

**POCKET DIARY BOOK CLUB
MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

Year 2023
06/08/2023 8:00 PM
PHASE II
Edition 20

There was this beautiful line-

"Zindagi ka kaam hai Uljhana and aadmi ka kaam hai Suljhana".

A night of candles, cake, friendship bands but even without all this, it would have been like the river we all go and sit by, dip our feet in it and breathe. ✱

✱ Mantra was entering the books from the physical library into the catalogue, I was reading Mistress of Spices, Rajesh brought **आको बाको, प्रेम गिलहरी दिल अखरोट**, these ✱ are book names. Priya and Chirag left to buy bands and missed listening to Mantra reading *"You know nothing, Jon Snow. It went on and on and on. There are hundreds o' caves in these hills, and down deep they all connect. There's even a way under your Wall. Gorne's Way."*

You know nothing, Jon Snow. Gendel did not die."

✱ *Ygritte punched his shoulder. "An old woman, am I?"*

"You're older than me."

"Aye, and wiser. You know nothing, Jon Snow."

Curation is a journey uphill, out of breath, yet repeating the beauty of the timeless view from the top of the mountain, again and again, for each team member, hoping that together, we will sit there at night, with our books and their worlds, which we carry inside.

Priya told me that Nirali, Chirag and her wanted to recreate the night of the retreat at Ghanerao with the 20th edition, it marks the end of phase II.

Sandip and I (Smit) were the moderators.

Tradition dictated that the session's rules come first. Unexpectedly, we recalled the rules and didn't need to consult the rulebook (thanks to **Nirali** and **Priya's** consistent, strong emphasis on the rules: P) **Sandip ji** made it apparent right away that they will serve as self-centered moderators :D. Consequently, the moderator will start this session by reading from a book.

Mistress of Spices by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni was my choice for the night reading. It tells the tale of

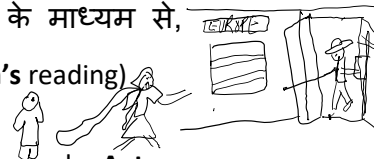
an immigrant Indian woman who uses her unique understanding of Indian spices to treat people. The word "Lanka" appeared. *Spices are known as lankas in Bengali*, clarified Mitesh.



Mantra read from the book "**Storm of Swords**" after that. The passage was about the scene in the cave with John and Ygritte. Mantra was blushing, but I have no idea why. :P According to **Rajesh Ji**, John Snow learned everything in the Cave. Someone said that getting this paragraph in PDBC, required 20 sessions.

Mitesh followed with the book **Zindagi Aais Pais**. Mitesh dropped joke bombs as usual with ease.

“फिल्म के जब आखिरी सीन में अमरीश पुरी, काजोल का हाथ छोड़ कर कहते हैं - “जा सिमरन, जी ले अपनी जिंदगी!” तब ये साफ हो गया था कि वो ट्रेन रूपी अलौकिक असंस्कारिक यात्रा के माध्यम से, माया से हाथ छुड़ाकर, आत्मा से परमात्मा के मिलन के लिए भेज रहा था। (From **Mitesh's** reading)



This novel was making everyone laugh uncontrollably. There can't be better use of the words- **Aatma** and **Parmatma** in such hilarious manner. PDBC has become an adult after the 18th edition.

As expected, **Asad** came up with another classic “**In the beginning**” by **Virgina Hamilton**. It discusses the creation myth from a variety of mythological vantage points. The creation of the world and mythology were topics of healthy conversation. The diet consisted of discussions about the mythology surrounding the creation of the world/universe. There were some good references about Aryans and Dravidians by **Ankit** which led to everyone throwing in their two bits at the same time. To Sandeep ne seeti bajayi aur sab shock se chup ho gaye!

Shor khatam, Moderators score 1

Now as you all know, "*Lottery in June, corn be heavy soon.*"

Ruchi decided to revive the long-lost tradition of Lottery, in preparation, she came with multiple personalities. But some of her characters did not honor the value of a communal activity of faith.

"They do say," Mr. Adams said to Old Man Warner, who stood next to him, "that over in the north village they're talking of giving up the lottery."

Old Man Warner snorted. "Pack of crazy fools," he said. "Listening to the young folks, nothing's good enough for them. Next thing you know, they'll be wanting to go back to living in caves, nobody work any more, live that way for a while. Used to be a saying about 'Lottery in June, corn be heavy soon.' First thing you know, we'd all be eating stewed chickweed and acorns. There's always been a lottery," he added petulantly. "Bad enough to see young Joe Summers up there joking with everybody."

Dramatic Reading is the essence of PDBC. She understood the assignment.

The story fits the Indian political scenario.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lottery#cite_note-Jackson-3

While reading this link, I could not imagine any reader sitting in that edition writing a hate mail for this story but then, it's a wonderful world.

The excerpt:

In a 1960 lecture (printed in her 1968 collection **Come Along with Me**) author Shirley Jackson recalled the hate mail she received in 1948:

One of the most terrifying aspects of publishing stories and books is the realization that they are going to be read, and read by strangers. I had never fully realized this before, although I had of course in my imagination dwelt lovingly upon the thought of the millions and millions of people who were going to be uplifted and enriched and delighted by the stories I wrote. It had simply never occurred to me that these millions and millions of people might be so far from being uplifted that they would sit down and write me letters I was downright scared to open; of the three-hundred-odd letters that I received that summer I can count only thirteen that spoke kindly to me, and they were mostly from friends. Even my mother scolded me: "Dad and I did not care at all for your story in The New Yorker", she wrote sternly; "it does seem, dear, that this gloomy kind of story is what all you young people think about these days. Why don't you write something to cheer people up?"

But why rebel against a familiar genre?

<https://www.thebulwark.com/shirley-jackson-and-the-unsettled-mystery-of-life/>

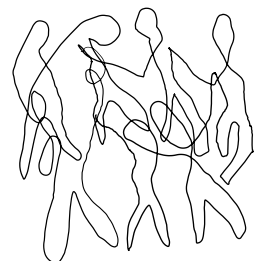
The conversation that followed the story's conclusion focused on unanticipated twists. **The Haunting of Hill House (1959)** and **Manto's** short story "**Khol do**" is a classic example of this genre.

The topics of audiobooks, Kindle, and printed books were discussed. Audiobooks can be helpful while doing daily activities, according to **Ruchi** and **Priya**.

"Hum jab khud ki hi nai sunte, fir audio book to kaha se sunenge" - Epic comment by **Rajesh Ji**.

Bhavita was the next reader, as planned. She did, however, ask for extra time to prepare. **Abhishek** was given the baton as a result. He picked **Khalil Gibran's** writings. Unexpectedly, this was the first time Khalil Gibran had ever been read in PDBC. It complemented the night edition so beautifully that Sandip Ji asked Abhishek to read more passages from the book.

"Then the autumn leaf lay down upon the earth and slept. And when spring came, she waked again - and she was a blade of grass." - Khalil Gibran



Ankit chose "**The Alchemist**" by **Paulo Coelho** as his choice. If he desired a better setting for the reading, **Priya** questioned. There were candles and dimmer lights in the studio, and **Ankit** enthusiastically consented. **Chirag** had arranged clip on reading light for the candle lit night edition. (All readers should buy this mini book lamp as it is very handy and useful, especially when you are traveling or reading hiding under the covers like a teenager). Please reach out to **Chirag** for more details.

With this, PDBC night edition got better and better. Ankit chose a passage that fit the atmosphere. Everyone could relate to the book because it had previously been read by many readers. However, **Prince** was so busy in preparing for his turn that he did not experience this surreal moment. Ankit ended his passage, there was pin drop silence, everyone was soaking in it when Prince, broke the charm, he said something.

Next was Rohan (first time reader) with the book named- "**Things my son needs to know about the world**" by **Fredrick Backman**. Passage was pertaining to IKEA bookstore. There were some really good punches that made people laugh. Here is my favorite one:

"IKEA has the least passive aggressive customers in the entire universe. Late middle-aged women with purple hair and a scent of methanol tobacco will ram your shins with trolleys like they were industrial whale catchers and you were a rubber boar bearing the Greenpeace logo."

Bharat read "**The Lord of the Rings**"- another classic for the session. As might be expected, this sparked the age-old argument over which is superior: the book OR the movie adaptation. The readers made some excellent remarks about this. But in my opinion, the discussion/debate was not required because everyone agreed that books were superior to their film adaptations. But I am a reader. If I had been sitting among film buffs, they would have shown me a few movies.

The session's next reader was **Bhavita**. As requested, the moderators didn't reveal the title of the book. She stated that her name is not Bhavita at the beginning of her reading. Moderators then exchanged glances, perplexed, 'did we say the name correctly or not?' unsure.

"My name is Veronica and I have decided to die", she pronounced, decidedly.

Paulo Coelho's "**Veronica Decides to Die**" was the book in her kindle.

Bhavita didn't glance much at the book, instead she recalled the gist of her passages. The experience was intense. She convinced the audience of Veronica's last wish, many were tempted to consider trying death themselves (not all readers, maybe all :D).

By this time, **Prince** was so eager for his turn that he didn't even wait for moderators to call out his name but he was in dilemma about the passage. So meanwhile **Rajesh** read from his pick **Aako Bako** by **Divya Prakash Dubey**. One story was about the old school pen lovers- "Parth from Mumbai and Taru from Bhopal". Another story was about an aspiring writer.

“Zindagi ka kaam hai Uljhana and aadmi ka kaam hai Suljhana” – the line beginning these minutes were read by Rajesh Ji.

Prince was in line after that, waiting with the aage badho energy (not literally :P). He encouraged everyone to close their eyes and visualize the city of Venice because his “the chosen one” was **Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice**. I wondered, for those who have never been... will Paris do?

For such a lovely session, it was the ideal conclusion. But it wasn't the end. **Sandip ji** opted to recite a paragraph from the same book after reminding everyone of "self-centered moderators." (The decision was more driven by popular demand than by his own).

His reading was theatre, and he was the stage the actor and that experience of the night that we remember.

Happy Friendship Day.

Red, blue and white colored old school thin elastic bands, everyone was wearing one on their wrists. There's an old saying that friends turn into family. The new one is- **readers who end up being friends and family.**

Bhavita (who refused to be recognized as the bringer of the cake, I did not know this) got a cake to honor the 20 PDBC issues. And I am writing the 20th minutes of the meeting.

It was chocolate, such a sweet thing to do. (Readers, take motivation :P).

Post cake cutting, there were informal discussions about how bad and hilarious Hindi dubbing can be of English movies. Please reach out to **Ankit** for more details. Also, suddenly there was an impromptu discussion on having a special “**Harry Potter**” edition. **Priya** called dibs on the character Albus Dumbledore. Nirali might, however, make a decent fit for Luna Lovegood, according to someone. :P

I am Smit Vavadia, I would probably be in the department of International Magical Cooperation in the Ministry of Magic or the driver of The Knight Bus.

