



Two

?????? [Gulzar]

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It's the winter of 1946. A truck leaves the village of Campbellpur after news of the impending Partition pours in. It is carrying people who don't know where they will go. They have just heard words like 'border' and 'refugee', and are struggling to understand how drawing a line might carve out Pakistan from Hindustan. As they reach the border, the caravan disperses and people go their own ways. Gulzar's first novel tracks the lives of the people in that truck right from 1946 up to the Kargil war. A novel on what the Partition entailed for ordinary people, Two is also a meditation on the fact that the division of India and the carnage that followed, once set into motion, kept happening inexorably and ceaselessly, and people like those who left their homes on that truck never found another home; they kept looking for a place called home, a place to belong to.

Two Details

Date : Published 2017 by HarperPerennial

ISBN :

Author : ????? [Gulzar]

Format : Kindle Edition 200 pages

Genre : Fiction, Historical, Historical Fiction, Cultural, India

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From Reader Review Two for online ebook

Shishir Chaudhary says

Gulzar is a good storyteller, there is no doubt about it. In his first ever novel, his talent is present in its full glory, even more effective because Gulzar deals with a topic which has featured consistently in all his work - conflict - political, geographical and personal. He tells the story of a bunch of inhabitants of a village called Cambalpore who are impacted by the partition of India in 1947, and who come together in a truck with the only objective of escaping (Watch out for how brilliantly he narrates the road trip). He follows the stories of a few major characters from that doomed truck through major political setbacks of India all up to the Kargil war.

Available in both Hindustani (a combination of Hindi and Urdu) and English (with the title 'Two'), I would recommend getting the former because that is the author's forte. After all, why would you read Proust in English when you know French?

Himanshu Pandey says

Do Log is another masterpiece from the pen of **The Gulzar Sahab**, this time in the form of novel.

Story of **Do Log** is based on the migration of people during the partition of India - which is the largest migration of people from one place to another in the history of mankind. The main characters of the novel hail from Campbellpur (now known as Attock since 1978) now in Pakistan. Campbellpur is a town where people from all the religion (mainly Hindu, Muslim and Sikh) live in harmony with each other.

When they heard about the possibility of partition, they didn't believe in the news. None from the Campbellpur wanted to migrate to other side of border but violence in the surrounding areas forced them to leave their home, property and friends and migrate to India and start a new life from the scratch.

This novel is based on the journey of migration of those residents of Campbellpur i.e. how they all started their journey together, what they witnessed on the way and how these incidents affected their life, what problems they went through, how they got separated from each other on the way knowingly unknowingly, how many of them reached their destination safely.

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Partition which divided India into two independent countries and further into three is the darkest spot in the history of mankind. This was not only a partition of land but of people, relations, emotions and much more. Very less has been written in this subject, historians have always escaped themselves from writing much about partition.

Pain of partition did not stop only in 1948-50 rather its effects continued till many decades, and another massacre happened in 1984 which renewed the wounds of partition. Wounds of partition have not yet been healed and its effects can be seen in many forms from time to time.

"????? ?? ??? ????? ???,????? ?? ??? ????? ???

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Gulzar sahab always creates magic from his pen which has continued here also. Gulzar saheb has written the incidents & wounds of partition in his book in such a way that a reader can visualize it easily and feel the pain of partition. The soul of book and fragrance of Gulzar Sahab's pen can be felt from the first page itself.

A must read book for everyone who is interested reading about partition - a black stop in the history of mankind.

rating: 4.7/5

Arpan Chakrabarti says

Veteran lyricist Gulzar has come out with his debut novel in English, which examines the status of refugees after Partition.

“I am still not at ease with this,” says Gulzar in the introduction to his first novel, Two. He is anxious about the numerous versions the original Urdu version of his text went through, worked upon by two other translators before finally coming under his own pen.

Yet, there is something more to Gulzar’s unease than the imperfection of metamorphosing one language into another and finding that his prose in English doesn’t quite match up to what he wrote in Urdu. It is knowing that he can never be purged of everything he needs to say about the Partition.

Gulzar’s short novel starts in the town of Campbellpur in 1946, with a cast of characters who never fully know what is going on and how their life will change if and when the Partition takes place. Fauji the truckdriver, Lakhbeera the dhaba-owner, Master Fazal and Karam Singh who are schoolteachers and close friends, sisters Soni and Moni, and several others come together while going their separate ways on an over-encumbered truck to India.

The road, riddled with flashes of death, throws everyone on the truck to different places, to refugee camps, abandoned on the way, running businesses in Europe, living like a graveyard-hermit, or underneath a grave. The swiftly-paced story flows across time and into parts of Indian history where the remembrance of the Partition would likely have been strongest – most prominently the 1984 Sikh Riots.

Two is characterized by a strong narrative. Strewn with the perfect use of metaphors to communicate, the writing seemingly shifts track on a poetic note. There is silence in the words, yet an unheard voice that screams out the plight of people and the situation. Gulzar’s strong prose lays bare the brunt of partition in words that linger long in your mind.

The writing isn’t heavy. In crisp and concise sentences, it still evokes strong emotions. Swiftly paced, with a smooth transition across timelines, the short novella indeed speaks volumes about the disruptive violence of 1947 and beyond.

Two may be a translation, but the book has done justice in every possible way. No wonder Gulzar is considered a master craftsman, who could weave words with ease in the most beautiful of ways. A book that

you cannot put down, highly recommended for just the love of words!!

Varun Mehta says

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Aditya Lotia says

There are 2 types of melancholy books - one which makes you want to scream into the pillow and another which makes you want to turn to the world and scream at them till your voice goes and you want to ask questions to the world - "Why?", "What did you possibly gain?" and "Are you happy now?". And then you realize you are part of this world, you are part of the problem. This book is the latter type.

I have come back to Hindi books after a long time and regret not reading more Hindi literature before. Gulzar writes the most gut-wrenching statements in simplest of sentences.

Do Log is about 1947 India-Pakistan partition at the outset. But it is more about humanity and the lack of it. It is about loyalty and betrayal. It is about love and hate. It is about our fake claims of 'Unity in Diversity'.

I am certainly going to come back to this book time and again.

Harshit Gupta says

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Ashok Krishna says

Expectations are the bane of mankind. From hermits that expect to attain salvation through penances to lesser mortals trying to reap the benefits of hard work, we are all driven by expectations of one kind or the other. No wonder then that we readers have our own expectations too – to see every book that we read leave upon us a lasting impression or a meaningful lesson. Especially if the book happens to be from our favorite authors or on our favorite topics, our expectations soar high. But, like most, a reader's expectations too fail, at least once in a while. 'Two' is one such a disappointment. This being the work of Gulzar, a man with the knack of conveying so much in so few words, I opened it with a lot of expectations, but only to be disappointed.

Gulzar is one of those innumerable victims of the India-Pakistan partition. Being a famous writer, he has time and again recounted in his works the horrors of that blood-soaked period of modern Indian history. Like many people who had their roots on either side of the border ripped out, he too nurtures within his heart a desire to see both countries get united. Or, at least, stop quibbling like 'school boys', to borrow his words. He has always tried to heal the wounds of partition through his poems and short stories. This time, he has attempted to do the same through a new format - the novella.

This novella by Gulzar, details the calm lives of the people of Campbellpur, in that part of the country that was to become Pakistan, the chaos preceding partition, the turmoil that befell them during partition and the horrors that awaited them even during the much more civilized, modern, later days. A school teacher and his simple family, an ageing courtesan, a rich landowner forced to abandon all his wealth, truck-drivers, dhaba owners, men of narrow ideas and great ideals all form the ensemble in this emotional work. Many of them leave 'Pakistan' by foot, while a bunch of them leave by truck. But even after coming to the other side of the

border, they don't find solace. They remain refugees at an emotional level, with memories of their ancestral land haunting them. Then there are the conflicts that kept happening well within and outside their country of refuge - India-Pakistan war, rise of Bangladesh, Kargil war on the outside, and the 1984 anti-Sikh pogroms on the inside. Thus, like 'the dry leaves falling from the trees', they are left unhinged, thrown here and there at the whims of the political winds.

The book is brilliant in parts, be it the formation of characters, depiction of events or flow within chapters. One can feel Gulzar's indignation and deep pain at the turn of events that cleaved the great nation into two. But seen as a whole the book isn't what you'd expect from someone like Gulzar. The book simply feels like a bunch of emotional events melodramatically cobbled together, using the thread of Partition. Of course, the book is said to be based upon real events, recounted by the families that went through the pain of partition, but somehow, it doesn't all stick together as a whole. May be, Gulzar was involved in this work more as a victim, dealing with it more at an emotional level, than as an author.

A nice, simple read, from an author renowned for painting vivid pictures with his words. The book can also serve as a reminder or as an introduction to that gory part of our collective past. But as a work of literary quality, it simply doesn't count for much.

'Two' is a good book, but the parts here simply don't add up to form a perfect whole!

Gautam Chintamani says

What can one say anything about Gulzar sahab that hasn't been said earlier.... This is the first time that he explores the novel format and the poignant tale that he weaves soaks you in right from the word go. His lyrics have often explored the endless yearning of the displaced to find a home, to settle down somewhere somehow such as the couplet in 'Machis' - Ek chhota lamha hai jo khtm nahin hota, Main laakh jalaata hun, wo bham nahin' or the song 'Ek Akela Iss Shahar Mein' from 'Gharonda' - "Din khaali khaali bartan hai, Aur raat hai jaise andha kuan, In suni andheri ankhon men, Ansu ki jagah ata hai dhuan, Jine ki wajah to koi nahin, Marane ka bahaana dhundhata hai." 'Two' is also translated from the Urdu by Gulzar sahab himself and is a must-read to get a first-hand account of what the torment of leaving behind everything and trying to rebuild meant for millions of people displaced by the Partition of India.

Rajat TWIT says

One of the most poignant tales written recently on the partition, Do Log is not the only attempt by Gulzar Saheb to revisit the horrors of partition. His award winning short story 'Raavi Paar' has the power to move the hearts of the most tough people. And that is the sad story of partition which was the darkest and perhaps most crucial time of Indian sub-continent in last few centuries. A time which was sorry state for millions of Indians and life turning for many, the era of partition has loads of stories hidden in its chest.

And Gulzar saheb has dug deep in this chest to draw the most painful yet humane stories for the readers. This is a story of town called 'Camblepur' which was peaceful before the 'boundary' for two nations started to form on the grounds of religion. The common people never thought about it, and most of them didn't even thought about it ever. But then this is the power of madness mixed with the religious flavor.

This is unfortunate that our earlier generation has not preserved the stories of partition and the need is to

bring all the stories out to readers. One of the books by new history writer Aanchal Malhotra 'The remnants of Separation' talks about it and is critically getting praises. It is time we come forward to explore, write and know more about this phase called partition when one people was divided into two peoples, and a scar was left on the page of history that will never heal!

Or will it?

Vikalp Trivedi says

In the foreword of book Pavan K. Verma imposes some questions like- Why should number of pages determine impact and expressiveness of a literary work? Who decides how long a work should be? But more important question I found amongst these questions was that- When should a story end? Should it end when the reader is yearning it to continue or should it last till the reader begins to wonder it will end?

When I started reading the novel. I came across a very simple answer to these questions and the answer was that all these questions are mere limitations to a literary work. And Gulzar Sahaab with his class, impactful and expressive writing defies all these limitations and creates a story which makes the reader yearn for more and at the same time gives a sense of a satisfactory ending. It is the first time when Gulzar Sahaab is explored the genre of novel (and I hope and wish he will continue writing novels). The book is not just a novel. Using canvas of novel Gulzar Sahaab has painted it with beautiful poetic prose and elements of a perfect screenplay.

The book starts during the period when India was at the verge of independence, and also at the verge of the greatest catastrophe the Indian history has ever seen. The (true) rumors of partition are in the air and the speed and intensity of the air is increasing with every passing moment. People are at the brink of losing their sanity. The only way to keep their almost tattered sanity is to deny (true) rumors. And finally the fateful time arrives and creates an unhealable wound, a wound so deep that its deepness can't be measured. And it may never be healed or measured. In fact with the passing passage of time the wound gets deeper and darker.

The book covers the lives of those "unimportant" and wretched people who were mercilessly crushed by audacious and arrogant storm of history. The book consists the story of those Muslims for whom Amritsar was equally theirs as was Lahore. It is the story of those Hindus for whom Lahore was equally theirs as was Amritsar. It is the story of those who were turned into dust and history doesn't even remember who they were.

The book made me think did the leaders really think of all these "unimportant" people for even once before imposing the catastrophe on them? I think they didn't. They were drowned in the drunkardness of fulfilment of their political agendas. They just gave birth to a blind assassin, named it partition and allotted him swords in both of the hands and set it on the spree of beheading all those "unimportant" people. But they forgot that their assassin was immortal and its? immortality will be a curse till the time immemorial in different forms, in different ways.

Though the novel consists of many characters, it is the magic of Gulzar Sahaab's quill that he made every character strongly built and gave every character space and time it deserved. The narrative was wonderful and the reader can feel each and every emotion the character is going through. The Hindi translation was classy and compelling.

A Must Read.

Perfect 5 Stars.

Aishwarya Rathor says

What an incredible book!

Gulzar is my most loved poet and his take on writing a novel is great.

I read both the hindi/urdu and english version of the book.

The story is about 1947 partition, about people, their emotions, their selflessness. The emotions people had about leaving their home, their land is well described. The use of urdu is Phenomenal.

The stories are sensitive and describing pain of those people.

I really dont have words to describe this book. I am just speechless.

Sumallya Mukhopadhyay says

Two, Gulzar

“These wars were not new to him. Nor were the soldiers. They were like schoolboys, scaring each other, wearing borrowed masks. One throws a brick, the other hurls a stone. They keep sharpening their nails to lunge at each other.

‘Fifty years...in fact, more. God knows when they will grow up,’ he muttered.”

The Kargil War has disturbed the valley. So, Fauji keeps walking. Nowadays he does not need his truck to steer his way out of places. I doubt if he still remembers his truck. His truck stands like a tree, rooted in its place. Its branches have spread far and wide. The leaves, however, are strewn all over, tossed over innumerable places, interrogating the idea of borders and maps that demarcate a nation and its people—an idea that materialized in reality as it divided the people and formed the nations. As Fauji walks he gathers the leaves that fall on his way. He wants to take them to a safer place. He wants the leaves to find their branches and form a newly blossomed tree. He sits in a corner and envisions a future for those with whom he travelled. He sees Rai Bahadur Des Raj’s son Jaipal. He witnesses his marriage to one Edna. Fauji is happy—satisfied. The fact that Jaipal discovers his father’s past is even more pleasing (p.157). History has been kind to them. But Soni and Moni, the two young women Fauji helped to escape, are in tatters. Moni has killed the son she gave birth to. She could not stand to look at the boy who was born of a liaison with a Muslim. Moni does not remember Soni. Fauji is a distant presence in her life. He suddenly remembers Kartar, the small boy who arrived with his grandfather. He was adopted by Punna. Kartar escapes the riots of 1984. Fauji is relieved. Now, he turns to look at Punna. Deep down, he knows, if anything pleasant stayed with him of the days of the partition, it is the memory of Punna. She listens to her words, “I think of him, he must be thinking of me...I am alive, he must be too.” (p. 170). Fauji still loves Punna as much as he loves his lost Campbellpur, his friend Lakhbeera.

But it is the first section of the novel that Fauji wants to do away with. It narrates the history of which many are aware now. A history of violence, displacement and nostalgia. But he knows that it is his history as well—the history that connects him with others. He cannot do away with it. Perhaps he can think of it differently. He urges others to do so. To reconcile with the shared history, to come to terms with it with compassion. And he thinks of Punna. Punna is alive in his thoughts.

In the foreword to the novel, Gulzar expresses his dissatisfaction with the translated version of his work. It is difficult to translate a poem, and Gulzar is essentially a poet. This he clarifies in the afterword. The translation of the novel is not a mature one. Yet one must read the book. It is poetic, painful but not without hope. After all, hope is the touchstone with which many migrated to settle down again.

Roshan Singh says

Gulzar's debut novel is a heartrending tale of a group of people who become refugees in their own country overnight. The book is poignant and takes you through the partition, makes you relive the 1984 anti-sikh riots and the Kargil war and brings you to the present day where you realise nothing much has changed. The hate and differences among people which chopped the limbs of this country returns time and again to spill more blood from an already dilapidated body.

Yamna Rashid says

O my heavy, heavy heart

*“Death you are a poem
And I've been promised by a poem, that it shall meet me”
? Gulzar*

This is the first time I wish I had the chance to read the original manuscript instead of the English translated version. Gulzar specifically mentions in the foreword that he is not entirely satisfied with the translated version and I get why he would say that. There are certain words that get lost in translation and the final text doesn't have the elegance of its original counterpart. And Gulzar mentions the effort put into making it as technically close to the original as possible, yet if the craft master is not satisfied, I believed I can't find satisfaction in the paraphrasing of his words either.

During my O' Levels, I was taking a class with our Pakistan Studies teacher and while we were debating (yet again) over the cruelty faced by Muslims during the partition of the subcontinent, our teacher pointed out something that has stayed me throughout the years. He said that you think Muslims were the only ones facing cruelty and how they never inflicted any pain on any Hindu or Sikh because that's what your countrymen tell you to make you prejudiced. But for every pig that a Sikh or Hindu killed and threw outside a mosque to enrage Muslims, a cow was slaughtered and thrown outside a temple to enrage the Hindus. And believing only one side of the story won't take you far.

This is a lengthier version of a quote by Will Durant which states, “Most history is guessing, and the rest is prejudice.”

*“It is believed that a community, a society, a nation is as strong and healthy as the stories they tell themselves.”
? Gulzar, Half a Rupee*

For most of my life, I believed that Muslims were the victims and Hindus or Sikhs the perpetrators. Obviously it was because I had been taught to believe that. But once I got a mindset of my own, I realized how biased our view is. We never thought of the other side of the tale, nor do we care to this day about it. The question you'll ask is “why do you care? It's been 60-odd years since the partition.” And I'd say that I care because we haven't forgotten. We never did. The war may have ended but its repercussions never died. If you are an Indian, you hate Pakistanis by default and vice versa. We can't see eye to eye and each day, our media is waiting for the perfect scandal to tarnish the reputation of the other country, as though that single moment of glee can hide the fact that beneath all the hatred, all the threats we

still pose to each other, all the blood that was lost, *we were all once brothers and sisters, united under a common flag*

One may cut a mountain in two, but people? It's a hard task, bhai, to cut one people into two. They bleed

Although Two is not a retelling of Gulzar's own story, he states that it's the true story of a number of people who lost, found and reiterated themselves through the partition.

From the small town of Campbellpur (now Attock in Pakistan), emerges a truck, full of people with little belongings and heading towards what will soon be India. They are scared, skeptical and now homeless. They have no idea if they will reach India alive, nor do they have a home or place to their name.

Over the course of the journey, the passengers face many surprises, threats and raw experiences that leave them shaken to their core. Gulzar also maps out the story of a few residents left behind in Campbellpur, and concludes each part of the story with his subjects having faced either utter bereavement or success.

You cannot go into this book expecting smiles or even a straight face. You'll be left shell shocked as once again the gruesome nature of the partition would jog your memory and you'll find yourself going back to the tales you heard from grandparents or great-aunts or anyone who travelled from the other country with nothing but the clothes on their back and a handful of family heirlooms. Each recount of a rape or murder will leave you shaken and once you reach the last page, Gulzar's promise will ring true.

One continues to read this book long after having finished its last page

The events of the partition might be in the past but they still have a strong hold on us. If you close your eyes, you might just smell the blood erupting from a fresh sword wound in the stomach of a Muslim. You might just sense the fear a family of Sikhs felt as Muslims barged into their homes, looted their drawers, raped the women, killed the children and forcefully cut the Sikh men's hairs, their pride. You might have the urge to vomit as you watch a woman, one of three in the family, get brutally raped before her brother's body, and vomit some more as the Hindu moves on to the next girl. You'll weep with the Sikhs who lost their beloveds, the Muslim left to die with a knife in her stomach, the woman forced to bear the child of her rapist and when you open your eyes, you'll realize the truth that could haunt you if you cared enough.

It still goes on.

In both countries.

In Kashmir, in small districts housing Hindus in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan and in mosques in some cities in India. Citizens of each country bestow violence on those of their neighbor and call it "justifiable".

The question is: "Till how long will you stay silent and pretend that even though we are a people cut in two and we bleed, and despite that we are still ONE people, we do not deserve to be saved?"

Make a move. Extend a hand of friendship. And you'll see mine was already raised.

Long are the passages of borders

One has lost count of age

Gathering the pieces of fate

Long are the stories of the partition

Ahmad Awan says

Things i didn't know about my own country's history ... A well written book .. Gulzar made me feel was making Pakistan a good choice ? But, later in same book he made me realise yes it was .. I feel sorry for Sikhs. I wish they had a separate country like bengals muslims and hindus ...

