



## Touching Earth

*Rani Manicka*

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**Touching Earth** Rani Manicka

THE BALINESE TWINS -- Beautiful and exotic, they exchange an island paradise for the shabby squalor of London, and innocence for corruption.

THE SICILIAN -- Ricky Delgado strikes a devil's bargain with a blood goddess: 'Build my temple and bring me the souls of damaged people, and you will see what rewards I give.

THE COURTESAN -- Elizabeth makes her living from men's desire. With a flick of the switch in her head, she feels nothing: no pain, no hate, no sorrow, no joy.

THE ARTIST -- Anis takes to painting as an outlet for his rage. His artist's eye knows his subjects before they know themselves, and he paints them all, a gallery of broken people.

Can they escape the deadly web of decadence and sin?

## Touching Earth Details

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Author : Rani Manicka

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## **From Reader Review Touching Earth for online ebook**

### **Joanna Brauckmann says**

I loved 'Rice Mother' and was really looking forward to reading 'Touching Earth,' especially after spending 2 weeks in Bali last year. The images of Bali are authentic and intoxicating. They transport the reader elsewhere. I remember watching the Balinese make offerings to their spirits all through the day, well into the night, mysteriously following an invisible path and rituals unbeknownst to me...Nenek does the same. Reportedly a witch, she's tied to the earth, feeding herbal combinations to the ill, possessed and her granddaughters, identical twins.

The twins, their perspectives and desires are fascinating. They each see their home, their family and their culture through different eyes, but each reveals layers rather than something separate.

Their downfall is a trip to London, a gift from their father. The transformation of innocent, sheltered village girls by the evil underbelly of the city is horrifying. You won't want to turn the page, but have to because you have to know what happens to them and their friends as they enter the temple of the spider goddess. A gripping, roller coaster of a novel

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### **Maria says**

A capa deste livro é linda, idílica. Mas pela sinopse compreendemos que não vai ser uma história cor de rosa. Muito pelo contrário, levamos do paraíso ao inferno, é uma história pesada, dramática mas que gostei de ler. Por isso se o lerem não se deixem enganar pelas lindas cores da capa e leiam com atenção a ação que se inicia a acaba em Bali, sendo a restante em Londres. Ah e o livro chama-se "As flores do TEMPLO" e não do "Tempo". Alguém que tenha permissões para tal que faça essa correção no título

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### **Shivane Ramlochan says**

One of my most-loaned books to date-- I think there's something in this story that grips one viscerally. It's been several years since I revisited it, and I remember certain passages with a vivid detailing that takes me rather by surprise, since I wouldn't necessarily list this as one of my overwhelming favourites. You know, I'm tempted to reread it, so I can review it at Novel Niche. It'd be bound to be one of the more colourful pieces featured there.

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### **Doula Umm says**

Brilliant multi faceted narrative of the mayhem drugs will wreak in people's lives and how those drugs take hold and keep you and kill you while doing the same to those around you. I loved the way the writer brought in the stories of the characters from such diverse backgrounds. The writer brilliantly wove her story around the reader so that each piece came together and gripped you into reading more. This enchantment however was shattered by the writers jarring entrance into the story (why oh why was that necessary?) so that the

readers mind was dragged from her fiction to an uninteresting reality for a moment breaking the flow of the story.

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### **Tracie Cowell says**

Knocked a point off due to the author's literal self-insert. It left a hugely bitter taste in my mouth.

Otherwise? Lyrical writing, gritty portrayal of people, along with harsh life lessons about drug abuse and sheer survival. It's hard to feel any empathy for some characters, but others you cannot help but end up rooting for. An interesting read to say the least.

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### **Julia says**

Fabulous book.

Accurate account of a journey into drugs and the sordid underworld it reveals.

I think teenagers should read this book as a warning of how easily a glamorous world can just be the outer layer of a grotesque world within. I think the analogy of the spider weaving it's sticky web is a good visual.

The only criticism I have is that although throughout most of the book her prose is wonderful at times towards the end the writing and plot becomes clumsy and a bit too romantic.

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### **Rui Batista says**

Um retrato fiel e quase sempre duro sobre a iniciação no mundo da droga. Sobre a destruição gradual dos próprios e de quem os rodeia. Este livro é o exemplo de como um titulo pode estar tão longe da verdadeira mensagem do livro. Esta autora tem um livro anterior, o seu primeiro, que teve um enorme reconhecimento internacional, que se chama " A guardiã dos Sonhos". Ainda não o li mas, estranho como este, pelo que tenho lido, não teve tanto. Trata-se de um livro muito bom mesmo.

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### **Susan Roy says**

I expected more from this author after having read her first book. The author says in her introduction that this book is nothing like her first book, however it was not just different it was just not well put together. She tried to tell the story from the perspective of different characters which other authors have done and been successful at telling a story and developing the characters. In this book the story continually shifts from one character to another so frequently that the reader never really gets to know the character or walk in the character's shoes.

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### **Danijel says**

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begin to vanish soon after their father returns back home, leaving the girls to fight their way alone in a new big city, one that is getting ready to spin its web around them.

The other key characters are:

**Ricky Delgado:** A young charming Sicilian, who loves to trap people in his deadly life web of sin and addiction. He also has an affair with one of the twins.

**Anis:** The young artist who knows his subjects better than they know themselves.

**Elisabeth:** Mistress to an Arab billionaire, the cold ice-queen, who guards a terrible secret, one that does not allow her to fall in love.

**Bruce:** Who ends up falling in love with Elisabeth, who must not love.

I can't really give out too much of the story here, as it will spoil the magic that Rani Manicka creates. The novel is filled with her lyrical style, a sing-song that instantly transforms the readers between the island paradise and the real, modern-day, sordid streets of London. What you read is so powerful that you can't help but turn the pages. As the author takes you through the fate of these young characters whose lives go topsy-turvy with heroin-addiction, she spares you none of the visual and depressing details of an addiction that takes over your life and wrings out every last breath from it.

The book is detailed to the point that it feels the author has done a lot of 'real' research on the subject and spent time with heroin-addicts. The story is dark and at times, depressing, but this does not mean you won't enjoy it. Don't let the reviews of the book being dark and sordid put you off, instead, read the book for exactly the same reason, as this is a book that despite talking about a subject that is essentially not a happy one, will make you flip through the pages and want to know what happens in the end.

Never in the book does the pace get slow or boring. The characters are extremely well-drawn and you feel as if you've begun to know them personally, though the related events are not something that most of us encounter in a regular day. There are many real-life circumstances and events, relationship angles that we may have personally experienced or seen others close to us go through. And of course there are those parts of the narrative which only a creative writer can come up with, which comes with creative license. Though there are parts in the story that you know are purely created out of imagination, you still end up believing the same, such is the power of the storyteller.

I've read a few reviews by other book lovers who mentioned that they were disappointed in the book after having read *The Rice Mother*, which they thought was brilliant. Well, I don't have any such comparisons to make, and I can definitely say this book is worth a read, especially if you haven't read her first book, and even if you have read her earlier work.

I give FIVE HEARTS to this one: AWESOME

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**Nxotyeni says**

I cannot describe, nor do I want to describe this book. It took me by surprise and I was hooked. Discover it yourself. All I will say about it is, this world that we live in is filled with so much cynicism, darkness, unthoughtfulness, games and indeed self discovery. One really has to know what it is they want out of this life, what their purpose is, before they are engulfed into dark corners that sometimes hold you in.

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### **Lilly Minasyan says**

“The rats ate an island, but we’ll eat a whole planet. Think about it. We really are like rats. We give nothing to any other creature on this earth. We don’t make honey, our milk is only for our own, our flesh, which is supposed to be sweet, we consider too precious to be eaten by another. We don’t know how to make nests out of our saliva. Even after we are dead we won’t allow our skin to be used for leather. We just know how to shit and fuck.”

This book was nothing that I expected it to be. The characters, the description were phenomenal. I am tired of “pure love” in books. Those young adult books, with perfect people, with perfect characteristics, so not real, that it makes you vomit.

This book on the other hand showed the truth. People who are unconventional, with their unconventional stories and love. Love, that is the real thing. When someone sees your ugly side and still wants you.

Rani Manicka captured the world, where cocaine is dominated. It reminded me of “The Wolf of Wall Street”, first you are successful and you think you will stay the same way. You can quit at any moment, just not now, not today, maybe tomorrow and the tomorrow never comes. The ugly side of this world, filth, prostitution, sex, jealousy, death.

Nutan, Zeenat, Anis, Maggie, Elizabeth, Bruce, Ricky and Francesca--their stories were captivating and I was rooting for them. But this isn’t a book with happy endings.

“The mirror is a dangerous thing. It is sincere in the company of the insincere.”

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### **Zane says**

Hands down one of my new favourite novels of all time.

Pros: Characters that are as engaging as they are flawed, hypnotic prose, fantastic evocation of the light and dark sides of her locations, gripping to the end and never once flags in pace

Cons: The scenes in which the author cameos within her novel. They feel like a cheesy attempt at selling the novel's events as real, but have the opposite effect by reminding us that we're reading a book rather than viewing people's lives.

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### **Deborah Dicks says**

Spoilers below:

I really enjoyed this right up to the point where the author inserted herself into the book. Up until this point, I loved her gritty writing which never shied away from the ugly as she gave an insight into the world of drugs and addiction; however, to me, inserting herself into the book seemed like an intellectual conceit and detracted from the beauty of the book which had, ironically perhaps, been in the ugly reality it showed.

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