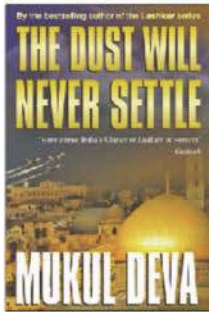


VOICE OF THE EAST

HOME | CITY | STATE | NATION | WORLD | OPINION | BUSINESS | SPORTS | E-PAPER | SUPPLEMENTS | LETTERS TO EDITOR | CONTACT

Story with no heat, only dust

By Tanushree Mukherjee, On 12-12-2012



The Dust Will Never Settle written by Mukul Deva and published by HarperCollins, is a good effort to tell the story of a British double agent who comes to India to wreak terror at an international summit hosted in the country's capital. But although the author weaves a readable story around the agent who is torn by personal conflicts, hailing Deva as 'the Clancy or Ludlum or Forsyth' of India (as mentioned on the book jacket) is too ambitious a move.

Ruby Gill is officially an MI6 agent trained to wage war on terrorism and, by extension, on terrorists. But she harbours a rather deadly secret in her unhappy soul — she is the daughter of a Palestinian extremist and has a group of terror-mongers for a family. Her Palestinian mother has drilled hatred into her of all those who do not sympathise with 'their cause'. Unfortunately, this includes her father Ravinder Gill who allegedly 'left' Ruby and her mother to return to India from the UK. Ruby suffers a nervous

breakdown after her activist mother dies in a terrorist attack on a peace march in Palestine. Close on the heels of this trauma, she takes on a 'freelance' assignment, while she is on medical leave from MI6, to carry out a terror attack on the peace summit between Israel and Palestine in New Delhi. While in India, she runs into Ravinder Gill, a bureaucrat who is in charge of securing the summit, and learns that her mother had not told her the whole truth about her father and about most other things, in fact. But eventually her mother's conditioning prevails in her 'fragmented' mind and Ruby sets out to do what she had originally planned to do, namely, disrupt the peace talks irrevocably by killing some of the delegates to the summit.

Although the story idea for the book is as good as they come, it fails to make it to the league of taut espionage thrillers that make the hair on the back of one's neck stand. In short, The Dust Will Never Settle is simply not hair-raising enough either in terms of the pace at which events unfold or the unpredictability of new developments. If anything, the author seems to have made a conscious effort to stick to a predictable chain of events that are hinted at in the first few chapters. Simply put, the book offers no surprises, which are key ingredients in any self-respecting thriller worth its nail-biting moments. In fact, the book's disguise of an action-espionage thriller slips away all too easily to reveal a familiar, mushy core and while reading it, one can almost visualise the story being converted to a boisterous screenplay for a film in which the terrorism theme is a mere foil for overflowing emotions and cloying melodrama.

The sections with detailed and graphic depiction of violence seem to be juxtaposed forcibly on an otherwise undistinguished storyline. Also, the father-daughter confrontations, which are straight out of clichéd tearjerkers, and the exaggeratedly detailed descriptions of firearms simply do not belong in the same book. The author's storytelling skills do not help in this respect and the climax, when it does arrive, is beyond the predictable. In any case, one is never comfortable reading an elaborately-conceived book in which a terrorist gets her way in the end, even if it happens to be at the cost of her own life.

Like 0

Sea

I

S

M

Be



t

230



4

22 p



pinjat

