



In High Places

Arthur Hailey

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As events bubbles to a scalding boil, leaders of two great nations fought in desperate secrecy to keep the lid on the world. Bartering, backstabbing, browbeating, bribing...and praying for a little more weight to throw on the delicate balance of international power. This is a novel of men at the summit, their bold deals and soiled souls -- and their women, clutching at fevered moments as the time for loving, the time for living, slipped so quickly away.

In High Places Details

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Vismay says

Finally, it happens not only in India!!!! With 'In High Places', Arthur Hailey describes the power struggle that takes place between warring political parties of Canada with each day bringing in new skirmishes and political maneuvers to haggle over.

Though the Indian Lok Sabha maybe the epitome of ruckus with verbal blusters, shers-o-shayeris to woo the opposition, high theatrics when a point is not agreed to, the walkovers, the marshalling out, the general pandemonium in the house leaving an utterly helpless Speaker who hardly manages to bring the rowdy, boisterous politicians under control- it by no means is the only country in doing so. Though we are the 'Argumentative Indians', in this book we come across the 'Cajoling Canadians'. A finely written book, I kept on drawing parallels between our Lok Sabha and their House of Commons while reading, and why shouldn't it be? The constitution of both the countries has been drawn from a common source- England! Of course, ours is a pot-pourri of the best practices of various countries, theirs had been predominantly taken from the British.

This book is way different from the others I have read by Arthur Hailey. Here characters, including the protagonists do not lose much sleep over wrong practices. The reason being- Politics is murky. You had to get your hands dirty to get things done. The end happens to be extremely innovative; the author had left it upon the audience to decide what end they preferred.

This book, of course, was written way before my time. And the World Wars and the Cold War don't arouse the same passion in me as the Indo-Pak or Sino-Indian wars do. So it comes rather as a surprise, though of course it was mentioned in the bland school history books, that during the cold war the situation was rather grave between the two superpowers. People all over the world considered Nuclear War imminent. Now we know that the war never happened due to a chat over hotline between the heads of the two countries (Of course disintegration of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall helped!). But in this book, a reader vicariously shares the apprehensions of the author of a very possible war which may change the face of the earth. And so that's why I think- the uncertain end.

We come across strong characters in the form of James Howden, Alan Maitland, Brian Richardson, Edgar Kramer, Milly Freedeman and many more. Oops! I forget the most important character of them all- Henri Duval! The book revolves around him- a poor stowaway on a ship whom no country would take in. By a quirk of fate, he finds multitude of people fighting for his cause, some of them for their own selfish ends but nevertheless giving a tough time to the ruling party which had taken an obstinate stand of not giving in to the opposition.

Soon this petty case overshadows the very important hush-hush act that would change the lives of millions. 'The Act of Union'- as it is called, calls for the annulment of the boundary between Canada and U.S.A. in the face of a very possible war at hand with Russia.

Overall, it's quite a good reading and racier than the others. But I want to complain!! Why does the back cover of any book indulge in lying and painting a putrid portrait when nothing of that sort actually happens in the book? The jacket proclaims- 'In this, one of his greatest achievements, he (Arthur Hailey) exposes the passions that seethe behind the blank facades of government offices as politicians in power fight to stay there- bartering, back-stabbing, browbeating, bribing with honours, money and women.'

I can understand the ‘bribing with honours, money’ part because it actually took place in the book, but what I cannot understand is why they had to add ‘women’ when nothing of that sort actually happened!! The publishers assume that a normal male reader is a pervert who enjoys a voyeuristic ride of a sadistic sort. Maybe they were speaking in general terms, but they should not believe for a single moment that by inserting this sort of gig on every book cover, they would have windfall gains due to libidinous readers lining up to buy the book...

Ichinkhorloo Khosbayar says

Finally finished reading this narrative novel where I randomly had bought during annual book sale this spring. Not a lousy one though. Betrayal, diplomatic relations, resilience, and sympathy were shown in a great amount. But not the one to recommend to others, though.

Wsm says

Another terrific book by Arthur Hailey. This time he explores the world of politics and international relations and adds a touching story about a stateless man trying to find refuge in Canada.

Robert Gaston says

Suspenseful and interesting novel about Canadian and North American politics. The book contains many details of the workings of government in Canada.

Arvind Srinivasan says

When I started reading the book, I felt the book is going to target more on domain of politics or house of prime minister than just a political drama. Owing to reading his previous books in that manner and having enjoyed it a lot, this book turning out to be a normal political drama was a great let down to me.

As usual the story is very thin line, it is through situation and people that the drama gets interesting. But these kinds of books with political drama is not something new and hence there was not big surprises. But as in other books though we could get to know about people and politics. If you have not read any political drama earlier this would be a different read, if you have watched movies or books on story involving political plot it is better you can just pass through this book.

M.J. Perry says

This is one of Hailey's earlier works and not one of his better known. It was written before he developed his style of focusing on the day to day work life of ordinary people however, his gift of finding the very interesting in the very common is just beginning to make itself evident. The story is of Canadian politics in

the early 1960s against the background of the cold war (which is heating up) and a Canadian society that struggles in establishing its identity--especially as that identity relates to the USA and to immigration.

The book could not be called great literature but it is interesting. It's interesting for several reasons. First, the story is interesting (even if not entirely plausible) and it does draw the reader in to ask "What happens then?" More important for Canadians it gives us a reminder of who we were and what we were like in the early 1960s. For the 21st century Canadian the then Immigration act is embarrassing, as is the attitude to certain minority groups in the country. The latter do not appear often, but they do indicate the author is a very perceptive individual who has some concerns about the social structure. Finally, it is a good reminder of political tensions before the personal computer era. Sharing information nation wide within twelve hours was considered lightning speed.

This is by no means a must read book--but, it's a great bedside table book and it is an interesting read that reveals more about Canada in the early 1960s than many of its contemporaries.

Karthik R says

A really interesting book about politics. Love Arthur Hailey's books.

Gab says

Arthur Hailey became one of my favourite authors when I read *Moneychangers*. That novel set the expectations so high, that maybe I expected much more from the novel that is considered his best work. It has a brilliant plot, no doubt. The first half of the book is very exciting. But by the end of it I found it repetitive and boring. It was like taking a drama to the highest level, keep it there until it gets boring and then abruptly declare the end. There is way too much time spent on Duval's story. Also, I had not expected the story will end before Howden declares the Act of Union. I was very much looking forward to the drama that follows. That would have been way more interesting, including the way it affects Duval's new life. Nevertheless, *Moneychangers* remains my all time favourite.

Paul Gaya Ochieng Simeon Juma says

Arthur Hailey is popularly known for his book 'Airport'. I do not own it, neither have I read it. Of course, I would love to read it but to everything there is a time. So, I will wait. For now, let us talk about 'In High Places'. What a brilliant story. I recommend it to everyone who loves politics.

The Country. It is based in Canada. Battle lines have been drawn between the ruling party of James Howden and the Opposition party led by Hon. Bonar Deitz. They are divided on various fundamental issues affecting the country at the time. With the elections coming neither side wants to be unpopular with the public.

The Government. It is tasked with the job of defending its unpopular policy on Immigration. It aims at keeping out negroes, catholics et cetera. Also, under its present immigration act, those without a country are not entitled to enter Canada. Once a special inquiry has been conducted to determine the persons character, the authorities may either approve or reject the application. In this case they rejected Henry Duval's request

to enter a Canada. The other thorny issue involved the Act of the union with the United States which was aimed at integrating both countries defence forces.

The Opposition. They firmly object the government's decision to detain and deport Mr. Duval either to his country of birth, domicile, or origin. Their main contention is that Mr. Duval has no country. Through their lawyer, Alan Maitland, they file repeated motions of habeas corpus in the British Columbia Supreme Court for what they refer to as 'the illegal detention' of their client by the immigration authorities. They also object to the Prime Minister's proposal for an Act of the Union with the United States. They reason that it would lead to Canada's loss of its independence.

Resolution. The issue of Immigration is fought in the British Canada Supreme Court. Justice Willis presides over the hearings. Though he is aware of the law and that it falls squarely in favor of the government, he is still sympathetic with Mr. Maitland's cause. In the end his own personal prudience overcomes his obligation to uphold judicial integrity as he indirectly decides to assist the 'young' and 'inexperienced' lawyer. He hands him an olive branch in the form of an old precedent which authoritatively provided that no individual can be detained and deported back to a ship. It must be to a known country. On the other issue, it is fought in parliament.

Conclusion. I am not sure whether the events described in this book really happened in Canada. If they did, they must have been very interesting to witness which makes the book engaging and absorbing. One of the best books I have read this year.

Mary E says

Thought provoking

I enjoyed the story with all its twists and turns but even more I enjoyed the way the story encouraged me to consider the way of politics. I always enjoy Arthur Hailey.

Rishikesh Pelluri says

The lead character Howden, the PM of Canada is portrayed as leading the country from an imminent threat, a nuclear war between the USA and USSR. By the end of the book it becomes clear that Howden's premiership is threatened by the consequences of a pact which he makes in order to gain the party leadership. The book talks about how even a minor issue of a country-less wannabe-immigrant, can affect both personal and professional lives of the people involved, and can have a major impact on the popularity of the government. If you skip the boring parts, the book quite beautifully describes how people respond to a given situation and how their emotions play a big role in making decisions by looking at the bright side of the situation while rejecting, and even refusing to look at the other side.

Kristi Lamont says

I cannot believe my brother reminded me of this stupid book yet again. The whole freaking thing was a build-up to . . .

Nothing.

In the end, it left me asking the question, "Why Canada? Why does it even exist? It is the ultimate build-up to nothing!!"

Sigh.

Dennis McClure says

Hailey wrote best sellers back in the day. I was young and an avid reader. I read every one of them. And I thought they were great.

But times change. I still loved rereading this one. But you probably won't.

Chaitanya Somalwar says

Well Arthur Hailey was recommended to me by a friend who spoke rather highly of his writing prowess. So, when I got my hands on 'In High Places', I definitely was very excited. The book describes the political career of the Prime Minister of Canada James Howden, 'the man whose destiny hangs on a scrap of paper' as the book summary suggests. The initial part of the book portrays events which seem unrelated at that moment but are intricately related in the latter part of the book. The plot of the book encompasses politicians, lawyers as well as journalists. When I was halfway through the book, I was pretty sure that the book would make its way to my favourites, but I must say I was disappointed by the ending of the book. Well, I am not sure if I can call it an ending after all. I thought that the book ended on an abrupt note. However, not regarding the ending, the book is very fantastic and a pleasure to read. Rest of the book compensates the lack of a proper ending. So a good read overall.

Chaitalee Ghosalkar says

Politics-you can't go wrong with that. Throw in a few hot topics like the Cold war, immigration, etc and you have a potboiler.

Except, nothing like that happens in this book. Like his other books, Hailey brings in multiple characters that make you lose focus. Also a burning subject matter like immigration ought to have generated major interest, but somehow seems outdated.

I couldn't wait to get done with it, and it was a Herculean task to not abandon the book midway
