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book review

Riveting tale of revenge

Set during the Serbian War, Gerald Seymour's *Dealer and the Dead* is a spine-chilling novel about how a Croatian village avenges an injustice

→ **Shilpa Krishnan**
CHENNAI

Revenge is an act of passion; vengeance of justice. Injuries are revenged; crimes are avenged — Samuel Johnson

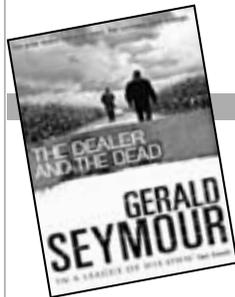
It happened almost 18 years ago. But whoever said time heals all wounds wouldn't have visited a Croatian village near Vukovar. Almost two decades ago, at the height of the Serbian War, these Croatians had given every last penny and trinket they owned to the village schoolmaster to buy weapons. But the dealer reneged and consequently, the village fell. Men were murdered and women were violated.

The villagers had a simple philosophy — V stands for vendetta and revenge is a dish best served cold. Now that they knew the identity of the person who betrayed them, it's payback time. They hire a hitman to avenge the injustice.

Meanwhile, in England, arms dealer Harvey Gillott is resting content in the knowledge that he is the perfect example of success. He's forgotten that he hasn't always kept his word and that there is a village in Croatia that he didn't deliver the order to.

There are some lessons in life that are learnt the hard way. And this is one of them. Gillott will soon find that the past has a long hand and that the hand is holding a gun.

It is on this intriguing premise that Gerald Seymour's *The Dealer and the Dead* is based. Though it is not wise to judge a book by its cover, I suggest that you judge the book by what is written on the cover. And if the rave reviews are anything to go by, then the book is a must-buy. If



Dealer and the Dead
AUTHOR: GERALD SEYMOUR
PUBLISHER: HACHETTE INDIA
PRICE: ₹295
PAGES: 495

you are a bibliophile, it is obvious that you will have your own set of favourites in every genre. But seasoned readers of thriller fictions will unanimously agree that if in the recent past there is a man



Illustration: M Arivarasu

who writes raw, mesmerising and riveting plots, it is the UK-based writer, Seymour.

One is often tempted to compare Seymour with Frederick Forsyth. While Forsyth's plots are engaging and easy-to-digest, Seymour can get a little complicated with his narrative. He writes like he thinks. While Forsyth writes like he speaks.

The Dealer and the Dead spans both west and eastern Europe, and boasts of a superb cast of characters. The meticulously methodical London assassin, the psychopathic British Secret Intelligence Service officer, and the bereft, still-mourning single-minded Croatian villagers, are all characters who have been well-researched and painstakingly portrayed (something that doesn't happen often in thrillers).

In a day when shop-worn plots in the disguise of well-written books are doing the rounds, *The Dealer and the Dead* comes as a refreshing, breathtaking story that keeps you gripped right till the very end ■

—shilpa@expressbuzz.com

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HORROR WRITINGS



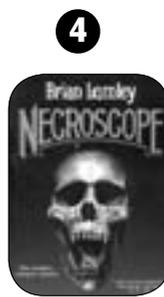
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