

CLASS-XI

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

DIRECTED WRITING-BOOK REVIEW

A book review describes, analyses and evaluates the merits of a contemporary work. It conveys an opinion, supporting it with evidence from the book. It is unbiased and critical in nature. Although, there is no set formula for writing a book review, it does have certain common elements. These include the following:

- The Title, Author, Publisher, No. Of Pages & Price
- An opening sentence to set the tone of the review, giving an overall feel of the work
- The general feel or genre of the book, like fiction or non-fiction.
- A concise summary of the plot, followed by the specific aspects of the work, individual characters, incidents and scenes.
- The outstanding idea that runs through the book to highlight its unique points.
- Overall impression of the work, including its shortcomings if any.

Sample Book Review

The Three Mistakes of My Life

Author: Chetan Bhagat

Publisher: Rupa Publications

Pages: 258

Price: Rs95

What strikes you first about Chetan Bhagat's novels is the fact that this author writes about Indians and for Indians. His characters are young, ambitious and passionate and have the same moral, social and religious dilemmas as many of the young Indians today. At the same time their context and sensibility too is unabashedly Indian. The new and the third Bhagat book, "The 3 mistakes of my life", has all these qualities.

The setting is the city of Ahmedabad that though being urban is yet not as metropolitan as many of its metro counterparts. It retains its small town flavour in colonies, traditional Indian households and small vegetarian eateries. It has the protagonist Govind with his passion and acumen for accounts and business, it has Ishan for whom cricket is the element around which his life revolves and it has Omi, a priest's son and loyal friend who is ready for anything that his friends are game for.

The book is based on real life events. It begins in a dramatic enough fashion with Bhagat receiving an e-mail from Govind who had taken many sleeping pills and was writing to him while waiting for the deadly sleep's embrace. Chetan was shaken enough by the incident to track the boy down to an Ahmedabad hospital. Fortunately he was still alive to tell the tale. The book is loosely based on the three mistakes Govind made in his life.

What follows is a mix of cricket, religion, business, love and friendship. Govind sets up a sports shop along with his friends in the temple compound with Omi's family's help. The shop prospers as Ishan coaches young boys in cricket and Govind teaches maths to Ishan's sister Vidya who also captures his heart. Ishan then meets Ali, a child prodigy with a hyper reflex condition that makes him hit each ball for a six. Ali displays the talent which Ishan never had and Ali's destiny becomes his own.

Enter Omi's Bitoo mama (maternal uncle), a communal party man bent on converting the young into fighters in the name of religion. Situations come to a head and Ahmedabad burns in riot fires. The background strongly replicates the Godhra Riots. The events that follow, lead Govind to his death-bed and that is when he writes the email to Bhagat.

Perhaps, this is the biggest compliment an author can receive. It's not when New York Times describes him as the biggest selling English language author in the country or when he crosses the coveted two million book sales' figure, but when someone chooses to remember him in his last minutes, that make a writer go beyond the ordinary. After all, isn't the purpose of all writing, to touch someone's heart?

"The 3 mistakes of my life" is written simply and has the quality that makes one want to read the book cover to cover in one sitting. The pricing of the book is just right for the target audience - young people. This book like Bhagat's earlier one, "One Night @ the Call Centre, too has the spice, emotion and pace to turn into a potential blockbuster.

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Question

Write a review of a book you have recently read (In approximately 300 words). Make use of the given points:
Name of the Book – Author – Publisher – Readership – Cover & Illustration – Plot – Characters – Insight into some interesting incidents – Message, if any – Appeal that the book holds for you.