

BOOK REVIEW

Tamblyn examines rape culture through a new lens

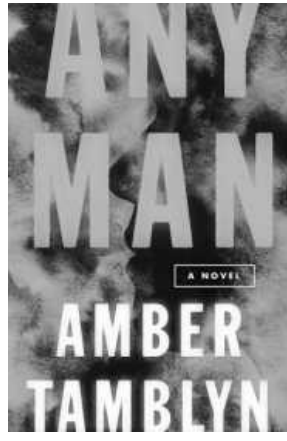
Steph Cha
Special to USA TODAY

Amber Tamblyn — actor, director, writer and prominent voice of the #MeToo movement — has written a book about a female serial rapist who preys on men. “Any Man” (Harper Perennial, 304 pp., ★★☆☆) is her debut novel, and it has a few interesting things to say about rape culture and social media, shame and survival.

These flickers of insight are spread thin across a short, experimental novel, built with odd parts that never quite come together.

The storytelling is eclectic by design: a collage of poetry and prose, OkCupid chats and diary entries, tweets and interview transcripts. There’s even a series of drawings.

These fragments relate the experi-



Author
Amber
Tamblyn

ences of several men over a period of many years, all of them victims of a twisted sexual predator known only as Maude. Violent and amorphous, she becomes a bogeywoman who fascinates the media, dragging her victims into the

public eye. Their voices, and those of the people around them, form a sort of chorus that reports on our culture.

Tamblyn has an ear for colloquial writing, and the strongest parts of the novel belong to Pear and Jamar, two of Maude’s victims who speak in a direct, confessional style. (Jamar’s struggle with self-harm is especially poignant: “I was disappearing here in this world, which in some way meant I was reappearing somewhere else. I was whole somewhere else. I was free somewhere else.”)

Her poetry, though, is mildly excruciating, and the book suffers when Donald, a poet and Maude’s first victim, is driving the narration: “I feel a tongue./ Or a tongue is felt./ It is my tongue/or it is a tongue/belonging to someone else./ I am someone else./ Or I am the tongue/belonging to a self.”

Tamblyn takes some admirable sty-

listic risks, but the book reads like a first draft — a handful of good ideas thrown out and left where fallen, without the rich language or disciplined structure needed to give them power.

It isn’t even clear, in the end, what “Any Man” wants to say. I don’t demand a clear message from my fiction, but this is a book that asks us to look in the mirror, and see — what?

As one character notes, men are frequent victims of sexual violence; yet when men are attacked in this novel, they’re all assumed to be victims of Maude — a concept, yes, but also an individual perpetrator — even when the only common thread is her cruelty.

“Any Man” offers, at best, some food for thought, nodding vaguely in the direction of a cluster of cultural problems. But the book favors form over substance and suffers on both counts.

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CROSSWORD
EDITED Fred Piscop
BY Tracy Gray

PATTERN PLAY

ACROSS

1 Like ice caps
6 Honeymoon locale, perhaps
10 Kendrick Lamar’s genre
13 One-named British pop star
14 One-inch putt, e.g.
15 Get value from
16 “Song Sung Blue” singer
18 Potato storage unit
19 “Neato!”
20 Anti-nuke treaty topic
22 Place for a Swedish massage
24 Semiaquatic amphibian
26 Ryan of “The Beverly Hillbillies”
27 Martial arts blows
29 Protection from the elements
31 Calf catchers’ gear
33 Strip mine yield
34 Cardiac ultrasound test, for short
37 “1 BR” listing, e.g.
38 Kelly and Ryan, on TV
41 Drill sergeant’s “one”
42 687 Earth days, to Mars
44 400-meter path, perhaps
45 Most confident
47 Toy for a builder
50 Places for mufflers
51 Clueless... or cruising
53 “Umble” Uriah of fiction
55 “Red ___ at night...”
56 Compulsive hoarder
58 Part of an omnivore’s diet
60 Snowden’s former employer, briefly
61 “This Is Country Music” singer
66 Fish in sushi rolls

DOWN

1 Bundt ___ (bakery utensil)
2 Romantic poem
3 Tiki party neckwear
4 Indicator of “shouting,” online
5 Update, as decor
6 “___ Legend” (Will Smith thriller)
7 Weightlifters’ helpers
8 Singles bar delivery
9 Breaks up a relationship
10 Bounced payment
11 Balinese or Bhutanese
12 Tubular pasta
14 Brothers Grimm offerings
17 Na+ or Cl-

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Monday’s Answer

C	O	L	A	R	A	D	A	R	C	H	A	T
A	L	A	S	E	D	D	I	E	H	O	S	E
R	I	G	H	T	G	U	A	R	D	A	N	T
E	V	E	R	E	L	I	S	O	S	O	I	N
S	E	R	P	E	N	T	S	A	B	E	R	
			O	A	T	S	Q	U	I	R	R	E
R	O	B	E	D	D	E	U	C	E	O	D	E
A	L	I	T	D	I	X	I	E	C	L	A	N
S	A	G	H	O	N	E	D	P	A	L	M	S
P	F	C	H	A	N	G	S	S	A	L		
			H	E	L	L	O	F	U	N	F	A
C	R	E	A	T	E	E	R	R	S	B	O	Y
H	O	E	D	M	E	M	O	R	Y	B	A	N
E	L	S	E	O	P	I	N	E	I	S	E	E
W	E	E	D	N	A	T	T	Y	B	E	S	S

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CROSSWORDS ON YOUR PHONE

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WORD ROUNDUP

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek 6/26

Find and Circle:
Five gases
Five words starting with EX
Three habitable structures
The Dynamic Duo
Thin, foldable mattress

Monday’s answer: SAPPHIRE DIAMOND EMERALD RUBY OPAL / CONDOR CANARY CRANE CROW / PACIFIC ARCTIC INDIAN / SMELT SOLE / FIVE NINE

QUICKCROSS

By John Wilmes 6/26

Watercraft					
Scandinavian city					
Watercraft					
Disrespectful speech					
Manager					
Plant safety org.					

Monday’s Answer
JETS
AMIE
KING
ETTA

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QUICKCROSS ON YOUR PHONE

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SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 (no repeats).

	8	7		5		1		
9			2	7		8	3	
			3	1			7	
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5	4			8		6	3	
2								9
	2			5	7			
	6	9		3	2			1
	5		8			2	9	

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SUDOKU FUSION ON YOUR PHONE

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UP & DOWN WORDS

By David L. Hoyt and Russell L. Hoyt 6/26

1. CHICKEN
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

PERSON

Clues:
1. Drumstick
2. Hamstring, e.g.
3. Vehicle made for speed
4. Axle or shock absorber
5. Sequel’s subtitle
6. Duo
7. Friendly individual

Monday’s Answer
BRIGHT SIDE POCKET CHANGE HANDS DOWN SOUTH
SIDE POCKET CHANGE HANDS DOWN SOUTH KOREA

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SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 (no repeats).

	6	3	4			1		
	5		2			6		
	2		1					
			1			2		
4		6				1		
5		2	3	6				

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TXTPERT

Across: 1. 338245, 2. 38653, 5. 6746466, 6. 7378233, 8. 4468, 9. 8253
Down: 3. 25427, 4. 268368, 6. 7568, 7. 7325

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Today’s theme: Literary terms

Use the phone keypad to decode the clues.
For example: 2 could be A, B or C... and 5678 could be LOST

1	C	O	L	O	N	G	
2	H	I	P	U	M		
3	S	R	A	S	H		
4	K	O	S				
5	N	T	O	N	G	U	E
6	E	O	S				
7	E	Y	E	S			

Yesterday’s solution

DON’T QUOTE ME

Writer Hal Borland talks about nature. Rearrange the words to complete the quote.
CAN GRASS MEANING PERSISTENCE TREES UNDERSTAND

“KNOWING _____, I _____ THE _____ OF PATIENCE, KNOWING _____, I _____ APPRECIATE _____.”

Monday’s Answer: “What is true by lamplight is not always true by sunlight.” - Joseph Joubert

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