

The Mira Press

The Edge of Night

FOR STUDENTS,
BY STUDENTS

VOLUME 4
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❖ — **From the Editors' Desk** — ❖

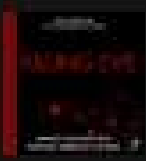

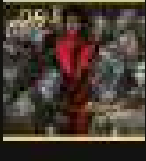







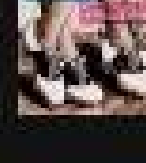
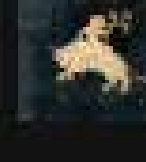
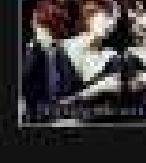

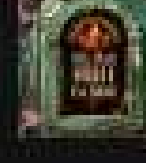


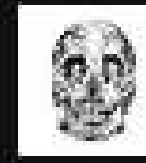
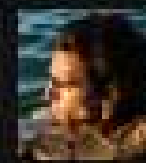
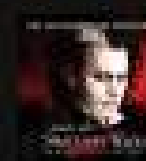
Transition, comfort, mystery, security, beauty, doubt, and fear - do these words have anything in common? No? Think again. These words might seem contradictory, yet there's one season that embodies all of them - *autumn*.

In autumn, just when you seem to get comfortable, the weather changes and in an uncharacteristic way you are reminded of your mortality. Nature plays games with you and now you're not so sure about your existence. There's something going on and winter is definitely coming.

If these lines haven't shaken you, don't worry. In this volume we bring to you all the spookiness of the world, and obviously lots of fun! Enjoy this spooky atmosphere with a huge mug of hot chocolate and a freshly baked copy of The Mira Press.

No no! Don't run away! Come back! We promise, we'll scare you but not scar you. Besides, it's Halloween time and *thodi masti toh banti hain yaar!*

It's Spooky Season on Spotify!

-  **Killing Eve: Main Title Theme: Killer Shangri-Lah**
Geek Music
-  **Spooky, Scary Skeletons - Undead Tombstone Remix**
Andrew Gold
-  **Thriller**
Michael Jackson
-  **This Is Halloween**
The Citizens of Halloween
-  **Adams Family Theme Song**
Halloween Music
-  **I Put a Spell On You (From "Hocus Pocus")**
Freak On a Leash
-  **Beetlejuice: Main Theme**
Various Artists
-  **Grim Grinning Ghosts - From "The Haunted Mansion"**
The Melomen, Paul Frees, Betty Taylor, Bill Lee, Thurl Ravenscroft
-  **Ghostbusters**
Ray Parker Jr.
-  **Monster Mash**
Bobby "Boris" Pickett, The Crypt-Kickers
-  **Tonight You Belong To Me**
Patience & Prudence
-  **Bottom of the River**
Delta Rae
-  **Seven Devils**
Florence + The Machine
-  **Witchcraft**
Frank Sinatra
-  **Save My Soul**
Big Bad Voodoo Daddy
-  **Season of the Witch**
Donovan
-  **NFWMB**
Hozier
-  **Full Moon**
The Black Ghosts
-  **Persephone**
Tamino
-  **Opening Title**
Stephen Sondheim

It's officially Halloween month, and we all know the best way to get in the mood is through music!

Here's our curated playlist for all you ghouls and ghosts to get down to! Find our favorite instrumentals and movie soundtracks, along with the grooviest vintage records to vibe to!

Follow us on Instagram at [@themirapress](https://www.instagram.com/themirapress) for daily song recommendations as we count down to Halloween day!

You can also click the link in our Instagram bio to find our official Spotify playlist for the month of October, with an extended collection of the best songs to make your week as spooky as it ought to be!



An Ode to Supernatural

I had no idea how much one dialogue could change my life till an utter goofball bad boy said,

“Dad’s on a hunting trip. And he hasn’t been home in a few days,” after breaking into his younger brother’s apartment at night. It’s safe to say that after that, it was a hell of a ride. Do I regret it? Nope. Did I fall in love a lot and get my heart broken every single time? Yup. Did the writers kill hundreds of my favorite characters? You are absolutely right!

Did I learn a lot of things that have made me stronger? Also, a giant big fat yes. Two brothers fighting all the odds Fates throw at them. Unlikely allies. Angels turned demons. Demons becoming best friends and fighting on the same side. A completely new image of God. Sounds like a mess, right? Well... it’s not. It is really simple and can be summed up in two dialogues. *“We aren’t perfect but we are good.”* (Sam Winchester) and *“No matter how much it hurts; no matter how hard it gets; you gotta keep grinding.”* (Dean Winchester). That’s the series. **All 15 seasons.**

Sam Winchester taught me that you don’t have to be perfect or right all the time. You can make mistakes and come back from them. That your life isn’t set in stone. You can make your own choices; carve your own path.

Dean Winchester taught me to not give up on the people I love no matter what happens. That there’s always good in people. He also taught me to never give up on myself and my life. To always go down fighting.

Castiel taught me that just because you feel loyal to a certain group of people does not mean you can’t form new bonds or stand up to them when they are wrong. He taught me not to ever take the short end of the stick from anyone. To fight for what I believe in and always stand my ground. A show is really and truly beautiful when the actors are just as amazing as the characters. There’s no use if the actor who plays a really good and kind character is actually a bad person in real life. Supernatural has equally amazing people playing these amazing characters. Jared Padalecki (Sam Winchester) taught me that its okay. Its okay to not be okay sometimes. Mental health is important. Asking for help isn’t a sign of weakness. There’s no shame in all this and its okay to have to fight every day to stay sane. That if I can make even one person’s life better, it’s worth it.

Jensen Ackles (Dean Winchester) taught me the importance of being humble and down to earth. That there are people out there who love me unconditionally and will fight for me. Life is beautiful and really worth living. That you need to fight for the life you want if you aren’t living it.

Misha Collins taught me to be myself. To not care what others think. Be my crazy, weird, a little damaged, awesome self and that its okay as long as I love myself. To be a kind soul no matter how dark the world turns. No matter how much it tries to snuff out my light. Its been 15 years, 2005–2020. For me, its been 7 years and I don’t regret even a single thing about it. And its coming to an end. 19th Nov 2020 will be the last episode of Supernatural. The end of the end. No more Baby (Winchesters’ 67 Chevy Impala).

No more **Carry On My Wayward Son** at the start of every season finale. No more crazy angels. No more kind hearted demons. No more baby in a trench coat. No more Winchesters saving the world... It's a bittersweet moment as I write this article. I want my boys to finally find peace when they are done but I also want them to continue saving people; hunting things. The family business. The paradox in that makes me laugh humorlessly. But one thing Supernatural gave me that's the most important is family.

I found older brothers in Sam and Dean. And a best friend in Cass. It taught me that family doesn't end in blood.

So, thank you, Supernatural for everything you've given me and millions of other fans.

You are way more than just a horror show or a series about two brothers who fight the most atrocious odds. You are a lifesaver at times, a ray of hope in the darkest days and a way to cope when things get hard. I always find peace and home in you. But its time to say good bye.... We can't let our boys struggle anymore. We promise to carry on like you have taught us to do and always remember that even if the world seems like its not worth saving, we shouldn't give up fighting for it.

Because in the wise words of Dean Winchester,

"Honestly, I think the world's going to end bloody. But it doesn't mean we shouldn't fight. We do have choices."

Isha Karandikar
TYBA

Source: [Pinterest](#)



❖ — The Werewolf — ❖

by
Angela Carter

It is a northern country; they have cold weather, they have cold hearts. Cold; tempest; wild beasts in the forest. It is a hard life. Their houses are built of logs, dark and smoky within. There will be a crude icon of the virgin behind a guttering candle, the leg of a pig hung up to cure, a string of drying mushrooms. A bed, a stool, a table. Harsh, brief, poor lives. To these upland woodsmen, the Devil is as real as you or I. More so; they have not seen us nor even know that we exist, but the Devil they glimpse often in the graveyards, those bleak and touching townships of the dead where the graves are marked with portraits of the deceased in the naif style and there are no flowers to put in front of them, no flowers grow there, so they put out small, votive offerings, little loaves, sometimes a cake that the bears come lumbering from the margins of the forest to snatch away.

At midnight, especially on Walpurgisnacht, the Devil holds picnics in the graveyards and invites the witches; then they dig up fresh corpses, and eat them. Anyone will tell you that. Wreaths of garlic on the doors keep out the vampires. A blue-eyed child born feet first on the night of St John's Eve will have second sight. When they discover a witch--some old woman whose cheeses ripen when her neighbours' do not, another old woman whose black cat, oh, sinister! follows her about all the time, they strip the crone, search for her marks, for the supernumerary nipple her familiar sucks.

They soon find it.

Then they stone her to death.

Winter and cold weather. Go and visit grandmother, who has been sick. Take her the oatcakes I've baked for her on the hearthstone and a little pot of butter. The good child does as her mother bids--five miles' trudge through the forest; do not leave the path because of the bears, the wild boar, the starving wolves. Here, take your father's hunting knife; you know how to use it. The child had a scabby coat of sheepskin to keep out the cold, she knew the forest too well to fear it but she must always be on her guard. When she heard that freezing howl of a wolf, she dropped her gifts, seized her knife and turned on the beast.

It was a huge one, with red eyes and running, grizzled chops; any but a mountaineer's child would have died of fright at the sight of it. It went for her throat, as wolves do, but she made a great swipe at it with her father's knife and slashed off its right forepaw. The wolf let out a gulp, almost a sob, when it saw what had happened to it; wolves are less brave than they seem. It went lolloping off disconsolately between the trees as well as it could on three legs, leaving a trail of blood behind it.

The child wiped the blade of her knife clean on her apron, wrapped up the wolf's paw in the cloth in which her mother had packed the oatcakes and went on towards her grandmother's house. Soon it came on to snow so thickly that the path and any footsteps, track or spoor that might have been upon it were obscured. She found her grandmother was so sick she had taken to her bed and fallen into a fretful sleep, moaning and shaking so that the child guessed she had a fever. She felt the forehead, it burned. She shook out the cloth from her basket, to use it to make the old woman a cold compress, and the wolf's paw fell to the floor.

But it was no longer a wolf's paw.

It was a hand, chopped off at the wrist, a hand toughened with work and freckled with old age. There was a wedding ring on the third finger and a wart on the index finger.

By the wart, she knew it for her grandmother's hand.

She pulled back the sheet but the old woman woke up, at that, and began to struggle, squawking and shrieking like a thing possessed. But the child was strong, and armed with her father's hunting knife; she managed to hold her grandmother down long enough to see the cause of her fever. There was a bloody stump where her right hand should have been, festering already.

The child crossed herself and cried out so loud the neighbours heard her and come rushing in. They knew the wart on the hand at once for a witch's nipple; they drove the old woman, in her shift as she was, out into the snow with sticks, beating her old carcass as far as the edge of the forest, and pelted her with stones until she fell down dead.

Now the child lived in her grandmother's house; she prospered.

The Origin of the Horror and Science Fiction Genres

The history of science & horror fiction is diverse and there is still a consensus between scholars and devotees regarding the same. The commencement of both these fictions occurred when the lines between myth and fact was blurred. Let's first acknowledge the timeline of science fiction, where 'A True Story' by Lucian Samosta is the earliest known work to include outer space, alien lifeforms and interplanetary warfare and due to which it is known as the first known text that could be called science fiction. However, it doesn't fit the typical literary genre as it contains a lot of mythical events. Fast forward to the stories of 'The Arabian Night' along with the 10th century tale 'Bamboo Cutter' which also contains elements of science fiction but again the topic has always been up for debate.

Myriads of scientific fantasy works were created during the scientific revolution, such as 'Age of Enlightenment', 'Somnium', 'New Atlantis' etc. However among these, 'Somnium' is said to be the first science fiction story as it depicts the journey to the moon and how earth is seen from there. Following this was the 18th century, when the development of the novel as a literary form came about, and many scholars such as Brian Aldiss argued that 'Frankenstein' (1818) by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley should be considered the first work of science fiction and not 'Somnium'. This later got accepted as the origin of science fiction as a genre, but not by all.

When we move forward with the horror genre in the fiction world, we open ourselves to the world of death, afterlife, evil, and the demonic. These things find their roots in either folklore or religious traditions and commonly portrayed tropes are those of demons, witches, vampires and ghosts. The traces of each of these characters are found at several different timelines in history. For instance, werewolf stories were popular in medieval French literature. 'Bisclavret' by Marie de France is considered as the first story under this characteristic writing style. For example, even Dracula as a trope can be traced back to the Roman Renaissance of the 15th century. Wherein during the reign of Prince of Wallachia Vlad 3, alleged war crimes were published in 'German' pamphlets. The Gothic Genre developed gradually in the 18th century with 'Vathek' by William Beckford and 'The Monk' by Matthew Lewis being two of the first books written in the Gothic genre. Cosmic horror, madness and cruelty found their way in the early 20th century where the serial murderer became a recurring theme.

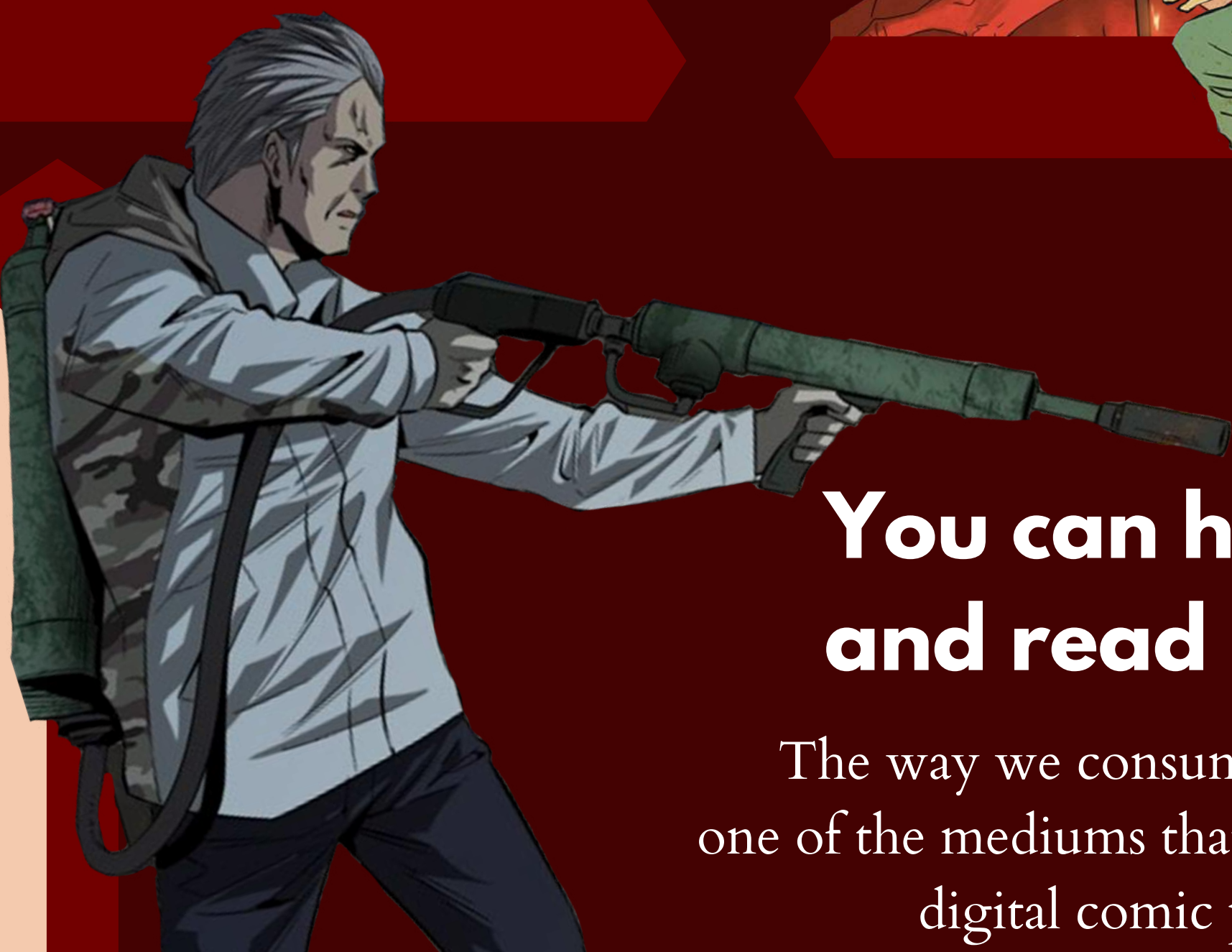
Later on, early cinema creations were inspired by many aspects of horror literature and ushered in a strong tradition of making horror films.

The Red Book



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You can have your comics, and read it (web)TOO(n)!

The way we consume media is ever-changing, and one of the mediums that has emerged in recent years is digital comic publications. Commonly called webtoons, this medium is an umbrella term for a number of sub-genres that touch upon categories like horror, science fiction, romance, slice-of-life writing and more. The key aspect of webtoons is this: they are published by independent artists, giving them greater control over what they publish. That being said, let's move on to a couple of The Mira Press team's favorite webtoons across the web!



Ghost Teller



ELENA

The Rebirth

We were asleep under a tree when I was suddenly disturbed by an obnoxious croaking of a grim, ghastly, nasty raven.

The piercing croaking shrilled through the night air. I ran towards the mansion when I saw flocks and flocks of them flying in circles just above me. The sound seemed so loud that blood started dripping from my ears. I stood there watching what worse was yet to come. I knew it was a bad omen but I didn't know how bad it was. The dark clouds were sobbing heavily. The irises in the garden were dead. We saw a horse approaching us. It was no one else but Mr. Rochester. We ran as much as we could but he caught us. He got down from the horse. He had an axe in his hand. He grabbed Adele, his own daughter. He hit her mother violently with the axe and kept hitting until her face was in shreds. He forced me back to the house. He grabbed my hand and pulled me to the red room. He tied me up to the ceiling. He ripped my dress piece by piece with a knife. He hit me with a stick until every part of my body was bleeding. I didn't shed a single tear because I didn't want him to feel pleased. Marrying him was the biggest mistake of my entire life.

He abducted me every night. I could feel my mother's pain every single minute. My mother was abducted by my father and the society because she performed witchcraft. They felt threatened by her. She was a born witch, how could she give up something she loved so easily. One night after the other was the same. Exhausted, one night she went into a church. She performed magic in presence of hundreds. She summoned the demon Lilith – Lilith the feminine figure who was made along with Adam but denied when she was asked to be subservient to him. After the holy Lord couldn't help my miserable mother she was ready to sell her soul to the demon but the magic took so much of her that she collapsed releasing hellfire. The people died and now the church was made of human bones and remains. She gave me the spirit to take a stand against violence. Suddenly, all the signs started making sense. I always questioned my existence but I didn't anymore.

I pulled the rope down with all my strength. The rope that was tied to my hand was rubbing against my skin, it burned but the pain was nothing against the feeling of freedom. I pulled harder and succeeded in breaking it. I took a deep breath, pulled over a blanket. It was midnight- the devil's hour. I grabbed the rope, ran into the attic and tied the rope to a pillar near the window. I threw the rope down from the window and descended to the ground. I felt fearless and courageous. I rose from the ashes like the phoenix. I ran and ran until I found a horse. I traveled for months, ate whatever I could get my hands on. Finally, the day arrived when I reached the church of bones- the place where the light met darkness.

I went inside, it was dark and cold. I collected various ingredients on my way here. My mother was buried in the church itself. I found the grave which was right in the center. I drew a sigil – a triangle surrounding a circle with symbols drawn on the corners of the triangle. I lit candles in a circle around the grave, kept a bowl in the middle, and added the essential ingredients. I set fire to the bowl. I started chanting the spell to summon the demon. *Ad constringendum, ad ligandum eos pariter et solvendum: Et ad congregandum eos coram me.* The spell did not work even after lots of chanting. All of a sudden I remembered my mother's words as if she was trying to contact me. she used to say, "To get something you must give something away". I took off my necklace which had a cross pendant and put it in the bowl. I gave up my faith in order to serve the devil. What is faith? – The light that guides you through the dark but all I had left within was darkness. I started chanting again. *Ad constringendum, ad ligandum eos pariter et solvendum: Et ad congregandum eos coram me.* Abruptly, the wind started howling as if it was warning everyone, the door shut with a loud thud, bats flew over my head- their wings making a fluttering sound, spiders crawled the ground as if they were running for their lives, the snakes were hissing rhythmically like they were gossiping the arrival of something. The wind was accompanied by thunder and lightning- the rains screamed in rage. The spell set the church on fire. I saw the faces of spirits screeching in the fire, they howled and yelped. The history repeated itself.

The spirits charged with all their force. I felt weak like it was over. But just then I felt I was not alone. My mother was standing beside me and started chanting along. Slowly and steadily I was joined by various spirits. The chanting was harmonious. Together we were strong enough to tear the world down. The magic worked.

We emitted tons and tons of blue light which pushed the fire back until there was nothing left but darkness. The world fell in utter silence. But just then the ground vibrated and the ceiling broke. From the ceiling entered black smoke which transformed into a dark figure. It approached me. Its shadow was shaped like a woman. Lilith! I gasped. She asked my consent and I let her in. She transformed into black smoke and entered my body through my mouth.

I was no more Bertha – the bright one, I was Lilith- the night monster.

Akanksha Balkawade
TYBA

The lock turned. The front door opened. "Honey I'm back!" She lived alone.

Shreya Bhide
SYBA

Get Ink(ed)!

*"Is door se
door hi rehna!"*

Inktober is an art challenge that was started by Jake Parker in 2009 as a means to improve his own inking skills. Since then, Inktober has become one of the most participated social media art challenges.

Participants share their artwork on the different social media platforms everyday in the month of October. Yet, these artworks are all inspired by the daily prompts sent out by the Inktober team.

Alongside is an artwork done completely in ink, however, it is not an entry for the challenge. Head over to the official Inktober website for further details. Also, if this challenge appeals to you, check out the official Inktober Instagram page to witness the popularity of this challenge in the art community.

Visit

www.inktober.com

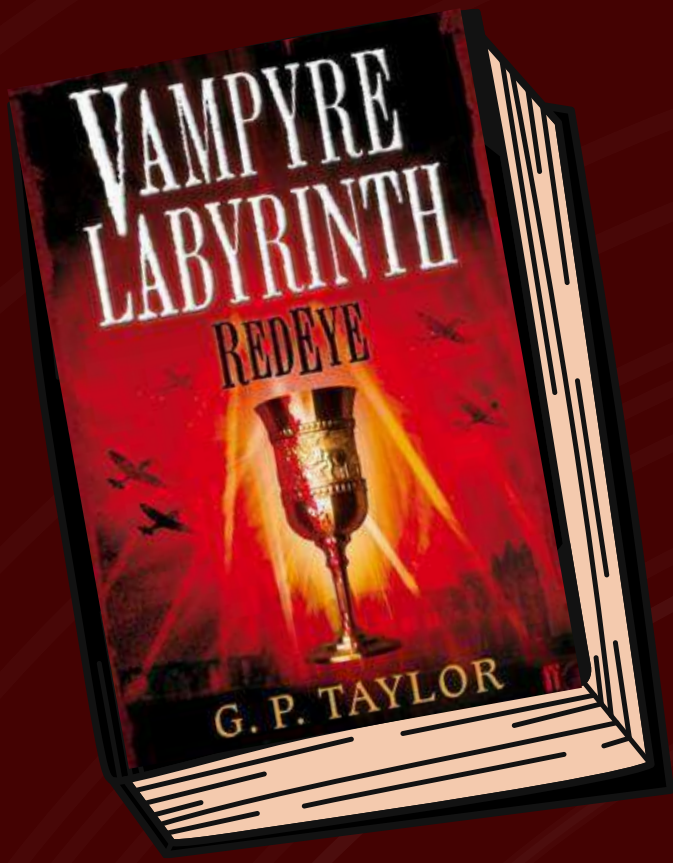
for more!

 [inktober](https://www.instagram.com/inktober)

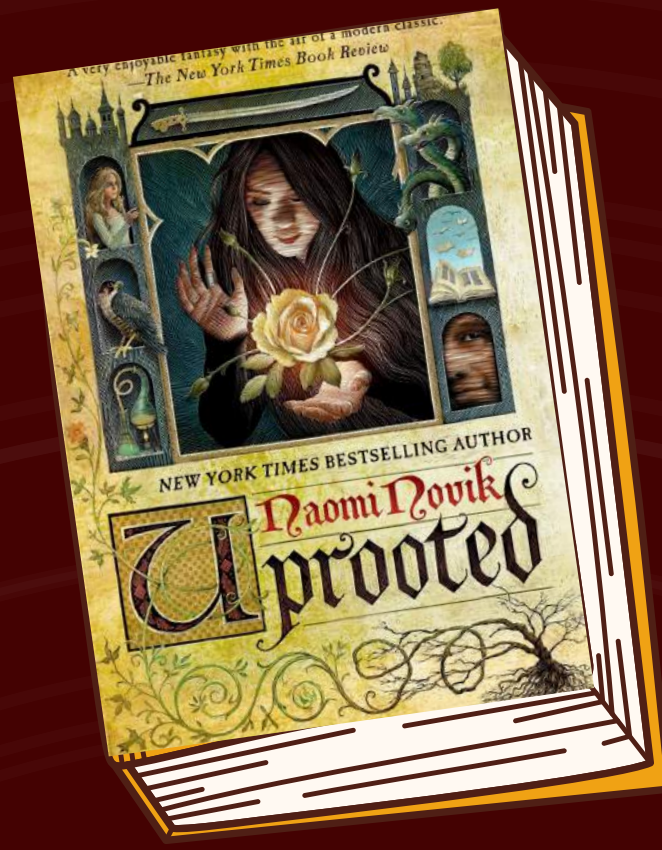
Ummesalama Karu
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What are you reading next?



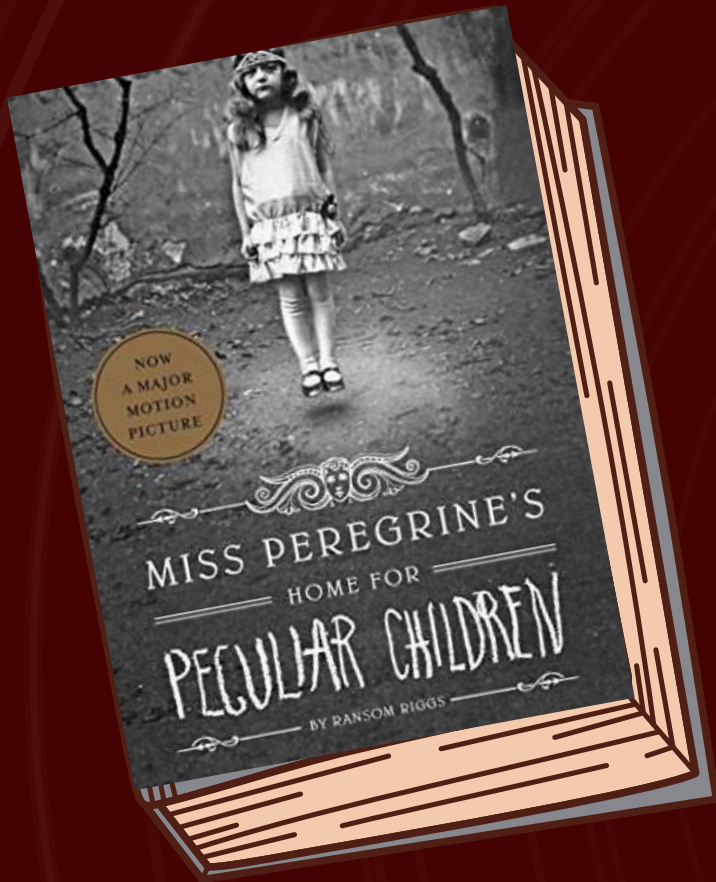
REDEVE
G. P. TAYLOR



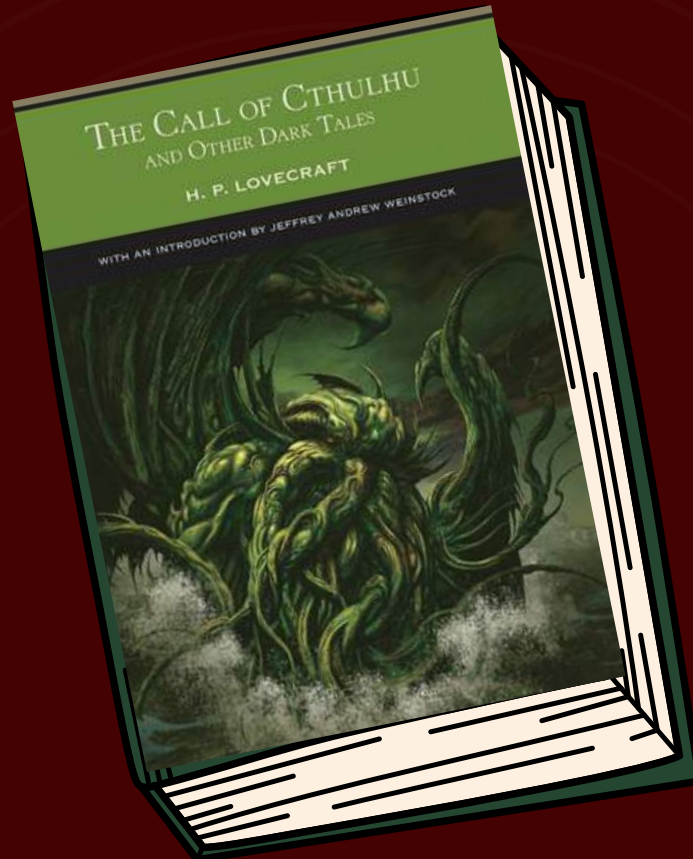
UPROOTED
NAOMI NOVIK



CORALINE
NEIL GAIMAN



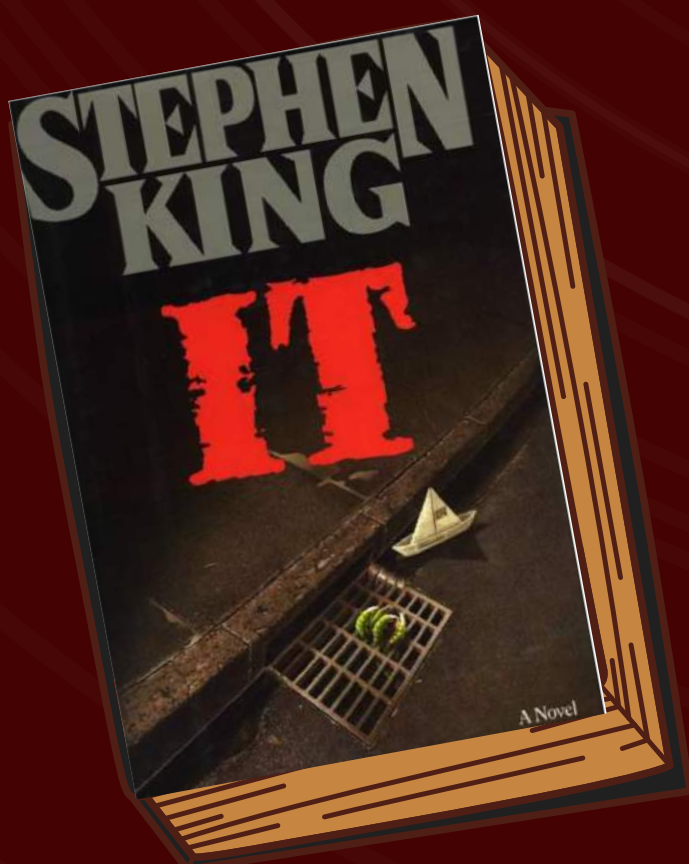
**MISS PEREGRINE'S
HOME FOR
PECULIAR
CHILDREN**
RANSOM RIGGS



**THE CALL OF
CTHULHU**
H. P. LOVECRAFT



**ANNA DRESSED IN
BLOOD**
KENDARE BLAKE



IT
STEPHEN KING



Forbidden Fruit: The Trope of Consumption in Horror

‘While forbidden fruit is said to taste sweeter, it usually spoils faster.’

This quote by Abigail Van Buren seems to sum up the entire trope that I wish to elaborate on. Consumption or, the act of eating and drinking as an archetype that enforces a certain amount of control over the narrative dates back to even the tale of Adam and Eve.

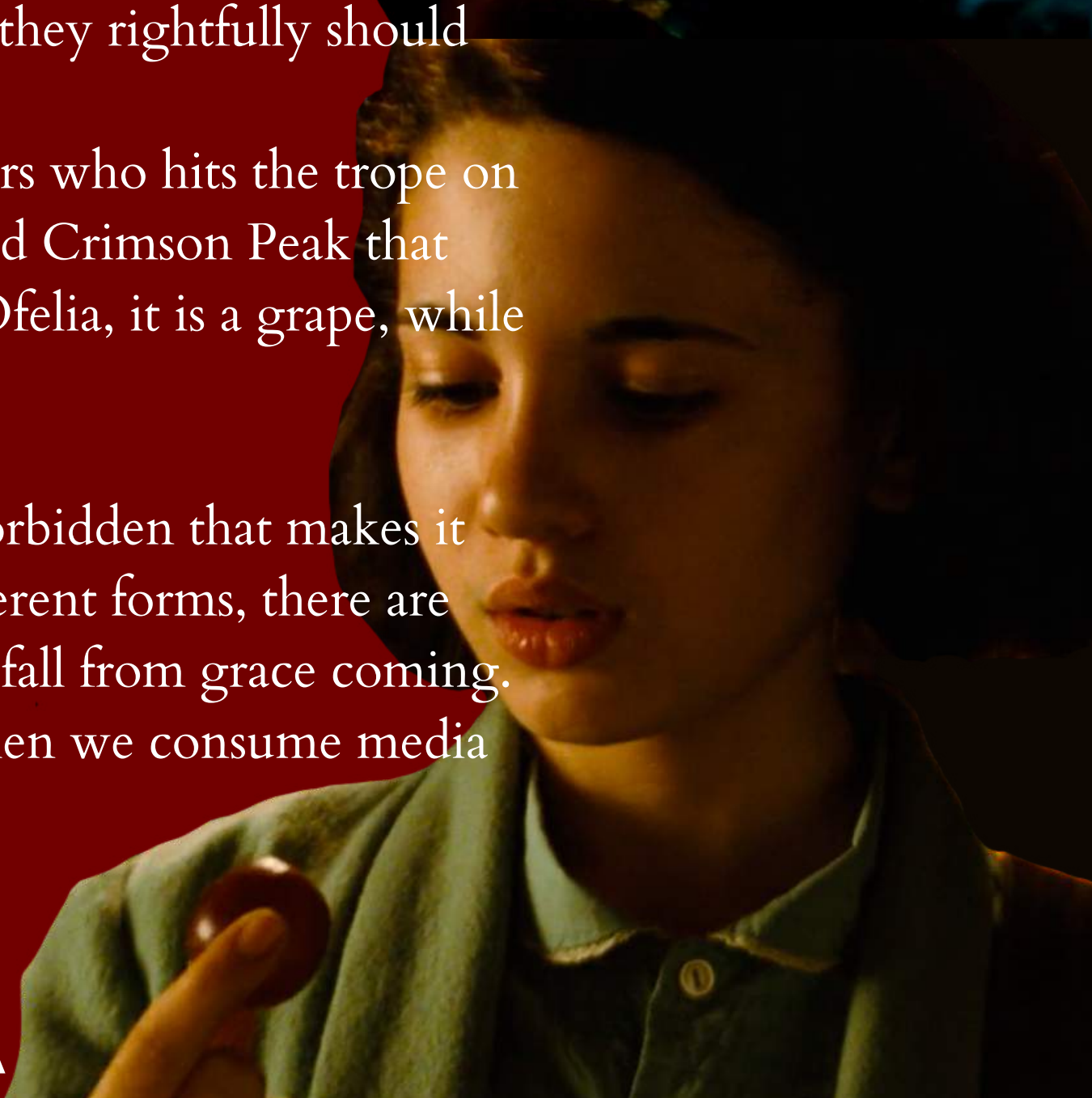
This seemingly primordial visual of temptation worms its way into the myth of Persephone, or as she may be called in the Roman syncretic tradition, Proserpina; a tale of love, obsession and freedom that uses the consumption of food from a foreign land as tying you to that earth, a situation only somewhat malleable by the king of the gods. Simply said, the eating of something that we inherently and instinctively know will bring us no good is terrifying- that is what allows this visual that has been repeated countless times to form a subtle but no less impactful sense of impending doom for our protagonist. A few of the works I might mention span the vast field of horror, not only prevalent in the categories of film and television but art, literature and music.

To lightly trace human creativity would be to go back to our simple oral histories, and their conversion to what we know as the ‘folk tale’, where consumption widely figures into the mythologies and beliefs of early European cultures. The concept of the fae, who are also known as the Fair Folk; a race of magically-inclined beings that were known to reside in the natural landscapes of the world. Various folk tales that surround the fae center in on the theme of never accepting gifts from them, be it fruit, nut or more; and should you have the great misfortune (or opportunity) to visit their lands, to never eat of the land of Faerie because you will then be forever bound to it. A work of literature that uses common Fae mythology as a bouncing board is Christina Rossetti’s ‘Goblin Market’, a story in verse of two sisters who find themselves ensnared by the temptation of the wares at the goblin market.

Consumption also makes its way to children’s literature, with both the plots of Hansel and Gretel as well as Alice in Wonderland being accented by the inclusion of scenarios of tension being exacerbated by the children partaking in food that they rightfully should not have touched.

Shall we then turn to the realm of films, where one of the directors who hits the trope on the head is Guillermo Del Toro; making both Pan’s Labyrinth and Crimson Peak that hinge on the treachery of eating ‘forbidden fruit’; in the case of Ofelia, it is a grape, while Edith’s downfall is the poisonous firethorn berry.

But as Mark Twain rightfully says, ‘There is a charm about the forbidden that makes it unspeakably desirable.’ As a ‘consumer’ of horror in so many different forms, there are some things that you just can’t get enough of even if you see the fall from grace coming. That gets one thinking: is there some adversity that we invite when we consume media in this way? One wonders.



Arman Chagla
TYBA

The Devil(s) in the Details

Lucifer, Satan, Devil or whatever you want to call the King of the Bad; bears many faces in books, movies and television. From being red with horns and all that jazz to having the face of a handsome man who solves crimes, Lucifer has been it all. Here are some of the top portrayals of the Devil.



Supernatural

Another Devil that really sits well with the audience is Lucifer from the series Supernatural. Lucifer, played mainly by Mark Pellegrino, being released from his cage in Season 4, possesses a human. He looks very normal and can pass off as human, except for his forked tongue and eyes that can glow on command. We see him possess two main characters on the show – Sam Winchester and Castiel. What really sells this Devil is his wit, sarcasm and charm. He becomes a part of the family and we see him switch sides numerous times. In the end, (SPOILER ALERT!) it was very very sad to watch this Devil die. A lot of hearts were broken.

The Powerpuff Girls

What's better to kick start the list than the gender-fluid weirdly lovable Devil in the cartoon The Powerpuff Girls, HIM. This Satan is all that we hear about. The red horns, the pointy tail and a spade in his hands. But what makes HIM different is their crab claws, black high heels and curled eyelashes. This Devil seems to be presented this way to make them more kid friendly and comedic. But they serve gender-fluidity on point and that is very appreciable.



Good Omens

Another hit supernatural series is Good Omens. Originally a book by Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett, the Devil here is very traditional, just like everything else in this story; big and red and rising from the earth, straight from the pits of Hell. He has a gruff voice and horns and all the shebang. He also gives a tribute to Dante's Satan from Inferno.



Lucifer

This Devil is our typical bad boy, handsome gentleman stranger. Named Lucifer Morningstar, he abandons Hell for Los Angeles. There he runs a nightclub named 'LUX' and becomes a consultant for Los Angeles Police Department. What?! The Devil fighting for the good side?! Noooo! This new take on the Devil is indeed very interesting and comedic. Played by Tom Ellis, this handsome stranger that seems up to no good is a sight for sore eyes.



Source: [PPG Wiki](#), [Variety](#), [Nerds and Beyond](#), [Devil Wiki](#), [Small Screen](#)

Isha Karandikar
TYBA

The Origin of Halloween and Trick-or-Treating

Halloween, a very beloved festival renowned all over the world, is celebrated on the 31st of October every year. It originated during the ancient Celtic festival- Samhain. The Celts lived 2000 years ago in the region that is now Ireland, the United Kingdom and Northern France. They celebrated their new year on the first of November, which marked the end of the summer and the beginning of the dark, cold weather. The Celts associated this time of the year with death, it was often believed that a night before their new year (31st October) the boundary between the living and dead became blurred, and that ghosts of the dead returned.

They commemorated the event by building huge sacred bonfires, and gathering around it in costumes, mostly made of animal heads and skin to drive away any phantom visitors. They also put up banquet tables, and food was left out to placate unwelcome spirits.

In later centuries, people began dressing as ghosts, demons and other malicious creatures, performing antics in exchange for food and drink. This custom is thought to be an antecedent of trick-or-treating.

By the ninth century, Christianity had spread into Celtic lands. Poor people would visit the houses of wealthier families and receive pastries called soul cakes in exchange for a promise to pray for the souls of the homeowners' dead relatives. In Scotland and Ireland, young people took part in a tradition called 'guising', where they dressed up in costumes and accepted offerings from various households. Rather than pledging to pray for the dead, they would sing a song, recite a poem, tell a joke or perform another sort of "trick" before collecting their treat, which typically consisted of fruit, nuts or coins.

Although, the origin of the term, "trick or treat" is unknown, the custom was established in America by 1951 when trick or treating was depicted in the Peanuts comic. Today, Americans spend an estimated \$2.6 billion on candy on Halloween, according to the National Retail Federation, and the day itself, has become the nation's second-largest commercial holiday.



A CASE OF THE MUNCHIES

Pumpkin Bread

Ingredients:

Flour: 1.5 cups,
baking powder: 1.5 tsp., baking soda: 1/4th tsp.,
pumpkin pie spice: 2 tsp., sugar: 1 cup, salt: 1/2 tsp.,
fresh pumpkin puree: 1 cup, oil: 1/3rd cup,
vanilla extract: 1 tsp., buttermilk: 1/2 cup.
Optional: pumpkin seeds for topping, and semi-sweet
chocolate chips

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Grease the loaf pan with a little oil and dust with flour to coat the pan. In a medium mixing bowl, sift all the dry ingredients together and whisk until well combined. In another bowl, combine the wet ingredients and mix thoroughly.

Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients and fold gently just until combined and no more flour pockets are visible. Do not overmix the batter. Transfer the batter to a baking pan and gently tap it on the counter 2-3 times to remove the air bubbles. Sprinkle 3 tbsp pumpkin seeds (optional) on top. Bake on the rack for 55-60 mins or until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean. If you feel the top is browning quickly and the bread is still uncooked, cover with aluminum foil during the last 10-15 minutes of baking. Transfer the bread to a cooling rack and let it cool in the pan for 15 minutes.

Slice and enjoy!

Note: For a vegan version, swap the buttermilk with your choice of plant-based milk. If you don't have pumpkin spice mix then use 1 tsp. ground cinnamon, 1/2 tsp. ground ginger, 1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg, 1/4 tsp. ground allspice & 1/8 tsp. ground cloves.

Hazelnut Hot Chocolate

Ingredients:

1 cup Milk,
2 tablespoons of
Nutella(or any hazelnut
chocolate spread),
Whipped cream,
Cinnamon or shaved
chocolate.

The Easy Way: Microwave the milk until hot (usually 2 minutes or so) and then, stir the nutella as it dissolves really quick. Add whipped cream and top with some cinnamon powder or shaved chocolate.

The Boujee Way: In a vessel, add milk and bring it to a simmer. Then add the nutella & give it a good mix! Pour it in a mug and add your toppings!



Pumpkin Spice Muffins

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups flour,
1/4 teaspoon baking soda,
1 teaspoon baking powder,
2 teaspoons pumpkin spice,
6 tablespoons melted butter(at
room temperature),
1 1/4 cups sugar,
1 cup pumpkin puree,
1 teaspoon vanilla extract,
1/2 cup milk (at room temperature),
1/2 teaspoon vinegar or lemon
juice

In a bowl, mix together the flour, baking soda, baking powder, and pumpkin spice. In a separate medium bowl, whisk together the melted butter, sugar, pumpkin puree, vanilla, milk, and vinegar. Pour in the wet mixture into the bowl with the dry ingredients. Do not overmix. Preheat the oven at 180°C for 10-15 minutes. Grease the muffin mould, pour the batter in it and bake it in the oven for 30 minutes. After 30 minutes, take out the muffins and let them cool down before de-moulding it. Enjoy with some warm coffee or chocolate milk.

REPEAT!

By:
**Monalisa
Pradhan:
SYBCA,
Nyati Bansal:
FYBA**

Cool, or a Fool?

The Commodification of Halloween and Fall

“What? You’re wearing the same costume for cosplay you wore 4 years back, in our college fest? Dude, are we friends? Heck no!” –and such comments help the capitalist grow. **Sighs**.

What comes to mind when you hear pumpkin spice, sweater weather and some spookiness, or when you see people in different costumes? You got it right, it’s Halloween! One of the most overly commercialised holidays in the world is that of Halloween; of a tradition that has its roots from consumerism and capitalism. Halloween way back then had the significance of celebrating one of the victories of America and the start of a new chapter in their lives. It is strongly evident that it no longer holds a religious significance. The only thing traditionally prevalent about Halloween is the capitalists leaving no opportunities to mint money. Candies, costumes, food, drinks, the decoration material and other stuff without which a person won’t be considered cool enough to be friends are a capitalist's best friend. For instance the pumpkin spice latte from a certain coffee company is extremely hot-selling all over the world, and it tastes gross! Still, it is purchased by the masses for the same reason– they want to be the ‘coolest’ ones in their peer circle. It is definitely amazing to decorate your house with lanterns and the seemingly creepy spider webs but it is amazing only when you buy things voluntarily and not under peer pressure or due to influence of the businesses. People spend over 3000 Rs. on decorations, costumes and other things which makes no sense when they compromise with their daily needs at times only to show off.

Oops! It’s late.

Time for me to get ready for the cosplay competition! I am going to do a lot of Jugaad for my costume cause I will prefer to spend money and get myself some books than buy certain things.



Sriradha Gupta
TYBA

The Unfortunate Fate of Victorian Mummies

Fancy attending a ‘mummy unwrapping’ party?

In 19th century England, the social event of the season was a rather gruesome affair.

Mummy unrollings were only one symptom of the Egyptomania sweeping England in the 19th century. Napoleonic wars and England’s colonial expanse had generated a wave of interest in Egypt’s past. Europeans began buying mummies to use them as medicine, pigment or even charms! To satisfy this growing demand, Egyptians in popular destinations such as Cairo would ship in mummies from less popular towns.

Back in Europe, mummy unwrapping parties were ghastly spectacles. The mummified body of an ancient Egyptian would be brought out to a crowd of onlookers and then slowly unwrapped, revealing a face that had been hidden from the world for millennia. Initially, these unwrapping parties were only done in private homes of the elite (sometimes even royalty), but gradually they made their way down through society.

The most infamous man in this practice was **Thomas ‘Mummy’ Pettigrew**. A surgeon-turned-antiquarian, Pettigrew’s obsession with unwrapping helped him sell out venues with his mummy unwrapping parties and made him a great deal of money.

Ancient mummies were seen both as potent vessels of power and as containing a substance called bitumen, which was thought to contain healing properties.

It could be used to treat headaches, epilepsy, and even blood clots according to ancient sources.

Eventually, however, such parties lost favour with the elite, as the ‘preservation of the past’ overtook ‘science’ in popularity.

Another reason is provided by **John J. Johnston**, an Egyptologist, who is of the opinion that the Victorians eventually grew bored of these mummy unwrapping parties. Thus, the gruesome affair of mummy-unwrapping came to an end.

Harshita Rao
SYBA

Source: [ArtMight](#)



Only a Bit of Your Blood



By the bonfire that night, the old man stroked his beard and told us a story.

“Can you see that villa over there?” he asked, pointing his finger near the tamarind trees. It was quite dark that winter night and I had to use a torch to make out the outline of the old villa. “Vaguely,” I replied. “Two sisters, around your age I presume, stayed there for a night a few years ago. Iseeya and Fraidy were their names. They were exhausted after their road trip and needed a place to stay. That night, something strange happened. Both the girls made their beds, but neither of them could sleep. The tamarind trees in the veranda were swaying violently as the strong wind found itself breaking the stained glass of the window. Startled by the noise, Fraidy buried her face in the pillow and started sobbing. ‘I don’t feel so well Iseeya, do you mind coming over and sleeping with me for the night?’

‘Don’t be afraid, Fraidy; it’ll be fine. Just hum that song you like so much. ‘My songs know what you did in the dark’. Was it?’

‘That’s your favourite song Iseeya, not mine!’ And at that exact moment Fraidy felt pointy, sharp fingernails scrape against her back. The scraping became harder and harder, but Fraidy was too afraid to look who was there. “Don’t move,” said Iseeya. “It just wants to have a bit of your blood, let it have it and it’ll go away.”

Fraidy did as she was told and the thing that was hurting her went away. “No need to worry Fraidy, I saw it leave.” Not wanting to discuss the subject any further, Fraidy and Iseeya slept and then left the next morning.”

“Some story,” I said. But there was one thought that kept coming back to me and I had to ask the old man. “How do you know this story? As far as I remember, you told us that you only came here after we bought the house and had never visited this part of Mahabaleshwar.”

“That’s true, I have never visited this part of town, but...” Tamarind fell from the tree and my attention was lost momentarily, only to find the old man missing.

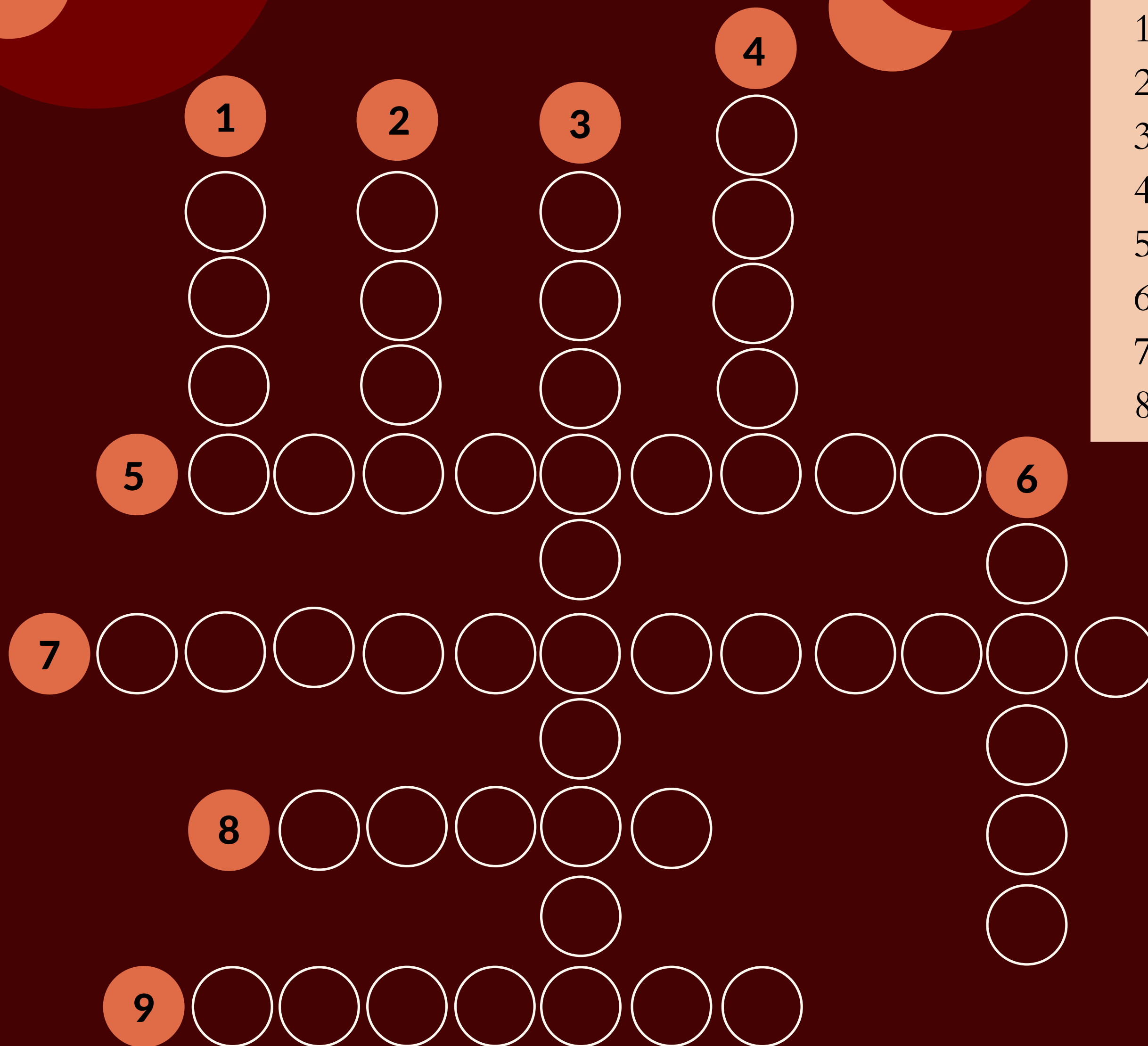
“Where did he go?”

No sooner had I uttered the words than I felt two rough hands, with razor-sharp nails run along the length of my arms, I closed my eyes, shivering with fright. I don’t know how much time had passed, but when I opened my eyes, I saw tiny drops of blood dripping from my right elbow.

The next morning the old man was nowhere to be found. I have never visited Mahabaleshwar since then.

CROSSWORD

CROSSWORD
SOLUTION
VOLUME 3



1. JUGAAD
2. APACHE
3. PANI PURI
4. CHAMOMILE
5. MAIZE
6. PALESTINE
7. FALAFEL
8. GERMAN

1 This film later became a part of a film series and had Bipasha Basu and Dino Morea in the first installment

2 *Bees Saal Baad* (1962) became very popular for the song - Kahin _____ Jale

3 He grants Goopy and Bagha three boons in the 1969 Bengali movie - *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne*

4 The people of Chanderi live in constant fear of this female spirit who attacks men at night during festivals

5 This Marathi horror comedy was inspired by the 1988 Hollywood movie - *Child's Play*

6 Director of 2008 horror film *1920* - Vikram _____

7 *Manichitrathazhu's* Tamil remake

8 Madhubala became a superstar overnight owing to the success of this film which was India's first reincarnation thriller

9 This is a 1965 Hindi film based on Agatha Christie's novel - *And Then There Were None*

By: **Ummesalama Karu**
TYBA

Angels, Demons and the Divine Conundrum

It is in this state of confusion that I write; how often is it that man in order to portray ideals has put them in parallel terms for an explanation? How is it that we are so tailor-made in these parallels of right and wrong, good and bad, heaven and hell? Yet, there are these opposites; contradictory. The point where there is little chaos and a little order; it's in this place exactly where I find myself asking the following question again and again, over and over: Whose imagination is it that I believe in?

The concept of angels and demons has inspired many movies and television shows like Dante Alighieri's *Inferno*, *Touched by an Angel*, *Midnight Texas*, *Miracle Workers* and many more. The angels have been portrayed as these delicate yet strong, beautiful white winged creatures with bodies like any human but just a little more silky and well, heavenly. These creatures are sent to protect or deliver messages to God's creations. And the Devil and his demons are portrayed as ugly red creatures with horns, a tail and wings like dragons. They are the hunters, hunting for souls; roaring lions looking for someone to devour.

This was the common description until recently. Netflix series *Lucifer* provides a fresher perspective, an agreeable one. There are a couple of things that I learned about his character and that is brutal honesty, his desire to be understood, to be wanted, to be loved, and the fact that he is not evil, he punishes evil. Yet, the demonic possessions in most horror movies makes one believe otherwise. The warding off of the evil spirit, the priest, and ahh... the human soul returns to the human body. Interesting, to put it mildly.

But in a case where we believe theories like these, ask yourself who has had the common decency to pray for the one sinner that needed it the most?



What's playing?

With Halloween almost upon us, we at the Mira Press have done our best to get into the spirit of the holiday; watching some of our old-school favorites, as well as some new TV series that soothe our spooky little hearts! Read on to know some of our favorite television shows to make your October all the more fun!



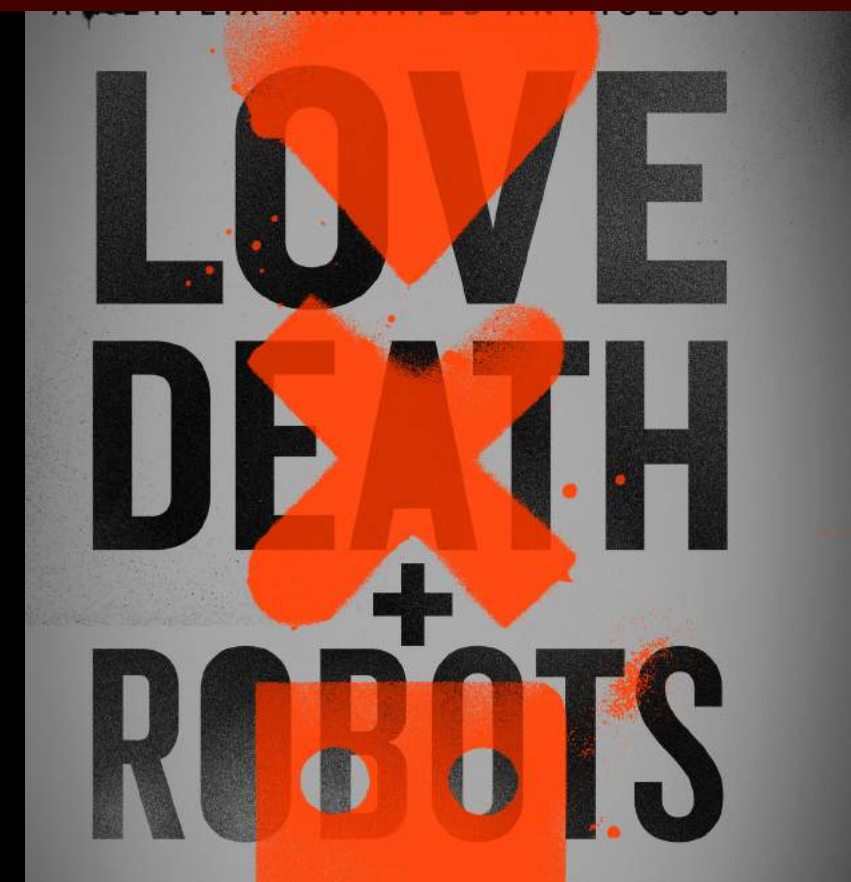
STRANGER THINGS



SUPERNATURAL



KINGDOM



LOVE DEATH + ROBOTS



AMERICAN HORROR STORY



THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE



CASTLEVANIA



BATES MOTEL

The Questionable Nature of Horror Movies

Many of us out there either hate or love horror films; but what really are they? A horror film is the one that aims at instilling fear amongst the audience for entertainment. These films usually awaken and influence the viewers' fear of the unknown or basically death. The horror movies universally use the key aspects of macabre and supernatural events to target the fear of death of the viewers of either themselves or their loved ones. But these movies widely symbolize the notion of death and its uncertain nature.

“Smells of dirt and wet and long-gone vegetables would merge into one unmistakable ineluctable smell, the smell of the monster, the apotheosis of all monsters. It was the smell of something for which he had no name: the smell of It, crouched and lurking and ready to spring. A creature which would eat anything but which was especially hungry for boy meat.”

I am sure you were all at the edge of your seats while reading this excerpt from the novel 'It' by Stephen King. Now imagine the same scenario being portrayed through graphic visuals. Seems thrilling and terrifying, doesn't it?

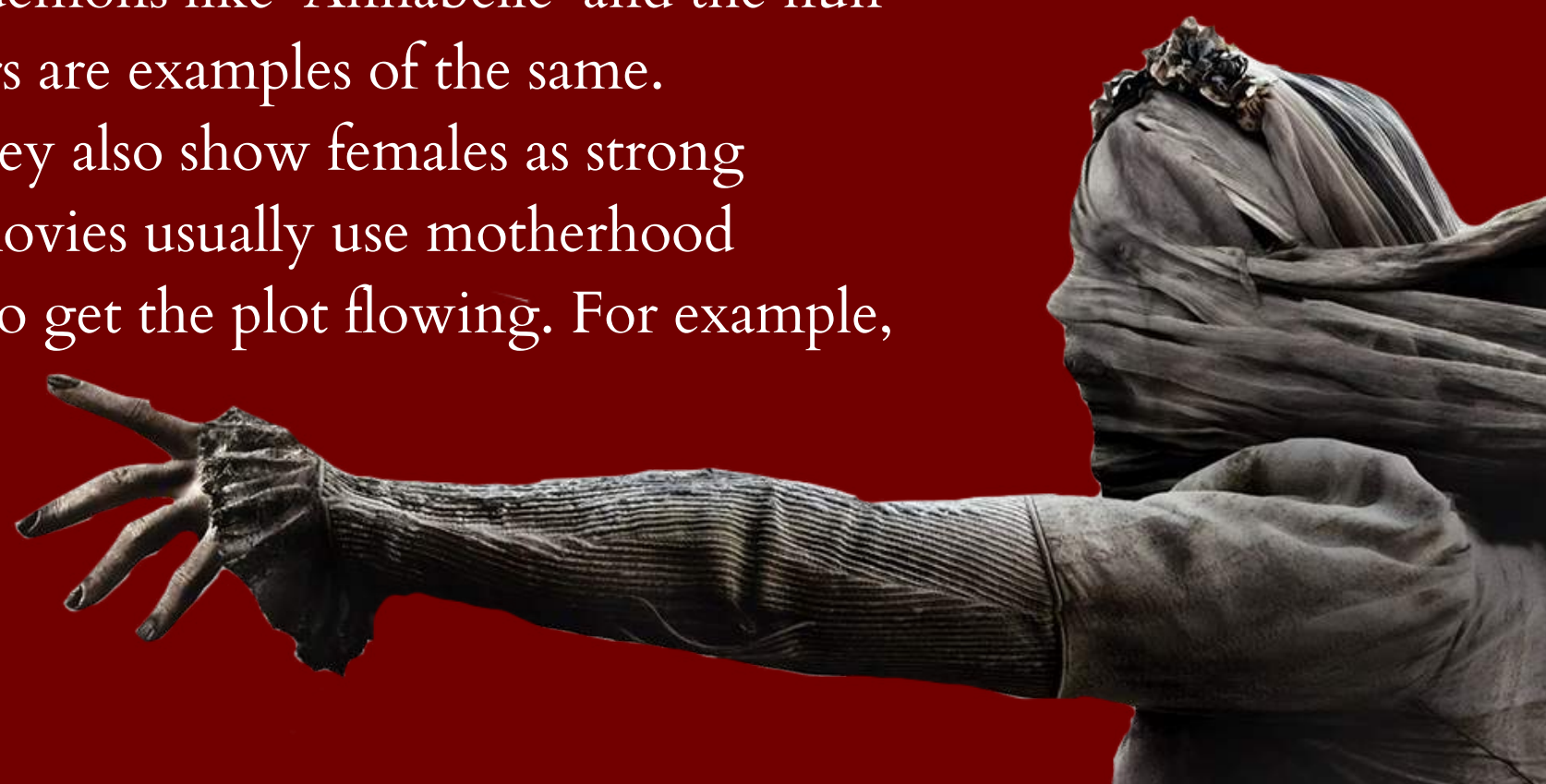
But here's another question that arises: why would people pay to watch something that terrorizes them? It can be due to various factors such as escaping reality, catharsis, and more. In my opinion, a horror film is truly petrifying not when the makers are successfully able to depict gory scenes and spine-chilling ghosts and ferocious murders, but when they create the possibility of the plot being more than just a fantasy.

When the filmmakers not only target the viewers' fears but also chalk out a sense of belief and social, cultural and religious relevance in and from day to day affairs, then the film has served its purpose. For example, the movie 'The Curse of La Llorona' or also known as 'The Curse of the Weeping Woman' in some markets didn't include many jump scares or terrifying representations yet was a successful horror movie due to the impression of the plot possibly being true.

This also brings us to the point of female representation as monstrous ghosts in films. The female antagonists in horror movies are usually portrayed as suppressed figures who have come back in search of revenge for the wrong that was done unto them. 'The Ring' series is an example where the female girl child comes back looking for revenge. The horror movies do highlight the challenges and social adversities of women such as female foeticide, rape, domestic violence and many more but they are not something resolved upon and are rather mere tools used to intensify the plot. Aviva Briefel states in her article, "Monster Pains: Masochism, Menstruation, and Identification in the Horror Film," that menstruation is the start of monstrosity. Once a girl has reached puberty she is seen to be monstrous. Horror films feed into the female monsters identity through her menstruation, since this is a point of contrast from male anatomy and physiology.

Motherhood and menstruation become things which society is taught to find disgusting. The Conjuring Franchise which renders ghosts and demons like 'Annabelle' and the nun named 'Valak' with plots preying on female characters are examples of the same.

Whereas horror movies have a very sexist outlook, they also show females as strong characters and final defeaters of the enemy. Horror movies usually use motherhood especially single motherhood as a profound weapon to get the plot flowing. For example, the movie 'The Grudge.'



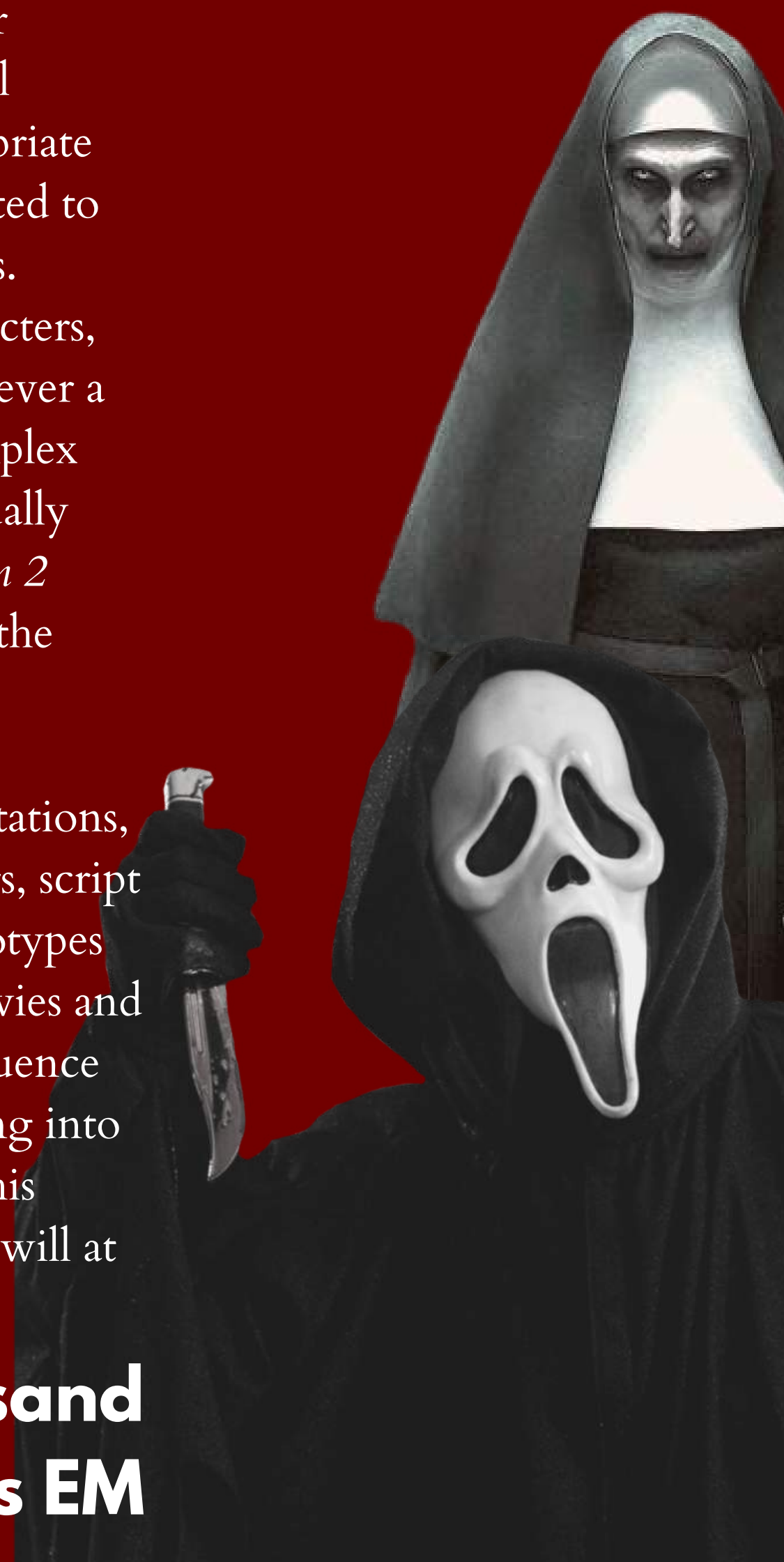
Along with such gender biased depictions of characters and roles, horror movies also have various racist remarks. Racist ideas, stereotypes and various other elements persist in horror films. In American-produced horror films, racial minorities or people of colour did not receive much screen time or appropriate casting of as compared to the white people. Minorities were often subjected to tokenism being commonly cast as supporting roles or villains and enemies.

Complex Networks did a survey of 50 horror films that starred black characters, finding that only 10% had black characters that died first in the film; however a great deal of those characters still died at some point in the movies. *Complex* also reveals that the black characters who do survive in the film are eventually killed in their sequels. For example, Jada Pinkett and Omar Epps in *Scream 2* (1997) who are killed even before the title plate of the movie appears and the sacrifice of Alfre Woodard in *Annabelle* (2014).

While movies of the horror genre still have such sexist and racist representations, modernization has impacted the mindset of many film directors, producers, script writers and actors who are working towards the eradication of such stereotypes and are trying to bring about an innovation in the storyline of horror movies and their making and casting. But there is no denying that horror movies influence our lives in many ways and always create that curiosity inside us of peeping into the dark with terror hoping of not finding something unusual. Though this article isn't scary and no matter how much you refrain, as I conclude you will at least once glance behind to make sure no one's shadow is lurking.

Harshita Masand
XII Arts EM

Source: [DeviantArt](#), [DLPNG](#)



Fire and Brimstone

This month's artist feature had us discover Daniel Lang, a freelance concept artist and illustrator from Taiwan!

This artwork is labeled 'Demon' and is a hyper-realistic envisioning of our classic horned and winged demon standing before the gates of hell; a cascade of molten lava.

Find him on:



[ArtStation](#)



[Behance](#)



[@danielliang_1107](#)



Cosplay? Don't mind if I do!

We, in association with the Mira Manch-queens theatre club hosted an exclusive cosplay competition for our students, inviting submissions for the special Halloween feature of the periodical that you see before you today! The competition was judged by our special guest, Ms. Farhat Chagla- aka Cosplay Mom India! Read on to see our winners!

1ST PLACE- MAITRAYEE SANGITRAO

I chose to do the Manray from Spongebob Squarepants; a sting ray who poses a threat to Bikini Bottom! This costume was a 2 A.M thought. That is a *curtain*.



2ND PLACE- SHRUTI GUPTA

I chose Red Riding Hood for this competition, because it was the easiest costume I could think of making at home as a beginner!



3RD PLACE- ELIZABETH THOMAS

While brainstorming about a character to cosplay which would be unique as well as easy, I thought to recreate a famous painting. I then chose 'The Girl with a Pearl Earring' by Johannes Vermeer because the painting itself gives a very special vibe and I was very keen to know if I could pull it off.



BEST MAKEUP- TAMANNA BABANI

I've chosen to cosplay the character of a clown, inspired by Harley Quinn and the Joker from DC Comics!



The Chudail in the Attic: A Reading of Women in Horror Films

How many of the novels we have read and films we have watched precede the entrance of our stereotypical witch or femme fatale with the creaking of an old wooden board, or the clickety-clack of heels on a ceiling overhead?

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's seminal work, *The Madwoman in the Attic* was a leap in feminist literary criticism; using the portrayal of Bertha Rochester (nee Mason) in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* as a bouncing board to critique the portrayal of women in novels by women writers. The reason this concept struck me was the constant demonization of women in both the media we consume as well as the conversations we as a society have. Bertha's Creole roots automatically give her the connotation of voodoo in a modern reader's perspective, and so the mirroring of occult beliefs in a women's narrative across cultures, languages and media is deeply tied to the demonization that occurs unto her.

We might consider a pop culture favourite, *Jennifer's Body*. A schoolgirl, caught at a local dive bar fire, is saved and coerced by the lead vocalist of a popular rock band to be sacrificed in exchange for fame and fortune; the ritual goes horribly wrong and Jennifer is left permanently possessed and begins to take revenge against those who hurt her. Let us take, for another example, Netflix's 2020 production *Bulbbul*— it outlines the tale of a child bride and the atrocities done unto her in the historical setting of late 19th century Bengal. For those who have seen the film (spoilers ahead), she is resuscitated by a divine breath of air that along with visual cues, symbolises the power of the goddess Kali. Post this, *Bulbbul* takes it upon her to mete out justice to those who trespass against the women in the nearby village; this punishment is superficially attributed to a *chudail*. A brilliant production by Robert Eggers entitled *The Witch* tackles this narrative in an early 1600s Puritan setting.



The allocation of gross crimes being committed against a family to the eldest daughter Thomasin and her being in consort with the devil takes a turn for the worse (or better?) when the entire family is slaughtered and Thomasin is invited to join a witch's coven on the fringes of the woods. The idea of a woman prescribing to the same beliefs that caused her much grief to begin with only goes so far as to be a testament to her 'wickedness'; an aspect of Thomasin's character that is hinted at from the beginning, and persecuted by her parents. In reality, she yearned to escape from a house she despised and a faith she didn't prescribe to; and when the opportunity finally presented itself, she did just so. This apprehensive of a woman with agency has historically led to them being written off as witches or being 'wicked' for a multitude of reasons; [this article](#) by Maggie Rosen elaborates on just this. This trope even trickles down to the idea of the crazy cat lady in our contemporary cultures; derived from a witch and her familiar that might haunt a local apothecary or cafe. All of these aforementioned works are narratives of women embracing the supernatural intervention that they find themselves aided with; that is the charge held against them. And for this to be used as a trope in horror only perpetuates the perception that it is morally wrong and that society as a whole is justified in perceiving it so; it's apparently the reason our protagonist is in hot water, is it not? It is time well overdue to shatter this concept, and as so many filmmakers of the 21st century are attempting to do, find themes that do not offend nor put down any percentage of our society.

Arman Chagla
TYBA



FINAL DESTINATION: DIY!

Creepy Candles!

Materials required:

A rubber glove

Wax (can use normal candlesticks)

Four strings (each 25–30 cm long)

Needle

Step 1: With the help of a needle pass the string through the glove for the four finger tips.

Tie a knot on the outer side of the glove.

(Make sure the hole is just enough for the string to fit.)

Step 2: Melt the wax and pour it into the glove.

Do not let the other side of the string sink in the wax.

Step 3: Let it dry and harden.

Step 4: Peel off the glove and scrape off the wax from the fingers such that the strings are visible enough.

Step 5: decorate it your way (creepy carvings or painting) and enjoy!



Have your Potion, and drink it too!

Materials required using edible ingredients–

Step 1:

Pour any Tropicana juice into your glass bottle.

Step 2:

Add edible glitter.

Step 3:

Decorate the bottle with ribbons and a label.

Step 4:

Stir/shake and enjoy!

Using paints:

Step 1:

In a bowl/glass add paint and water, stir well.

Step 2:

Add the mixture in the glass bottle

Step 3:

Add glitter.

Step 4:

Fill the bottle with water to the brim.

Step 5:

Decorate the bottle, stir and you have your very own witch's brew decor!

Yogita Melwani

SYBCA

Source: [PNGio](#)

A Witch's World

“Magic” has created wonders and added amazement to many of our favourite TV shows and books. Magic not only provides an escape from reality but also gives us hope to dream on. Witches are widely known as practitioners of magic so let's discover what objects are associated with them and what they symbolize.



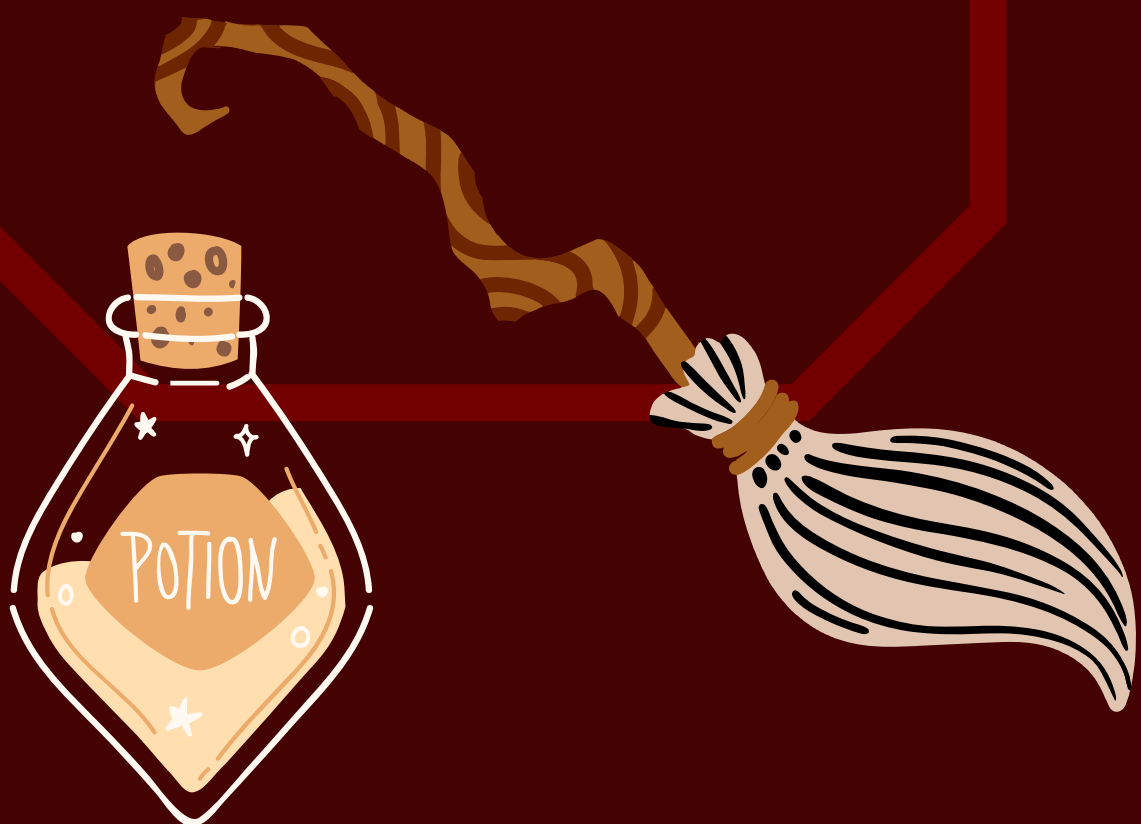
Spell Books

With all that brewing that witches have to do, spell books act like guides or recipe books. They symbolize a witch's power, and like all other book readers they are possessive of their books so do not touch them without permission!



Brooms

The broom is used to sweep away negativity. Witches are said to ride the brooms during the night, or who knows maybe they just like sweeping floors?



Wands

Wingardium Leviosa! And any object that you point at will float in the air. Symbolic of a witch's energy and power, it acts as a directing and channeling tool for spells.



Black Cats

They were once said to be a gift from the devil. Black cats symbolize the night. Some associated it with bad luck but today they are just normal lazy companions that sleep around the house.



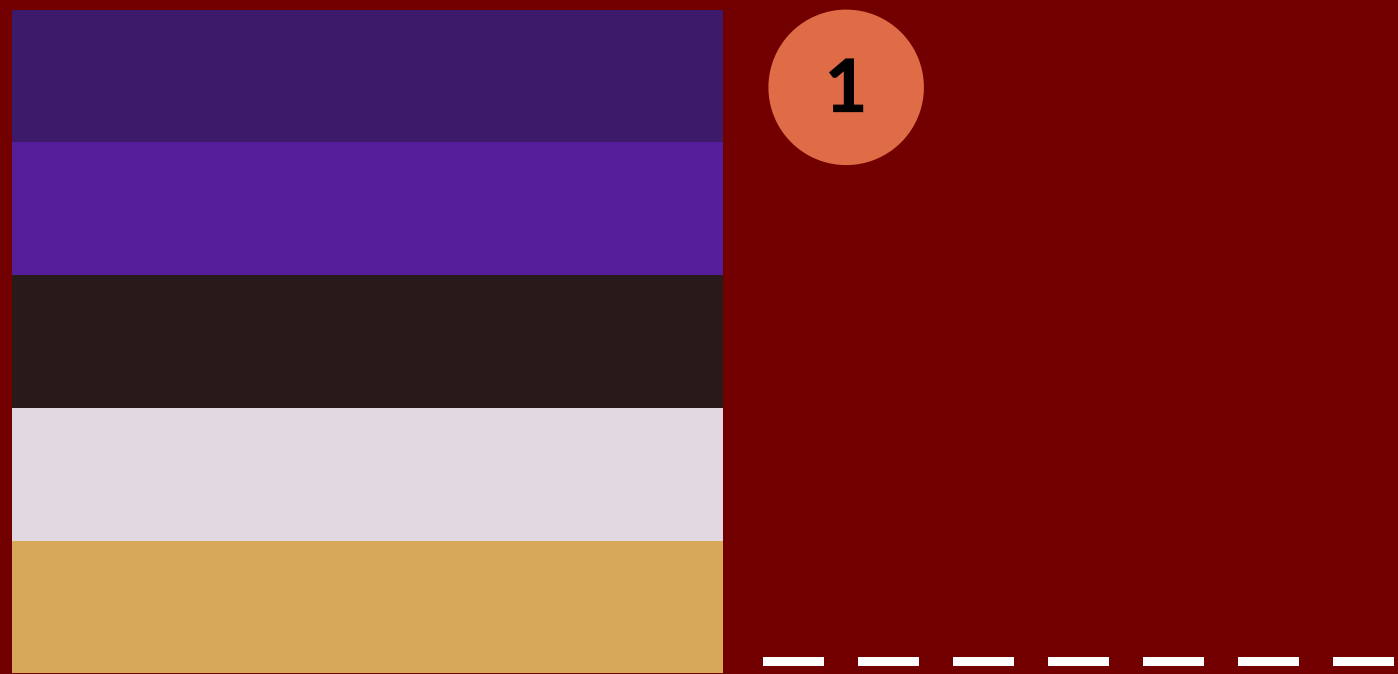
Cauldrons

The witches are always seen stirring weird things in the cauldron, bubbles form as it glows green and the cauldron overflows or bursts into a spell. The cauldron is symbolic of a womb which acts as a tool for mixing all the magical elements together.

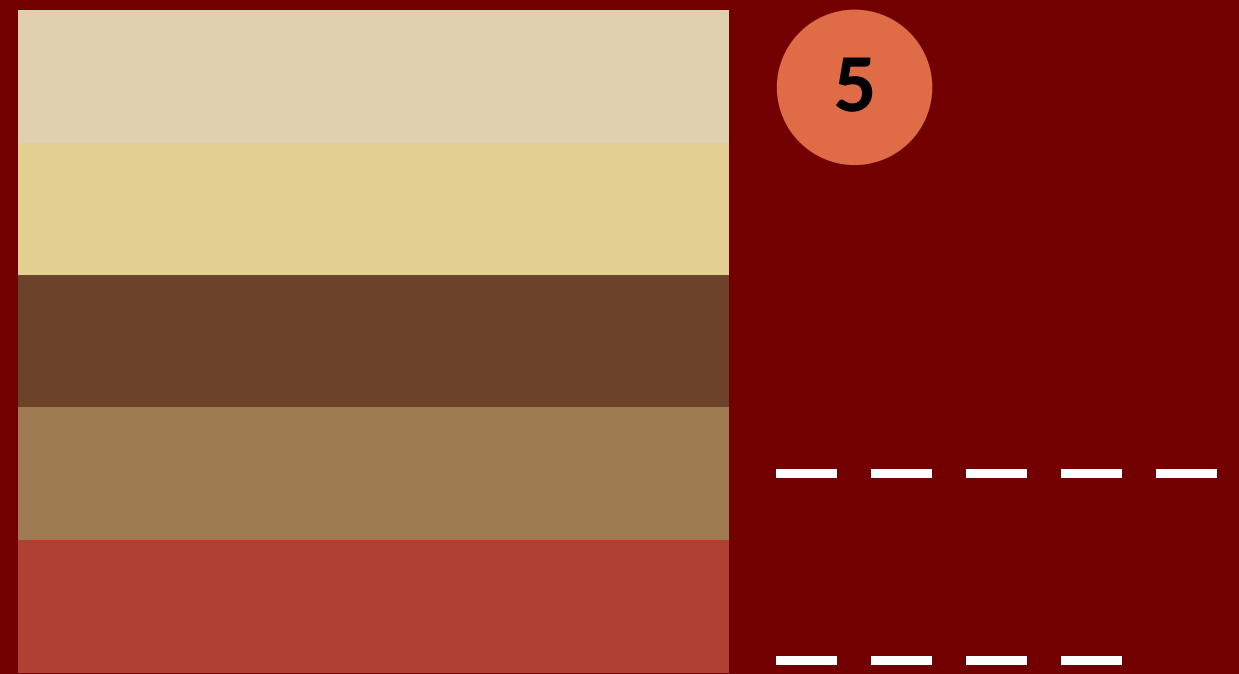


GUESS THE INDIAN CANDY!

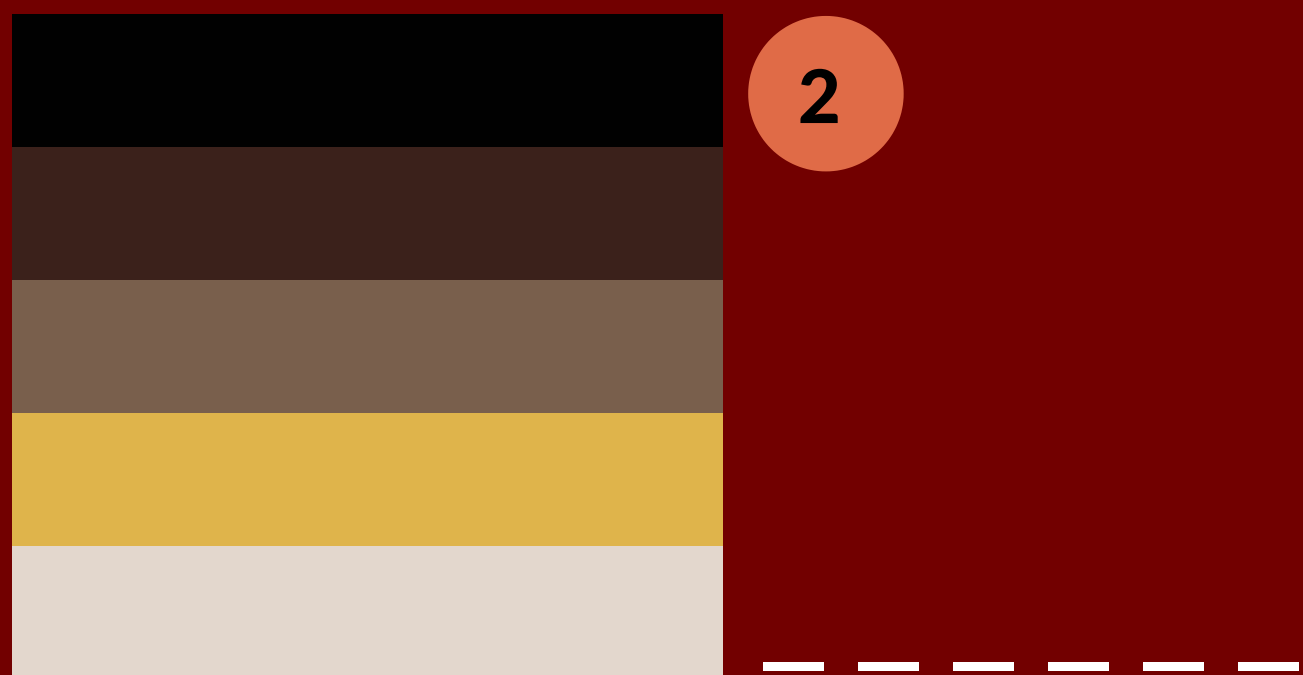
A key characteristic of Halloween as we know it is to trick-or-treat; greeting individuals and getting sweets in return! But we couldn't make it all that easy for you, could we? So, here's a trick from our side: guess these quintessential Indian candies by their packaging's colour palettes, and crush this candy challenge!



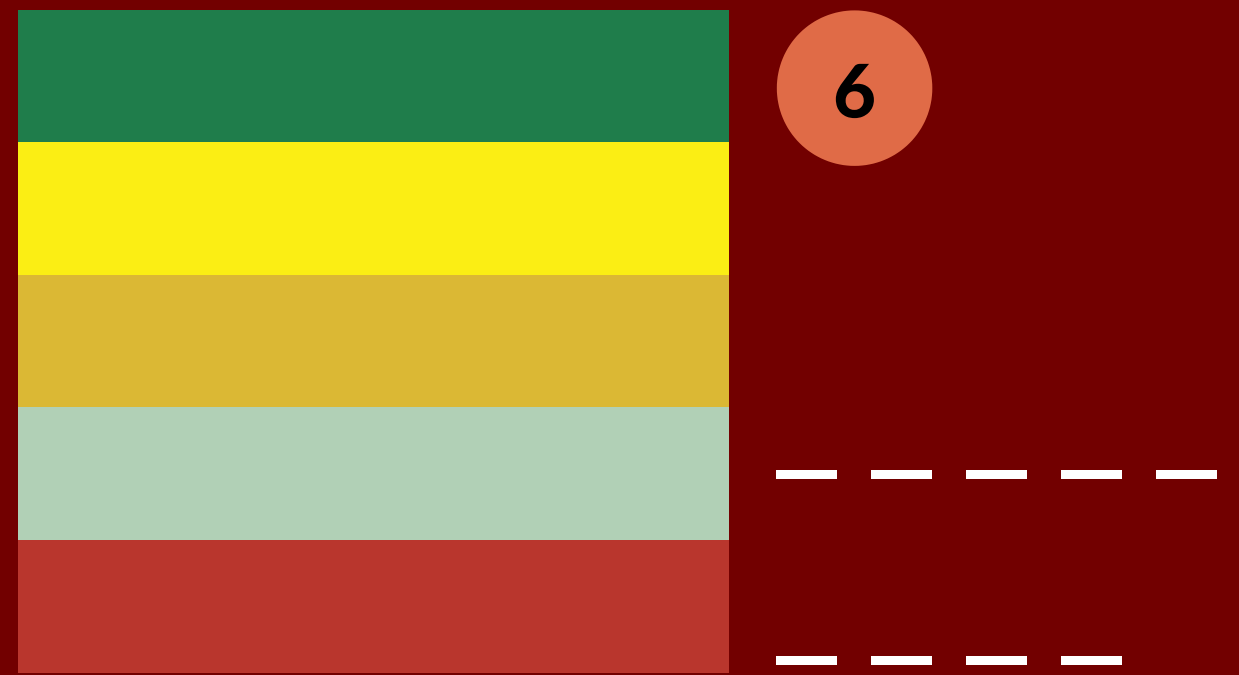
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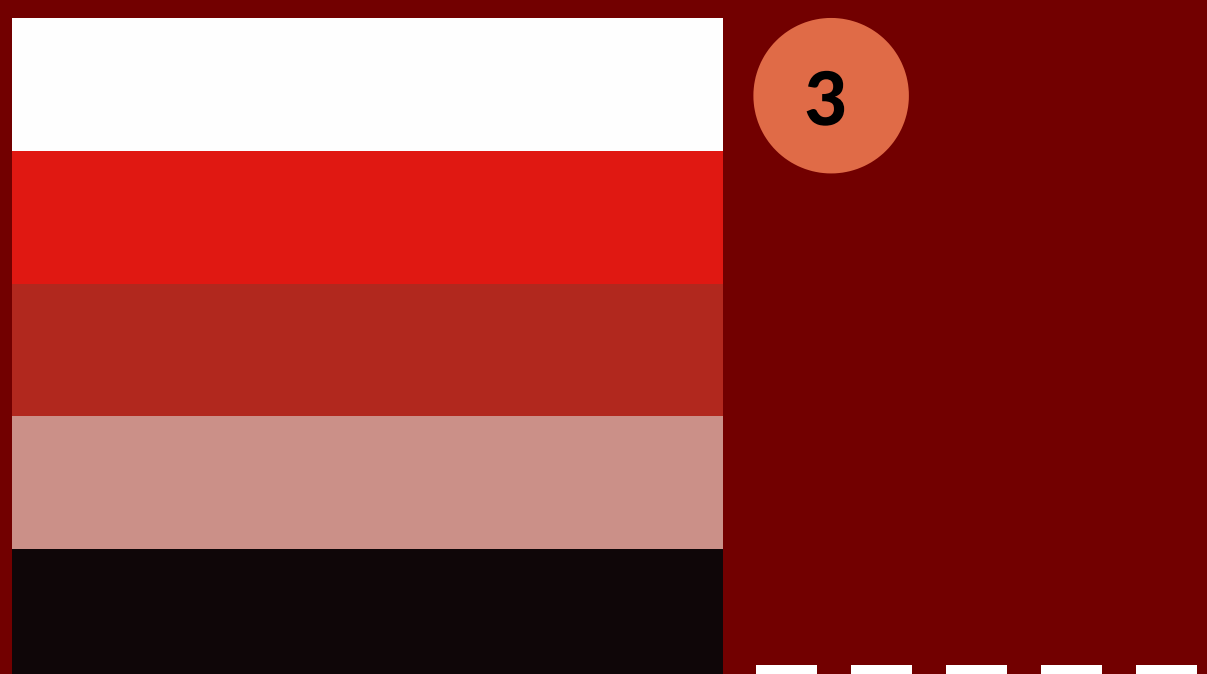
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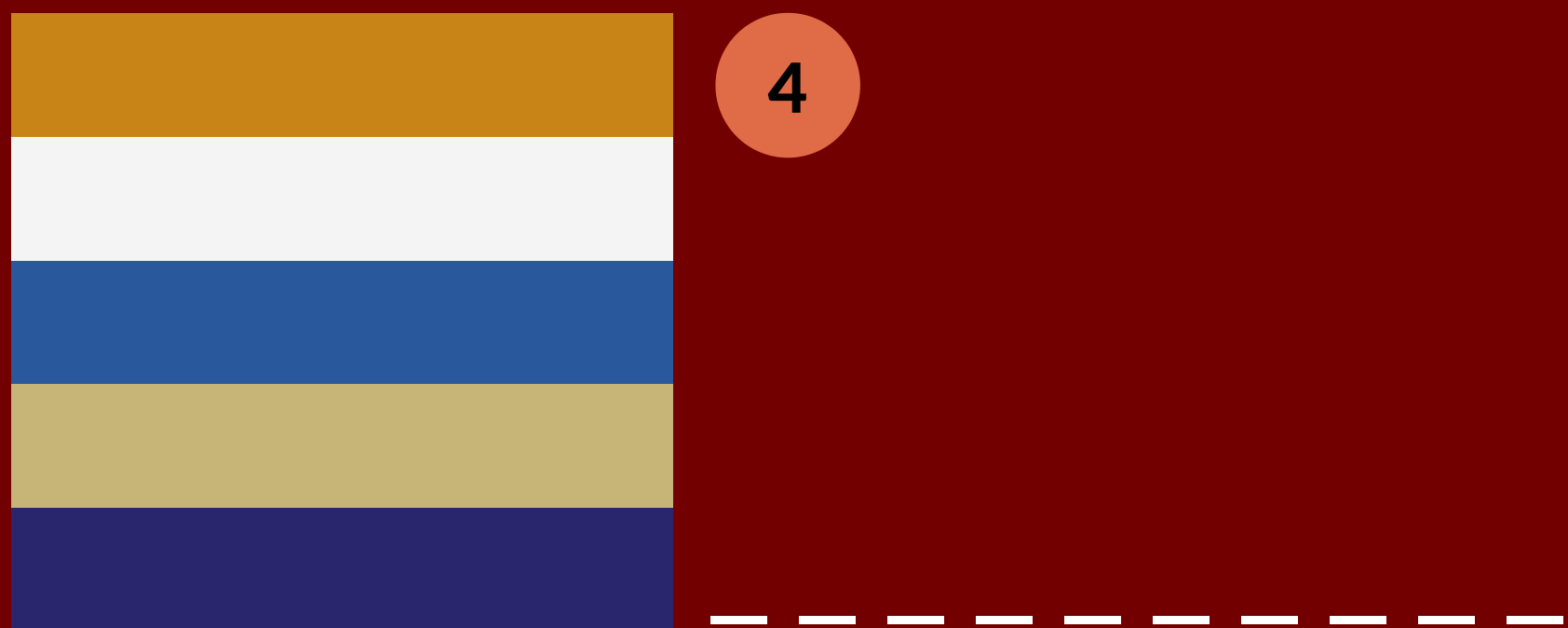
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3



7



4

- SOLUTION
1. ECLAIRS
 2. MELODY
 3. KISMI
 4. ALPENLIEBE
 5. COFFY BITE
 6. MANGO BITE
 7. HAJMOLA

We're not cruel; if you can't figure it out, take a look at the solutions here! But no peeking before trying!

**By: Ummesalama Karu
TYBA**

A Brief Look at Horror in Indian Films

White *saree*, bright red lipstick, the sound of anklets; thunder, a meow and then light footsteps– a typical Indian horror movie. Well, aren't the ghosts tired of the same attire? I mean to catch prey, why will they want to be so unapproachable? Isn't the goal to attract people?

Yet this set up is observed commonly in Bollywood and the daily soaps. Experimenting might go wrong as generally we do not accept a ghost who looks stunningly beautiful, is male rather than female, laughs naturally than the exaggerated 'HAHAHA' thing. The question is why?

The advancement of science and technology for cinema was a bit late in India. Even though we have the ability to incorporate the animations, the computerized effects and sounds, we still look forward to an exaggerated make-up look, the automatic closing of doors and all other melodramatic devices. Bollywood movies appeal to the stereotypical Indian mindset and hence, the scope of experimentation is less. Also, the audience craves immensely for entertainment, even in horror movies, or else the film fails to leave a mark. In the recent past this has changed, but to what extent?

We turn to Western cinema to watch a "horror" movie, because of their experimentation; they don't fall under what's stereotypically horror, and thus, the mystery and deception in the film keeps one hooked. People in the west rejected the stereotypes and norms way before Indians did and thus, their creativity is immense when it comes to horror movies. Western cinema is more about creating notions for what's scary whereas Indian cinema

simply follows it, till date. Some very good productions have been created but 'something' is not 'everything'. For a scene to be scary, you do not need darkness; even during the day things could get scarier provided you create that atmosphere.

Pari is a good Indian horror movie. As far as rejecting stereotypes are concerned, the title definitely does the work. *Pari* means a fairy and the genre is horror. This year's release, *Bulbbul* was one of the first drastically advanced horror films to originate out of India.

We did start the growth of the genre somewhere, but a lot is to be done. Nevertheless, something is always better than nothing, right?

For now.

Sriradha Gupta
TYBA

Fall at St. Mira's

17 November 2019.

We were a hairsbreadth away from winter, but hadn't strayed off from the October heat yet. We were in the beautiful realm of fall. Now, why do I distinguish fall as a separate realm? It deserves to be. Especially when it's fall at St. Mira's College.

That day, while many would crib about having to attend college at 9:00 a.m. on a Sunday for a credit course, I wanted time to stop. I wanted to experience that particular moment in every corner of the campus. In the heat of being a college student, a young girl trying to establish herself somewhere, I never took the time to realize how absolutely magnificent my college was during this time of the year, my favourite time of the year. Now that I can't go back to experience fall at college this year, I miss it like no other. What I like best about the location of St. Mira's is that no matter which part of the city you come from, be it Fatima Nagar, Camp, Kalyani Nagar, the Wadia College bus stands, anywhere, the way to St. Mira's is magical. The Southern Command, the Council Hall area, the Koregaon Park lanes are all so beautiful during fall. It's like entering a different world untouched by the city pollution, traffic and rush. The journey in a way says, "This is just a taste of what you're about to see at your destination." Lo and behold, there we have our beloved, our home, St. Mira's. I am teary eyed as I write this; this particular memory comes back to me as I try to recall the autumn at St. Mira's for this article.

We had just returned from our diwali vacation and winter was starting to show signs of arrival. As soon as I entered the "green space", where Mira Bai's statue lies, I stepped onto this particularly dry leaf. It let out a loud crunch and two little kittens pounced onto that destroyed leaf to fight it, but then got distracted by the laces of my shoe. Those kittens play a major part in making autumn at St. Mira's so special for me. I remember arriving at college at least half an hour early just to spend time with these kittens. It was starting to get chilly around that time and I'd bring an extra jacket with me everyday to let the kittens sleep in my lap, warm and cozy for as long as I could let them. Man, do I miss my little babies. I hope they're happy and warm and loved wherever they are. I can't believe they'll be a year old soon. They grow so fast, I tell you. I don't know if it's just me, but, last autumn, I fell in love with every single person in St. Mira's. Just looking at everyone clad in warm clothes, some shivering, some adorning rosy cheeks... my heart flutters at the memory. Everyone looked so loved and looked after and warm. I could tell that their parents, grandparents, siblings, spouse, roommate, warden, someone who cared for them had ardently insisted on them putting on just one more article of warm clothing, smothering them with warm chai, or Bournvita, or coffee early in the morning.

“Wear a jacket over the sweater! Raste par thandi hogi! You’ll fall sick!” Our professors looked even more welcoming and homely with the shawls draped over one shoulder or the sweatshirts very smartly worn under a saree. How madly I fell in love with the world when I saw this at St. Mira’s. I spent a lot of my autumn in the auditorium. We were working on a play around that time and full fledged practices had begun. The cold had turned nipper at this point in time and every morning, we made it a point to have garam chai at the tapri.

Right behind the bus stand, there was a couple who sold breakfast every morning, and no matter what we had when we left from home that morning, we’d make it a point to have hot wada sambhar and idli sambhar or sabudana wadas. Standing there, not knowing who paid for what or how much they paid,

blissfully unaware of the impending doom of a virus, we bonded. Now, I terribly miss my girls. I miss being cocooned in the warmth of someone’s arms right after I climb off the bike, the welcoming shelter of the auditorium, taking fifteen minute naps on the auditorium chairs during lunch break because it was just so cozy! St. Mira’s during the fall is my home. I haven’t been home since a very long time. The experiences documented in this article happened about 11 to 14 months ago. It’s been that long since I have felt like home. After having studied, through our syllabus and personally, many pieces of literature and art, I developed a new understanding, a new appreciation towards my surroundings, towards nature, towards the sun, the rains, towards autumn. I yearn to appreciate these at St. Mira’s, to look at the very same fall with a different lens, but I think this yearning will drain the life out of my being before I can survive to live the next fall, or at least the hopes of living it at St. Mira’s. Please, stay home and stay safe. I beg of you. Please help me make it to fall 2021 at St. Mira’s. Let me witness such magic again. Stay home. Stay safe.

Harleen Kaur Grewal
SYBA



Did You Know?

Lord Krishna is known for killing many demons, and one such demoness is Putna. King Kans appointed Putna to kill Krishna once and he believed that she'll be able to do it as Putna was a black magic practitioner and a witch; in other words a *rakshasi*.



There is an Island of Dolls in Mexico City, where hanging from trees are hundreds of dolls - decapitated, naked, mould encrusted dolls. It was an ordinary island until one day the caretaker/owner of the island, Don Julian Santana Barbera found a drowned girl on the bank of the river with a doll. As a symbol of showing respect to the girl, he hung the doll upside down on a tree. Convinced that the girl's spirit was haunting him, he started hanging dolls everyday. 50 years later, his body was found at the same place where the girl drowned. According to rumours, the dolls whisper at night. Some even say that the dolls blink.

Source: [Business Insider](#), [The Milwaukee Independent](#)

**A lifeless body lies breathing on the bed,
For years it's lain there;
partially dead.**

Shreya Bhide
SYBA

An Indian stereotype is that if something is goes wrong in the presence of a Bengali woman then definitely she has something to do with it. People use phrases like- *Bangalan kala jadu karti hain, Bangalan ne vash mei kar liya hai*, etc.



People in the 17th and the 18th century believed that women lost their virginity to demons and were hence, impure in nature. This seems to be the basis of the witch-hunts that were the 'rage' then.

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