



A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW ON PREETI SHENOY'S *LIFE IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT*.

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Abstract :One of the best novels I have ever read by Indian female authors is *Life is What You Make It*, written by Bangalore-based novelist and artist Preeti Shenoy. The simplicity of the book is its best quality, and although its three main themes—college life, the delusions and hope that love offers, and bipolar disorder—might not seem particularly important when considered separately, when they are combined, they form a coherent theme that prompts the reader to wonder what the book is actually about. As the author puts it, it is not only a story about bipolar disorder; but also about strength, commitment, and growing up. It is also a story about having faith, having hope, and having grit, as well as about creating your destiny.

Key Words: *Preeti Shenoy, Hope, Mental Illness, Bipolar Disorder, Delusion.*

Introduction

Life is What You Make It, Preeti Shenoy's second book, was published on January 1st, 2011. The "Top Books of 2011" Neilsenlist from the Hindustan Times also featured a national best-seller in this novel, a 21-year-old girl named Ankita Sharma who triumphs over a mental illness with the help of her parents, physicians, and friends. Consequently, it helps her soar to new heights in her life. Everybody experiences a major life transition at some point, and Ankita was no different. Ankita Sharma, a fictional character created by Preeti Shenoy, serves as a reminder of what an unexpected life is. She makes an effort to set the scene realistically, acknowledging that things can change. The author attempts to convey a strong feeling of hope

through the protagonist's struggles with life's challenges. It is a story of courage, determination, and growing up. It is about how life can take a different path from what is planned, and yet how one can make a success of it; a story of faith, belief, and perseverance in charting your destiny.

The fiction is told in the first person, allowing us to empathize with the protagonist, Ankita Sharma. It provides a good backdrop, college life, with which most people can identify. She is young and enthusiastic, and it is due to her talents that she has been admitted into a famous management college for her Master in Business Administration (MBA). Six months later, she is admitted to a mental health hospital. The novel seeks to answer why and how, as well as a few other questions.

The book attempts to increase awareness of Ankita Sharma's *bipolar condition*, often known as *manic depressive illness*. It is a major mental disorder that causes considerable mood changes that are not visible in everyday living. It is called bipolar because sufferers experience two extremes, or "poles," mania and depression when manic, they are highly euphoric and exuberant; when melancholy, they sense deep gloom, worthlessness, ponder death, and suicide. Society is a network of ties designed to improve human society. *Life is What You Make It* Preeti Shenoy illustrates the same point. Three boyfriends enter Ankita's life; Joseph, Vaibhav, and Abhi how each one changes Ankita's life in a different situation by affecting various emotions in her life, which becomes a life changer for her.

Ankita and Vaibhav are friends from school. Both attend the same school in Delhi at first, but after the 10th Ankita's father moved to Cochin, where she studies. Vaibhav is accepted into IIT Delhi. Later on, they solely converse via letters. Ankita begins her studies at St. Agnes Institution in Cochin, a prominent women's college. She is elected secretary of her college's Arts Association in the institution with an event, she meets Abhishek or Abhi from Mahaveer College, a coed college. Abhi develops feelings for Ankita. He sends her a love note in blood. Suvi, her friend, persuaded her to meet with Abhi, as he had requested, and also reminded Ankita that because she was not married to Vaibhav, she had to tell him everything, even meeting Abhi and it is okay to express her feeling toward Abhi to Vaibhav. During the three years of graduation, both slowly and gradually form a deep relationship with one other. Both apply for MBA programs after graduation. Abhi is only admitted to CUSAT, or Cochin University of Science and Technology, whilst Ankita is allowed to pursue an MBA at Bombay University.

Abhi wants her to get her MBA at CUSAT, but she chooses the higher institute in Bombay. Abhi wishes to marry her or at least make a marriage proposal, but Ankita responds, “Oh Abhi, I can’t guarantee anything. I wish I could” (Shenoy 76). He appeared sorrowful and asked her to remain in touch. After few a days, Ankita was shocked to hear that Abhi had drowned in the water as a result of having high blood alcohol levels. Ankita regrets that if she had vowed to stay in touch with Abhi, he wouldn’t have killed himself. Things might not have been as awful if she had promised to see him in Cochin once a year. For there to be growth, there must be two-way communication. As a result of Abhi’s higher expectations and Ankita’s lower reaction. Abhi’s situation became more complicated and crucial. It ended tragically because of this Ankita learned from the experience to never discount love, regardless of its source. By failing to consider Abhi’s viewpoint on this issue, Ankita made a mistake. She would recognize the pinch point if she had tried to put herself in Abhi’s shoes. However, Abhi also contributed to the problem because he was unable to embrace change. It is common for a female to consider her future with her lover. But a boy takes his relationship with his girlfriend seriously when he does. This needs to be thought off and it is only a general opinion though with no relevant evidence to prove it. There are many instances where girls also take relationships seriously and sacrificed their life, such as Ankita thinks she is in love with Vaibhav so she denies Abhi’s proposal in a pleasant way.

After a few years, Ankita gets a letter from Vaibhav. She is in a dilemma to accept Vaibhav or not. He takes her to a beautiful place and proposes to her. On a cab journey, he tries to kiss Ankita without any reaction allows him to do that because she thinks about Abhi who killed himself for not accepting him and she doesn’t want to happen the same thing with Vaibhav. He often visited Ankita’s home and get close to her family. Ankita’s parents who never allowed any boys at home liked Vaibhav very much and were okay to send Ankita with him outside. After a painful incident that took place in Ankita’s life with two failed suicide attempts her parents are not too strict with her. They want their daughter to be happy.

Preeti Shenoy appears to be interested in the undercover yet genuine nature of connections between young boys and females. What young boys and girls need to understand here is not to hurry to take any hasty decisions but to wait and give little time to perceive the relationship whether it is going to sustain for long or end because it is only an infatuation.

“How would you react when a beautiful person comes into your life, becomes your most precious possession, and then one day goes away from you... forever? Not all love stories are meant to have a perfect ending. Some stay incomplete. Yet they are beautiful in their way. Ravinder Singh’s love story is one such innocent and beautiful story. He believes love stories seldom die. They are meant to stay for the generations yet to come and read them.” -*I too Had*

A Love Story by Ravinder Singh(12). Ravinder Singh in this fiction too had a love story that expresses the deep emotions felt when someone loses their loved one. Not all love stories have a perfect ending as he mentions, we get to experience it while reading fiction *Life is What You Make It*.

Relationships have the potential to have any kind of influence. It could be advantageous or detrimental. Following Abhi's passing, Ankita developed a bipolar illness. A brain illness called bipolar disorder causes a sharp change in mood and energy levels. The individual may have a "high episode," at which time creativity is at its highest. He occasionally has "low episodes" or emptiness. In this stage, one begins to consider suicide or death. Ankita initially believes she is at the height of her creative potential.

Ankita transforms into a "memory machine". The loss of any relationships can cause every type of effect. It may be positive or vice-versa. After Abhi's death, Ankita suffers from a dramatic change in her behaviour initially she thinks everything is going in the right way when she memorizes the whole chapter and produces it well in the exams. When she could have high energy to run a marathon constantly every morning as a part of her workout schedule. She never realizes changes that are occurring in her body and mind, unless one day her friend says she has lost weight inexcusably. There is a shift in mood and energy levels, she feels a high energy episode i.e. creativity is at its peak in this phase. Sometimes she feels a low episode or emptiness. Which her mother observes and addresses to her. Also, she starts thinking about suicide or death. During this phase which is the last stage, she fails two suicidal attempts. In the beginning, Ankita feels at the pinnacle of her creativity. But gradually understands it when she is taken to a Psychiatrist.

The amount of research required to write this book illustrates how well Preeti Shenoy has written about the disease and numerous emotional rollercoaster rides had by Ankita. Only the passages describing Ankita's gradual ascent into the realm of her disease may have improved this book. It's possible that they were reduced to fewer pages. As it stands, the story gathers up momentum toward the end and attracts you to read more. It provides inspiration to anyone who has experienced the hand of fate, who lost their loved one, while also acting as a guide for those unable to resist and connecting them to the protagonist. Preeti Shenoy's Ankita Sharma is an extraordinary girl with so much life in her. Who learns from all her experiences; it is a love relationship, parent's relationship, or relationship with herself. She is brave to come out of mental illness, and fight for herself.

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