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Look to the Hills: The Diary of Lozette Moreau, a French Slave Girl

Posted on 24 February 2017 By K.R. Meera

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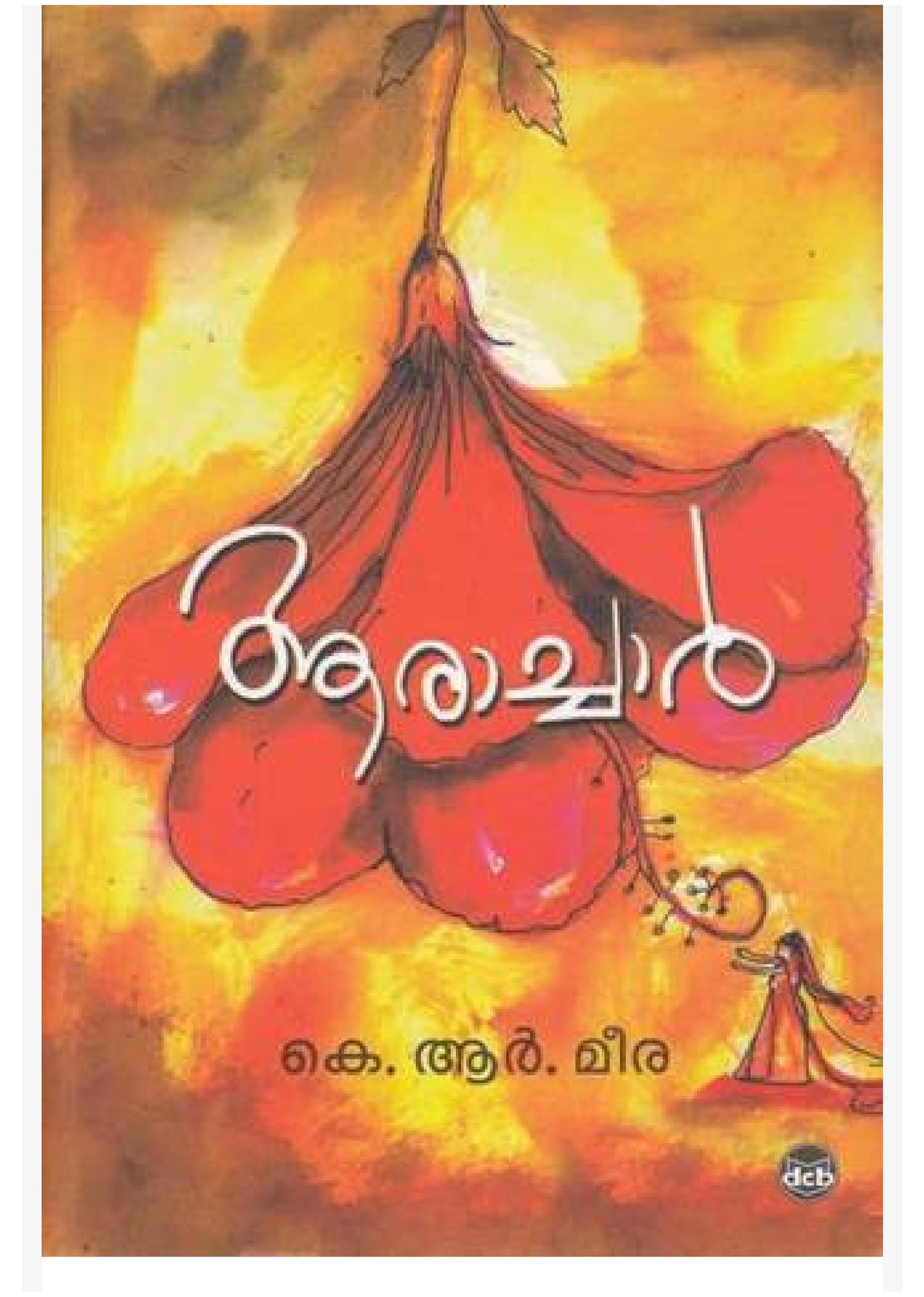
Review originally posted on A Skeptical Reader. Hangwoman by K R Meera is a translated novel from India that opens with the main character being asked to take up the position of the first hangwoman of India. The novel is about what it is to be a woman in a society where men dictate what happens to your life, your body, and your home. The main character, Chetna Grddha Mullick, observes the way her life is shaped by the actions of her father and a journalist hell bent on possessing her body and time. All the characters in the novel are utterly repulsive and untrustworthy, the latter being also true of the main character. I'm not opposed to reading about dislikable characters but there seems to be no rhyme or rhythm to any action or reaction that plays out. When Chetna first meets the journalist intending to cover the experience of her first hanging, Sanjeev Kumar Mitra, he tells her, I want to fuck you at least once, and steals their family coin. Despite the shocking way in which this meeting occurs, Chetna is intensely attracted to Sanjeev and continuously seeks his attention even after his assaults and insults persist. There's absolutely no explanation or reasoning for this and in the same breath that she hates him for abusing her and her family, she also craves his affection in ways that completely baffle me. Further, in the beginning of every chapter, the reader is bombarded with a myriad of stories, myths, and histories. Even as an Indian, with the ability to distinguish and pronounce names, phrases, and terms, the sheer count of stories thrown in this book is suffocating. Being that the writer is from Kerala but writes the story set in Bengal, it seems she spent months researching Bengal and

decided she's going to fit in every single sentence from her notes into the novel. It's unnecessary, it considerably weighs the book down from its accomplishments, and, as I predict, will discourage many readers from finishing the novel. That novel also has than a few repetitive chapters and there are large portions of the novel that can be completely omitted without losing sight of any plot movement. To be blunt, only the first and final quarters of the book are worth reading. Everything in between can be skipped and the reader would have no trouble absorbing the purpose of the novel. The first quarter builds up a good setting, even with the weak characterizations, and the final quarter contains some beautifully written scenes of Chetna's moments of self-realization scenes that, in my opinion, have a lot to offer to the contemporary battles of feminism in India. In the end, I think *Hangwoman* has some very thoughtful moments of feminist introspection but the poor way in which the characters' motivations are handled and the excessive amount of chapters will likely keep it from reaching many readers. I can't honestly say I'd recommend it to most people, unless you're really keen on reading a translated Indian novel and there's no other in sight.

India's first hang woman Chetna. wanna ask K R MEERA how she got this much historical evidences [E-pub] ? ????????? ? Award Winning Novel *Aarachaar Executioner* Is A Story Based On The Indian Culture Of Caste And Religion Set In Bengal, It Tells The Story Of A Family Of Executioners With A Long Lineage, Beginning In The Fourth Century BC. The Protagonist Of The Novel, Chetna, Is A Strong And Tenacious Woman Who Struggles To Inherit This Profession. According To Noted Literary Critic M Leelavathy, *Aarachaar* Is One Of The Best Literary Works Produced In Malayalam And Follows The Legacy Of O V Vijayan S Classic Work *Khasakkinte Itihasam*. The Novel Received The Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award. It Was Also Awarded The Prestigious Odakkuzhal Award In And Vayalar Award In 3.5.

Depressing, grim powerhouse, and yet beautifully crafted. The kind of book which shouldn't be kept on your shelf, rather hanging from the roof with a noose around it. It was a difficult read because of extreme negativity of characters. Had many sleepless nights due to this. Within the main plot, there are 45-50 short stories about hanging and death. Unbelievable descriptions of Kolkata coming from a Malayalam writer. The writing is extraordinarily good. I read the English translation 51 chapters, and every chapter is packed with a punch. Too bad I couldn't handle all that grimness. Hated almost every character. Highly recommended if you like dark and powerful writing. . Sheer brilliance manifesting as a very grim, morose, turbulent tale told with maximum impact upon readers. The story of a 22-year-old girl, Chetana who is from a family of hangmen who practiced their trade from a time when Bengal, or even Jesus Christ wasn't born. Chetana is urged to take up the job of Hangwoman as her father is getting senile and the family needs a working member. And the Indian government is not too keen to provide her with that particular job, which would really have gone to Ramu da, her much elder brother, for whom fate had nasty plans. Phanibhushan, her 88-year-old father is a tough nut to crack. Sanjeev Mitra, the ever opportunistic news reporter finds Chetna and her family as

a means of increasing his channel's TRP. Chetana and Sanjeev are attracted to each other, not in a necessarily pleasant way. With this background the scintillating tale unfolds. I felt like being given a crash course on hangmanship and the history of Bengal region from historic times through Indian partition up to the present, flavored with the personal histories of her ancestors. Chetana is most easily one of the strongest women I have come across in fiction, and Ramu da, one of the most pitiable. I would recommend this book to all people who love a grim tale, and would advise the weak-hearted to stay clear. This is one book that can remain with you and niggle at your innards for a long, long time. My reading buddies for this venture Gorab and Rebecca Thank you Took me almost a month to read this book But boy What a ride it was I consider it as an accomplishment of sorts as I read the Malayalam original The story revolves around Chethana the hang woman, her musings and her narrations from her vast store of ancestral memories Though some of the stories were outright cruel loved most of them especially Pingalakeshinis The mood of the book is that of pathos and there is a feministic undertone Though initially I did not like any of the characters, in the end I found myself rooting for Chethu. Beautiful . Chetna Now, that's A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH OMG The strongest and mightiest female character ever in Malayalam literature at least in my humble opinion An extraordinary book, that deals with the topic of Capital Punishment, the long and fascinating history of the Hangman family of the Grudha Malliks and so much The atmosphere it creates in the reader's mind is just so intriguing and at the same time so haunting, relevant, scathing, brilliant and riveting The story is so well crafted and is filled with legends, myths and historical backstories which fits so, so well with the situations and ties the whole story together and forms that perfect final picture We get than we could ask for, the fascinating history of Kolkota, the 1200 year old epic legends of the Grudha Malliks, stories, stories, and stories, and that's quite an offer I can't refuse And this perfect juxtaposition of the myths and imaginative with the realistic is what makes it unique and special. Meera so perfectly and effectively attacks and criticises the outrageous, inappropriate and disgusting behaviour of today's media, the attitude of the society towards women and the the lower class, the traditional system in India at that time and, even now of profession being based on one's cast and religion, and the book covers so many areas like, love, sex, death, life, karma, fate, life after death, and is full of profound philosophical thoughts and views The characters are so solid and well built and are very interesting, Phonibhushan Grudha Mallik, Dhakkuma, Sanjiv Kumar Mitra, Manobendra Bose, and CHETNA, like the hilsa fish that swims against the current for thousands of miles to finally reach its destiny, her character alone is enough to make this a masterpiece A unique book, that deserves all the awards and praise it got I read the original Malayalam language edition, but I believe the English translation is equally good Shortlisted for the South Asian Literary Award Hats off to K.R Meera for this brilliant book and hoping to see works of her in the future. Thanks for reading



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