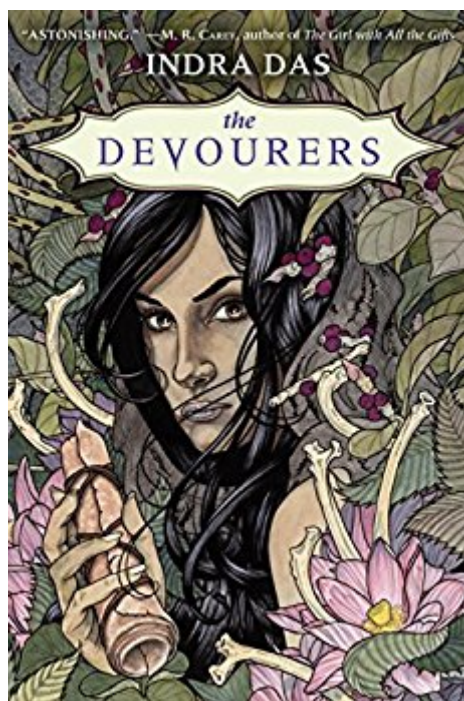


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The Devourers



Synopsis

For readers of Neil Gaiman, Margaret Atwood, China Miéville, and David Mitchell comes a striking debut novel by a storyteller of keen insight and captivating imagination. On a cool evening in Kolkata, India, beneath a full moon, as the whirling rhythms of traveling musicians fill the night, college professor Alok encounters a mysterious stranger with a bizarre confession and an extraordinary story. Tantalized by the man's unfinished tale, Alok will do anything to hear its completion. So Alok agrees, at the stranger's behest, to transcribe a collection of battered notebooks, weathered parchments, and once-living skins. From these documents spills the chronicle of a race of people at once more than human yet kin to beasts, ruled by instincts and desires blood-deep and ages-old. The tale features a rough wanderer in seventeenth-century Mughal India who finds himself irrevocably drawn to a defiant woman—and destined to be torn asunder by two clashing worlds. With every passing chapter of beauty and brutality, Alok's interest in the stranger grows and evolves into something darker and more urgent. Shifting dreamlike between present and past with intoxicating language, visceral action, compelling characters, and stark emotion, *The Devourers* offers a reading experience quite unlike any other novel. Praise for *The Devourers*—a chilling, gorgeous saga that spans several centuries and many lands . . . The all-too-human characters—including the nonhuman ones—and the dreamlike, recursive plot serve to entrance the reader. . . . There's no escaping *The Devourers*. Readers will savor every bite. —N. K. Jemisin, *The New York Times Book Review* —*The Devourers* is beautiful. It is brutal. It is violent and vicious. . . . [It] also showcases Das's incredible prowess with language and rhythm, and his ability to weave folklore and ancient legend with modern day loneliness. —Tor.com —A wholly original, primal tale of love, violence, and transformation. —Pierce Brown, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *The Red Rising Trilogy* —Astonishing . . . a narrative that takes possession of you and pulls you along in its wake. —M. R. Carey, author of *The Girl with All the Gifts* —Every sentence of this ferocious and extraordinary book pulses with life. An absolute masterpiece. —Daniel JosĂ© Older, author of *Half-Resurrection Blues* —Profoundly moving and endlessly inventive. —Ken Liu, World Fantasy Award-winning author of *The Grace of Kings* —Das's brutal, intoxicating, and gorgeously visceral debut merges an often mythic sensibility with an appreciation for the coarse beauty of the everyday. —Publishers Weekly (starred review) —A sensual tale of violence and desire . . . for fans of Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* but with a fascinating setting beautifully described. —Library Journal (starred review) —Das's narrative is lush, imaginative, and hypnotic, bringing to life scenes of savagery and moments of wonder. . . . Das's debut is an

ambitious, unsettling trip into our own capacity for violence.âKirkus Reviewsâ[An] extraordinary piece of meta-fiction: stories within stories . . . trans-genre, transgender and transgressive . . . Who gets what he or she wants and, above all, who has the moral right to their desires, is the heart of this remarkable, multi-layered novel.âMacleanâsFrom the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

I don't give a lot of books five star reviews, and this one is definitely not perfect, but I think it deserves the five. The teaser/excerpts talk about a mysterious woman and a doomed love, but this is (not surprisingly) a reductive description of a complex, well rounded plot full of three dimensional characters. There are several stories within the story, all tied together fairly well at the end. There is indeed a doomed love and a mysterious woman, but their trajectories are far from what I expected at the outset of the book. For those of you interested in a spoiler free review, the plot is unusual, the characters each have deep flaws and beautiful strengths, and they interact convincingly. The prose is excellent, a few minor rough spots here and there don't detract from its compelling flow. When I

finished the book I wanted to spend longer in that violent, gorgeous world and it resulted in some vivid dreams. Minor spoilers to follow Our story frame follows the experience of Alok, a middle aged, fairly successful professor who has been unlucky in love for various reasons, some more socially acceptable than others. He's approached by a beautiful stranger, a young man who claims to be a "werewolf" but refuses to prove his claims, instead hiring his new acquaintance to translate a strange text. The text provides the second layer of story, an account by a shape-changer known to humans as Fenrir, who originally hails from Norway or thereabouts - as you can guess from his Viking name, his back story is from Norse mythology. Fenrir is simultaneously repulsed and drawn to humanity, his natural prey, and particularly women as he views their creative powers in child-bearing as sacred and desirable.

It must be said (but is no secret, as the dustjacket and promotional materials make clear) that this is a werewolf tale. It is not clear to me whether we are experiencing a new "wave" of werewolf-centered stories that may be comparable to the vampire-flood that started in the '70s and to some extent continues today, along with the far less interesting zombie invasion, but certainly the impulse among writers to explore the range of superpowers, sexual variations and varieties, colorful and exotic appearances and locations, and especially, perhaps, in the case of werewolves, the temptation to indulge in particularly gory and graphic levels of violence (ripping apart, tearing to shreds, decapitating, general physical mayhem and terror), would seem to have prompted a number of writers to explore the available "traditions" tied to this particular type of super-monster. In the case of Indra Das, his access to, and exploitation of, folk traditions of many areas of the world (northern Europe, western Europe, the Caucasus, ancient Egypt, and especially India), with their various names for the particular demons we call shape-shifters or werewolves (ifrit, rakshasa, hamrammr, djinn, and more) gives him the ability to embed many descriptions of the different types and behavior of the "tribes" of shape-changers and their changing situations across millennia of earth's history (not primarily "human history," since the shape-changers firmly reject any association with inferior human types, which provides much of the psychological drama of this novel, *The Devourers*).

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The Devourers

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