

# Misir Ali, an interesting and mystic creation by Humayun Ahmed.

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*During the world pandemic, where the restless souls are confined within the four walls, it seems really impossible to imagine a character who is amazingly self-oblivious and extremely concern to the future of the human race. Here in this article, the centre of discussion will be Humayun Ahmed's portrayal of Misir Ali, a different kind of take on the character by going against of the flowing along with an undercurrent note of creative reading during this turbulent time. In the world of mystery, Misir Ali stands individually-apart from the typical novels, on the shoulder of a fearless persona to challenge the set rules of society – a great learning indeed !*

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## **Book Details:**

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Author – Humayun Ahmed.

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Suspense and mystery along with a spine-chilling and nerve-wracking thrilling plot appeal to any human mind most. This genre has been revisited several times by multiple authors for centuries in various countries. The cathartic effect of a good thriller can leave a long lasting effect upon a reader's mind by arising a few conflicted fundamental questions of belief and complexity. In this context Humayun Ahmed's **Misir Ali** is probably one of the finest creations to define such characteristic traits. In **Misir Ali**, the blend of mystery along with a bone-chilling suspenseful ambience happen just so seamlessly with utmost ease.

Categorizing the character of Misir Ali into any particular format is nearly impossible as it displays combination of various sights of complexity level as his conscious mind gets unravelled with every layer of story – something impossible to understand just by having a peek on the surface in his unorganized lifestyle. From outer side he appears to be a normal mid-age professor of psychology department in Dhaka university who leads a single life – the simplicity of his outer side was the actual complexity of the plot. Logical approach and a sympathetic view upon human race can't go along due to its two completely detached facing of journey and the ultimate destination. This almost two different and nearly contradictory quality have found their path in Misir Ali who loves the human race and deeply worried for its future on one hand and on other he has this very shrewd mind and sharp observation skill to analyse everything under the light of logic.

Ahmed skilfully represented a unique combination of human impulses in Misir Ali's character. In most cases the people who observes and studies human psychology for a long time generally tend to devoid of any personal sensitivity, they incline to criticise other over on the smallest or trivial thing, here the exception is Misir Ali. He tries to understand the logic behind every incident or human reflection without any judgement or harsh feeling towards that other person. He is a sharp observer and a meticulous listener. Though at times, he can appear as a careless person who is oblivious to his duties or responsibilities (including self-improvement) but in deep down he

cares for others seriously as we notice how desperately he searches for the parents of a little girl who lives in his house and even hires a boy to look for any missing news in old newspapers or the way he takes care of her when she caught fever even the girl was wondering that nobody actually thought of his worker with such earnest caring way in **Nishithini**. Though he appears to be an ordinary mid-age person, he possesses great inherent love for the whole world. He can be calm and deliver his logical explanation even in a very awkward, tough and nerve-wracking situation – he can be that composed in a tensed circumstance, appear at times as if highly detached from any worldly pleasure or attachment. You can notice a strong calmness in his whole appearance almost hidden underneath his oblivious outer side.

There is a part in **Brihonnala**, where Misir Ali finally confronts the criminal in such a calm and composed manner with such a confidence that actually elevates him from just an ordinary truth-seeker man. Also, the pin-drop silence of the night blends smoothly with an undercurrent of ghostly ambience adds an extra layer of thrill and suspense which inturn beautifully heightened the climactic effect upon the readers. There is another scene where in **Nishithini**, where Misir Ali, with immense control in his nerves, talked with the murderer who came to kill him actually. The whole scene is so intense in terms of its narration that left the reader's mind numb with the explosion of various feelings – a masterstroke of the author which is bound to attack on a reader's mind.

There are multiple detective novels in Bengali and world art literature. Detective novel are basically take the readers on a journey of mystery and problem-solving skill of a particular individual to reach to the ultimate destination. Though Ahmed never claimed it to be an acknowledged detective novel rather his claims were inclined more towards on the free personal quest of a mid-age professor who seeks logic behind everything, for whom there is no place for mystery in physical world, there is a tinge of detection in Misir Ali's work process but oversimplification of his character can lead us to a wrong direction rather what makes Misir Ali a stand apart is his being different from the typical

norms, for example, there is no proper ending of the stories, Misir Ali will take you on the journey and you will understand everything slowly as layers would start unravelling one by one and Misir Ali would dive into them. In typical detective novels, the detective would narrate the actual story behind everything by explaining the layers and how he/she reached to it but in Misir Ali there is no particular division or ending like that, it is as if you would understand everything by yourself and there is absolutely no need to let other to explain, it is more like a narration of incidents rather than a detective novel – an Ahmed's masterstroke to underline the difference from typical detective novels which in turn makes Misir Ali a highly relatable character for the readers. Ahmed probably wanted to be documentation of a work-lover professor who love to search logical explanation behind things, for that he didn't provide Misir Ali a sidekick or a partner as any mainstream detective novels would do. Therefore, the readers get the chance to have a first-hand experience in the journey without the interference of any third person's presence or point of view. The description and the incidents are very rich in its own individuality. In mostly mystery or detective thrillers we might have come across the narration where the author only showcases the part of the protagonist or the detective individual who is searching the truth and the rest remains under the carpet. In **Misir Ali**, we notice a thorough study of the antagonist also without any judgement in a very detached style placing itself in a parallel universe. Unlike typical novels which place protagonist in centre, Ahmed actually represents a well-knitted parallel storyline for those antagonist's psychology along with each and every other character – a fantastic way of narration which actually triggers the mind of readers to imagine the story beyond the book and all the possible conclusion and explanation can be derived from this.

There is no set one way of narration, Ahmed skilfully employed artistic technique to capture not only the progress of Misir Ali but also of other characters. The development or the pace of the narration mostly depends upon Misir Ali's innovative way of investigation, totally different from any typical set

storyline, he would follow each and every place where he can get any piece of information related to that particular case even if it is trivial. He can employ his time, energy and money to any particular unknown case if it appeals to his conscious mind even if he is not getting any money for that (which he doesn't get in most places). Misir Ali is someone who loves to build his mansion of consecutive happenings with the brick of logical explanation.

For me **Nishithini** has appealed to my senses mostly because it somehow underlines more maturity and responsible sight of Misir Ali along with a slight undercurrent vibe of his romantic persona, also the development of side characters like Firoz or Naznin or even Misir Ali's bond with that little girl Hanifa work as an extra point of interest to me. The story revolves around Feroz, a twenty-two years old medical student and his mental or psychological conflict or disorder. As the narration captures pace, one by one we explore the mental layers of each and every character including Misir Ali himself, not a lightweight peek through rather we get a deep observation or study of their mental appearances and conditions. Slowly he untangles the mystery one by one even putting his own life at risk. There are multiple interesting subplots which include Nilu, a young student of university and Hanifa, a little girl who works in Misir Ali's house. Though in the preface of this book Ahmed clearly mentions that development of romantic feeling is a casual thing for any normal living being yet for a persona like Misir Ali it should be contented only in himself and not actually take a shape in his real life also (as he shows Misir Ali's marriage to Nilu in **OnnoBhuban**, which Ahmed clearly mentions as a "huge mistake" in the preface). Misir Ali somehow feels strong reluctance with any emotional attachment to any individual. He has a very deep inherent romantic soul in himself which should be left in himself as a hole so that his work can slowly fill in with logical interrogation and quest of the outer world. There is also a strong gothic element to the overall theme of the story, it is like a rollercoaster of thrilling experience that mixes mystery and ghostly atmosphere – so intricately woven together that the grip will make the readers glued to the end.

According to Humayun Ahmed, often readers complain that the endings doesn't consist carpe diem effect upon readers which actually give a sense of joy of final completion of the mystery. The joy of getting a final closure at the end of any mystery thriller is a something every reader want to experience. But according to my personal opinion, the never ending thread is another beauty of Misir Ali, it actually leaves a long-lasting effect on mind. The endings are often so complex and intrigued that it is almost impossible to give any concrete ending to those narratives. Providing it with any perfect direction can actually disrupt the the path of endless imagination for readers. This never-ending sense actually accentuates the relatable features of Misir Ali with real life figure. He is an oblivious man with no self-awareness and with no absolute fiendish mentality to others, a logic lover person who continuously wants to discover the hidden logic beneath the surface, a lively person with no absolute ambition for money or position or power but only deconstruct the mystery, a mid-age alone man who has nothing to fear but only the hunger to discover the new, his only wish or demand is to extract the logic from the veil. Though at times, he can appear as a madman (since he appears to give more than what he gets) but deep down he loves the human race and wants to help them. Often a great observer of human psychology can

be devoid of any emotional feeling but not in the case of Misir Ali, he is a deeply emotional individual but at the same time doesn't believe in any type of mysticism. At one place Humayun Ahmed even states Misir Ali loves the world unconditionally and in his character emotion and logic walk hand in hand.

In this pandemic where confinement is becoming new normal day by day and a restless, overwhelmed feeling slowly crawling towards us, Humayun Ahmed's **Misir Ali** will help you to engross yourself in a journey of mystery and thriller. In this turbulent time where everyone is freaking out for future, Misir Ali's casual approach will wonder you and may help you to reinvent your core logical system and beliefs. His simple yet captivating life lesson will fascinate you and can actually make you rethink your point of view of seeing the physical world – a piece of solace to the restless soul in this conflicted, confused time.

### References

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