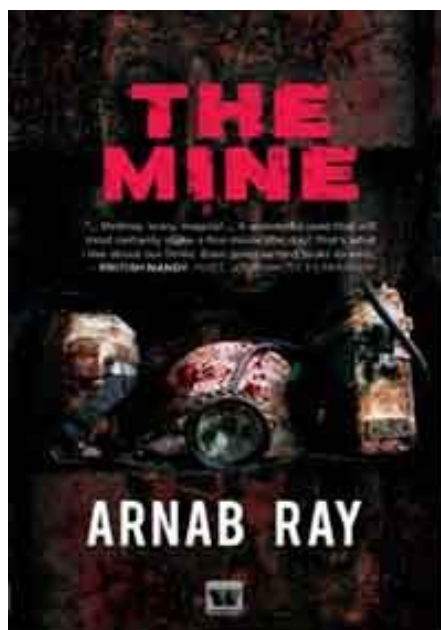




The Mine

Arnab Ray

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At a secret mining facility somewhere in the deserts of Rajasthan, an ancient place of worship, with disturbing carvings on its dome, is discovered buried deep inside the earth. Soon the miners find themselves in the grip of terrifying waking nightmares. One tries to mutilate himself. Worse follows.

Five experts are called in to investigate these strange occurrences. Sucked into a nightmare deep underground, they embark on a perilous journey; a journey that will change them forever, bringing them face-to-face with the most shattering truth of them all...

The greatest evil lies deep inside.

The Mine Details

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Author : Arnab Ray

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Genre : Horror, Asian Literature, Indian Literature, Fiction, Thriller, Mystery Thriller

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From Reader Review The Mine for online ebook

Riju Ganguly says

This was one of the finest works of suspense-driven horror that I have EVER read.

On one hand, it's a story of supernatural evil that gets unleashed by the unearthing of an inexplicable shrine inside a mysterious, and totally secret mine. Five experts are brought in by the authorities, to explain the "accidents" that had besieged the miners, and to assess the safety of the mine. Then, predictably, things go very very wrong.

On the other hand, this is a story of deep and disturbingly human evil. As one character after another went through his or her individual hell, befitting the evil inflicted upon others by himself, or herself, we started realising what a unique purgatory, with all possible layers, have been created by the author, for us.

Above all, the book was absolutely unputdownable.

The only reason behind me dropping one star is the mind-numbing pain & shock caused by the ending, which could have been different, easily.

Even then, Recommended, obviously.

Sibikaran says

not impressive..seems like the author has watched lot of movies like seven,cube,exam and combined them to form a so called novel THE MINE..

D says

Loved it. Never expected this kind of book from an Indian author. Not that I don't read Indian authors. They write really well but revolves usually around love stories etc the ones we usually refer to as light read. This one is a bit disturbing but overall nice.

Suyash says

Horror, Thriller, exciting characters.

Sandeep says

Started reading this after seeing some rave reviews and a lot of buzz about the book. However, after finishing it, was not too impressed by the ending and the overall story as such.

Sneh Pradhan says

Having heard glowing reviews of this book by Arnab Ray , whose other book May I Hebb your Attention pliss , I really loved , I had high expectations here This book , however just reads like a cheap , uninspired Bollywood rip-off of the Saw films franchise , with a generous dose of sleaze thrown in for good measure It has none of the shockers , ingenuity and philosophical base that the films rather had..... I'll chose a 2-hr Saw film any day ,over this 587-page of a time-waster.

Sakthidharan says

What do you think you are doing? I asked this very question when I started reading this. I know that I happen to read a cheap flick every now then; this book is no different. It is a high flying, super duper pow, worst of its kind.

I came to know that if I am a intelligent scientist, I would probably also be a sex addict. And I also came to understand that sex is the only thing that I would remember when I think of something that I did wrong. And if I think there is a guy who is under control, he is most likely to be the one worst hit by the addiction. I came to know the author himself is a computer scientist (Oops - hope he knows what he thinks).

I sincerely request authors like dear Arnab not to manipulate fiction.

Arun Divakar says

A good majority of people who read or watch movies are fascinated by a group of people getting trapped in a seemingly unsurmountable set of obstacles. The setting could be anywhere : haunted houses, jungles, isolated islands and they could facing off against killer(s), monsters or forces of nature. Throughout the ordeal, members of the group give up their ghosts and the survivors leave the stage with a new perspective on life. This thread is so common that its extremely difficult to find the word 'novelty' in it anymore. This book suffers the same fate.

I must say that in the overall scheme of things, it is well written without much of flowery prose or unnecessary details. I wouldn't want to go in and dissect the plot for it is a very altered version of the Saw franchise of movies. Oh no ! I did not spoil the suspense for you prospective reader for suspense is not what this plot is all about. It is about people confronting their sins and to follow the dictums of divine justice, it is about paying the price for those sins as well !

Arnab Ray chose only one sin : Lust. This he methodically extrapolates all through his book. It could just be the reflection of the sentimentalities of a good chunk of Indian moviegoers as sex sells like nothing else in movies here (as it does everywhere else in the world !). While the plot lacks ingenuity, I somehow felt that if the author had thought of focussing on the other evils infecting the Indian populace (read corruption, media frenzy et al) then it would have been a tremendously readable book. Sadly, it's almost completely consumed by sex with a few exceptions. Character development is not something I was very interested with for at places they appear solid and rounded off but frequently they are as thin as paper. The forced effort to ape what might one day be a film script is very overt & I did not miss those clues.

Devarsh says

This blog is about movie reviews, and would continue to be. But I just had to write a small review about this book.

I picked this book luck by chance waiting for someone at the Landmark Book store. I was drawn to its particularly grotesque and vibrant cover with an unconventional title for an Indian author. I thought I'd humor myself and read a few pages till my friend came along. I ended up reading the first 20 pages and was instantly hooked on to the plot.

The Mine follows 5 individuals through a secret mine in Rajasthan. The 5 are "experts" in their particular field of work and have been called upon to investigate strange on – goings in the mine. Events such as delusional miners, people killing themselves for no rhyme or reasons start after a strange Shrine dated even before the Harappa civilization was accidentally excavated. What starts as a normal investigation for the 5, ends up into a fight for survival for the individuals.

Read the whole review at : <http://devlifeintehnicolor.com/2012/...>

Morgan says

Imagine combining Event Horizon with Agatha Christie's And Then There Were None then mixing in the criminally underrated film Below. Set it in a mine deep below the Great Indian Desert and you'll get an idea of what you're in for in Arnab Ray's horrifying, claustrophobic, sex-filled gore-fest of a novel about five adults and one little girl trapped underground with their guilt.

The Mine starts out with Samar, a rich recluse specializing in industrial security, wallowing in his grief after the disappearance of his daughter and the death of his wife. Yeah, Samar has shit luck. A mysterious man named Arnold Paul (whose name I kept reading as Arnold Palmer) finally bribes, er, "convinces" Samar to drag his depressed butt out of bed by offering him a large sum of money to go with him and do a sketchy job, the details of which Paul/Palmer won't reveal. Samar is apparently used to this sort of thing due to his work as a security expert/spy for secret government ops, and figures he wasn't doing anything important anyway (except moping and sleeping) so he begrudgingly accepts the offer and heads off for the titular mine. As it turns out, greed is a great motivator because Mr. Paul/Palmer has also convinced four other experts to go to the middle of nowhere with a complete stranger, no questions asked.

???Joining Samar are Dr. Karan Singh Rathore, a diplomatic and laid back older gentleman who specializes in infectious diseases; Dr. Anjali Menon, a widowed archeologist who brought her disabled daughter, Anya, along; Dr. Akshay More, an arrogant and obnoxious assistant professor in forensic toxicology; and Dr. Preeti Singh, a short-tempered psychologist with a surprising lack of people skills. The group has been brought together to give their expert opinion on a series of deadly accidents that seem to have been caused by the discovery of an ancient, creepy temple the miners are too afraid to go near. A temple that also happens to be covered in explicit carvings of naked women being tortured and killed, because whomever created the damn thing is sexist and gross. If that wasn't ominous enough, the director of the mine is named Lilith Adams. While it's fully possible her parents were just uncreative goths from the early 00's, it's far more likely that Ms. Adams just picked the most obvious evil pseudonym since Alucard and Lou C. Pher.

At this point, most people would've noped the fuck out of there, but Samar and the scientists have clearly never seen a horror movie in their lives and are too wrapped up in their own issues to notice the whole

situation has more red flags than a May Day parade in Moscow. The mine could not be more obviously evil if it had "Gateway to Hell" in big florescent lights over the entrance, ominous music playing in the background, and a bunch of demons chilling in the conference room. Then again, these are people who willingly followed a creepy stranger into the middle of nowhere to visit his sketchy underground dungeon (literally, the workers are all criminals and aren't allowed to leave until their contracts are up) because Paul/Palmer promised them candy/money. Little kids have more street smarts than this group, so I shouldn't be surprised they're completely oblivious to danger.

Akshay and Anjali explore the torture-porn temple and discover it depicts ironic punishments attributed to specific sins. Meanwhile, Karan and Preeti talk to the survivors, who share stories that would make Rob Zombie squeamish. Akshay makes light of the situation and acts like a jackass, Anjali does her best to ignore everyone and just do her job, Karan remains calm and reasonable, and Preeti is hostile and short-tempered. Samar checks the security and continues to have no fucks to give beyond a kind of creepy obsession with Anya, who reminds him of his dead daughter. The general consensus among the workers is that they've somehow opened a portal to hell and everyone in the mine is going to die horribly as a result of their dark pasts. Needless to say, company morale isn't great. At this point, everyone finally agrees this place is super creepy and they want to collect their paychecks and GTFO. Alas, in a twist that should come as a surprise to exactly no one, Lilith turns out to be evil, and sets off an explosion that kills all the mine workers and traps the six survivors (Samar, the scientists, and Anjali's daughter) inside while she laughs manically about the mine's real resource being fear. Worst. Job. Ever.

The explosions cause the security systems to engage, sealing the group inside with a series of death traps. Because why wouldn't you want death traps in an already dangerous mine? On top of everything, an experimental gas that causes super human strength and insanity is being pumped through the A/C, which frankly, feels like overkill to me, but hey, they can run their portal to hell however they want. After their initial panic, presumably followed by the realization that they really should have seen all of this coming, the survivors formulate a plan to navigate the traps and make it to the surface. They're slightly hindered by the fact they have to trust each other and work together to make it out, and most of them are deceitful, suspicious, assholes, not to mention all the stupid puzzle traps that were apparently inspired by 80s video games. One such puzzle involves trying to obtain acid vials while avoiding motion activated laser and an electrified floor, and if you succeed you'll be rewarded with a chainsaw, which may be useful later. Unfortunately in this "game" there are no save points or extra lives.

What follows is about what you'd expect for a book about trying to escape from a possibly haunted mine with a bunch of jerks, but the predictability doesn't make the story any less suspenseful or gripping. But face it, if you're reading this book, you're looking for creative deaths, not creative storytellin, and boy, does Ray deliver there. Besides, the true mystery doesn't lie in their Aeneas-like journey through the mine, but in each character's backstory, all of which are slowly revealed as they try to escape the subterranean deathtrap. Each of the adults has done something criminal and escaped punishment, and have been struggling with their guilt ever since. The quality of the backstories varies, with some characters (like Akshay and Preeti) getting plenty of focus, while Anjali gets very little characterization beyond "the aloof mom". So too do their sins seem to be of differing severity. Some of the survivors have committed crimes so awful as to make them irredeemable, while others are more sympathetic and their sins, while still terrible, are still at least partly understandable. This disparity seems a little unfair as it means at least some of the group will potentially suffer a gruesome death (at least according to the carvings in the temple) over something that would normally earn them less than 15 years in prison (at least in the US, not sure about the Indian judicial system). It's not that their crimes aren't bad, they just don't seem to merit a sentence of being reduced to a puddle of bloody viscera.

We never really learn if the mine is truly being controlled by a demonic entity or if the group's guilt and paranoia (fueled by the hallucinogenic gas) is causing them to attribute bad luck to malicious forces and see

things that aren't there. Samar even suggests that the whole thing is an unethical experiment by the government to test their new gas on subjects no one will miss, as there are far too many coincidences for mere random chance, and the temple may be a fake created to amp up their fear levels. Since none of the characters are able to trust their own senses, making them unreliable narrators, arguments could be made for either scenario, making the story even more spooky and disturbing. Monsters are scary, but they're even scarier when you can't even tell if they're real or simply the imaginary scapegoats of guilt-ridden, paranoid people. Even more frightening, Ray argues, are the depths of human cruelty and depravity, which are explored in each character's backstory. Though that may just be an excuse to squeeze more gore out of the story.

The Mine does an excellent job balancing itself between psychological horror and splatterpunk. The true scares lie in the book's creepy atmosphere, suspense, and the characters slowly succumbing to madness; the over-the-top gore is simply dessert. Unfortunately, this otherwise perfect blend of horror comes with as huge helping of misogyny. Yuck. Look, I'm fully willing to admit I'm part of the lowest common denominator who just wants to see heads exploding like overripe cherries and attractive people boning, but that doesn't mean I like sexism. Unfortunately, more often than not, the three seem to go hand in hand, much to the frustration of female horror fans, and other, more enlightened individuals who just happen to like hot sex and lots of blood. Ray isn't as bad as some other authors out there, the violence is pretty evenly split between the genders and there aren't any scenes of knife-wielding killers chasing half naked women. He even manages to handle the subject of sexual assault fairly well, choosing to focus more on the problematic culture of victim-blaming and men who feel entitled to women's bodies rather than the rape itself. But he struggles with creating believable female characters, defining them by their relationships with men, and then victimizing them. Both of the female scientists have backstories that involve abuse and mistreatment at the hands of men, and instead of being written as strong, survivors, they both come off as bitter, man-haters. Apparently Ray subscribes to the theory that in order to be "strong" a woman must act rude, aloof, aggressive, and despise an entire gender, with the exception of that one special man who tames her with his magical penis. Which is why both Anjali and Pretti act like complete jerks, with Pretti especially flying off the handle at every perceived slight (she must be a great psychologist), and basically being awful to everyone except, ironically, Akshay whom she latches onto almost immediately (despite the fact that he's literally just the worst). Despite all her bluster, Pretti still falls quickly into the role of helpless victim in need of a man's protection at the first sign of danger. It's really embarrassing. I guess she can't help it because she's an emotional female with a hysterical uterus or some such nonsense. The women in the story are all described as being gorgeous, but only one male character is described as being very attractive, the wholly unlikable Akshay, and that's only because his appearance is supposed to reinforce how vain and materialistic he is. Many of the women are also incredibly horny, even minor characters, like Tanya the gold-digging nurse, and Ray paradoxically has no problem slut-shaming them for it (apparently enjoying sex is sinful enough to get you murdered by the mine), even though he later demonizes other characters for doing the same thing. Maybe the mine is just super slut shame-y. The unearthed temple certainly implies that someone behind the scenes hates women.

The women in the story seem less like real people and more like a weird combination of straw-feminists and male masturbatory material, with Ray putting way too much emphasis on their appearance, sex drives, and relationships with men. Then of course we have Anya, who, while thankfully not a sex object, is still treated as an object nonetheless. She barely gets any characterization, and doesn't communicate even through sign language or writing, she's just a blank slate for Samar to project his weird daughter obsession onto. It's doubly problematic since Samar seems to use Anya's disability as an excuse to treat her like a life-sized doll he can love, protect, and turn into his replacement daughter. Because she's mute he assumes she has nothing to say, and because she doesn't walk he thinks she's completely helpless. We don't even get to learn what she's thinking, or how she feels about Samar treating her as some sort of second chance, because, unlike the other characters who all get their turn in the spotlight of the limited, third-person narrative, Anya is completely ignored. At least she gets a little bit of a role later on (which I won't spoil). Miraculously, Lilith Adams is the only female character who is neither a victim, nor a sex fantasy, and is described only as being

terrifying, intense, and very much in charge, much like her namesake.

So the female characters are about as well written as you'd expect from a male author who doesn't know how women work, and the whole "helpless, sick wheelchair girl" trope is super problematic. It's not the worst treatment of women I've seen in splatterpunk, but I'd still prefer to enjoy my blood and guts without the side of sexism. I mean, I don't think it's an unreasonable request. The writing is still pretty good, and it's definitely the scariest book I've read so far this year. The Mine is also one of only a few Indian horror novels I've been able to find in English. Whether that's enough to overshadow the book's problem areas, however, is up to the individual reader.

Abhiram Viswamitra says

A good thriller from Arnab Ray. Quite cinematic and fast paced, this book is loosely based on the thriller Saw series. The book ends on an open note and you are left to imagine the different possibilities as to what could have happened, and how it has happened.

Read this if you have a lazy weekend and nothing much to do.

Namitha Varma says

When I began reading, I found the story very gruesome. I couldn't read more than 10-20 pages at a time. But as the story progressed, it got less revolting, because my mind got used to it, and I simply stopped putting imagery into the words.

Despite that, it was a difficult read. I like books with shades of grey, where people are both good and bad, where situations can swing either way. I am a cynic and do not believe that people are good by nature, but digesting so much hatred and manipulation and "evil" was hard. The book is a "feel-bad" one that makes you realise "there is evil lurking within each individual" through what I'd like to call a hyperbole of evils (yeah, all right, call me delusional) - the opposite of feel-good, which generally exaggerates the good in the world.

Narrative style is all right, and though initially I felt that some characters were not being given enough page space (Samar's story dominates), I realised that it was a technique to keep the worst for the last. In a way, the narrative also made us a "helpless bystander" like Samar, forced to watch evil brewing.

spoiler ahead

We do not learn anything about the shrine or the mine in the end though. As in, what exactly was its purpose. Who was Lilith Adams? Is the author planning a sequel to explain, or is it supposed to be left to readers' imagination? I, for one, do not want to imagine. I shall "remember to forget".

Amit Si says

None of your actions : muted in secrecy or invisible in chaos ever goes unnoticed. We have known this for decades through our parents and theirs. "The Mine" by the Greatbong dramatizes the thought and what a dramatization has it been !

The story follows the philosophical learning of the protagonist : an ex-spy Samar Bose who is desperately searching for his daughter. He and a couple of other well skilled individuals, each carrying a dark baggage from his/her past are lured into a secret mining facility plagued by strange occurrences. However, the mine, so well known in our daily rhetoric for its depth and darkness actually constitutes something more sinister for all of them.

The story grips all your sensations from the first page itself. Nowhere during the book, do you feel weighted to keep it down. Though at times, the philosophical baggage and the technological explanations do seem heavy.

Arnab Ray -- or more popularly the Greatbong, has infused a lot of philosophy in this gripping thriller. Sometimes, to the extent that the reader is forced to relive his own actions through the prism of the story. The English, though "GRE-level" at patches, is something that everyone will be able to keep pace with. The story building is constant, and doesn't stoop at any point.

Personally, I would have loved the ending to culminate with the doctor and not extend to the protagonist's brother and subsequent actions. I found that a bit too negative.

To summarize, The Mine is worth every second and penny spent, and does an impressive job of gripping you, while forcing you to introspect ... the usual neutral view of life.

Abhyudaya Shrivastava says

A fast-paced thriller with lots of blood and gore. I guess it is an OK read for fans of pulp.

Upasna says

I really dont know what to say. All i know is this story will occupy my brain for a good time now! ?
