



Crooked Lines

Holly Michael

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Two continents. Two cultures. Two souls seek hope and a future.

On the shores of Lake Michigan, Rebecca Meyer seeks escape. Guilt-ridden over her little sister's death, she sets her heart on India, a symbol of peace.

Across the ocean in South India, Sagai Raj leaves his tranquil hill station home and impoverished family to answer a higher calling. Pushing through diverse cultural and religious milieus, he labors toward his goals, while wrong turns and bad choices block Rebecca from hers.

Traveling similar paths and bridged across oceans through a priest, the two desire peace and their divine destiny. But vows and blind obedience at all costs must be weighed...And buried memories, unearthed.

Crooked Lines, a beautifully crafted debut novel, threads the lives of two determined souls from different continents and cultures. Compelling characters struggle with spirituality through despair and deceptions in search of truth.

Crooked Lines Details

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From Reader Review Crooked Lines for online ebook

Caryl McAdoo says

A beautiful tapestry of God's weaving, Holly Michael's debut novel CROOKED LINES will stay with you long after the last page. The threads gently intertwine as two souls on opposite sides of the world reach for faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of these is love! And I believe you will love this book as I did.

The setting is split between India where Sagai becomes a man while in the church studying toward the goal of becoming a priest. He loves God with his whole heart and longs only to serve Him and His people, but everything is not what he expected. Then we also follow the American Rebecca who lives in Wisconsin to start but also in California and Tennessee during her search for God's will. She, too, loves Him but because of a horrible tragedy that haunts her, she makes a few bad life choices. As a reader, I came to love them both.

The similarities in their lives - skipping stones, both the seventh child in their families, losing family members - lend to rooting for them. And they're even praying for one another through a mutual friend, an Indian priest who visits America occasionally. He counsels and encourages both Sagai and Rebecca through their difficult decisions. At the end, I had gooseflesh and teary eyes. I love books that give me gooseflesh and teary eyes :)

Francene Stanley says

From opposite sides of the world, two teens skitter stones over the top of water. When they take their place in the adult world, the author reveals with an amazing understanding how, although the depths of their lives swirl with different challenges, kindred spirits float over the sea of life.

Aisling says

I really wish I could separate this book and give the Indian story a 5 while giving the American girl part a 1. Although Rebecca Meyer's story starts out strong she becomes weak, loathsome and almost unbearable to read by the middle to end of the book. If it were not for Sagai's story I would not have finished this book. The author regularly travels to South India and that really shows; the color and texture of India are amazing. But plotwise it was not a strong book. The ending seemed very abrupt to me and honestly Rebecca's story should have begun there. If there is a book two I might read it if it took place in India and Rebecca began to mature.

Katie Cross says

Oh my goodness, where to start?

First of all, I thought this was a romance. It is SO not a romance, which actually helps me love it better, to be honest. It's more a journey with a couple of very lovable people throughout their lives.

I don't have much experience with the Catholic church, so perhaps what I loved best was taking the journey with Sagai through his faith, and all the experiences he has. I was angry for him, heartbroken for him, rejoiced with him, and in the end, just wanted the best for him. The culture that Michael's brought into the story through India was fascinating.

I often got frustrated with the other main character, Rebecca. But in retrospect, I think I got frustrated because her constant turning away from good decisions, and making bad ones, is really just a reflection of our own lives. Rebecca constantly wanting better, but not really choosing it, was a really interesting opposite to Sagai, who constantly chose better, but got worse.

I looked forward to sitting out on my porch swing and reading this book at night. I'm not Catholic, but I loved and appreciate the Christian elements and struggles in this story.

I'll be watching for more of Michael's work.

Holly Michael says

Crooked Lines, a beautifully crafted debut novel, threads the lives of two determined souls from different continents and cultures. Compelling characters struggle with spirituality through despair and deceptions in search of truth. <http://www.amazon.com/Crooked-Lines-H...>

Ashlee Willis says

A unique book that follows the separate stories of two people who are intertwined, yet half a world apart. The author has a fresh, admirable way with words and storytelling. The story itself is one that has a great message at heart. Recommend!

I received a copy of this book from the author in exchange for an honest review :)

Christine Lindsay says

I suppose it's no surprise to some that I would absolutely LOVE Crooked Lines. It's set in modern-day India. But that's not the only reason. Sure the setting takes me back to the land I fell in love with over the years when I dreamed of exotic India from afar (like the main character in the book) and from my one and only visit.

But my reasons for highly recommending this book have more to do with the beautiful entwining of two characters and two cultures over decades. I was mesmerized reading the life of a young Indian man, Sagai Raj, as he prepares for the priesthood, and the despair he feels over the years, trapped under the harsh situation regime of politically driven superiors. Sagai's love for Christ and to serve people with that loving heart is nearly snuffed out of him and he wonders what God could have for him, if not the priesthood.

On the other side of the world in the US, Rebecca Meyer, suffers her own suffocating despair--unanswered questions to how her little sister died, the cruelty of an abusive husband, a dysfunctional family that takes

decades to come to healing, and all along her desire to go to India and how God captures her heart.

The author's fast-paced but musical prose drew me along into these lives that I became so quickly invested in. I can't wait to read the sequel to this novel. This was the kind of love story I want to read. Realistic, gritty in places, yet full of poetic truth.

This is one of the best books I've read in the last 12 months.

Penny Marks says

Wow, what a powerful read. Two worlds drawn together by God's plan. This book was well written and completely drew me into the story. Each of these characters have gone through great trials in life. On one side of the world you have Sagai Raj in India getting ready to enter the priesthood and in the US you have Rebecca Meyer being drawn to India. Sagai has been feeling pressure from superiors in power. All he wants is to help people and show God's love. What does God have planned for him?

Rebecca on the other hand has been dealing with many things in her life too. She is dealing with the unexplained death of her little sister, an abusive husband and a devastated family dynamic. Meanwhile she is trying to figure out her path in life and what God has planned for her.

This author had me hooked from the first chapter! The characters, the plot, and most importantly the Spiritual journey is beautiful. Can't wait for book two.

I received this book from The BookClub Network for an honest review.

Darlene Foster says

An inspirational story of two very different individuals, living halfway around the world from each other, dealing with the trials of life. One lives in North America and one in India. This well written and believable story, makes you feel the pain of these two contemporary young people as they struggle. It is a story about destiny that proves God does work in mysterious ways. I loved the descriptions of India and the different regions of that diverse country. The characters are well developed, with very real flaws. Interesting minor characters are sprinkled throughout sometimes helping, sometimes hindering, the main characters along their journey. It is evident the author has put her heart into this story. I hope we will see more books by Ms. Michael.

Rick Bylina says

Read an ARC of this book. It is a fascinating blend of two cultures and two life paths in a well-written, inspirational story that puts God in the middle of their hearts' desires and making Him the ultimate match-maker. Whether you are in it for the positive Christian message, love story, or just tempted by the sights and sounds of distant lands (okay, Wisconsin is as distant for some as India is for others), you're sure to enjoy this read.

Ann says

I really enjoyed this book. The author does a wonderful job of describing two different cultures and telling the stories of two different characters at the same time. I was pulled into the story line and the characters from the first pages. It is a beautiful story of how God can make straight the crooked paths we sometimes walk. I really enjoyed this debut novel and will look forward to future books from this author. I was gifted with a copy of this book in return for an honest review.

Sarah Bailey says

At first I wasn't sure what to think about this book – the beginning was intriguing but since Holly is a debut author I honestly was worried that her writing wouldn't be up to what I was used to. I was wrong. Holly's debut book starts out with an intriguing sentence, "It didn't occur to me at the edge of the pond that I'd broken the sixth commandment, actually committed murder." Now that is a way to start a book and pull the reader in – at least this reader. When Holly put out the call for reviewers and after I read the description I knew I wanted to give her book a try and I'm so glad I did, the book pulled me in and I read it quite fast – it's not a long book but it's not a short book either. The story of Rebecca Meyer was one fraught with sadness, loneliness and ultimately a path directed by the Lord and the story of Sagai Raj is one of a boy who is in a loving family but which much is expected until he feels called to the ministry in the Anglican church.

Rebecca is drawn to India – she feels it represents a peace she can't find at home and so her life revolves around her wanting to make it to India at some point and she begins corresponding with a priest who also know Sagai. I don't want to give spoilers but Rebecca's character is one that is full of real life struggles and Holly does a great job in making the reader feel that and sympathize with Rebecca's plight as she goes from a woe is me girl to a woman who is able to stand on her own feet and seeks to follow the Lord. Sagai is also full of questions as he sees more of the priest hood and what it's going to entail and even those priests who are less than Christian in their acts. Both characters are well developed and the plot weaves together intricately and ends in a wonderful way – that I suspected would happen at some point but I wasn't sure when. I'm looking forward to reading more of Holly Michael's works – I definitely enjoyed this one.

**I was provided an e-copy from the author in exchange for my honest opinion, no other compensation was given.

Paula Ackley says

What a great book! As you follow the lives of two people living half a world apart from each other you can't help cheering for them and crying with them. As their life's path takes twists and turns you hope that they get to fulfill their dreams. With determination and faith they continue along life's journey knowing that God does have a plan and that His plan for you doesn't necessarily coincide with yours. This book touched my heart. I hope to read more from Ms. Michael.

Edith Parzefall says

Crooked Lines builds bridges across cultures. Tragedy, spirituality and survival of the human heart in the face of cruel adversity lie at the center of this fascinating and ultimately uplifting novel. Crooked Lines held me spell-bound.

Alicia Ruggieri says

When I started reading Crooked Lines, I figured that I'd pick it up, read a few chapters, and set it down again. That did not happen. This book grabbed me by the shirt collar. I gobbled it up in just a couple of reading sessions. I found myself scraping for more time to finish this intriguing, interwoven story of Rebecca – a girl from Wisconsin – and Sagai – a Catholic priest-in-training from India.

With a splendidly easy writing style, the author weaves a tale of how God can and does use the horrible things in our lives to bring about His good plan. I loved anticipating and seeing the joyful merge of the dual plot, especially after experiencing all the heartache and pain that fills the two main characters' lives.

I also really liked the way that, though it contained an undercurrent of romantic possibility, this novel wasn't primarily a "romance;" rather, it focused on Rebecca and Sagai's lives as a whole – particularly how events were shaped by and shaped the spiritual part of them. I enjoyed this change of pace in inspirational fiction; so often – too often – the romance is the central feature. In the case of Crooked Lines, God's work in Rebecca and Sagai's lives found the central position.

The parts about India were superbly researched – that was apparent. I (enjoyably!) learned SO MUCH about the Catholic priesthood there. I loved how the author included the research as part of the story itself (Sagai is a priest-in-training, as I mentioned above). After finishing the novel, I felt as if I had gone to India! Holly Michael deeply draws the reader into the world of her characters – Her skill in this is unsurpassed.

My only reservation with this novel comes from the incorporation of an idea/theme into the storyline about which I hold a strongly differing belief. However, the main theme and message of the book was excellent and well-told. I highly recommend it for mature readers who relish deeply-researched stories about other cultures and who love to trace the patterns of God's grace in individuals' lives.

* I received a copy of this book from the author in exchange for an honest review. I was under no obligation to provide a positive review, and all thoughts which I have shared above are mine.
