



The Cloud Messenger

Aamer Hussein

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Like his parents, he too spent many hours sending cloud messages to other places, messages of longing for something that he knew existed otherwhere.

London, that distant rainy place his father lived in once, is where Mehran finds himself after leaving Karachi in his teens. And it is there that his adult life unfolds: he discovers the joys of poetry, faces the trials of love and work, and spends his dreaming hours "sending cloud messages to other places," hoping, one day, to tell his own story.

A feeling of not quite belonging anywhere pursues Mehran as he travels to Italy, India, and Pakistan. But the relationships he forms—with wounded, passionate Marvi, volatile Marco, and the enigmatic Riccarda—and his power of recollection finally bring him some sense, however fleeting, of home.

Aamer Hussein was born in Karachi in 1955 and moved to London in his teens. He lectures at the University of Southampton and the Institute of English Studies and is a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. His novella *Another Gulmohar Tree* was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize Europe and South Asia 2010.

The Cloud Messenger Details

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From Reader Review The Cloud Messenger for online ebook

Audrey Arnold says

I received this book as a giveaway through Goodreads. It was hard to get into this book at first but the author has such a poetic way of writing that I pushed through to the end. It's a nice story that reads like a drifters memoirs. Though well educated the main character travels around and lives a bohemian lifestyle which made it interesting but again it was the writing style that got me through and made it worth reading.

Anna Sternberg says

A beautiful book, full of longing and sadness. Haunting and the writing is beautiful and poignant.

Eleanor says

It bothers me when authors lace a text with metaphorical language that doesn't shed light on the story or characters themselves. Guess what the motif in "The Cloud Messenger" is? You guessed it: clouds. Honestly, clouds are about as difficult a metaphor to pull off as shadows or footprints: so easy they risk being only cliche'.

What makes me curious, still, is the author's note at the end: these are scenes from a life he could have led -- paths he could have taken. That's interesting! And perhaps that's why the book reads a bit like a dictation the author made of scenes he imagined. Unfortunately, though, the choppy year-to-year style made me feel shortchanged: what, you're only giving us the highlights? And, quite honestly, it feels a bit lazy. The author lingers in the main character's younger years, then uses years as titles in order to jump ahead in the story. We are supposed to believe what we're told about the characters, and still feel for them, despite the lack of continuity. These are not flash forwards; the whole plot surges ahead, leaving huge gaps. As a result, the story feels quickly told, not leaving enough time or space for the reader to grow to care about the characters beyond a surface interest in them.

I still don't understand what the idea of "cloud messenger" has to do with Mehran, the main character, or his friends.

Alka says

Vague. Moving between Karachi, Indore, London. Didn't find it engaging.

Chinmoy Bordoloi says

I never knew that words can intoxicate you. But this book does it and does it in style. The bittersweet

memories of the lost world, lost dreams and missed opportunities..... the loneliness of a man and the unquenchable thirst for something undefined..... and yet, contentment.

Lora Mays says

Overall, the “Cloud Messenger” is abysmal and mundane. It reminds me of the much-acclaimed movie “The History of Violence” that was released a few years ago. You continue to watch (or read, in this case) because you are confident that something is going to happen because there surely can’t be a storyline that is that dull. But of course, once you reach the end, you are mad at yourself for even making it that far – since nothing has happened of importance. Perhaps if you are intrigued by slow storylines filled with random events, this may be the book for you.

Read my full review at [www.crazybookreviews.com!](http://www.crazybookreviews.com)

Sasha Strader says

I really had high hopes for this book but it was...random. Sort of like reading the rantings of an Alzheimer's patient with a poetic bend.

Ruth says

I didn't like Mehran, the main character, so although there were some good bits (mainly the early part about his childhood) the book didn't really work for me.

Varsha says

I was confused about the story or message the book was trying desperately to convey.
Whats in it to be called “the cloud messenger”?
A series of connecting random things to rain doesn't really mean it is relating to title.
Not my kind of book.

Ming says

The writing is at times beautiful. But the general feel of the book is depressing and has a disjointed effect. While a chronological scheme is there, it lacks some overarching drive or momentum (and needs some more complete resolution). I just finished the book and I feel like I'm dangling and somewhat unsatisfied.

Ellen says

I received this book through the Goodreads First Reads program, so I was pretty excited for my first free book to review! I expected this book to be like The Namesake by Jhumpa Lahiri, which I enjoyed. However, I found it confusing and without enough details for me to get interested in the storyline. The book follows the life of one man, from childhood through adulthood, but only certain excerpts of each year are given. I found myself getting confused with the geography mentioned in the story, first of all. The story was supposed to be about the relationships of the main character, but I wasn't very interested in them, especially since I wasn't really following the plot very well. I didn't develop any empathy for the main character or see very well how the pieces of his life fit together. Also, there were many cultural and literary references (particular to India/Pakistan) that went completely over my head. Overall, it was a short novel that could have been interesting but was missing too many pieces to draw me in.

Slawka Scarso says

Read the Italian translation. I'm usually very interested in stories of migration but this book was just not engaging enough. I've often thought about identity in a mixed family, as this is my case too, but despite the closeness to the topic, everything was so distant, every character.

Simon says

Hard to relate to if you don't know much about Arabian poetry or literature which is the most common topic iirc.
