



## Toba Tek Singh: Stories

*Saadat Hasan Manto , Khalid Hasan (Translator)*

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## Toba Tek Singh: Stories Details

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Author : Saadat Hasan Manto , Khalid Hasan (Translator)

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## From Reader Review Toba Tek Singh: Stories for online ebook

### Navjeetsingh says

I've read only a few stories from Manto and his 'Toba Tek Singh' is a doubtless masterpiece. Lunatics explain the pain of partition. They feel it and make it feel to the reader. As per my reading, this is absolutely the best piece describing the grasping pain non-violently in minimum words.

"He roundly abused all the Hindu and Muslim leaders who had conspired to divide India into two, thus making his beloved an Indian and him a Pakistani."

"If they were in India, then where was Pakistan? If they were in Pakistan, how come that only a short while ago they were in India? How could they be in India a short while ago and now suddenly in Pakistan?"

You forget the world around you for a while when you read that last paragraph.

When I feel too low, too disappointed, which often happens rarely, I read Toba Tek Singh and feel I'm far better. I feel - better.

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### Yeshi Dolma says

4.5/5

This collection of short stories by Manto was a joy/a heaviness/a weird emptiness to read. Each short story ended with me realizing the darkness it silently built, which is nothing but truth in some corner of the world and time. Most of the stories are set at the time of Indian independence or rather India-Pakistan partition. Toba Tek Singh, which is also the title of the book stands out. The story leaves a deep sense of emptiness. The story itself is 5/5 on its own. Very simply written and nicely translated the entire collection dips several times into topics of sexuality and the life and story of very simple people battling their own monsters. Few stories also explore the darker-selfish sides of politics and those caught in between. Overall, this book was very very close to 5/5- I am justtt being too picky.

My favorites were: The dog of Titwal, The gift, A wet afternoon, A tale of 1947, very closely followed by rest of the stories in the collection.

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### Ankita Khanna says

#### About Toba Tek Singh:

Imagine having to wake up one day with the realisation that everything you have called yours, the land, the home, even people, are going to be taken away from you. You might never get to see them again. You have to make it across a new imaginary border. There is violence and chaos, you might die there or you might survive. If you survive you now belong to the other side, to what some powerful people decided would be your new home. You didn't want this. You just want to be here, you want to be home. Toba Tek Singh essentially captures this sentiment.

While Manto's writing is satirical and funny, reading Toba Tek Singh was painfully reminiscent of some of

the stories passed on to my parents from my grandparents about their experiences during the partition, about having to start a life from scratch in a new country. I only wish more of us familiarised ourselves with such literature because it highlights the truths of the lives of innocents that were adversely affected by politics.

I would recommend this short story to anybody who feels strongly about India-Pakistan relations or anybody who has been uprooted from their Indian/Pakistani ancestry and is interested in learning more about their cultural heritage. Its very simple, really, we are all the same.

### **The rest of the stories :**

Manto's writings capture the madness, pain, chaos and simplicity of his times with possibly the most simple language and imagery. Other than Toba Tek Singh, Saadat's writings definitely pack a punch. They did not always move me but they left me contemplative and wanting to read more and more of his writings. What I loved about his stories is his ability to highlight powerful observations in the most simple things. I recommend reading them in Urdu because of the beauty of the language, if not, Hindi would be the second best option. The English translated versions don't do justice to his writing.

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### **Bigсна says**

When I picked up the book, it was the name Toba Tek Singh that led me to believe that I was going to read some quaint simple Indian stories. What it actually had was completely different - and I guess not having any background on Manto was a big part of not knowing what to expect.

However, though the initial few stories were unsettling, I really liked almost every story after the first few once i got the hang of Manto's way of writing.

Though he wrote in urdu, the english translation of his stories is very well done and seems to maintain the every aspect, thought and feeling.

Good idea to check out more on Manto on wiki :-)

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### **Pushpam Singh says**

This book is a collection of short stories by a very famous and critically acclaimed urdu writer - saadat hasan. This book basically focuses on the time around partition of india in 1947. From various stories that feature in the book, he tries to portray the social class, economic situation, beliefs and various other taboo that existed during that time.

There are few stories on lives of ladies who possibly lived during those days and sustained the blows of brutalities of partition.

The author has very boldly talked about many other issues and aspects which others might have decided to hide otherwise. His writing contains bold usage of words and descriptions. After reading this we can conclude that during those days also, things were secretive and sensitive.

It was good read.

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### **Rohit says**

I labelled this book as a work of fiction, but quite a few of the stories in this collection seem to have been

inspired by true incidents. I came to know about Manto quite recently, only when a certain Bengali director acknowledged his works in the opening credits of his movie. And I picked up his work even later, only when the promo of a certain Hindi movie based on his life appeared on-line. Strange, but yes, movies got me back to books in this case.

Now coming to the book, it is a really slim collection of some of his narratives. Most of them deal with the partition of India and Pakistan, and the grim repercussions of that event. In many instances, the stories are replete with repulsive descriptions of sex and violence. They make you feel uncomfortable, even nauseous. They make you wonder as to how humans can be so barbaric. Unfortunately, the most gruesome of the tales are the ones that have lingered on long after I finished off the book. Maybe that's what Manto wanted all along.

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### **Renuka says**

I am starting to love Manto's writing but I would really like to read the original version of this book. (especially the Toba Tek Singh)

It is always painful for me to read about the partition stories but the way Manto wrote these stories makes them readable.

Toba Tek Singh is my favorite in this one!

*One Muslim lunatic, who every day for twelve years had regularly read the "Zamindar," was asked by a friend, "Molbi Saab, what's this 'Pakistan'?"; after much thought and reflection he answered, "It's a kind of place in Hindustan where razors are made."*

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### **Pranav says**

This was the first piece of Hindi literature I've read since passing 10th standard. Even though my speed was barely middling, the whole affair was worth it. This is not the cruel injustice of a lifetime a la Roy or the fantastic lament of Rushdie, but it is an epitome of Indian literature nonetheless. Starting off with highly depressing stories of the partition, to the stories of Bombay's prostitutes which made him infamous, all the way to fascinating tales about banal insecurities that lead people to unimaginable ends, he somehow finds a way to round it off in a rather poignant way with a story about vagabond actors and derelict writers in Pune, and their Mummy.

I'd highly recommend it for someone trying to get back to reading Hindi literature (I'm not quite sure if this is the translated to Hindi version or the Urdu version itself, as the language seems very natural to someone living in Bombay in the 40s), but be ready for intensely personal shit.

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### **Awinder says**

A perfect read for those who look for deep meanings in the most simplest of of writings. Through very ordinary stories but very powerful and elegant metaphors, he makes you read the entire story in one breath! Most of the stories revolve around the partition of India {Toba Tek Singh, my personal favourite}. The hardships, confusion, self-conflict and inhumane conditions people had to suffer during and after the partition. Reading Manto Sahab's story is like looking curiously through a key-hole and try the different

locks until the right combination fits in and you look at a whole a new world in the end!

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### **Gill says**

I have only read the short story 'Toba Tek Singh', which can be found online here - <http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pr...> - not the book of short stories. The story, in a subtle way, is a massive indictment of the horrors that took place during and following the partition of a India in 1947. It is well worth reading, and if you know little about this time in 20th century history, I hope that it encourages you to find out more.

I recommend this story.

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### **Nishant Gupta says**

This was my first book by Manto, and I like his style. There are no protagonists or heroes in his stories. The characters are ordinary and grappling with life. These stories give a peek into their lives. There's nothing extraordinary or mind-boggling, but at the same time the humanity of the characters stands out. The only disappointment I've is that I read it in Hindi, while Manto wrote these stories in Urdu. Some poetry of emotion gets lost in translation. Unfortunately, my understanding of Urdu is Nil Battey Sannata, so I'll have to stick with Hindi only in future as well. Lastly, I was a bit skeptical about the content of the stories, as there were a lot of warning about vulgarity in Manto's stories. But there's none. Just to be clear, the lead character of almost every story in this book is a sex worker or people surrounding them. So, the content of the stories can be unsettling or disturbing for some. But those people are part of our society, and their lives are real. One might choose to read about them or not, but there's no vulgarity in these stories.

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### **Avirup Chakraborty says**

Manto takes you through a smooth uphill climb, and then pushes you off the cliff with an abrupt showcase of reality. The Dog of Titwal or An Old Fashioned Man exposes Manto's hatred towards shallow social/political constructs in an utmost caustic manner. The irremediable wounds of a forced partition are portrayed in Toba Tek Singh and A Tale of 1947. And Manto's characteristic exploration of sexuality is presented in A Wet Afternoon and Odour.

The translation is really fluid, although there are criticisms about perturbation of the original text by Khalid Hasan. (ref: <http://www.urdustudies.com/pdf/11/12m...>)

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### **Siddharth Singh says**

I picked up this work of Manto more out of curiosity than anything else, a local radio channel had run a month long feature on Manto and I just wanted to see what was the hype all about.

Some of the hype was certainly justified, Manto's writing is very provocative in nature and certainly not for the faint at heart. His stories cover topics that are almost certainly not discussed in polite company and he doesn't shy away from highlighting the dark side of human nature. Manto's caliber as a writer is on full display in his collection of short stories and while you may end up being scandalized, you certainly won't end up being bored of what is on offer.

Manto lived in pre-independence era and his stories are usually set in the same backdrop however instead of focusing on the politics of the era, he sticks to the society and humans so there won't be much of British bashing or nationalism at display.

The only possible complaint I have with this collection is Manto's obsession with sex and prostitutes. Sure, I can understand that these topics make for compelling stories, seeing them again and again in every story only dulls the impact of what is otherwise a great collection.

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### **Suman Das says**

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### **Ritika says**

Saadat Hasan Manto is an amazing writer and when it comes to describing partition and the pain, he becomes unbeatable. Toba Tek Singh is a masterpiece from him.

The story dates back to the time of Indo-Pak partition and takes you to a mental asylum where Toba Tek Singh (a name given by his inmates) lives.

People in that asylum have their own perspectives for this partition. It is when both countries' governments decide to exchange madmen on the basis of their current nationality.

What happens next makes you realize that despite of not being in his senses, Toba Tek Singh is more sensible than the governments of both the newly built countries.

The writer does not try to make you understand each and everything but the message reaches you through this madman called Toba Tek Singh. A very emotional story and a must read!!

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