

1971: A War Story – A War Story You Would Fall In Love With!

By Gyaneshwar Dayal

“The first casualty of war is innocence” goes the maxim. All wars fought on pretext or the other result in human misery. People kill people who they do not know, several die, even more, are wounded for life and many many more are left to suffer for their lifetime.

War is horrendous. The horrors of war cannot be fully captured with mere words. The aftermath extends for centuries and beyond. Humanity still can shine through even the most horrific of war stories. That is the stark reality of life. Indeed war eventually seeps into the literature and becomes part and parcel of our life so that posterity can take life lessons from it.

History judges the war-makers and celebrates the war heroes. It often forgets the ones who suffer the most – children women, old, and incapacitated. That is what Dr. Neelam Verma’s book on Bangladesh is all about. Poignantly written and dexterously executed 1971 – a war story it is a tale of the Bangladesh war of independent; an account of a nation’s birth. The pain of its birth was however felt by its women and children the most.

Neelam Verma , the Author of the Novel, is a trained journalist and has worked both in India and Canada. The war and its aftermath happen to be one of her favorite subjects. In her journalistic days, she met a lot of war victims – children, war widows, ill soldiers. Her interactions with them come in handy in the book available on Amazon.

The author has penned many articles and books on the subject earlier. But this book gives a good account of the Bangladesh war without losing the track of her core subject – the misery the common people go through due to war.

1971: A War Story is a powerful story. It does not touch your heart but also your soul. It is about a little girl Anu who is portrayed in the novel. She goes to Pakistan to look for her father. Her beliefs are as strong and convictions unshakable. The writer seems to choose her words to pull your heartstrings. Seemingly it looks like a history book which it is in a sense. However, the author mixes history with a story, which makes it so believable.

Even the end of the book is done exquisitely. Throughout the book, the writer gingerly takes you through the miserable lives of widows of army men. It leads you to the lives of terrorists and the happening inside Pakistan jails. The novel depicts the 70s era and one feels as if one was watching a movie as every little detail is described to appears vivid.

The novel also deals with the subject of war prisoners who are often forgotten by their respective governments. The author describes their feelings as if these people. For us they are nothing but a statistical figure. Their country has long forgotten them as living beings. They are human too and should not have been forgotten. Unfortunately, they are, and now it's too late. You have to read this book to understand the plight of their families.

It is obvious that Neelam sat down with the families to listen to their stories and it reflects in her writing. The author has a keen eye and done meticulous research before putting this book together. The truth is hard to digest but cannot and should not be ignored. Along the way, Neelam has raised important issues like girl education and dowry. The side effects of the Green Revolution and the root cause of terrorism also figures in the novel. It's a book that one would keep on the bookshelf for kids to understand what happened during the 1971 India Pak war...