



El amante japonés

Rani Manicka

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Escape into a world of exotic intrigue and romance. A breathtaking and absorbing novel set in Malaya propelled by the superb storytelling instinct of the author of *THE RICE MOTHER*.

Parvathi leaves her native Ceylon for Malaya and an arranged marriage to a wealthy businessman. But her father has cheated, supplying a different girl's photograph, and Kasu Marimuthu, furious, threatens to send her home in disgrace. Gradually husband and wife reach an accommodation, and the naïve young girl learns to assume the air of sophisticated mistress of a luxurious estate. She even adopts his love child and treats Rubini as her own daughter – a generous act which is rewarded by a long-wished-for son.

But it is a life without passion, and Parvathi dreams of loving – and being loved – with complete abandon.

When the Japanese invade Malaya, in WW2, they requisition the estate. Marimuthu dies and Parvathi is forced to accept the protection of the Japanese general who has robbed her of her home. For the first time, she experiences sexual ecstasy. And gradually, her sworn enemy becomes the lover she has always yearned for . . .

El amante japonés Details

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From Reader Review El amante japonés for online ebook

Anne says

The blurb on the cover of this one makes it sound like soft porn - all that love with complete abandon and experiencing sexual ecstasy... Actually, it's a really good read, if a little surface-level on some of the heavier issues - Parvathi's an endearing character and there's plenty of interesting back story extending from Ceylon in 1916, into Malaysia through the Japanese invasion and into the 80s. Some nice mystical touches too - just a bit of a shame the Japanese lover wasn't as well drawn as he should've been, and, other than the obvious, it's sometimes difficult to see the attraction...

Maha says

just so nice!!!!

Smitha says

Parvathi, a young girl in Ceylon is married off to a rich landlord in Malaya, by her unscrupulous father, by showing the marriage broker some other girl's picture. This also fulfilled the prophesy when she was born. Parvathi's husband is annoyed at the cheating, and asks her to get ready to go back to her village. For some reasons, her husband(Marimuthu) lets her stay on with him. She stays there, but not as a much loved wife, but more as a person who is just about tolerated to be allowed to stay on.

Some years later, her husband brings home his love-child with a dancer. When she (the dancer) dies, Marimuthu brings their daughter(Rubini) home to his wife. Later Parvathi gives birth to a son, who ends up being extremely pampered and spoiled. Both these children test Parvathi a lot, in different ways. Marimuthu passes away just before the Japanese invasion of Malaysia.

After the Japanese invasion, it so happens that Parvathi becomes the lover of a Japanese General, and for the first time in her life, is happy and cherished as a woman.

While the story was interesting, there was still something missing. I haven't been able to pin point it. There was a lot of prophesies, and portents happening, but the story could not really hold it together to explain everything that was brought up in the narration.. It almost feels like a lot of ingredients were added, but somewhere along the line, the purpose of the recipe was lost?

I would rate it 2/5, mainly because it started off well, and the way it ended was a little disappointing. Not a book that I would particularly recommend.

Claudia says

Mientras más lo pienso, menos me gusta este libro. La escasa empatía que hacen que el lector desarrolle por la protagonista al inicio, luego es eliminada mediante una narración acelerada en la segunda parte del libro y las actitudes despreocupadas e irritantes de casi todos los personajes.

Una 'heroína' que se vuelve egoísta; humana, sí; ¿justificable? no. Una sirvienta/curandera que da el toque de sabiduría y teológico, y añade más confusión al tema del libro (¿romance?, ¿histórico?, ¿espiritual?). Hijos engreídos e insufribles, y un general japonés que aparece y desaparece sin ton ni son, y menos gloria. Lo que rescataría sería el interés que siembra por la cultura malaya y la claridad sobre la xenofobia entre los pueblos asiáticos.

Ciscananda says

Por fiiiiin lo acabé. Fue un desafío, honestly. Estuve a punto de abandonarlo como cuatro veces.

Bueno, siento la obligación de (tratar de) explicar por qué lo odié tanto.

En primer lugar, la protagonista. ¡Ah! Parvathi era, sencillamente, insoportable. Creo que no me habría molestado tanto su presencia de no ser porque un par de veces la autora trata de convencerte de que su personalidad es como una *pantera* del desierto (o algo así), que era astuta, calculadora y... En fin, que tenía el tipo de características que la hacían una mujer admirable, inteligente y poderosa. Mentira. Parvathi apenas tiene una personalidad a la cuál aferrarse. Es ignorante, ingenua y torpe, y se comporta de la misma manera a lo largo de tooooda la historia. No evoluciona en lo absoluto, a no ser de que pueda considerarse su (supuesto) pobre y patético despertar a la sensualidad como una evolución. Ja. Nunca tomó una decisión sensata, se dejaba manipular por todos. Relegaba todas sus responsabilidades a otras personas y no le interesaba hacer nada productivo. (view spoiler). Cada una de sus acciones me enervaba y me daban ganas de entrar en la historia solo para darle una buena bofetada. Una cosa que de verdad me dejó desconcertada fue que tomara clases de inglés siendo que ni siquiera sabía escribir bien en su propio idioma (nunca me quedó claro si era o no analfabeta). Supongo que quizás si es posible aprender otro idioma apenas sabiendo el tuyo, pero bueno...

Otro personaje que me pareció aborrecible fue la co-protagonista: Maya. Con este personaje queda al descubierto la necesidad de la autora de escribir un libro de autoayuda. Sinceramente, no sé por qué se molestó en inventarse el rollo del "amante japonés" si este al final no es más que un relleno. En realidad, toda esta historia (trata de) hablar sobre la energía mística del mundo, de la reencarnación, del culto a los dioses, del espíritu, de la religión, de los templos sagrados... Puaj. De solo recordarlo me dan ganas de vomitar porque ¿saben qué? No es que esos temas me molesten como tales, pero me molesta la manera de exponerlos. Maya era así como una *erudita* encubierta, una enciclopedia de lo místico. Vez que hablaba, vez que salía lo místico, la reencarnación y tooooda esa *bullshit*. Nunca dijo nada *normal* en toda la historia, por el amor de Dios. Me imagino preguntándole sobre el tiempo y ella respondiéndome con un sermón de una hora sobre los astros y la energía solar. Sinceramente, no sé como terminó siendo la sirvienta de un millonario si pudo haber sido la 1era mujer profeta del mundo ¿? Meh, supongo que su gran cualidad era la humildad. Ja. Maya terminó estresándome más que Parvathi, y odié la forma en cómo su palabra era tomada por todos como la verdad suprema.

La verdad, nunca pude meterme en la cabeza el hilo argumental de la historia. Como que ni siquiera había

uno, porque como dije, todo al final giraba en torno a lo místico. Todo lo demás era relleno, absolutamente todo.

Comencé a leer con la esperanza de encontrarme con una historia romántica del tipo histórica y me encontré con una verborrea mística, una historia de amor salida de la nada (view spoiler) y minúsculos datos históricos.

En fin. Esta clase de libros; quiero decir, novelas provenientes de la zona *oriental* del planeta no son para mí. Su cultura no calza con la mía, su manera de ver el mundo no calza con la mía, su *todo* no calza con el mío.

!!!Lo odié!!!

Ainur says

This is a story about a young woman wanting to find love. Being sent to Malaya during 1916 from Ceylon, Parvathi then married Kasu Marimuthu, a man a decade of her age. Experiencing the new cultures, Parvathi learned to adapt to her new surrounding. It is really interesting reading about Malaya's people during that time, which bit by bit already had British influence in it. The Japanese invasion started in the middle of the story. This was when Parvathi started to fall for the enemy and having a secret affair every night. There's really not much on what happened in Malaya at that time. There's one part where people were being tortured at the basement of the house but it was slightly mentioned.

I don't like the writing style. The scenes kept jumping from one to the other that made it hard to enjoy and more confusing. Some parts just seem like info dumping; part where Maya was having conversation about the US government, Statue of Liberty, etc with Kasu; then at the end about Hindraf.

I really want to like this book but I find it confusing. I am a big fan of historical fiction and I was excited to read this since it sets in Malaysia during WWII. But I find that there's really not much about it.

Overall, it was okay. Doesn't make me want to read it again.

Antoaneta Mitrusheva says

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Elsa Ramos says

muito bom, muito educativo, muito emocionante. gostei muito, aprendi muito, uma leitura maravilhosa.

The Book Whisperer (aka Boof) says

I am actually struggling with finding a way to review this book as, even after turning the last page, I'm still not entirely sure what it's about. It felt, to me, like the book wanted to be a sprawling, epic book about a woman who was married off for money in Malaysia and set over nearly 100 years, but here it really falls short: there wasn't enough depth there and I still feel, in a way, that I don't know the characters well enough. I can't quite decide whether it was meant to be a family saga, a book about finding true love, a book about spiritualism, a book about WW2, I just don't know. I sort of feel that the story never really found its true identity.

The story starts in Ceylon in 1916, with the birth of Parvathi to a very poor and lazy father and a doting mother. Her father is told by an astrologer on the day of her birth that she will marry into great wealth and when a marriage broker appears 16 years later trying to find a wife for a hugely wealthy Malaysian businessman, Parvathi's father gives him a picture of a beautiful girl who is not his daughter and her fate is sealed.

Crossing the sea by herself she is thrust straight into the marriage with this man who is more than 2 decades her senior and who is angry and humiliated at being deceived. He decides to send Parvathi straight back but for reasons that are never especially clear, he doesn't. She remains in the house where she is happy but unloved. Several years into the marriage, her husband's love-child is brought to live with them after her mother (and her husband's lover) dies and then Parvathi herself gets pregnant and gives birth to a child; a son. These two children are the most rude, selfish, brattish, vile kids and both of them deserved a damn good slap in my opinion! GRRRR!!!

When WW2 breaks out and the Japanese descends on Malaysia, Parvathi is taken to be a lover for a Japanese General and there she finds true love.

It sounds simple enough, right? So it shouldn't have confused me, but it did. I did enjoy *The Japanese Lover* but I just didn't fall in love with it. I didn't find enough forward momentum with it: I enjoyed it for the most part while reading it but had no real compulsion to pick it up again when I wasn't reading it. I never really felt like there was anything to cling on to in terms of wanting to know what happened – I felt as though the book couldn't decide whether to be plot driven (which I don't think it really was) or character driven (again, there were none whom I felt I knew well enough for this).

Jeanne says

The Japanese Lover is the second book by this name that I've read this year (this by Rani Manicka, the other by Isabel Allende). What is it with Japanese lovers?

Both books are set during WWII (one in the US, the other in Malaysia), so explore issues of privilege, oppression, and racism. Interestingly, in Manicka's book, the Japanese lover is in a privileged position relative to the Malays. In Allende's book, he was interned in a concentration camp; his upper class white lover is unwilling to risk marrying him, to risk losing everything. In Manicka's book, Parvathi is willing to risk everything for Hattori. In both books, the relationship remains a secret, even well after the lover's death.

In both books, there is a supernatural component. In Manicka's book, this is tied to and follows from the characters' spiritual beliefs, so worked for me. The supernatural pieces of Allende's book didn't make sense to me and didn't seem to follow from the characters, so interfered with my appreciation for that book.

On the other hand, it was very clear why Allende's characters fell in love with each other, even though we saw her lover primarily in letters – but such letters! Manicka's Parvathi falls in love with Hattori although she was conscripted into this relationship – and arguably was raped (although she does not see herself as raped). Hattori's men took over her house; he runs hot and cold and is often emotionally guarded with her; and Malays are tortured and killed in the basement while Hattori and Parvathi make love. Why would she choose him? (He is also loving toward her, and sensitive in his understanding of music and ideas.)

Manicka's book is often sweet (not saccharine), but the characters in the central family do not always make sense in ways that aren't only attributable to the significant cultural differences between Parvathi and myself. Why does Parvathi's husband fail to see her for herself? Why does her son turn out badly, her stepdaughter refuse her throughout her life? I don't buy it, nor do I see how Manicka is building larger themes.

However, I liked the Manicka's discussions of Hinduism and traditional medicine. These discussions often center around Maya, initially a servant in Parvathi's household and a traditional healer. Maya is the one character who consistently acts with integrity and respect. She sees the larger picture and helps Parvathi see parts of it.

That both *Japanese Lovers* came out in such a short period suggests that love across difference, despite oppression, is an important theme for our time. Unfortunately – or fortunately? – neither of these books is the final story.

Zenling says

Una lectura bastante buena sobre la vida de un personaje femenino y su evolución como ser humano desde la perspectiva de una vida sencilla y llena de dificultades. Recomendado.

Maria Ana says

É um pouco difícil encontrar algo a dizer sobre esta leitura.

O livro chamou-me à atenção e a sua história parecia promissora, no entanto fiquei um pouco desiludida. Esperava uma narrativa com um fio condutor organizado, mas tal não aconteceu. Por vezes, a narrativa saltava para acontecimentos precipitados e desconexos dos mencionados anteriormente, o que me deixava confusa, e um pouco desmotivada.

Descrevo a história como um pouco surreal e mística. Para além da narrativa se iniciar com um nascimento, e o futuro desse nascimento ser lido nos astros, ao longo da história encontramos episódios fabulosos de misticismo, deuses e religião. Esta vertente da história é-nos transmitida pela personagem Maya, que confesso que é a minha personagem favorita.

Recomendo a leitura, pois é um livro apaixonado, faz-nos refletir as nossas convicções pessoais e cósmicas.

Sara Jesus says

Este é um romance envolvente repleto de magia, mitos e que relata a história de um amor incondicional. Aborda a História da Malásia. Com personagens envolventes que nos marcam no coração.

Baljit says

Having read Manicka's Rice Mother some years back, and being completely blown over that novel, I had rather great expectations for this novel. initially is seemed to have a parallel setting, young village girl from Sri Lanka sails across to Malaya due to an arranged marriage. The characters of Parvathi's husband, Maya and Kupu were well thought out and held attention. However i was v dissapaointed the writer romanticised the whole scene of the occupation by the Japanese army and her affair with the Japanese officer. The atrocities of the was were glossed over, the fact there were captives held in the house, moans were heard, but Parvathi was so consumed by her relationship, does not ring true. and during this phase of her life, the v character of her two children was not developed. At the end of the novel, the writer shifts emphasis to the two children, who are now adults, and paints a picture of the evil son and the caring daughter, in v superficial terms. This whole novel had so much more promise but delivered a v average storyline

Tocotin says

Wow, this was one of the most confusing books ever, and not in a good way. I'm not really sure what it was about. A poor girl from a small village in India becomes the wife of a Malay millionaire in the beginning of the 20th century, then witnesses all the political & historical & cultural changes... except she doesn't.

All the characters speak in the same highfalutin style, and the wise woman Maya spouts prophecies about "media" and "globalization" (in the 1920s, mind). The main character Parvathi is forced to accept amorous advances (oh look alliteration) of a Japanese general during the occupation, but actually it's a love at first sight for both of them. In the meanwhile some folks are tortured in the basement, but who cares. The Japanese general dresses Parvathi in kimonos and paints her face so that she resembles a geisha (because geisha are obviously an embodiment of female beauty for the Japanese). He also addresses her as "Anata" which made me laugh sadly. This eponymous Japanese lover takes about 20% of the book and is a pretext to introduce about every platitude on Japanese culture known to man.

The only part I liked were references to Hinduism and Indian and Malayan customs, which I don't know much about, but I'm not sure if they can be trusted.

Oh well, it was a fast read.
