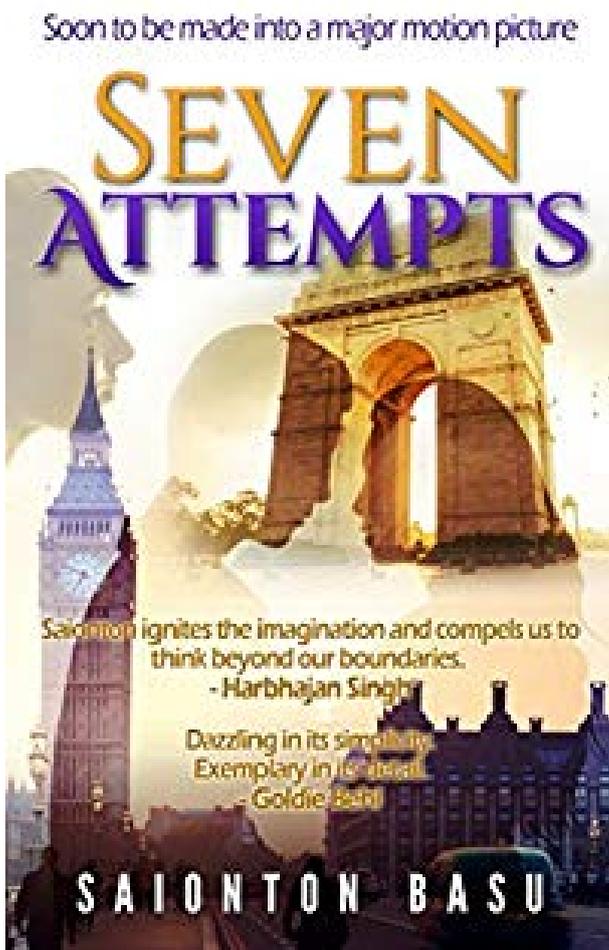


SEVEN ATTEMPTS



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Seven attempts. Seven protagonists. Seven years. No truer test of gumption and fortitude from the dustbowl of Ber Sarai village to the sylvan settings of Canary Wharf. Practitioners in the dark arts of teen patti or poker know the odds of drawing a starting pair from a pack of five cards are the toughest. But most events can be calculated as being finite outcomes because the rules are set in stone. Now what happens if you are locked in a battle of mental and physical endurance, where the odds of a win are five times tougher than the poker starter pack? Wait. That's not it. The rules to calculate the odds can change at any time. The Indian civil services examinations administered by the UPSC fits the above bill and much more. How will Vikas Kumar play the odds? Will he win the hand for the demure and lovely Pragati? Will his reservoir of endurance give up or will he go the full mile? Will the chance visit to London better his odds? Will the encounter with the attractive Pakistani girl Rumaira alter what Vikas had set out to do? Will Vikas Kumar crack the UPSC? A journey that takes seven years. In classic chessboard style, while some stand still others move on and yet others regress and can perish. A story that will make you yearn to be part of the lives of one among the seven. To take in the settings, to be in their skin or alternatively just to knock some sense into them. Lastly, it might make you writhe in agony that the story ended and commence a sentinel watch for the next dispatch from the lives of these seven. For their next seven years.