



Drawing in the Dust

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By turns philosophical, suspenseful, and passionate, this debut novel transports readers into a mystical world and takes them on a journey they won't soon forget.

Drawing in the Dust Details

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From Reader Review Drawing in the Dust for online ebook

Renee says

At the solid and good chapters, this book reminded me slightly of the Jewish version of the Da Vinci Code, and at other times, it just seemed plain silly. This book gives insight into the world of biblical excavation in Israel and focus on an American archeologist named Page Brookstone who uncovers murals, artifacts and remains suggestive of the prophet Jeremiah, buried with the woman he loved, Anatiya, who also has left a manuscript that parallels the Book of Jeremiah.

Cinnamon says

DRAWING IN THE DUST by Zoë Klein is a magical and fully romantic read. I went into the book figuring that I would find a great story and found something so full of wonder and color that my brain is still swirling with the beauty of it. Much as a fairy tale leaves frosting and pixie dust floating about the head, DRAWING IN THE DUST leaves warmth and happiness surrounding you like a soft blanket fresh out of the dryer. I am absolutely ecstatic to share this review with you today and hope that it encourages you to pick this book up and get lost within the wonder of its pages.

DRAWING IN THE DUST follows the blond, beautiful, intelligent and lost Page as she journeys to discover who she is and what mysteries the world holds. Originally a divinity student in college, she found herself drawn to archaeology and has spent over a decade digging up the remains of past civilizations. She's always cataloging, recording, analyzing; she's searching for something but has no idea what that something is. When Ibrahim and Aisha Barakat show up at her dig, claiming to have ghosts visiting their home, Page is quick to dismiss them as the rest of her colleagues have. Her brain and heart war with each other and soon, despite the pleas of her coworkers, she finds herself on the Barakat's doorstep. What follows is a story woven with mystery, intrigue, suspense, and above all, love.

The discovery of a scroll and coffin in an ancient cistern set the world on fire. The scroll contains the words of a young woman, Anatiya, as she details her life and her love for the prophet Jeremiah. The coffin contains the old bones of Anatiya, locked in a loving embrace in the long-dead arms of Jeremiah. Her story and the obvious love between the pair throw age-old stories up into a whirlwind of chaos. When panic and destruction are becoming a part of everyday life, can the tender love of two long-dead mortals cure the world, or crush it?

I am not exaggerating at all when I say that DRAWING IN THE DUST is breathtakingly beautiful. This is one of the most unique and wonderful love stories that I have read. At the forefront is Page and her desire to find love despite the fact that she constantly pushes it away. As Page's discovery of the ancient scroll continues, we also learn of Anatiya and her undying love for Jeremiah. Klein gives a velvety soft, fluid texture to Anatiya and its practically impossible not to fall in love with the young woman, feeling every joy and heartbreak that she experiences. Anatiya's voice is the voice of love. I don't know how Klein does it, but she creates such a tender and romantic atmosphere that I feel even the most bitter and angry people would find themselves melting over her words.

Normally, a strong female character is what wins a book over for me. In this case I was extra lucky to experience two strong female characters. Both Page and Anatiya play strong leads and bring strong stories to

the book even though one character is dead. One would expect that Page, the woman that we actually follow would steal the spotlight from Anatiya. Or perhaps Anatiya would steal it from Page seeing as how it is her scroll that Page discovers and her life that unfolds before us. Instead, Klein brings both characters to the front, showing amazing skill at creating two lead characters that can both stand in the spotlight together without one overshadowing the other.

It is for reasons such as this that *DRAWING IN THE DUST* is a remarkable book. Klein's ability to bring us down into multiple stories while at the same time keeping utter cohesion is just amazing and adds such a level of depth to the book that enjoyment lasts long after the last page is read. People say it all the time, but in this instance, it could not be more true. Klein's characters really do jump off the page and cavort around you. *DRAWING IN THE DUST* follows more like a beautiful play, a wonderful moving work of art, than simple black lines on grey paper. It's been a day since I finished *DRAWING IN THE DUST* and I can still picture scenes from the book vividly in my head. That is the kind of artistry Klein puts forth.

Aside from the wonderful creation of great characters and a fantastic job at creating a compelling plot, Klein seems to be terrific at creating romantic tension. Romance is the key to *DRAWING IN THE DUST*, at least in my opinion, and romance is the thing that constantly pulls us along. It was very difficult for me not to experience an intense feeling of love while reading this book and I imagine many share my opinion. The story of Anatiya, the woman who dared to love a prophet, brings its own impossible bit of romantic tension. Add in Page, and her constant battle with her own self as she fights to find love and you've created an epic love story - one that is bound to capture hearts for years to come.

Jill Furedy says

I'm a couple years late on getting around to this one: I was reading an ARC version of this book (yes, an advance reader copy, over three years after its release), in which Page goes to an archeological dig in the home of Ibrahim and Naima. But in reading other reviews, it sounds like Naima's name changed to Aisha in the published version. Which makes me wonder if anything else changed. However, I'll forge ahead and assume what I read was much the same as what everyone else read.

Page is a little immature for a nearly 40 year old woman, but I still liked her well enough. She's selfish in a lot of areas, made clear when she's dealing with her friends and with men. She tries to defend herself to her mentor/wannabee romantic interest Norris by saying...but I'm a terrible friend to everyone, not just you, and expects him to forgive her based on that (though clearly Norris has his own issues). Jordana listens to Page cry on the phone over a man while Jordana herself is in labor and her husband is begging her to hang up. I'm not certain we see her grow out of that either, by the end of the book. But there is so much more-interesting stuff going on in the book, I didn't focus too much on that.

Page (and others) had a very articulate dialect, which I tried to justify as speaking very properly to non-native English speakers. But even though very few people would speak like she does, I also overlooked that, because I liked the descriptive, if a bit proper, writing throughout the book.

I thought all the characters were fairly well developed, considering most of them are just minor supporting roles. Mortichai is an odd duck, and jumps from creepy guy to potential love interest a little quickly, although then the friendship/ relationship develops a bit oddly itself and is undefined for a majority of the book.

I know very little of the biblical references, so had to learn about Jeremiah as I went. I liked the scroll of Anatiya... sure it's a bit dramatic, but they mention she would have been young when writing it, and what teenager in love (or in obsession) isn't dramatic. Not sure if that was what the author intended, but that was how I read it.

There were a lot of incredible discoveries and unbelievable events that I was willing to go along with, including all the sneaking, stealing and creating deceptions to bring the scroll the public. But when it came to the very last chapters, it suddenly felt like a cheesy mystery novel....searching out the crime scene based on a hunch/ vision, hiding from the bad guys, putting herself in danger only to be unexpectedly rescued in the nick of time. I could have done without that part. The other part where that feeling invaded the story for me was in the cabin in the woods with Page and Jordana translating the scrolls in hiding.

I enjoyed far more than I disliked in the book, and thought it was brought to life very nicely. I don't go out of my way to read historical fiction, but of those I've read, this one falls into the category of 'historical fiction that I prefer to pretend actually happened', like the Jim Fergus books or the Red Tent. It wasn't quite as strong as those books, or I'd have given it five stars. But it's definately one I'll recommend.

Michaela says

Milujem knihy, kde je hlavnou postavou archeológ, alebo archeologička!

Anotácia knihy je trochu zavádzajúca, lebo popisuje len čas príbehu. Spočiatku to vyzeralo len ako práca na odhaľovaní a odkývaní tajomstva v dome, kde vraj straší dvojica milencov. Ale je v tom aj viac mystiky a dejín a áno, aj viery... a hlavne je to príbeh o láske a jej hľadani a naplnení. Aj keď to bolo len zbežne popísané, napr. byrokracia, či popis postupu vykopávok, o preklade, ale aj všetko o Izraeli a o rozdieloch medzi moslimským a židovským a kresťanským... proste mi to sadlo, bolo to zaujímavé a vôbec nie nudné. Nepátrala som, čo v tom je pravda a čo fikcia (aj tak sa to dozviete v doslove), ale príbeh zanechal vo mne veľa príjemný dojem. A hlavná hrdinka sa mi ozaj páčila. Myslím, že si túto knihu ešte niekedy prečítam...

Bridget says

Drawing in the Dust is the story of a Page, a woman who spends her days uncovering the past. She is a very talented archaeologist but is somewhat bored with her current situation. She's in Mediggo and searching to figure out life's mysteries. A couple comes to her in need of help. They see love making ghosts in their home. Page is skeptical but intrigued. She makes a visit to their home and feelings overcome her that she thought were buried. She leaves in a hurry but is drawn back to this home and decides to help this couple. Will Page find the meaning of life in the area beneath this couples home or will she just find herself?

Sometimes you need a book that speaks to you. Drawing in the Dust makes you think and feel. When you're looking for a book that will touch your soul, this is the one to pick up. It is a masterpiece! Now go read it:)

Thank you Ayelet from Pocket Books for sending me this book to review.

Eileen Souza says

This was an ok book, but not great. Honestly, I think my problem started because the book cover sounded so fascinating, and so I peeped at the back of the book at the author's acknowledgments before I started reading, and subsequently found out that the author had written the Scrolls of Anatiya (yes, I'm secular enough that I would never have known that) and even though those scrolls wound up becoming a prevalent part of the book, I just felt that it was conceited to then write a whole book about how the scrolls she had written herself were found. I couldn't get over it.

I did like the characters - although some were one dimensional, it felt like the cast of characters that one would come across today in modern Israel. I really like Mor. However the prose was excessively flowery, and unrealistic, and there was frankly too much quoting of bible passages in conversation.

It was a book that did not captivate me, and I could put it down while reading it.

Emily says

This was a well-constructed book about Biblical archaeology and love. Certainly two things that are of interest to me. It focused on the prophet Jeremiah, which is one I don't really know much about. Half-way through the book, I did skim through his book in the Bible, but really, Klein gives readers all they need to know in her book. The excellent construction comes from Klein's extensive knowledge of the subjects, and her obvious desire to keep learning about them and sharing them with others. So I liked the Biblical archaeology and I liked the love story. It was a satisfying read, but not soul changing.

Alexandra says

This is an interesting book. Klein is good at writing with a completely religious undercurrent without making things too heavy handed. Some people might take this book to be a lot more than fiction but in my mind's eye as I read it, it was pure fiction to me but very well written fiction I might add. I liked the Love story element to the book but I felt like Page and Morticia's relationship did not hold the same passion and intrigue as Jeremiah and Anitya's at the same time Anitya at times seemed more obsessed with Jeremiah than in love with him. It sometimes bordered on unhealthy. My favorite elements of the book centered around the archaeological dig sights and such. I found that very interesting and Klein wrote it so well that at times I felt like I could feel the cold clay and the smell of all the dusty ancient artifacts. That requires talent as a writer to be able to write something that deliciously descriptive. She really transports you to the setting of the book so very well. I've never been to Jerusalem but for a second while your reading the book you feel like you have. I liked that a lot about this book.

Dale Harcombe says

Three and a half stars.

Archaeologist Page Brookstone has been working for many years at a dig in Megiddo. It has not proved to be as satisfying as she expected, and much of that has to do with the faltering relationship between her and her boss and mentor Norris. When a young Arab couple come with pleas for her to excavate under their house in Anatot, Page is intrigued. More so when they claim the ghosts of two lovers share their home. Could it possibly be true? Or will Page end up making a fool of herself and destroy her reputation as a respected archaeologist?

Page decides to go ahead and makes a discovery that will shock and upset many. She finds the bones of two lovers and scrolls. One scroll she believes is by the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah. Another is by a young woman called Anatiya. It is interesting to see how these discoveries affect not only Page but others.

An interesting and engaging read, I enjoyed this novel. I liked the references to the prophet Jeremiah and the scriptures, but also the fictional inclusion of Anatiya. What I wasn't as convinced about was the behaviour of Page. She acted more like a giddy teenager at times than a woman of almost forty. Also the modern day love

story didn't really work for me. I'm just not convinced it would be able to survive their huge differences in faith and outlook. It felt contrived, as did some aspects of the ending. However I am still glad I read it and did enjoy it. I particularly liked finding out more about Israel and the process of archaeology. Zoe Klein is also a poet and that shows throughout some of the beautiful writing. This is Zoe Klein's debut novel and I will be interested to see what she writes next. I'll be keeping an eye out.

Nathalie says

I thought the book had a lot of potential. The ghost story being set in Israel is what appealed to me, however the characters were not believable. I felt the main character did not act as a grown woman would- she was a permanent child. The dialogue was a bit pretentious at times, it seemed like Klein was trying too hard. There were a few great one liners, but I wouldn't tell people to waste their time reading this debut.

Judy Chessin says

I reread this for a class on Jeremiah that I am teaching. As before, I found many of the ideas magical and lyrical. While this is a fairy tale on so many levels... (Why can't we all get along?) I did like the idea of bringing Jeremiah to life. I won't ever see the prophet the same way, although I am not sure that he really did find the love of his life, other than his Divine mission. As for so many prophets, home life, in actuality suffers. So this is a nice fantasy, but not a realistic novelization. BTW, I thought Jeremiah died in Egypt. I still don't get how he ended up back in Anatot?

Julie (jjmachshev) says

The back-cover blurb is what drew my attention to this book since this is my first read by author Zoe Klein. The story has strong mystical components as well as many references to the story of the Biblical prophet Jeremiah. Readers who are unfamiliar with Jeremiah's story may find it hard going, but I didn't have any problems.

Page is an American archaeologist who has been working in Israel for more than a decade on the excavations at Megiddo. She likes her work, but is realizing a sense of dissatisfaction with her current situation. Her long-time friend/mentor and boss recently made a pretty strong pass at her; her refusal and his inability to accept it have resulted in a very strained working relationship. So Page is ripe for change and when a Palestinian couple approach her on the dig, she listens to their story more closely than she realizes. Her boss scoffs at their claims of a haunted chamber underneath their home at Anatot, but Page cannot seem to forget. When she drops by their home on her day off, she quickly becomes drawn into the thrill of discovery and risks her career and professional reputation when she leaves Megiddo and begins work in Anatot.

Those familiar with the story of Jeremiah will either love or hate this story. Klein fleshes out the prophet far beyond what is known and connects her life with that of a young woman who 'loved' the prophet. The author quotes from a fictional 'Scroll of Anatiya', the story of the young woman from long ago who passionately loved the prophet. Each chapter is headed by a quote and the author admits to having actually written the entire scroll while in school as a parallel to the life of Jeremiah. Biblical purists will no doubt be up in arms and screaming at the extent of poetic license Mrs. Klein uses in her tale.

I found the 'mystery' and archaeological discovery portions of the book quite riveting. But I had to wade through the author's metaphysical meanderings as she psychoanalyzes her lead character during the entire novel. It could just be that I'm shallow--if I want to read a character study, then that's what I look for; if I want to read an archaeological mystery, then that's what I want. I just wish the author had limited herself to one or the other and I would have enjoyed "Drawing in the Dust" much more.

Margaret says

This book almost made it to the "Abandoned" list, but I forged ahead. What bumped it from 1 to 2 stars are that the story mostly takes place in Israel and that archeology is one of the themes; so, two interesting subjects. However, the first person narrator, a young 40's going on 15 year old female archeologist, is one of the more annoying characters with whom I've ever spent time, and that, among other things, makes it a tough read. The jacket brags that readers of "The Red Tent" will like this book - well, not really. Read "The Red Tent" instead.

Heather says

I was pleasantly surprised by this book, and loved every minute of reading it. Zoe Klein weaves a beautiful story! The writing itself was incredibly creative and inspiring. The story is fictional, yet I had a hard time not wishing it was true.

The story follows Page, an archaeologist in Israel. She goes against all of the advice from her peers and begins investigating a site that has been ridiculed for its supposed ghost stories. What follows is an incredible find that leaves the whole world reeling. It's fun and spirited from beginning to end. It reminds you of the fact that the prophets in the Scriptures were real people with lives just as complicated as ours if not more so, just living in a different time.

There are a few odd references and assumptions, but it's then that I just remind myself that it's fiction, so it doesn't really bother me.

I loved it and would read it again!

Linda says

I was a little hesitant to read this book, because on the back it says it is like the Red Tent, a book I didn't enjoy.. But I really like this one. I loved the character Page and the way she developed over the course of the book. I enjoyed all the details of Israel and learning more about that culture. I really liked Zoe's writing style. It is pleasant to read--and I loved the ending.
