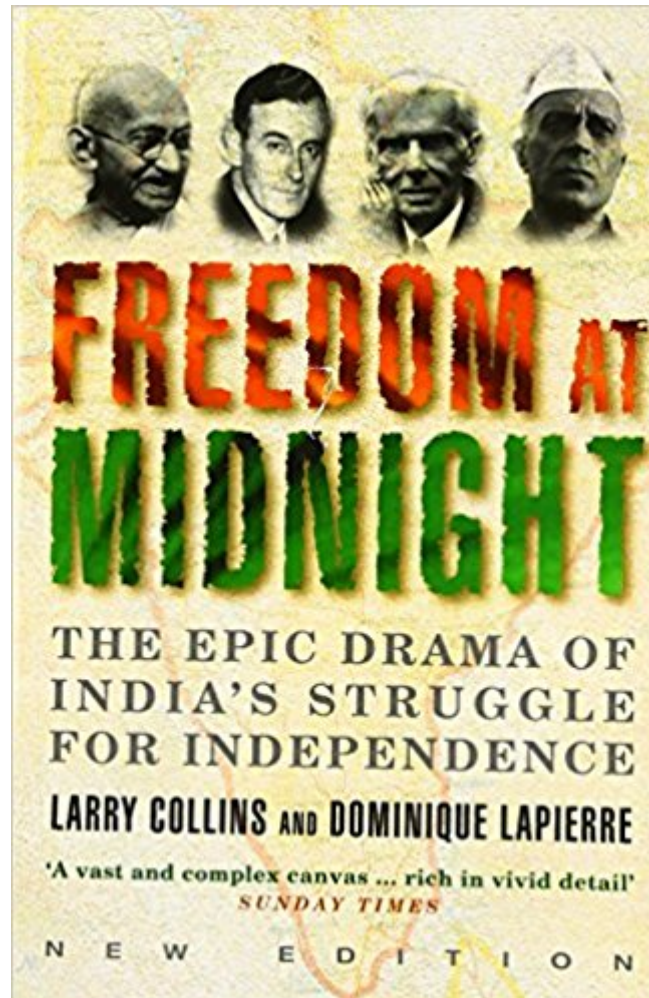




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Freedom At Midnight



Synopsis

On 14 August 1947 one-fifth of humanity claimed their independence in India. But 400 million people were to find that the immediate price of freedom was partition and war, riot and murder. In this reconstruction, Collins and Lapierre recount the eclipse of the British Raj and examine the roles enacted by, among others, Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Mountbatten in its violent transformation into the new India and Pakistan.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

'Magnificently enlightening and exciting.' -- National Observer, Washington
'The song of India...illuminated like scenes in a pageant.' -- Time Magazine, New York
'Thrilling...staggeres the imagination.' -- Daily Mail --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

'Thrilling ... staggeres the imagination.' - DAILY MAIL 'There is no single passage in I this profoundly researched book that one could actually fault. Having been there most of the time in question, I can vouch for the accuracy of its general mood. It is a work of scholarship, of investigation, research and of significance.' JAMES CAMERON, NEW YORK TIMES The dialogue is convincing, the story is emotionally moving and it contains some of the best descriptions of battle I've read..." - TIME OUT "I defy a reader to put the book down once Robinson has got him into the air..." Paul Fussell, NEW REPUBLIC 'The song of India ... illuminated in scenes like a pageant.' - TIME 'A heroic tale that has not been told a tenth as, well before ... It will give more non-Indians more knowledge of the vast circumstances surrounding the birth of India than anything previously written. With an instinct for drama and a skill in narration, the authors take the reader from Whitehall to Delhi, to Calcutta, to

Lahore, to Pula, to the villages of the Punjab and Bengal; their hold on the reader never falters.' -

JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH

This book is a fascinating and deeply moving account of one of the seminal events in world history, the emergence of India and Pakistan as sovereign nations. Collins and LaPierre, in their infinitely researched, nuanced account of the independence of the Indian subcontinent, relate their story in prose that approaches the lyrical rhythm of poetry. Some may take issue with the point of view of the account, insisting that it is written primarily from the British line of sight, but regardless of any bias, it so beautifully and successfully relates the stories of those in the highest seats of power and the impact of their often wrenching decisions on the common person. I have always held that in order for history to teach us, it must be delivered in a form that seduces us into understanding it. By developing the characters whom most of us already know - Gandhi, Nehru, Mountbatten, Jinnah, Churchill - we find ourselves in the venues of the account as quiet observers as the die is cast to deliver India to its destiny. The book underscores the power of language, with excerpts from the inimitable speeches, delivered extemporaneously by Nehru, in quick succession, upon the birth of the nation, and upon the death of India's father. This book is also a cautionary tale for the present, by showing so clearly how false distinctions between people, riven by such things as religion, wealth, and power, can so readily cause diverse communities living in harmony for centuries to shatter the peacefulness of their coexistence and turn on each other in abhorrent communal violence at a moment's notice, leaving us stunned and questioning our humanity. Perhaps this understanding can encourage us not to repeat this insanity. A marvelous book - highly recommended.

I read this book a decade or so ago, but it has been coming back to my mind recently -- apparently simply because it made such an impact and I now have a medium () in which to express my appreciation of it. It is an impressive book in every way: an epic story, with gripping narrative, about extraordinary events and characters. I had had no conception of the monstrous tragedy of the partition of India from Pakistan. This book not only describes its true dimensions, but also makes clear how circumstances can force such absurd things to occur. Much of the book is a biography of Gandhi, and here I could only marvel at the power and authority of this man, and -- on top of everything else -- be riveted by the assassination story in all its detail that I had not known about. Whether there are more accurate accounts of these matters, I am not in a position to say. I can only report that I found this book completely satisfying in multiple respects: as history, as biography, as

narrative. At least for a non-expert I can't imagine how it could disappoint as a book, however distressing (and, alas also, timely) its subject matter may be.

When it comes to writing about the Independence of India and the partitioning of the country that happened with it, it is hard to find a neutral source of information. Luckily 'Freedom at Midnight' is one such source. Unfortunately, with neutrality comes the perspective of someone outside looking in, which is also what happens in this book. That being said, this book is a MUST read for all fans of history and people interested in understanding Pakistan-India dynamics and the culture of the sub-continent. The one issue I have with the book is the glorification of the role that Mountbatten and Gandhi played in the aforementioned events. There is in some sense, a simplification of their actions and intent. The reality (at least as perceived by citizens of the two countries) is much more complicated. Gandhi's own auto-biography is more revealing, nuanced and provides a better insight into the thoughts (many naive or unsavory) of India's great leader. The final aspect, which should make this a fun read for everyone (including people who are not fans of history) is the colorful and detailed description of the (often futile and vain) life of Indian nobility. If you ever wondered what (unimaginably crazy) life the Indian princes enjoyed, make sure you read the book.

I gained a much better understanding of the struggle of India for its independence and its problems with Pakistan. For the amount of information in the book it was amazingly easy to read and maintained my interest.

This is an excellent book. However, the Kindle e-book has many typo errors. Please will edit the book for future downloads. Thank you. Also, what e-mail address do I use to communicate with ? I can't phone as I live in South Africa.

The quality of book was simply great! What I liked in this book was the detailed portrayal of events and how significant individual decisions were in the formation of our country! One thing I did not like to that an extent was portrayal of the scenes of Indian Independence from the point of view of the Viceroy (British), a lot of belittling is done without a deep understanding of the Indian civilizational beliefs. But nevertheless a third person's truthful point of view and accurate depiction of the events leave you amazed as to how much pressure the decision makers would have been under and how their choices have shaped the current scheme of things. Almost the "Bible" on the last decade of Independence: Must read!

The most well written and historically accurate book on the partitioning of India

Wonderful book. One of the very best I have ever read, and I read a lot of history and biography. Has you laughing out loud one minute and gasping in horror the next.

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