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Exploration of the secret inner lives of characters in the works of Nikita Singh

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Abstract

Nikita Singh is a leading romance writer of India who writes with a little spicing of nudity and sex. Most of the times she writes about relationships of people. That relationship may be with themselves, with others or with their social and professional environments. Although there is romance packaging in her novels, still they offer a reality check, often of a brutal type, focusing on the real-life troubles the new generation faces. The focus in her works, is on the hate and love relationship between passionate and young people that start with psychical intimacy and ends otherwise. She is known for her ability to portray the inner lives of her characters in a compelling and authentic way. Her characters are complex and multidimensional who grapple with their innermost thoughts and emotions. Her novels often deal with the themes of love, loss, and self-discovery, and her characters are complex and relatable. Her works are characterised by a focus on the inner lives of her characters, exploring their emotional journeys and personal growth. They may not focus explicitly on the inner self, they do offer insightful explorations of the complexities of human emotions and relationships, which can ultimately lead to greater self-awareness and understanding.

Keywords: Romance, amnesiac, relationship, distress, erotic, nudity, love

Introduction

In the ever-burgeoning segment of romance fiction by Indians writers, Nikita Singh is a prominent name who explores the complexity of human relationships and the inner lives of her characters in her novels. Singh portrays the emotional struggles and the conflicts that her characters face in their personal and professional lives. She often delves deep into their thoughts, emotions, and motivation, giving readers a glimpse into their psyches. Authors like her have inspired many young and amateur novelists to try their luck in Indian English fiction. "I was inspired to take up writing after reading a really shitty book," says Nikita Singh, to a question from a participant at a Bloggers' Brunch, organised by Women's Web in Bengaluru. "When I was 19, I read this book by this really famous writer, who I won't name, and I thought, seriously, *I could do a better job than this.*" The rest, as they say, is history.

The writings of Nikita are basically focused on the hate and love relationship between passionate and young people that start with psychical intimacy and ends otherwise. She is one among those romantic novelists who have been rubbing the same pen on the same paper again and again and each time, the results are different. If we see, all of her novels recall the same settings and same plot – events that lead to pulling off one's shirt and pants, with a different kind of love story where sex is in limelight and everything else is not in focus. But isn't it what the readers love. The authors like Nikita Singh provide a momentary joy to the readers who can read their book and forget without even trying to remember anything. The novels are basically written for the youths of today and that's why they have to fuse erotic elements in the novels. So, the novels by Nikita Singh are perfect examples of commercially erotic novels and the author herself is an example of a successful literary entrepreneur who invests her time in writing and reaps the monetary returns.

She has written twelve books till date. Readers of Singh's novels have encountered unusual themes in her books. *Right Here, Right Now* is about a woman losing her memory, while *After All This Time* deals with a character who is HIV positive. *Love @ Facebook*, is a young adult book about a nineteen-year-old girl, who falls in love with a VJ, after befriending him on Facebook. *Right Here Right Now* follows the new life of an amnesiac in an identity crisis.

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After All This Time, is a confrontation with the past in the face of incurable medical condition. *Like A Love Song*, is an endearing coming-of-age story of a troubled teenager. *Every Time It Rains*, deals with enduring emotional damage caused by domestic abuse. *Letters To My Ex*, studies a broken engagement solely through the written communication that follows. *The Reason Is You* (2019), explores grief and recovery from loss and the constraints of traditional relationships. Her latest release *What Do You See When You Look In the Mirror?* (2021), is about the secret inner lives of her characters, as they grapple with love, loss, grief, and mental health.

The novel *The Promise*, explores the complex relationships between three friends who are struggling to come to terms with their pasts. The novel is told from the perspective of each of the three characters, giving readers a glimpse into their innermost thoughts and emotions as they try to move forward and find happiness. Singh writes in the novel, "Love is an adventure, a journey. It is a risk you take, knowing that you might fall. But it is worth it." *The Promise* is a heart-warming, agonising and inspiring story of an unmarried pregnant girl (Shambhavi Sen) betrayed by her boyfriend (Arjun Datta) and her struggle for existence. Shambhavi, is a simple and energetic girl with a dream of getting into interior designing. Arjun, on the other hand, comes with fame and money, but he is hardworking and isolated. As they get to know each other, they make promises of fulfilling each other's desires. They also promise to fulfil every other promise. Nikita writes, "Promises are meant to be kept, once it is broken, no sorry can compensate for it, everything seems go against you."

Similarly, in *Every Time it Rains*, Singh explores the inner lives of her characters as they navigate the complexities of love and relationships. The novel follows the story of Laila and Jay, two young people who are struggling to find their place in the world. Singh delves deep into their thoughts and emotions, painting a vivid portrait of their inner lives and the challenges they face. The novel represents the story of every girl who has ever had her heart broken and fell in love again. Love is a dangerous thing. It brings with it great joy, and opens you up to pain. But does one really have the courage to say no and look the other way? Laila is yet to recover from her painful past. Hurt, and untrusting of love, she is fully immersed in work, her only source of cheer. Her bakery franchise is very popular and she just might be able to go national, if she can pull off that big deal. Just when things are looking up, along comes JD, an impetuous, free-spirited creature to stir up the calm. He is her exact opposite. Laila is self-destructive, he is life-affirming. She is cautious, he is buoyant. But here is the thing: he makes her feel the very things she wanted to forget, stirring a familiar passion, she longed for but had lost the courage to pursue.

Letters To My Ex, is a beautiful tale of love, heartbreak, and second chances. It reminds us that sometimes, the love we thought we had lost forever, may still be waiting for us in unexpected ways. The story revolves around the life of Nidhi Sharma and Abhay Nigam. Nidhi and Abhay had been in a relationship for five years until Abhay broke up with her without giving any reason. Nidhi, is struggling to come to terms with her past and find her place in the world. Through Nidhi's introspective journey, Singh explores the themes of joy, loss and, self-discovery. Nidhi's thoughts and emotions are depicted in a raw and honest manner, making her a relatable and sympathetic character. Nidhi writes

letters to her ex-boyfriend, as a way of processing her feelings and coming to terms with their break-up. She lays bare the pangs of heartbreak and things left unsaid. It explores the aftermath of a break up between two people, Nidhi and Abhay. In a series of letters that Nidhi writes to Abhay, she bares her soul and reveals her innermost thoughts and feelings. These lines appearing in the novel suffice to reveal the underlying thought. "It feels like I'm on autopilot; I have no control over anything. The pain of losing you is so crippling that I can barely hold pieces of myself together. The slightest nudge could break me. But somehow, my possessed brain knows what I need. It's telling me to stick to my choice, to stay away from you, to open a Word document and bleed on paper, try to throw up all my jumbled thoughts in form of words, collect all disconnected facts, try to make sense of it all."

The Reason Is You is a stirring story exploring emotional health, the boundaries of traditional relationship and second chances. Siddhant meets Akriti during their medical residency in Delhi. Their connection is instant, blossoming from the many similarities between them. So, when Akriti faces a devastating loss, she leans on Siddhant for support. In the heat of an emotional moment, the two decide that this must be love. But as Akriti's depression begins to take a stronger hold over her, she spirals out of control, sinking deeper into an abyss of fear, insecurity, and rage. And while Siddhant struggles to help her, it seems like everything he does is only making things worse. Meanwhile, Siddhant's life gets further complicated when Maahi, his ex-girlfriend whom he never stopped loving, re-enters his life.

Accidentally in Love, is the story of a young model, Chhavi, who falls in love with the handsome photographer, Tushar. The relationship started off to be a lusty affair with no strings attached, but she soon finds out that she cannot go on like this as she realizes that she has feelings for Tushar, and misses him terribly when he is not around. *Like a Love Song*, tells the story of a young woman named Nandini who is trying to find her place in the world. Nandini is a talented musician who is struggling to make a name for herself in the music industry while also dealing with the pain of a broken heart. The novel delves deep into her innermost thoughts and feelings as she navigates through life trying to find her passion and purpose. Nikita writes, "Love is a many-flavoured thing: it can go from vanilla to rainbow sprinkles in the blink of an eye...Love is not about finding someone who completes you. It is about finding someone who accepts you for who you are."

Singh is indeed a leading romance writer of India. Her plots are not the assembly line Mills and Boons-type romance, where damsels in distress fawn over tall, dark, and handsome heroes. Nor are they sticky with sentimental heroes wondering if love can happen twice. The focus is on the real-life troubles of the generation that dates on Tinder, likes to go clubbing, takes risk in love and makes fatal mistakes. Far from mush, these 20-something urban men and women are pragmatic, career-driven, cynical, full of regrets, though not entirely without hope for a better life or love. "Nikita is perhaps the only female writer in this genre who's able to keep the stories contemporary, build both her male and female characters equally and write books that connect with the youth," adds Mathur, who has worked with her over several books. "The fact that she herself is very young, and therefore knows and connects with her target readers, adds to her profile."

Popular romance writer Nikita Singh has been writing about love for over a decade now. In a session held on October 16, 2021, at the Times Lit fest 2021, the cupid's favourite author talked about her latest book, 'What Do You See When You Look In The Mirror?', with author Harshali Singh. Nikita talked about love and romance, why she writes about it, and the way her writing has changed over time. At the age of 19, Nikita wrote her first book 'Together Forever' and has been evolving as a writer ever since. Being acutely aware of the difference in her work over these years, she believes in the relevance of her writings from different stages in her life. "People often ask me if I would change anything in my old books. Well, I wouldn't because that is how a 19-year-old thought, that's how a 22-year-old thought... And that is just a time capsule to me," Nikita said. Addressing the elephant in the room, Harshali began the discussion with romance, its significance, and the purpose behind writing it. "A lot of books portray women in a way that serves the male character's journey, so romance for me is full of women's voices and women's stories. Of course, there are non-binary authors now, and romance is no longer about a man and a woman - there is more love to go around," Harshali said. While Nikita believes that romance novels are a little piece of an emotional journey that one has with oneself and it helps them escape reality. "At the end, I feel that all fiction novels are about relationships; with self, with others, with the environment that you're in," said Nikita.

Talking about her process of writing, Nikita revealed how she relied mostly on observations, the world around her, and imagination, and not her personal life for stories. She also stated how she abstains from proper research because of her susceptibility towards internalizing others' mannerisms and writing styles, thinking, and planning. She tries to stay away from books that are of a similar kind as hers, but reads voraciously. Speaking of how romance and its portrayal has changed over the years, Nikita talked of the complexity of characters and the progress towards realism that one can witness in fictional romance, which is a much needed, welcome change. Nikita talked of the joy of writing short stories where multiple characters can be created without much following through, leaving more room for variety, unlike novels where a lot of investment is made into the characters. The session ended with the author stating her opinion vis-a-vis love and writing both of which she believes would suffer and eventually fade if they stagnate. "I think it is important to dream, and not let it turn into a nightmare," she summarized. Singh says. "Penguin wanted me to write like all its successful romance writers. They wanted to make a superstar out of me," says Singh. "But I wanted to be an actual writer, a good one." HuffPost called Singh "India's Leading Romance Writer" in an expansive profile done on the writer in 2017. The Hindu called her "the Goddess of Racy Reads" in an article.

Overall, her introspective writing style and keen insights into human nature make her novels a must-read for anyone interested in exploring the complexities of human relationships and emotions. The authors like her provide a momentary joy to the readers who can read their book and forget without even trying to remember anything. The novels are basically written for the youths of today and that is why they have to fuse erotic elements in the novels. Nikita is a digital nomad, currently obsessed with travel, tea, and thrillers. A popular-among-youth novelist, she has

authored many erotic novels and made her name among juvenile, semi-adult and the adult readers looking for quick-reads without any emotional or intellectual arrest. She has a talent for capturing the emotional struggles of young adults and creating stories that resonated with the readers of all ages.

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