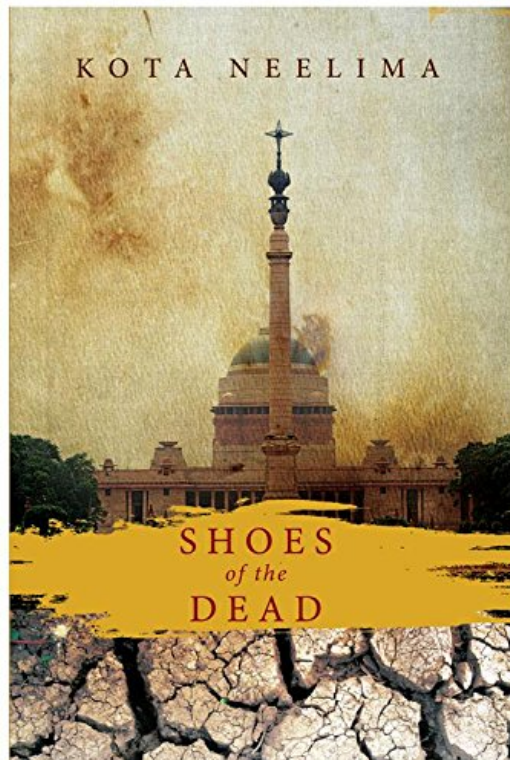
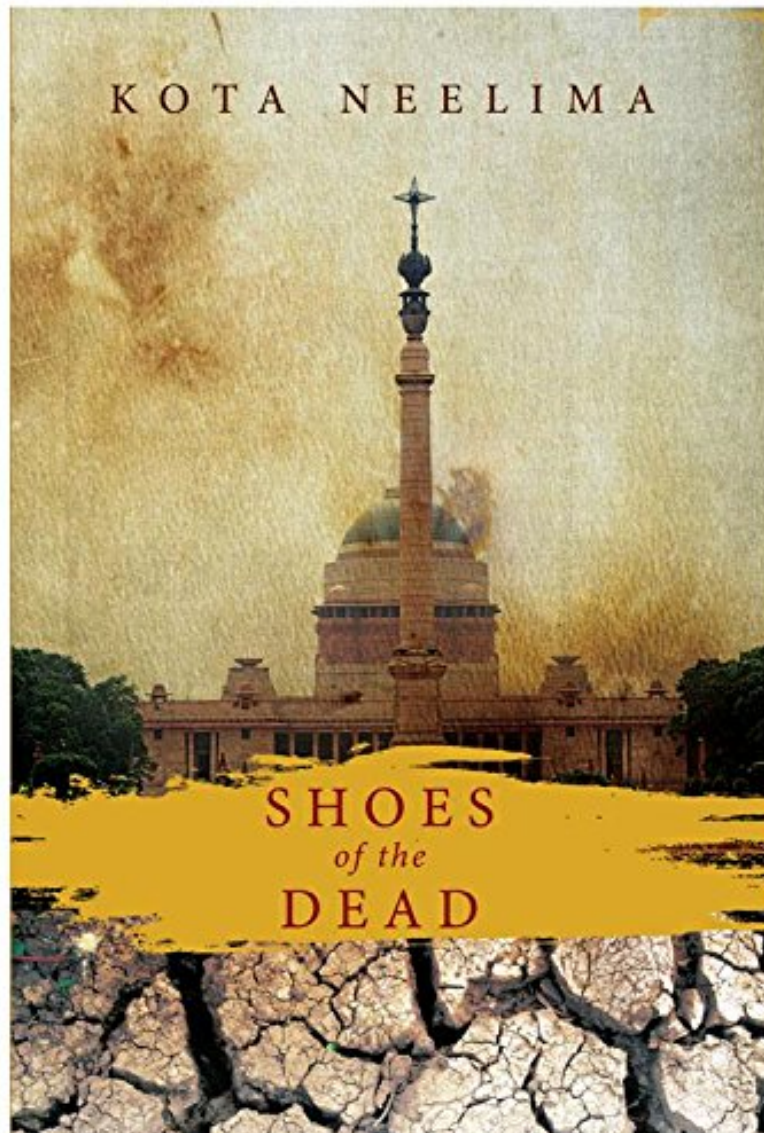


SHOES OF THE DEAD BY KOTA NEELIMA



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About the Author

Kota Neelima is a political editor with The Sunday Guardian and a Research Fellow for South Asia Studies at The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC. Her previously published work includes the novels Riverstones and Death of a Moneylender. Neelima lives in New Delhi and Washington, DC.

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The Vidarbha region and its countless farmers are all struggling under the weight of successive droughts, unjust politics and debts-ridden lives. Sudhakar Bhadra buckles and commits suicide due to multiple debts, but his wife doesn't receive any compensation from the Mityala district committee. They fake the account of his death as they have done with countless others who have all been denied any redress. Gangiri, the brother of the deceased Sudhakar leaves his life in the city to fight the injustice of the system.

In his attempts to vilify the arrogant and unscrupulous officials and moneylenders at whose hands his brother lost his life, leads him to Keyur Kashinath. Keyur is the son of Vaishnav Kashinath, the general secretary of the Democratic Party and he plans to contend for elections from Mityala. Gangiri's vendetta for justice is a complete deviation from the ideal picture he needs to paint to ensure his place among the body of the elected and therein lays the conflict.

The chain of events that Gangiri sets off in an attempt to validate the suicides committed by the farmers is threatening the ambitious young politician who is predestined to inherit the legacy of his father.

The seedy world of politics aside, the soul of this enlightening read are the farmers of the Vidarbha region as the author brings to light several repugnant and horrifying realities faced by these people. As the fight between the world of politics and farmers grow in clamor and chaos, the question remains as to whether Gangiri is finally able to repair the system? Or is the system beyond repair and what does that truth entail for Gangiri?

Shoes Of The Dead is an engrossing read and as a political thriller it exonerates the truth behind agriculture and the associated politics that cripple its very growth.

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About the Author

Kota Neelima is a political editor with The Sunday Guardian and a Research Fellow for South Asia Studies at The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC. Her previously published work includes the novels Riverstones and Death of a Moneylender. Neelima lives in New Delhi and Washington, DC.

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Excellent

By Sheetal Bahl

Shoes of the Dead took me completely by surprise - not because of its portrayal of politics in the Indian capital (which, as a layman, sounds fairly plausible to me), but because it managed to make the politics

intensely personal, and moved me in a way very few books have in the last few years. By the end of the book, the Gangiri's (co-protagonist) victories and losses were mine, and when he hurt, I hurt too. The characters, and the book, stayed with me for a long time after I finished it. The book's structuring and language are robust and accessible, and above all, eminently readable.

Strongly recommended.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Fight Between Poor Farmers And Lousy Politics

By jaideep khanduja

<http://pebbleinthestillwaters.blogspot.in/2013/06/book-review-shoes-of-dead-fight-between.html>

Book Review: Shoes of the Dead: Fight Between Poor Farmers And Lousy Politics

Shoes of the Dead by Kota Neelima - a hardbound book, published by Rupa Publications, has a neatly woven storyline. It has a strong bunch of negative and positive characters scripted in an interesting and powerful manner. I received this book for review from BlogAdda under their Book Reviews Program. Kota Neelima is a Political Editor for The Sunday Guardian. She is also undergoing her Research Fellowship for South Asia Studies at John Hopkins University, Washington DC. She already has a twin hit of her previously published novels under her belt - Riverstones, and Death of a Moneylender.

This is a sensitively written book presenting both ends of a typical Indian scenario - where on one hand poor farmers keep following suicide spree due to various reasons as most of them depend heavily on monsoon rains, political and local moneylenders support and living with low temperament always worried about the next meal for their family; political leaders keep taking advantage of these situations with just motive of keeping their vote bank intact with whatever measures they have to take to achieve it. One bad monsoon creates a big debt for a farmer and forces him to get pushed under heavy weight of loans drifting him to more poor and uncertain conditions. Local politicians and moneylenders unite and create a kind of mafia to loot poor farmers and mint money by grabbing their land, money, jewelry and home. Very few who understand this ballgame get screwed badly if they try to resist.

The whole game starts with the suicide of Sudhakar Bhadra who belongs to Gopur village, kills himself out of huge debt and no possibility of any healthy conditions returning back so as to live a normal life. He leaves his wife and two kids behind him. Gangiri (the main lead of this story), when comes to know about it, leaves his teaching job in city and returns back to take care of Sudhakar's family and a single motive of fighting with the poor conditions being faced by other farmers in his village. Sudhakar's wife plea of considering Sudhakar's suicide as debt driven and hence sanctioning relaxation in the payable loans by him gets rejected by the local committee stating it otherwise.

Shoes of the Dead is a fight of poor against rich, good against bad, common man against politics and administration. Overall it is an interesting read passing through various twists.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Shoes of the Dead

By Drac

Shoes of the Dead by Kota Neelima not only have a catching title but also captivating content.

Gangri, whose brother committed suicide owing to all the debts his farming cursed on him, is fighting for a dead man's rights. On the other hand, a young politician Keyur Kashinath, bestowed by political powers transcended due to his father's legacy is looking forward to embark his mark in the dirty politics. When their world collides, what the reader gets is a story filled with farmer's plight, dark face of government politics and

image of a shattering society caged with false anticipations.

One would say there is nothing left to say when it comes to such a concept this book is based upon. And they might be right. Shouldn't one read Premchand instead? And one might be wrong. People like us, belonging to a foremost middle class group either believes that things are getting better - 'Hey there is a new chain of XYZ brand in the city.' or 'It rained good this year.' Or, we believe things are getting worse - 'What petrol prices hiked again!' or 'Are you kidding me, no subsidy on LPG?' But the fact is things have always been the same for the farmers of this nation. Government, politicians, society and corrupted professionals, everyone constitute for it. And maybe they will be this bad for a long time, unless a struggle begins, one such portrayed in this novel.

But that's not all what the author has to offer. She has also taken into account of politician's thinking. Something, I don't remember I witnessed anywhere else; and hence an applauding effort.

Writing is refreshing and next to perfect. It feels good to learn that you are investing your time in such a book whose author has done a tremendous research. The confidence, anger and urges are conveniently conveyed with moderate flow, quite appropriate for such a story. No, it's not a drag.

The only bad part I came across is that many-a-times I felt the dialogue between characters as superficial. Reminds you of something you may have heard somewhere. Also, it makes the characters to lose a bit of credibility.

Overall, this is a fresh read which you begin with a sigh of relief that it's not going to be in the junk shelf of your library and complete with lots of thoughts and emotions storming through your brain. Recommended for every reader who need food for thoughts, particularly those who can't miss a day's newspaper.

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