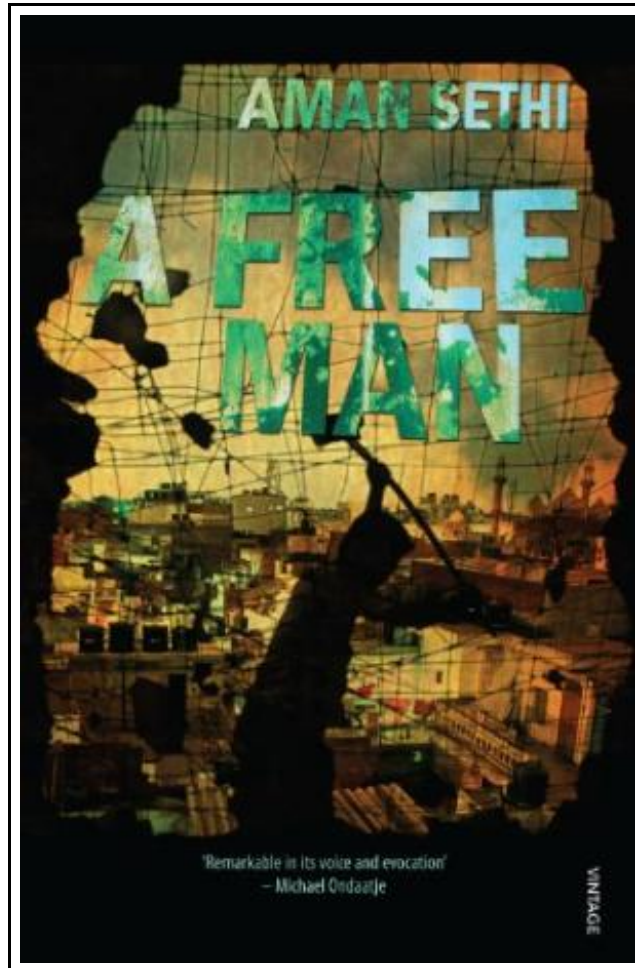


A Free Man



Filesize: 8.72 MB

Reviews

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(Annette Boyle)

A FREE MAN



Random House Publishers India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2012. Soft cover. Book Condition: New. In this landmark work of reportage, Aman Sethi sets out to understand the life of Mohammad Ashraf, a daily-wage worker in Delhi's Bara Tooti Chowk. Spending the greater part of five years in "the largely empty space between the backpacker haven of Paharganj and picturesque Chandni Chowk", where daily-wage transactions take place, he learns, over alcohol, tea and ganja, the story of Ashraf's life. Bringing labour into the narrative of the city, Sethi chronicles the minutiae that make up the lives of the labourers who are building Delhi: from the boiled eggs, sweet tea, varieties of raw alcohol that can quickly nullify a day's earnings, secret pockets stitched into clothes, and unconventional banking arrangements to the vulnerability of the labourers to the kidney mafia and their survival in a network of systems that should serve but mostly alienates. The vignettes come in asides to the running conversations with Ashraf, throwing light on the lives of countless invisible men. A Free Man gives us the lens to view a contemporary transformation. Deeply insightful and compulsively readable, it is a humane, intimate and compelling account of an individual and a group of people who are most often explained away in a statistic. Page Extent: 240.



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