

## I am 90 percent entertainer, 10 percent reformer: Chetan Bhagat

Bollywood, writing or politics? Author Chetan Bhagat, whose new book '2 States: The Story of My Marriage' was released Friday, says 'he is 90 per cent entertainer and 10 percent reformer'.

His book - an autobiographical tale about an inter-caste love marriage - was launched by Minister of State for External Affairs Shashi Tharoor.

'But after seeing Shashi Tharoor taking time out to release my book and working so hard at the same time, I will become 20 percent reformer and 80 percent entertainer. If we could have 20 Shashi Tharoors in parliament, India would be a different country. He is the only minister who tweets and remains so closely connected to the country's youth,' Bhagat told IANS.

'Anyway, Bollywood, like writing, is always more fun than politics. I will stick to scripts, movies and newspaper columns for the time being,' he said with a laugh.

However, Bhagat feels 'he is already political in a way'.

'I tell 500 people how to do their job better everyday. People are inspired by me. Even if 10 people do it - that makes a difference and I succeed in my mission to change the system,' he said.

Bhagat's new book takes off on his own marriage to a Tamil Brahmin. "2 States..." is the story of my marriage and I have dedicated the book to my in-laws. I think this is the first time any Indian writer has dedicated a book to his in-laws,' he said.

'The book is funny and completely different from 'Five Point Someone', 'One Night@ the Call Centre' and '3 Mistakes'. I did not want to write about friends any more,' Bhagat said.

'2 States...' is about Krish and Ananya, who are from two different states of India. They are deeply in love and want to get married. But their parents do not agree. To convert the love story into a wedding, the couple have a tough fight ahead of them.

'Indian love marriages are not easy. It's not just the boy and the girl who fall in love. Everyone - both their clans - have to fall in love. In the end, the boy and the girl start questioning whether there's anything more left to it and even fight. But it's important - at least for me - what parents think of your marriage,' Bhagat said.

'My wife read the book and loved the female lead, who is modern, liberated and educated. India is opening up and parents are learning to accept love marriages despite prejudices about caste,' the author explained.

Bhagat has several offers from Bollywood for his new book. 'It's always easy to cast boy and girl in Bollywood than friends. The director has to look for the right people to gel as friends. But this story works,' Bhagat said.

Bhagat feels his best stories are 'those drawn from his own life and experiences'.

'The more personal the book, the more unusual and funny it becomes for me. People relate to it

better because they know me - my wife, my twin boys and how I left my job as an investment banker to write,' Bhagat said.

As for the language - 'seven editors worked on the book'.

'I believe that the language should be colloquial - a popular fiction has to be a dialogue with the people on the streets,' he said.

Bhagat is inspired by novelists George Orwell and Ayn Rand.

'I like Orwell's social observations. After reading Ayn Rand, I felt capitalism was the best option in this work. But that was long ago,' Bhagat said.

Publisher Rupa and Co is aiming to sell '10 lakh copies in 10 weeks'.

'We have also kept the price unchanged since his first book in 2004. Its still Rs.95. The price of milk has gone up, but Chetan Bhagat's books are still priced what it was five years ago,' Kapish Mehra, publisher of Rupa, told IANS.

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