



The Chamber of Khajuraho

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This stunning adventure, from LA to a hidden temple in India, is a trip worth taking.

What if you had to travel halfway across the world to discover who you really were? In this stunning new novel, *The Chamber of Khajuraho*, by father-daughter writing team Manfred McArthur and Anitra Crist, Ian McArthur takes a trip to India that changes more than his perception of how he fits into the external world.

It's 1975, a year of change, and Ian is frustrated, feeling stuck. He's working for social change in Los Angeles, trying to lobby corrupt corporations to amend their ways; in the meantime, he builds houses in the nearby ski town, Mammoth Lake, California. He's constantly at loggerheads with the people he meets; he seems to have an innate ability to get into arguments with anyone, anywhere, about anything. By chance, he finds an architectural rendering of a temple in India that shows a hidden room—a chamber, purpose unknown. Soon he's obsessed, and a few vivid dreams convince him to investigate further. He leaves his girlfriend and heads to Amsterdam, guided by a recurring vision of a monk in orange robes.

From Amsterdam to Munich, to Iran and Turkey, Ian winds his way across Europe into Asia. The storytelling is quick paced and engaging; each scene is dotted with details that bring the landscape to life. From Ian's perspective, architectural details pop, and colors are vibrant.

Up ahead was a Greek Orthodox church, very stately. Along the side I noticed a narrow step ladder going up; at the top was a small dome brightly painted royal blue. Standing in front of the huge doors, I hesitated before I entered the large room, passing through a cloud of pungent incense. ... To the side was a rectangular table covered with lighted candles.

There's more to *The Chamber of Khajuraho* than a wild goose chase, though. Ian slowly peels back the layers of his psyche, learning to let go of his anger and unreasonable expectations. As he loses his fear, he and his traveling companions become increasingly aware that they're being followed by a sinister stranger—a treasure hunter who hopes the temple holds more than just spiritual enlightenment. The presence of their stalker keeps tension running high and adds a thrilling element to the novel. Add to all this the socially and politically turbulent backdrop of the 1970s, and *The Chamber of Khajuraho* is a real page turner that keeps you guessing until the very last chapter.

Though McArthur and Crist co-wrote *The Chamber*, there is no unevenness in the novel's tone. The narrative flows smoothly, and is enriched by excellent dialogue, especially between Ian and his daughter, Sarah. There is a welcome playfulness in the writing, which is rare in adventure stories. It's also good to see Ian change, albeit slowly, into the kind of man he wants to be. The acceptance and patience his friends show him are inspiring as he grows and develops a life changing meditation practice.

Challenging assumptions about the external and internal worlds of the mind, *The Chamber of Khajuraho* is a zesty,

exciting romp that journeys through terrain of all kinds. Around the world and into the depths of a human heart, McArthur and Crist push the boundaries of the adventure genre. It's a trip worth taking.

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