



# **The Giniralla Conspiracy ; Five Journals of Sujatha Mallika**

*Nihal de Silva*

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## **The Giniralla Conspiracy ; Five Journals of Sujatha Mallika** Nihal de Silva

Colombo is under a terrifying threat. The third bestseller from Nihal de Silva the author of the Gratiaen prize winning 'The Road from elephant Pass'. A story involving a subversive plot to topple the Government by University students led by a messianic leader who promises to sweep away the corrupt establishment and a female journalist who joins the University.

## **The Giniralla Conspiracy ; Five Journals of Sujatha Mallika Details**

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# From Reader Review *The Giniralla Conspiracy* ; Five Journals of Sujatha Mallika for online ebook

Savindi says

**Cover Gushing Worthiness:** The image on my cover is this one , but when I typed in the isbn number of my copy of *The Giniralla Conspiracy* this edition appeared with no cover. No matter though, I'll still gush about the cover anyways!

I really like the cover of *The Giniralla Conspiracy*. From the way the girl in the cover is crouched down, you could tell that something terrible is going to happen. The significance of her position becomes apparent as the story goes on.

**Review:**

*What you're talking about is a revolution. You cannot achieve justice by way of injustice. That is immoral. The end does NOT justify the means. Revolutions cause immense suffering to innocent people. Victory is achieved only by the letting of much blood. The good you seek does not justify the means your friend Kalinga might want to use.*

*Father Basil*

I first became familiar with Nihal De Silva when my brother received *The Road From Elephant Pass* as a present. I haven't read the book, but I was curious about *The Giniralla Conspiracy* when my best friend mentioned it to me and gave it to me as a present.

Before the journals start, the author Nihal De Silva talks about receiving five journals and reading them till the early hours of the morning wondering if the city of Colombo and Sri Lanka would have been thrown into complete chaos had it not been for the efforts of a brave girl and the man who was deeply enamoured with her. The author does say he changed the names and dates of the people and the events which occurred within the pages of the journals. As a reader you're constantly wondering if there was a chance of these events taking place? As a Sri Lankan I can believe that some of these things may have happened.

*The Giniralla Conspiracy* takes the reader into the dark times of Sri Lanka's contemporary history which is filled with civil uprisings and a civil war that lasted for thirty years, only ending in 2009. This book also explores the vicious ragging culture and political presence and its influence within the Universities in Sri Lanka. If I were to guess when the book takes place, I would say maybe around the early 1990's.

It feels weird to say I enjoyed this book when I consider the content in this book, but it's true; this story gripped me from the beginning and I literally zoomed through it within five days. Combining information within the journals given to De Silva and his own creative imagination, the author paints a picture of the difficulties of the poor, the corruption of those in power and the friendships and love that could change one's life.

More than the political intrigue which is a big part of this story, I was more curious about how the ragging culture was portrayed something I had heard horror stories about from my parents and extended family.

While reading this book I was no less horrified than I had been when I heard the stories back in my childhood. Reading about the ragging freshman had to endure left me disgusted and disappointed in those who entered University because what was done to the students was nothing but sadistic and the justifications used for ragging by senior students was unacceptable. I personally don't believe I could ever survive University in Sri Lanka. It maybe different now, but I don't think I would have the mental strength to endure horrifying acts such as dropping hot oil on a girl's head and waiting for it to dribble down her face.

Moving away from the ragging, the political conspiracy itself was shocking and left me in a state of disbelief. However it also made me realize that one charismatic leader can literally sway the most open-minded, educated person with one simple promise: equality to those who have never known it. If people jump on the bandwagon to end poverty, the means are often overlooked and the horrors come back to haunt those who believed in the dream without realizing the means of achievement.

Like I said this entire story is grips you from the first page and as you hear Sujatha's voice in your head you understand her sufferings, her happiness, her achievements; all those are experienced, but as a reader you also get annoyed at her. I think that's probably the beauty of flawed characters. We could have easily been Sujatha and been awestruck by someone who wants to change the world and passionate about that dream without being forthcoming on how it will be achieved. As I was reading the book however I did recognize one lie the author made in regards to a department store in Sri Lanka called *House of Fashion*. The author talked about the store's changing rooms, well Mr.Silva I'm sorry to disappoint you, but *House of Fashion has no changing rooms!!*. That's one of my pet peeves about that store, even though I've always found really good stuff there! I also recognized some of the places Sujatha talked about in Colombo and I was excited when I did know the places she talked about.

One aspect that really struck me with this book was how the author showed the disparity between the haves and the have-nots in Sri Lanka. I think the author's intentions of showing these clear class distinctions within Sri Lankan society is evident when you read the book's dedication. Another aspect that took me by surprise was the how open the characters were about sex. Not that I believe people in Sri Lanka don't have sex outside marriage-I'm sure people do, but I was surprised the author talked about it so openly. Not that I'm complaining about it! It just took me by surprise.

Sujatha was a very easy character to root for. I think her background and her determination to succeed was one of the reasons I wanted her to succeed. Sujatha's growth throughout the book was evident because of how bold she had become. It was interesting to see her friends and later boyfriend tease her about how much she had changed since her freshman year. Her best friend Nalini however drove me nuts. I wanted to smack her sometimes because she was annoying. That being said I will say that she was a good friend to Sujatha. Mithra and Harith- the two significant others of Sujatha and Nalini were both likable. However I thought some of Mithra's logic to be incredibly flawed-especially as someone who has grown up in a different country. I found his reasonings to cut ties with his friends from Sri Lanka as he went to Australia to be stupid-even I wasn't stupid enough to do such a thing when I left Sri Lanka at the age of 13. Sujatha and Mithra's relationship develops gradually and that was beautiful. It kind of reminded me of a relationship blossoms in some of the old Sri Lankan tv dramas. Their slow burning growth is always something that I've liked because the chemistry flows slowly and gradually.

The secondary characters; especially Kumudu and Kalinga were fascinating. I think I know who Kalinga was based on in reality and to watch this man mesmerize people with his speech and charisma was in cold and twisted way inspiring. For Kumudu all I could feel was a sense of pity for him the end. His story was sad and it was another indication to how society treats the lower classes and its no wonder he believed in Kalinga's dream. Father Basil-Sujatha's mentor and confidant was a character I admired. I admired his dedication to

the people of Sujatha's village and his perseverance to help Sujatha through her tumultuous life.

The ending of *The Giniralla Conspiracy* disappointed me. I was disappointed because it felt like a cop-out. I don't believe Sujatha chose the right path in the end. She could have done so much more in her current position instead following through with the choice she made.

Overall *The Giniralla Conspiracy* was a heartbreaking, eye-opening and thought-provoking read. It showed the darker side of those in power and the even darker side of University Politics in Sri Lanka. I would love to pick up De Silva's other books after reading this one.

My Rating: 4/5

Would I recommend it? Yes

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### **Dilipickle says**

It had its moments but over sensational.

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### **Dianne Silva says**

The plot moves along relatively quickly and the ending is not as predictable as one would think, so overall it's an interesting read. Not too many unexplained cultural references, so it's great for any audience. The first book of this author, that I am reading.

I think if I had actually gone to local University as an internal student I would better appreciate all the nuances of the details he provides. But I wouldn't necessarily agree with the Nancy Drew-like persona he gives to Sujatha Malika, journalists in Sri Lanka are NOT like that and they can't work as he describes them. Also I would have thought it more interesting if there was a little more mystery and a plot twist in how the author got the journals; a blurring of the line of fiction, similar to what happens in *Chinaman* by Shehan Karunatilake.

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### **ga.n.ga says**

It gave me hope of a thriller and ended up as a Sydney Sheldon. Still, a good read although it felt as if the background to the story (Sujatha Mallika's college journals and couple of times where there were whispers of the Conspiracy) was given priority while the detailing of *Giniralla Conspiracy* at the end was ostensibly neglected.

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### **Richa Bhattarai says**

Sadness, terror and anxiety surfacing every few pages, balanced out only by subtle but heart-warming instances of love, loyalty and friendships. Riveting.

The novel is a collection of five journals of a student turned journalist, Sujata. Fighting her own childhood demons, Sujata is plunged into a terrifying college life sandwiched between opposing political forces. Determined to claw her way out of poverty and help others, she joins a political wing promising to deliver justice to the poor and needy. We meet her friends Nali, Mithra and Harith; her aunt; Father Basil. All these characters seem to stand before us. Many times I was Suja, taking rash decisions, cowering in fear yet trying to overcome it.

Silva takes forward the story quickly with ease, one incident follows another, transitions between memories and present is smooth. The language is simple, and very comfortable. Silva also knows how to pack a page with tension, and create touching love stories.

But he is at his best while unfolding the working of the Giniralla (firewave) conspiracy through Sujata's eyes. His ability to build up rage and resistance in characters, and have them unearth secrets (with surprising twists) is exciting.

This was my first novel by a Sri Lankan writer, so I had a lot of additional reading, especially on history and insurgency. It is another sad story, with youth lashing out against class/caste oppression through violence. Silva captures this unrest, understands the change the youth seek, but constantly asks: does the means define the end? Is it all right for the innocent (even though rich and privileged) to suffer (he gives the example of Pol Pot killing millions) if it eventually benefits oppressed? A chilling question, and one directly related to our Maoist 'revolution', - did the means justify the end as it stands today?

Sometimes overtly dramatic and commercially-driven, but interesting and readable.

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### **Amashi De Mel says**

If you're looking for an AMAZING plot, this is a great book to read. A fast paced read, with crazy plot twists that just won't let you keep the book down! Embed with reality and fiction, once what is real stops, the fiction may seem heavy to handle - but all in all it works out to form a great piece of fiction. What I appreciate about the book the most, is that, there were many feminist values highlighted in the book - which up to date, I have not come across in other work by male authors - so I was thanking Nihal de Silva from time to time. :) At times some elements seemed corny, but once again these elements in a collective form make sense.

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### **Mahesha Goonesekere says**

One of the best books I have ever read...

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### **Senura says**

I've been going on a Sri lankan literature bender these past few months and this is the first book by Nihal De Silva that I got my hands on. Admittedly, I probably should have read his 'Road From Elephant Pass' first but still.

It was the cover and the title which first attracted me. 'Giniralla' being a word that is translated into fire wave.

'Gini' meaning fire and 'Ralla' meaning wave. Or more in keeping with what the book describes, a tsunami of fire.

The story is amazing. Detailing a Sri Lanka on the brink of political unrest by a major Left-Wing political party with strong ties in the University Student Bodies, the book is a keen insight into the world of ragging, political activism and the naivete of youth.

The book is written well, especially the first part as the hint of this 'Giniralla' conspiracy is introduced slyly. I thought that the shift in focus from university ragging to political activism and this conspiracy was particularly well handled. It was a smooth, streamlined transition, almost insidious I felt.

But I was rather disappointed with how the story ends. No, that's not true, I like how the story ends but the writing loses its focus. I felt that the writing became rather hectic and confused towards the latter part, maybe due to the nearing conspiracy and the immediacy of the situation, and the detailed, personal and very authentic voice of narration turns rather cold, unfeeling and unattached to the story.

Nevertheless, the book is amazing, and the events detailed certainly provide food for thought about Sri Lanka's youth.

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## **Megara says**

Another amazing book by Nihal de Silva. The language is simple which means you can whiz through the book in a day. However, the plot is exciting- to think that there's an element of truth in the story.

The story unveils the atrocity of ragging in local universities and the reason behind it. It reveals how intensely students are involved in politics in these institutions. It discloses a conspiracy organised by university students that is so complex, bloody, brutal, grand and unimaginable that might have occurred in Sri Lanka.

**An after-thought-** Once the truth of the brutality of ragging and political interference at universities filters away, you're left with the bare story and well, it doesn't really cut it as a great novel.

One, I was a bit disappointed at the way the story ended. It just seemed a bit anticlimactic.

Two, the coincidences where she meets the school boy who harassed her on the bus again at the supermarket years later and the boy who had a crush on her being part of the movement/ her torturer, is a bit inconceivable.

The story has a lot of potential. I don't think Nihal has made it what it could've been.

But overall, yes. It's good in its way of shedding light on the ragging, corruption and politics in universities.

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## **Canute Aravintharaj Denicius says**

I enjoyed each word in this book, since I went through same ragging conditions in my university. The book

tends to reflect the reality of student unions & political involvements in university life at latter parts. Some of the descriptions remind me characters whom i really met in university life & wondering they may true!!  
I suggest to everyone who studied in universities in Sri Lanka except Jaffna & Eastern must read this to get answers for several questions!!

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### **Shan Ayeshmantha says**

I was hooked on this book from the first page. An exciting plot which gives the same thrill as a Robert Ludlum novel. Best thing about this book was seeing the ragging in universities, manipulation in politics , and the dark sides of revolution from the view point of the female protagonist. The ending was hard to predict and had a good twist. The road from Elephant pass was another great read from same author.

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### **Lagatta says**

A pleasant book, but not exceptional

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### **Kaushalya says**

The university part of it was a little overwrought  
Obviously not written for anybody who speaks anything other than English.  
plot-wise it kept me reading till the end.

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### **CD Athuraliya says**

Starting off as a personal journal *The Giniralla Conspiracy* swirls into a conspiracy thriller which unveils in an alternate history. Clearly the author has got some influence from popular genre, but still it was an interesting read with the twist ending.

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### **Malsha says**

Loevelly. Still, the road to elephant pass was one of his best!

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