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Editor-In-Chief

Dr. Vishwanath Bite

Managing Editor

Madhuri Bite

www.the-criterion.com

criterionejournal@gmail.com

Leema Dhar in Conversation with Vishwanath Bite**Dr. Vishwanath Bite**

Assistant Prof. in English

Govt. of Maharashtra

Ismail Yusuf College of Arts, Commerce and Science,

Jogeshwari (E), Mumbai

Editor-In-Chief**The Criterion:** An International Journal in Englishwww.the-criterion.com**and****Editor-In-Chief****Galaxy:** International Multidisciplinary Research Journalwww.galaxyimrj.com**VB:** Tell us a bit about yourself and your family.

LD: Well...I'll start with the famous saying '*You are who you are when nobody's watching*' so while I write books and give words to my illusion, I can say this is what I am. On the other hand I'm a person of intense emotions and unpredictable thoughts. I love travelling, that's been the biggest inspiration behind my whole being, to make me what I am. I sometimes feel like someone could easily lock me in a dark room with a candle and a huge pile of good books, and I can read for an indefinite period of time.

My sweet little nuclear family consists of dad, Samir, who's also a Bestselling Bengali author, who's been the man of my life. He's a stubborn person when it comes to writing (hardly lets me miss out on a day when I don't pen down at least 500 words!). He's a great counselor, both professional and personal wise and the source of making me a writer! Then, my mom, Mausami, teacher of St. Mary's Convent Allahabad, she's the face I look up to in my desperate times, she knows how to soothe my blues away and smile when I feel hopeless at times. She's my lifeline.

VB: What are you most proud of accomplishing so far in your life?

LD: Obviously I'm most proud of my creative gene that I'm carrying from my dad, that's made me a strong girl with heights of imagination. Holding my two books, 'Till we Meet...' and 'Mom and I...' close to my chest I experienced the most beautiful moment of life.

VB: How has your upbringing influenced your writing?

LD: 'Would you have your future in mind or would you carry a part of me?' That was the question dad had asked with sensitive feel to his voice when he first read my poem at the age of three. That time I didn't know what will become of me, or what dad meant. But now after all these years, having two poetry poems in Hindi and English respectively and two fictions under the belt, I can smile and say 'I'm carrying a part of dad with me...always' and my mom's over consciousness on my works, my disarrayed routine and my the fickleness of my mood have

made me realise I've taken up the profession which my heart has always craved for and seeing them motivating me encourages me to feel and write more and more.

VB: Do you recall how your interest in writing originated?

LD: Everybody has their own hobbies; I've had mine and that's writing. And I never knew one day I would grow up to be a writer and a bestseller so soon. I've always had this habit of expressing my happiness, sadness or anger in the form of poetry and I've always done that. I never knew I turned a poet at the age of thirteen. By seventeen, my second anthology of English poems was out in the market and then turning from a poet to a writer had been a tough journey but one day I penned down a random chapter, dad poked me to write more and that has been the origin of the fountain flow now.

VB: How long have you been writing?

LD: I started writing at the age of three with three lines of kid poetry...now I've turned into a fictionist, rest you can calculate!

VB: What inspires you to write and why?

LD: Travelling and visiting various places, giving up to dad's constant nagging to write each day without fail and my world of Utopia with characters running wild in my head makes me write on and on, with no full stop.

VB: What genre are you most comfortable writing?

LD: Romantic Thrillers I can say and Fantasy, it gives me pleasure to write on them.

VB: What inspired you to write your first book?

LD: My granny's cancer, my depressive mood that lasted for two years and my family's encouragement has been the source of inspiration.

VB: Who or what influenced your writing once you began?

LD: My father has and always will influence me, encourage me and motivate me to write and work hard. Mom is always holding my little finger making me realise she's always there. So now or in future these two people will be irreplaceable and will be the most influential ones for creating an altogether different Leema.

VB: What do you consider the most challenging about writing a novel, or about writing in general?

LD: Dealing with a plot once I conceive and doing justice to each of the characters: be it the protagonists or the antagonist or the characters in supporting role, I always step in their shoes and throughout the novel I try and live my life their way. Reaching the end of the sea in this worthwhile journey is most challenging.

VB: Did writing this book teach you anything and what was it?

LD: ‘Mom and I...’ is close to my heart and so are the Andaman Islands upon which the plot is based. The islands and the plot of the story have taught me to deal with life differently at times, a pinch of adventure is always necessary to pull us out from seriousness. Each work of fiction that I think about or write has always and will always teach me to see life through a unique perspective, to express emotions in a way that touches lives and to live rather than just exist.

VB: Have you developed a specific writing style?

LD: As I mentioned earlier I’m kind of a crazy person with different shades of me and new thoughts arise every moment like a *VIBGYOR* rainbow following the other. So fantasy, delusion, hallucination and romance are things I’m composed of and most comfortable with, thinking, reading and writing.

VB: What is your greatest strength as a writer?

LD: I can visualize things that’s yet inexperienced, can travel to places that I haven’t even thought of visiting ever and narrate incidences without the boundaries of age, hence my strength are my characters always persuade me to think and think more. And all this comes from the man behind the scene, my dad.

VB: Have you ever had writer’s block? If so, what do you do about it?

LD: That’s something I’ve not yet experienced because I take precautions to avoid that kind of situation. I take a minimum of 14 days relaxation before I start working on my next. So I’ve ample time to think and write.

VB: Can you share a little of your current work with us?

LD: My third fiction ‘THE GIRL WHO KISSED THE SNAKE’ will be out in the market by middle of next year and I’m currently working on my yet untitled fourth project.

VB: How did you come up with the title?

LD: I've come up with the title way back in Andaman Islands. Terrorism and Society have been two crucial topics to deal with in a simple yet effective way simultaneously. I work on my title hard so my readers would get a pulse of what I'm trying to convey.

VB: How did you develop your plot and characters?

LD: Instead of me developing them, they develop me into a mature and sensible person each time I conceive a story. It comes naturally with burning topics running in my head.

VB: Is there a message in your books that you want readers to grasp?

LD: I want readers to grasp the soul of the book in their own ways. I've left them to not only read the book but also live the life of my characters and once they do that they'll reach conclusions in their own ways.

VB: How much of the books are realistic?

LD: Books are made of fantasy and reality. And since I've not jot down an Autobiography it's up to the readers to feel the realism in it.

VB: Have you included a lot of your life experiences, even friends, in the plot?

LD: As I mentioned earlier, a book is both real and imaginative. Of course most of the characters are a part of my life in some or the other way and the rest are the added flavor. If you don't see the other side of the world, how do you expect it to be expressed in words? Writers are humans, living with humans. So, of course they'll create an impact on our minds.

VB: How important do you think villains are in a story?

LD: Villains are equally important as the protagonist. A hero can only be a hero when there's an evil villain in it that pulls out the strong side. In fact most of the time while reading or writing I fall in love with villains rather than the heroes.

VB: What are your goals as a writer?

LD: To write not only for me, but for my family, for my society, for all people directly or indirectly associated with me and my readers and leave them with a smile or a tear in the end and letting them walk upon the road I've taken and flow with the breeze of my journey.

VB: Do you have to travel much concerning your book(s)?

LD: I love travelling. But for any other promotional purposes I don't prefer travelling much. I travel for myself and my own world of thoughts, to feel nature and to love sea and skies. Travelling makes me live my life with added meanings to it. So it's more than a necessity, it's a pleasure, Pleasure of being with my own self.

VB: What books have most influenced your life?

LD: All that I've read so far have influenced me in some or the other way-- *Where rainbows end*, *Message in a bottle*, *Village by the sea*, *Namesake*, *Season of ghosts*... to name a few.

VB: Have you ever considered anyone as a mentor?"

LD: One and the ultimate-- my DAD.

VB: Who is your favorite author and why?

Ans. Jhumpa Lahiri for her exclusive narration and Anita Desai for her depiction of imagery that makes one feel close to oneself and love nature, love mankind.

VB: Can we expect any more books from you in the future?

LD: You can expect books, books and more BOOKS forever from me.

VB: Have you started another book yet?

LD: As mentioned, I'm working on my fourth.

VB: Where do you see yourself in five years?

LD: Putting my head on mom's lap and holding dad's index finger one fine day and telling them 'Look this is Leema today, with name, fame, money and a perfect family.' To see my parents smile because of me is my ultimate goal.

VB: What are your current writing projects now?

LD: Lots to come. Just wait and watch out.

VB: Are you reading any interesting books at the moment?

LD: Finished the erotic trilogy of '*Fifty shades Grey*' and currently started '*Only time will tell*' by Jeffery Archer.

VB: Are there any new authors that have sparked your interest and why?

LD: *Amish Tripathi*- for bringing upon a new work on mythological tales that once dead in the youth and *Chetan Bhagat*- for reviving the world of fiction.

VB: What are some of the best tools available today for writers, especially those just starting out?

LD: The tool of your way of fantasizing, few good mentors out if you're lucky enough and a good editing works would definitely help budding authors.

VB: Do you have any advice for writers?

LD: Being new to this field and just two books old, what advice would I give to the writers! I can just say just think more in any way stupid way possible and write your heart out, I'm sure you'll come out with flying colours.

VB: Do you have any specific last thoughts that you want to say to your readers?

LD: Live your life to the fullest. Love you all and keep reading! There are much more mysteries to unfold!

VB: What do you do to unwind and relax?

LD: Hug mom and listen to soothing music in a dimly lit room and talk to a very close group of friends that I have; And then having long discussions with dad about my future projects and my current fame.

VB: What dreams have been realized as a result of your writing?

LD: My mom's smile, my granny's cancer stability, my grandpa's happy tears and dad's dream and my friends support, what can give me more peace and pleasure than these?

VB: Do you have any upcoming appearances that you would like to share with us?

LD: My life's an open book, so my readers and turn over the leaves and experience adventures, one after the other.

VB: If you could leave your readers with one bit of wisdom, what would you want it to be?

LD: Life's too short. It passes by in the blink of an eye. So live to read and read to live and you never know what turn to would bump next!

VB: When you wish to end your career, stop writing, and look back on your life, what thoughts would you like to have?

LD: No thoughts because to stop writing would be to stop breathing. So no writing, no life! Writing is my life more than my career. So apart from a perfect life and perfect family I wish to have a perfect death and to make my end perfect I have to pen down moments of my life that would reflect through all my works.