a trace of leopard blood in her veins. While Nandini flamboyantly takes on Bombay's art scene, the couple attempts to mend their marriage, eventually discovering that real love, mercurial and many-hued, is given and received in silence. Sensuous and electric, achingly moving and wickedly funny, **The Last Song of Dusk** is a tale of fate that will haunt your heart like an old and beloved song.

Discussion Guide

1. In chapter 1, Anuradha recounts her mother's delicate warning, "In this life, my darling, there is no mercy." What does she mean by these words? By the end of the book, are you convinced that she is right?
2. What is the significance of chicken club sandwiches? To Anuradha, what does it measure?
1. Do Anuradha and Vardhmaan react to their son's death differently? Do you think that either gender interprets loss differently? If so, how?
3. How does the relationship between Anuradha and Vardhmaan evolve in the house by the sea? What happens to their marriage, and what does this new stage in their life say about relationships, love, and responsibility?
4. What is necessary to keep secure a marriage that has suffered astonishing tragedy? Is love enough?

5. In chapter fifteen, Nandini states, "I've been lucky enough to never love." Do you believe this is true?

. In an attempt to cure his mother's disease, Sherman decides to study *triste incurabilis*. Is anyone in this novel immune to heartbreak? Is there a cure for a broken heart?

7. Why does Anuradha admonish Nandini to "stay clear of the whites," and how does this relate to the political climate in India at this time?

8. Does Nandini ever love Khalil Muratta, and Libya Dass; or has she seduced them for her own motives? Why or why not?

9. Do you agree with Anuradha's decision to send Shloka away to Australia? What was she protecting him from? What would you have done in her position, given her past experiences?

10. Why does Vardhmaan move into a new room? Do Vardhmaan and Anuradha still love each other? What makes you think so?

11. Pallavi asks Anuradha not to remember her. What does she mean by "the memory of happiness is as heartbreaking as its absence"? Do you agree with this statement?

12. Why is Pallavi skeptical of the idea of karma? Why is she afraid of her fate?

13. Pallavi believes "there is only one truly important work for all of us . . . and that work is to love cleanly." What does she mean and do you agree?

14. What does the last song of dusk mean to you?

Author Bio

Critical Praise

"Set in 1920s India, this magical debut novel tells the story of beautiful Anuradha, whose songs are spellbinding, but whose fate is troubled."

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