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Title of the Book: *The One Night Affair and Other Stories*

Author: Madhulika Chauhan

Publisher: Authorspress

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Literature is a platform by which one can provide wings to his/her feelings. It is the art of writing that helps to vent out internal pain that one carries in own heart. Thus there is no definite age or time to start to write either poetry or fiction. The same is with the emerging writer Madhulika Chauhan who has served as a Media Industry Analyst and a Senior Research Analyst. Although her field is different yet she has tried her hand at literature. Her debut work, a book of stories under title, "*The One Night Affair and Other Stories*" has been published. Born in Moradabad Madhulika Chauhan is living at present in China with her family.

The *One Night Affair and Other Stories*, is a collection of seven stories that are well fabricated. The book deserves appreciation as it is related to the life of common people in natural setting. While reading the book, we do not feel that it is a work of fiction. The title given to each story is apt and appealing. The author gets success to convey the message that she wanted to. A variety of themes have been wonderfully crafted in the collection. Each story revolves around a character at the center trapped in some problem. The collection includes *Benjarong*, *The One Night Affair*, *Condolence*, *Salaam*, *Maruttuvacci- The Life Giver*, *Rupa*, *The Chemistry Book* and a few questions on all the stories.

The collection begins with the story, *Benjarong* that revolves around *Priya*, a house wife who faces an economical upheaval which leads her in making compromises to manage households and upbringing of her two children. The story that enjoys the title of the book, *The One Night Affair*, is a story that gives goose pimple to the protagonist as well as readers. Going to a stranger's house in a rainy night to make a phone call and clinging in the house where a dim candle light is the only source of illumination, runs the heartbeat fast. *Condolence* is the tale of a young girl who goes to her friend's house to mourn her mother's death. On seeing her condition without a mother, she realizes the importance of parents in her life and thus is the message the author wants to convey to the readers. The Hindu-Muslim's riots revive the days of blood-shed and curfews in the story, *Salaam*. A Hindu girl *Ashmi* entangles in the riots in market and finds herself in a muslim home after getting conscious. The psychology of *Ashmi* while living in a Muslim home is aesthetically narrated by the author. '*Maruttuvacci- The Life Giver*' is a tale of dilemma of a midwife. *Seema* realizes her guilt in the story *Rupa*. It happens after her meeting with *Rupa*, a three years old girl. It is of no worth to cry over spilt milk. Thus *Seema* tries to

console and satisfies her motherly feelings by giving gifts to the children playing in the street. The encounter of an army officer with terrorist is the tale of the last story, *The Chemistry Book*.

The most admiring aspect of the book lies in the attempt to take the readers to the ground of reality. One thing that binds the seven stories with different themes and protagonists, in a thread is the usage of minute details of the surroundings in which that story sets. The mouth watering dahi-vada and pakodas, rummy session, stinking open potholes, barbequed kababs with ringed onions, birth of baby, encounter with terrorist etc. are the details that a reader feels itself as a part of the story. Unlike Kamala Das's *The kept woman and other stories*, where woman is the only protagonist in all stories, Madhulika Chauhan brings a variety of protagonists in her collection.

Manjiri Prabhu, an author says about the collection, 'Thought- provoking and deeply moving'. The author for sure needs to be applauded for bringing a variety of themes along with messages to the readers. The author gets success to take her readers on a literary journey.

My views may differ from other readers but it is sure that they will enjoy visiting through the narrative journey of Madhulika Chauhan.