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Title

THE WHITE TIGER

Author(s)

Aravind Adiga

Publisher: Harper Collins Publishers

The book, a Booker Prize Winner written by Aravind Adiga is very interesting focusing on social and economic dimensions. According to Adiga, much has been said about poverty in India lately. Poverty is said to be a hindrance for India's progress, it is a virus, it should be eradicated. But this gentleman, by the name Aravinda Adiga conveys to the readers why it is so. *He clearly indicates the subtle yet alarming difference between the two Indias that exist today.* The story is narrated in an interesting manner, as the protagonist tells his tale to the Chinese PM in a span of seven nights.

The book is a fiction depicting the story of seven nights, each dealing with social story line. *There are two Indias that run parallel with each other.* The protagonist, Munna alias Balram Halwai reflects about the contrast between the two Indias. One is the 'darkness' in which he begins his journey i.e. the villages of our country. His childhood perfectly represents the apathy of a typical village family and the downtrodden lives of his people over there. Illiteracy, corruption, unhygienic atmosphere only add to his family's problems. Balram goes through many ups and downs, mainly through the downs. His father's death and a wicked grandmother's greed makes him leave his village Laxmangarh and his school where he was once known as 'the white tiger' and breaks coals at a tea shop in Dhanbad. *Here Adiga gives us a glimpse into the mind of a typical village fellow in India and tells us how mediocre goals they set for themselves.* Having a uniformed job was all that he wanted and Balram's childhood hero was the local bus conductor!

Balram faces it all in Dhanbad when he finally gets his dream job. The servant-servant brawls, mockery made of his ignorance, scolding from his masters etc. are also described with astute finesse. A startling revelation is made when the main driver turns out to be a Muslim fellow and was forced to lead the life of a Brahmin for 30 years just to get a job in a hardline Hindu family. And the government today talks of employment galore!

Life shifts to a higher gear for Balram as he moves to the brightness of Delhi serving a new and probably a better master. But things start to get darker from here on. He learns how people are still in the darkness amidst all the glow of Delhi. He is reminded of his village whenever he sees the slums. *The author has very well shown the psyche of an Indian servant with many lucid instances, one of the most remarkable being when Balram agrees to take the blame of an accident caused by his mistress on himself.* But there was something else in store for him. Delhi

made him a man out of the boy from Laxmangarh as he would often do things to satisfy his desires and an instinct such as drinking foreign liquor, sleeping with golden haired girls, going on long drives alone etc. Also in between, there are mentions of his family who still remains in anticipation of some attention from Balram. *The greatest punch is the involvement of politics and our great men in power who love to puppet people like Ashok, Balram's master and these businessmen have to keep on bribing them with crores of rupees. One India requires a few coins to feed itself for just a meal whereas the other India is not even satisfied with crores being spent on foreign liquor, bribing, malls and brothels.*

Another interesting aspect is the servant-master relationship shared by the two. Balram often boasts of the telepathic connection he shared with his master and also about how good a boss he was. But sometimes he would just be upset with the way he was treated with. It shows how less a man is taken care of with whom one trusts his car, his house, in fact his whole life. And one rainy day, the 'Murder Weekly', a magazine the drivers used to read as a pastime took its toll on him and he slits open his master's throat and runs off with his seven lakh rupees in the car and starts a new life in Bangalore. The action was not out of hatred or disrespect but more of an impulse. There was remorse and the fear of losing his family in Balram's mind but it soon faded away as he thought of the hundreds of politicians and other famous people who must have killed thousands in their path to glory.

According to Balram, *theme of the entrepreneurship comes into the picture*. With his stolen moolah he became an owner of a taxi company which took care of the call centre fellows. The police was after him, but the details of the posters released were so much defaced that the man resembling the poster could have led to the arrest of half the men of India. And from thereon Balram leads a luxurious life of an entrepreneur in the IT hub of the nation. *He certainly roared like a White Tiger to come out of the darkness and enjoy the luxury of brightness but the journey had its share of shame, guilt and crime.*

What Adiga has done with his remarkable satire and great wit is that he has cracked a whip on our social, economical and political system. And with the journey of the 'White Tiger' he has shown the rising India with heart getting rotten day by day.

THE WHITE TIGER, winner of the Man Booker Prize 2008 is a marvelous book portraying the tale of the two faces of India- one of abundance, prosperity and affluence and another of penury, darkness and deprivation and relentless struggle of the deprived. Knowledge can never be weighed in terms of price and publishers have priced the book at Rs. 395 which is reasonable taking into the wealth of knowledge and wisdom the author has shared.

PRICE: Rs. 395

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