

## **PRESS RELEASE (Pre-publication)**

15 February 2026

# **BLOODHIVE**

*by Shashank Gupta*

A literary novel about how a community comes to prefer a story it can repeat over a truth it would have to face.

London: Fidessa Publishing Ltd will release *Bloodhive*, a new novel by Shashank Gupta, on 15 February 2026 in hardback and paperback.

Set about a century ago in Didoli, a remote hill town shaped by fog, local folklore, and social hierarchy, *Bloodhive* opens with three deaths and a note that offers the town an explanation it can repeat: “a bird came down from the night.” The line is clean enough to carry, catchy enough to rehearse, and ready made for a community that would rather keep a portable myth than confront a truth with consequences.

As the refrain circulates, Didoli responds with public performances of order: reassurances, meetings, blame, and the comfort of a simple story. Fear begins to set the terms of daily life. Patho, a local official, tries to hold things together while his wife Yaga becomes preoccupied by what others refuse to name: who is listened to, who is ignored, and whose suffering is treated as acceptable.

*Bloodhive is a work of fiction. Didoli, the characters, and the institutions depicted are invented. Any resemblance to real persons, places, organizations, or events is coincidental. The themes described below refer to the novel’s fictional world and are not statements about any real administration or community.*

### **Key points**

- Opens with three deaths and a refrain, “a bird came down from the night,” that spreads until repetition starts to feel like fact.
- Moves through whispered testimony, public posturing, private desire, and collective fear, showing how an explanation circulates and hardens into certainty.
- Looks closely at scapegoating and shared permission: how small, everyday cruelties make room for larger ones.
- Returns to Didoli, a recurring fictional geography shaped by landscape, labour, and hierarchy, where tenderness and violence coexist.

## Synopsis

Bloodhive follows Patho and Yaga as Didoli's explanations multiply and its tenderness contracts. Moving through whispered testimony, public posturing, private desire, and collective fear, the novel traces the life of an idea: how it forms, circulates, and hardens into a verdict.

Suspicion narrows toward Kurchen, a recluse living with the effects of polio, and with inventions the town cannot place without turning into spectacle: steel wings, private mythologies, an uncanny brilliance, until it becomes easy for Didoli to name him monstrous. When Yaga is drawn toward his mountaintop workshop, alive with bees and the thrum of a "bloodhive," the boundary between the uncanny and the everyday begins to thin. What follows is less a hunt for a culprit than a close study of shared permission: how language repeats harm, and how a story becomes the rule people live by.

## Author quote

"I wanted to follow the life of an explanation: how a town's language turns fear into something repeatable, and repeatability into permission. Bloodhive listens for what is pushed to the edge of hearing, where myth becomes accepted fact and the vulnerable pay the price. And how narrative prunes and trains the play of apical dominance."

— Shashank Gupta

## Publisher quote

"Gupta's prose moves with the hush and surge of a rumour: precise, rhythmic, and quietly devastating. Bloodhive is a novel about how a community rehearses its own violence in language long before it acts it out — a study of what we do in the name of 'sense', of 'order', of 'truth', and how quickly a story can harden into a verdict."

— Anton Kwijtaal, Publisher, Fidessa Publishing

## About the author

Shashank Gupta writes as a listener before he writes as a maker: attentive to what a community repeats, what it edits out, and how language can turn fear into something portable — then "true". Much of his fiction is set in Didoli, less a backdrop than a living geography shaped by memory and moral fracture. And, in his words, Didoli is merely a favoured actor with a familiar appearance playing a different character in different works.

A horticultural way of seeing runs through his work: long cycles, patient labour, rot alongside bloom. Growth and deterioration shape his structures; pruning becomes an ethics of power; barrenness and fertility become social weather.

At thirty, Gupta moved to Bombay (now Mumbai) and entered advertising, first as a proofreader and then a copywriter, later rising to creative director, a position he has held for over two decades. In 2002, after the death of his father, he began writing with sustained intensity. His

novels include *Pimp* (Tara India Research Press, 2015), *Visitors to the House* (HarperCollins India, 2023), and *Four Chimneys* (Fidessa Publishing, 2025). Gupta lives in New Delhi.

### Publication details

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### Press materials

Cover image (hi-res), author photos (hi-res), extract or reading copy, and press kit are available on request.

### Media and review requests

For review copies, interview requests, festival or event enquiries, or extracts, please contact:

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## **About Fidessa Publishing**

Fidessa Publishing Ltd is a boutique, independent publisher devoted to literary fiction and poetry, with a distinctive focus on translation as craft rather than assimilation. Its editorial ethos is direct: keep literature unarmoured, unguarded, true; translation, not erasure—championing work that rewards attentive reading.

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