

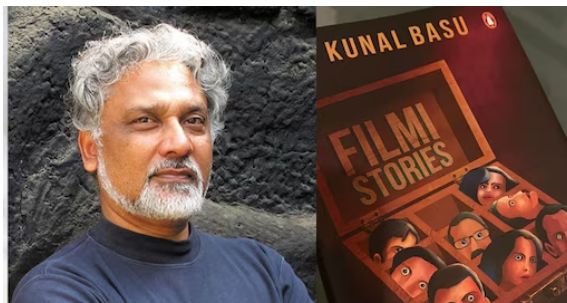
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4-MIN READ

Kunal Basu Talks About 'Filmi Stories;' Says, Conceived These Stories As Hybrids Of Fiction And Film | Exclusive

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Last Updated: OCTOBER 09, 2023, 13:51 IST

[New Delhi, India](#)

Kunal Basu's recent collection of stories featuring eight tales is truly unputdownable. (Images: Instagram)

From his writing process to the way the title was conceived and thought apt of, author Kunal Basu sheds light on his recent work 'Filmi Stories.' Read On-

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Going through Kunal Basu's recent collection of stories titled 'Filmi Stories' is like going through a part-by-part manuscript of a Bollywood film that you simply cannot get enough of. More than a dozen years after 'The Japanese Wife' took to the bookstands and captured our hearts, Basu makes sure to leave an undeniable mark in the hearts of his readers and he does so brilliantly with his words and the rawness of the characters in the short story collection. The eight stories in the collection, like Vishal Bharadwaj rightly comments, "deserves an adaptation."

In an Exclusive conversation with News18, Kunal Basu who can most certainly be termed as one of the 'most looked up to writers of our generation' talks about his recent work 'Filmi Stories' and much more.

Excerpts from the interview-

It's been quite a while since you penned down a collection of stories. What prompted you to work on one again?

The Japanese Wife collection of stories was published in 2008. Since then, I've written 8 novels and two volumes of creative non-fiction. But in the interim, I had not stopped conjuring up stories, which I'd saved for the future. The completion of my latest novel – In an Ideal World – offered me a break from the longer to the shorter form of fiction. I felt these stories were bubbling up inside me waiting to be written, and I couldn't stall them any longer. You can say, it was an overwhelming urge that prompted me to write them, as with all my books.

The very title 'Filmi Stories' is very intriguing in itself. Can you talk to us about what went on in your mind when you sat down to think of a title and how do you think this title justifies the entire book and all the components that it entails?

I had conceived these stories as hybrids of fiction and film. It was my intent to write audio-visual fiction, whereby the readers would be able to visualise each scene of every story vividly as if they were watching films. Yet the stories would also embody the reflective power of good literature and offer enjoyment of the subtleties of prose. I am a great believer in the interplay between the sibling arts and thought it appropriate to name the collection thus.

Among all the stories in the book, can you choose one that you like more than the others and why is it so?

Asking an author to choose between her/his stories is like asking a parent to choose between her/his children! I like each for different reasons. Oxblood for its Latinesque

spirit; Patna for its surreal world; OK TATA and Passport wallah for their rootedness; Struggler for its soul; Fake for its edge; Jailbirds for its charming romance and The Enemy for its contemporaneity.

In the prologue, you mention, "There was something about them that made me think of these stories as films." Do you truly envision them being made into films? If you had to choose a director and a cast for each of your stories, who would they be and why?

I did see my stories as films when I wrote them. I am a visual storyteller, which means I have to see a story as a collection of unfolding scenes. Whether or not any of these will actually get turned into films is anybody's guess. That depends on directors/producers reading the book and liking a story/stories enough to proceed to the next step. Also, since the stories are quite diverse, they'd call for directors with different sensibilities to work on them. I admire the work of a number of directors and actors but don't wish to see my stories as being exclusive domains for any of them.

As an author, if you had to judge your own book, what about 'Filmi Stories' do you think stands out the most?

I think it must be the power of narrative. In none of these stories would readers be left in the lurch as far as characters and events unfold. I hope they'll carry the readers along on an exhilarating journey as they have with me as the author.

Each of the stories have a diverse tonality. How did you go about it? What was the writing process like?

I conceived of each story as a stand-alone piece, without any thematic connection among them. It was like writing 8 different novels, albeit much shorter versions. Also, since these stories had appeared in my mind at different times, they reflect my mindset at those times. I think that explains the distinctiveness of the 8 stories. I wrote them during the COVID-19 pandemic, which let me enter their different worlds in an uninterrupted fashion and unclouded by external impulses.

Post "The Japanese Wife," do you think the audience sort of expects you to write for the screen or want your writing to be made into films? Do you think it is justified?

I have not felt any pressure to write for cinema. Since my writing is quite visual, readers and reviewers in all parts of the world routinely comment on their cinematic potential. The print-to-celluloid transformation appears quite natural in this day and age. While I'd be excited to see more of my works turned into films, my primary intention remains to write powerful stories.

What is next for you in line?

KB: I'm cooking up a new novel.



About the Author

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First Published: OCTOBER 09, 2023, 13:51 IST

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