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FOREWORD REVIEW ♥♥♥♥♥ EROTICA

Sexcrime: An Anthology of Subversive Erotica

Cecelia Tan, editor
Circlet Press (March 2000)
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Exposing the inspiration for her anthology of erotic science fiction short stories,

Tan conjures the Orwellian dystropia of 1984, the novel which first spawned the eight ominous letters that signify repression and the dark bloom of subterraneous desire. Sexcrime.

Readers with eyes of voyeuristic fetishists taste the illegal forms of sexual expression—the excitement in tracing their boundaries and the rapture that awaits upon crossing. In Lee Crittenden's "Anthem," the book's inaugural piece, a worker lustfully entwines with her clone upon the floor of a stilled machine shop, as the scorched scent of industry hangs pregnant in the air. Futuristic, with enough grim contemporary parallels to spur paranoia ("Our lives are an endless progression of vacant days, punctuated by the free periods, spent in the identical gray coveralls, the identical gray cubicles."), the narrator questions the regulation of sexual relations in her society, and the authority behind them. Recounting her taboo tryst, as her lover fades into the ranks of identical workers, the narrator poignantly asks, "Is it incest for me to love my sister-clone, or only masturbation?"

Exploring the realms of socially restricted sexual practices in Maya Kaathryn Bohnhoff's "As the Angels in Heaven," a newly-wed archaeologist team comes to unexpected terms with their sexuality in a future world where marriage has culturally evolved to exclude sex. In contrast, the fluid bounds of the psyche are explored as editor, author and sexuality activist Tan unfurls her own brilliantly dark tale of dominance and submission to reveal the definitive keyholders of sexual slavery in "The Game."

Intelligently written and skillfully edited, Sexcrime tongues the imagination with poetic narrative, offset by the comparatively raw feel of other selections. Transcending the prosaic limits of erotic fiction, these twelve tales of fantasy and science fiction each engage the mind, recognizing it as the origin of sensuality, awash with the intoxicant of imagination. The anthology succeeds in establishing wide appeal for a book that centers upon oppression and denial of self, and the inherent erogenous thrill associated with engaging in illicit acts. Great diversity of characters, settings, sexual orientations and fetishes drives the collection, as does the shifting tonality of writing style between each piece, rendering it accessibility as multi-genre erotica.

Trailing through each story, beads of forbidden passion are inevitably explored with arterial intensity, while tangible and intangible fears course throughout—elevating the erotic exchange that is developed with readers. Inhibitions abandoned with the splaying of its brooding black cover, Sexcrime tests the placid waters that reflect the sunlit libido, and parts them with its carnal wake.

KAREN WYCKOFF (May / June 2000)

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