

# HALF GIRL FRIEND BY CHETAN BHAGT INTERROGATES THE MISCONCEPTIONS THAT THE YOUTH MAKE AND THE FOLLIES THEY COMMIT

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Chetan Bhagat a revolutionary writer, who is the author of six blockbuster novels- Five Point Someone(2004), One night @ the call center (2005), Three mistakes of my life (2008), Revolution 2020 (2011), 2 states (2009), and a non-fiction title What young India wants (2012). Bhagat's writing has touched the people's pulse. Half girl friend is a simple love story. It is all about a boy who doesn't speak English well and brings out the issues related to English in the country today. It is a rural-urban love story that not only touches the heart, but also inspires the reader, Bhagat said in a statement about *Half Girl Friend*. In *Half Girl Friend*, he has shown a new angle of love, an unison love story – an instinctual feeling of bondage in the human relation. The story is build up in the north part of India – Bihar. Chetan Bhagat's usual style of introducing the story through the main male protagonist- Madhav Jha, a Bihari boy who happens to meet Chetan Bhagat the writer, at the Patna and give him the journals of his late friend Riya. Bhagat, brings into light the secret of Riya's death to Madhav and from here the main plot of the story begins.

Bhagat, an ex-Banker, has titled all his novels with numerical numbers, it shows his inevitable interest in Banks especially numbers. In all his novels the readers are exposed to a famous educational institutions in India especially in North India, may be it his nevertheless love for education, as he is an IIT product. The readers are taken to St.Stephen's college at Delhi, where the main protagonist Madhav Jha attends an interview for admission. Bhagat's specialty in introducing male characters first in all his novels, as a sufferer of love break up or a failure in life or failure in career, who happens to be in his last days mostly in depressed condition without any

hope or aspiration to lead a good life. It is a simple love story, a rural-urban love story, with many twist, ups and downs, struggles, it moves towards a happy ending. Madhav Jha a basket ball player who is an aspirant to graduate from the best college to develop his English language to change the social condition of his society and the people where he lives in. He is supported by his mother Rani Sheba of Dumaron, and his father is late Raja of Dumaron who lives in haveli, an uncared castle since independence. Rani Sheba runs a self financing school for over a decade, educating more than 700 children from nearby village, without proper facilities and equipment but with only a motto to bring education to the downtrodden people in the villages. The school neither gains profit nor gets funds from the any of the government institutions or from the local people, it is pure non-profitable institution that serves the society. Madhav and his mother lead a normal middle class life in the haveli with few servants who serve them out of respect rather than for money. Though the family doesn't possess much of wealth, they received respect and honor from the village people. Bhagat has succeeded making the readers to recollects the ancient King rulers in India and intentionally making us believe that still there are villages which are dusk into darkness that which not even exposed to modern world. Bihar, the backward state of India, which was under the control of the nawabs in the early years and went under the control of the British rule made a lot of change to the state and its country. The oldest princely state in India, which had been scattered after independence of India by the government, even affected Dumaron where several near bankruptcies, man alcoholic made health and wealth lose but the women saved the family pride and the haveli by taking the position of the men.

“It brings back the history of the Great Battle of Buxar in 1764, describing about the Indian rulers- Mir Qasim, the Nawab of Bengal, Shiyu-ud-Daula and the Mughal King, Shah Alam II (pg-98) These lines of history make us look back over our past which is one way or the other related to sufferings of many people in India due to colonization. Bhagat had made an attempt to make an illusionary concept come true by connecting Battle of Buxar and the birth of English in India in his novel *Half Girl Friend*. This concept is made clear in the following words which make the readers think about it. “If there was no Battle of Buxar, or if it had had a different outcome, the British may not have ruled India like they did. There would be none of the English high class, rest low class bull shit that happens in India. These would not even be a St. Stephen's College. Just imagine, if only the jokers in Buxar had done things a little differently, may be the white man would be speaking Hindi and Bhojapuri would be the new cool.” (Pg-98) Indian

traditions and culture can be still seen in villages whereas in urban areas it has exhausted as they are heading towards the modern culture so called the western culture. Bhagat brings us the taste of our own culture which the people have left out. “Your coronation .You saw the tents outside, right?” (Pg-)

Humor is the always the master key for Bhagat who makes readers enjoy fantasy throughout his novel. Coronation ceremony for a prince who neither has a Kingdom to rule nor has the power to accomplish, but receives pride and prestige from the VIP’s and news coverage for the same from the reporters. Modernisation and Globalisation are the terms restricted to only few countries and cities, as it has not touched the doorstep of the villages or the village people. Even today there are villages without proper power supply, water and even basic needs to lead their life. The true condition of Indian administration which opens widely for the rich but it is always closed for the down trodden people.

“The man wanted three hours of power in 24 hours. And even for that he had to wait to meet his leaders with folded hands. There must be millions of Indians like this, I thought. There is something about people with no hope for a better future in life. You can identify them from their expression. Most of all, it is in their eyes, which don’t sparkle anymore. They aren’t sad eyes. They are resigned eyes. The villagers had accepted that life would be what happened to them, not what they made of it. After all, this was rural Bihar.”(Pg-109) From this rural village, hails the main protagonist Madhav with revolutionary thoughts, to change his society and develop it economically sound. Youth with such broad minded thinking is the need of the hour for the countries development. Madhav’s journey begins from Dumaron and lands at St.Stephen’s college, Delhi. An ultimate branded Bihari boy who can’t speak English fluently, tires to find a place at the famous St.Stephen’s college, only to develop English language.“Back in 2004, my English was Bihari. It was 90 percent Bihari hindi mixed with 10 percent can’t really bad English. Cumty room.... bat lai eyega zara? Hamara interview hai na wahan..... mera khel ka kota hai. kis taraf hai?”(Pg-8) Madhav Jha a state level basket ball player attends an interview at St. Stephen’s college. “I faced the first interview of my life.”

“Good morning, sir, sir and sir, I said they smiled. I didn’t think it was a good smile. It was the high class to low class smile. It was the high class to low class smile. The smile of superiority, the smile of delight that they knew English and I didn’t. (Pg-9) Bhagat style of creating humor

always co relates with the colloquial language of the youngsters. “Are you from Bihar? he said you know Dumraon?” I said, I could have kissed his feet. The three English speaking monsters continued to stare.”(Pg-10) Piyush Yadav, the sport coach helped him in making his dream come true. Madhav Jha feels like a fish out of the pond, being in St.Stephen College. Not only Madhav Jha but many Indians feel the same when it happens to learn a foreign language. They try hard to succeed in the race of learning English, but many a time they fail in it. It has become a nightmare for many too. Madhav stays in college hostel room, shared with Ashu, Raman and Shailesh from Bihar or Jharkhand. Among the four, Shailesh’s English is good. Bhagat hasn’t given much information about the minor characters; his concentration is mainly on the major characters. Bhagat is always a supporter of male characters, tries to show up the male dementedness in many sequences in the story too. Madhav Jha happens to meet Riya Somani, the second main character in the story.

“Riya Somani, a basket ball player, the most beautiful Marwadi girl on the planet, owner of an extra ordinary eyebrows, and speaker of wonderful lines, had yanked my heart out of its hiding place.”(Pg-22) Use of condition clause in the sentences, makes the readers to think about imaginary situations which may not may not have the impact on the situation. “If she weren’t tall, I wouldn’t have noticed her. It is funny how her height shaped my life. If she had been four inches shorter, my eyes never have met hers and everything would have been different. If I had not been bored and arrived at the basket ball court an hour earlier, it would have been different. If someone had not missed a pass and the ball had not come out of the court and hit me on the head, I would have had a different life.”(Pg-14) “God designs the future life but man designs his love life” Madhav falls in love with Riya Somani, a five feet nine inches tall, fair good looking girl, her long neck, long arms and long legs attracts every guy’s attention. “I didn’t know if I was a real prince or not, but I had found my princess.”(Pg-28)

Madhav Jha makes himself convenient with Hindi language rather than English language for communication with Riya. Riya Somani, an English literature student, who comes to college in BMW attracted by his basket ball techniques, makes friendship with him. Madhav Jha becomes a basketball friend for Riya. Usually they both practice the game. Their friendship develops day by day and Madhav tries to confirm his love with her, but many a time he fails with Riya rejection of his proposal. Bhagat has used new strategy of man chasing the woman and the men are the

chasers and the women are being chased. “Did you just put your hand on mine? she whispered, but loud enough for people around us in the movie theatre to look out way. Accidentally, I said Mr. Madhav Jha, you have come to see the movie. Focus on that.” (Pg-29)

The whole story revolves around the two main characters, where the main protagonist chases over the female and makes his love proposal which is being rejected by Riya. Madhav Jha basically from a prince family, though don't have wealth but only their pride is left over by their ancestors. He leads a normal Indian life, who enjoys a real life with mother and his village people. He has clear ideas about his future life and career, who doesn't aspire for much luxurious life but wants to lead a simple life satisfying his own regards. On the other hand Riya Somani a modern girl brought up in western culture and habits, hails from the capital city Delhi in a marwadi business family, born with a golden spoon leads a luxurious life. Her ambitious thoughts about her life suffers from the overruled restrictions of her family makes her accept the fake life. When Riya was young girl she was very active and talkative but when she realized that she had been molested by her own father, she became silent forever. She became silent as she couldn't express or share it with her mother too. She had started to write journals at the age of fifteen to share her sorrowful experience with her father. Journal had become a good friend of her whenever she felt depressed or suffered from any problem. Girls always feel supportive with their parents but when parents become the offender of transgression, they go nowhere on the earth for rescue. Illicit treatment of his father haunted her for a long time too. This is expressed by the writer in the through Riya's words of confession. “I was not quite as a child. I became this way. Dad knows I changed. Dad knows I remember everything. Still he pretends nothing happened. I do the same.”(Pg-197)

Riya remains silent but when conflict arises within her she opt to write journals, where she expresses her feeling. But once Riya, opened up to Madhav Jha who had pestered her to relieve the reason for her soreness. “I have this dream. I want to play music and sing.... in a bar in New York. I don't want to be a famous singer or a rock star. I don't want to marry a billionaire. I just want to sing in peace, surrounded by passionate people. I want to own a house in Manhattan, my house, filled with books and music CD's. I want to play basketball on weekends. I don't want to check out a dozen lehengas for my engagement.”(Pg-33)

Riya an 18 years old Indian girl bought up in Indian being influenced by the western culture, wants to lead an isolated life with sheer enjoyment – the people who lives in foreign countries do prefer it. She doesn't want to make herself arrested with the traditions and cultures of India. Riya wants to break up her family traditional marriage culture but fails in her attempt in placing her wish before her parents. Riya enjoys playing basket ball. "I took up basket ball because I saw an NBA game live at Maadison square in New York "(Pg-35) Riya feels like being alienated among her family members itself, enjoys her own life with lifeless objects.

Girls mind cannot be read by anyone, trying to identify it is like searching something in the ocean. They are always between the devil and the deep sea in taking up right decision. This is well understood from Riya's confessional words.

Bhagat has the intensity to give a twist in his stories. The distressed condition, fretfulness, dejected state of his main character fades away by the special appearance of a character in the story. Bhagat develops a special character in such a way that it brings out or gives way for the problems faced by the main protagonist of his stories. In *One night @ the call centre*, God makes a special appearance and changes the depressed mind set of Priyanka, Shyam, Vroom, Radhika and Esha. In *Five Point Someone* when all the three students Alok, Ryan and Hari were about to be expelled from the IIT course Prof. Veera gave them helping hand by requesting the DISCO to show concern about their future. This helped them in getting an opportunity to continue their studies. In *Three Mistake of my life* when Govind had lost his shop and his entire investments, Pandit-ji a character designed only to provide a helping hand to Govind, who offers a whole lot of goods to him, and make him recover from that fretful condition. In *2 States*, when Krish had a love and marriage breakup with Ananya Swaminathan, his father who was silent from the beginning of the story makes a special appearance in rejoining the two states of people by his talk and arranges marriage for them. In *Revolution 2020* when Gopal had lost his father, his AIIME rank along with his lady love Aarti, he was made to overcome from that drastic condition by MLA Raman Lal Shukla who offered him his hand and made him to restart a new life. So, in all his novels Bhagat's main characters face a problem and go to the extreme depressed state, provides a helping hand for them by real or unreal characters who brings back life in his story. In *Half girl friend* the eminent personality and the world's richest person makes a special appearance to changes the condition of student's life in a remote village in Bihar.

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