



## Touched By Venom: Book One of the Dragon Temple Saga

By Janine Cross

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**Touched By Venom: Book One of the Dragon Temple Saga** By Janine Cross

Like her half-breed mother, young Zarq Darquel can't always hold her tongue. A peasant on a large dragon estate, she goes unnoticed by the Dragon Temple-until she captures the attention of a dragonmaster. Her clan is plunged into destitution, her sister Waivia sold into slavery, and her mother lost to madness. Desperate to find Waivia, Zarq and her delirious mother flee. Zarq then develops a taste for the highly addictive venom of the dragons she has been taught to revere-and with it, she imbibes their memories and a glimpse of a plot for social revolution. But to achieve it, she must defy not just sexual taboos and patriarchal society, but the Emperor who rules her nation.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Set in Malacar, a land with a repressive patriarchal society that both worships and enslaves dragons, Cross's bold debut introduces headstrong nine-year-old Zaraq Darquel, who lives a harsh but not completely unpleasant life as a member of the pottery clan on a dragon estate. When destitution forces her father to sell Waisi, Zaraq's beautiful older sister, into sexual slavery, her mother, Kavarrria, who belongs to the disdained Djimbi race, tries to save Waisi at all costs, but more tragedy follows. Zaraq, her life governed by her mother's madness and obsession, eventually winds up as a sexually mutilated nun caring for retired bull dragons. Turning the fantasy cliché of the underdog girl who dreams of dragon-mastery into a grim but fascinating coming-of-age tale, Cross scratches only the surface of this richly detailed, well-imagined world. Hints of a plot involving social and religious revolution hold promise for future installments of the Dragon Temple saga.

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Review

A compelling and harrowing journey...a vividly rendered world. -- *Jacqueline Carey*

About the Author

Janine Cross has published short fiction in various Canadian magazines and was nominated for an Aurora Award in 2002. Her mainstream fiction has appeared in newspapers and a local anthology, *Shorelines*. She has also published a literary novel.

### Users Review

**From reader reviews:**

**Ella Cook:**

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**Dena Jacobs:**

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