FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Pulp

The Blaft Anthology of Tamil Pulp Fiction, Volume II
Rakesh Khanna, editor
Pritham K. Chakravarthy, translator
Blaft Publications
978-938063600-9
(September 30, 2010)

Tamil Pulp Fiction, Volume II is full of bloodthirsty women, secret vices, and monsters that slip through the human world unnoticed. The anthology showcases the masters of Eastern pulp fiction from India and Singapore, and is a thrilling read from start to finish.

Even Western readers not familiar with Eastern social or religious traditions can dive right in. As in much pulp fiction, there is little moral quandary. The good guys are *good*, from nice families and with positive characteristics. The bad guys are selfish thugs, *bad* to their cores. One character is still good despite his thieving abilities: “Had the devil taken hold of his mind, Prabakaran would certainly have become the most feared criminal in the country. But his family background and the discipline with which he was raised at home stood him in good stead. He completed his bachelor’s degree with flying colors.” The stories don’t deviate from the archetypes of loyal servant, dashing young heir, tough cosmopolitan girl, and so on. But this doesn’t take away from the reader’s enjoyment—instead, it transports her to a fast-paced, electrifying world that seems at once familiar and exotic.

Because editor Rakesh Khanna has focused on the “pulp masters,” the selections in *Tamil Pulp Fiction* are well-written, strong examples of what the genre should be. For example, while questioning her lover, the glamorous Archana scrutinizes his face. “She could feel the heat of his stare in the center of her brow. She realized that with each question, she was plucking out chunks of his excitement like pods from a jackfruit.” This delicacy of detail brings the story to life, and reminds the reader that it’s not all karate kicks and evil scientists. The anthology includes a rich spectrum of writers, as well as a short comic and a smattering of particularly exciting cover art. *Tamil Pulp Anthology* celebrates the genre as a mixture of high and low, with a dash of kitsch and a little humor, too. Translation by Prithan K. Chakravarthy captures the genre’s zingy language without modernizing it too much. Flashy, fun, and fierce, the *Tamil Pulp Fiction*

anthology reminds the reader that pulp can be an art form, too.

Claire Rudy Foster