



The Conch Bearer (Brotherhood of the Conch)

By Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

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In a dingy shack in the less-than-desirable Indian neighborhood he calls home, twelve-year-old Anand is entrusted with a conch shell that possesses mystical powers. His task is to return the shell to its rightful home many hundreds of miles away. Accompanying him are Nisha, a headstrong but resourceful child of the streets, and a mysterious man of indeterminate age and surprising resources named Abadhyatta. His quest will take him farther from home than he's ever been and will teach him more than he ever imagined -- and it will force him to make a poignant decision that will change him forever.

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The Conch Bearer (Brotherhood of the Conch) By Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #372939 in Books
- Brand: Aladdin
- Published on: 2005-03-01
- Released on: 2005-03-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.63" h x .80" w x 5.13" l, .41 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 265 pages

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 4-7-Anand's compassionate gesture of sharing his tea with an old man in a Calcutta market leads to radical changes in the 12-year-old's life. The stranger is a member of the Brotherhood of Healers and invites the boy to join him on a dangerous journey to return a magical conch shell to its proper home in the far-off Himalayas. Along with Nisha, a sweeper-girl who insists on joining them, Anand and Abhaydatta travel to the mountains pursued by the evil Surabhanu, a power-hungry ex-member of the brotherhood. Anand struggles in his own mind, doubting Abhaydatta's motives and the existence of magic, jealous of Nisha's comfortable relationship with the old man, and occasionally succumbing to Surabhanu's tempting illusions. When he finally reaches the Silver Valley, more challenges await him before he can enter. In the end, he faces the most difficult choice of all-to stay in the world of magic he had always dreamed of or return to his family. This quest adventure has an exotic flavor: the journey from a crowded Indian city through rural villages and the high mountains, a magical background from traditional Indian tales, and deliciously detailed description of Indian foods. Honesty, loyalty, and compassion are the virtues demanded by the Healers; Anand's actions show that he has all three. Readers can sympathize with his struggles and long for his success. This traditional story in fresh new clothing should appeal to middle graders.

Kathleen Isaacs, Edmund Burke School, Washington, DC

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 5-8. In modern-day India, a boy named Anand perseveres in difficult circumstances. His father is gone, his sister has had a breakdown, and he and his mother struggle to keep a shack's roof over their heads. Anand is kind to an old man, Abhaydatta, a healer who is charged with bringing home an irreplaceable conch shell, stolen from his brotherhood. What follows is a classic quest story in which Anand and feisty, orphaned Nisha eventually continue the quest for the shell on their own. Faced with all the conventions of the genre, they undergo various trials, and Anand makes choices that change his life. Fantasy lovers will recognize familiar elements; certain touches are reminiscent of the Harry Potter books (the evil one takes the shape of a snake) and C. S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (tempting food controls a child). With so many fantasies being published, what's special about this one? It's the unique setting, along with the elegance of Divakaruni's writing. The slums of "Kalcotta" are so richly created that readers can almost smell them, and the pure beauty of Anand's destination is a shimmering Shangri-La come to life. The characterizations have the same lucidity, real to the core, yet cloaked in magic. This speaks directly to children, in a very enticing voice. *Ilene Cooper*

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Review

"This book is a real page-turner...you'll stay up late to finish it."

--*Chicago Tribune*

"Young readers can only hope for more from this master storyteller."

--*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

"The action is exciting, and the Indian setting makes this story new and different."

--*Washington Post*

"Divakaruni [is] a gifted storyteller...Though [she] beguiles us with the sights and sounds of an exotic place, what she really does is make us feel at home."

--Los Angeles Times

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Antoinette Hagen:

Why don't make it to be your habit? Right now, try to prepare your time to do the important work, like looking for your favorite book and reading a book. Beside you can solve your trouble; you can add your knowledge by the publication entitled *The Conch Bearer (Brotherhood of the Conch)*. Try to make book *The Conch Bearer (Brotherhood of the Conch)* as your buddy. It means that it can to be your friend when you really feel alone and beside associated with course make you smarter than before. Yeah, it is very fortunate to suit your needs. The book makes you considerably more confidence because you can know everything by the book. So , let us make new experience in addition to knowledge with this book.

Gale Taylor:

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David Betancourt:

Spent a free time to be fun activity to do! A lot of people spent their down time with their family, or their own friends. Usually they doing activity like watching television, gonna beach, or picnic in the park. They actually doing same every week. Do you feel it? Do you need to something different to fill your personal free time/ holiday? Could possibly be reading a book is usually option to fill your cost-free time/ holiday. The first thing that you'll ask may be what kinds of book that you should read. If you want to test look for book, may be the book untitled *The Conch Bearer (Brotherhood of the Conch)* can be good book to read. May be it

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