

## This one's for the road

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### Find out whether Inspector Juneja takes the high road in Reeti Gadekar's second novel titled Bottom of the Heap

If you thought author Reeti Gadekar has had enough of aggressive Assistant Commissioner of Police, Delhi Nikhil Juneja from her first novel Families at Home, you need to think again. For inspector Juneja makes an appearance once again in a sequel of sorts in Gadekar's second novel Bottom of the Heap.

Brash, over the top and an out-an-out Delhiwallah in action as well as words, Juneja finds himself in the middle of a scandal this time committed by one of his own constables Sajjan Kumar, who is accused of raping a foreign national while being held at their police station.

While Juneja has hardly had time to deal with one scandal he is dispatched to the badlands of Arse, a fictitious place located in the middle of nowhere in between two districts, to solve a road scam.

While Families At Home dealt with the grimy underbelly of Delhi high society that is masked behind the plushness of their existence, Bottom Of The Heap takes a harsh look at the world where rape, and honour killings are de rigueur all in the name of road widening and scams.

While Juneja's morals have always been questionable and quite flexible, swinging whichever way the wind blows, the book explores the dilemma that his character goes through struggling between good and evil. Along the way there is the matter of dealing with an estranged father, a dead grandmother, a gay couple, a girlfriend he fears committing to and a suave but evil village landlord.

Gadekar keeps the narrative taut throughout and manages to bring out the oppressiveness of the situations in her novel very well. She understands and writes from below the belt astonishingly well on behalf of her protagonist Juneja.

She manages to paint an accurate picture of the Delhi Police and twists their motto of "With you for you, always" in the most grotesque of ways throughout the narrative. She imaginatively creates a fictitious no man's land between two districts in a rural heartland where evil reigns in the most casual manner and throws her protagonist constantly into a dilemma from which he has to figure his way out.

*Bottom of the Heap*

*Author Reeti Gadekar*

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*For Rs 250*

*Available at all leading bookstores*