



All Inclusive

Farzana Doctor

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"By turns funny, moving, thoughtful, and erotic, All Inclusive is a powerful meditation on life, love, and loss. Farzana Doctor spins a passionate, page-turning tale about the sometimes invisible ties that bind. This is brilliant storytelling." –Terry Fallis, Canada Reads and Stephen Leacock Memorial Medal-winning author of The Best Laid Plans

Whether it's about work and play or life and death, sometimes there's no avoiding bumpy encounters.

What's it like when everyone's dream vacation is your job? Ameera works at a Mexican all-inclusive resort, where every day is paradise — if "paradise" means endless paperwork, quotas to meet, and entitled tourists to deal with. But it's not all bad: Ameera's pastime of choice is the swingers' scene, and the resort is the perfect place to hook up with like-minded couples without all the hassle of ever having to see them again.

Despite Ameera's best efforts to keep her sideline a secret, someone is spreading scandalous rumours about her around the resort, and her job might be at stake. Meanwhile, she's being plagued by her other secret, the big unknown of her existence: the identity of her father and the reason he abandoned her. Unbeknownst to Ameera, her father, Azeez, is looking for her. The fact that he's dead is just a minor detail.

A moving new work from award-winning author Farzana Doctor, All Inclusive blurs the lines between the real world and paradise, and life and the afterlife, that shows how love can conquer any obstacle.

All Inclusive Details

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From Reader Review All Inclusive for online ebook

Allison says

What do you get when you put together the largest terrorist air attack ever, Caribbean orgies, and ghosts who communicate by blowing dead breath into the mouths of the living? And let's throw in a token, but small, inconsequential dash of transgenderism while I'm thinking of it, shall we?

You get Farzana Doctor's new awkward, strange "chick lit" patchwork quilt that may have been titled "Covering all topics I like to think about in one saucy novel."

Look, I honestly do not care how people live their consenting adult sex lives -- none of those "sexy" issues bothered me one bit (although admittedly, some of the raunchier scenes did catch me by surprise). What I stumbled on in this book was the way it weaved together these topics with the horrific Air India crash for which true justice has never been served. And the notion that nearly-reincarnated relatives hover around needing things like empty seats on planes, or directions to locations written down for reference. It's odd. The whole thing was odd. Deepak Chopra meets Emily Giffin.

I am uncomfortable knocking an author's work. I know that everyone puts forth their best work, gives it their heart and soul. Ms Doctor, if you're reading this, please accept my apologies for any offense you may feel. I also, however, depend on honest reviews from other readers when choosing my own books, which is why I have put this one up.

As a pottery teacher once said to me when I actually liked a bowl I'd made, "there's no accounting for taste."

Heather(Gibby) says

So I had headed to the library to pick up Six Metres of Pavement to work through my 100 novels that make you proud to be Canadian, and meet a GLBT requirement for a BINGO Challenge. The library did not have that book in, but it did have All Inclusive on the shelf so I picked it up instead-not knowing a thing about this book.

It was a strange read for me. Definitely innovative, never read anything like it before. Really good writing. A story and plotline that flowed really nicely, I read it fairly quickly 3 1/2 hours in total. However the premise is so odd, that it really left me with a big ???? What was that ??? at the end of the book.

I don't enjoy magical realism type books, and one of the main characters in the story is a spirit/ghost, so I think that is the main thing that has thrown me off.

However it was strong enough that I am anxious to read Six Metres of Pavement

Brandon Forsyth says

I'm kind of perplexed by this book. Half told by Ameera, a young woman who works at an all-inclusive

resort and is hoping for a promotion, and the other half by the spirit of her deceased father, there's a lot going on here, although none of it really comes together in a satisfying way. Compelling, but I can't quite put my finger on why.

Dorianne Emmerton says

It's an enormous relief to read a book with a protagonist who has sexual desires similar to your own who isn't vilified because of it. The fact that it's lovingly written with detail and cross-cultural insight makes this a great read even for people with more conventional sexual identities.

Melanie McFarlane says

Every bit as perfect as I expected. It's life, loss & everything between. The title couldn't be more appropriate. I was surprisingly affected by this one, pulled into the impulsive passions of a twenty-nine year old, driven by hope & love.

Shane says

An interesting fusion of contemporary and ghost fiction, set in a Pacific all-inclusive resort where anything goes, under covers, that is.

Ameera, a 29 year-old of mixed Canadian-Indian heritage, works at an all-inclusive resort in Huatulco, Mexico, and is on a team of tour-operator's assistants made up of expatriates and locals. They up-sell local tours to visitors, mainly to gain brownie points with their bosses and not necessarily always for the benefit of their customers. All are vying for the new role of supervisor, as their Ottawa-based company looks to localize its management structure. The only problem is that Ameera has a fatal flaw, one frowned upon in the corporate world: she is a bisexual swinger with a rabid appetite for Thursday night orgies with her customers, without any attachments, for her sexual partners have to leave on their Friday departure flights.

Her origins are interesting; she has never met her Indian father who sired her after a one-night stand on the eve of the Air India bombing. I figured the tragic air disaster had to play somewhere in the narrative as it has become a staple in recent Indo-Canadian literature, just like the Holocaust is to the Jews. This traumatic genesis has left Ameera as a rather shallow young woman preoccupied with sensory and material pursuits. The ghost story comes into play when we switch to her father Azeez's viewpoint; the latter is now a spirit, albeit a benign one, trying to make up for his abrupt departure from this world. Above all, Azeez is determined to guide his errant daughter, from the "other side."

Therefore, there are two main story lines in the novel, narrated alternatively by Ameera and Aziz: Ameera is aspiring for promotion and fighting anonymous rumours about her sexual peccadilloes that are leaking all the way back to HQ in Ottawa, while Azeez is trying to make his unearthly presence felt (by "breathing" into humans, until they 'feel' something) to his relatives both in India and Canada and steer them along the moral high ground, one that he himself strayed from just the day before his "accident." While Ameera's story is full of earthly foibles and preoccupations, Azeez's story is a tender one of a loss never to be regained. He only has difficulty "breathing" into Ameera, for she is usually drunk after her shift, and "Alcohol is the ghost's

Kryptonite,” according to our gentle ghost.

The author captures the atmosphere and activities of a tour-resort extremely well. But herein lies the challenge with this setting in a fiction novel, for it is indeed a barren place populated with petty jealousies, unbridled sensual appetites, sun, sand, and bored and overfed people going through a routine that gets repeated weekly with different sets of players on every new plane that arrives. The action at the resort becomes repetitious and inconsequential. The point brought out strongly and realistically is the difference in meritocracy that exists between local and expatriate staff - the latter being always favoured. I wondered whether the repeated mention of the charter aircraft operating into Huatulco being DC8s, in the year 2015 (which would have made the youngest of these noisy fuel guzzlers at least 44 years old), was deliberate on the part of the author in trying to symbolize a disaster waiting to happen.

What I find puzzling is that when the inevitable yoghurt hits the fan on the supervisory appointment, it is the whistle blower who is punished, while the lying transgressor is restored, and corporate HQ is portrayed as a pitiable pimp peddling the supervisory job from Peter to Paul, almost begging one of them to take it. Again, I am not sure if this is a deliberate attempt to show the new morality that exists in Corporate North America today. I mourn for the days when job appointments were orchestrated with the utmost confidentiality, with proper protocols in place to announce management appointments, a time when HQ bosses descended like hawks upon field offices to get to the bottom of matters that were getting out of hand instead of relying on contradictory third-party reports that shifted like the surf on a sun-swept beach.

I am glad however that Azeez, who is the novel’s real hero to me, prevails in the end, and fulfills his fatherly role by showing Ameera the better way, whatever its rewards may be down the road, but a path that is a departure from her sterile life of sun, sex, booze and greed, and towards one of principled purpose. The novel is therefore a cautionary tale for the Gen Y people and a good snapshot of the illusiveness of unbridled appetites.

Anita Dolman says

Highly recommend this book. Explores, kindly and beautifully, the lives and perspectives of two people linked by fate and expectations, as they unravel their needs for both connections and escapes. Engaging writing, with an inclusive (no pun intended) cast of characters all trying to learn what it means to find and stay true to yourself and how to let go of the rest.

Margaret Bryant says

Another winner of a read from Farzana Doctor!

Jane Mulkewich says

I have been waiting to read this book for a while (trying to use the library more) and it was worth the wait! First of all, I am happy to say that I knew the author, Farzana, when we were studying at McMaster University at the same time, and I have read and loved all of her books so far, and I am also really happy to

see parts of this book situated at McMaster and in Hamilton. I also loved the way that Farzana wove the Air India bombing tragedy into this story, and her normative matter-of-fact dealing with race and sexuality throughout the story... the premise is creative and innovative and I can't wait to see what else Farzana will have up her sleeve. Don't want to give any spoilers to those of you who might read this book.

Blow Pop says

Content warnings: mentions of death, mentions of terrorism, bisexual relationships, consensual non monogamy, lesbian relationship, gay relationship

I received a free copy for a fair and honest review from NetGalley.

Holy crap! I am absolutely in love with this book. Especially the amount of research that went into this book. We've got actual cities in Mexico and Canada as well as actual acts of terrorism mentioned in this book. One of the happiest things about this book for me is that there are NO love triangles. Instead there are swingers and polyamorous people. And the lead female is more or less bisexual (she's asked about it and kinda goes with it but isn't a huge fan of labels for herself). Oh and we have a trans character (though that character is kind of more or less an afterthought but doesn't feel like a caricature or anything).

It took me a few chapters to realise what was going on with Azeez and Ameera and their connections to each other but once it hit me my jaw dropped and I went "no way" and then when it was finally stated in the book I continued my "no way". I also figured out the source of who was sabotaging Ameera before she did as well. But that has to do more with my own experiences of people backstabbing me.

I loved the fact that Azeez and Ameera were definitely not white. I mean yeah, Ameera is half white but she doesn't fully look it from the description of her in the book. I also like that the author included the fact that dissent between the locals and tourist places exist. And it wasn't glossed over or treated as "this is just the way it has to be". It was treated more as "this is a thing that happens and despite what the tourist place says it was anything but amicable". And while yeah, I'd like to be a tourist one day and visit places I'd also like to get to know the local culture before I go and while I'm there and put money into their economy rather than tourist places.

The swinger and polyamorous couples felt real and authentic to me. As I know quite a few of both groups in my personal life I can definitely say that the author definitely put in a lot of research and made them more like the real people I actually know in those lifestyles and that made me really happy. It's not something I often see in books that are explicitly about the lifestyles.

This is the first book I've read of the author's and I definitely want to read more by them especially if the other books by them are as fantastic as this one. I honestly couldn't find the words to recommend it enough to others.

Kristine Morris says

I was a bit surprised to find that this novel was the author's latest. It feels a bit like an earlier version of this writer's skill that was so compelling in *Six Meters of Pavement*. Still very good. It was difficult to put down

after the totally unexpected happens. This event so swiftly shifts your expectations of what the novel is and will be about. I had to re-read that event a few times to double check my understanding. Flipping back in the pages leading up to this event I found subtle clues that should have had alerted me, but didn't. In this book and *Six Meters*, Farzana Doctor writes about the daily lives of those living with the aftermath of personal tragedy long after the story has left the front pages of the newspapers.

Sarah says

i got this book Wednesday night, I read it Thursday, and I write about it today. I guess you could say it is the story of two people, how their lives intersect, and then drift apart. I liked Ameera's story, she is a very likeable and sympathetic character, even if she is making choices that are not the best. But I loved the parts of the story with Azeez. I cried so much. It was sad, but I found it to be very cathartic. Azeez's story was like a double edged sword (oddly enough I take this analogy from a documentary of a famous indian dancer who lost her husband and daughters on the air india disaster, when she said words to the effect that life is a double edged sword). Azeez's story is beautiful and hopeful, and extremely sad, and i loved the author's depiction of the afterlife. A Beautiful read, and really changed my mindset in terms of opening myself and my mind up. i loved the words and the imagery and the visual pictures my mind conjured, but still very sad. The beauty of the thought of the afterlife, contrasted with the fact that you are in a transitory phase, like purgatory, where you are witness to not only your own death but the sadness of those you left behind. Is it better to believe there is no afterlife rather than to face an afterlife whereby you are an active participant in the sadness of the lives of those people you left behind? No more mulling over. i have no answers. Its a gorgeous novel.

CaseyTheCanadianLesbrarian says

Toronto-based, Lambda-award-winning novelist Farzana Doctor's latest book *All Inclusive* is nothing short of extraordinary. As always with Doctor's novels (this is her third), there's her trademark sharp insight into the human psyche and this gentle, calming, empathetic lens as she explores her characters. You can see how she is also a social worker who practices psychotherapy. But her latest book is what I've come to expect from her and more. As cliché as this might sound, I've really never read anything like *All Inclusive* before. It manages to take so many different themes and kinds of people, throwing them together to make this kind of magical, delicious soup of a story when you imagined it would turn into some inedible slop. Here are some of the ingredients: ...

See the rest of my review on my blog.

Kate Condon says

I loved this book! It is so refreshing to read a character like Ameera, a woman who is both sure of herself but still searching for something more. She is sexually exploratory, but still struggles to live freely with that identity. She is waiting for more responsibility, but not quite sure if this is what she wants. The switching perspective between Ameera's story and Azeez's story adds texture to the narrative and I loved the magical realism elements of the ghost story.

I recommend this book to everyone, but especially those looking for a late coming of age/new adult story,

family sagas, and those that appreciate diversity in literature.

There are some sexy bits, FYI, but you can handle it!

Tricia Dower says

2.5, actually because I did finish it. Disappointing. I expected more artful writing and deeper characterization from a writer who's won awards. In this book she spoon feeds us everything we need to know, leaving me, for one, without the fun of noodling some things out on my own.
