

Disdain: A Fiction

Pallavi Mishra

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Nurturing a curious longing within, to visit the mountains where she had spent her lonely childhood, a remorseful adolescence and a memorable youth, Shivani Kashyap, as she nears mid life revisits those mountains with the hope and earnestness of meeting the people, whom she had kept alive in her memories.

From a fistful of memories, Shivani tells the tale of her own life and that of her friend, Maya. Shivani is sensitive, emotional and passionate about Buddhist philosophy, while Maya is practical, down to earth and vehemently discards the theories of predestination and rebirth. Their friendship meets a tragic end.

As pages of Shivani's life open up, darker aspects of contemporary Indian society begin to rear its ugly head. Things like the anti-accommodationist stance of the natives and non-natives, intolerance and dissident behavior towards each other get reflected. Ethnic-clashes harm the social fabric and strict social constraints disrupt the loving relations in an emotionally divided land. Shivani bears the taunts and insinuations of both the natives and non-natives for being with a tribal boy. Various short anecdotes and reminiscences reflect upon the social and political picture of a distant state in India where discontentment is a norm.

Time overturned, she is uncertain of whatever unfolds before her when she decides to go to places where she had once belonged.

Did her visit meet her expectations? How does the place reciprocate? Does time allow her some space?



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