**BOOK REVIEW**

## Book- Believe: What Life and Cricket Taught Me Author- Suresh Raina and Bharat Sundaresan

Suresh Raina, commonly known by the name “Chinna Thalla” in South India, one of India’s most successful international cricketers, is a familiar name even to those who are not cricket fans. An aggressive left-handed middle-order batsman, a useful off-spin bowler and one of the best fielders the world ever saw, Raina was part of the World Cup-winning team in 2011. The youth icon is also among the most-followed Indian sportspersons on social media. He was the first Indian to score a century in all the three formats. Raina did not get a longer run in Tests despite his debut hundred against Sri Lanka at Colombo in 2010. However, when he wore India’s blue shade or the yellow hue for Chennai Super Kings (CSK), Raina was the master. Though he retired from international cricket last year along with his best friend MS Dhoni, he still remains an active cricketer for CSK.

Through his memoir titled Believe: What Life and Cricket Taught Me, Suresh Raina, with co-author Bharat Sundaresan, takes the readers through the challenges he faced as a young cricketer. Raina’s story had to be told and the result is Believe, a tiny book at 167 pages but one that packs a punch. The tome has gained immensely through co-author Bharat Sundaresan’s efforts. The voice is Raina’s, the finesse is Bharat’s and we get a portrait of a player, who strove hard and prospered. The book revolves around the title word- “Believe” which has been burnt into Raina’s consciousness both through his own efforts and from the legend of game-Sachin Tendulkar after whom he has written the inaugural chapter. Its chapters oscillate between his sporting and personal life and offer glimpses of Indian cricket, its highs like the 2011 World Cup triumph and also the lows. Losing one of his elder brothers in an accident is a trauma that makes Raina shudder and his description of life at the Sports Hostel in Lucknow is filled with anguish. The seniors, who ragged him, would contaminate his share of evening milk but a pragmatic Raina writes: “I always filtered the milk using a muslin cloth before drinking the few millilitres left”. But as Raina said- “Belief is one thing that has kept me going and motivates me to achieve bigger things in life,” Raina tells us. “When I started believing in myself, I could also do things that I thought were impossible for me to do. That is why I thought of writing this book and telling everyone, through my story, that nothing is impossible. You just need to have the right attitude and believe in yourself that with hard work and determination you can do wonders in life”.

Known for his soft-spoken nature, Raina does have an independent perspective. While he pays his respects to the Indian cricketing greats, he also offers a contrarian view: “I never say Dada (Sourav Ganguly) made this team. He, and (M.S.) Dhoni, did lead and make an impact on it, that’s true. But the man responsible for making the teams for all three formats of the game is Rahul Dravid”. The book also throws light on the bond that Raina shares with Dhoni, so much so that he retired on the same day as his more famous buddy. Their friendship is often compared to that of Jai and Viru from the Bollywood epic- “Sholay”. Married to Priyanka and with two children at home, Raina believes that he still has a lot to offer to the game. In the book he has written that- "Parenthood starts changing your perspective towards the sport as well”. He feels that parenting brings a lot of responsibility and a person start to think of the impact on your kids in whatever he/she does. Be it personally or professionally, it would be natural for one to think to work in a manner that our children will be proud of us. Raina is a very humble and modest person on and off the field and this book is also a very candid display of his personality. So, to sum it up, this book is a good read where you can experience how belief can bring about a positive change in your life if you have the courage to work hard no matter what.