



Aab e Gum / ?? ??

Mushtaq Ahmad Yusufi

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Aab e Gum / ?? ?? Details

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Ameen says

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Faraz Beg says

It's easy to pick up this book as a comical/satirical book since it's written by Yusufi Sahab. But by the time you finish reading it, it becomes one of the most fascinating books on human behaviors written in Urdu. The protagonist, Basharat, takes us from the time of his adolescence through his professional life and then at the verge of his end.

Never before have lives of ordinary looking people been described in the detail and the artful manner Yusufi saab has done.

Steve Kemple says

This falls under the category of "books I never wanted to end."

Rashid Rehman says

This is one of the best books I ever read. This was for the first time that I read Yousafi sb, and after reading this, I have become a huge fan of him. He has described human tragedies in a light and thought provoking manner. You cannot read even a single page without laughing.

Tonymess says

You know you are in for a ride when the introduction to your book says it's "a challenging book. It is challenging because of its length but more so due to its erudition." Never one to shirk a challenge, and given I was looking forward to reading some Urdu fiction in translation, I dived straight in. And what a wonderfully colourful and rich world we have.

Mushtaq Ahmed Yousufi, born in 1923, is a highly respected businessman as well as a multi awarded writer.

From General Manager at the Muslim Commercial Bank in 1950 to the President of the United Bank in 1977 onto Chairman of the Pakistan Banking Council, following his father's footsteps (his father the Speaker of the Jaipur Legislative Assembly). In January 1950 his family migrated to Pakistan after the Urdu language was replaced by Hindi in India, so four years after the partition of India and the creation of East (later to be known as Bangladesh) and West Pakistan (later to become simply Pakistan).

“Mirages of the Mind” opens with an explanatory, uncredited, “introduction” where a “reading guide” is presented on the “encyclopaedic culture”, the “Poetic punning”, “narrative digressions”, and “cultural nostalgia”. Whilst handy at assisting with the reading, these instructions are not mandatory and a reading of the book would not be diminished without the assistance, it does contain some memorable material, including a quote from Mushtaq Ahmed Yousufi himself:

You cannot write humour until you love your target or subject of attack. Love is the foremost condition. In satire it's not necessary.

Yes, this is a humour filled story, whilst containing lashings of satire, it is primarily a funny tale, one with a unique structure.

Our work is split into five sections, each containing chapters, those containing subheadings and within them quotes of world poetry (with a bent towards the Urdu poets of course). So rather than a linear plot, we have vignettes, different story tellers, flash backs, oral tales and interpretations. Yes it does sound “challenging”....

For my full review go to <http://messybooker.blogspot.com.au/20...>

Hira Qazi says

a real treat for mind :) must read it

Caroline says

I think this was just a lot over my head. I couldn't keep track of all the characters, references, narrators (were there more than one?), chronologies, anything really. There were entertaining stories that I got out of it, but halfway through I decided I had had enough and wanted to move on to stories with plots and characters that I could understand.

Salman Tariq says

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Lucknow and Kanpur but the narrative often flies to the pre-partition times), it is not the theme that has led me to include this book suddenly in the list of my all-time favorites, but rather what the author mentions in passing somewhere in the prose:

“But look at what nonsense I’ve written! I started with Hakim Ahsanullah Tasleem, weaved my way through the brothels and ended up in Ajanta and Ellora. But what can I do? This is how my elegant friend talks. He weaves seamless stories from the rays of sun and moon.”

The author could well have been talking about himself. The book has no head, no tail and a lot of body with broken pieces. Basharat, the unfortunate horse-loving Urdu teacher is more of a butt for Mushtaq’s jokes, ridicule and satire than the ‘central character’. Though his stories fill up more than half the book, the other characters that flit through haphazardly, the barbers, horses, servants, cooks, dogs, maulavis, corrupt orphanage owners and prostitutes; all make up one rich narrative.

Added to the prose here and there are couplets in Urdu and Persian by Ghalib, Mir and the neighborhood fakir (translated to English) for that immersive experience of Muslim life in India and Pakistan.

“The problem with living so far from home is that each bit of news (and each rumor) makes your heart pound and your blood run fast. The biggest problem with rumors from Pakistan is that they turn out to be true

.....Also, the British are extremely well mannered and sympathetic. Drivers are so well-behaved that should a single pedestrian indicate that he would like to cross the street, drivers would rather create a mini traffic jam than not let this soul cross. Yes, Mirza Abdul Wadud Baig is the height of sentimentality. When he sees someone stop for him, he feels so honoured that he has to restrain himself from rushing into the crosswalk and bowing to each and every car from crossing the street. In short, my corner of cage is comfortable enough.

O Hunter, I am OK in this cage
Except how I want to fly away”

- Writes Mushtaq in the Afterword about how living away from Pakistan made him appreciate his homeland more, leading to this wonderful piece of art.

Allow me to mention again, that the theme of nostalgia for one’s own country has been done to death, and it in itself does not merit particular notice. But the beauty of the prose lies in the way the most common, the most mundane have been brought to life effortlessly.

“God made the common people in such great number, you can see that it must have given him pleasure or why else would he have made so many? Every person is like an unread page. How can we read them all? If they aren’t extraneous and pedantic, but rather are true and interesting, then they tell their own story; there’s no need to force fit them into some fictional frame or to push them into whatever ideal form you have in your mind” – Again, Mushtaq in the Afterword on his own narrative style.

The book is unabashedly full of peculiar references that those unfamiliar with the particular language used to write (Urdu or Persian) or that particular geographic location might not understand. However, plenty effort has been made by the Translators Matt Reeck and Aftab Ahmad to provide cultural context wherever possible.

“...and He’s from Delhi. So he hugs you three times. The upper class from Awadh just do it once.”

The book is full of such cultural nitty-gritties of the people and places of India and Pakistan of yore, allowing us to take a peep at the times and people not only miles but years away from us. And the best part? It really doesn’t make a lot of difference whether the character being talked about is in Karachi or Awadh or Lucknow or Lahore. No difference at all in the manner of talking, description of surrounding or strings of thought- though a stark difference can be observed about the state of business, law and order on each side of the border. With this Mushtaq very subtly, without even mentioning it once, drives home the point that people across the borders have always been the same within. The differences did not exist, were rather created.

“But back in those days as soon as a man passed outside his town, he considered himself a stranger in a strange land. And by ‘homeland’, people only meant their town and vicinity; no one considered the country or state their homeland.”

The book will leave you an entire culture richer- and a new perspective wider.

Laura says

Catching up on some book reviewing...

I got a big kick out of this, which is less a novel than 5 novellas or even a whole bunch of connected stories and anecdotes. It's about several Indian Muslims who move to Pakistan after Partition, and it's poignant and funny and sad. It reminded me in parts of the Wise Men of Chelm stories. It's quite long, but it reads like a recorded conversation-it wanders and meanders and remembers this and makes reference to that and eventually usually gets back to where it meant to be. It is, be warned, a story of and about men. I don't think there's a single woman who is the subject of a story, although they appear in many. But it's his story and he gets to tell it the way he wants.

Valerie says

This book follows Basharat and his adventures in Pakistan. Throughout the book, he and his family learn to deal with their new home, while missing India. The book is a series of stories that help the reader to know what the author was experiencing as that transition is made.

More about this book can be found on my blog: <http://hesaidbooksorme.blogspot.com>

Disclaimer: I was awarded this book in a Goodreads giveaway. While I did not pay for the book, the opinions expressed in this book are strictly my own.

Tarun says

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Mian Faizan says

By far one of the most beautiful, witty,funny and yet heart wrenching books I have ever had the pleasure of reading.
the chapter titled "Kaun Kaisay toot ta hai" is one of my favorite works in urdu literature
