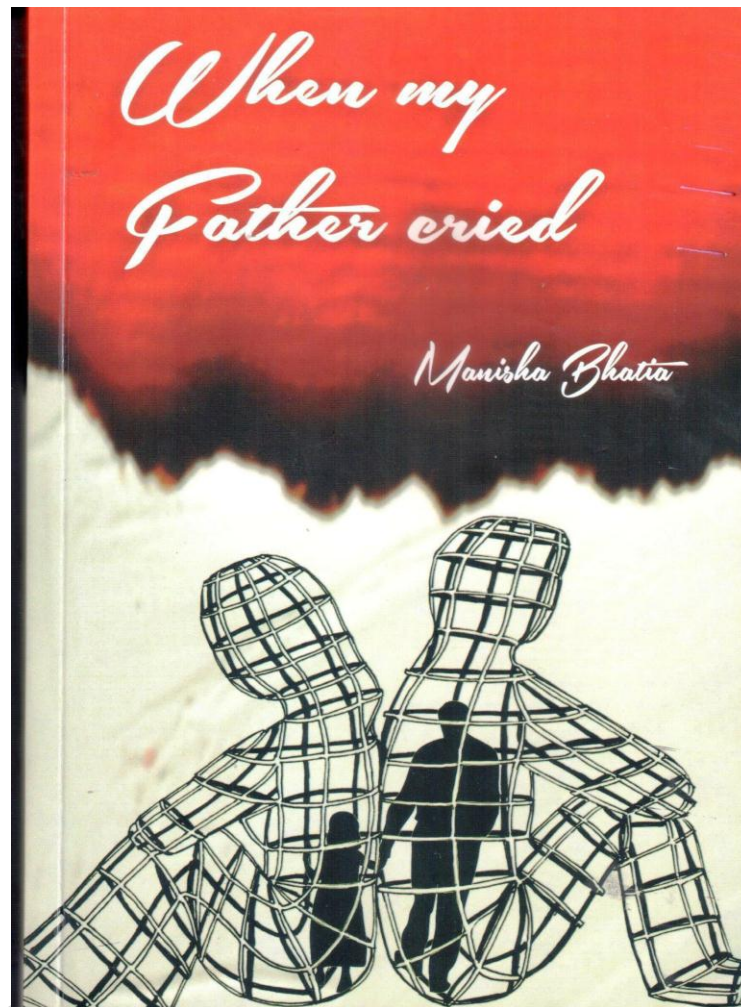


A DAUGHTER'S TRIBUTE TO HER FATHER

By Manzar Iman

When My Father Cried, is a story of life's ups and downs that an average student experiences where she is caught in a catch-22 situation between her career aspirations and a lover who initially appears to be all loving and caring but as things move ahead and college life draws close to an end, there appears a dramatic change in his attitude and approach to both love and life. It is also a story of the relationship that a daughter has with her father. The story tells about the fickleness of some of modern day realities but there is a twist in the spin which unfolds as the story progresses.

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It was past 8:00 PM and Malini Malhotra was still in office, working on a piece that required her immediate attention, but the continuous ringing of the phone was irritating and disturbing her. What she describes as ‘a harsh professional world’ in which formality needs to be maintained for the sake of what people call “professionalism”.

“Malini...it’s Kartik here... How are you, Malini?” asked the voice softly. There begins the story in flashback of a young college student. A story which is of love, longing, betrayal and a failed relationship as a result of failure to understand what constitutes real love as against what can be termed as a fake, phony and interest-driven relationship.

However, failure here seems to turn into the stepping stone to success for Malini who divorces her past and embraces her present which makes her a successful advertising professional. But in between is the long story of love's labour lost.

Malini tries to protect the relationship but fails, despite her best attempts. This makes her question its validity and shakes her belief in the very notion of love. However, it does not stop her from trying to find solace in other avenues of life with a broken heart though, in the initial phase. But as she moves on, she finds new mates and colleagues who turn out to be kind and considerate, and provide her the best possible support to start life anew and succeed.

Her new friend Raven Keith who is frequently refers to as Ravz assuages her wounded soul without letting her have the slightest idea of how strong a belief he has in her ability to overcome her bruised and shattered state of mind and mould herself into a more mature, firm and successful person and, find true meaning of her dreams as she herself thought- "Dreams crushed in the past leaves seeds for the new ones to grow..." It has Ravz in fact, who turns her 'madness' into success. However, Malini isn't ungrateful to the help she received from Kartik Khandelwal, a promising student who is the envy of students of the management institution – IBS Kolkata and who even becomes her 'official Finance tutor' helping her with the topic that she finds hard to understand. However, later, it dawns on her that Kartik is of complete dominating nature who thinks that women are supposed to play second fiddle to men. This is where Malini's egos get hurt and she is forced to rethink about her choice but, it is too late to regain the state of mind which she had before getting so up and close with Kartik.

Although the story is knit well, sometimes the personal details of the relationship is overstretched and sounds unnecessary. But that is what Malini undergoes and, unless these are given due space, one would fail to understand the depth of a hurt soul. However, the length could have been shorted.

While it's hard to get out of the trauma of a failed love, Malini's new friend Ravz helps her weave a new dream to first succeed as an advertising professional and then begin her journey as a writer. When he sees her cry, he says, "I won't stop these tears today. Let this poison ooze out." And when

she has shed enough of her tears, she feels relieved and finds herself stronger. Success comes calling and it is rewarded as she is chosen for the prestigious Young Talent of the Year award in the advertising agency where the 'who's who' of the industry joins to celebrate and congratulate the young professional and where her father is greeted by the bigwigs.

A dotting daughter's day comes to let her father feel proud. Overwhelmed with the praise Malini receives; her father's eyes are filled with tears of joy. With the result that "His daughter's success had healed the friction and sourness that had developed in their relationship." He feels "proud, ecstatic, and emotional at the same time. The days of rift were piercing in his heart. The sudden flow of guilt of misunderstanding his own daughter make him feel nostalgic and miserable." This is the part of the novel which highlights the unique relationship a daughter has with her father and how she tries to manage it, because a daughter is most sensitive towards her father and "Every girl is her father's princess".

The biggest surprise is the past coming to witness the present. Kartik comes with a bouquet in his hand to congratulate her over the success that she has achieved.

"Kartik? How? I mean...you...here...Thanks anyhow," she said, accepting the flowers, puzzled. What leads to this big twist in the tale is the reason for one to first read the novel of Manisha Bhatia, which is full of some beautiful anecdotes. What happens to the new found love of Malini in Ravz, is the crux and climax of the novel.

Bio

Manzar Imam is a freelance journalist based in New Delhi. He is pursuing Ph.D. in International Studies from the Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi and is also doing an online research-oriented program from the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, USA. He divides his time between writing and research and follows his heart to celebrate India's diversity of art, culture and tradition.