

Revenge Theory' by Onkar Sharma

Review by Ramlal Agarwal

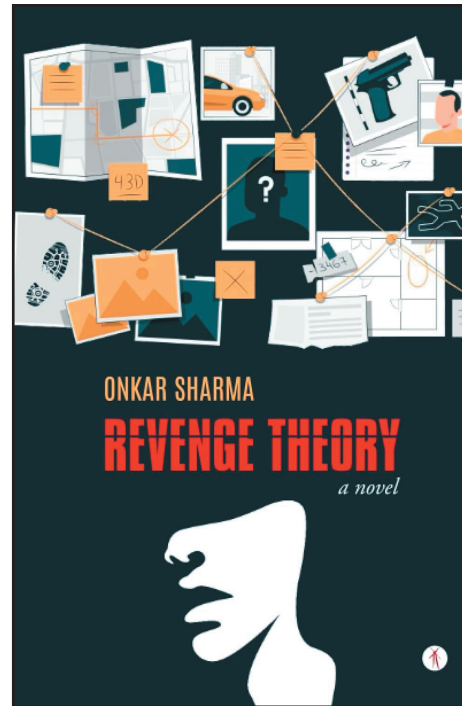
Onkar Sharma is a digital marketing consultant. He is also the editor of an online literary journal called Literary-Yard.com. In his welcome debut novel, *Revenge Theory*, Sharma very cleverly blends his interest in technology and literature and propounds that revenge need not end in bloody deaths but can be a source of happiness and progress. The novel is set in the lap of the beautiful Himalayan villages of Tutu, Hamirpur, and Chandigarh, Punjab.

Tutu is known for its flourishing fruit market. Shyama Devi, fed up with her drunkard husband, sets up a jam factory and emerges as a successful entrepreneur. She attracts the attention of Amarnath Chauhan, a local MLA who wants to take over her enterprise. He makes overtures to Shyama Devi to sell her factory, but Shyama Devi firmly turns them down. Amarnath cannot accept "no" to his wishes, and one day he breaks into her factory, disrupts its set-up, roughs up Shyama Devi, and forces her to hand over the factory. Badly bruised and humiliated, she vows to avenge her tormentor and leaves Tutu with her two daughters for Chandigarh.

She establishes herself in Chandigarh with the money she gets for her factory and meticulously plans to destroy her tormentor politically and financially. She preserves the semen Amarnath jerks on her hand instead of her body and uses it to inseminate a hired womb to finish his political career and start coaching classes that can disrupt his three schools, his main source of income. 10 years later, she emerges as the owner of the famous Pratigya Training Institutes, a chain of career counselling and coaching centres that prepared students for competitive exams like NEET, GATE, IIT, JEE, etc., and the patron of Babloo, the child born through the IVF process and ready to avenge her oppressor. As a part of her plan, she decides to start a coaching centre at Hamirpur, where Amarnath's biggest school is located.

To start her coaching centre, she chooses a school called Sanatan Bhoomi School with about 200 students where the curriculum is based on the principles set by its principal, Kuldeep. Pratigya meets Kuldeep, persuades him to take up her coaching programme and offers him all her financial help. Kuldeep is against the culture of coaching classes and shows his reluctance to associate with her, but finally yields to Pratigya's insistence and clever manoeuvring.

Kuldeep is a widower. He lost his wife, Mona, in an accident. The loss of his beloved wife creates a vacuum in his life, and he clings to her mem-



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ory. Kuldeep believes that our culture and traditions are very precious and must be preserved. He has written books celebrating them. His brother-in-law, Abhisek, lived off the money he coaxed out of his sister. After her death, he lost his source of income. He was in love with a woman named Ekta but refused to marry her. He persuades her to hook up with Kuldeep so that they can get a hold of his money. Accordingly, Ekta tries to ensnare Kuldeep, but Kuldeep sees through her plot and shames her.

Pratigya and Kuldeep meet frequently in connection with the coaching class, and it leads to a strong bond between them, and they become lovers. They share their past lives with each other. When the results of NEET are declared, the entire faculty of S.B. School is overjoyed because their entire batch of 30 students cleared the exam with a high score. The school hit the headlines for its success, and students who preferred Amarnath's schools began to prefer S.B. school for admissions.

This rattles the minister, and he starts scheming to disrupt the S.B. school and defame the couple. He adopts all possible means of intimidating them. In the meantime, the MP from Hamirpur constituency dies, and a search for a new candidate begins. Amarnath wants to grab the opportunity, but before he is chosen, the papers break the news that his illegitimate son languishes in a home. The news baffles Amarnath because he has always taken care to avoid unwanted pregnancies and wants to get to the bottom of it. He reaches the home and is told the boys have gone on an educational tour. While he is searching frantically for the boy, he receives a letter asking him to reach the jam factory if he wants to meet the person who has vowed to destroy him and his illegitimate son, Babloo. Amarnath rushes to the factory and inquires about Shyama, the writer of the letter. When he confronts her, he fails to recognize her. Pratigya tells him that she is Shyama, and the boy standing by her side is Bablu.

Amarnath wants to know who her biological mother is. Pratigya tells him that she will not tell him unless he returns the factory to her. Amarnath yields to her demand and signs the papers. Meanwhile, a devilish idea enters his mind, and he wants to shoot the boy to wipe off the proof of his debauchery and take out his gun. But Suresh, his principal, appears on the scene with the children of Kuldeep and Pratigya hostages. Kuldeep urges Amarnath to refrain from shooting. He tells him that the happenings at the factory are being viewed by thousands of people online. He also tells him that his principal, Suresh, arranged the live streaming to destroy him. Amarnath reads the name of the channel on YouTube and is confirmed that Suresh has been trying to destroy him. Amarnath turns his gun at Suresh and fires at him. When he is about to fire again, the police arrive, and Amarnath is arrested and sent to jail. Later, Amarnath commits suicide.

Pratigya has her revenge and reclaims her factory not through murder or murky deeds but through her grit, determination, and intelligence, and in a manner that destroys her tormentor completely. While on her mission, she also gets a bonanza of a loveable husband.

Onkar Sharma's novel *Revenge Theory* has the element of a fairy tale and keeps the reader glued to it till the end.