

A Review of Naseem Siddiq's *Snowy Splendour*

Nithin Varghese, M.Phil. Scholar

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Naseem Siddiq (Prof. Naseem Achakzai)

A Magical Journey

Naseem Siddiq's *Snowy Splendour*, (Pakistan: CPD, 2009) is an assortment of ten short stories for kids and youth. This book will certainly take you on a magical journey, filled with adventure. There is a little something for everybody within the pages of this book, and it ends showing wisdom. Nasrullah Barech, Executive Director, Centre for Peace and Development (CPD), has written the introduction to this book. He clearly expresses the purpose behind this collection of short stories; violence is increasing among the youth of Balochistan because of numerous regional, national, and international reasons.

Positive Message

CPD picked these ten stories because they convey the positive message of affection and peace and it will teach them the path of love, harmony, and tolerance. He also hopes that these stories will certainly facilitate the kids and youth to search out meanings in their life. Barech is also of the opinion that Siddiq's endeavour is to interpret the shades and meanings of patience and tolerance through art, creation and human beings, among the people of the remotest areas of Balochistan.

Creating Awareness

Confucius rightly said "Human beings regardless of nationality, race or religion – everyone – should be loved equally." If such an insight was endorsed through our colleges,

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community organisations, and families then our society would not have issues with racism, discrimination, and xenophobia. Therefore, Siddiq tries to create awareness among the kids and youth of Balochistan through these stories.

The author within the foreword clearly states that these stories are written for kids, particularly to the teenagers and he dedicates these stories to them.

The Setting of the Stories

The setting of the first three stories is in a jungle and the setting varies for the other six. The characters of these stories are quite the attention-grabbing and engaging types. They appeal to the imagination of the kids as well as the adults. Youngsters like animals, birds, trees, and flowers; they prefer to watch animals or birds and listen to stories of birds and animals. That is why Siddiq builds animals, birds, flowers, etc., as the central characters in these stories.

Symbolic Characters

Despite the fact that the stories are concerned with the intentions and wishes of humans, the characters are animals with human behaviours and characteristics. Kids carry these stories in their mind even after their childhood days. They value each moment within the story told here and wait to envision the story. Such stories facilitate children in two ways: they can increase imagination skills, and impute morality. The characters in these stories are insignificant compared to the realistic present day stories. However, the author tries to convey deep and profound truth to his readers through these simple straightforward experiences of these characters.

The story of the good looking butterfly talks about the importance of freedom to the readers. The water lily in the second story stands for positive thinking and encouragement. Its words concerning the rainbow change the total scene to a cheerful state of affairs. The owl in the third story is distressed concerning the fate of the moth. However, the moon changes its mental state and calls for positive thinking. Therefore, the moon is the epitome of positive thinking. The small dot in the fourth story helps Kamil to complete his masterpiece picture. The dot moved to the cheek of the portrait, thereby offering an idea to the artist. It helps him to realize, to feel a completion. Black tulip offers an honest outlook on life to others. The nightingale is in search of perfection. He understands that the duration of his life is just too short. Therefore, he starts

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singing with a powerful impression. The stone Beauty desires to move from the peak of the mountain to the Great Plains and valleys. The mountainous goat and the rain help the stone to come down. But a grinder maker takes the stone and creates a grinder. The flaw of the stone is to turn its ear to those with knowledge. The rusty needle is optimistic and it continuously thinks of the best. But the fly is a skeptic and it always talks the negative aspect about everybody.

However, the oil fully changes them. The fly meets its tragic end and the needle comes out as a shiny one. A soft stunning white floating feather is also a character in this collection. It is trapped in the sharp nails of a poisonous thorn in a bush. It tries laboriously to free itself, but all its efforts are in vain. The camel that appears on the scene attacks the bush and the feather is dislodged. It starts flying in the air with the assistance of another wave of wind. Life is not perpetually happy. It contains the episodes of tragedies also. But it will move and happiness will return. The title story is about a young intelligent king who has a thirst for knowledge. He undertakes the most difficult and adventurous journey to find the answer to his question and attains fulfillment in his life.

The Message is for All

The message of each story is not for the kids only, however, but applicable for all. It is necessary for youngsters to find out the values that they will take with them through the rest of their lives. These stories will serve multiple functions, and therefore, children are able to pick up values from these tales and they will stick with them throughout their lives. It can also help children to grasp the behaviours and attitudes of those around. All the stories in this collection talk about the positive aspects of doing the right thing.

Siddiq's Strategy

Siddiq jumps right into action at the very beginning of each story, and toward the end brings the story to a prompt close. He sets all the stories in the very place and time that may be fascinating to the readers. The stories are written in simple language that most readers can understand. Most sentences are comparatively short and easy. He writes simply and directly, in short words, short sentences, and short paragraphs and always keeps the readers in his mind. Simplicity and straightforwardness are the main qualities of Siddiq's stories.

Simplicity

I think of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's words while reading this collection, "In character, in manner, in style, in all things, the supreme excellence is simplicity." Siddiq tries to convey his idea in a simple way through this book. Moreover these stories carry universal appeal both in perception as well as appeal, since many a nation needs some sort of revamping to stabilize normalcy in living situations. I like to recommend this collection of short stories for children and teens.

It is worth reading this collection, because it helps us to face the odds in our lives and also it certainly instills values.

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Nithin Varghese, M.Phil. Scholar
Department of English and Foreign Languages
The Gandhigram Rural Institute – Deemed University
Gandhigram 624 302
Tamilnadu
India
nithinvettu23@gmail.com