

CHAT

Sudipto Das' debut novel weaves Indian history and fiction. He tells SOORAJ RAJMOHAN that he attempts to unravel interesting historical facts

Ancient linguistic fossils, secrets passed down over generations, a murderous plot and a frantic journey across continents to uncover the truth; this is not a description of the next Robert Langdon novel, but of *The Ekkos Clan*, penned by debutant author Sudipto Das.

An IIT alumnus, Sudipto finds himself in the same boat with other writers like Chetan Bhagat and Khaled Hosseini, with the urge to write slowly making itself known to him about six years ago. The product of five years of research and writing, *The Ekkos Clan* tells the tale of a young college student named Kratu and his friends as they try to decipher hidden meaning in the tales that have been passed down in his family for generations, all the while escaping the attention of fanatics that are determined to wipe the tales from existence.

Influences

Sitting near racks of books bathed in late afternoon sunlight at the Just Books outlet at Panampilly Nagar in the city, Sudipto is possessed with a manic energy as he states that his influences are many and varied. "I have been a huge fan of Indiana Jones and more recently, the works of Dan Brown. For me, Jones is the original adventurer, and Dan Brown has woven history and fiction in a way never done before. This got me thinking that Indian history is so much older and no one has really tapped into it in a similar manner, which is how *The Ekkos Clan* came about," he says.

Much like Brown's globe trotting adventurers, Sudipto has gone with a character whose family hides mysterious secrets, accompanied by a female companion who is a linguistic palaeontologist, and helps Kratu uncover 'linguistic fos-



New look at HISTORY

sils' in the stories of his grandmother. The novel has its fair share of Bengali culture and customs, which Sudipto states is a result of drawing from the familiar. "Being a Bengali, it was easiest for me to set some of the characters there, though there are exceptions. Also, Kubha, who is Kratu's grandmother and the one who passes on the family stories to him, was caught up in the Partition riots, with the early part of the book being set in the Partition of Bengal, which I think is often overshadowed by the partition of India and Pakistan. In fact, since my family also came from Bangladesh to Kolkata, the

first few chapters of the book are loosely based on real incidents," he says.

Kubha's exploits

Sudipto explains the historical elements in his book fondly, clarifying that while Kubha's stories are his own; they are based on aspects of Indian history. "I have always been fascinated by our culture and heritage, and I believe studying at the Ramakrishna Mission and having read Tagore in his own language has contributed to that. While researching the book I also read the Rig Veda, which is believed to be

the oldest written text, and was surprised to find that for a book considered to be of religious significance, it is quite secular, talking about love for mankind and Nature. To be honest, history is always coloured by people in power, and fascinating details are sometimes buried. It is details like this that Kubha's stories hold that set off the chain of events in the book," he says.

On future projects, he says that he plans to write a sequel, but as that may take another five years he is working on a romantic novel in the meantime. "I have already completed the first draft of a romance story, but I have realised

OF HIDDEN TRUTH Debutant author Sudipto Das believes in research for his books  
PHOTO: K. K. MUSTAFAH

my strengths lie in research and fact, while a romance needs smaller details. So I've decided to look for a co-author, someone who can provide these details. It's like music, which has *aalap* and *jhala*. I have the *aalap*, now I need the *jhala*," he smiles.

Sudipto is currently vice-president of design services at Mirafra Technologies and lives in Bangalore with wife Trinita and son Hrishav. He plays the violin for 'Kohal', a band he started with his friends.

*The Ekkos Clan* is published by Niyogi books and is available at bookstores and on online retail sites.

Laughter in the time of war

CINEMA Sharman Joshi talks of his role as Captain Rajendra Singh Rana in the comedy *War Chhod Na Yaar*



KEEPING BUSY Sharman Joshi

There are a few actors who ensure their audience has something new to look forward to every time their film is released. Sharman Joshi, is one of them. From wearing his heart on his sleeve as a Haryanvi in *Rang de Basanti* to playing a collegian in *3 Idiots*, he has always succeeded in wooing his fans. The actor will now be seen with Javed Jaafery and Soha Ali Khan in *War Chhod Na Yaar* directed and written by Faraz Haider.

"The USP of the film is that it is India's first war comedy. It is a well written script that has been well executed. It has gone beyond the expected. The plot surrounds Indian and Pakistani soldiers on the Indo-Pak border, at the time of peace, and the relationship they share with each other. They engage in casual banter and have their own issues which they discuss in tongue-in-cheek kind of humour, simultaneously providing ample food for thought."

About his role on the film, he says: "I play Rajendra Singh Rana who is the captain of the Indian Army in this film. He's hardworking and disciplined. He's quite a big flirt too and you'll see that when he flirts with Soha, who plays the role of a reporter."

What drew him to the film was that "it wasn't a gimmick script. I really liked how satire wove itself into the film that is based on very believable real life situations. And when there's intelligent humour involved, it becomes a

lethal combination." And was there any research he had to do for his role? "Not really," the actor responds. "I have spent enough and more time with Army folk to know how they behave, talk and work. Also, the uniform helped! Once in it, it brought out the Army chief in me!"

While he didn't have to spend any time on homework, the film came with challenges of its own. "The weather conditions were extreme and shooting in April and May for so long in a desert is something I've never done before. In fact, Soha and I had to shoot a romantic song and it was crazy because there was dust flying into our eyes and mouth! But then again, I enjoyed every bit of working on this film."

Sharman has worked with Soha Ali Khan before in *Rang de Basanti*, back in 2006. "It was great working with Soha again. We share a really good friendship so much so we started from where we left off when we met on the sets."

With a string of projects he's working on, Sharman is happy to be finding work that he enjoys doing. "I've got *Super Nani* coming up with Rekha and Randhir Kapoor. Then there's Satish Kaushik's *Gang of Ghosts* in which I will be acting with Mahi Gill and Anupam Kher. Vikram Bhatt's film, *1920 in London*, is another release I am looking forward to," he says.

*War Chhod Na Yaar* releases today.

N. S.

Bravo, it's footwork again

PERSONALITY Dwayne Bravo to sing and dance in the Tamil film *Ula*



It is finally happening. West Indian and CSK all-rounder Dwayne Bravo, whose nimble footwork on the field gets as much attention as his action on the crease, will be seen showing off his dancing prowess in a song sequence in the Tamil film titled *Ula*.

Apart from shaking his legs, Bravo will also be singing the song with Gaana Bala. "Music is one of my passions. I have always wanted to be a part of movies in India since I know I am well-loved here. I hope this opportunity will enable me to learn more about the culture of Chennai and entertain people."

The cricketer also expressed his wish to get involved creatively once he hangs up his boots. "I am just 30 and looking to lead my team (West Indies) in the next world cup. Obviously, cricket is my priority right now. Hopefully, this is the beginning of more things to come."

Is he looking at a career as an actor? "No. I would like to stick to singing," he said with a smile.

The producer of *Ula*, Srikanth said that he roped in Bravo to lend a touch of novelty to this fun song. The film will be directed by Rajan Madhav. UDHAV NAIG

Read the MetroPlus online at [www.thehindu.com/life-and-style/metroplus](http://www.thehindu.com/life-and-style/metroplus)

You will get booking only with us... What about others?

MAGIC HOLIDAYS  
Panoramic Group  
Unforgettable times!

Call: 1800 267 1211  
[www.magicolidays.info](http://www.magicolidays.info)

Sample this!

TV *The Taste* brings together four culinary geniuses

With the launch of their latest international show *The Taste* Fox Traveller is teaming with internationally acclaimed culinary geniuses - Anthony Bourdain, Nigella Lawson, Brian Malarkey and Ludo Lefebvre.



They will select 16 contestants - both amateur and professional cooks - by tasting just one spoonful of their food while blindfolded. The judges then mentor their team of four contestants, but the blind

tasting continues, meaning a judge may unwittingly vote off their own team member.

*The Taste* will air every Friday at 9 p.m. starting 18 October, 2013 on Fox Traveller.

Qaiser Bagh FESTIVE COLLECTION

11 Oct 2013 onwards

fabindia

KOCHI: Bay Pride Mall: 3043517 | Fort Cochin: 2217077  
Lulu Mall: 2540700 | Nucleus Mall: 3043399  
Oberon Mall: 4043636 | Ravipuram: 3019682  
CALICUT: 4099112 | KOLLAM: 2764450  
KOTTAYAM: 2580013 | THRISSUR: 3253411  
TRIVANDRUM: 3071440

INDIAN by CHOICE

SHALINI JAMES

MANTRA

Lulu Mall | Oberon Mall | Gold Souk Grande