



Gender, Honour, and Female Futurity in Narinder Jit Kaur's "Who Killed Me": A Study of Stolen Futures

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How to Cite this Article:

Kaur, H. & Kaur, P. (2026). Gender, Honour, and Female Futurity in Narinderjit Kaur's "Who Killed Me": A Study of Stolen Futures. International Journal of Creative and Open Research in Engineering and Management, 2(6).

<https://doi.org/10.55041/ijcope.v2i6.272>

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<https://doi.org/10.55041/ijcope.v2i6.272>

Abstract

The Partition of India in 1947 remains one of the most traumatic events in Indian history, marked by mass displacement, communal violence, and the loss of countless innocent lives. While many works have examined women's experiences of abduction, sexual violence, and trauma during Partition, less attention has been paid to the destruction of young women's aspirations and imagined futures. Narinder Jit Kaur's short story "Who Killed Me," published in *The Icicle: A Collection of Short Stories*, offers a powerful exploration of this neglected dimension of Partition. Through the experiences of two adolescent girls, Ameena and Nimmo, the story reveals how communal violence and patriarchal notions of honour work together to deny women agency and control over their lives. Rather than focusing solely on physical violence, Kaur highlights the loss of dreams, education, friendship, and selfdetermination. Drawing on Partition studies, feminist criticism, and trauma theory, this paper examines the interconnected themes of girlhood, honour, patriarchy, and resistance. It argues that the story can be read as a narrative of stolen futures in which the most devastating loss is not simply death itself, but the destruction of possibilities that never have the chance to be realised. By foregrounding the experiences of young girls, Kaur broadens our understanding of Partition and exposes the lasting impact of gendered violence on women's ability to imagine and shape their own futures.

Keywords: Partition, Narinder Jit Kaur gendered violence, honour, futurity, girlhood, patriarchy, trauma, women's agency

The Partition of India in 1947 remains one of the largest forced migrations in modern history. The division of British India into India and Pakistan displaced nearly fifteen million people and resulted in widespread communal violence across Punjab, Bengal, and other regions. Historians have documented the immense human cost of this event, including massacres, riots, abductions, and the destruction of families and communities. Within Partition studies, women's experiences occupy a particularly significant place because women often became symbolic bearers of communal identity and family honour (Menon and Bhasin 39).

As Urvashi Butalia observes, countless women were abducted, assaulted, forcibly converted, or even killed by members of their own families during Partition (192). Such acts were frequently justified in the name of protecting family honour. Women's experiences therefore reveal not only the brutality of communal violence but also the patriarchal structures that shaped responses to the crisis.

Partition literature has repeatedly addressed these concerns. Writers such as Manto, Amrita Pritam, Bhisham Sahni, and Intizar Husain portray the devastating effects of communal conflict on ordinary lives. Yet discussions of women in Partition



narratives often focus primarily on physical violence and trauma. While these dimensions are crucial, they do not fully account for another profound loss: the destruction of women's imagined futures.

Futurity refers to the ability to imagine and inhabit a meaningful future. Human lives are shaped not only by present circumstances but also by hopes, ambitions, and expectations. Young people, in particular, construct their identities through visions of what they may become. When violence interrupts these possibilities, it destroys not only lives but also the futures that might have unfolded.

Narinder Jit Kaur's short story "Who Killed Me," included in *The Icicle: A Collection of Short Stories*, offers a compelling exploration of this neglected dimension of Partition. Set in Lahore during the turbulent years of Partition, the story centres on the friendship between two adolescent girls, Ameena and Nimmo. Despite belonging to different religious communities, they share a bond that transcends communal divisions. Their friendship represents a world of trust and possibility that stands in sharp contrast to the violence surrounding them.

The narrative opens with the revelation that Ameena has been killed by her brother Bashir. His act is justified by the fear that she might become a victim of sexual violence during communal unrest. As the story progresses, Nimmo discovers that her own brothers may be considering a similar fate for her. Through these parallel experiences, Kaur exposes the devastating logic of honour-based violence and its consequences for young women.

This paper explains "Who Killed Me" as a narrative of stolen futures. The tragedy of Ameena and Nimmo lies not only in the threat of death but also in the destruction of their ability to imagine and pursue meaningful lives. Their aspirations for education, friendship, adulthood, marriage, and self-determination are interrupted by the combined forces of communal hatred and patriarchal control. In foregrounding these losses, the story expands our understanding of Partition beyond visible violence to include the erasure of unrealised possibilities.

At the same time, Kaur challenges conventional portrayals of women as passive victims. Through Nimmo's questions, doubts, and acts of resistance, the narrative exposes the contradictions embedded within patriarchal notions of honour and protection. Her voice becomes a critique of the social structures responsible for female suffering. By focusing on adolescent girls, the story offers a powerful reflection on gender, violence, and the politics of futurity.

The study of Partition has undergone significant transformation over the past few decades. Early historical accounts largely concentrated on political negotiations, border demarcations, and state formation. Later scholarship shifted attention towards the lived experiences of ordinary people, particularly women, thereby redefining Partition as a deeply human tragedy rather than merely a political event.

Among the most influential contributions to this field is Urvashi Butalia's *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*. Butalia demonstrates that women frequently became victims not only of rival communities but also of their own families (192). Her work highlights the gendered nature of Partition violence and the central role played by notions of honour.

Similarly, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin's *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* examines how women's bodies became markers of communal identity. The authors argue that violence against women served to preserve collective honour while reinforcing patriarchal authority (39). Their insights provide an important framework for understanding Kaur's story, where Ameena and Nimmo are victimised not because of personal actions but because they are perceived as repositories of family honour.



Gyanendra Pandey's *Remembering Partition* further illuminates the social consequences of communal conflict. He notes that Partition shattered long-standing relationships and transformed neighbours into enemies (98). This observation resonates strongly with Kaur's portrayal of once-harmonious communities fractured by fear and suspicion.

Trauma theory also offers valuable insights into the story. Veena Das argues that traumatic events do not simply end; rather, they continue to shape everyday relationships and social life (34). In "Who Killed Me," trauma extends beyond physical violence to include fear, anticipation, and the constant threat of loss. Even before violence directly reaches Nimmo, it reshapes her understanding of home, safety, and belonging.

Jeffrey Alexander's concept of cultural trauma is equally relevant. He defines cultural trauma as a process through which a community can no longer reconcile a catastrophic event with its previous understanding of the world (1). Partition exemplifies such a rupture. In Kaur's narrative, this trauma is reflected in the collapse of friendships, the fragmentation of communities, and the emergence of communal divisions where trust once existed.

Although the suffering of women during Partition has been extensively documented, relatively little attention has been paid to the question of futurity. Discussions often emphasise what women endured rather than what they lost: the futures that never materialised, the ambitions left unrealised, and the identities that remained unfinished. This absence becomes especially significant when examining young female characters whose lives are still in the process of formation.

Recent feminist scholarship has increasingly emphasised women's agency, voice, and self-representation within narratives of violence. Rather than treating women solely as victims, scholars now explore the ways in which they negotiate, challenge, and resist structures of power. This perspective is particularly useful for understanding Nimmo, whose questioning attitude transforms her from a passive sufferer into a figure of resistance.

Building upon these critical perspectives, this paper examines "Who Killed Me" through the lens of lost futures. In doing so, it shifts attention from visible acts of violence to the less obvious destruction of dreams, aspirations, and possibilities. Such a reading offers a more nuanced understanding of Partition by revealing how historical violence extends beyond immediate suffering to shape the futures that individuals are denied the opportunity to live.

One of the most compelling aspects of Narinder Jit Kaur's "Who Killed Me" is its portrayal of girlhood before the eruption of violence. Before introducing fear, loss, and death, Kaur creates a world shaped by friendship, affection, and hope. This portrayal is significant because it encourages readers to see Ameena and Nimmo not merely as victims of history but as young girls with dreams, ambitions, and imagined futures. By foregrounding their everyday experiences, Kaur humanises them and underscores the magnitude of what is ultimately lost.

The friendship between Ameena and Nimmo forms the emotional centre of the narrative. Although they belong to different religious communities, their bond is marked by affection, trust, and companionship. The girls frequently cross the wall separating their neighbouring houses, treating it as an insignificant barrier rather than a symbol of division (Kaur). In this sense, the wall acquires symbolic significance. While it physically separates the two households, it fails to separate the girls themselves, suggesting the possibility of coexistence beyond communal identities.

This friendship acquires greater importance when viewed against the backdrop of Partition. As Pandey observes, Partition transformed familiar communities into sites of fear and hostility (98). Kaur deliberately contrasts this historical reality with the innocence of the girls' relationship. Their friendship offers an alternative vision of social harmony, one rooted in shared humanity rather than religious difference.



Equally important is Kaur's depiction of the ordinary experiences of adolescence. The girls spend their time playing games, sharing secrets, discussing marriage, and imagining adulthood. These seemingly simple activities perform an important narrative function. They reveal that Ameena and Nimmo are actively engaged in imagining their futures. Their lives are not defined by survival alone but by aspirations and possibilities that give meaning to the future.

The recurring motif of hopscotch becomes particularly significant in this context. As children, Ameena and Nimmo enthusiastically move from one square to another, claiming each square as their "home." At one level, the game reflects childhood innocence; at another, it symbolises the desire to occupy a secure place in the world. The girls' playful claims over these spaces mirror their hopes for adulthood and belonging.

The symbolic meaning of hopscotch becomes tragically inverted after Ameena's death. The game that once represented possibility and freedom comes to signify loss and exclusion. The notion of "home," previously associated with security and hope, is transformed into a reminder of vulnerability and confinement. Through this reversal, Kaur illustrates how violence destroys not only lives but also the meanings attached to everyday experiences.

Education occupies a similarly important place in the story. For Ameena, schooling represents more than formal learning; it symbolises the possibility of self-determination. When she expresses her desire to continue studying despite her father's plans for an early marriage, she articulates a vision of a future shaped by personal choice rather than social expectation: "When I come of age, Papa has decided that I'll be married. But I want to keep going to school" (Kaur). Her statement reveals both her aspirations and her awareness of the limitations imposed upon her.

Through Ameena's desire for education, Kaur highlights the importance of future-oriented thinking in the lives of young women. Education becomes a means of imagining alternatives and expanding possibilities beyond traditional gender roles. The tragedy lies not simply in Ameena's death but in the destruction of the future she hopes to create.

Nimmo's response to her friend's situation further develops this theme. Unlike Ameena, she is more willing to challenge authority and question established norms. She encourages Ameena to resist an early marriage and continue her education (Kaur). Although this appears to be a small gesture, it reflects an emerging belief that girls should have the right to shape their own lives. This questioning attitude later develops into a broader critique of patriarchal structures.

Another important symbol in the narrative is the attic. For Ameena and Nimmo, it functions as a private space removed from the restrictions of everyday social life. Within this space, they share secrets, discuss their dreams, and imagine futures beyond the expectations imposed upon them. As Nayar suggests, such spaces often become sites of female selfexpression and imagination within patriarchal societies (112).

The symbolic significance of the attic, however, is also tragically transformed. What initially serves as a refuge for friendship and hope eventually becomes associated with violence and loss. The destruction of this space mirrors the destruction of the futures imagined within it. Kaur suggests that historical violence damages not only bodies but also the relationships, spaces, and possibilities through which people construct meaningful lives.

The loss of friendship itself constitutes another important dimension of the story. Unlike many Partition narratives that focus on political leaders or communal conflict, Kaur presents historical upheaval through the perspective of adolescent girls. The separation of Ameena and Nimmo reflects a broader fragmentation of society. Neighbours become strangers, communities dissolve, and relationships built over years are abruptly disrupted.



What makes this loss particularly tragic is that neither girl participates in politics, communal disputes, or acts of violence. Yet both suffer the consequences of decisions made by others. Their vulnerability demonstrates how historical violence often falls most heavily upon those who possess the least power to influence events.

By focusing on the experiences of Ameena and Nimmo, Kaur shifts attention from visible acts of violence to a more subtle form of destruction: the loss of possibility itself. The story asks readers to consider not only the lives that ended but also the futures that never came into being. Lost friendships, interrupted education, unrealised identities, and imagined lives become central to understanding the true cost of Partition.

The tragedy of Ameena and Nimmo therefore extends beyond their individual fates. Their stories represent countless young women whose aspirations were erased by historical violence. Through their experiences, Kaur reminds readers that Partition destroyed not only lives but also the futures those lives might have created.

Although Partition provides the immediate context for the tragedy in “Who Killed Me,” the fate of Ameena and Nimmo is ultimately shaped by deeply entrenched patriarchal structures. The story demonstrates how women become repositories of family honour, their lives valued less as individual human beings than as symbols of communal respectability. Through this framework, Kaur reveals that violence against women during Partition cannot be understood solely as a consequence of communal conflict; it must also be examined as a product of patriarchal ideology.

The title itself invites such a reading. The question “Who Killed Me?” cannot be answered simply by identifying an individual perpetrator. Ameena is murdered by her brother Bashir, yet the act is enabled by a larger social system that regards a woman’s body as the bearer of family honour. She is killed not because she has committed any wrongdoing but because of the possibility that she might become a victim of sexual violence. Her death therefore exposes the logic of honour-based violence, where imagined shame is considered more intolerable than the loss of life itself.

As Menon and Bhasin argue, women frequently became symbols of communal and familial honour during Partition (39). Within such a framework, the preservation of reputation often took precedence over women’s autonomy and wellbeing. Ameena’s death reflects this disturbing hierarchy of values. Her life is sacrificed to protect an abstract ideal, revealing how patriarchal cultures can privilege honour over humanity.

The irony of this situation becomes particularly striking when one considers the role traditionally assigned to brothers. In many South Asian societies, brothers are expected to protect their sisters from harm. Yet in Kaur’s narrative, the protector becomes the perpetrator. Bashir kills the very person he is culturally obligated to safeguard. This inversion exposes the contradictions within patriarchal notions of protection. Protection is extended to women only so long as they remain symbols of honour; once honour appears threatened, protection can transform into violence.

For Nimmo, this contradiction becomes even more terrifying when she realises that her own brothers may be prepared to make a similar decision. The threat no longer comes from unknown rioters or external enemies. Instead, it emerges from within the family itself. The home, conventionally imagined as a place of safety, becomes a site of danger and uncertainty.

This aspect of the story resonates strongly with feminist analyses of gendered violence. As Butalia demonstrates, many women during Partition faced violence not only from rival communities but also from their own families (210). Kaur’s narrative reflects this reality by showing how patriarchal control operates within intimate domestic spaces. The greatest danger to Ameena and Nimmo comes not from strangers but from those entrusted with their care.

Closely linked to this violence is the denial of female agency. Agency refers to an individual’s capacity to make meaningful choices about their life and future. Throughout the narrative, decisions concerning women’s lives are repeatedly made



by men. Ameena's proposed marriage is arranged by her father. Her educational aspirations depend upon parental approval. Even the decision concerning her life and death is made without her participation. Similarly, Nimmo's future becomes the subject of discussion among male relatives who assume the authority to determine her fate.

The exclusion of women from these decisions highlights the unequal distribution of power within patriarchal society. As Nayar observes, patriarchal structures often reduce women to subjects of social control rather than autonomous individuals (167). Kaur's story vividly illustrates this process. Women are denied the right to participate in decisions that directly affect their lives, reinforcing their dependence upon male authority.

The denial of agency is inseparable from the denial of futurity. Individuals shape their futures through aspirations, choices, and acts of self-determination. When the ability to choose is removed, the future itself becomes uncertain. Ameena's desire to continue her education remains unrealised because her life is controlled by others. Nimmo's future becomes precarious when her survival depends upon decisions made by her brothers. The theft of agency therefore becomes a theft of possibility.

The story also emphasises that honour is not merely a personal belief but a collective social construct. Honour derives its power from community approval and surveillance. Individuals are expected to uphold social expectations even when doing so requires personal sacrifice. This collective dimension helps explain why violence can be carried out by individuals who may otherwise appear caring or affectionate.

Bashir's actions illustrate this tension. There is little evidence that he harbours personal hatred towards Ameena. Instead, he acts within a social environment that rewards the preservation of honour and condemns any perceived threat to it. His violence emerges not simply from individual cruelty but from his acceptance of patriarchal values. Kaur therefore presents Bashir not as a uniquely monstrous figure but as a product of a broader social system.

In this respect, "Who Killed Me" functions as a critique of patriarchy rather than a condemnation of a single individual. The narrative exposes how social structures can compel ordinary people to participate in acts of extraordinary violence. As Butalia notes, honour killings during Partition were often legitimised through the language of protection and sacrifice (201). Kaur draws upon this historical reality to reveal the devastating consequences of such beliefs.

Equally significant is the story's treatment of silence. Patriarchal societies often expect women to accept decisions imposed upon them without protest. Ameena's inability to challenge the decisions governing her education, marriage, and future reflects this enforced silence. Her compliance stems less from agreement than from the absence of meaningful alternatives.

Yet Kaur does not allow silence to dominate the narrative completely. Through Nimmo, she introduces a voice of questioning and resistance. Nimmo refuses to accept patriarchal assumptions as natural or inevitable. Her doubts expose the contradictions underlying honour-based violence and challenge the social values that sustain it.

The story ultimately suggests that the destruction of female futures begins long before physical death. When girls are denied the freedom to pursue education, make choices about marriage, or determine the course of their own lives, their futures are already being constrained. Physical violence becomes the most extreme expression of a system that has long denied women autonomy.

Through the experiences of Ameena and Nimmo, Kaur offers a powerful critique of honour-based culture and patriarchal authority. The story demonstrates how women's lives, aspirations, and futures can become casualties of social ideals that privilege honour over humanity. In doing so, it reveals patriarchy as one of the most significant forces responsible for the theft of female futures.



Despite depicting the horrors of Partition and the oppressive force of patriarchy, Narinder Jit Kaur does not confine her female characters to the role of passive victims. One of the most significant aspects of “Who Killed Me” is the transformation of Nimmo from a bewildered adolescent into a questioning and resistant figure. Through her, Kaur challenges traditional assumptions about female obedience and presents a powerful critique of honour-based violence. Nimmo’s development reflects the emergence of a feminist consciousness that refuses to accept injustice as inevitable.

At the beginning of the story, Nimmo appears as an ordinary young girl struggling to understand the violence unfolding around her. Ameena’s death leaves her shocked and confused. She cannot comprehend how a brother who once cared for his sister could become her killer (Kaur). Her question—“How can a brother kill his sister?”—becomes one of the central moral questions of the narrative. It forces both the characters and the readers to confront the brutality hidden beneath the language of honour and protection.

What distinguishes Nimmo from those around her is her refusal to accept easy explanations. While others justify Ameena’s murder as a necessary sacrifice for honour, religion, or family reputation, Nimmo continues to question the assumptions underlying these arguments. Her innocence allows her to perceive contradictions that adults have learned to ignore. In this sense, Kaur uses the perspective of a young girl to expose the moral failures embedded within patriarchal culture.

As the narrative progresses, Nimmo gradually recognises that Ameena’s death is not an isolated tragedy but part of a larger system of gendered oppression. She begins to understand that women’s lives are routinely subordinated to male-defined notions of honour and respectability. This shift in understanding marks an important stage in her intellectual and emotional development.

A decisive turning point occurs when Preeto warns Nimmo that her own brothers may be planning a similar fate for her. With this revelation, the violence that seemed distant suddenly becomes personal. Nimmo realises that she occupies the same vulnerable position as Ameena. The threat is no longer directed at someone else; it now shapes her own future.

Her immediate response is fear, grief, and disbelief. Yet Kaur does not allow these emotions to define her entirely. Rather than surrendering to despair, Nimmo begins to interrogate the logic behind honour-based violence. Her questioning transforms personal fear into critical reflection.

One of the most powerful moments in the story occurs when Nimmo asks why Bashir did not sacrifice himself instead of killing his sister. If honour truly demands sacrifice, she argues, why must women always be the ones who pay the price (Kaur)? This question exposes the fundamentally gendered nature of honour-based violence. Men are celebrated as protectors, yet women are expected to bear the burden of preserving family reputation.

From a feminist perspective, Nimmo’s question challenges the unequal distribution of power and sacrifice within patriarchal society. As Judith Butler argues, systems of gender often present male authority as natural while rendering female suffering invisible or inevitable (47). Nimmo refuses to accept this logic. By demanding accountability from men, she shifts attention away from women’s supposed responsibility and towards male privilege and authority.

Her critique extends beyond Ameena’s death. Nimmo questions why women, who neither initiate communal violence nor participate in political conflicts, are forced to suffer its consequences (Kaur). This observation highlights one of the central paradoxes of the story: women are excluded from positions of power, yet they often bear the heaviest burden of its failures.

The significance of Nimmo’s resistance lies in her refusal to accept victimhood as her defining identity. Although she is frightened, she rejects the idea that her death should serve as proof of male honour. In doing so, she asserts her own moral worth



and challenges the values imposed upon her. This transformation marks her emergence as an active subject rather than an object of patriarchal control.

Importantly, Kaur does not present resistance as a guarantee of survival. The story avoids offering a simplistic narrative in which courage automatically triumphs over oppression. Instead, resistance is portrayed as an ethical and intellectual act. Even when faced with overwhelming power, Nimmo insists upon questioning the values that seek to determine her fate.

This distinction is crucial because it prevents the narrative from romanticising suffering. Nimmo does not gain strength because she suffers; she gains strength because she refuses to accept the ideological structures that justify suffering. Her resistance lies in her determination to expose the contradictions embedded within patriarchal discourse.

The relationship between Nimmo and Preeto further enriches this theme. For much of the story, Preeto appears resigned to the realities of patriarchal society. She often interprets violence against women as an unavoidable aspect of fate or destiny (Kaur). Her attitude reflects the internalisation of beliefs that have shaped generations of women.

Yet Nimmo's persistent questioning gradually unsettles this resignation. At one point, even Preeto expresses frustration with men, describing them as "Janus-faced hypocrites" who oppress women both within and beyond the household (Kaur). This moment suggests that resistance can generate broader forms of awareness. Nimmo's refusal to remain silent creates space for others to articulate grievances that have long been suppressed.

The story therefore presents feminist consciousness not as an individual achievement but as a collective process. Nimmo's questions resonate beyond her personal experience and illuminate wider patterns of gender inequality. Her voice becomes representative of countless women whose suffering has been ignored, normalised, or justified in the name of tradition and honour.

The symbolic significance of the title becomes particularly clear through this lens. Before parting from her mother, Nimmo asks, "Who Killed Me?" (Kaur). The question extends beyond the immediate circumstances of the narrative. It asks readers to identify the deeper forces responsible for violence against women.

The answer cannot be limited to a single individual. Ameena's death is not solely Bashir's responsibility, nor is Nimmo's suffering attributable only to her brothers. Behind these acts stand broader structures of patriarchy, communal fear, conformity, and honour. The title therefore functions as an indictment of an entire social order rather than a single perpetrator.

In many respects, Nimmo emerges as the moral centre of the story. While others attempt to rationalise violence, she insists on confronting its ethical consequences. While others invoke honour, she defends life. While others submit to patriarchal authority, she challenges it. Her voice transforms the narrative from a story of victimisation into one of resistance and critical awareness.

Ultimately, Nimmo represents one of the most hopeful elements within an otherwise tragic narrative. Although Kaur exposes the devastating effects of Partition and patriarchy, she also demonstrates the possibility of resistance. Through Nimmo, the story suggests that oppressive systems endure only when their assumptions remain unquestioned.

Long after the narrative ends, Nimmo's questions continue to resonate because they speak not only to Partition but also to contemporary debates about gender, violence, and human rights. By giving voice to a young girl who refuses to accept injustice as natural, Kaur creates a character whose significance extends far beyond the historical moment in which the story is set. Nimmo becomes a symbol of resistance, reminding readers that even in periods of profound suffering, the human capacity to question, challenge, and imagine alternatives remains intact.



Narinder Jit Kaur's "Who Killed Me" offers a powerful reimagining of Partition through the experiences of adolescent girls whose lives are shaped by both communal violence and patriarchal control. While the story is rooted in the historical realities of 1947, its concerns extend beyond the immediate context of Partition to address broader questions of gender, power, and human dignity.

This study has examined the story through the framework of female futurity, arguing that its central tragedy lies not only in the loss of life but also in the destruction of possibilities. Ameena and Nimmo represent young women whose aspirations for education, friendship, selfhood, and adulthood are interrupted by forces beyond their control. By foregrounding these unrealised possibilities, Kaur shifts attention from visible acts of violence to the less acknowledged loss of futures that never have the opportunity to unfold.

The analysis has also shown that communal violence alone cannot explain the suffering of the female characters. Patriarchal notions of honour play an equally significant role in determining their fate. Women become symbols of family and community reputation, while their desires, choices, and lives are subordinated to values defined largely by male authority. Through the figure of Bashir and the threat faced by Nimmo, the story exposes the contradictions embedded within the rhetoric of protection, revealing how the language of honour can become a justification for violence.

At the same time, Kaur refuses to portray women solely as victims. Nimmo's persistent questioning challenges the assumptions that sustain patriarchal power and transforms her into the ethical centre of the narrative. Her refusal to accept honour-based violence as natural or inevitable introduces an important dimension of resistance. Through her voice, the story moves beyond mourning and becomes a critique of the social structures that make such tragedies possible.

The title, "Who Killed Me?", ultimately demands a broader understanding of responsibility. The answer extends beyond individual perpetrators to include the intersecting forces of patriarchy, communalism, fear, and social conformity. By exposing these structures, Kaur transforms a personal tragedy into a wider commentary on gendered violence and social injustice.

"Who Killed Me" makes a significant contribution to Partition literature by drawing attention to a dimension of loss that is often overlooked: the loss of imagined futures. In doing so, it broadens discussions of Partition beyond displacement, abduction, and trauma, inviting readers to consider the countless aspirations that disappeared alongside those who perished. The story serves not only as a memorial to the women whose lives were destroyed during Partition but also as a reminder of the continuing need to challenge social systems that deny women the freedom to shape their own futures.

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