

# THE MIRA PRESS

FOR STUDENTS  
BY STUDENTS

# THE BOOK CAFE

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# From the Editor's Desk

Hello and welcome to the greatest show!

This month the team has carefully curated a carousel of literary aesthetics for all the book heads (or movie buffs \*wink wink\*) out there.

Let's spruce things up and introduce this in the form of a poem:

Whether you're a Potterhead or an ardent lover of Shakespeare,  
it's all in here! What is that I hear?

A comic chatter?

Well, come on out and express your genre!

Hear ye, hear ye sound the bells!

Here comes Romeo with his Juliet.

A work of art which acts for many as a silhouette.

What if they never died and had children?

Would everyone still treat their love as forbidden?

Virginia Woolf, Emily Dickinson along with Sylvia Plath

Strong willed poems and stories each one hath.

So, raise the curtains and feel each page across your finger

As you, my dear reader, will have no time to linger!



# Unmasking Souls through Stories

I always believed that I was born in the wrong century. I have always been a person who loves classic literature, royal palaces, living in a cottage, riding a horse and so on. The lifestyle of the vintage era always pulled me into its universe. The times of 'The Dead Poets Society' to classics of Jane Austen are still popular among the youth who admire literature. Stories complete us. It is difficult to imagine a world without stories. In fact, it's not just limited to the stories that we read and hear. However, literature finds a way to intrigue us by romanticizing the methods of learning and paving its way to aesthetic appeal too. Stories do not just give us the ability to extend our limit of imagination but also create a way to self-discovery, finding the passion in our lives and even falling in love. Theatre has been a huge source of entertainment and happiness for people of all ages since the time of Shakespeare to the recent times of Pablo Neruda. These plays and operas would have not existed if not for stories, authors, poets and playwrights. A pinch of the aesthetics makes it more beautiful and attractive than ever before and makes one fall in love with books and literature.



The interests for the 18th century European culture to the age of Renaissance has been quite appealing to the youth these days, not just the books, but things like the smell of the dark coffee beans when it rains, or when one sits next to the window of their room and gets a view of the palace that is right across the road. The appreciation for nature and art, fondness for history and warmth of a bonfire next to us. The gravity of these aesthetics that pulls one towards them include dark academia, cottage core, light academia, ethereal, minimalist, and so on. The journey to these aesthetics and literature is a never-ending process, and every story is unique, paving its path into society and filling the voids it encounters. We are the magical creations of the world who will eventually be forgotten in history. Words have the power to be given voices. Not all these words are heard by everyone, but their echoes are felt everywhere you go.

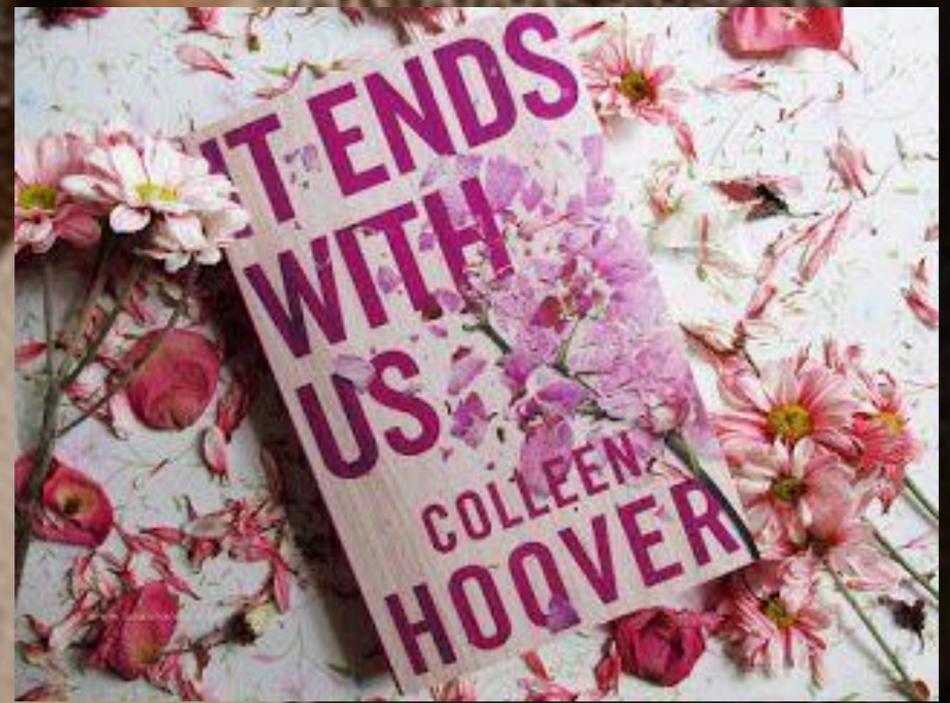
-Vasudha Ramani 2

# It Ends With Us

'It Ends With Us' is a complicated love story by the author Colleen Hoover. Why is it complicated you ask? This is because sometimes the one who loves you the most is the one who ends up hurting you the most.

The author guides us through a complicated story which teaches us about the sacrifices in a relationship, the struggle to ask for forgiveness and well, love. The story begins with our protagonists, Lily Bloom and Ryle Kincaid, who have accidentally bumped into each other on the roof. They are poles apart, while Lily fancies a stable relationship filled with love and laughter, Ryle on the other hand, is an averse to any kind of relationship and his main focus is his career as a neurosurgeon. As they meet and get to talking, they could feel the sparks fly and the fireflies bloom and what happens next is history.

To get to know a little more about our protagonists, Lily had an abusive childhood. Her father, who was the mayor of the city, would often get drunk and physically hurt Lily's mother. This led her to keep a diary addressing all the entries to Ellen (Ellen DeGenres) and her secret relationship with her former boyfriend Atlas Corrigan.



Her character as portrayed by the author has gone through emotional turmoil and the burden of hopelessness of not helping her mother.

Ryle, along with his sister Allsya, grew up in a wealthy family. But with all that money and power, comes trauma and suffocation. As a young child, Lily made a vow never to grow up like her mother who was not able to stand up for herself. Years and years of emotional turmoil made Lily very protective of who she interacts with and how they treat her. Ryle had anger issues which sometimes he did not have control over. When Ryle and Lily had their first tiff, Ryle accidentally pushed Lily and she was hurt. Lily was determined to leave him but neglected the incident because she was falling in love with Ryle. She knew that Ryle was not a bad person and he would never hurt her intentionally.

## It Ends With Us

Soon his jealousy got the best of him and this was the last time he ever laid hands on Lily. However, after this incident Lily made a decision to save herself as she could not follow her mother's footsteps. Seeing no way out, she turned to Atlas for comfort and gained refuge in his home and heart and decided to finally stand up for herself.

Not everyone in this world is born evil and there is no such thing as bad people. We're all just people who end up doing bad things and every choice which we make to live our lives has its consequences later in the future. Standing up for yourself and trying to own up to any kind of abuse takes patience, courage and effort. Victims in an abusive relationship usually cannot fathom how to escape and their judgement is clouded due to their love or hatred for the abuser. Physical and mental abuse torments the person and leaves the person with memories they want to erase and let go of, but these memories will either go away sooner or later depending how knee deep in an abusive relationship you were in. "All humans make mistakes. What determines a person's character aren't the mistakes we make. It's how we take those mistakes and turn them into lessons rather than excuses"

-Mihika Lele  
FYBBA

But as these fights kept on recurring due to Ryle's inability to control his anger, Lily wanted to help him and her relationship and therefore her decision of walking out the door and leaving him again went down the hole. Lily was slowly turning into her mother, even if she did not realize it. Jealousy, heartbreak and trust issues were a couple of things that Lily and Ryle were no strangers to. Even though Ryle was in love with Lily, he could not get past his raging trust issues when it came to Lily's ex-boyfriend, Atlas. On realizing that they have gotten in touch recently, Ryle lost his temper and began questioning his decision of being with Lily.



## Geronimo Stilton: Secret Agent

This was the first book that I read and eventually, reading developed into a hobby. It revolves around Geronimo Stilton and the things that happen in his life and also, there are many sequels to it. This book is so close to my heart, I was in love with this book. I was in 5th grade when I came across this book and it had so many eye-catching pictures and the stories were so good. There was fun, mystery, drama and everything that I could ever think of. This book revealed a whole new world to me. A world which I had no idea even existed, where imagination was everything. It is so beautifully written and the details of events happening in his life, his thoughts are supported by great pictures. It is a perfect combination for a reader.

- Lavina Waghlekar

# Bella Swan

Do you have a favorite character from any book or story? Well, I do and I would say that mine is Bella Swan from The Twilight Sequel. She is my favorite character as she inspired me through her actions of protecting her loved ones and her admirable personality.

"About three things I was absolutely positive. First, Edward was a vampire. Second, there was a part of him - and I didn't know how potent that part might be - that thirsted for my blood. And third, I was irrationally and irrevocably in love with him. Ah, it's an off day when I don't get it. I'm telling me how edible I smell. How strong you are. You break the furniture.". "I stared at their faces, so different, so similar. Devastatingly, inhumanly beautiful. You were supposed to be dead. You exist, not irritating me. I believe that I'd just stepped into this bizarre, beautiful world not despising me. Bella Swan. Bella Cullen. The deal was a thousand times what I liked the sound of. It was much better. It was a hundred years, and I was a hundred times more likely in this world than they had in my clear-cut bedroom.". "I stared because their faces, so different, so similar, were all devastatingly, inhumanly beautiful." - Stephenie Meyer



Bella is a seventeen year old girl who is from Phoenix, Arizona. She lives with her father, after her parents' divorce, as per the novel. Her appearance is quite breathtaking; brown eyes, brown hair and pale skin. She has an average height with a skinny figure, sweet, shy and is kind to everyone, regardless of their attitude towards her. I personally think that is sweet because sometimes when we do not like someone, we are mean to them, aren't we? She has always wanted to try something new, which makes her full of surprises, which in turn makes one wonder as to what will happen next.

Bella moves to Forks, a town in Washington with her father, a completely new place, knows nothing about it and is familiar with no one. Apart from being shy and quiet, she knows her identity and what she wants - this shows the element of angst in her. She joins a new high school, makes a few new friends and that is when she meets Edward Cullen who is a vampire and

studying in the same high school with everyone unaware of his secret. From the second she sees Edward, she is enamored by him. Although Edward tries to stay away from her, that does not stop her from proving her love for him and gradually he falls for her as much as she falls for him. Bella is described as quiet, clumsy and shy. However, she ends up being one of the strongest characters in the novel. The small power that she has inside her, upholds such a strong level of Altruism when it comes to protecting her loved ones. She is ferocious in fighting for what she wants but never deviates or turns into someone she is not. Bella is willing to make hard choices and then see those decisions through. No matter how many people want to kill her, exploit her on being a human with a vampire; that is naturally not possible, but she makes it possible, stays true to herself and ends up getting everything she fought for. Isn't that inspiring?

# An Ode to Virginia Woolf



A woman was she,  
That was her biggest flaw.  
Society knew not her talents and questioned her thoughts.

So simple it was for people to judge her,  
Their excuse was that society would not hear of her.  
Yet she toiled away till her heart knew no rest.  
Her efforts never dulled, and she always gave her best.

Virginia Woolf so powerful was her name,  
She stuck to her strengths and did not care about fame.  
Her father's faith in her urged her to move forward,  
She refused to let her dreams be murdered.

I look at the world around me and wonder,  
How easily we throw around the word, "struggle."  
It is when we go against society  
That one truly understands, we are living in a bubble.

- Chandana Roy

## Looking for Alaska Book Review

-Purva Joshi

'When I look at my room, I see a girl who loves books.'  
The perfect way to describe us girls, isn't it? That's what Alaska was. The most feminist character I've come across. A little bit moody, sassy, emotionally unstable and a whole different level of secretive. That's what made her even more mysterious and interesting.

You get these questions - 'What is wrong with her?' 'What's her story?' 'What does she mean by that sentence?' Till the end of the book, you never get to know that. Not properly at least and that's okay, right? Even though we know someone very well, there is always something that we don't know about them. And even if you feel angry, upset or disappointed about it, you just accept it later on.

When I read 'Before' at the start of the book, I knew, I just knew that this book was going to make me cry. John Green never lets you down. He always takes you on a bittersweet journey where you laugh, cry, smile, shake your head and gush about what a brilliant author he is. You feel connected to the characters until the end of the book. They stay with you as long as you live. The one thing you keep asking yourself after the book ends is - 'Everything's a maybe, isn't it?'



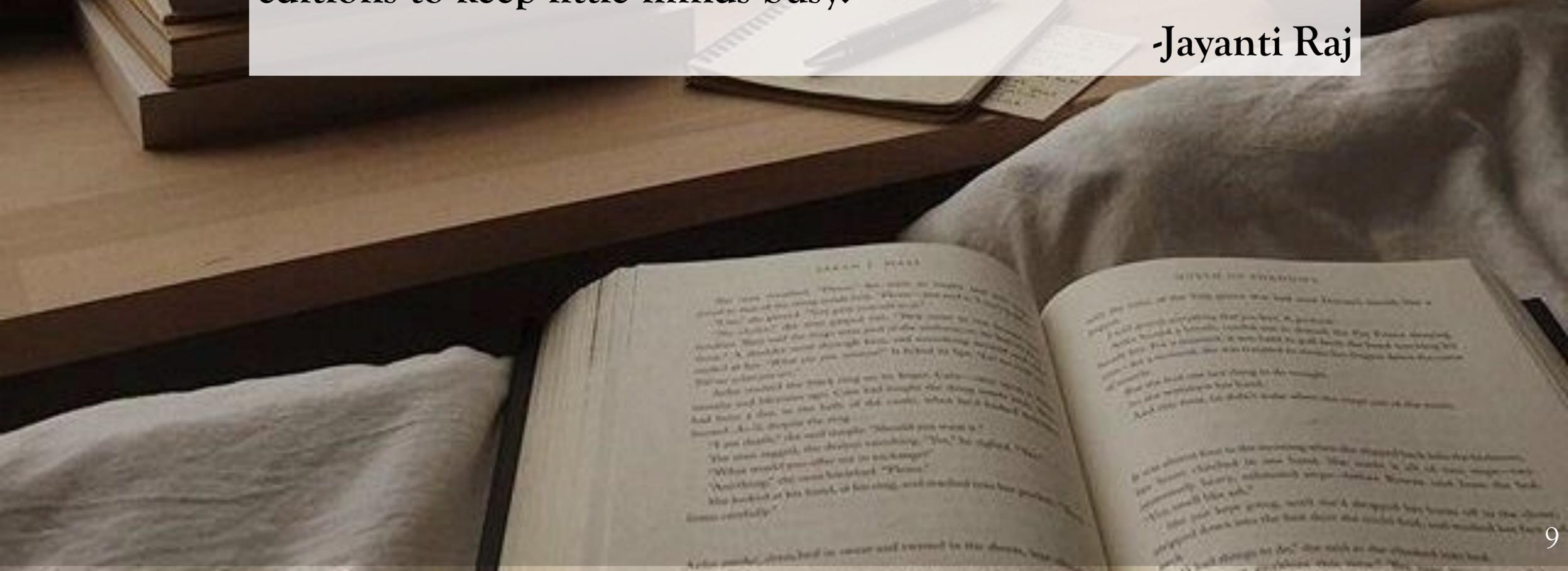
# Childhood Nostalgia: Magic Pot



As a child, we all have adored the periodical called 'MAGIC POT'. I still wonder how a Rs 20 book has a valuable influence on our childhood! Those simple stories conveying a message in the end. The accompanying colorful pictures helped them to retain our interest.

The variety of activities that include coloring, joining the dots, simple counting, word games and so on kept us engaged for hours. It also comes up with purely read and color editions to keep little minds busy.

-Jayanti Raj





Margaret Atwood was born in Ottawa, Canada in 1939. She studied at the University of Toronto, then took her Master's degree at Radcliffe College, Massachusetts, in 1962. She is Canada's most eminent novelist and poet, and also writes short stories, critical studies, screenplays, radio scripts and books for children; her works have been translated into over 30 languages. She is a feminist and show it by her writings. Her various novels were later turned into movies and web series. Her first publication was a book of poetry, *The Circle Game*, which received the Governor General's Literary Award for Poetry. Several more poetry collections have followed, including *Interlunar*, *Morning in the Burned house* and *Eating Fire: Selected Poetry*. Her books of short fiction include *Dancing Girls and Other Stories*, *Wilderness Tips* and *Good Bones*.

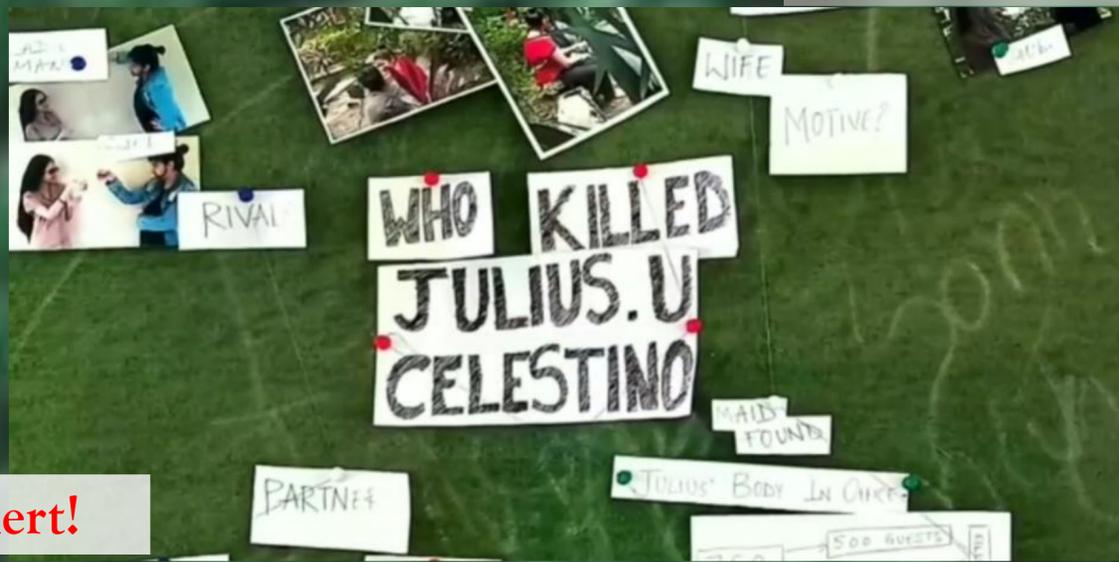
My favorite novel by her is 'The Handmaid's Tale'. This series has 2 parts and both are dystopian novels. Dystopian genre imagines worlds or societies where life is extremely bad because of deprivation or oppression or terror, and human society is characterized by human misery. The Handmaid's Tale draws on the feminist idea that in a male-dominated society the way men look at women is a form of control and even violence.

'The Handmaid's Tale' demonstrates the full context of the human experience through not only the positive interactions but through the vast number of negative elements of the protagonist Offred's life. But it's through these negative interactions that a better lesson can be learnt and a greater individual mental and physical experience can be formed. It also argues that legally controlling women's reproductive freedom is morally and politically wrong. 'The Handmaid's Tale' demonstrates the full context of the human experience through not only the positive interactions but through the vast number of negative elements of the protagonist Offred's life. But it's through these negative interactions that a better lesson can be learnt and a greater individual mental and physical experience can be formed.

-Kanishka

# Who Killed Julius U Celestino?

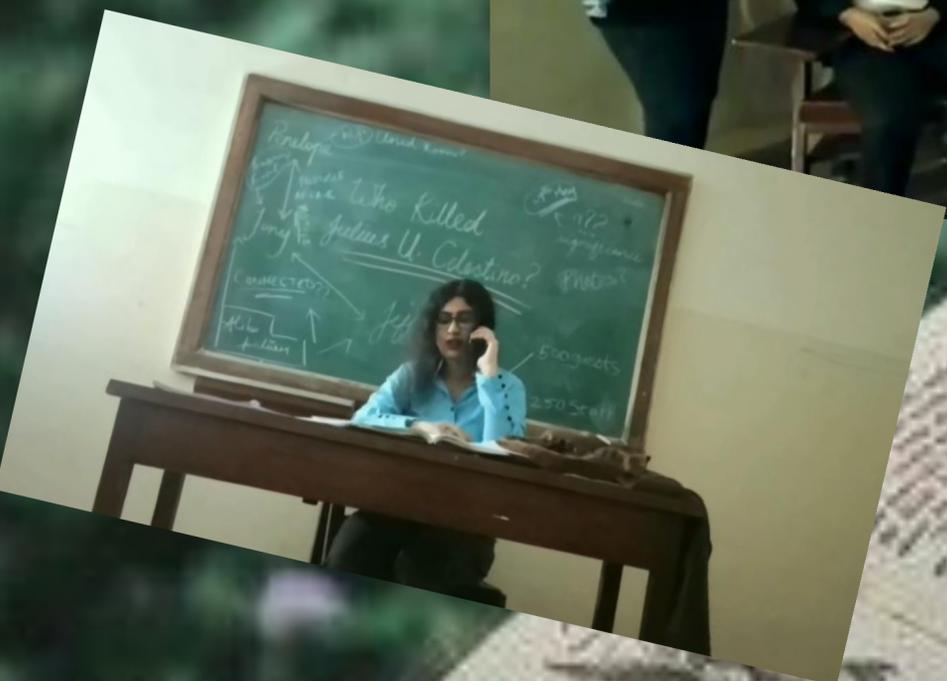
-Falaqnaaz Sayyed



**Spoiler alert!**

The real magic of a film doesn't happen when it's on screen, it's what goes on behind the scenes that actually makes this magic happen, As a Scriptwriter and Actor of '*Who killed Julius U. Celestino?*' I can gladly say the making of this short film was one of my most memorable experiences. When I enrolled for Mira Manch Queens, our theatre club, I didn't know what I was getting into, I just wanted to learn something new and make a few friends and I am proud to say I actually did do that. Shreya and Harleen were a literal joy to work with. And the rest of the team and crew was just plain lovely. We had various brainstorming meets initially when the script was being written, we had a plain draft into our mind but we didn't know where to take it from there, it was in one of those meets where suddenly I suggested we could name and foreshadow characters and stories from Greek mythology for this play. The 'U' in Julius U Celestino actually stands for Ulysses, the famous hero that was favoured by Homer in his world famous 'Odyssey'. To complement that we decided to name Julius's wife Penelope, whom we all know is also the name of Ulysses's wife in Greek mythology.

In our short film it is shown that Penelope is having an affair with Antonio or Tony for short, this actually comes from "Penelopiad" written by Margaret Atwood where it is mentioned that the real Penelope had an affair with a guy called Antonio. Let's now talk about our significant and prominent character, the maid, who we decided to name Leda. The reason behind this was to foreshadow the whole myth of Leda and the swan and how Zeus rapes her, in our play, Leda is raped by Julius. The last literary aspect or allusion, if you will, that we decided to put in our play was to name our badass detective Eris. Eris in Greek myth, is the goddess of mischief. And our detective does bear a striking resemblance to her personality wise. Apart from all this a little behind the scene detail that I would like to reveal is that throughout the play you can see Eris and Leda wearing the same matching rings in order to hint at some kind of a connection.



The wine everyone is drinking while actually killing Julius is nothing but coke and sprite mixed. Also a little hidden fact: the eye witness that sees Penelope, Tony and Jeff running after killing them was actually played by me as we were falling short on actors and had only a very small amount of time to film the whole thing, that's my hint of hair that's visible in the scene. While writing we actually had a couple of names ready to name the play, initially we were going to name the play "The artfulness of known strangers" but decided in the end to go with "Who killed Julius U Celestino" To conclude I'll just say, Greek myths are so powerful, and they have been present and inculcated in various stories and novels throughout history. As an admirer of Greek mythology it was obvious that we would try to bring in some aspect of it into our writing and it's amazing how everything fell into place. The writing and acting process of our play was tiresome and exhausting but if I could I would revisit each and every moment of it.

-Falaqnaaz Sayyed  
TYBA

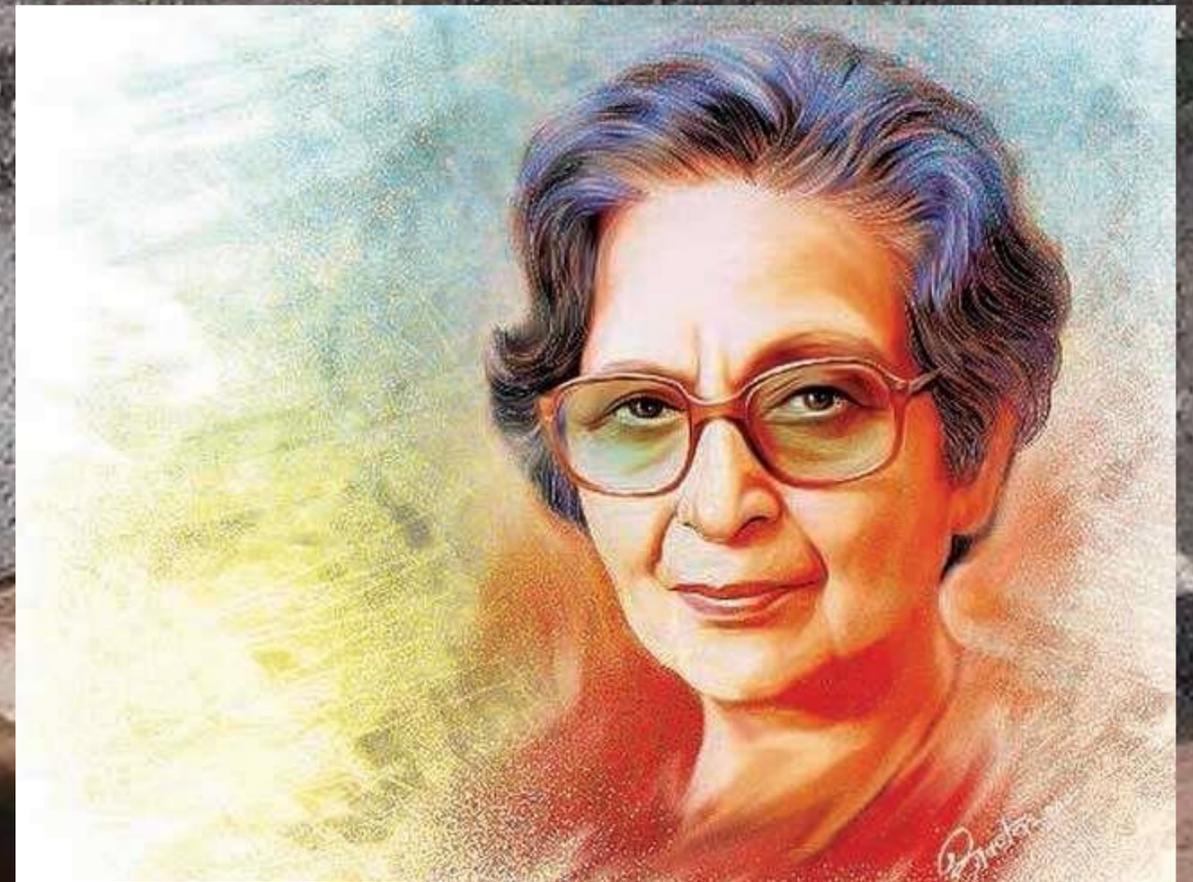
# Amrita Pritam: Poetess

-Mrudula Neware

Whenever someone talks about how beautifully women are written by women I'm reminded of Amrita Pritam, A great writer and even a great individual. With many firsts to name to name herself, Amrita wrote passionately about love, romance and equality. Born in 1919 in Gujranwala Punjab, she migrated to India during the partition . Amrita was Punjab's first female poet. She was also the first First woman to win the Sahitya Akademi award. She also won a Jnanpith award for her novel Kagaz Te Canvas in 1982. While her love and admiration for Sahir Ludhianvi and her relationship with her partner Imroz is frequently discussed in the media often forgetting the brilliant writer and beautiful human she was.

During the partition, Amrita wrote her poem , "Ajj akkhan Waris Shah nu" in In which she called out Waris Shah ,the writer of the epic tale Heer and Ranjha to speak from his grave. This poem was painful and heartbreaking which pictured the horrors of partition. Unlike other authors

Who wrote very politically uncensored about the Partition and its aftermath , she decided to write it in a more emotional and humane manner.



At a time when stereotypical roles around women used to creep the big silver screens (the bechaari) and even literature, Amrita's women were flawed, vulnerable, angry, trapped in societal rules yet hopeful, free spirited, daring and outspoken. In the black and whitish toned 60s India when modernity and traditional intellect were like two edges of a river that would never meet, Amrita built a bridge between the two through her writings.<sup>13</sup>

## Amrita Pritam: Poetess



In her short story “Junglee Booti” she highlights how patriarchal notions are fed to women at a young age often standing in the way of their personal happiness and freedom. In another short story titled “Dua aur Lath”, the protagonist Hardev develops a soft place in his heart for Brahmi, the one who helped him when he was hurt. He then asks himself and realizes how the society is interested in knowing relationship between two individuals.

"यही तो दनुियवालो की बुरी आदत हैकी वो आदमी से आदमी का रश्ता जांिा चाहते है, वे आदमी को पीछे देखते है, रश्ते को पहले। क्या औरत का मुुंह औरत का िहीुं होता? क्या वो जरूर माँका मुुंह होिा चाहहए? बहि का मुुंह होिा चाहहए? बीवी का मुुंह होिा चाहहए? बेहि का मुुंह होिा चाहहए? औरत का मुुंह औरत का िहीुं हो सकता?

Amrita not only broke barriers in the literary world but also in her personal life as well. Married off at the age of 16 , she ended her unhappy marriage on friendly terms with her husband . She then pursued writing and won many awards. Fell in love with Sahir Ludhianvi but the relationship somehow remained incomplete. Few years after that Imroz, who was deeply in love with her, entered her life and never left. They shared a home together as two individuals who admired and respected each other at a time when the term “live in relationship “wasn’t even heard of. She dedicated her last poem “Main tenu phir milangi (I will meet you again) to him. Their togetherness lasted 40 years till her last breath on 31October 2005.16years after her passing, she still continues to inspire people across generations. One of her poems’ आज मैंिे ‘s verse beautifully captures the life she lived.

"और जहाँभी आजाद रूह कक झलक पडे समझ लेिा वही मेरा घर है।"

-Mrudula Neware

# An Art of Living

-Kanchan Keswani

## THE BHAGAVAD GITA



### What is the BHAGAVAD GITA ?

When asked to people the mass answers are that it is a Hindu scripture, a religious book.

GITA is not a religious book. It is a book which gives you a way to live. It is the world's first LIFE guide. A book of Answers.

The setting of Gita is the battlefield of Kurukshetra The Mahabharata where Arjun's confused and Krishna becomes his mentor and gives him guidance to do right. Every person has confusions and dilemmas to do or not to do to be or not to be and that's how Gita begins.

Gita is as simple 'as it is'. It is not complex but simplicity is the problem of Human intellect. When you tell people simple things they think through the world because it is simple. Therefore, they say that from 700 verses a Gita reader will only understand the verses which are meant for them and the answers they are seeking.

The verses I am very fond of explain that this body which you are proud of is nothing but as fragile as clay. This body is in a cage made of Fire, Earth, Air, Water and Space (*agni, pashan, vayu, jal, vasudha bas panch tatva ka pinjara hai KAYA*). You are not just a fragile body. Your 'self' is your Soul. A splendor creation of the creator. Your soul is an Energy. And Energy neither can be created nor be destroyed.

*"na jAyate mriyate vA kadAchinnAyaM bhUtvA vA na bhUyaH*

*ajo nityaH shAshvatoayaM purANo na hanyate hanyamAne sharIre"*

The self is neither born nor does it ever die nor having once existed, does it ever cease to be. The self is without birth, eternal, immortal and ageless. It is not destroyed when the body is destroyed. The one who realizes this truth is able to distinguish between the nature of one's Qualities (*gunas*) and one's Activities (*karma*) Gita says to relate to your self (soul) you need Tolerance, Spirituality, Mind, Power, Creation of Divinity and Knowledge.

- **Tolerance:-** If a person can't tolerate things can be easily distracted. Tolerating pain is understandable but one should also learn to tolerate success and good times cause they both distract us.
- **Spirituality:-** Being spiritual does not mean encountering ghosts. Some people have these aspects. Spirituality is about how it transforms your daily life. Your perspectives, worldviews. Your outlook towards the work you do and relationships. In true means Spirituality is a life transforming journey than some occult or supernatural experiences.
- **Mind:-** The mind can be a friend or an enemy to you it depends on how you deal with the mind.



*"shrI bhagavAn uvAcha asanShayaM mahA-  
bAho mano durnigrahaM chalam abhyAsen  
a tu kaunteya vairAgyeNa cha gRihyate"*

Gita says that the mind is more difficult to control than the wind. But it can be controlled by repeated practice and detachment.

If you befriend it will empower you but if you don't deal right it will lead to your downfall.

- **Power:-** Every person needs to understand that they are way more powerful than what they are going through at the moment. The confusions, the challenges, problems, heartbreaks they are smaller than them. That you have power to make a difference than that impact.
- **Divinity:-** Start looking at Divinity everywhere and in every place around you including people who are doing better. We don't have to go to a place of worship to look at the presence of divinity. You can look at it in nature and in other people. Start looking at the splendor of the creator in the creation. *Bible Philippians 4:13- "I can do all things through him who gives me strength.* Any kind of creative process is not entirely yours, you are just a channel."
- **Knowledge:-** *"na hi jNAnena sadRiShaM pavitramiha vidyate taysvayaM yogasansiddhaH kAlenAtmani vindati"*

No individual is above Knowledge. Knowledge is the world's biggest strength. There is nothing as purifying as divine Knowledge.

Gita has influenced many legends and famous personalities. There are many books, songs and films made in an influence from Gita.

Albert Einstein When I read the Bhagavad Gita and reflect about how god created this universe everything else seems so superfluous.

Mahatma Gandhi-The Bhagavad Gita calls on humanity to dedicate body, mind, and soul to pure duty and not to become mental voluptuaries at the mercy of random desires and undisciplined impulses.

Swami Vivekananda-The secret of karma yoga which is to perform actions without any fruitive desires is taught by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita.

Henry David Thoreau- How much more admirable is the Bhagavad Gita than all the ruins of the East.

Aldous Huxley, Sunita Williams, Annie Besant, Warren Hastings, Sammi Kapoor, Kajol, Sonam Kapoor, Jawaharlal Nehru and immeasurably more.

This list is as long as 700 verses of Gita.

PS:- The Bhagavad Gita is not a mythological story.

-Kanchan Keswani



# Sita's Sister

-Abha  
Patwardhan



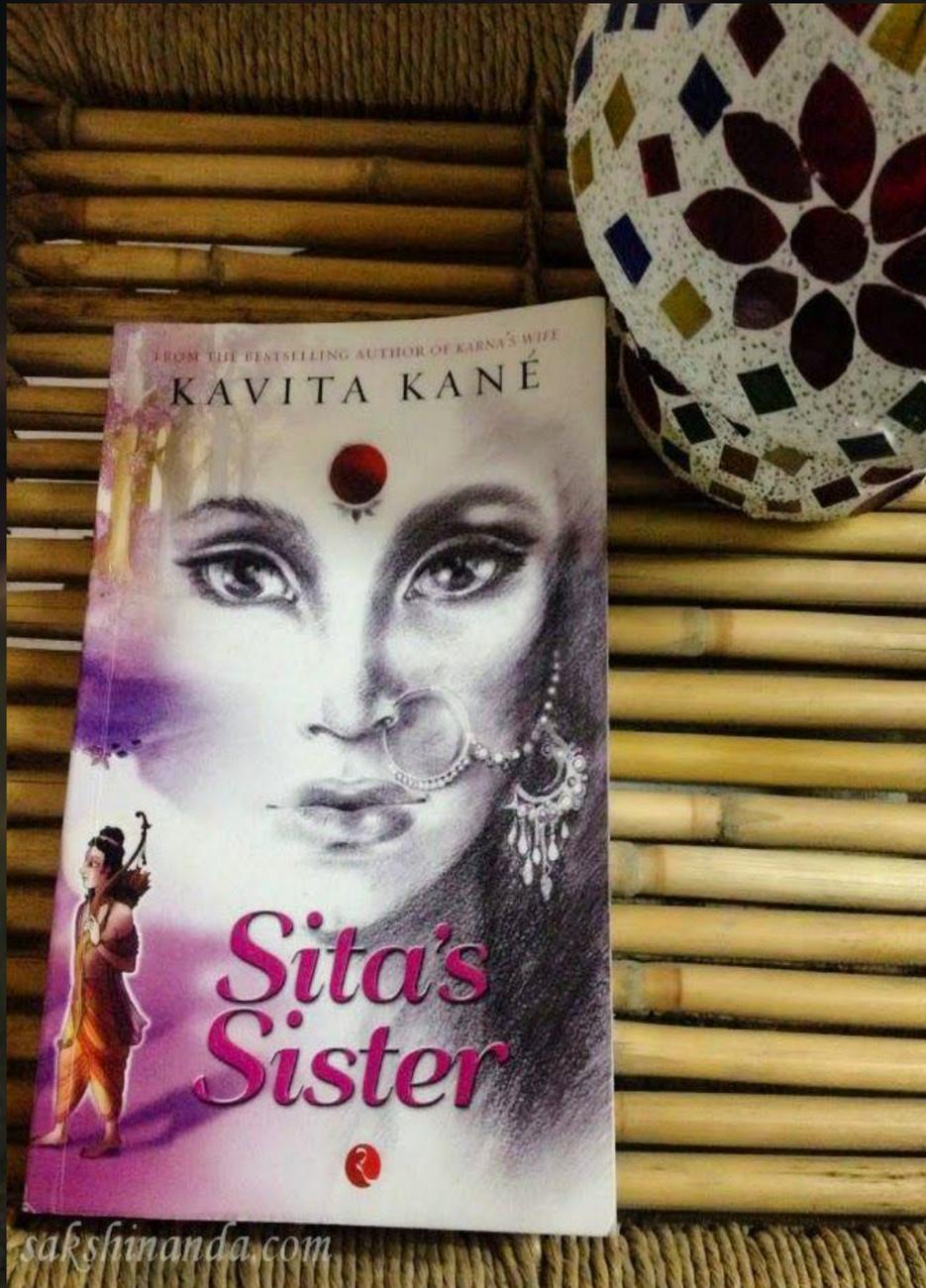
~ The value of a moment gone and lived often lies in the strength of its memory. ~

In this one line, Kavita Kane summarizes what I believe to be mythology. A moment, fleeting and inconsequential; or a story, passed down through generations until it is merely a whisper of the original tale. But it doesn't matter what I believe, I suppose.

Our parents, and others in their generation wholeheartedly believe in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, perhaps the two most spoken about mythological marvels of India. Both have been the subject of several modifications and adaptations, Kavita Kane's 'Sita's Sister' being one of the modern ones. The tale of Ramayana told through the eyes of Urmila, the sister of Sita, the book is poignant and touching. Seamlessly blending mythology and fiction, it is a prime example of what we refer to as 'mythological fiction'. The term is extremely ironic in many ways though, because mythology is perhaps the first example of literary fiction. I can't talk about the impact of mythology on literature, because I believe mythology to be literature.

Written by Maharishi Valmiki, the original Ramayana is around 24,000 verses long. I'll admit, even as a bibliophile, I do not have the patience to read a book that long. Sita's Sister however, is 310 pages long, and an insightful read in many ways.

Urmila, the vivacious and blunt sister of the revered Maithili, has been sidelined her whole life to pave way for her adopted sister. From her birth as the daughter of the bhumi to her samadhi in her mother's folds, Sita's journey of pain and sacrifice has been told several times, and in several forms. But Urmila, as the first born; but not the first child, has always been disregarded.



Written from the perspective of a modern woman, Urmila as a character is real and relatable, and her plight will make even the coldest of hearts melt. Secondary to her sister, and secondary in importance to her husband, Lakshmana, who vowed to protect his brother even in the most dire of circumstances, Urmila stood tall and strong through the many trials and tribulations of life.

What could have come across as a glorification of the character was entirely justified in a splendidly written monologue delivered by Urmila. "Today in this room, we have talked about all sorts of dharma of the father and the sons, of the king and the princes, of the Bhramin and the Kshatriya, even of the wife for her husband. But is there no dharma of the husband for his wife? No dharma of the son for his mother? Is it always about the father, sons and brothers?" These words are enough to shut any misogynists' mouths up even today. So the impact of these words in a time where women were simply meant to be seen and not heard would have been freeing and devastating in equal measure.

As a modern woman herself, Kavita Kane seems to have poured all the pent up frustration at the age-old oppression system on the pages of this book through beautifully strung sentences. One cannot help but relate to Urmila when she is questioned on how she dares to speak so shamefully in the presence of elders and gurus. "Princess, how dare you speak such outrageous words? Do you think this is your father, King Janak's court that encourages free thinking women like that philosopher Gargi to debate and argue shamelessly? This is not so! This is the assembly of the greatest minds of Ayodhya!" Urmila's disregard of these words convinces the reader that she will neither accept nor protest. But the fiery character retorts in her own way.

“You are right, Guru Kashyap, Ayodhya is not Mithila. Mithila does not treat her women so shabbily. And unlike Sage Gargi in my father’s royal court, I did not receive any answers to my questions. Not that I expected any.” Kavita Kane brings to life a character that we all want to see, maybe more so than the character she truly was. If only all of this could have been backed up by solid proof. Maybe then young women like us wouldn’t need to look up to characters like Black Widow and Scarlet Witch as role models.



At the end of the day, they remain what they are: myths. Beautiful and rich tales, but myths nevertheless. Our mythological texts are maybe our greatest truths, something to learn from, to adopt and incorporate in modern literature.

To blend literatures from eras with many thousands of years between brings back the culture of a great nation, a nation that will hopefully reach its full potential someday. Books like these seem to me an ode to the sacrifice of the women whose stories were never told.

However, had this book not been rooted in mythology, it would have come across as preachy and moralizing. That is why mythology is so important for literature, because it allows us to write about holier-than-thou characters from our past, and humanize them to suit the modern world. It is important to understand our traditions, instead of blindly following. That being said, sometimes it’s okay to treat our mythological stories as we treat Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty, fairy tales with a ‘moral of the story!’

# Modern Day Darcy

-Delna Anklesaria

Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy is known for his disagreeable countenance, his proud manner, and of course, his wealth. It didn't do him well at the balls he attended, and people thought him unworthy of being compared to his dearest friend Charles Bingley. But he was just gravely misunderstood most of the time, and I relate to that. So, imagine a Gen Z Darcy. I have a feeling our beloved Mr. Darcy would not be so different today. Imagine a gorgeous twenty-year-old man who's unaware of his features and the fact that everyone turns to look at him when he enters a room.

He goes to the same college as Charles and dresses down because he doesn't want to attract attention towards himself in any way at all, but he still manages to make his outfits impeccable for every occasion. He's a little old school and prefers trousers and shirts over jeans and t-shirts. If there's a black-tie event that he has to attend, he'd slap on some black nail paint and silver rings to go with his fit, he has good taste.

Darcy studies something like Business, but his true love is: The Arts. He's very eloquent and can address how he truly feels through his writing. He has a secret emo Tumblr page where he posts all his original poetry, and he's blissfully unaware of the fact that his sister Georgiana knows about it. Speaking of his relationship with Georgiana, Darcy is what you'd call the typical protective older brother and would definitely intimidate all her partners. Charles forces him to go to dorm parties, and Darcy ends up being unsociable and plays with the dog instead.



He's conveniently deaf when someone calls out to him but listens to all the gossip and silently judges everyone from where he sits. He's also the perfect 'wingman' for Charles and covers for him when his parents call.

He's also probably overthinking the entire time because his crush, Elizabeth, is in the crowd, and his brain cells are doing backflips at the sight of her.



He won't let anyone notice his sweaty pits, though. On the outside, he is the picture of dignity and elegance. She's the only person he ever wants to talk to, but he doesn't budge because every time he tries to approach her, his legs turn into jelly. He's the kind of guy who would fix his schedule in such a way that he'd bump into Lizzie by mere 'happenstance' while going from one class to the next.

He also laughs at her lame jokes just to see her smile. He blocks all his prying relatives from his caller list and has his phone on 'Do Not Disturb' most of the time, occasionally checking to see if there's a text from Lizzie or Charles. He regularly bottles up his feelings and has random outbursts where he sends Lizzie risky, confessional texts in which he hints at his love for her, and when she doesn't open the chat, he hastily deletes the messages. He doesn't know that Lizzie reads his texts from the notification bar itself.

Darcy is impolite and indifferent towards everyone, and people refuse to talk to him because of his above his company, and snobbish attitude. But it works out well for him because of his chaotic introverted energy, and honestly, that's what makes him our *perfect* man.

# I opened a book...

-Ahana Shah

Picture this- 11 year old Ahana, sitting in the school library amidst all the other classmates (who by the way, are playing truth and dare and not actually reading) , poring over the pages of 'Nancy Drew and the Whispering Statue', completely consumed by the thrilling plot. Oblivious to the noise made by her fellow classmates.

This was the exact scenario, every Thursday during our library period. Our library didn't have the best selection of books but it had almost all the Nancy Drew books which were about the life of an American sleuth called Nancy. I was completely, irrevocably hooked on the series. This was all thanks to my mother, who first introduced me to Nancy Drew and I am really indebted to her for that.

I have loved mystery thrillers from the very start and so it goes without saying that growing up, Nancy Drew has been the best book series for me to have ever come across. The suspense, the enthralling plots, the friendship Nancy shared with Bess and George and the best part- the extremely wholesome relationship she shares with her dad<3

As she was for thousands of other girls, Nancy Drew was a role model for me. I probably didn't consciously realize it at the time, but looking back I'm glad I spent all those hours with a heroine so loyal, courageous, and resourceful. She taught me so much about life. One of the most valuable lessons I've learnt is that friends are golden. No matter where she goes, Bess and George are always with her, through everything. This made me realize the importance of good company quite early in life.

All in all, Nancy Drew was kind of an elder sister, taking me with her on a plethora of amazing adventures and undeniably great life lessons which I am truly grateful for!

This was undoubtedly the best book series I had come across growing up and brings back a lot of fond memories.

# Arundhati Roy

-Maanvi Sahani



Arundhati Roy: An Indian author who presented wonderful masterpieces from 'The god of small things', 'The ministry of utmost happiness', 'The cost of living', 'an ordinary person's guide' to 'Empire', 'Capitalism: a ghost story', 'Things that can and cannot be said', 'Democracy' to 'The doctor and the saint'.

She always lives up to the readers' expectations. Furthermore, she has the best and unique style of writing by employing redolent metaphors and evoking utmost admiration. The best quality about her is that her content puts emphasis on feminist perception, politics and being Indian. She is one of the best known representatives of the contemporary generation of Indian writers. Her works are challenging and widely reward the critics who want to explore their depths.

-Maanvi Sahani

# Influence of Mythology in Books

-Siya Lala

A lot of us confuse mythology for old ancient stories. However, mythology is the only way we can dive into our culture, cherish our traditions and be guided by the experiences of our forefathers. Undeniably, mythology has a significant influence on literature as well. A book series which blends mythology to fit in with today's world is the 'Ram Chandra' series by the "banker turned author" Amish Tripathi with 2 in the pipeline; this series has 3 books published till date- 'Ram- Scion of Ikshvaku', 'Sita- Warrior of Mithila', 'Raavan- Enemy of Aryavarta'.

The series tells a story we all know- the Ramayana. The Ram Chandra series follows a multilinear narrative- each book shows the birth and upbringing of *Ram*, *Sita* and *Raavan* respectively, and all 3 end with the abduction of Sita. These stories will then converge from the fourth book onwards.

Amish Tripathi uses mythology as a brilliant tool to debate the issues vexing us today. He gives no answers, but his words compel you to stop and think for a moment or two. That indeed is the grandeur of mythology. Book 1 tells us about Ram and Ramrajya- a perfect society. It tells us the story of Ram, the prince with the terrible childhood, with only his brothers for support. His extreme obedience of the Law, his courage and humility are slowly acknowledged by the masses, yet he largely remains alone. Till he meets Sita, his other half and the greatest ally.

## Influence of Mythology in Books

Book 2 narrates the story of the Goddess, the warrior- Sita. Adopted by the ruler of the powerless Mithila, she is undermined by everybody. But she is exemplary. She fights ferociously, protects like a tigress, and knows her ideals, beliefs and principles. It is when she meets Ram, that her chaos sees calm. A perfect man, yet is highly ignored and shunned by society. She knows he needs her support.

With Book 3, we come to the lesser known story of Raavan. His childhood, his devotion and his wisdom are never seen by the society- his disabilities overlooking hem. His heart has only known one true love, to never get it. His rise is sudden and mighty. From the small trader he is, he rises to conquer great lands until he decided to abduct Sita. The part I loved about the series was the way Amish Tripathi portrayed the childhood of Ram, Sita and Raavan, which consequently determined the kind of relations they had with each other.

I also loved Sita's character. She is fiery, yet has such a soft heart. She is in most ways like her mother, who is her greatest role model. Sita is not afraid, and even as a child shows admirable strength and toughness. Another part of the book which has established itself in my heart eternally is the first time Ram sees Sita in the market place.

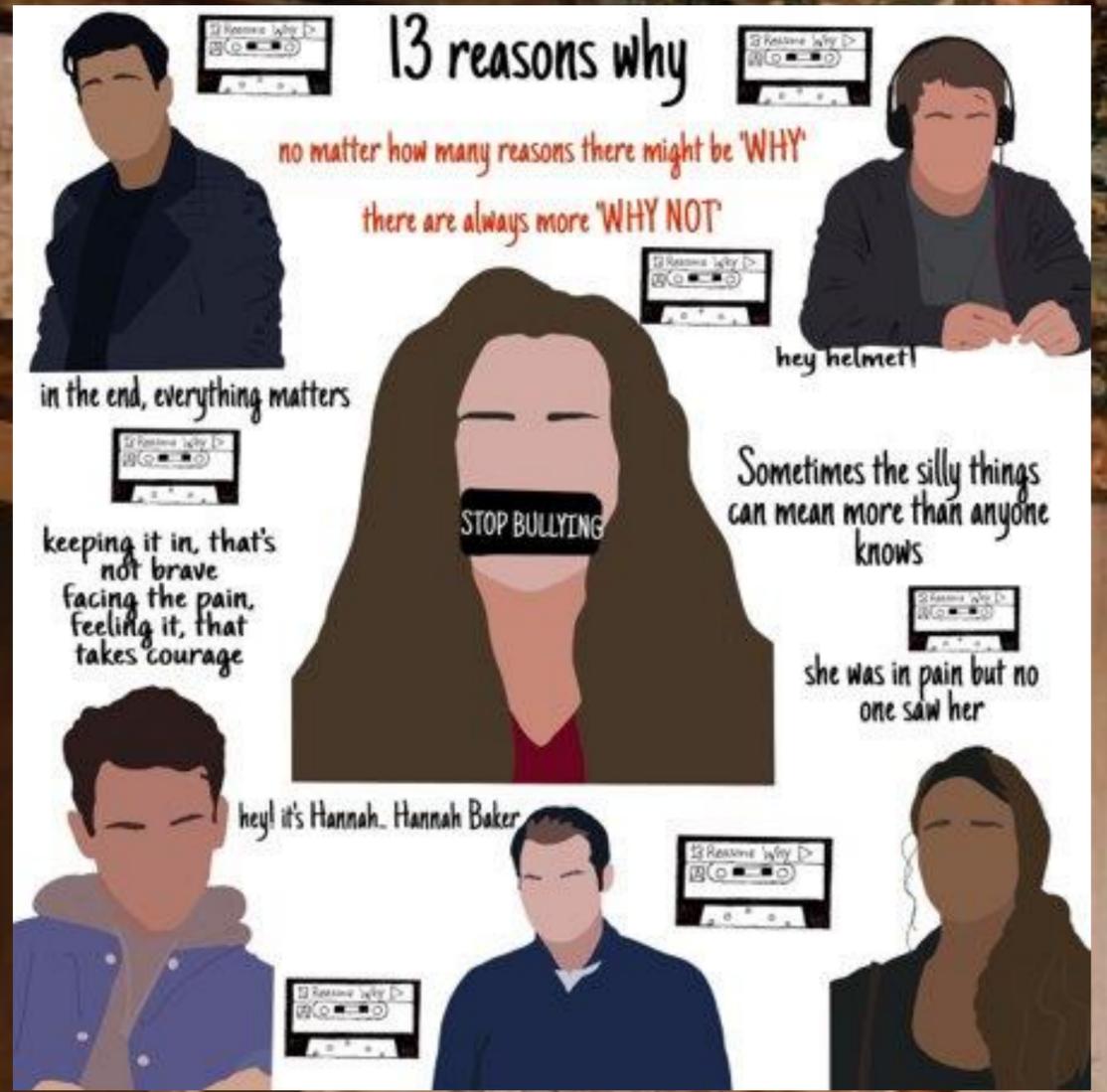
He is enthralled by Sita's personality- her warrior spirit, her inclination for law, her perfect face, her poise, and everything about her. Such is her persona, that Ram is compelled, as if by some outer force, to bow his head and just be rooted on the spot by awe. How beautiful! This story will be continued from book 4. It is a superb masterpiece, and I cannot wait for the next book!!



# Artwork



Elizabeth Benett  
By Elizabeth Thomas



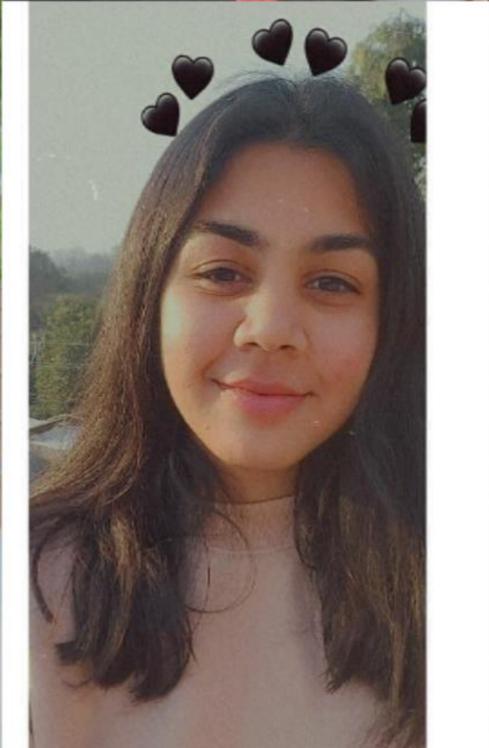
13 reasons why  
-Harsha Sirwani



Hogwarts  
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-Hrithika Kahol



Thank  
you!





**Curated by**



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