



Diffusion

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What would you sacrifice to bring to light the greatest discovery in human history?

Quentin Darnell was only a boy when his anthropologist parents were overcome by a professional failure so crushing it led to his father's suicide. Now a schoolteacher, Quentin is looking for answers that can only be found in the wild terrains of Indonesian Papua, where years ago his parents studied an isolated aboriginal tribe.

Quentin leads his wife, son, and six students on a field trip to experience Papua's pristine tropical forests. When their plane tragically crashes in the wilderness, Quentin becomes trapped in a vicious fight to protect the ones he loves.

Just as resources and hope run out, several mysterious tribesmen appear, bearing a substance with extraordinary healing properties. The material promises to benefit all of humanity. But it's much more than medicine. It creates creatures unknown to science. And it brings to life what should remain dead—including Quentin's own son, Addison.

Logic and sanity begin to unravel. Addison speaks a new language. He knows things he shouldn't. And he's a killer.

For the others to escape, Quentin must face a decision no parent should have to make.

Diffusion Details

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From Reader Review Diffusion for online ebook

Rosemary Standeven says

An American biology teacher, his wife and son, and six of his teenage students go on a school trip to Papua New Guinea to study the indigenous flora and fauna. Papua New Guinea is a highly forested country, full of many as yet unidentified species. It also has many tribes and languages, and in most of the country, few of the trappings of Western Civilisation. Quentin Darnell is passionate about the place, and all the scientific possibilities that he could investigate here, and is equally passionate about introducing his students to such an intoxicating environment. The students, for their part, are generally very interested, but also attached to their smart phones, computer games and Western lifestyle.

The writing is excellent – you can feel the steamy oppressiveness of the forest, and the mounting fears (and confusion) of the Americans. The Papuan landscape and cultures have been well researched (bibliography at the end), and the dialog is scattered with Papuan phrases, which are translated at the end. On a Kindle it is rather difficult to look up each phrase as it is used, but you can usually understand what is being said by either the context, or an immediate translation of general sense.

(Small spoiler alert)

On the final day in the field, they come into contact with some Papuan men, in traditional garb, who appear very intimidating. It is generally believed, that while there is a lot of intertribal and anti-government violence in the country – tourists are usually quite safe. Suddenly it appears that might not be the case.

Back in town, the students are allowed to spend their last hours exploring on their own. But, the atmosphere changes substantially for the worst, and they need to evacuate immediately. It takes time to get everyone together, and they are forced to take the last (tiny) plane out. Relief on making the plane soon turns into horror as they crash. A book that started as American teens abroad, interacting with local peoples and nature, now becomes a fight for survival as they crash in impenetrable jungle, miles from anywhere. Nothing way out of the ordinary so far.

But then it gets strange ... stranger ... and really weird. We are not in Kansas anymore! There is an abrupt change of genre – that takes a while to work out exactly what the new genre is: ethnography, fantasy, scifi, folklore – or all mixed in together. The pace increases markedly, and the possible outcomes shift from moment to moment. Each of the Americans has to make profound moral decisions. Whose life is worth saving? At what price? Can killing another person ever be justified? What if they are a stranger, a friend, a family member? Is one culture more important than another? Is scientific advancement paramount at all cost? After the explosion of the A-bomb, Oppenheimer quoted the Bhagavid-Gita: “Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds”. What will Quentin Darnell, his son and the students become?

This is a remarkable novel that changes and evolves as the pages turn. It is very difficult to put down, and even when you have finished reading it, the tale still occupies your thoughts. Even if the moral dilemmas leave you cold, you will definitely be left with an overwhelming love for tree kangaroos.

I received this copy from the author in exchange for an honest review

Bandit says

To be honest normally a cheesy cover on a kindle freebie from an unknown author is usually enough to warn me off the book. But in this case there was an armchair trip to Papua New Guinea offered and I'm all about vicarious travel, so I checked it out and I'm glad I did. The quality of the writing certainly surpassed the quality of the cover. It may be occasionally silly and there's enough teens to attract a YA audience (which is

basically too many for an adult reader), but it still works. It's a really entertaining adventure, far fetched for sure, but fast paced, original and conceptually intriguing. Exotic setting helps, but the main premise of the greatest discovery since...whatever you consider the last greatest discovery and the possibility/threat of subsequent diffusion from a purely anthropological view is fascinating. Looks like the author is expanding his fictional universe with a prequel, sequel and so on, because...well, why not, it's a fun world to visit if only from a safety of your favorite reading place and not in person. This is evolution with a sci fi angle and plenty of action. Good for a quick diverting read.

C.L. says

Truly Interesting Anthropological Mystery With Twist

Imagine discovering an unknown tribe of humans at a moment of great personal trauma and being made aware that there is a power greater than anything you could imagine that has been tapped into. If you have ever wondered what it might be like to truly explore an unknown world with the potential of new discovery, this book will be a thrill. Two teachers of science take a group of teens, including their son, to New Guinea on an exploration trip. They suffer an unexpected setback that forces them into life & death...and even beyond those conditions and situations. The world turns upside down. Intrigue, mystery and even frightening elements will have you turning the pages quickly to find out what force is at work and who will survive.

Mark says

This was a free download from BookBub.com, so I gave it a chance. It is a mix of science fiction and fantasy. A school field trip to Papau, a plane crash, and then a bunch of very strange discoveries drives the story which is part 1 of a series. It was creative and compelling which led me to finish it quickly. I was dissatisfied with the ending, which often happens to me, but in this case it was due to the real ending coming at the end of the series, which I might or might not get to unless BookBub offers it up.

Margo James says

Strange magic!

This book was hard for me to get into. It took me a week to read, but I stuck with it because there is a message that I needed to discover. Please read to the end before you decide. The premise is unique, the writing dodgy, but there is action, and more importantly, it makes you think.

Melissa Montana says

I enjoyed this book. I thought the opening was a bit slow, but once it got to the action, I was interested to the end. I was impressed on how the indigenous people were portrayed; not as good or evil, but as human. The author does a good job of showing the unique tribal culture, while keeping the book simple and easy to read. The sci-fi twist is good. I would recommend it.

Mel says

Diffusion

Well crafted and written storyline. I have enjoyed this first book, thrilling plot. I must say that I nearly liked the whole book, but as I found out what they have found I was a bit baffled, because somehow it doesn't fit in this fantastic detailed storyline within this extraordinary tribe they found. I couldn't believe that they take it with them. But I guess this will lead to more books in this series. I would have liked to read more in this series, but the thing they found its not my kind of interest. Sorry. I loved the style and imagination in this book, special to read about this hidden tribe, how they lived.

Margaret says

Building on prequel or book #0 Savage, Diffusion by Stan C. Smith tells of a small group of teachers and students returning by plane from Papua due to an outbreak of hostilities by local freedom fighters. Their small plane crashes in an area virtually isolated from any sort of civilization. The remaining survivors, unable to contact anyone for assistance do their best to survive and assist the wounded.

A Tree Kangaroo finds them and seems to begin helping them. They become aware of a few undiscovered tribe members who do not appear to be friendly. The teacher in charge of the group, Quentin, tries to go for help and encounters an explorer who seems to have been living with the tribe for a good many years, prevented from ever leaving. At least, the explorer is able to persuade the tribe to help the group and not kill them. Once brought to their village and miraculously and almost instantly healed. they find themselves also prevented to leave. Tribe members are unable to heal one of the student, Quentin's son. However, the boy appears to come back to life, but does not seem himself.

All this sets the scene for mystery and unearthly happenings involving the source of the healing and a great deal more. This fascinating story is one thrilling scene after another. What the tribesmen have found, and what they have been protecting has been awaiting someone foretold to come and take it to the rest of the world. They believe that some of those in Quentin's group are those who will be the ones foretold. Fortunately for us, there are more books coming to trace what happens when they leave with what the tribe has been protecting. Very exciting reading.

David says

Just finished reading this thriller by first-time novelist Stan C. Smith. Once started I couldn't put it down and finished it up in three sittings over three days. This mix of nature, science, and fantasy is a compelling read. Set in Indonesian Papua you'll be surprised and unsettled by what an anthropologist turned teacher, his wife, son and six students stumble into deep in the jungle. The secret they discover changes them, and could change the world as we know it. But, only if they survive the jungle and it's 'lost in time' inhabitants. The author has done his homework and the novel's setting is based in reality, or at least what is known about this remote jungle area. I'm looking forward to the sequel that's out very soon.

Megan McCormack says

Some spoilers below...Read with caution!

This was a fascinating book by first-time-published author, Stan Smith. What I particularly enjoyed was how quickly the book introduces action and conflict; this makes for a story that is riveting and engaging.

The setting of the book is different from a lot of books I've read lately, and I loved learning about Papua and the impact of anthropology and diffusion. What costs come with our interactions with other cultures? When we visit another country and civilization, is it only for our own needs? What happens when we make assumptions of those with beliefs and practices different than ours?

Smith explores these questions using elements of science fiction that I found to be unique and interesting. Using science fiction to investigate and address real-life issues is just one of the many ways that this book transcends multiple genres. Quentin, his family, and a small group of students start out as relatively naive characters with the goal of exploring another culture. After a mysterious plane crash, the characters quickly learn that their assumptions, mindsets, and previous ways of living must be discarded in order to try to understand their new situation and to adapt to their surroundings. Their arrival in this unfamiliar territory is devastating not only for themselves, but also for the tribe they encounter.

In this novel, the "end of the world" is presented in many ways: the death of loved ones, the end of a culture, the end of previous ways of living, the end of one's previously formed identity, the literal ending of the world, and more. The novel is not an apocalyptic novel, but it certainly has some of those influences. The end of the world is something that many of the characters express, especially those from the tribe. They are aware of this (and have been expecting it for quite some time), while Quentin and the others struggle with trying to understand and shed their preconceived notions of the world and beyond.

This inability to "let go" and to be more open-minded is also represented in the fate of Quentin's son, and it causes many fatal problems for all the characters. Those from the tribe warned Quentin and his wife about Addison, but they refused to believe them until it was far too late. Even Samuel, a character who has been with this tribe for a couple hundred years, still fails to see that he is the one who is a relic of a closed-minded and damaging culture; he may see himself as progressive, but that is hardly the case.

What I've mentioned above is just a little piece of Diffusion; this creative and fast-paced novel is sure to fascinate many readers. I'm looking forward to reading the next installment in this series!

J.elaine says

A first novel by a brand new author? That's exactly what Diffusion by Stan C. Smith is. Once I started the book, I read it as quickly as I could - not really wanting to put it down. When I was forced to set it aside, I determined the next time I picked up Diffusion it would be all-the-way-to-the-finish-non-stop reading! I'm not usually a very fast reader, but the totally surprising plot twists drew me into the text and propelled me through to the end. When I finished, I conjured up all kinds of possibilities for the characters' future

experiences. After all, with sci-fi anything can happen - right? That's when I picked up Book 2 - Infusion to actually find out for myself!

Lisa says

What can I say? Words are not enough to express how much I enjoyed this book. If you like adventure and the outdoors, this is for you. Imagine being on a plane over the jungle and it crashing! You, along with your family and a few others survive. This is what happens to one couple, along with the students that are traveling with them. They meet a tribe that has never had contact with the outside world except for a few men. Just think what people in the jungle would think of us and modern stuff. Not only would we affect them but we would also be affected. We could also pass along certain diseases they haven't been vaccinated for. But this isn't what happens in this story. There are magical things out there that can't be explained. These Americans also meet a man who once lived centuries ago. Strange things seem to happen in this jungle. There's something that can't be explained. I loved how this really brought nature up close and personal. I've always wanted to go to the jungle, but now it also seems a little creepy. I loved all the characters and felt great sorrow when a few passed away.

Susan says

Diffusion is the first book in the Diffusion series. This book can be read as a standalone but is open-ended for the next book. There is violence.

The book blurb adequately describes the storyline so I'm not going to repeat that info here. This storyline is an interesting mix of mystery, anthropology, and SciFi. There are some interesting twists and turns throughout the book. I have my suspicions as to some of the things in the next story. I'll have to read it to find out if I guessed right.

Mike Goodman says

Wow Totally Surprised

This story of a school field trip that really gets started after the plane crash was so far from expected totally surprised me. While they're captured by a group of savages who are guarding an ancient alien artifact really piqued my interest. Couldn't stop reading. ..

Lauren says

The truth is out there.....

This story is right out of the X Files and I loved the X Files. I did not realize this was that type of story or I may not have read it. I am glad I did though as it poses difficult questions. It held my interest throughout and I didn't figure out what was going on until the author started dropping hints. It is not a stand alone book and

you'll have to get the next book in the series to see what happens. I imagine the story will not conclude until all the books are read.
