

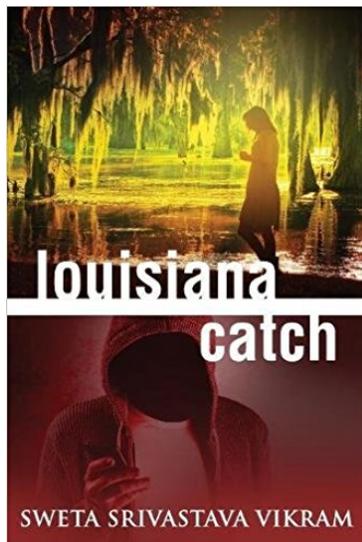
Book Review

Louisiana Catch

Author: Sweta Vikram

**Publisher: Modern History Press (to be released on April 10, 2018),
253 pages**

(“*Louisiana Catch* is a terrific work by Sweta Srivastava Vikram. I was an early reviewer for the book and absolutely loved it! Get your copy today on Amazon.com)



The upcoming Novel, “Louisiana Catch” (release date April 10, 2018) by the author Sweta Vikram focuses on marital rape and abuse of

women through the narrative of its protagonist, Ahana Chppra. It’s an extraordinary story clearly defining the line between love and lust, adherence and violation and reciprocity and rape in a relationship.

The story opens with a young woman in her 30s (Ahana) who has filed for a divorce after putting up for ten years with her husband, Dev whom she accuses of repeated marital rape, being ill-tempered and violent. Soon after the story begins, Ahana’s mother who was her greatest supporter and confidant passes away. Ahana is grief-stricken and heart-broken due to the double whammy. Enter her closest cousin, Naina, a free-spirited colleen

who is from New Orleans, Louisiana. Naina, a shrink herself convinces Ahana to join an online support group where she (Ahana) meets the antagonist of the story, Jay who resides in the US. Ahana tries to explore Jay who happens to be an online stalker and a fickle character. They meet in New York towards the end of the novel. Jay proves himself to be a lecher, intrusive, boorish, philanderer and violent. Though Ahana doubted him to be of dubious character from the very beginning, Jay left no doubt about his character in their first face to face encounter in New York.

Ahana is also assigned to represent “No Excuse” campaign (a voice behind women not accepting violence) in New Orleans on the insistence of her leader, Shelly Roy. She gets an opportunity to work with Rohan Brady, Adonis, enlightened and intelligent person. Finally, Ahana comes to the US and becomes romantically close to Rohan.

Sweta has very clearly defined the line between intrusion (rape) and courtship through Ahana’s relationship with Rohan. Their sexual tension intensifies to the cusp but doesn’t reach culmination since Ahana didn’t approve of it. Rohan understands this

and reciprocates by respecting Ahana's

In the end, Ahana gives a powerful speech at the conference in New Orleans, "Truth: No is a complete emotion, word and sentence. Rape is never. As a survivor, you are not to blame. It's OK to be angry, but it isn't OK to carry shame."

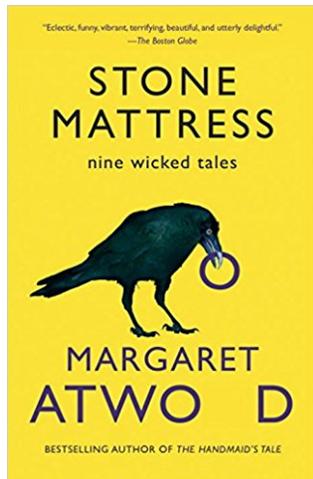
The novel could have been even a better read if some words like f*#@k and matron were not overused. Some Indians and Delhi-dwellers may sense prejudice as Ahana could not find a man in Delhi who was decent nor did she come across any woman

boundaries.

past middle-age who was not a busybody except her own members of the family. Anything that could go wrong with a woman on Delhi streets happened to Ahana despite her elite surrounding and privileges.

"Louisiana Catch" is a terrific work by Sweta Vikram. She has used very expressive language in building up the characters in the story and has succeeded in sending her message to all who care about women's struggle.

Stone Mattress: Nine Tales
Author: Margaret Atwood
2014 original publication date.



"Margaret Atwood understands old age. As simple as that. And what's more - she gives this understanding such potent expression that one just sits back and marvels... A book of 9 stories. "9 Tales", she calls it. The first three have interconnecting characters - the same events are told from different perspectives. It's like a wonderful short novella on its own. Tales 4 and 5 - sorry to say - were not my cup of tea, and they also didn't fit thematically into this particular collection. But the rest of them - spectacular gems, each one - have more than made up for the two, making it so easy for me to give the book 5 stars. Humor and bitterness, insight and bewilderment are balanced so perfectly in description of advanced age - each story is so unique in its plot, certain ideas and descriptions are so relatable. A very powerful statement in the last story - I think that was my favorite.

Here is what one protagonist says of herself: "Be prepared.... It's a lifelong failing: she has never been prepared. But how can you have a sense of wonder if you are *prepared* for everything? Prepared for the sunset. Prepared for the moonrise. Prepared for the ice storm. What flat existence that would be."

-Reviewed by Irene Rudra