



Café Latte: Eighteen Unusual Short Stories

Amit Shankar

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We are brought up listening to and reading stories, which make us form a clichéd framework of expectations and concepts about life. Café Latte, takes you on a tantalizing foray into the unusual with some refreshing and some startling stories. A young man, Bikash, is delivered a message through paranormal forces while waiting on the railway platform; A doctor snaps a young man back to life by promising to help him commit suicide. A poor boy, Lokesh, dreams of people at a cinema night show perishing in a fire. Will his desperate attempts to save some lives succeed? 'The Other Side' is the story of a nymphomaniac fighting her desperate craving for sex. 'Smart TV' showcases a smart sales performer, Raj, buying his wife and daughter an expensive TV to cover his affair. 'Code of Honor' is a poignant tale of an army jawaan and his last letter to his son who shuns the army. The stories cover a broad spectrum of people and events and have us turning the pages eagerly for the twist in the end. So shed the mundane, become a fearless traveller and savor a fresh approach towards the enigma called Life.

Café Latte: Eighteen Unusual Stort Stories Details

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From Reader Review Café Latte: Eighteen Unusual Short Stories for online ebook

Lekha Sinha says

it swept me off the floor...with its power, story telling, conviction and sheer grit. in a world where short stories don't even sell, this crazy man not only penned them but did so with so much of élan. every story is a gem in itself. different and completely 'arty.' The stories have been crafted beautifully and narrated in a fluid manner. what amazed me was his power of observation. life painted in a new color and the color i love the most; shades of black.

it is a must read for serious readers though youngsters would like it. Go grab your copy, it is once in a lifetime that you get a compilation like this.

Shraddha says

I received this book as a giveaway. A big THANK YOU to Amit Shankar.

When I grabbed this book, I decided to read at least one story a day but I ended up completing the book in 3 days. At the end of every story, I could not resist reading more. Short stories are arduous to write because in few pages, you have to create a background, add life to it and get a story out of it.

Every story keeps you at the end of your seat and the turning point of most of the stories left me spell bound. Surely the end justifies the means. Commendable work by the author.

My personal favorites are 26 down express, Code of Honor, Jazz Player, Black Widow, The Chosen One, Home Sweet Home and the Guardian Angel.

26 Down Express is the best. It has an astonishing twist at the end which no one can ever predict.

Code of honor and The Guardian Angel puts light on the beautiful relations which we are endowed with and we often fail to express our gratitude towards the same.

Yes, some stories didn't have anything unusual in it but at the same time it had a lovely hidden message.

What sustains throughout the book is the ability of the Author to give every story amazing twists. Well written and thought provoking. Now I yearn to possess all his other collection.

If I had to sum up my take away from the book, it would be "Beauty of Life lies in its unpredictability".

Meera says

Café Latte an anthology of 18 unusual stories. All the stories were good enough; not all the stories had an unusual end or twist. Each story being different; some of them were predictably unusual. Good effort by the author to compile these stories together. All in all, the book is an enjoyable read.

Thanks to Goodreads and the author for giveaway; appreciate it.

Nishtha says

I already reviewed this book once but I didn't really mention anything about the book itself so here it is-

Good things about the book--

- The stories are not THAT short
- The stories were complete
- Some of them will make you say, " Holy..", so be prepared.
- The writer knew what he was writing so the suspense is unpredictable
- Some stories may just become your favourites. My favourites were many, especially the one about the doctor and suicidal patient, and the one with the person who could foresee things.
- There was also this story about a phone call that seriously rose the hair on the back of my neck.
- I read it during a journey, I hate travelling so if I liked this one, the credit goes to this book

No doubt, I am going to try the other books by the same author!

Bad points--

I will tell you when I find out for myself!

Four.five stars!

Also,the cover is awesome!

Abhilash Ruhela says

I haven't read the 1st book of Amit Shankar but I was surprised to find another author with a big potential after reading Chapter 11 and Love is Vodka. Chapter 11 was a hilarious book which made me laugh and entertained throughout. Love is Vodka was quite sensuous but it was a fine attempt considering the genre in which it was written. Amit Shankar has just come out with his 4th book that's an anthology named "Cafe Latte". The 190-pages anthology is out by his home publisher- Vitasta and the cover page of the book promises "eighteen unusual short stories". These days, many small publishers are coming out with their respective anthologies back-to-back and hence, when I came to know that Amit Shankar has done the same, I was quite doubtful because reading short love stories aren't something new for Bloggers like me. But as the book promises, I really got to read some unusual tales and happily, there wasn't a single love story. Yes. Do you get it, new and small publishers? This is what an anthology is. Not the shit you are publishing these days.

Every story begins as if it's just another tale but as soon as the half of it ends, you realize that the end is not going to be predictable. By the time you reach the end, you find your mouth open in surprise and shock. This anthology is been attempted seriously without any casual approach. Every story is written in a way that might want you to read more such stories which can leave you with lots of questions, thoughts and interpretations. The kind of messages and outlook these story provides, it assures that you aren't having the same opinion about the discussed topic anymore. It gives you an insight that you could have never known if not read these stories or faced those situations yourself which is quite unlikely to happen.

Temple of the King, the 1st story itself makes you sad knowing what happened to one of the protagonists. Even the last story with which the book is ended is upon an unusual happenings between a publisher and writer. The book consists story of emotions of a boy who's father owns a lingerie shop, a girl who confesses to a Father before committing suicide, a child beggar who sells a rose daily to a schoolboy of the same age, a jazz player who feels he has no existence etc. All the protagonists are such about whom we don't think much as they aren't given much damn because of their own sad lives or presence. But Amit Shankar, through his stories, gives those characters a presence that makes you think time and again how problematic life can be and how wonderful our lives are.

Coming to the author, I would say that Amit Shankar has once again impressed me with his writing and the kind of stories he selected for this anthology which is surely one of the bests I have read. But I would suggest him to continue with the full-fledged novels that he writes because I didn't feel the same excitement in this book when compared to my happiness and reviews after I finished reading 2 of his novels. It would be fine publishing one Cafe Latte kind of a book after every 3 full-fledged novel but continuing with anthologies and short stories won't be a good idea for a wonderful talent like him. He has an amazing story-telling skill that he shouldn't limit with anthologies. I give this attempt 3.75*/5 considering it to be a bizarre sort of anthology. :-)

Thanks.

ABHILASH RUHELA - VEERU!!!

Divya Nambiar says

Caffè Latte, a shot or say two of bold, tasty espresso with fresh, sweet steamed milk over it... seems like heaven, already!

Guess the author knew well in advance that this book would leave an impact similar to the title of the book, on its readers. Just like the 'sour' taste from the Tannic acid that occurs naturally in coffee beans, each story leaves behind a lingering thought somewhere in the back of the reader's mind.

And yet, when it comes, the sweet steamed milk- the realization when the words of the story fall short just before the full-stop. The letters stop forming a chain of words. They simply leave behind a blank, clear page. That's when the reader's mind starts its own story!

Yes, it isn't a novel like his other books but an anthology that contains moments to be crystallized and lessons to be kept in mind for the rest of one's life.

I am glad that the author chose the choicest of coffee beans and served it to the reader in the form of Caffè

Latte.

What I would like to point out here is that not every story needs a twist. Sometimes the flow of the story can be interrupted by a twist, in a negative way. One needs to be bold enough to try and incorporate twists in almost every story in the book. A good try!

I also noticed the typical AmitShankar-ness in the book, just like in his earlier books namely, The Flight of Hilsa, Chapter Eleven and Love is Vodka. What I mean by that is a bit difficult to express. To understand that, one might have to read these books. The frankness, a rebellion's undercurrents, the down-to-earth, on-your-face writing style left me with a smile on my face. But in my mind, the stories have just begun. May they take their own route and brave the storms that are about to happen!

P.S. To the author: I am sure that Manju di, your sister whom you have mentioned in the dedication, would be smiling from up there, at the sheer unexpectedness that each tale brings and how it manages to bring down its curtains with each one as well! Just like in life and death. :)

- Divya Nambiar

Author: Amit Shankar

Other books by the author:

The reviews of the same can be found here-

<http://critiquedontcriticize.blogspot...>

<http://critiquedontcriticize.blogspot...>

<http://critiquedontcriticize.blogspot...>

Inderpreet Uppal says

I had a lot of expectations from these short stories by Amit Shankar having heard so much about him (*grinning*) and the stories are indeed unusual. Not all of them but yes most of them. They explore a different side of the human mind and a couple were especially good. I had gone through his website and was quite interested in reading his book. After reading the short stories I will try and read his other books too. I am sure they too have the twisted turns and endings like these stories.

I picked up the book in the morning with my bed tea and had a good morning indeed! They are all easy to read, simple and interesting stories; not all are unusual but fun to read. After lunch I was revisiting the stories and writing this.

I must mention the ones that stayed with me long after I had finished reading them. Smart TV comes foremost to the mind and as does The Jazz Player. In Smart TV, the simple, clueless housewife and the doting daughter had my pity. We have so many women who face this reality every day.

‘The Jazz Player’ was creepy and I agree with fact that maybe the player was indeed tempting death! I could not figure out what he had ordered till it was out in the open.

Stories like ‘Let Me Help You Die’, ‘The Black Widow’, ‘The Dream Chaser’, ‘True Lies’ are all well

written and delve into the madness of our minds. How much pain can be inflicted or absorbed.

The story 'Home Sweet Home' was quite poignant and predictable as was the 'Temple of The King'. The 'Writer's Block' was a bit weird; what if all unsuccessful writers start doing that? Thank god for Self-publishing ?

'Code of Honour' was another story that tugged at the heart strings, the soldier father writing his heart out is easily the most heart tugging right after 'The Guardian Angel'.

A special mention for the two guest stories included in the book; both are a great read and a breath of fresh air. I totally agree with Amit when he says they are 'Super-talented'. The stories brought a tear in my eyes and a lump in my throat and when I was reading the stories I had forgotten that the writers were aged 10 and 16. Bravo! For nurturing such talent.

The language in the stories, especially the initial ones could be better with fewer words but they do manage to get the point across. They are Indian stories so they are fine with "Indian English" in them. (You can check out my post on "Indianisms that may be ruining your writing".

<http://www.indianfreelancewriters.com...>) I am not a language critic and I can only write about whether the author got his point across or not; did the stories reflect what the blurb said or not and whether I would read the author again.

Well, I say yes for all the above, I will read his works and Cafe' Latte delivers what it promises. I finished the book in 2 short sittings and enjoyed myself too!

A perfect coffee or tea time read or even a cool travel read.

Rashi Gaur says

I am not fond of short stories. But as I had really liked two of Amit's earlier title that made me buy it. I am glad that I did. It is unusual for sure; in its construct, selection of stories, the plot, the characters, the pace , the end, the vacuum it creates in you... Edgy to the core, it lefts you wondering about life and your ownself. Such brilliantly has the author explored various facets of life, that I was speechless. Temple of the King made me sob while the Code of Honour made me cry. The Jazz Player made my heart ache with restlessness and deep remorse. He paints a brilliant picture using shades of black and grey only. I have never read such an offering from any Indian author. Very intense and profound. I am sure this kind of stories and this kind of compilation has been launched for the first time. Kudos to the author for trying such brilliant and unusual stuff in this market where only moronic stuff sells. Every bok lover should have this one on his / her shelf for sure. A great read.

Doctor says

Enjoyed reading the short stories; it's both interesting and readable. Read the book in installments, chewing every story before beginning the next. Readable, many lovable phrases, some quotable on the writer's understanding of love, life etc.

I liked all the stories, some more than the others like Home Sweet Home, Every Mouse Ain't a Mickey Mouse and True Lies etc. It's subjective; you have your own preferences. But I consider 'Home Sweet Home' as complete in every respect - everyday human problem, worries, suffering, even loss of the highest order, above them all, humane touch.' Every Mouse...'for the author's dexterous handling of an apt metaphor of the modern man's/ woman's changing life style and predicaments, though the metaphor itself is an over-used one. And 'True Lies' for its flawless development.

In majority of stories there is a twist at the end which does not make them nontraditional. The creativity of the author is in the treatment - novel phrases, unorthodox name-calling, considered modern.

If you thought some of the stories are based on unconventional ideas they happen to be unrealistic too -

'Writer's Block' is unconvincing in the beginning and not unexpected at the end.

The descriptions I liked: 'patent grin', 'million tale lights', 'life in the rear view mirror', 'find a great looking hole' with a pun on 'hole'.

The expletives/ addresses: mother fucker, shit bag, son of a life, son of a gun, you creep, you wretched scum, you horny bastard, that old cow, etc.

Quotes I liked: "There is no destination before death." p.7

'After all, if life is a never-ending journey, the baton has to be passed on.' p.12. etc., etc.

I award this book four stars. This book was received through 'giveaway'.

Gorab Jain says

A perfect coffee table book.

The stories are well written and full on light headed entertainment.

"True Lies" (the second last story about confession box) was the best of the lot. "Writer's Block" was an apt ending!

Recommended for contemporary short story lovers.

Ila Garg says

Café Latte

By Amit Shankar

Review By Ila Garg

The anthology comprising of 18 remarkable short stories, Café Latte, has been published by Vitasta Publishing Pvt. Ltd. The collection is penned down by the author, Amit Shankar, who is earlier known for his novels titled Flight of the Hilsa, Chapter Eleven, and Love is Vodka – A Shot Ain't Enough. The cover of Café Latte is simple yet beautiful. The coffee cups gathered together symbolise the many different stories compiled together in this book. The use of pink and green color is interesting too.

Although, as I began reading the first story in the collection, Temple Of The King, I was in two minds. I felt that the plot wasn't that extraordinary. However, I soon found myself enjoying as I reached the second one in the compilation, 26 Down Express. The climax left me shocked. However, I felt I'm back to square zero while reading Let Me Help You Die.

Amrit Sinha says

What does it take to be different? How can you experience the unusual? Well, one just needs to ask Amit Shankar to get a reply to the first question, and pick up a copy of *Café Latte* to know the answer of the second.

Short stories are meant to enthrall your senses, to heighten your curiosity, and at the same time, leave you with a feeling of satisfaction towards the end. A good story is one that is riveting and has the potential to keep your attention engrossed at every moment. The task becomes all the more difficult when you have to pour all these ingredients into a concoction of just a few pages, the word limit surely binding you at times. How does one, break these shackles and cook a perfect tale in just a few thousand words?

Amit Shankar, author of three bestsellers – ‘Flight of the Hilsa’, ‘Chapter Eleven’ and ‘Love is Vodka’, comes forth with his fourth title – ‘Café Latte’, a collection of 18 short stories, 16 among them by Amit himself, and two by the talented kids Kartikey Sharma and Vasundhara Goyal, aged ten and sixteen years respectively. The cover is very well designed, with coffee mugs in the background staying true to the name. The layout is grayish while the fonts on the title are colored green, pink and white. An unusual color combination indeed, but it does feel interesting to the eyes.

However, cover alone doesn't make a good book. The content is what matters the most, and here too, Amit delivers as expected. The stories belong to diverse genres. They tell tales of love and hate, loss and gain, and victory and defeat. They make us smile, and cry, and often, we are forced to gape with amazement at the sheer uniqueness of the plot. Though all the tales are different, one thing is common between them – the sense of mystery.

Yes, it is this feeling of ‘what – happens – next’ that binds the readers to this paperback. The sixteen stories by Amit track the different facets of human lives, but in a manner we hadn't expected. Be certain to experience goose bumps when you read these stories.

‘Temple of the King’ narrates the story of living a dream conceptualized by someone you admire, while ‘26 Down Express’ leaves you with chilling beads of perspiration. In ‘The Jazz Player’, one can relate to the ironies of life, whereas ‘Let Me Help You Die’ chills you right through your bones. ‘Writer’s Block’ comes with a smiling twist, ‘True Lies’ teaches you to be positive, whatever the circumstances, and ‘The Black Widow’, my favorite in the book, is like that piece of haunting melody that keeps ringing in your mind. ‘The Lion, The Leopard And The Hyena’ rediscovers love and lies, whereas ‘The Chosen One’ makes one believe in fate and destiny. ‘Home Sweet Home’ is a mixture of love, compassion, obsession and ironies. ‘The Other Side’ is the journey of a woman, often lonely, always alone. ‘The Dream Chaser’ leaves the readers with a bitter-sweet feeling, while ‘Smart TV’ showcases the danger of the increasing ‘smartness’ in modern gadgets. ‘The Guardian Angel’ will make you smile, ‘Code of Honor’ has the tinge of patriotism, and ‘Every Mouse Ain't A Mickey Mouse’ is all about the rat race in modern world.

Café Latte is a book you can pick up any day, summer or winter, spring or autumn, or while savoring the monsoon rains. The stories amuse you and refresh you, just like the sweet smelling coffee drink that's a perfect mixture of espresso and steamed milk.

Hemant Rajput says

I was not sure what to expect of out of this book as I read very few short stories books, mostly in hindi and that to be of like akbar-birbal type. Also before opening the book I was not aware that Amit shankar is a national best seller. I thought this would be fun book; however in the beginning Caffé Latte started to creep me out because of unusual twists. The theme, which the first few stories set, was not what I was expecting, but after few more stories I started to see changes in the twists.

Amit Shankar's writing is beautiful with poetic details and nuances. Caffé Latte will give you mix of emotions in very short span of time. If you are coffee lover and you like reading short stories this would be a perfect company on your leisure time, but if you not used to short stories, you might find little bit of disappointment with the book. You'll get disappointed with few stories and feel great with others, but in the end this is well crafted work and reader may enjoy the intense mix of emotion with Cafe Latte.

L says

Received this book through Goodreads First Reads.

Reading this book was fun. The author, Amit Shankar has written 18 amazing short stories that take you away from all your thoughts into amazing fictional worlds. The language used in this book is powerful yet simple. Almost all of the short stories would present before a reader a feeling of lingering gloominess; the reason for this being that they are mostly contained with unfulfilled ambitions and melancholy feelings. However, this will be one of the few books that will lure you, and prevent you from ceasing the action of turning the pages.

Each short story has a unique essence of literature and composition of its own that can be carefully developed into full-fledged perfumes reflected in the form of novels. No single genre has been unnecessarily duplicated (as it is frequently happening in new books nowadays!) and everything is independently beautiful. You might even experience the need to take a break before moving on to the next chapter to come out from the story line of the previous one!

The only setback is that this book contains text that readers may find to be 'highly inappropriate' and 'indecent'.

IF YOU ARE UNDER 15, OR DO NOT WISH TO BE OFFENDED, DON'T READ THIS BOOK. IT CONTAINS CONTENT THAT IS NOT SUITABLE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCE.

Jairam Mohan says

With Cafe Latte, the author Amit Shankar manages to concoct quite the brew that will drive away your boredom, make you sit up and take notice of the unusual characters and situations that happen around you.

Some of the really good stories like The Dream Chaser, Every mouse ain't Mickey Mouse, The Jazz Player and 26 Down Express manage to end up leaving you wanting for more.

However, for almost every good story, there is an ordinary one in the anthology. Temple of the King and Let me help you die were very cliched and predictable. In my personal opinion, the author relied a little too much on providing a twist at the end of every story, which to me, is akin to walking on a tight rope. If the twist works well, then the story remains memorable and if it doesn't, then it becomes a damp squib. And that is probably the sole reason the anthology suffers, due to its over-reliance on the twists.

That being said, the author must be commended for an honest attempt to explore relatively unusual and unexplored human emotions and situations. Detailed review can be read at <http://mahabore.wordpress.com/2014/09...>
