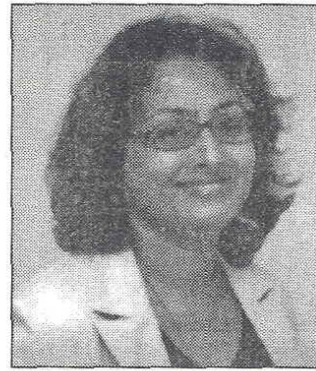


Afternoon PEOPLE ARE THE KEY

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PEOPLE ARE THE KEY



Jyothi Menon

The Angel of God, a novel by Jyothi Menon, is a tale of beautifully interwoven characters and circumstances, which somehow end up redeeming themselves throughout the book.

Looks like Jyothi Menon has lifted the stones and rocks along the paths of her life to scan and observe all that exists and goes about underneath there. She has noticed that under every situa-

tion, life is always seeking rectification or redemption from the underbelly of fate.

Rising above circumstances

Here, the underbelly is Dharavi (spelt Dharawi in this novel) and the character who rises from this world's biggest slum is Moosa Bhai. Hardened by harsh life in those by-lanes, Moosa's first brush with a harsher fate occurs when, in order to save the honour of his sister, he kills his own father. The locality maintains a semblance of ignorance about the whole episode. Moosa becomes an accomplished contract killer, much feared and respected. To the people he loves and protects, he is something of a Robin Hood, a legend who looks after the poor and the destitute.

This is a story of his growth into the world of organised crime, as a grateful and doting friend to those who have treated him well in his bad days. Jyothi Menon goes well into the character to seek out the nobler attributes present in all mankind, when ever she is writing about Moosa Bhai. And remember, the novel begins with him ordering a hit on a double crosser living way back in Chavakkad in Kerala, from his safe haven in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He has repaired over there after suspicions surfaces over his role in the riots and bomb blasts that bloodied Mumbai that followed the infamous demolition of the Babri Masjid.



Similar situation in real life ring a bell?

Jyothi Menon brings in the untainted element into the story with the other protagonist, Bhaskaran, living in Mahim, cheek by jowl with Dharavi. The two meet as youngsters when Bhaskaran intervenes in a fight, challenging Moosa's writ in the area. Bhaskaran's affability wins the tussle and sees the commencement of a life long friendship. Moosa plays the role of friend, philosopher and guide, in addition to patron and benefactor. Bhaskaran reaches the heights of academia, MIT, Boston, USA before returning to establish a great software company in Chennai. The author sees no contradiction between the two entities of Moosa and Bhaskaran being closer than brothers in the story, the bond being one of abiding love.

Striking gold

For the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, Jyothi Menon brings in Abubacker, the tea boy, who Moosa meets in Kozhikode, when he goes there to expand his gold smuggling business. Moosa sets him up to become the *capa di capone*. (Here the word of reverence for a don is Muthalali). Abubacker too becomes lifelong friend, and associate in the world of smuggling and money laundering. Hard work is again rewarded by the author, when Moosa rescues younger brother Raashid from an automobile workshop in Nagpur, and sends him over to Libya. He also rises, yes, and successfully oversees the repatriation of money via the hawala system. Jyothi Menon explains the parallel system that lakhs of non resident Indians rely upon unto this day to bypass the tedium of legal money transactions.

Jyothi Menon is above all things an established HR person, so naturally, fantastic advice comes in from Moosa,

who expansively recounts, "People are the key, Bhaskaran. Unless you look after people, unless you realise that the true capital of any business is the human capital, no business will survive." Point noted, Ma'am.

The Angel of God is published by 'Cedar books' and is priced at Rs.195.

