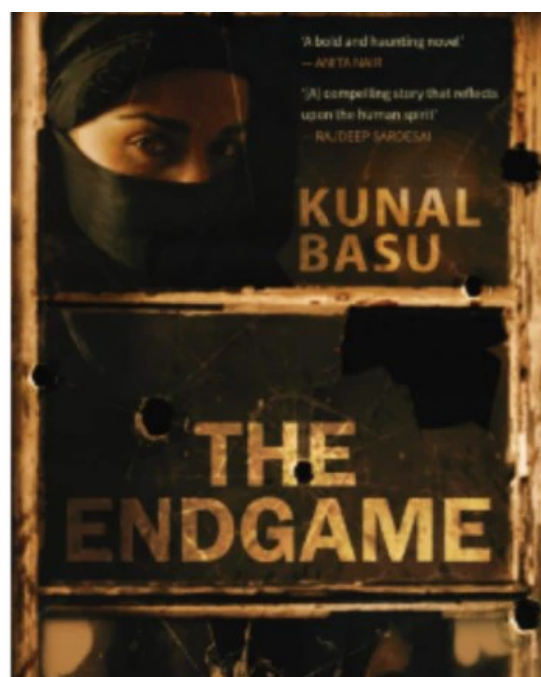


[indiatoday.in](https://www.indiatoday.in)

A tale in which War scars body and soul

3-4 minutes

The novel, *The Endgame* by Kunal Basu is the tale of a war reporter who has been left tarnished not just by the losses in war but also from what has been left behind.



Novel, *The Endgame* by Kunal Basu

It could well be the prologue of this book. In the midst of life we are in death. It's a Gregorian chant translated into English and printed at the beginning, before the novel begins. And when the novel

ends, you very well know that's what the book is all about.

The novel, *The Endgame* by Kunal Basu is the tale of a war reporter who has been left tarnished not just by the losses in war but also from what has been left behind. Superbly translated from the Bengali by Arunava Sinha, it's a novel that makes you look at war and its aftermath from a new angle.

The plot is somewhat like this. Reporter Tejaswani Ray with a reputation for daredevilry has a new assignment at hand. She is sent to war-torn Iraq post the death of Saddam Hussein. Her task is to bring back stories but her mission takes her beyond regular reporting. And a chance encounter with a young woman trafficked from India changes the course of her life, something from which there is no return.

The book digs deep to high light how US Marine Corps function, the way media reporting is done from a conflict zone, and how citizens are labelled as terrorists.

The Endgame is Basu's first novel to be translated from Bangla (originally titled *T ejaswini O Shabnam*) to English. A writer of acclaimed novels such as *The J a p a n e s e W i f e* , *The Opium Clerk* , *Kalkatta*, his new book was born out of a story on trafficking that a Bollywood producer wanted Basu to write so as to be made into a film. As part of the project he visited an orphanage in Bengal notorious for human trafficking and met young survivors and "broke down" on meeting the young girls. He knew the only to bring forth the story was a book on the subject.

A bilingual writer, Basu has nicely woven together trafficking with conflict and how lives get affected in faraway places due to war.

One of the strong points of the book is how Basu cleverly weaves

the imagery into the story. The conflict zone, the war-torn land, the outskirts of Baghdad..., you almost feel as if walking through these areas. In a vivid portrayal, *The Endgame* brings forward the ravaged landscape and the monuments that have seen better days.

The novel ends abruptly leaving the readers to draw out their own conclusions.

It could either have a sequel or perhaps this was the way the writer wanted it to end.

Nevertheless, it's a complete book in itself. It shows how relationships are forged between strangers, in the strangest of places, at the toughest of times. It's a novel that questions war and addresses the times we live in. Does war only kill people? Are the ones who are left behind any better? Even if bodies are spared, souls are scarred for life. *The Endgame* is a compelling tale that leaves us with these questions. Read and you won't regret.

It's one of those books where nothing's lost in translation.

THE ENDGAME

**KUNAL BASU, TRANSLATED BY ARUNAVA SINHA, PAN
MACMILLAN; Rs 499**

Get real-time alerts and all the [news](#) on your phone with the all-new India Today app. Download from