

POCKET DIARY BOOK CLUB

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

YEAR 2023

29/01/2023 3:00 PM

Edition 6

Oscar Wilde's Tea Party

Dramatic Reading

Nirali (Duchess of Monmouth) had arranged the props. A small flower for Sandeep's (Lord Henry) coat. Two empty cups of imaginary tea standing regal on their saucers. I suggested pouring some on the plate and drinking after (cravings).

She refused, naturally. Only a spoon was added for her character's flirty amusements. The setup was complete with a table lamp and a lit candle.

As we began the narration, Lord Henry laid back in a silk-draped wicker chair (bean bag) and Gladys smiled at Dorian Gray.

"What are you two talking about?" said Lord Henry.

- Chapter 17 The Picture of Dorian Gray



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hClf1vfaOmQ> (a small glimpse)

Rehearsal@28.01.2023:

"There is too much sugar in it", Nirali made a face. "It's good." Nothing keeping me from good quality beans. It was homemade coffee and we were reading.

"Let's play Henry & Gladys", said Nirali to me. I offered my services but Sandeep was a theatre director. He cut an orchid, for his buttonhole. "It was a marvellous spotted thing, as effective as the seven deadly sins. In a thoughtless moment I asked one of the gardeners what it was called. He told me it

was a fine specimen of *Robinsoniana*, or something dreadful of that kind.” scoffed Sandeep (no not him, Henry).

So much drama...

Authors we read¹:

- ✓ RAMDHARI SINGH DINKAR
- ✓ JAMES REDFIELD
- ✓ ALAIN DE BOTTON
- ✚ AMISH TRIPATHI
- ✚ SHILPA PHADKE, SAMEERA KHAN AND SHILPA RANADE
- ✓ ROLF DOBELLI
- ✓ RICHARD FEYNMAN
- ✚ KHALED HOSSEINI
- ✓ DIVYA PRAKASH DUBEY

We had a storyteller woman, **Neha**. She had curated a collection of poetry, beginning at depression, moving to productive anxiety, leading to rage and at the end, emerged a warrior from the toil of her voice and journey.

In Nirali's words, it was badass. She pitched up and down, quivered with vulnerability and pride, playing see-saw with them. The words were just there on the paper, until she picked it up, filled them with life blood and delivered to the world sitting around her. Her voice was reaching us.

I love seeing women participate.

Dinkar began:

मितेश ने हुंकार² दी,



“सलिल कण हूँ, या पारावार हूँ मैं
स्वयं छाया, स्वयं आधार हूँ मैं
बँधा हूँ, स्वपन हूँ, लघु वृत्त हूँ मैं
नहीं तो व्योम का विस्तार हूँ मैं”³

तो राजेश ने हाहाकार किया

उर में दाह, कंठ में ज्वाला, सम्मुख यह प्रभु का मरुथल है,
जहाँ पथिक जल की झाँकी में एक बूँद के लिए विकल है।
घर-घर देखा धुआँ पर, सुना, विश्व में आग लगी है,
'जल ही जल' जन-जन रटता है, कंठ-कंठ में प्यास जगी है।⁴

The Parliament was now in session.

¹ I may have missed out on some names, memory problem

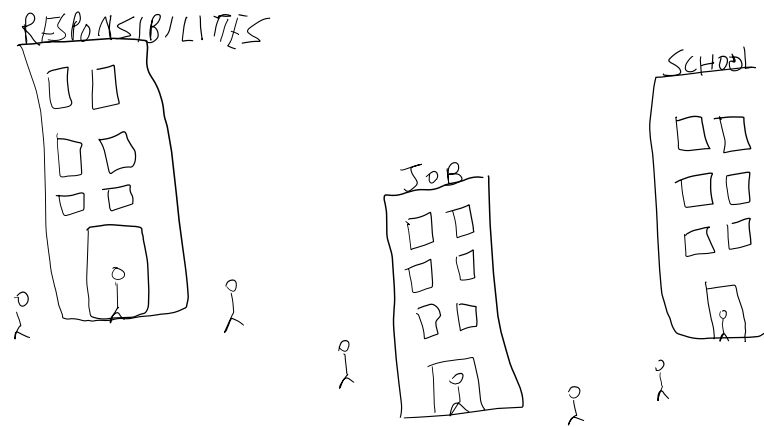
² [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hunkar_\(epic_poem\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hunkar_(epic_poem))

³ परिचय काव्य

⁴ Famine

Yogesh has changed 6 schools in his lifetime.

Amish had changed 6 jobs in his career.

This is the 6th edition of Pocket Diary Book Club. 

Talk about coincidences.

Amish did. What an insightful man. He had 9, to be precise.

While **Aishwarya** was a student of **The School of Life**. She read the entire chapter in 1 take. She sounded nervous, and I could feel the jitters, remembering how I feel every time it is my turn to speak/read a book for someone. I wasn't like that in childhood. I remember perfecting a speech on **alligators** being different from crocodiles for the school assembly. That was the last best speech I gave.

So, I stay away from reading aloud. Let others face the nerves.

Sita – The Warrior of Mithila: The conversations between Sita, the protege and Vishwamitra, the mentor is a rare genre. I skimmed for those after **Reena** read to us the chapter of Sita's childhood. Chapter 6 and Chapter 8 have some amazing conversations and the visuals of a female matriarch's death, in Sita's life and in an elephant herd.

"... 'The warriors?'

'What are the chief qualities of warriors? What drives them? What motivates them? Yes, there are many who fight for honour, for the country, for a code. But equally, there are those who simply want a socially sanctioned way to kill. If not given an outlet, such people can easily turn to crime. Many great warriors, celebrated by humanity, narrowly escaped being remembered as social degenerates. What saved them from becoming criminals and instead, turned them into soldiers? The answer is the warrior code: The right reason to kill.' It's difficult for a child to surrender certainties and understand nuances. Sita, after all just a thirteen-year-old, stiffened...

Yogesh with his charm, converted non-fiction into a beautiful anecdote of 'the black swan' from **The Art of Thinking Clearly**. He asked us to think of an event that changed the route of our life map, be it a negative or positive. Nirali saw all of us with glazed eyes, an event flashing in them.

Then we went to Mumbai roads and just loitered there, like Ayushman Khurana and friends in 'Bareilly ki Barfi', 'Bahdaai Ho' and expected something amazing to happen, like all those swag scenes while they have tea at a chaiwala's open stall or paanwala's galla. Shaurya took us there and introduced the book **'Why Loiter? Women and risk on Mumbai streets'**

<https://scroll.in/article/993810/why-loiter-ten-years-have-passed-since-the-seminal-book-on-women-alone-in-cities-was-published>

In the prologue, **Shilpa Phadke** writes:

"Discussing this with other women, I realise that almost without being aware of it, every woman reflects deeply about how to access public space. Our safety is something that at a visceral level none of us take for granted but strangely enough, this need to plot, plan and strategize has come to assume the proportions of a taken-for-granted life-world for all of us. As I ask questions of them and myself, this sense of stoic taken-for-grantedness crumbles, producing angry and humiliated stories of harassment."



The three authors of the book made “a case for loitering as a fundamental act of claiming public space and ultimately, a more inclusive citizenship. We believe **the right to loiter for all** has the potential to undermine public space hierarchies.”

...

There are **A Thousand Splendid Suns**, one of which was Laila.

“Mariam saw his feet pounding the steps as he came down. She saw him pocketing the key, saw his belt, the perforated end wrapped tightly around his knuckles. The fake brass buckle dragged behind me, bouncing on the steps...”, read **Ankit**.



How many women...

Change comes from men like Ankit, they read, they read aloud for others. He did not beat around the bushes. Nirali's notes say, *“the magic of Hossieni lies in this small act “swinging a shovel on the head” just the swish but the wives who have been abused and tormented their whole lives finally find a moment to unleash...”*

I am stealing most of the minutes from her diary.

...

Shaurya read, *“In a Buddhist temple there, the man in charge explained a little bit about the Buddhist religion for tourists, and then ended his talk by telling them he had something to say to them that they would never forget – and I have never forgotten it. It was a proverb of the Buddhist religion:*

“To every man is given the key to the gates of heaven; the same key opens the gates of hell.”

- Richard Feynman December 1955 (**The Value of Science**⁵)

This quote resonated with the book I am currently reading in preparation for the next club meeting, **“To Kill a Mockingbird”**:

“Miss Maudie stopped rocking, her voice hardened. ‘You are too young to understand it’, she said, ‘but sometimes the Bible in the hand of one man is worse than a whisky bottle in the hand of – oh, of your father.’

...

Who is Rajesh's **lbnebatuti**? What would he call her?

P.S. we could not let this question go.

P.S. what is the overlapping difference between awargi and ghumakkad?

P.P.S Nirali saw me confounded by a jinx spell, my confusion was considered hilarious.

At the end of the session, we attempted safe teasing Reena. She smiled. Victory!

THANK YOU

⁵ <https://calteches.library.caltech.edu/1575/1/Science.pdf>