



# Unravelling the complexity of Love and Deception in Vikas Sharma's Novel 'Love's Not Time's Fool'

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**Abstract:** Love is one of the human emotions, having different colours namely - affectionate love, conjugal love, sibling love, platonic love, spiritual love, erotic love and so on. Love is the most appealing emotion but it creates so many complexities to unravel, though its definition and positive achievements are not definite. Sometimes the deception in life may create drastic changes in the nature and life of someone like Tulsidas, Radha, Meera, Heer, Ranjha etc. Living in tension and lost in the maze of the world, everyone craves for true love to soothe and make the life meaningful and rudderless. The present paper will deal with Vikas Sharma's Love's Not Time's Fool (2021) to showcase a bold, thought-provoking, and chaotic rhythm of love and deception through Richa, Abhilash, Malya, Robert Lee, Nikki and Ishqui etc. in the modern world of artificiality, unsustainability, dishonesty, selfishness, and opportunity

**Keywords:** Love, deception, hunger, unity, sexual pleasure, spirituality

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## INTRODUCTION

Vikas Sharma's novel Love's Not Time's Fool (2021), has a deep sense of meaning, connected to William Shakespeare's 'Sonnet No.116' that is dedicated to his friend to offer his true and immortal love that does not alter when the alteration finds and cannot be decayed by the time but in this novel the narrative revolves round a rich but poor lady named Richa Pandit who possesses a huge money, intelligence, knowledge, education and property but faces deception in love relationship again and again leading to emotional disruption, hunger for true love and identity crisis among other characters who are also in the same boat in many ways.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Most of the characters in the novel – Richa, Abhilash, Parents of Abhilash, Nikki, Ishaki, Malya, Amitabh, Neelam Pandit etc. – are found engaged in the labyrinth of love and deception with their viewpoint, ideology, morality, immorality, and ethical perception which led to emotional attachment, detachment, physical gratification, casual liaisons, and cozenage. So, it is quite pertinent to investigate the complexities of love and deception explored by the author with courage and boldness in a huge quantity.

## MAIN TEXT

The novel weaves the story of deception that Richa faces in her love relationship with Robert Lee in USA, in her conjugal relationship after marriage with Malya Vedic, in her forced sexual relationship with her brother-in-law, in her relationship with Abhilash who indeliberately and deliberately cheats on her by

seducing Nikki; and that Malya, after being impotent, faces due to his own perennial sexual needs and those of her wife. Abhilash, the ardent lover of Richa, also cheats on his studies for IAS exams, his parents, his farming land and even his beloved Richa. Neelam Pandit, the sister of Richa, is duped by her own husband and her own sister.

The story of the novel is told in the first-person narrative by an omnipresent narrator named Richa Vedic, a rich, fiercely intelligent, bibliophile, open-minded, emotionally weak, and kind protagonist of the novel. Reading for her is like bed tea, which gives her energy, develops her imaginative powers and shapes her ideology. She has developed a big library in her house and “Early morning, I entered my home library to study.” (3) Being an admirer of love and romantic literature, she has studied several novels and several writers like Salman Rushdie, Vladimir Nabokov, D.H. Lawrence, Emile Zola, Khushwant Singh, etc. is surprised enough why “Lolita has been banned in a few countries...” (3) While the novels - *Women in Love*, *Nanu*, and *The Company of Women* etc. are read and accepted with great admire. Her appraisal of the above novels shows her bold nature, ideology and stark love for romanticism.

Being a romantic person, Richa, at a very tender age, falls in love with Robert Lee in USA where she lived with her father who “had the privilege of perfect security being the ambassador of India” (120). Her belongingness to an elite class with a special status permits her to enjoy her life at the fullest. She trusts her lover very much, so she surrenders herself completely so that her love may be immortal even before marriage. She confesses, “Robert Lee loved me a lot and we often enjoyed sex in hotel rooms. As my sister Neelam could trace the hotel bills...” (112)

Her lover breached her trust badly and left her “unprotected and insecure” to abort. But her kindness, humanity, and emotional attachment to the pure product of her love did not allow her to abort the child, even at her mother’s advice. She delivered a club-footed son before or without marriage. Once again, he felt cheated by God for giving a club-footed child as a lifelong punishment for the true love she had for her lover. She groans, “trust brings back trust and causes a lot of tensions when trust is betrayed.” (112) This deception shattered her romanticism and motherly love badly because he never came to see her and did not even bother to have a glimpse of the child. Richa felt hurt, but her family, especially her mother, Poonam Pandit, handled the situation very well with love, trust, and care. To save the reputation of the family and the life of Richa, she kept everything a closely guarded secret and the child was placed under the care of a paid caretaker, Nora, so that Richa could marry someone in India and begin a new life.

Richa married Malya, a wealthy businessman in Agra, and started a new life. But just after three months of marriage, her conjugal relationship lacks husband’s physical and erotic love, she desires for. Malya had ceased to have physical relations with her. She ponders over her fate: “How long to feel dissatisfied like this? Will worldly pleasures never quench my thirst” (66)? She suspected that her husband was having an extramarital affair with his employee, Indumati Varshney, who was informed by Malya’s friend that Malya “has been hit on his penis while fielding in a cricket match. He has no potency so far as his manhood is concerned” (122). She also tells Richa that Malya had forced her to sleep naked with him and enjoyed playing with her body but failed to have sex with her as if he had been emasculated. Obviously, Richa’s conjugal life has no future and it seems to be another dupe in her romantic and love life. This frustration leading to her unfulfilled desires may have flummoxed her what to do? It may have driven her into the arms of Abhilash for bodily fulfillment and emotional satisfaction when her husband is on a foreign tour for

business purposes. The extramarital relationship between Richa Pandit alias Richa Vaidik and Abhilash culminates into their marriage in the last of the novel. In her chance meeting with Abhilash, a student of Post Graduation and aspirant for IAS, she not only feels drawn towards him and but also notices his positive response to her spontaneous efforts for friendship. She goes ahead to help him monetarily to buy books for his competitive examinations and makes successful efforts to bring him home and cunningly, observes his lustrous eyes on her beauty and vigor. "I noticed his eyes stopping for a little while on my bosom. While playing tennis, she admits 'he notices the rise and fall of my breast. I found him observing my smooth and beautiful thighs.'" (8) It ascertains her Abhilash quest for sexual pleasure, though he hesitates yet while bathing naked, he starts enjoying her company, "kissed my bazooms" (10) Besides, hyperactive Richa's man-hunting moves may be an indication of her nymphomania or her personal life's conditions. She, enthusiastically, narrates their first meeting in bed,

I took him to bed...he was ignorant and hence I directed his penis to enter me but he...came within a few seconds...I was aroused and I need him badly inside myself...this (second) time, he entered me in one go. Soon, I took him under me and took the control of the affair in my hands and enjoyed sex for nearly fifteen minutes. (11-12)

This hastily and erotic relations even in the first meeting with Abhilash, shows the depth of her sexual thirst to be quenched for the emotional and physical satisfaction. Karuna Devi in her research article, *'Foolish Love: Exploring the Theme of Love and Madness in 'Love Not Times Fool'* published in *Journal of Advances and Scholarly Researches in Allied Education in 2025*, comments,

In this novel, Prof. Vikas Sharma masterfully evokes the delirium of love - the sweet, intoxicating madness that blurs reason and renders. His characters do not merely fall in love; they surrender to it, allowing desire, longing, and emotional chaos to govern their choices. (160)

The relationship between Richa and Abhilash starts with physical attraction to each other and there is no indication of true love at first sight, and to savour the real taste of carnal food, Richa manages his job in her shoe company, *Peppe & Tette Footwear*, and his stay in her own house so that she may be "free for him every time and every day" (131). Nicole Cirino, M.D., Associate Professor of Psychiatry at OHSU's Center for Women's Health (USA) makes an important comment, "All women deserve to enjoy a healthy sexual life." (Web)

Gradually, their physical attraction turns into true love and care for each other. They make love frequently and spontaneously at their will – every time it was not Richa to initiate rather Abhilash also instigate for love making. Love for her is life and all else becomes a blur. Her mind is filled with so many forbidden and unfulfilled desires for playing with male orgasms that she even interprets the Biblical story of Adam and Eve by replacing 'Forbidden Fruit' by 'Male genital.' She wants to vacate all the negative experiences and sufferings from her unconscious mind and fill it with the exciting and enthusiastic experiences of love in order to maintain sexual and mental wellbeing. She sighs, "I wish to love you in a way that makes me forget the whole world.... Love for the sake of love, nothing more nothing less." (77)

Though she seems a little bit weak for seeking sexual pleasure, yet she is really a dynamic and smart businesswoman who is never caught by her sexual desires rather she enjoyed it and goes ahead. She, in the absence of her husband, finesses the employees to run a shoe company '*Peppe & Tette Footwear*' very

well and even enhances the production day by day. She is a strong woman to be the role model for so many women who have lost their hopes in life; she was hoodwinked by her lover badly and even suffered in her marital life, she left behind the unpleasant experiences of past and move on. She tells Abhilash, “You know my mental strength and like Ulysses I believe in ‘strike and move forward’ even in old age to see new countries.” (132).

Abhilash as an employee and lover also trusts her and tries his best to justify his work for the benefits of her employer whom he respects, supports, and loves him passionately. He, in a discussion with Richa, regarding quality control of the shoes and sandals, gives valuable suggestions that,

Shoes to be exported to cold areas of the U.K., U.S.A. Russia etc. needed a separate chemical to be sprayed upon to make them snow-free... he told me the name of a chemical lotion that had a long life in cold and hot weather and the upper of the shoes won't be separated from the sole in any weather. (56-57)

Abhilash, a middle-class boy, wins her trust and even he himself trust Richa in true sense because he has achieved for which he does not deserve. He is an intelligent person with logical sense so he has observed the business and his job very well to add happiness and benefits to his employer-cum-beloved who is very much anxious of a sustainable relationship with him. She is married and worried of losing Abhilash and his true love; when her husband Malya will return to India. Her dreams reflect her inner situations when she is sleeping in the arms of Abhi at Holiday Inn in Mumbai where they visited to settle a business nuisance.

I...saw a horrible dream – I found myself and Malya in a boat sailing on the surface of sea and Malya hit me hard and threw me into the sea. As the crocodile was nearby, he swallowed me and I cried from his stomach – ‘Help me Abhi...Help me!’ (64)

Her dream shows that she is a common lady with moral inner conscience. If he were a slut, she would never think about her husband, morality, ethics, and the society consciously or unconsciously.

Both of them have positive vibes for each other and the time was flying very fast from 25th December 2018, when they first met to April 2019, when Malya died of lungs problem in USA. Richa has mix feelings of happiness and sorrows. The lockdown and cancelation of flights to USA due to spread of CORONA, does not allow her to attend the funeral of her husband. She deceives the relatives of Malya by having tears in eyes to get sympathy and captivates Abhi as if Malya's death is the symbol of their permanent unity and presents him a new car as a love token.

After Malya's death, Richa's jiju (brother-in-law) gets a chance to visit Agra with a textile engineer to discuss a new business of textile in her collaboration and misunderstands her words of greeting, “come and enjoy.” He very smartly manages Abhi to send with the engineer at the site and tries his successful attempt to seduce Richa who finds “no one to help me in this situation” (140) keeping in view, the future and conjugal relationship of her sister, Neelam and her children, she puts her own dignity at stake of lustful desires of her jiju and promises him, “I'll come once a year to satisfy your love-calls and stay in the hotel there... but please, for God's sake, be loyal to my sister and trust me as I am trusting you today.” (141)

The narrative shows the real situation of a widow who is supposed to be available for everybody, anywhere and anytime in Indian social strata. Even the close relatives have lustful desires for them and take advantages of the compulsion of near and dear. In its annual report, the National Crime Records

Bureau states, “The data showed that 86 percent of rapes had been committed by close family members such as brothers and uncle, as well as neighbours, employers, co-workers and friends.” (Web) Though, Richa surrenders herself as a silent victim to the lustful desire of his jiju, she feels disgusted and as a mouth piece of the novelist asks herself and the world,

Is a widow everybody’s wife? Immediately my intuition responded to ask me to be wise and prudent and maintain my self-dignity at every cost. For this getting married was essential as social considerations could not be given up forever. (143)

Richa, being a widow, feels as if she were an empty road where anyone has fundamental right to run his car. She knows the poisonous reality of the patriarchal society. Madhurima Paul and Swapan Das write in their article titled ‘*The Silent struggle: Psychological impact of widowhood on the life of women in India*’ published in *International Journal of Science and Research Archive*, in 2023,

Widows are abused...people even use epithets such as ‘husband eater’ against them. Unfortunately, widows are considered a sign of misfortune and bad luck. Although widows today are no longer forced to die by ritual sati (burning at their husband's funeral pyre), they are still generally expected to mourn for the rest of their lives. (307)

The status of widowhood is a curse for women in India and the recent incident drives her to get rid of it by marrying Abhilash Amit Kumar Bhagat, in his research paper titled ‘The Concept of Love in Vikas Sharma’s Love’s Not Time’s Fool (2022), rightly says, “She opts Abhilash for marriage because marrying Abhilash was the only option for her to get rid of her one-month-old widowhood... cherish the social virtues of chastity, fortitude, righteousness, forgiveness, etc. (192) Without any delay, Richa and Abhilash performed marriage rituals with the help of Pandit Ji and became husband and wife.

Abhilash, an aspirant for Civil services exams, though simple, obedient, and studious in the beginning, changes his target and priority after meeting Richa. His personality is in contrast of Manoj Kumar Singh, the protagonist in 12<sup>th</sup> Fail movie, who is determined to be successful by working hard. He loves Shradha but he makes her his strength not weakness like Abhilash. He proves to be an opportunist and easy going as he accepts the help from Richa for buying the books and put his dignity at stake when she invites him to her banglow, tennis court and ultimately to her bed. Only Richa is not at fault to impress him rather he equally participates in sexual pleasure with Richa frequently. He left his PG and shifted to her banglow, joined a part-time job in her company along with a part-time lover to gratify the sexual hunger of Richa and himself. He easily hoodwinks his study, dreams of being an IAS and even his parents whom he obeys and goes to his village to meet them. But the fire of physical love has burnt his determination and he forgets even to visit his parents in the winter vacation. The novelist is successful enough to give a message to the readers by depicting the real situation of a student who has fallen in physical love of a married but rich lady. Abhilash is shocked, “Oh no. I forgot that it is Christmas today. Generally, I visit my town during the winter break. My parents wait for me.” (16)

He is so much engaged with the office work, playing tennis and making love to Richa that he forgets the real world behind. His middle-class parents are sick; still they are affording the study and other expenses of Abilash who dumped them for a married woman. Earlier, Abhilash used to take care of them, ask their wellbeing, and support them to manage the agricultural affairs but now the situations are different. He is



employed and earning a good amount but he does not help his parents with his salary. After waiting a lot, his parents sent their neighbor to meet Abhi in Agra to remind him of his ailing parents and detached sister, Gautami. Richa says, "This old neighbour of Abhi asked him - 'why had he not visited his sick and ailing parents in winter break? Now his father, Mr. Tarun is confined to bed and his mother fails to look after him these days...he was asked to visit his home with some money.'" (53) But the lost youth, Abhi does not melt and asks him, "What about income from agriculture?" (53)

How drastic changes, we witness in his character, ideology, priority, and obligations for his parents. Though he went to his village yet he could not save his parents as it was too late. The next day, he informed Richa that his father had died and "her mother breathed her last next day." (54) i.e. within two days his father and mother die of sickness and deception of their son. His sister Gautami also has chosen the path of spiritualism by detaching from the family and worldly pleasures and Abhi takes it a golden chance to own all the properties of his parents. He aptly states that half of the land belongs to his sister but she refuses clearly to take any part of agriculture land that was sold to Richa in two parts. Gautami becomes a saint and in the second wave of corona, she as Trisha Devi is arranged to stay in Richa's house. Abhi recognizes her and takes interest in his sister by failing to control his affection but she refuses to take any monetary help from Abhi and even to meet him in isolation because she cannot deceive her determination and sainthood. She claims herself "to be above violence, greed, lechery, anger, pride, ego and other evils." (151). It was Abhi who also listens to her speech and finds himself on the wrong path through wrong deeds and a sinner as he did with his parents and studies.

Moreover, Abhilash's lecherous nature is also evident in the novel. In his adolescence, he used to have a sexual eye on his cousin, Ishqi who loves him. She happily takes care of Abhi's parents and after their death, she goes Agra with Abhi as she has hidden love for him in her heart and misunderstands that he also loves her. She, while lying in his bed, tries to stimulate his sexual desires by caressing his body but he boldly scolds her, "Stop this nonsense at once." (58) Ishqi feels cheated and disgusted, she replies in weeping, "When you studied in 11th and 12th class you often pressed my boobs and often pressed my hips while playing carom-board and card. You aroused me and then left me dissatisfied – was it decent then? ... I waited for your company for nearly four years." (58) But Abhi controls himself and consoles her somehow as a brother who does not want to shame on their relations as a brother and sister along with his beloved Richa. Later, Abhi and Richa give Ishqi a reputed job, purchased a flat for her and get her married with a laborious person, Suman.

But in the case of Nikki, the batchmate, and co-resident of Abhi in Richa's house, Abhi fails to control himself and have a sexual encounter with her consent in sleep; though it was only a spur of the moment act without soul in it, yet it was a deception for Richa and Nikki also. Nikki thinks it to be love so she again expresses her will for the same for a decent future, but he said to Nikki clearly, "There is no love between them, sex is separated from love. He convinces her to accept the reality and satisfied her rising passion in bed once again." (97) His words were shocking for Nikki and ringing as a cheating bell in her ears again. In fact, Abhi is attracted to the physical beauty of the girls whom he meets and without love, he has made sexual intercourse with her. He violates her virginity that is a big thing for a girl from middle class society. She feels cheated and disgusted because he has deceived her as well as his beloved Richa.

But after Richa and Abhilash marriage both remains faithful to each other by forgetting their past and she

vows, “I’ll be ever true to myself and cherish you” (161) The novel happily ends with a good news of pregnancy of Richa, marriage of Ishqui and Suman, Amitabh and Nancy.

## FINDINGS/ RESULT DISCUSSION

Vikas Sharma is successful enough to unravel the complexities of love and deception in the modern society through his novel *Love’s Not Time’s Fool* by representing their different shades. The novel deals with romantic love, conjugal love, extra marital love, family love and deception everywhere to culminate frustration and suffering yielding place to positive attitude and better option as in case of Richa who is deceived by his lover in USA and by unfortunate impotency of her husband in India, meets a perfect lover, Abhilash. The love between Richa Pandit/Vaidik and Abhilash may have many superficial layers in the beginning and middle parts of the novel but in the last part of the novel, it is proved that their love lies in deeper layers and truth. Some critics and academicians address Rich with so many negative epithets which she does not fit for. She is really a common human being and to fulfil the needs of body is essential for everybody. Moreover, she is kind enough to other human beings – be it Abhilash, Ishiqui, Nikki, Rikki, Suman, and did tremendous works for orphanage, old age home i.e. humanity. Abhilash also has the same instincts and needs to be fulfilled, and cheated Ishiqui and Nikki, his studies, motherland and his ailing parents but the male dominated society has no courage to criticize his deeds. Richa’s seduction by Nirupam, her jiju, earns shames on the selfish relatives who take advantages of someone near and dear in problems. As if Richa had not been deceived by her first lover, and her husband had not been impotent after 3 months of marriage, she had not been compelled to move towards promiscuity. She is not a hooker or a prostitute to have sexual relationship with so many people for money or anything else. In reality, she is also a common human being, having feelings, emotions, and desires to be fulfilled, she is deprived of.

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