



An Incurable Insanity

Simi K. Rao

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Her heart fluttered when she heard the sound of the key turn in the lock. She quickly adjusted her maroon silk sari with the yellow border, the one that had caught his eye, and waited eagerly for his footsteps.

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven... Yes, exactly seven steps before he stopped, hesitated for a few moments, then removed his shoes one by one and arranged them neatly side by side on the shoe rack.

She smiled. He had been mindful of taking his shoes off every day now. "I am not used to it, but I will if you want me to. It's probably a good thing to do anyway."

As he settled down, he would pick up the TV remote and, without looking at her, would say in his smooth baritone, "So how did you spend your day, anything interesting?"

Shaan Ahuja found himself bowing to tradition and agreeing to an arranged marriage to the beautiful Ruhi Sharma. He went through the motions but had no intention of carrying through on his vows. His last foray into matters of the heart with an American girl had left him scarred and unwilling to try again. Thoroughly disillusioned and disgruntled he wasted no time in making his intentions clear to Ruhi on their wedding night. But, he was completely unprepared for what his new wife had in mind.

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From Reader Review An Incurable Insanity for online ebook

Jazmen says

copy provided by author/publisher in exchange for an honest review

Incurable Insanity is a fun twist on the joys and woes of arranged marriage.

This was a fun story that took on a serious topic, that of a prearranged marriage. Many people have preconceived notions on prearranged marriage, including myself. It can seem cruel to force two strangers to get married but as in this story it can be something beautiful.

I loved the author's take on the matter. It was a beautifully timed love story and I enjoyed it. I also loved the way the author interspersed the language throughout the story. It made me feel connected to the culture. I love cultural reads. They allow me to learn about a culture I wouldn't otherwise find out about.

It was a light read that would be great for fans of realistic fiction.

Roxanne Schulte says

Simi K. Rao wrote An Incurable Insanity with great emotion that one is entranced by every word on each page. The story of Ruhi and Shaan exhibited personal growth for each character and their journey together in a traditional culture and modern one. Their journey unfolded emotions and a new self awareness and self understanding which ignited and unveiled the passion within themselves and each other. It is truly a must read!

Ramzz says

Incurable insanity is a tale which makes you feel really really incurably insane. It is such a lovely story and the writer have nailed it by making our heart go out for Ruhi and later for Shaan. The characters start growing on you, making you too eager to know what happens with both their lives. And the way things have been detailed about both Indian and western culture. Very well written. Sunshine & JJ are sweet hearts. All the characters fall in place perfectly adding spice to the entire story. Great going. Wish to read more of her works.

Sophia says

I was enchanted by the idea of reading a book written by an Indian author of an Indian couple who came together in an arranged marriage and eventually found love so I grabbed up this one with great anticipation.

Ruhi is shown a picture of Shaan and agrees to the match her parents and her dad's friend set up for her and Shaan. She is the apple of her parent's eye and has led a light easy life so far. She knows she has a lot to offer

a husband as she knows she is lovely, she has finished university and she acquired all the skills of a good Indian wife.

Shaan is angered that his dad has set up this match with his business friend. Shaan is in a relationship with an American woman where he lives in LA and doesn't want this. His dad persuades him that this is his grandfather's dying wish and that he can end it after his grandfather dies. Shaan reluctantly agrees, but he won't trick the young woman so he tells her the score. He expects his revelation that he is in an affair to drive her away, but it doesn't. She insists that they give it a two month trial so that it doesn't shame either of their families.

Secretly Ruhi is hurt, but still hopeful that she can change Shaan's mind with the time she has bought them. She will prove to him that he can't resist her with her skills as a wife in making a home for him. It's harder than she imagines as he continues about his life just as it was. He is polite, but uninterested. It is only when she realizes that the other woman is in the picture too that she has an epiphany moment. No more! She will now take back the reins of her own life. She will finish out the trial period, but then she's done. Too bad her heart is still affected by Shaan.

Ruhi doesn't realize it, but her efforts were successful. Shaan had set aside Des and he was coming to appreciate Ruhi, but Des wouldn't be easily set aside and does her best to fight his decision. Now Shaan also has a fight on his hands to convince Ruhi that he has come to care.

The general plot on this story was engaging from the start. I was vested and wanted to know how things could possibly turn out well for a couple who started out in such a way. I enjoyed exploring Ruhi's initial experiences with getting married, moving to America, and dealing with the circumstances of her relationship. Getting to know all the facets of Shaan and why he says and did stuff was intriguing. I applauded Ruhi for deciding enough was enough and I was thrilled that Shaan saw the good thing that was right in front of his eyes right when he was getting ready to lose her, but--

That was when the pace bogged down and things just sat in the spin cycle for over half the book. Ruhi was hurt, angry and wanted revenge. Shaan tries to weather her storm and prove his love. It just went on and on so much of the same thing. Ruhi drove me crazy. Long after it was time to forgive or don't forgive and either walk away or take the steps of trust she just kept whipping up her petulant anger and acting like a spoiled brat. Shaan was a doormat who just kept groveling hoping she'd snap out of it. I read on to the end because I was vested enough to see what would finally do the trick, but honestly I was done and didn't care if they stayed together.

So end the end, I loved the author's colorful descriptive voice, the general plot and enough of the characters and their relationship that I'll concede that there was quite a bit to like in this one. Its a unique tale of romance and I'm glad for the opportunity to read it.

Those who enjoy reading romances set in other cultures and don't mind a long developing romance should give this one a try.

My thanks to the author for the opportunity to read her book in exchange for my honest review thoughts.

Jonel says

Rao evokes a vast array of emotions in her audience. Through brilliant descriptions, straightforward storytelling, and intimate narratives she draws you fully into this remarkable tale of trial and error and love at its finest. Rao definitely had my heart tied in knots with this one. She not only takes a practice that is less than popular in western culture, but plops it down in the seat of all things North American. This talented author also makes it work, and spins it into a novel that you won't be able to put down.

The writing in this novel was amazing, but don't even get me started on the characters themselves. They were so real and easy to relate to that I couldn't help but fall in love with them, both as individuals and as a couple. I found myself at one second thinking 'If they'd just talk to each other' and at the next thinking 'but I'd so have done the same thing.' This was a true comedy of errors with no easy way out of the corner they've backed themselves into. Since this novel was so focused on these two very different yet remarkable individuals the minimal development of the supporting cast actually worked in the author's favour.

As a whole this was a brilliant novel. Rao walks the line between traditional Indian culture and all that is Hollywood to create a tale that will pull at your heartstrings and keep you captivated throughout.

Please note that I received this novel free of charge from the author/publisher/blog tour company in exchange for an honest review.

Mel says

I bought this around 11:00 on a Wednesday evening and finished it at 4 am the next day! Once I fell in love with the main character, Ruhi, I couldn't put it down until I knew how it ended. I enjoyed the characters and their vibrant lives. I especially enjoyed learning about Indian culture, and my only complaint is that it didn't include more of it! :)

You know you are emotionally invested in a story when you actually want to slap your favorite character, shake her hard and yell, "stop this ridiculousness!" (only at times, though!) ;) I enjoy books with rich characters, and this one had me from the get-go.

I'm excited to read more of this author's books!

Risbee says

I had originally scheduled my review of An Incurable Insanity to post in a couple of weeks due to the backlog of pending posts I have looming over my head -- but I can't seem to stop thinking about it.

I'm not sure what to say about it. And don't automatically assume that it is a bad thing, because in this case, it isn't. I started it on Saturday, finished it on Sunday and here I am on Wednesday still trying to tie everything up in a pretty little bow and put it away on my "read" shelf. But it won't go quietly.

I have been married for 15 years and let me tell you -- it isn't easy. And I adore my husband. We got married after dating long distance (well, if you can say 80 miles apart is long distance) for 3 years and living together

for 1.5 years, so I feel pretty confident in saying that I knew him pretty well on the day we said "I do." So I can't even imagine marrying somebody that I didn't know.

The premise of this book fascinated me. To be in Ruhi's shoes. To be in Shaan's shoes. I mean, talk about taking a leap of faith. Yikes!

I love a good friends to more story - I've mentioned that before - but this was the exact opposite. A "more to friends", maybe?

Then throw in the fact that one of the involved parties has absolutely no intention of following through. That can't be easy.

And it isn't.

(side note - this review is not going at all in the direction that I thought it would)

The characters - I found myself really really liking them, though there were quite a few times where I wanted to grab them by the shoulders and shake some sense into them. Ruhi, in particular. She came across as a petulant, spoiled brat...but then I took a few steps back and thought about all the "steps" that she missed. This marriage was her first, her only, relationship. Marriage, people. No dating, no flirting, no messy break-ups. Marriage. She was completely naive. And maybe that allowed me to forgive her behavior just a little bit. Maybe...though she still generated her fair share of "eyerolls".

That being said, there was no shortage of emotion in this book. There was a little bit of everything. For every passage that made me want to smack somebody, there was one where I wanted to nod my head and say "see, you're doing it right". The swoony moments were swoony, and there was just enough humor to lighten moments at the exact right time. Thank you, Sunshine and that crazy bird of hers.

Now, I do feel like I need to talk about the writing. It was beautiful and fluid and flowy -- but it was also a bit...much. Not all the time, but there were times when I felt like a moment/scene/chapter/dialogue could have been cut in half and had the same impact. And yet, I don't know what I'd cut.

See what this book has done to me?

And stepping back and looking at my ramblings, maybe that is the sign of a good story. One that does grab a hold of the reader and lingers long after the final page is turned. It makes it a bit easier to overlook.

My review is also posted on my blog, Flutters and Flails

Reshma Dave says

This is a fantastic book. The characters are flawed yet you can't help but love them. Once I picked it up, I couldn't put it down till I finished. It has just the right touch of romance and angst. Good book!

Maria says

I received a complimentary copy of this book as a part of a book tour and rated it 5 out of 5 Stars.

A mixture of contemporary romance, coming of age tale and multicultural fiction, Simi K. Rao's *An Incurable Insanity* is a wonderful debut novel. Facing an arranged marriage, Ms. Rao's characters give us a chance to explore ancient traditions against the backdrop of a modern society with a high divorce rate. We also get the chance to experience the cultural differences between two countries, men and women and the basic truth that all you need is love.

The only daughter of a well to do family in India, Ruhi Sharma faces a bright future; educated, loved and beautiful, she agrees to an arranged marriage to make her father happy. She's even encouraged to participate in the choice of her future husband and chooses Shaan Ahuja, the son of a family friend, whose picture she falls in love with. Looking forward to her wedding and move to America, Ruhi is unprepared for what she discovers on her wedding night; a groom with no intentions of staying married who claims he's given his heart to someone else.

A graduate student when he first came to the United States, Shaan Ahuja is now an aerospace engineer with no intentions of ever returning to India. Involved in an unsatisfying affair with an American woman, Shaan is determined to avoid marriage at all costs. At least until his father informs him his grandfather is dying and that his last wish is to see Shaan married. Forced into an arranged marriage, Shaan is determined to make his intentions clear to his wife and plans to return her "untouched" to her family. Only he never planned on his wife being determined to save her pride and demand a two month time period where they could gently break it to their families they're not a good fit. Agreeing to her plan, Shaan is unprepared for the realities of having a roommate who has no intentions of going home.

The scenes between Ruhi and Shaan are well written and full of emotional angst. While Ruhi is infuriated with Shaan and his duplicity, she's determined to save her family from the embarrassing truth and also save her pride. While Shaan attempts to pretend Ruhi means nothing to his life, Ruhi quickly immerses herself into his house and attempts to break down his resistance – she's not giving up her husband without a fight. Ms. Rao does an excellent job developing her characters and dealing with the conflicting emotions they both undergo throughout the story. While neither planned on an emotional war for the other's heart, they do find themselves engaged in an emotional battle. Ruhi wants to win her husband's heart and feel love, while Shaan begins to realize he's been used by his previous partner and that Ruhi could very well be everything he's ever wanted.

The secondary characters all contribute something to Ms. Rao's tale; from Ruhi's parents, to Shaan's friends in America, the colorful people Ruhi meets at the bus stop and even the woman who stands between them at first. Showcasing the strengths, and weaknesses of each culture, Ms. Rao gives us insight into Indian cuisine, traditions and their colorful emotions. While an arranged marriage goes against the American idea of falling in love and choosing your own spouse, it's clear that an arranged marriage does have some appeal. Of course it's only when Ms. Rao's characters face their past, are honest about what they truly feel and make a conscious decision to give their future a chance that their arranged marriage has the greatest chance for success.

Will Ruhi learn to embrace life in the U.S. and capture her husband's heart? Will Shaan realize the happiness he's looking for can be found when he gives his heart to his new wife? You'll have to read *An Incurable Insanity* to find out. I loved it and can't wait to read what Ms. Rao writes next.

Cristian Arvinte says

A very cogent allegory of the meaning of a Committed Relationship, of Love's awesome power to either uplift and/or to hurt, and of the painful sacrifices that it sometimes requires to bear fruit. The shell of romance may appear playful, but the core contains as much drama as any journey towards one's Essence (even celibate monks & nuns of different faiths admit that Marriage, as the model of a Committed Relationship, is as difficult and rewarding a Spiritual Path as their own).

I have a wonderful 15 y/o Son whom I have urged to always do his best to not break a girl's/woman's heart, regardless of how committed (or not) his relationship(s) will be. I don't need to teach this to my wonderful 17 y/o Daughter; she, as most other women, are wiser than most of us, rascal-men, [at least] when it comes to commitment.

Melanie says

Ruhi and Shaan are both from India. They got married a month ago and are now living in LA. Their marriage was arranged and Shaan dropped a bombshell on Ruhi on their wedding night--he can't make love to her because there's someone else. She's shocked but decides to stay for a couple of months so they can say they tried to make their marriage work, and it will be easier for her to start over. We also learn from a conversation he had with his father prior to getting married, that he can't marry the woman he's involved with, because she's already married.

The way Ruhi handles his news and carries herself surprises Shaan and he starts to look at her differently. He's lost her trust, though, and she's determined to leave as soon as she can. But now he's having second thoughts. Will they be able to get on the same page and decide to really give their marriage a chance?

I was excited to read this book and while I enjoyed it overall, I personally had a couple of issues with it. I wish there would have been more of an explanation of the ceremonies that are referred to--the Mehendi, the Sangeet, the Haldi and the wedding ceremony itself. I don't know what those are and would have liked to have understood them better. I also like different POV's in stories but sometimes it changed too quickly for me, and we would get each of their thoughts as they were carrying on conversations with each other. Their first date, in particular, made me dizzy with all the back and forth. (This may not bother others--I'm getting older and slower, haha.)

There is lots of drama and they each change their mind a lot on whether or not they want to try to work on their marriage. Ruhi starts her marriage with one plan and when that doesn't work, she changes tactics, becoming more independent and more enticing to Shaan. She makes some new friends and it was fun to watch those relationships develop. She continues to amaze Shaan throughout the book and, even though she's frustrating at times, she's also very likable. I cut Ruhi some slack because she's quite young and was delivered devastating news and I honestly can't say I would have reacted any better than she did. I liked the cultural references that were included so I felt like I understood them a little more.

I wasn't impressed with Shaan at the beginning. We find out why he married Ruhi, which didn't paint him in the best light, either, but he shows a lot of growth and maturity as time goes on and redeemed himself to me in the end. There were some crazy, dramatic parts and also some calm, tender moments. I look forward to

reading more of Ms. Rao's books in the future!

Content: Mild swearing and some kissing

Mel's Shelves

Priyasree says

what do I say??? the title "An Incurable Insanity" says it all.

right from the beginning when u start reading, U will fall in love with the characters Shaan and Ruhi, and U will be hooked with it. at times u even feel like hugging or even slapping the characters...and that tells U how beautifully the author has penned down all the emotions. it has the touch of both American and Indian culture. the story is matured, realistic and a passionate one...It will surely take U on a roller coaster ride of emotions.

must read!!!

I would like to congratulate and thank the author Simi K.Rao for this wonderful story. U have done an wonderful, fantastic job.

Chu says

Review Originally Posted at: Book Freak

The first time Ruhi saw Shaan's picture – she just knew he was the one. So, among all the suitors that are vying for her attention, she allowed her father to arrange her marriage with a man she had never seen or talked to before. After all, their fathers have been friends and he was an eligible bachelor – handsome, smart, and has a stable job.

But at the night of the wedding, she realized that all her dreams were just illusions. The man she had dreamt about did not exist. It was not exactly how she envisioned her married life would be. Shaan might be kind to her, but his heart belonged to someone else. Ruhi decided to play the obedient, caring wife – cooking his meals, cleaning his house, and the like, but no matter what she does, it seems like it's never enough. He's never going to learn to love her.

Shaan had never thought that he'd followed tradition and agreed to an arranged marriage. But his father had blackmailed him into doing so. He had no choice but to do as he pleased, for his grandfather. In no way, however, he would claim his marital rights or carry out his vows. His previous relationship left him broken and angry. He made it clear to his new wife about his intentions – but he was in for a surprise for what his wife had in her mind.

Both of them exasperate me. Here are two people who finally realize their feelings for each other but no one is brave enough to take risks! Okay, Ruhi was hurt, disillusioned and her pride might have gotten bruised, she's away from her family in a strange country which she really knew no one, add in a disgruntled and bitter ex: ONE BIG TROUBLE. Doubt and insecurities sets in and no matter how much Shaan tries to make her explain – she shrugs him off. Shaan, on the other hand, has a mouth that knows no filter. I don't think he

knew what ticks off a girl, or what she wanted to hear. He had learned it the hard way and suffered the consequences. Nevertheless, I admire his tenacity in proving his feelings for her.

Arranged marriage might be a little medieval at this point in time, but then it still happens. Finding true love when someone else chose for you might be hard, but with fate on your side, you might be lucky enough to find happily ever after. They might have started out wrong, and their relationship had been a wild rollercoaster ride, but Shaan and Ruhi proved it just takes a little bit of trust and a whole lot of love for a relationship to succeed.

Love indeed can make you a little bit insane. These two had me on the verge of insanity, but I love them still. I enjoyed reading this novel, not just because of the banter between the two characters, or their love-hate relationship but Simi K. Rao gave us a glimpse of the richness and complexities on the Indian Culture.

*ARC Copy was given in exchange for an honest review.

Vatsalya says

For such a simple concept to appeal so well, to shape up so to really touch a chord somewhere emotionally, I would have to say the author has done a fabulous job. Wonderful piece of writing.

Great detailing whether it is about the Indian society, the American society, the relationship a newly married couple has with each other as well as with the rest of the family, the characters, the build up..it's very impressive. Ruhi's dilemma and Shaan's turmoil, they both have been dealt with so gently and wonderfully, you love both these imperfect creations of the author because of the fact that they are so.

The interest never dies throughout, there is not a single page you would want to skip, you might though want to read them again in fact just so you can actually take it all in, once again, slowly.

A delightful, engrossing read. Thumbs up!!

Rachelle Ayala says

A big hurrah to Simi Rao on her delightful story about Ruhi and Shaan, newlyweds, India style.

Ruhi is an independent, feisty, business school graduate who comes from a warm and loving family. Only problem. She is an only child and her parents want nothing more than to see her married. When the socially high-class and wealthy father of the groom brokers a match between Ruhi and his youngest son, Shaan, the stars seemed to line up and Ruhi is prepared for happily ever after.

Until... the groom drops a bomb on her wedding night. He won't sleep with her because he's in love with someone else! Screeeccch...

Ruhi does not want to disappoint her family or cause shame to fall on her, so she emigrates with Shaan to America where his married girlfriend lives. They agree to live together for two months and develop a disagreement that convinces their parents they should separate.

Secretly, Ruhi is in love with Shaan, but the last thing she wants is to be pathetic. When it appears he couldn't care less about her being a dutiful Indian wife, she sheds her accoutrements, the mangasutra and sindoor, and goes off exploring metropolitan Los Angeles. She meets a cast of colorful characters and causes Shaan heartache and worry as he wonders if she'll be mugged, kidnapped or swept off her feet by handsome strangers.

You can't help but pull for Ruhi because she is so direct with her emotions. And you really don't like Shaan at first until it becomes apparent that he realizes he's made a big mistake.

The book is full of fun scenes where Shaan tries to make up to Ruhi, taking her on fun trips to museums, restaurants, and even Vegas and the Grand Canyon. Meanwhile, Ruhi cannot trust Shaan's sincerity and tries his patience to the limit.

The chemistry and banter between the two is entertaining and Ruhi's antics are endearing. Even better, you get to learn about Indian culture and customs and see how important family is and how Ruhi's concern for her parents' feelings and loss of face overshadows her own happiness.

Shaan is forced to grovel to the vast enjoyment of the reader and not to give it away, but like all good romances, there is a happy ending for all. Well, maybe not for the married woman Shaan had an affair with, but she was a user anyway and a fitting villainess.

Unabashed 5 stars! I look forward to more from Dr. Rao. Bravo!
