ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

BIOGRAPHY

The Journeys of Rowena Sunita Singh
Guy Jones
AuthorHouse
978-1-4389-0749-9
Two Stars (out of Five)

The Journeys of Rowena Sunita Singh is Guy Jones's unconventional tale of a British woman's global adventures during the first half of the twentieth century. Rowena endures abuse, loss, danger, hardship, love, and joy as her experiences shape her into a woman of strength and courage.

Born into a large Welsh family, Rowena spends a tumultuous childhood running away from her abusive father and being encouraged toward decent womanhood by a kind aunt. After escaping to India and living there happily for two decades, she begins to itch for a change. Her adventures carry her around the world; along the way, she experiences love and heartbreak, and she touches the lives of many people.

The language in *The Journeys of Rowena Sunita Singh* seems to be intended to emphasize the elaborate age in which Rowena lives. The author generously scatters words such as *vicissitudes*, *reverie*, and *gargantuan* throughout the story. For instance, Jones, describing Rowena's husband, writes that "Raghubir was as secretive about his peregrinations as he always was." Such showy vocabulary fails to make up for the lack of real character development that could have come from a clearer narrative thread and more dialogue between the characters. If anything, Jones's choice of words sometimes makes the plot more difficult to follow.

By summarizing characters' emotions, the author doesn't allow the reader to see the ways in which characters grow and change. For instance, Jones writes, "Rowena felt light-hearted about their relationship, Raghubir had a joi-de-vivre [*sic*] which brought out the same in her; and these [*sic*] days when they first met were always a warm and comforting memory…." Rather than providing readers with evidence, through the characters' actions and dialogue, Jones summarizes, leaving readers feeling as though they've missed key points. One exception is a scene in which Raghubir asks Rowena's father for her hand in marriage. The description of the scene allows each character's true self to shine through.

The preface is a summary of the novel, not really a preface at all. Throughout the book,

the formatting is inconsistent. Some paragraphs are indented with no line breaks, and some are indented and double-spaced. Punctuation errors undermine the credibility of the work. However, the bleak, black-and-white cover photo of Rowena is fitting for a book about a character as strange and sad as Rowena.

Although the book has potential, the story is poorly executed. Proper editing, less fussy language, and better character development would help to clarify the plot and engage the reader.

Emily Adams