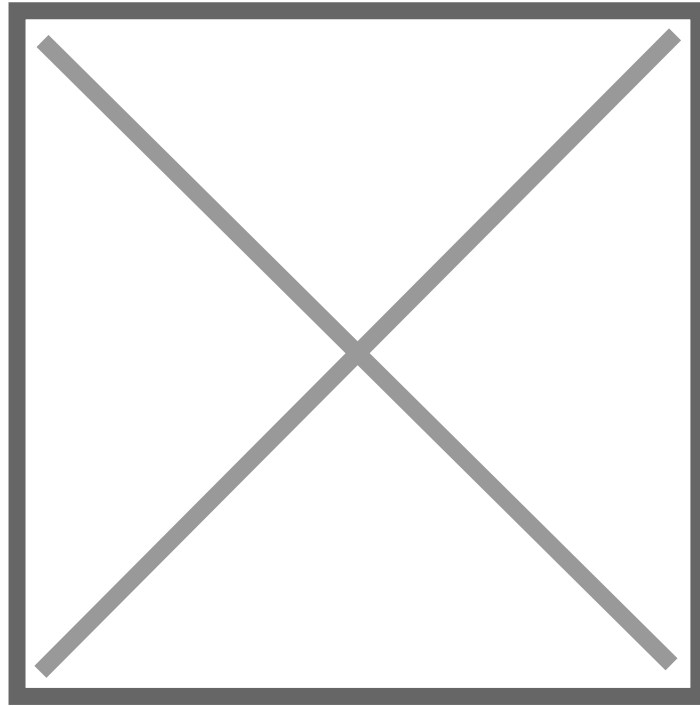


Popping illusion balloons.....” CHEWING GUM



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“Chewing Gum” a collection of short stories by Shakil Ahmed, contains all the happenings that occur around us. There are different shades of life in his stories. To feel what is ignored and to say what is concealed are the acts of elevated souls. Certainly Shakil Ahmed has a sensitive heart and this is what an artist of any field must possess. Picking stories from daily life and choosing current and burning issues are his forte and these issues need to be addressed, as this is the age of technology and advancement one must know the reality of life. Reel life can't be panacea for all the sufferings. At present scenario stories must be meant for awareness, it has an important duty to arouse one's conscience and stimulate their emotions, not to find interest but the remedies. Shakil Ahmed has carved his stories on the rock of bitter factness. He has every thing to display on the screen of life, where there is ugliness of developed life, there are also beautiful things to look at that seeks our first attention. The way Shakil Ahmed dealt with the stories, it proved him an established story teller, having all the necessary requirements for being a perfect fiction writer. His art of story developing can't be overlooked any way. He realised what he wants to be realised by others. A writer wishes that he must be listened with all heart and soul then comes the matter of ruminating the depictions. Most of his stories are based on daily life happenings. Shakil Ahmed has seen the reality of life and he penned it majestically. The stories are concise and have been written in lucid language and as far as my opinion is concerned these are the specialities of a good story book. At

present, readers like to read stories which are brief and focussing on the main objective, there is no need of creating atmosphere and going round and round to unfold the motto of writing the story. This is the first collection of his stories and he seemed not less than a master in knitting the yarn of thoughts. This is the first and foremost duty of a fiction writer to create awareness and share the remedies to the illness of the society.

With the advancement of society every thing has changed now and the worst affected things of this so called development are trust, love and respect.

Having all the necessities of life why one feels exhausted and helpless. This is the question in everybody's mind. The author has a bitter experience of the roughness of today's life.

There are altogether sixteen stories in this collection and all of them have a specific outlook of life. As I mentioned earlier, his stories are not cock and bull stories, infact these stories are the pieces of our scattered life. The titles of the stories are also different from the past trend. This new world of materials does importance only materials not emotions and some times it seems very challenging to decide what is right and what is wrong, wrong has turned into milk white truth and truth lies open teethed like guilty, asking for pardon.

“I love chewing gum” is a very thrilling story of the corporate world. Today man has become a machine, he is liked if he is working perfectly without any opposition, smoothly gliding as his operator here master wants and he is thrown away in a minute as it gets a single excuse. Think of our selfishness and the progress we show to ourselves, there is no importance of dedication and commitment for the organisation. A man (a machine in today’s advanced world) is sucked all the sweetness in him and finally kicked off to live a life of his fate. In the story the writer defaces the reality of so-called bosses in organisations. The boss’s statement for not entertaining Rishi Sahai’s candidature for promotion is very disgusting and a SHAME

“Because I LOVE CHEWING GUM. It doesn’t require to be swallowed after its sweetness gets over. Once you suck all the sweetness from gum, you can just spit it out,”

“We are professionals” is a story about the present trend for earning money in other words converting minutes to money. The story is about two cousins, Aakash and Ridhi. At a very difficult and needy situation when he calls his brother who has become a money-producing machine and a follower of professionalism. By profession he is a very busy doctor. He knows the art of remaining calm at challenging situations. In a hurry he advised his cousin to consult a reputed doctor of the city who has a good experience in the case. But being honest to her profession she proved to be very professional and succeeded in getting his lion’s share. She was quite comfortable to hear the worst

situation of the baby. According to her Dr Aakash was also an example of professionalism. He also used to avoid talking and listening to his dear ones just for converting minutes to money. This is a very heart touching story and it compels us to rethink the life we are living without emotions, ethics, loyalty and sincerity.

“Germ of Greatness” is a beautiful story. It is all about the stupidity of overthinking and overreacting on those issues which need no importance in taking a big decision of life like the main character of the story decided to take. He considered his wife as a baggage which he did not want to carry anymore just because of her deep complexion and to get rid off it he was to give divorce to her wife but by the genius of his true friend turned his mind and he repented for taking such a stupid turn. At Shahnawaz bhai's house the narrator spun a story out of his mind with the hanging photograph and finally got success by saving a married couple and his friend Aniket.

The story “The colour of my blood is still red” is a heart touching story of Babban, a man who is the leading character of the story has a heart with true love for his parents and brothers. Besides being a successful city dweller his heart longs for the village and his old parents who did not come to see him and his ailing dad in the hospital. He took huge loans to fulfil the requirements of his family members. He did not repent what he bestowed on his family but felt proud that the colour of his blood was still red. This is a story that shows the another aspect of a loyal son in most cases we

observe the cruelties of an elder son turning his face from the responsibilities he must shoulder.

There are many stories which would catch readers' attention such as Railway track,

Horoscope, Boomerange, Chess and Birth day celebration etc. All stories are based on real life. The

writer knows the art of story telling, the best thing I found in his stories that he creates not

imaginary world of his choice but the world he is forced to live in. His style of writing is lucid and

smooth. short sentences give deeper meaning. Glimpses of his interest in acting and theatre are

there in his stories when he presents dialogues. The reading of the stories gives not only pleasure of

reading but also provides an opportunity for self-realisation. I would like to congratulate Shakil

Ahmed for this beautiful collection of stories which is worthy enough to be praised by every

reader.