



## Dilip Kumar: The Substance and the Shadow

*Dilip Kumar*

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## Dilip Kumar: The Substance and the Shadow Dilip Kumar

An authentic, heartfelt and compelling narrative – straight from the horse’s mouth – that reveals for the first time numerous unknown aspects of the life and times of one of the greatest legends of all time who stands out as a symbol of secular India. Dilip Kumar (born as Yousuf Khan), who began as a diffident novice in Hindi cinema in the early 1940s, went on to attain the pinnacle of stardom within a short time. He came up with spellbinding performances in one hit film after another – in his almost six-decade-long career – on the basis of his innovative capability, determination, hard work and never-say-die attitude.

In this unique volume, Dilip Kumar traces his journey right from his birth to the present. In the process, he candidly recounts his interactions and relationships with a wide variety of people not only from his family and the film fraternity but also from other walks of life, including politicians. While seeking to set the record straight, as he feels that a lot of what has been written about him so far is ‘full of distortions and misinformation’, he narrates, in graphic detail, how he got married to Saira Banu, which reads like a fairy tale!

Dilip Kumar relates, matter-of-factly, the event that changed his life: his meeting with Devika Rani, the boss of Bombay Talkies, when she offered him an acting job. His first film was *Jwar Bhata* (1944). He details how he had to learn everything from scratch and how he had to develop his own distinct histrionics and style, which would set him apart from his contemporaries. After that, he soon soared to great heights with movies such as *Jugnu*, *Shaheed*, *Mela*, *Andaz*, *Deedar*, *Daag* and *Devdas*. In these movies he played the tragedian with such intensity that his psyche was adversely affected. He consulted a British psychiatrist, who advised him to switch over to comedy. The result was spectacular performances in laugh riots such as *Azaad* and *Kohinoor*, apart from a scintillating portrayal as a gritty tonga driver in *Naya Daur*. After a five-year break he started his ‘second innings’ with *Kranti* (1981), after which he appeared in a series of hits such as *Vidhaata*, *Shakti*, *Mashaal*, *Karma*, *Saudagar* and *Qila*.

## Dilip Kumar: The Substance and the Shadow Details

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## From Reader Review Dilip Kumar: The Substance and the Shadow for online ebook

### Melvin Mathews says

I would say the shadows loom larger than substance in this autobiography. The problem with most autobiographies is that the subject usually glosses over unpleasantness and uncomfortable matters, and presents us with tidbits that show him in a favorable light. It's like when my grandfather used to tell me stories as a child, he would leave out bits that he considered were not suitable for my young, impressionable ears, and elaborate more on the parts that would make a moral impact on me. This autobiography is like that. Everything unflattering and controversial has been ironed out and sanitized...it's so consciously dignified that it staggers under its own weighty discourse.

I enjoyed reading about Dilip Kumar's childhood and how he became an actor - all that is elaborated upon with nostalgic fondness. That, for me, was the best part. After that though, it is all rose-tinted and diplomatic. I wanted to read more about how he felt about the films that did not do well, about what he felt about his roles...I wanted more insight into the film industry. That would have made up for how he sort of hand-waves all the controversies in his life, like his rumored love affairs with his co-stars and the whole Asma affair. The Madhubala section is very guarded, I got the impression that he would rather not have written of it at all... and the Asma affair is diluted into a page where he hints at a conspiracy by his enemies to trap him. I got the feeling that he only included it because it would have been too noticeable if he hadn't.

The tributes from his wife and the industry people were all a bit too much though... Especially when they were all uniformly positive. The thing that was a bit funny was that some of them did hint at the gossipy stuff before returning to the praise of the legend. The tribute from Sitara Devi was especially pointed.

I would have respected this more if he had given us the warts and all version rather than this version of events diluted with hindsight. Before he became a legend, Yousuf Saheb was a man like any other, who probably made mistakes. And since mistakes are also part of what also shapes the character, by showing us only the positive side, by giving us accolades alone, we never get to see the complete man. Which is not to say that he is not a good man - he probably is. But still...

Overall, a nice read, if not entirely satisfying. Maybe it would have been better in two parts?

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### Sbijapure says

This book provides some information about the actor Dilip Kumar's life. Though it is called an Autobiography, it is "as narrated to Udayatara Nayar".

This book informs us that Dilip Kumar was a good actor and was not only respected by all but was revered by most.

This book contains a Reminiscences section (of nearly a 100 pages) in which more than forty people have narrated their experiences on meeting Dilip Kumar. On reading this section one comes to know that Dilip Kumar made such a deep and lasting impression on all of them that it seems as if all the reminiscences are written by one person.

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### **Himanshu says**

Yousaf Khan aka Dilip Kumar aka tragedy King , now does one define an actor who has been declared as an institution by actors no less than Amitabh Bacchan,Shahrukh Khan,Aamir Khan to name a few. Fortunately this is not the requirement over here from an average reviewer so without further ado , I will get down to putting my 2 cents on this latest biography from B-Town.

Given his age and personality, it was quite obvious that the book would be free from any possible controversy which to be frank is what a usual cinema fan will expect from a memoir. This book filters all that out. There is a very passing reference to his love interest with Madhubala, little mention of the tax issues he was embroiled in. This book is more like an over extended eulogy to a thespian, not that he does not deserve it but an average reader like me was left wanting for more.

The letters and contributions from all the movie personalities in the end was repetitive and got a bit self flattering at the end and could have been avoided. On the contrary , the description of life in Peshawar and his early days in Mumbai/Pune made for an interesting read

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### **Pranietha says**

The book had a great start with vivid descriptions of Dilip Kumar's life in Peshawar, growing up in Bombay, his work in Pune, and even his entry into films. As the book turned to his world into the movies, the book comes across as guarded. It reads like Dilip Kumar provides a thickly veiled access to his life because of his need to maintain "decency". For instance, he does not delve into how he coped with movies that did not do well, or he does not give a reason for his second marriage, other than saying he was duped. However, the love and respect his co-stars have for him is evident in what they write about him. As a reader, I was left craving for more openness in this book.

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### **Rachna says**

It's a good peek into the life of an icon in Indian Cinema. It's much better written than most Indian biographies as it lets you get more personal but it also glides over some of the more 'interesting' bits citing privacy. For example he starts off talking about some woman who used to meet him often and the next thing you know he's talking about how their marriage hurt his first wife!

The second half of the book where others have written about their experiences with him could have been better curated. Most of them are very similar in content and take the opportunity to slip in some subtle praise about themselves

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### **Prabhat says**

Dilip Kumar : The Substance and the Shadow- Autobiography- as narrated to Udayatara Nayar is the story of

a legend and thespian Dilip Kumar born in Peshawar Joint family which does business of maintaining fruit gardens and selling fruits and dry fruits. The family moves out in 1930 to Bombay and continues the fruit business at Crawford Market and the family 11 children live in a rented house situated in a lane near the Crawford Market. The young man attends school and is educated. Turn of events, first, Being scolded by his father, he leaves for Pune by train and finds work as manager at Army Club, Pune. After few months, he informs his brother and ultimately leaves the job and joins family at Mumbai. second, alongwith his Professor, he meets Devika Rani, film Producer and is offered a job of actor for Rs. 1250/- per month - a big money in those times. He is a hard working person and a fast learner who picks up the whole art of film story - script writing, use of camera acting also. His capability in Urdu and Persian language is of help in improving the script of films. The Producers take his suggestions in development of script and scenes. His films are successful at box office. He shifts from rented house to his own house in Palimala a suburb of Mumbai. All his brothers and sisters shift with him and he lovingly finances for their education and marriage. Third, shift from tragedy King to comedy films, fourth, marriage with actress Saira Banu, her illness, her treatment in London and recovery . Being invited to meet Queen Elizabeth and her comment that you are very popular. Fifth, on the recommendation of Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru works for Congress Political Party and he addresses election meetings round the country. Sixth, he plans to work for the poor and deprived classes and helps in collection of funds when needed by people suffering from natural calamities. Seventh, he joins national association for Blind alongwith other philanthropists and collects funds for blind. He is friendly with people from all walks of life including film person, politicians, Advocates, political party workers, sports personalities and common people. He is appointed Sheriff of Mumbai for one year and his habit of reading books comes to his help. Eight, he visits his Peshawar for inauguration of Blood Bank. Government of Pakistan organises Pak Airlines flight for his family and friends from Bombay to Pakistan and back. Nine, his is granted Nishan-e-Imtiaz award by Government of Pakistan. He visits with Pakistan again and accepts the honour. Ten, An income tax case of use of black money is lodged against him by Income Tax Department. With the help of his N K P Salve and his son Harish Salve Advocate, he succeeds to get a clean chit order from Supreme Court in a period of six years. Eleven, He starts his next innings as a character actor in films which have a story with a social message. In the second part of the Book, Reminiscences, pen portraits of Dilip Kumar has been scripted by about 45 friends, relatives from film world and other professions have been collected. Foreword and introduction are charming reading. Sairu Banu has taken great effort to get the discussion sessions with Udayatara Nayar and has recorded the narrative of Dilip Kumar from which the beautiful book has come before the readers. English vocabulary is used in a way that in short, the meaning is conveyed. For English language, parts of this book can be used a text book for schools. It is a must read for all

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### **Hasan says**

Did not expect anything out of the ordinary from this book. It was a self tribulatory book which had good and sincere views about himself, his wife, his family, his industry and his friends. With the validations from superstars, directors, fellow actors and actresses, Kumar's biography was merely a congratulatory note for an iconic star of Bollywood.

The earlier chapters of his life were interesting to understand how Yusuf Khan, who from Pre-partition Peshawar ended up becoming Dilip Kumar. Like all Bollywood films this biography was 'we lived all happily ever after.'

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## **Mohanan Nair says**

A book ,written in simple and lucid style and interesting for reading.

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## **Kaustuv Baral says**

Great book to read with insight into the icon that is Dilip Kumar. I will not say it is completely entertaining but the knowledge we got to know about the star, his personality, his working style more than compensates it. My takeaway from this book is:

1. The sense of Responsibility Dilip Kumar had towards his family, friends, fans and work.
2. His level of deep commitment towards his work- he actually learned sitar for the song- Madhuban mein Radhika nache.
3. His way of interaction with people- one which was full of humility, respect and "tehzeeb".
4. One interesting thing which I marked is he did not desire to be an actor as such. His primary motive was to earn money for his huge family. Upon getting an opportunity to become an actor he immersed himself in it and created a legend out of himself. That is something.

This book is inspiring and is a must read for aspiring actors, fans and everyone in general.

Bidding adieu with this wonderful song :)- Suhana safar he yeh mausam haseen-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aSU74...>

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## **Ankit Kumar says**

it was clear like water. if you have an inclination towards movies and entertainment business, do take a look into the tragedy king's life and see what inspired him, his approach and his philosophy.

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## **Mayank says**

The man who is held 'the greatest' by many, is a man of few words. Dilip Kumar has always expressed more with his silence than with his words (brilliance of an accomplished actor) and here too he leaves some things unsaid, but unlike his movies, these things haunt you and you wish he had said more. You wish to hear more from such a legend who also happens to be a well learned and educated man.

Not without its share of fascinating moments, his chemistry with his professional rival and dear friend Raj Kapoor is an interesting read and so is his relationship depicted with his parents. The book though, is marred with pace inconsistencies and you feel this book was somewhat lost in translation by the co-author. The book might just be a Shadow.

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### **Tania Qureshi says**

I loved it, overall. I picked it up because my mama mentioned his name a few times in my life. Yusuf Khan and I personally love this name. It's so good. Before this book I just knew Dilip Kumar's name but after reading the book I'm in love with his personality and the life events he described in the book. I also had a dream about his childhood when I was reading it late at night. I always like Hollywood more than Bollywood as Bollywood copies a lot of things and ideas from all over the world but after reading this book, I would like to give his old movies a try. He is indeed a legend. And the book is beautiful with pictures and writings of praises by other actors like Aamir Khan, Anil Kapoor and Amitabh Bachchan.

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### **Afshan Hashmi says**

Hello Friends  
Greetings!!!

I did book review of the following book on my radio show.

Book: Dilip Kumar - The Substance and the Shadow : An Autobiography by  
Dilip Kumar(Author)

Here is the link of my radio show where I did the review:  
<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/drafshan...>

To know more about me please visit my website:

<http://drafshanhashmi.com/>  
Cheers!  
Dr.Afshan Hashmi

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### **Rafat Nadaf says**

Beautiful.

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### **Sameera Kazmi says**

As a beginner i started off with this book on recommendation of someone. Not just to learn about the life of a legendary actor(although i have seen only few of his movies) but also for having a liking for his wife Saira Banu. Because i always admired her beauty and she always seemed so down to earth and carried herself with such an elegance.

This book has instances of his childhood, beginning of his career, journey in the film industry, the truth of the much talked about affair and breakup with Madhubala, few eerie incidences experienced by him, list of all the films he did, and reminiscences about him by his family, colleagues and other actors.

It did not seem to me i was reading the autobiography of a legend but a common man who just took right decisions for himself and used his talents and skills wisely and became an inspiration to many.

I liked the narration of this book unlike few others which i have read recently and had hard time completing them. Also the pictures in the book of the young Dilip Kumar and Saira Banu will leave you in awe.

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