Israel and Evangeline are both fortyish, living in a seedy area of a city ‘as big as you like’, in a ‘crazed republic’ – clearly the USA, though it’s never named. They live together but not exactly as man and wife: Israel is gay and Evangeline is straight, but they are nevertheless in their unconventional way committed to a long-term partnership.

Israel’s sexual adventurousness and drug-taking has been alarming Evangeline, who isn’t exactly a prude herself – apart from being a jewellery designer, she often works as receptionist, and sometimes more, at a brothel. When Israel disappears, Evangeline is distraught. Gradually she finds out more about the world he had been inhabiting and where it might have led. The indigenous people and their mysterious drug Silt have apparently opened up a parallel dimension of miraculous healing and harmony.

*Izzy and Eve* is narrated alternately by Israel and Evangeline, even after Israel’s departure from the ‘real’ world, so it’s not exactly a conventional thriller, with its slow-moving plot and reflective tone. And though there’s lots of explicit sex, it’s often not all that erotic. This is actually a mystical book about extreme behaviour and where it can lead, with luck.