

THE REVENGE OF THE NON-VEGETARIAN-THE STORY OF A MAN BLINDED BY VENGEANCE

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ABSTRACT

"The Revenge of the Non-Vegetarian" tells the tale of a guy who is so consumed by vengeance that he is unable to feel compassion for anyone and who is ready to end up doing more than 23 years in jail for an act of rage. Despite being only 128 pages long, Chatterjee's latest book addresses topics that are far more complex. Meat-loving is a trait that Mr. Sen, the accused Bal, and the judge, and Dalvi have in common. Chatterjee skilfully channels the delicious atmosphere into a terrible yet rewarding resolution. Like a superb well-cooked mutton curry, the joys of this book rely on how much attention we give it.

Key Words: Revenge, non-vegetarian, vengeance, compassion, complex, meat-loving terrible, skilfully, accused, consumed.

1. INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this paper is to discuss the novel, The Revenge of the Non-Vegetarian written by Upamanyu Chatterjee. It was published by Speaking Tigers in India in 2018, a real and original of Indian writing which is in brilliant shape. Chatterjee gives a gripping story of probe into the deaths of the Nadeem Dalvi family. The Revenge of the Non-Vegetarian by Upamanyu Chatterjee takes place in the town of Batia, in the state of Narmada Pradesh, between 1949 and 1973. The Dayasagar Adinath Temple, which dates back a millennium, is located in Batia, but the Batia subdivision is only seventy years old. Eating meat is not recommended in Batia because the community is primarily Hindu and the temple grounds are holy. There are three main characters in the novel: Madhusudan Sen, Nadeem Dalvi and Basant Kumar Bal. In the town of Batia, a house is set on fire on a September evening in 1949. It burns to cinders and soot. All of it is reduced to ashes, including the six-member family and their dog. Nadeem Dalvi was the family's head. He was Madhusudan Sen's ICS subordinate mamlatdar. Mr. Sen serves as Batia's magistrate. Sen and Nadeem Dalvi became close because of Nadeem Dalvi's provision of fresh eggs, fish, and red meat. This is because Sen lives in an area near a temple, where it is difficult to find non-vegetarian meals. Mr. Sen takes an oath to turn vegetarian until justice has been done when it is discovered that the deaths had not been accidental or caused by fire. Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar says:

With humour and an informed description of legal procedures, this novel shows how, to avenge the death of another privileged man, a powerful, high-caste man ended the life of someone whom he saw as an inferior. What appeared to be a revenge of the non-vegetarian is actually a revenge of the privileged (1)

Upamanyu Chatterjee-Biographical sketch

Upamanyu Chatterjee is well-known for his works that highlight problems with contemporary society. His books portray the real India in all its complexity and myriad issues. He presents the western world with a new India that may appear small and unimportant, but these are the kinds of problems that are difficult to eradicate. He represents the new India of the 1980s. Even though Upamanyu Chatterjee only published a small number of novels, several readers both in India and elsewhere were drawn towards his work. Chatterjee talks about the issues that our ancestors ignored and that have been passed down to us over many generations.

The present work, The Revenge of the Non-vegetarian highlights the gap between the haves and the have nots since the murder occurs to satisfy the killer's craving for non-vegetarian soup (Basant Kumar). Due to his socioeconomic circumstances, Basanth Kumar would never be able to enjoy such exquisite cuisine at least once in his lifetime. As Nadeem Dalvi's servant, he will only receive food leftovers after everyone has finished eating. He is therefore little and debased. Since he is a member of a lesser social and economic class than Dalvi's family and doesn't have a family, and there is no one to show him affection. He is practically doesn't exist to the outside world. Basanth Kumar Bal expresses this in a single monologue that allows us to get insight into his mental state. It has to do with consuming meat. Chatterjee states:

"They always ate well," says Bal of his late employers. "They had non-vegetarian almost every day, saab, goat or chicken or fish or egg. They are like rakshasas themselves and always left only two

pieces of meat in the pot each for the sister-in-law and her daughter.” His inhalations became audible, spasmodic. ‘I got scrapings of the pot, some gobs of curry, some grains of rice and a couple of chapatis. Then I’d have to filch two green chillis and one raw onion to complete my meal” (19-20)

This riveting short story by renowned English author, Upamanyu Chatterjee, is his most approachable work to date and is a page-turner. Although Bal’s ideas and deeds are inexcusable, a person who is born into poverty, works for a family, has no hopes for the future, is illiterate and unaware of the world around him, and has no family of his own to care for him will undoubtedly have a mistaken world view. The text mentions that Bal “did not wonder what was going on beyond [the walls] in the world”. He always wondered if people ever remembered him at all. His sense that no one is interested in him, his ignorance of the outside world, his lack of friends, and his lack of affection and the cruel treatment he had from the Dalvi family turns him into a devil who only remembers the bad things about the people he worked for, never seeing the good aspects of the same family members. He even murders a dog that was not a threat to anyone and an innocent child who has just begun to grasp the ways of the world. He never speaks the truth for himself and shows no remorse for anything he has done. Perhaps, he is jealous of the wealthy, content, well-fed, and well-regarded Dalvi family in society, which may also be the reason for his attitude or cruel nature. Chatterjee says:

According to Basanth Kumar, “Well, the family had had dinner at 9.30-10, as they did every day. Gosht of goat, daal, tamatar-paneer. They always ate well. Then the sister-in-law and her daughter ate in the kitchen, whatever was left over. They called him. He went and washed up the thalis, pots and pand and then, after they had all gone to bed, he had his dinner in the shed, whatever was left over for him by his sister-in-law and her daughter from whatever had been left over for them. (19)

Basanth Kumar has to finish the household chores and is constantly busy with them. He brings in water, wood, and coal, washes up, goes to the bazaar to buy sugar and eggs, tends to the cows, irons the boy’s school uniform, and after all of this, he never gets time to relax. Since food is one of the necessities for all living things, Basanth Kumar feels, he works tirelessly for the Dalvi family but never receives a sufficient amount of it in return. He is so hungry that he kills every member of the Dalvi family in order to have delicious food—that is, non-vegetarian cuisine. According to Basanth, if you need a beast to work for you every day and you want your donkey to serve you, you have to at least feed him well. The Dalvis liked to eat, and they liked the others under their roof to feel want. Ultimately, due to the efficient investigation by Mr.Sen, Bal is punished for the heinous crime which he has committed. This novel is about another form of intolerance, one directed towards those who live in lower socioeconomic strata than ourselves and whom we perceive as inferiors, but we don’t realize this until the murderer is apprehended.

This novel depicts, with comedy and a knowledgeable explanation of legal processes, how a powerful, high-caste man killed someone he considered to be inferior in order to get revenge for the death of another privileged man. What seems to be the non-vegetarian’s retaliation is actually the privileged’s retaliation. Sen’s personal desire for revenge also curbs the freedom of others with regard to their diet: after turning vegetarian, Sen also forces the entire town of Batia to go vegetarian as well, by having the abattoirs shut down on the recommendation of a person from the temple trust.

2. CONCLUSION

This novel has incredibly beautiful writing, with very little emotions expressed but wonderful descriptions. The narrative centers on Basant Kumar, who is convicted of killing his master’s family, and the subsequent occurrences. It’s difficult to understand Basant’s nature, who undertakes a horrible act merely to obtain non-vegetarian food. To create a taut narrative, Chatterjee makes sure that the correct amount of spices and ingredients are used, much like in a perfectly cooked dish. Despite the challenging issues the book presents, the author is in excellent form. His straightforward manner and prose ensure that readers can enjoy the book all at once. It is a scathing analysis on the incredibly particular evils of Indian society.

3. REFERENCES

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