

In the Shadow of Freedom

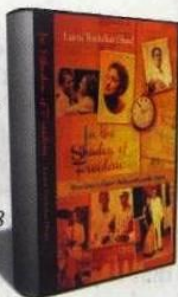
By Laxmi Tendulkar

Dhaul

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●●● BOOK REVIEW

Binding love

BY MANDIRA NAYAR

There are love stories. The epic sweep-you-off-your-feet kind; the quiet type where love comes softly and then outstays its welcome; the happy-ever-after romance, fictional, of course; the love-at-first-sight tales and Bollywood's favourite in the 90s, the battle to stay together in the face of parental opposition. There are also those that break your heart. *In the Shadow of Freedom*, Laxmi Tendulkar Dhaul brings alive a love story with a sprinkling of all these elements. Only, the opposition to the love story is a little more daunting than ordinary parents.

In the 1940s in Belgaum lived Indumati Gunaji, idealistic, opinionated, beautiful and fearless, and a follower of Mahatma Gandhi. Ayi Tendulkar had just returned from Germany to start a Marathi newspaper. He was married to a German, Thea van Harbou. He drove around town in a red convertible Mercedes. He was irresistible. They fell in love.

Banished from her home, Indu chose to live with Tendulkar in his village in Belgundi. Her father, unable to drill sense into her head, wrote to Gandhi for help. Babu asked to see her and then stipulated that she "purify all by purifying her friendship with Dr Tendulkar". They were to test their love for five years. When they successfully did it, Gandhi gave his consent for their marriage. However, he extracted a promise from them to have children only after India won freedom.

"My mother followed Gandhi with her heart," says Laxmi. "My father wore khaddar till the day he died. But my mother was a Gandhian. I grew up with mixed feelings for Gandhiji."●