



A List of Offences

Dilruba Z. Ara

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Author : Dilruba Z. Ara

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From Reader Review A List of Offences for online ebook

Wendy says

"A List of Offences" which I won from Goodreads Giveaways is a poignant story about a young girl's struggle against the superstitions and constraints of a rural society that smothers any kind of freedom outside of the staid customs of the village. The story begins with Daria's birth in Gulab Ganga, a small rural village in South Pakistan. Whispers about her strangeness, her unnatural behaviour follow Daria from birth through her childhood even after her silvery white hair turns colour and drastic steps are taken by her mother to stifle her natural curiosity. As a young woman Daria rebels against tradition when she falls in love and marries Ali Baba, a handsome, young, secular attorney from Firingi Para. What she doesn't realize is that the cost of her defiance might be higher than she ever imagined.

Dilruba Z. Ari's narrative is lyrical in its emotional intensity. It fills the senses with all the exotic colour, sights and sounds of Gulab Ganga and Firingi Para. Well-written, the plot flows smoothly as the characters interact and events unfold in this complex look at a class distinction, abuse, superstition and cultural restraints.

The personalities of the characters are multi-faceted especially Daria. As she develops into a woman she must face her own natural fears without a mother's unconditional love and guidance. As a child she resists the whispers and criticisms of the village gossips clinging to the freedoms that a happy childhood brings in her close friendship with Mizan, a flood survivor who's fostered by the Chaudhury family. As she grows to maturity her loving, happy nature, her eagerness to learn is suppressed by the arrogance, intolerance and abuse of the Baba family, but in the passivity that cloaks her pain and anger she finds the courage and determination to break the chains that bind her.

All well as Daria the other characters arouse an emotional response in the reader like Jharna Begum, Daria's narrow-minded, emotionally detached mother; a woman who's just as superstitious as her neighbours and insists on conformity. Persistent in teaching Daria the long-established views and skills of a traditional woman of her class, she fails to nurture her as a loving mother would. Azad Chaudhury, is a strong and loving father who believes in the freedom that education brings a woman. Although he loves his wife he recognizes her weaknesses and is the strength and support Daria will desperately cling to. Mizan, the Chaudhury's foster son is warm and caring, deeply in love with Daria. A man of intelligence and sensitivity, he suffers from a lack of self-esteem. Ali Baba, Daria's husband is the antithesis of Mizan; cold-hearted, arrogant, and cowardly. Alia Baba and her daughter Rani are self-indulgent, proud, and morally deficient while her husband Kasim is spineless because he fears rejection because of his declining health.

Interspersed in Daria's heart wrenching struggle are elements of friendship, love, patience, perseverance and salvation This is a story that transcends time and place because even today many women do not have the freedoms many of us take for granted. It's an inspired and uplifting work and well-worth reading.

Nikoleta says

να τρυφερ? βιβλ?ο γεμ?το εικ?νες, που μιλ?ει για τη θ?ληση να ζ?σουμε ?πως εμε?ς επιθυμ?με και ?χι ?πως οι ?λλοι κρ?νουν σωστ?. Υπ?ροχη παρουσ?αση της μουσουλμανικ?ς κουλτο?ρας. Στα αρνητικ? το οτι σε κ?ποια σημ?α δυσανασχετο?σα με την υπεραν?λυση περιττ?ν λεπτομερει?ν.

Chrsiter says

A fascinating book. Full of colours and scents. I read it three years ago, but still remember the pictures and the characters... a book - well worth reading.

Thalia says

Even before beginning to read this novel, my attention was captivated by the intriguing and what I could only assume metaphorical chapter titles, including "Snails and Butterflies", "A Silver Fish in a Fisherman's Net", "Elephant Woman" and "A Clay Doll" just to name a few. Juxtaposing these with the novel's somewhat austere title, I wondered where this story might lead...and having never read a novel by acclaimed Bangladeshi author Dilruba Ara, I was keen to find out.

The story follows the life of character Daria, and could be described as a story of self-discovery in a world where customs and traditions play a major role in defining one's path.

The story begins just prior her birth, where we learn that her mother who, after rearing four sons and struggling to conceive a daughter, visits a "Pir", akin to a supernatural witch doctor, who prescribes her a mysterious bottle of river water meant to help her conceive this longed-for daughter.

Set in a small village known as Gulab Ganga, where gossip and speculation run riot, news of the child "conceived using paranormal methods" soon circulates the grapevine. So much so that even before her birth, Daria is described as "a mermaid, half-fish, half-human" and shortly after her unfortunate unforgettable birth, an "unlucky child" doomed to live out a "pitiable life". You see, Daria is born with a head of shocking silvery hair, seen as "not human" but rather touched by evil spirits...so when Daria later exhibits signs of individuality and uniqueness, even where they would undoubtedly be seen as "normal" in any other child, she is cruelly judged as suffering from some form of insanity.

Suffice to say that Daria grows up affected by the rumours that follow her ill-wanted legend, rumours that crop up each and every time she strays from the expectations of a woman of her conservative traditional and cultural background.

And whilst her father tries to release her from the grip of her "inauspicious destiny" by arranging a marriage with a good local boy who loves her dearly, Daria follows her heart to another man and leaves her village for the city. However, in the end, she is forced to face her demons and the opposition of the villagers when she unwittingly finds herself back in her hometown.

Ara's description of Daria's journey of self-discovery is compelling right from the get-go. It is unique, touching, and inspiring, written beautifully by an author talented with the gift of writing prose and poetry. A must-read.

T. says

I received this wonderful book through Goodreads Giveaway. It was a wonderful book about a poor girl who

lives in a rural village. I don't want to spoil the book. The main character, Daria, is born with pure white hair. Because of her white hair, she is treated differently. This book will be of interest to readers who have an interest in women's studies, mythology, anthropology, sociology, poverty studies, cultural studies. Excellent writing, plot, and characters. I have recommended this book to all of my friends.

My Book Addiction and More MBA says

A LIST OF OFFENCES by Dilruba Z. Ara is a powerful Women's fiction set in Bangladesh. This is the story of Daria, born with silvery hair, she is considered to be an ill-fated omen for her family and her village. With deep-rooted traditions,superstitions, ancient beliefs,oppressed women,and customs,Daria must make her own way,find her own destiny,and her own integrity. Defying her parents she marries a young anglophile lawyer, Ali Baba,she soon learns life is a challenge when she realizes her new mother-in-law resents her. Faced with traditions and customs of the Bengali people, when she becomes pregnant with her daughter,she realizes their ways are not her own,she strikes out to make a better life for herself and her child. What courage Daria,shows! A compelling and powerful story on the life of a dysfunctional relationship, culture,and family. "A List Of Offences" voices what so many woman young and old,alike face in different parts of the world. A complex,heart wrenching story. This is not just the story of one woman but the story of many women,it will defy race,culture and religion. If you enjoy reading stories of other countries' customs,and traditions,than you will enjoy "A List of Offences". I would recommend this title for women everywhere. Received for an honest review from the author and/or publicist.

RATING: 4

HEAT REATING: MILD

REVIEWED BY: AprilR, Review courtesy of My Book Addiction and More

Simplydolphins says

4 stars---Enjoyed the book. Plot was well thought out and the characters were relatable. I would put this one on the second shelf. I would recommend it and would even lend them a copy of mine ?

Create With Joy says

Every now and then, you come across a writer whose voice is so fresh – whose message is so important – whose book is so timely – you'd like to put a copy into the hands of every person you meet.

Dilruba Z. Ara is one of those writers and her first novel, A List Of Offences, is one of those books!

A List Of Offences tells the story of a young, Bengali girl named Daria who is born into a very superstitious village. Even before her birth, rumors and gossip surround her. When she is born, many of the villagers believe she is cursed just because of her shimmery, silver hair!

Daria is born to parents who love her, but who are products of the religious and cultural environment in which they are raised. They want the best for her but, like most parents, try to impose their traditions and values upon her – regardless of the cost.

As Daria matures, she develops into a sensitive, intelligent young woman who must find her place in a world that does not intrinsically value her or recognize her worth. How will she deal with the daily injustices forced upon her as a woman living in a third world country? Will she succumb to familial and societal pressures – or will she break tradition and risk facing the wrath and backlash that is sure to follow?

A List Of Offences is a beautifully written story that transcends race, religion and culture and provides fresh insight into issues that impact women everywhere. The book is highly relevant and I'm pleased to recommend it to my readers.

This review was written by and originally published at Create With Joy.

Disclosure: I received a copy of this book from the author for review purposes. I was not compensated or required to write a positive review. The opinions expressed in this review are entirely my own.

Cynthia says

Welcome to Bangladesh! In 'A List of Offences' you'll see what it feels like to be one woman in the Muslim culture here, and how she survives a life where all of her choices are made by the people around her and how she struggles against this. Author Dilruba Z. Ara uses colorful evocative language in writing this piece of one woman's life, from the ill omens of her birth to the frustrating circumstances of her young adulthood and marriage. The way she has of describing things is like tasting an exotic dish and you will be captivated until the very last page! I was lucky enough to receive this book from Goodreads, and would highly recommend it to both women and men.

Irene Azuaje says

Excelente novela, porque nos enseña mucho de un país que poco se conoce.

Roxana Bogacz says

Me gusto mucho mucho

Sherry says

A list of offences was sent to me by the author for an honest review. Thank you Dilruba for this wonderful

book, your writing and artwork are beautiful! Your poetic descriptions made me feel as if I was right in Bangladesh, and the emotions portrayed by your characters were both heartfelt and realistic. You have great insight into human nature and show that despite being bullied and mentally abused one can rise above it and still be strong and independent. Truly a lovely and interesting read. Thanks again!

Karen M says

I wish I felt that I could write a review that is so beautifully descriptive that I could begin to explain why this book is a five star read but that is why I am a reader and not an author.

The author paints a picture with expressive language that leaves you seeing the scenes and characters in your mind. Each setting is described so completely that you cannot only see but also smell and feel the surroundings. And the characters are so well written that you understand what motivates them and accept each of their actions and reactions as creditable.

We start with the birth of a baby, Daria, whose appearance is different but this should not surprise us because even her conception had an unnatural shadow cast over it. The baby grows into a child who is still perceived as different which causes fear in her mother's heart and a determination that her daughter will not remain different. Daria tries to please her mother and slowly accepts the fact that her mother is rigid in her thinking and will never understand Daria nor accept anything from Daria that does not conform to what she thinks and believes is proper behavior.

Daria marries a handsome young man who comes from a large town and she escapes from her small village and a life she no longer can live. Her plans to pursue an education and be loved and encouraged by her new husband soon become only a bitter dream. Her husband does not love her and does not shield her from his family. Even the birth of her daughter becomes bittersweet for Daria.

What Daria goes through to achieve a life for herself and her daughter shows a strength of character and a will to survive that is praiseworthy beyond any words I have. Women are suppressed throughout the world and trying to survive and this book is a beautiful reminder to all us that many women are still struggling against oppression. Beautiful book.

This book was won as a FirstReads giveaway.

Catherine Stickann says

“A List of Offences” by Dilruba Z. Ara is an intriguing story. I won this book on Goodreads First Reads Giveaway. This exotic story with deep Bengali roots was such a nice study of a part of the world of which I have little knowledge.

The characters are studies of a culture. There are many dimensions to the story from the country vs. city, religious vs. nonreligious, western vs. eastern culture as well as study of different female personalities. The reader is treated to some well written prose that paints the settings of this far off land.

The main character, Daria, is well developed and the reader is treated to a complex character study of a young girl who develops into a strong mother. It is sometimes a difficult journey Ara takes her readers on with Daria.

The author sometimes gives too much detail, for instance, who really needs to know what is in the vomit? This amount of detail results in a longer than needed manuscript. Though the book is beautiful with a cover

painted by the author, the format of the book was a concern for this reader. The font is smaller and tight leaving little white space making the read a bit over whelming at times. The glossary in the back should be useful, but many words are left out leaving the reader frustrated. The glossary should either be complete for the manuscript or be eliminated.

I give “A List of Offences” four plus stars with a recommended read for those interested in other cultures and interested in women’s issues.

Katie says

This book was beautifully written in my opinion. I loved the main character!It is truly an inspiring book about overcoming what others think is correct.
