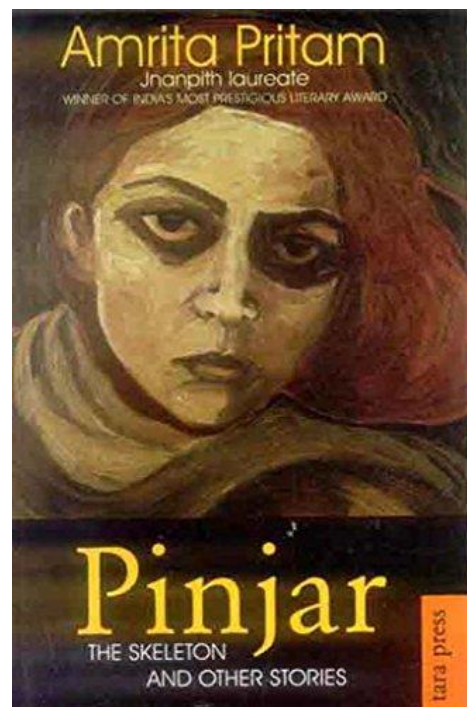


***Pinjar : The Skeleton and Other Stories* by Pinjar, Amrita Pritam, Khushwant Singh (Translator), Tara Press; First Edition (1 January 2009), ISBN-13 : 978-8183860970, Pages-240.**

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A path-breaking novel *Pinjar*, set against the backdrop of the Partition, is filled with the themes of family, family rivalry, communal hatred, partition, and abduction. It was written by Amrita Pritam, who was the first woman Sahitya Academy Awardee. Later, the novel was translated into English by Khushwant Singh as *The Skeleton*. The storyline is linear with both flat and round characters, such as Trilok, Ramchand, Lajjo, and Rajjo, who are simple and ordinary men and women to whom one can relate that they work according to society without question, but on the contrary, Rashid, Puro (later Hamida), and Mad Woman (Pagaliya) are the round ones who question the societal norms, although their retaliation is sometimes voiceless, but they never disappoint the readers with their unpredictability of actions. Family, familial relations, betrayal, and how family works in society are brazenly and courageously represented by the writer with simple, effective, colloquial language and a straightforward tone, such as Puro's return to Rashid's home after her family rejects her as if she herself went with Rashid and Rashid's kidnapping Puro as vengeance. Nature plays a vital role as Puro is abducted from the ranch and Pagaliya gives birth to her child in the field, all naked.



It also depicts the condition of women through the portrayal of female characters under the dominance of male hierarchy because, during partition and communal hatred, women were treated as a subject for vengeance. Pritam has the ability to make a picture in the mind of the reader through her writing, as one can visualise the naked parade of a woman as a result of

communal violence through her words as One day, Puro witnessed a young girl being paraded nude as 10 youths were passing by their hamlet in the style of a procession while playing a drum (91). The height of brutality that every single one forgets about their family and just indulges in the communal riots, which she portrays that without someone to bury or cremate the bodies, the streets were covered in blood, and the stench of putrefying flesh spread disease across the area. (84) This kind of violence can be seen in many partition novels, such as in Ice Candy Man, where the bags in the train are filled with women's breasts. The character of Pagaliya resembles Kusum from What the Body Remembers, whose body was chopped into six pieces while she was pregnant. Like any other Partition novel, this one also depicts the word "izzat," which is always associated with female sexual organs; on the other hand, the word "power" represents male phallogocentric ideologies regardless of what the time and situation are. The use of symbolism is part and parcel of Pritam's works; even the very title shows the condition of the country and the women at the same time, which became skeletons without any soul or flesh.

Amrita Pritam has cultivated the character of Puro as a shining example of female strength and significance throughout the whole book. Rashida is likewise shown as a dynamic person, yet Puro's immaculate description still demonstrates the author's strong desire to elevate the female population's suppressed strength in contrast to the male population's highly coveted position and dominant status.

Instead of giving an idealised utopian depiction of the family and its members, Pritam chose to give a genuine image of the family via a number of episodes, such as when Puro hurried to her parents' house after making an unsuccessful effort to escape Rashid's house and finally succeeding in doing so. Unexpectedly, Puro's parents push her away to save their family the violence of the Sheikhs. With nothing left to live for, Puro came back to Rashid a skeleton. Men were also victims of the split, but owing to social pressure, they were embraced wholeheartedly and never had to go through the process of being accepted by their own family.