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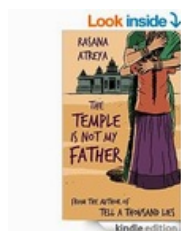
Jesus Burned by Jim DeFilippi

Reviewed by Alex Canton-Dutari

I am a fan of this author, who has demonstrated his capacity to describe the whole gamut of human feelings in his previous books. *Jesus Burned* is full of metaphors and social finger pointing, which made this a great reading experience.

For example, raveling through the body metamorphosing into a soul is but a speck of an important message about life and its inequalities.

I found it very interesting how the deceased told their stories while being almost nonjudgmental in a time when being closeted was the norm. The main characters represented society's struggle between ego and super ego.



The Temple Is Not My Father by Rasana Atreya

Review by Julia Dutta

The oldest profession in the world prostitution, takes on a more serious side in India, when one reads cases and books on what is called the devadasi system in India, which is rooted in religion. In Rasana Atreya's new Novella, *The Temple Is Not My Father*, the reader encounters the shocking realities of how, the system is both used and abused by bigoted family instruments which can bring up an immense amount of anger towards those, who force women to corners of society, where life is but a bleak existence of no hope.

Godavari, named after a river in India, is the third daughter of parents who have had five daughters, which in itself is ominous, because, only a son is an auspicious addition to a family. She has been sold at seven to the temple by her father, where like many devadasis in India, is wedded to Goddess Yellamma. Frequented by one after another man, on a daily basis, she becomes pregnant and bears a baby girl. Godavari's mother, has shown much resistance to this, but with an adamant husband to manage, she has lost to him. But, she decides not to allow, the plight of her daughter to be repeated with her grandchild that is Godavari's daughter. By willing all her wealth to Godavari, she has risen the wrath of all her children, including her son, who ought to have inherited the wealth of his mother. Shunned by family except a single sister, Krishna, Godavari lives a solitary life with her daughter, in a house inherited from her mother.

Soon, their solitary life will be interjected by two delightful girls, Neeraja and Vanaja, who have been sent by their chastity-obsessed parents living in the US to India, to live and study with their grandmother, for fear that the girls now coming of age may give in to poor moral values existing in the US, and date and mate with boys! A great relief for Sreeja, daughter of Godavari, the little girl begins to know the value of friendship, with the two girls and also learn from them. But their grandmother is not happy at the association and stops the girls from coming. When finally they are able to break loose, it is only to tell Godavari that they would be sent away to boarding school so that they can be kept away from social outcasts like Godavari and little Sreeja. This is a blow to Godavari.

In the mean time, before the two girls leave, an NGO run by Asha garu takes little Sreeja away from her mother, and gives her for adoption, so that Sreeja can have a normal life, and not as a shunned by society, uneducated daughter of a devadasi. This breaks Godavari's heart but she survives the pain by focussing on changing her life too. She too joins an NGO and begins to learn computer and is guided into a life of saving children from prostitution. This is how she meets Raji, who is mimed from the torture of being given to prostitution at the age of seven. It takes Godavari three years to make the girl speak even a single sentence.

The book ends with a typical Rasana Atreya sign off – a tremendous twist in the story, most readers would never imagine what it might be, as they read the novella.

Rasana Atreya, is not only a story teller par excellence now. She is a Brand. Stories from the heart of India based on social structure that continues to exist despite its urbanization, marks the very essence of her books. She is disturbed by this and no reader can put her book down without feeling waves of disturbance themselves. Her writings raise the bile in your belly and make you want to go and change the system and yet, it is true, that perhaps those who stand to protect us, actually are the perpetrators themselves. Whether, it is *The Temple is Not My Father*, or her book which was nominated for the Tibor Jones Asia Prize, *Tell A Thousand Lies*, Rasana Atreya, jars you to sit up and think.

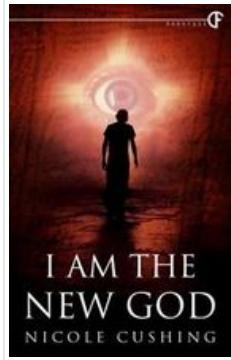
And the twists and turns of her stories are at once, a great art in story telling at the same time, very natural to Rasana Atreya as an author and a Brand.

The Temple Is Not My Father by Rasana Atreya

Reviewed by Alex Canton-Dutari

Rasana Atreya I consider a sociological writer, as she brilliantly exposes India's social inequities -- or social peculiarities? The discovery of a god's approval of female child prostitution in India did not surprise me. This happens in other societies, also. Nevertheless, the pathos of the story and its ending was, strangely enough, to be expected, as in some societies those living in "the abyss" -- Jack London's expression -- always seem to turn full cycle never finding a way out of their misery.

I am looking forward to Rasana's next book.

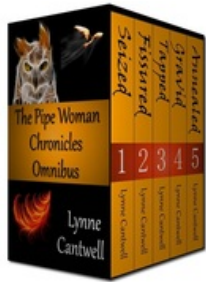


I am the New God by Nicole Cushing

Review by Kim Tomsett

This is the story of Greg Bryce. A disgraced priest has been writing to him, believing him to be a new God. At first Greg dismisses the idea and ignores him, but as he continues to write, Greg begins to come around to the idea. This sends his life into a catastrophic spiral that he has no control over, and no way back from.

I enjoyed this so much. It was a very different, quirky idea that read really easily. Greg's back story was interesting, and I liked the way we were given little snippets along the way, almost as teasers to the main events. Told predominantly in the two voices of Greg and the hierophant, everything raced along until the catastrophic finale, and the best twist in a book I have read for ages. This is the second book of Nicole's I have read, and I really enjoy her style. I recommend this as a quick, unusual read that may just leave you breathless at the end.



The Pipe Woman Chronicles Omnibus by Lynne Cantwell

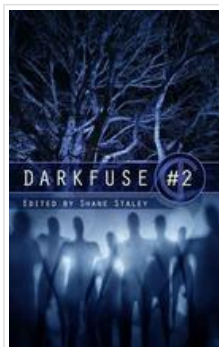
Review by Greta Burroughs

I read the first book of this series, "Seized" and was very keen on getting the rest of the books. I was very happy to find all five books packaged together in a set and bought it. It's so convenient to have the next installment right at hand and be able to continue reading without a break.

The Pipe Woman series is very interesting and unique. Naomi gets pulled in a situation she never would have believe existed if it hadn't actually happened to her. The gods she had read about in Norse mythology, Indian legions, etc were real but were kept on the QT by the omnipresent being we refer to as God. Naomi was drafted by a Native American goddess named White Buffalo Calf Pipe Woman so that she could mediate a peace agreement in heaven between all the pagan gods and goddesses and

the Christian God.

Along with her team, Naomi faced many challenges leading up to the grand meeting. The action was fast-paced and very interesting. The author only gave a little back story when necessary and the story did not drag along at any point. It was a novel concept carried out in an engaging way. I thoroughly enjoyed the entire series and highly recommend it to everyone.



Darkfuse #2 - Darkfuse Anthology Series

Review by Kim Tomsett

This is the second in Darkfuse's anthology series. Once again it features six stories by six different authors.

I love anthologies. They are so easy to dip in and out of without investing too much time in one go. That being said it is rare to find an anthology where every story is a winner, or near winner. This one is that exception. I enjoyed every story in this anthology, but the last one by Tim Curran was by far the best. Tim's story was also slightly longer than the rest. It built up slowly and then power hosed through to the end. It was written in the style I have come to expect from Tim. All in all, this second anthology stood up well to the first and is an excellent read.



Last Woman by Jacqueline Druga

reviewed by Sue Palmer

I loved this book! Straight into the story from page one and completely hooked to the end. The characters are likable and the plot very easy to follow, so much so that I really couldn't put this book down. I have read other comments about errors etc, I found one or two but can honestly say that I haven't read any book, and I mean any, that hasn't contained an error. So come on guys, if you like an apocalyptic story line, give this book a go. The only downside I found is that I couldn't find a sequel. However, I have just found out that there is one coming very shortly!