



Sense of Mystery in Pratap Sharma's Top Dog Ranjha

Name of Author – Praveen Kumar

Email – sunny9785babal@gmail.com

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Introduction

Pratap Sharma used to write plays. He was also a novelist, with a number of children's books to his name. Pratap Sharma's work in Indian cinema is noteworthy, as he was a renowned actor and documentary filmmaker. His work has been produced and published in India, England, the United States, France, Denmark, Holland, and Canada, among other places. Two of his works are being put on stage in France right now, and Flammarion and Edition de Septembere in Paris are publishing his books there as well. As an actor, he has been the main character in five Hindi movies. In 1971, he won the National Award for his role in Phir Bhi. In the movie Nehru: The Jewel of India, he most recently played the part of Nehru. He has made several documentary films, including a series about history for Channel 4 Television in London. People know his voice from movies, TV, and radio because he is one of India's best commentators and storytellers. Pratap Sharma's most well-known works are as follows:

The Surangini Tales (1973)
Dog Detective Ranjha (1978)
Top Dog (1985)
A Touch of Brightness" (1964)
Sammy

Begum sumroo (2004)
The Little Master of the Elephant (1984)
Days of the Turban (1986)
Zen Katha(2004)

Detective Fiction

The term "novel of adventure" is often used to describe a detective novel. Mystery and suspense are the hallmarks of detective novels. It undermined the heroic nature of the hero. These books are a perfect example of how society should be approached realistically. In these books, things get a little more complicated than they should.

It is a subgenre of crime fiction that focuses as much on the hero detective as it does on the crime. Though Edgar Allen Poe and Steen Steensen Blicher are often credited with inventing the genre, detective stories have been around since the dawn of time. Since detective fiction was first officially recognized in the 1800s, it has undergone numerous changes, including adjustments to the protagonists' personalities and shifts in tone. For those who prefer adventure stories or horror tales in their detective stories, there is a variety to choose from. While early detective fiction often featured a well-educated hero, the stories often focused on the detective's intelligence, cleverness, and ability to outwit the criminal in the first place. A well-known detective character of this type is Sherlock Holmes. More than a few other detectives were



inspired by *Sherlock Holmes* in some way, and a few became popular enough to inspire a series of novels. The callous Private Investigator is another orthodox character in these mystery thrillers. In the pulp detective fiction of the 1920s, these characters were particularly popular. Detectives in the *Sherlock Holmes* traditions were more refined, but these men relied more on guts and grit to crack a case. Phillip Marlowe is an excellent example of this kind of character. The types of characters used in detective fiction have become increasingly diverse over the course of the genre's history. There is a darker side to detective fiction as well. As with any good detective story, some of these tales will into the realms of horror fiction at times. The macabre nature of the crimes committed and the sinister nature of the villains are the main distinguishing characteristics of these stories. In some cases, the villain is actually supernatural, but it could be argued that these stories are too far afield to fit comfortably into the detective fiction genre. Novels by well-known detective novelists have also incorporated new elements to keep pace with the times. Popular detectives may be computer hackers, while others may rely on cutting-edge forensics. Forensic technicians play an important role in some detective stories. As a result of Edgar Allen Poe's short stories and sensational novels, one generic convention in detective fiction was established for future generations by the golden age of detective fiction that began in the late nineteenth century and lasted until the post-World War II scenario. To put Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes* novels in context with the imperialistic tendencies of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it can be said that Arthur Conan Doyle's works, which featured the eponymous fictional detective, were instrumental in establishing the formulaic nature of detective fiction as we know it today. According to Martin A Kayman "Doyle expertly achieved the right balance of elements to provide the male middle classes with relaxing reading which uttered them by providing an intellectual adventure, while assuaging their anxieties about the modern world" (Kayman 48). Doyle's creation of Sherlock Holmes aimed to reassure readers that reason, however cold and cynical, arrogant or brutish, can still act as an antidote to an otherwise chaotic world. As a result, not only did the creation of Dr. Watson enhance the intellectual appeal of Sherlock Holmes, it also gave readers the impression that they might be less mortal than Holmes, but they were still smarter and more insightful than Watson. This book makes the reader feel as if he is a member of an advanced scientific world that neither bores nor alienates him and, most importantly, protects him while asking nothing of him. The character of Sherlock Holmes has loomed large over his fictional successors since then, even if their stories are often set outside of the golden age.

Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers, and Vine Dine are just a few of the authors who contributed to the golden age of detective fiction by incorporating psychological motivation and rational deduction into their investigations. In an effort to maintain the status quo, these books were labelled as being socially conservative and conformist. As one of the most well-known detective writers of all time, Agatha Christie's *Hercule Poirot* and *Miss Marple* series focused on meticulous plotting.

However, this is not the case in India when it comes to English-language detective fiction. Because of this, readers may believe, albeit incorrectly, that international authors are still doing



it right, despite the genre's apparent absence. Poulomi Chatterjee, publisher and editor-in-chief of Hachette India, says that "readers have been long exposed to crime writing from the West" and adds that Agatha Christie and Sherlock Holmes still sell the most. According to Amber Sahil Chatterjee, the Commissioning Editor of Penguin Random House India, "It is a challenge for Indian publishers to persuade readers to read homegrown detective novels." A reader had a hard time buying a book by an Indian author after he tried to persuade him at a book fair. "An Indian name on the cover never seems good enough" he continues.

Sense of mystery

A sense of mystery Pratap Sharma defied certain traditions in order to provide the reader with a unique book to read. This novel is a breath of fresh air in a genre where the reader has been accustomed to a similar sort of theme in every detective fiction, just with new names and stories. Pratap Sharma dared to venture into the unknown and brought a whole different perspective to the genre. Throughout the novels Dog Detective Ranjha and Top Dog Ranjha, the main character, makes use of his great natural abilities to apprehend criminals. This also suggests that Ranjha has kept some of the attributes of the traditional protagonist of other detective stories, such as hyper-consciousness, a level head, and situational awareness, among other things. His canine powers, on the other hand, set him apart from humans, as evidenced by Ranjha's perspective on his owner Woof in the final pages of the book, which demonstrates how much beyond the knowledge of the human mind his canine abilities may assist him. He could have told the time by consulting his gut if the situation had been more acute. He would determine the temperature by measuring the amount of evaporation on his nose. He was able to identify direction by measuring the magnetic fields of the earth. Ranjha is the protagonist of the book Top Dog Ranjha, in which he and his owner, Woof, solve crimes using their special bond with each other and Ranjha's abilities as a dog. Ranjha's journey in the book starts by solving the mysteries of stolen cars in Mumbai. But it is shown that Ranjha relies on his owner, Woof, for direction. The city police were nowhere to be found with a gang of robbers who used to rob people by stealing cars in the street and then parking the vehicle at the same spot the next day without the owner noticing. One day, Woof's car is stolen but is found by the police, but they are getting nowhere with their investigation. That's where Ranjha comes into play. Woof allows Ranjha to examine the car for a scent, and Ranjha doesn't disappoint as he finds a beedi, which can help Ranjha track the culprit. It must be noted that this is a very useful and special skill that Ranjha has because, at the time when the novel was written and the time period in which this book was written, the police did not have modern scientific methods such as DNA, forensics, etc. to catch criminals. So, it was a pretty massive feat that Ranjha achieved by tracking a thief with a beedi. At that time, technological barriers hindered the police's ability to track the culprit, even with the help of a beedi. Ranjha tracks the gang with the scent of the beedi even in crowded Mumbai streets, which are full of different kinds of scents. This shows extreme discipline, patience, and dedication from Ranjha. This was something rare and heroic that even the most talented and trained police dog couldn't achieve. Even in the 21st century, where so



many technologies are available, such as CCTV, tracking devices, and fingerprint databases, it is not hard for a criminal to evade these by using masks, gloves, etc., but Ranjha could catch a criminal by their scent, even if it was very faint. That is why Pratap Sharma's idea of using a dog in a detective fiction book can be justified. Ranjha was also a highly skilled and trained German shepherd, which is used for hunting. This makes him a suitable companion when dealing with a criminal, as he can also be a lethal hunter with his teeth and agility. This was shown in a story when Woof was confronted by an enemy with a weapon. Ranjha quickly disarmed the thug by biting him. In the final chapters of the novel, when Woof's neighbour, Mr. Tamhane, was facing a threat from the local goon, Pandu Dada, he was saved by Ranjha. But Pandu Dada was a formidable enemy who devised a plot to exact his revenge on Mr. Tamhane. He kidnapped Mr. Tamhane's daughter by drugging their dogs and giving them meat. But Ranjha was trained to not eat food from strangers. He almost immediately deduced that there was some foul play. He tried with all his might to save the little girl, but he couldn't, for which he felt very disappointed with himself. There is an instance where Ranjha caught the scent of the man who drugged all the other dogs at Tamhane's residence. By this scent, he found the car that was used by the kidnappers. This led the police to the man who helped Pandu Dada and approached him. This man revealed the location of Pandu Dada. A police standoff occurred at the place where police and goons went. Ranjha proved himself a hero by saving the girl's life by risking his own. Ranjha has always endeavoured to find an amicable solution to the issues that have been brought to his attention. For example, in the first chapter of the book, Woof was at a loss as to how to solve the problem of a stolen car, but Ranjha was so sure that he decided to examine the car and give it a try. In fact, doing so was the appropriate action to take. In this case, Ranjha uses his outstanding sense of smell to help catch the criminal. Ranjha's line of reasoning displayed a scientific temperament on multiple occasions, which is an essential quality for a detective. When the villain tries to poison Ranjha, he has reasoned that the food that was left behind must be a part of some plot, and it turns out that he was correct in his reasoning. He had the intelligence to deduce that some scheme must be in motion, and he immediately ran to the house where the little girl was alone for her security. It has been shown that Ranjha has all the qualities a leading detective needs. It features all of the classic components of detective fiction, such as mystery, the pursuit of sceptical or studied people, and the existence of a powerful enemy. Pandu Dada was portrayed as a powerful antagonist. However, in this situation, the author could have made the antagonist more intelligent than the reader, which would have brought the book up to the level of other detective novels. Here, Pandu Dada puts all of his skills to use in order to deceive Ranjha. However, he was betrayed by an accomplice who was careless. The book's climactic scene, in which Ranjha is left alone and unable to exert his full power without the support of his partner because they have been separated, was masterfully arranged by the writer. But Ranjha is able to solve this problem, proving once again that he is a top detective who can adapt to his surroundings to catch the criminal and bring him to justice. In addition to incorporating all of the hallmarks of the detective fiction genre, Pratap Sharma's Top Dog Ranjha manages to surprise and delight readers by presenting them with material that is both unique and original. What distinguishes



Ranjha from Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot, though, is his sympathy for other living things. There are numerous situations in which Ranjha demonstrates maturity, while others have failed to do so. Throughout the years, readers have been exposed to international thrillers and have grown acclimated to the topics and styles of these books. It was just a few years ago when all of the world's book stores were crammed with nothing but Sherlock Holmes and Agatha Christie novels. However, Pratap Sharma has demonstrated that India can also be a prevalent component in detective stories, something that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle saw during the Victorian era. Even though it will never achieve the fame and popularity of Sherlock Holmes, Agatha Christie, or even Byomkesh Bakshi, that only serves to illustrate the point that India has not been known for its own indigenous thrillers in the past. Only mythological and romantic novels have achieved significant levels of commercial success in our country, and these two types dominate the genre. It is possible to conclude that the author was attempting to demonstrate the limited mental capacity of the canine species. However, this goes against the overall purpose of the book. The typical characteristics of detective fiction include the fact that each story and each case introduce new difficulties and new pieces of information. Therefore, in order to solve each puzzle, the protagonist will need to employ a unique set of problem-solving strategies. This feature is what draws a reader's attention to the book in the first place. When viewed from this angle, it is clear that Pratap Sharma was unable to live up to the hype surrounding *Top Dog Ranjha* because many of the stories in the book became repetitive. The only moment in which it builds up to any kind of suspense is when Ranjha is physically defeated, which also happens to be the point at which the story comes to a head. The majority of the tales are engaging, but they all center on the same central ideas. In almost all of the stories, Ranjha's amazing nose is the only thing that helps him figure out what's going on. As a result, it turns every story into variations on the same theme, which is that Ranjha will use some clue to get a scent of the person who committed the crime. This will make the reading somewhat monotonous, but it will still be engaging.

Conclusion

Top Dog Ranjha is a book that falls into two different literary genres: children's literature and detective fiction. There are few cases where these two genres collide, but Pratap Sharma tries something that is both unique and grabs the reader's attention by appealing to the reader's curiosity. Although it is written for children, it may also be appreciated by adults. It provides enough mystery and intrigue to satisfy a grown man's hunger.

Ranjha delivers mystery, thrill, deduction, and the fiction of deduction in the most unnerving and fascinating of the book's stories. The protagonist, who is depicted in the position of a protagonist who utilizes his skills to unravel the insoluble puzzles, is the primary character. It has thrilling chases and evil characters, making it a good addition to the detective fiction genre, or at the very least a wonderful or honorable mention. *Top Dog Ranjha* is a novel about a dog. Ranjha tells the narrative of Woof, a dog, and his owner. The novel delves into Ranjha and Woof's relationship and particular affinity. Woof taught Ranjha how to utilize his powers in such a way that he can now track down criminals who would otherwise go undetected.



Although the book is amusing and makes a solid case that it is a work of detective fiction, it lacks the shine of a mystery and offers Ranjha little to no intellectual challenge. It's probable that the author was intending to highlight the canine species' poor mental ability. Pratap Sharma was well-versed in the aforementioned themes, which are obvious throughout the narrative.

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