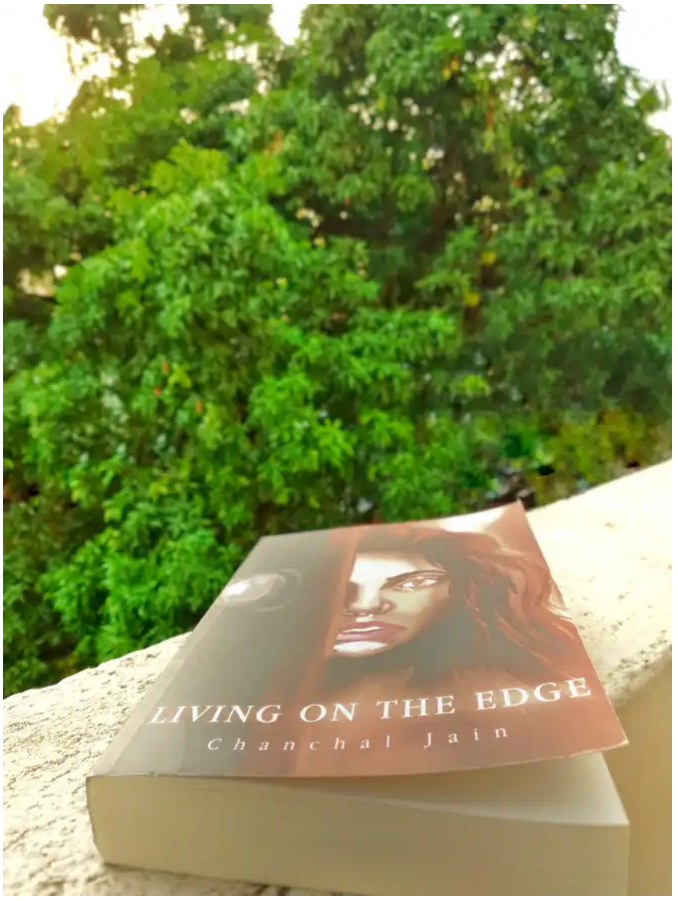


Fiona Bruce's Girlfriend At Age 58 Shocks The World

y Chanchal Jain

Statistics



Format: Paperback

Length: 366 pages

Genre: Fiction

Publisher: Olympia Publishers

Rating: 2/5 stars

Disclaimer: I received a free copy of the book from Olympia Publishers in exchange for an honest review

Olympia Publishers had offered this book for review. Since the blurb claimed that it was a story of immigrants, especially Indians and the problems that they face in a different country, I was curious to see how the story would go.

The book was first written in 1981 and published in 2017.

The Author

Born in Punjab in India, Chanchal Jain went to Birmingham England with a Post-Graduate qualification from Punjab University. She later gained teaching qualification from the University of Birmingham and has worked in a variety of employments before retiring from teaching.

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She has served the community in many organisations as a volunteer and as a professional and received an award for community services from the Birmingham City Council.

The Blurb

"*Living on the Edge describes the early life of overseas Asians/Indians living in England. It reflects the continuous struggle and conflicts in their lives in the ever-changing society here in the UK.*
The novel is written through the eyes of a community worker who works in the inner-city, deprived area, of Birmingham, at a Neighbourhood Centre where ethnic people come to seek advice for basic needs such as – unemployment, housing, health, DHSS, legal, social, personal and language issues.
The majority of the characters are of Asian origin and the novel is set in Birmingham at various locations. The story is fictional, but issues highlighted are real. It has a touch of romance which moves the story forward. Subjects covered include: – pregnancy for a young unmarried Asian girl, abortion, forced marriage, living with a man outside marriage and alcoholism."

The Book

Living on the edge is a story that centers around Geeta, a social worker and Poonam, a University student. They meet each other when Geeta tries to help Poonam deal with her homelessness and her pregnancy. Then enter the men in the story- Mandeep, the man who destroys Poonam and Bill, the man who saves her.

The book is filled with racism and sexism and makes no effort to hide the blatant hatred towards Indians and women. Every character makes innuendos and insults that are not even questioned by other characters. The very obvious division between whites and non-whites like "I've got a charming Indian lady with me" and "By Indian standards, she was a beautiful girl. By English standards,she was more than presentable" were unnecessary. Woman bashing began very early in the book with statements like "Keep on appreciating her cooking and clothes, she is fine" about a wife who 'nags' her husband for not giving her any of his attention and "You could do with losing some weight around your waist" made me see red. Characters like Mr. Sharma and Mrs. Johnson were grating on my nerves and it felt like it was not necessary to take the story to the level of negativity seen here.

The book went into too many so called 'twists' with each character trying to fix others up. I could not understand how a man who asks a woman to marry him can immediately ask to marry her friend and both the ladies can be okay with it. I was just begining to like the character of Geeta before she went around hitting people in the face because they had been drinking. She just knew Mandeep in her capacity as a social worker and to actually start living with him and say things like "Don't you dare drink in front of me" made no sense. And for Mandeep to immediately put his head into her lap was too intimate for two people who were practically strangers at the time. There were plenty of grammatically incorrect sentences and also redundant sentences like "Geeta was sad and unhappy" which made reading the book a chore.

The only positive thing that I could tell about the book is that it was written in 1981 where culture allowed for some amount of racism and sexism to exist freely. It showed how difficult it was for immigrants to survive in a country that did not want them. It also showed the life of women who wanted to get a good education and work to live on their own. However, as a book published in

2017, it gives a very wrong impression of the Indian community and the English population in general. Although arranged marriages, disownment and excess control over the lives of children are still a part of the Asian culture, it is not as severe as is made out in the book. I wish there were at least a couple of characters who were strong and stood against all the wrongs that kept happening in the story.

TL;DR: A book that is chock full of racism and sexism that should have been dealt with better.

Have you read a book that you felt was giving the wrong message about something?

Tell me in the comments below or on my Instagram @the_food_and_book_life (https://www.instagram.com/the_food_and_book_life/)

Tagged Book blog, Book review, Fiction, Immigrant, Indian, Origins

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