



The Temple Dancer: A Novel of India (Novels of India)

By John Speed

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The Temple Dancer: A Novel of India (Novels of India) By John Speed

India, 1657.

When Maya, a graceful, young temple dancer with a mysterious past, is sold into slavery, she enters a world of intrigue, violence, and forbidden love. Bought by a Portuguese trader and sold as a concubine to the dissolute vizier of Bijapur, she embarks on a treacherous journey.

In a caravan led by the dangerous settlement man Da Gama, she travels by elephant on the hostile road to Bijapur, joined by Geraldo, a Portuguese adventurer, and Pathan, a handsome prince who carries a dark secret. Together with Lucinda, a beautiful, spoiled young Goan heiress, and the manipulative eunuch Slipper, they climb the windswept mountain road through the Western Ghats.

When their caravan is attacked by bandits, the travelers' lives are turned upside down. In the aftermath, Maya and Lucinda suddenly find themselves stranded in a strange, exotic world, a world filled with passion, romance, and deception, pure love and lurking evil, where nothing is as it seems and the two women are faced with great temptation as well as heart-wrenching decisions that will affect the rest of their lives.

Greed, politics, commitment, courage, love, and intolerance mesh to form a vibrant Indian tapestry. With spectacular settings, unforgettable characters, fierce sensuality, and intense scholarship, this adventure-packed novel marks the debut of an exciting new storyteller.

The Temple Dancer is the first volume of John Speed's Indian trilogy, a three-book journey that will cover the final years of the Mogul Empire and the rise of the Marathis under the highwayman Shivaji. It will leave you breathlessly awaiting his next novel.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

A melange of creatively imagined characters populates Speed's first novel (the first installment of a proposed trilogy), an entertaining historical saga that takes place in 17th-century India. At the center of the story is Maya, a Hindi slave who is being transported across dangerous terrain by a caravan of Portuguese settlers that includes the aging adventurer Da Gama and Lucinda, a spoiled but sensitive young woman. The most intriguing traveler is Slipper, a Muslim eunuch whose relationship to Maya serves as one of the driving mysteries of the novel. The fast-paced story benefits from intriguing characters and situations twisted just enough to keep them on the safe side of unbelievable. Though the story is sometimes beset by overexplanation and cartoonishly violent episodes, it's driven by a contagious enthusiasm for the people and places encountered throughout the journey. Speed, a longtime scholar of Indian history, takes more care with plot and cultural color than dialogue and style, but the result is an enjoyable adventure that still has respect for its characters. (Aug. 31)

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From [Booklist](#)

Renowned historian Speed conducts an exciting tour of seventeenth-century India. Lavish and lush, this mesmerizing novel wends its way across the exotic Indian landscape as Maya, a dazzling temple dancer bought by a savvy Portuguese businessman as a politically expedient gift for the grand vizier of Bijapur, is transported via caravan to her new master. Of course, the road to Bijapur is not a smooth one, and Maya and her escorts face a new danger around every bend. Chock-full of sex, suspense, and peril, this high-voltage adventure yarn will rapidly transport willing readers to a vanished time and place. The initial volume in a projected trilogy, this installment will leave readers craving more. *Margaret Flanagan*

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Review

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"The fast-paced story benefits from intriguing characters and situations twisted just enough to keep them on the safe side of unbelievable . . . it's driven by a contagious enthusiasm for the people and places encountered throughout the journey . . . an enjoyable adventure that still has respect for its characters."---*Publishers Weekly*

"A richly atmospheric debut." ---*Kirkus Reviews*

" . . . an absorbing adventure and love story . . . fast-paced and suspenseful."
---*About.com*

"*The Temple Dancer* sweeps the reader into an age of passion and danger, romance, chivalry, and high adventure---an age when a bandit could defy an emperor and a dancing girl change the course of history. Set against the rich backdrop of Moghul India, *The Temple Dancer*'s combination of history, intrigue, and forbidden love should appeal to anyone who loves M. M. Kaye's *The Far Pavilions* and *Shadow of the*

Moon. In fact, it should appeal to anyone who loves a story that will totally intrigue them."

---India Edghill, author of *Queenmaker* and *Wisdom's Daughter*

"What an adventure! Two women, utterly different in culture and outlook, travel across seventeenth century India on elephant back and discover, in the face of betrayal, that they have a great deal more in common than they ever suspected. Beautifully researched, this novel has it all: heroes adept with sword and pistol, bold and independent heroines, corrupt rulers, treacherous eunuchs, slippery merchants, and bloodthirsty banditti. The author stirs them all together with a handsome dose of conspiracy, mysticism, and sensuality to create a splendid entertainment in the grand style. --Judith Merkle Riley, author of *A Vision of Light*, *The Oracle Glass*, *The Master of All Desires*, and *The Water Devil*

The Temple Dancer is an ocean of a story, filled with adventure, passion, and heartbreak. It's compulsively readable and everything you want in a novel."

---Michael Swanwick, author of *Bones of the Earth*

The Temple Dancer is a lush, loopy, multicultural epic set in seventeenth-century India, like the cockeyed marriage of a Bollywood musical and an Errol Flynn/Olivia de Havilland movie, well-researched, playfully written, and highly entertaining."

---Christopher Bram, author of *Gods and Monsters* and *Lives of the Circus Animals*

The Temple Dancer is what reading is all about. This book upholds true literature, which is . . . the beauty of language. There is a wonderful world here full of enchantment and nourishment."

---Daniel Ladinsky, translator of *The Gift* and *I Heard God Laughing*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lisa Jennings:

As people who live in often the modest era should be revise about what going on or details even knowledge to make these keep up with the era and that is always change and make progress. Some of you maybe will probably update themselves by looking at books. It is a good choice for you but the problems coming to a person is you don't know what one you should start with. This *The Temple Dancer: A Novel of India* (Novels of India) is our recommendation so you keep up with the world. Why, because book serves what you want and wish in this era.

Jennifer Barton:

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