

By KC Calpo

An acquaintance had explained her book-buying habits in this way: she gets print copies of the books she wants people to know she owns, but only downloads e-books for titles she won't ever admit to wanting or having. I don't follow the same rules, but I'll admit to having some e-books that I'm relieved no one else will ever see.

Which is why I feel slightly conflicted with Alma Anonas-Carpio's debut novel *How to Tame Your Tikbalang Without Even Trying*, the first in her planned Tikbalang series. First released in late 2015, it got a layout refresh last year, along with a new cover by Rica Palomo-Espiritu. Of course, I'd want more people to know about it, but I also feel selfish and smug. Everyone else is still stuck with bad mommy porn; and I'm reading something that hasn't been done before, as far as I know, and is as far from mommy porn as you'd think.

In this case, it's Philippine mythology and erotica (mytherotica). Tala, a rookie Babaylan working in a Makati call center, and Buhawi, an Adonis-like alpha-male banker who also happens to be a tikbalang, crash into each other's lives after Tala obtains a diary written by her "crazy" ancestor Beatriz. Individually, the Babaylan must learn about and harness her powers, and the tikbalang must be tamed by said Babaylan so he can ascend the Molave Throne as its rightful heir. Together, in their pursuit of love and immortality, they encounter problems like a wayward tikbalang sibling, an ancestor's thwarted union with another tikbalang gone mad, and conflicting emotions about spending forever with someone you barely know. The penalties? Death for both, not to mention prolonged insanity for the Tikbalang.

Let's get the biggest part out of the way: shall we? You read erotica primarily for the sex, and anyone

who says otherwise is a liar. "How to Tame Your Tikbalang Without Even Trying" doesn't disappoint—there's plenty of that throughout the novel's 242 pages of content. They're graphic and oh-so-racy, with the clear intent of stoking hearts, libidos, and body temperatures. Anonas-Carpio makes her main characters go at it in every possible position in every possible place: from her apartment to his house, from back seats to bathrooms, from private beaches to stokoy-owned love caves, and even from the real world to the Other World. Her vivid imagination gives us sex toys that exist in real life and only on every woman's wish list; and her characters, enviable stamina and prowess that I doubt an actual living, breathing person has. Vines from magic balls, instant chains, lightning-powered dildos and a seven-stage sex marathon, oh my!

Erotica also requires a solid plot and setting as backbone, and for the most part this novel has those down too. There are a lot of statements, facts, and bits about our country's folklore, traditions, and destinations, with the action spanning Manila to the Visayans and up north toward Paay. The novel also includes a glossary that explains local myths, expressions and phrases, and even culinary dishes. It's quite the introduction for non-Filipino readers—and answers that damn persistent "Filipinoness" question asked of every piece of local literature.

But the ample sexytyme also leads to other questions. Even with the

novel's emphasis on equality, consent and reciprocity, the first few chapters showcased problematic behavior for both leads, behavior that many people unfortunately still call romantic. Tala and Buhawi's characterizations are uneven at times, with both switching moods and intents at whim, sometimes in the same page. At times, Buhawi came across as mere supernatural beefcake with a raging hard-on than a potential life partner for Tala. The supposed villains weren't given enough page time, and their motives were mostly explained by the main and supporting characters. The dirty talk and catch phrases become repetitive, some acquiring a comical effect for me by the back half. There were four scenes wherein the new couple devoured big meals (pre- and post-coitus), which seemed to me like the novel was buying time until the next Big Moment. One character's coming-out was unexpected but unearned, and another's unforgivable betrayal wasn't built up properly.

And if you know the author well enough, you'd know what she has taken from real life and made fictional, and how. Her journalism background also shows; some parts of the novel were too detailed, and I was expecting even devices' model numbers to be stated at some point. Some would say this is a mild blurring of the line for a work of fiction, but I'd say she wrote the story she wanted to tell, exactly the way she wanted to. Isn't that every writer's wet dream? ■

Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying

Alma Aileen Joy Anonas-carpio

Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying:

How to Tame Your Tikbalang Without Even Trying Alma Anonas-Carpio, 2021-03-25 What happens when a Babaylan finds herself a Tikbalang to tame Tala Bienvenido can't help but be curious about a strange book in the attic of her clan's ancestral home and she finds herself thrust into a world filled with ancient lore when she takes the old tome Buhawi Batumbakal was caught and he knew it Yet all that was clear to him was that he needed to find a way to make that Babaylan his forever elemental disturbances and threats to his life and hers notwithstanding In Philippine lore and mythology the Tikbalang is a monster hybrid of horse and warrior that is feared throughout the archipelago Just as fearsome are the priestesses of the pre colonial animist religion The Babaylanes A Babaylan it is said can heal the sick and injured commune with the gods and goddesses speak and do battle with otherworldly creatures like the Tikbalang and yes strike her foes down with lightning called from the heavens So what does happen when this Babaylan meets that Tikbalang This work of fiction contains graphic depictions of sexual acts that some readers may deem offensive It is not for the faint of heart or for anyone younger than 18

How to Tame Your Tikbalang Without Even Trying Alma Anonas-Carpio, 2015-11-27 What happens when a Babaylan finds herself a Tikbalang to tame Tala Bienvenido can't help but be curious about a strange book in the attic of her clan's ancestral home and she finds herself thrust into a world filled with ancient lore when she takes the old tome Buhawi Batumbakal was caught and he knew it Yet all that was clear to him was that he needed to find a way to make that Babaylan his forever elemental disturbances and threats to his life and hers notwithstanding In Philippine lore and mythology the Tikbalang is a monster hybrid of horse and warrior that is feared throughout the archipelago Just as fearsome are the priestesses of the pre colonial animist religion The Babaylanes A Babaylan it is said can heal the sick and injured commune with the gods and goddesses speak and do battle with otherworldly creatures like the Tikbalang and yes strike her foes down with lightning called from the heavens So what does happen when this Babaylan meets that Tikbalang This work of fiction contains graphic depictions of sexual acts that some readers may deem offensive It is not for the faint of heart or for anyone younger than 18

Maligno Unbound Alma Aileen Joy Anonas-Carpio, 2017-09-18 Mythology meets New Millennium Welcome to the Philippines where creatures from the mists of myth walk on the seashores streets of the 7 107 islands of this archipelago They will eat you and ask for seconds and thirds with lechon sauce Six tales weave monsters into the fabric of a crime scene on an island paradise through Manila's underbelly into the kill zone of Tirad Pass out into isles of dispute and out into the world where Filipino migrant workers earn their keep as the new heroes of a country still struggling to become the pearl it has long been called and into the walking nightmare of a zombie apocalypse Welcome to the monster heart of the Pinoy soul Come walk the night with me

Immerse yourself in heartwarming tales of love and emotion with is touching creation, Tender Moments: **Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying** . This emotionally charged ebook, available for download in a PDF format (*), is a celebration of love in all its forms. Download now and let the warmth of these stories envelop your heart.

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Table of Contents Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying

1. Understanding the eBook Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying
 - The Rise of Digital Reading Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying
 - Advantages of eBooks Over Traditional Books
2. Identifying Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying
 - Exploring Different Genres
 - Considering Fiction vs. Non-Fiction
 - Determining Your Reading Goals
3. Choosing the Right eBook Platform
 - Popular eBook Platforms
 - Features to Look for in an Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying
 - User-Friendly Interface
4. Exploring eBook Recommendations from Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying
 - Personalized Recommendations
 - Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying User Reviews and Ratings
 - Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying and Bestseller Lists
5. Accessing Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying Free and Paid eBooks
 - Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying Public Domain eBooks
 - Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying eBook Subscription Services
 - Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying Budget-Friendly Options

6. Navigating Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying eBook Formats
 - ePUB, PDF, MOBI, and More
 - Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying Compatibility with Devices
 - Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying Enhanced eBook Features
7. Enhancing Your Reading Experience
 - Adjustable Fonts and Text Sizes of Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying
 - Highlighting and Note-Taking Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying
 - Interactive Elements Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying
8. Staying Engaged with Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying
 - Joining Online Reading Communities
 - Participating in Virtual Book Clubs
 - Following Authors and Publishers Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying
9. Balancing eBooks and Physical Books Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying
 - Benefits of a Digital Library
 - Creating a Diverse Reading Collection Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying
10. Overcoming Reading Challenges
 - Dealing with Digital Eye Strain
 - Minimizing Distractions
 - Managing Screen Time
11. Cultivating a Reading Routine Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying
 - Setting Reading Goals Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying
 - Carving Out Dedicated Reading Time
12. Sourcing Reliable Information of Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying
 - Fact-Checking eBook Content of Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying
 - Distinguishing Credible Sources
13. Promoting Lifelong Learning
 - Utilizing eBooks for Skill Development
 - Exploring Educational eBooks
14. Embracing eBook Trends
 - Integration of Multimedia Elements

- Interactive and Gamified eBooks

Tame Your Tikbalang Without Trying Introduction

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