

POCKET DIARY BOOK CLUB

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

YEAR 2023

29th August 2023 / 03:00 PM / Akshat Drama Group Studio

Edition 21

Attendees (15)

Ruchi, Bharath, Prince, Sonam, Rajesh, Prashant, Gaurav, Mitesh, Bhavita, Raxil, Kusangi, Pankaj, Sandeep, Nirali, Priya and Chirag.

"Twenty years was yesterday, and yesterday was just earlier this morning, and morning seemed light-years away." - Call Me By Your Name

The room felt like it still hadn't gotten over the night edition and its afterglow lingered and reminded us of that magical world of words. The studio now - a - days feels like instead of air molecules, it is heavy with words and the scent of books mixed with camphor. (Just exaggerating; it is the diligent room freshener hissing every 45 minutes.)

Priya breezed in the room clad in a cute spring summer dress, looked dreamy. Bhavita was sitting with her head bumping in the book shelf and out of concern I locked eyes with her; one look on her face and I could tell that she was doing the balancing act. (In house very own mime.) In the meantime a stranger ranger by the name Neha walked in carrying a grey little diary. Rumor is that diary spews some nasty jokes.

Ready Player One by Ernest Cline

Read by Bharath

In his matter of fact style Bharath tells us that it is a typical quest to find easter eggs to escape the real world. What intrigues one here is the puzzles strewn over the entire narrative. Bharath assures us that this book will interest the non gamers equally as its essentially a treasure hunt. One of the best written gaming novels... Priya managed to flip the book open on a page that talks about the gamer's love interest. Bharath enlightens us about how it was virtual and how they barely meet in real life.

"We sat there awhile, holding hands, reveling in the strange new sensation of actually touching one another."



Every gamer is not just an unemployed loser in their mother's basement. Most of them have a better chance at a "Love story than you non gamers. Who's a bum now?" (hateful).

Call Me by Your Name by Andr  Aciman

Read by Ruchi

We wanted to hear something soothing and Ruchi brought chirping birds and crickets and sunshine on that cloudy gray afternoon. As she read we closed our eyes and were transported to a warm cozy conjured up escape place of our own. Eyes closed and a smile on his face, I saw Prince enjoying every bit of the reading and he did teleport himself to some place peaceful. Ruchi began with a short description and we nudged her to give us the entire plot. Ruchi and her sparkle in the eye when she talks about a book she really loves is hard to miss.

As this book keeps on doing a comeback and we keep on asking about the title...

"I'm like you," he said. 'I remember everything.'

I stopped for a second. If you remember everything, I wanted to say, and if you are really like me, then before you leave tomorrow, or when you're just ready to shut the door of the taxi and have already said goodbye to everyone else and there's not a thing left to say in this life, then, just this once, turn to me, even in jest, or as an afterthought, which would have meant everything to me when we were together, and, as you did back then, look me in the face, hold my gaze, and call me by your name"

A House Called Awful End by Philip Ardagh

Read by Prince

Prince's excitement to read the book was literally infectious. He was so excited he called the book nonsense. Being kind, not thinking of passing the book around to know the end, but ended up giving into the temptation. The book had way too many innuendos...

Prince claims the book being written under the influence of hallucinogens.

(Note to self: buy the book to pair with your stash of hall... nevermind)

चित्रलेखा by भगवती चरण वर्मा

Read by Sonam

Sonam begins emphasizing on how first impressions can be misleading... the main protagonist Chित्रलेखा being a court dancer and how the character turns out to be a dynamite of a personality. Rajesh ji and Sonam were tripping over the storyline leaving us all feeling like

people from the Chitrageet era. Rajesh being Rajesh brought in the reference of Pyaasa movie in here too. Sonam maintained her calm and with a smile told us that this book is all wisdom...and to which Priya smiled and quipped, only wisdom?

The book skirted around the elusive love vs lust debate. The question पाप क्या होता है?

I would not attempt at the nitty gritty of the characters and their links it will actually require a complex mind map.

Watchmen by Alan Moore

Read by Rajesh

मेरा माल कहा है?

Rajesh calls his books maal, well that's something me and Priya agree on... we plan to get our hands on all that maal. Not quite sure what trip Neha goes on once she hears the word maal. The comic reminds one of all things gory and repressing, the red wedding, we the people, V for Vendetta and the list continues. I see Priya squirming at all the gore. Watchmen, although heavily influenced by cold war and nuclear arms race also was inspired by Bob Dylan's masterpiece Desolation Row.

Gory, repression, vigilantes, TO-BE- READ. The book also quotes Friedrich Nietzsche.

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

Read by Kusangi

"Oh Mr. Bennet!"

Kusangi read the very famous introductory passage of the classic..the entry of a handsome and surly Mr. Darcy and sweet and charming Mr. Bingley. The fact that the initial expressions on their face and in their eyes had no impression that money could not hide, how the entire story unfolds around brief first impressions creating prejudice be it of Lizzy or Mrs. Bennet, was the recipe of a classic love story that would be used and revamped in years to follow..

Mirza Ghalib by Gulzar

Read by Gaurav

उन के देखे से जो आ जाती है मुँह पर रौनक

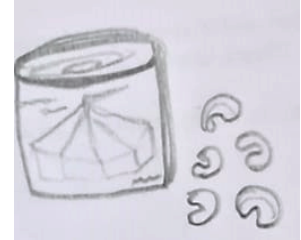
वो समझते हैं कि बीमार का हाल अच्छा है

A reading dedicated to Ghalib never goes without a sher or two by the legend and it lead to one of our readers go ballistic on the waah waahs. (No brownie points for guessing the name). Gaurav kept on smiling and went on to read sweet anecdotes from the life of Ghalib and his love affair with दिल्ली. We roped in Sandeep to share his close to the heart anecdote of his visit to मजार-ए-ग़ालिब and how he recited a few choice couplets sitting there. Hearing it from him we almost feel like we too have been there with him...

Somebody Who Will Love You In All Your Damaged Glory by Raphael Bob-Waksberg

Read by Prashant

Almost seemed like a pangolin about to curl up in ball and roll away... smiled the widest (after Sonam of course) and seemed as if he will just disappear 'poof' while smiling and turning all red out of being cornered. (He was literally sitting in a corner)



So a book with outrageously long title and surprisingly short stories, he sent me a story to read and I ended up reading the entire thing. He read two stories the cashew one and the one with conscious meat. Both stories had too much to unpack and that spilled over the tea break much more.

Salted circus cashew - Box of Trauma that makes you cynical.

THIS TIME ITS GONNA BE DIFFERENT

The second story should have trigger warning for vegans.

ज़िन्दगी आइस पाइस by निखिल सचान

Read by Mitesh

Mitesh went on to read the snippets of a life...the main character's name brought out giggles from us readers..

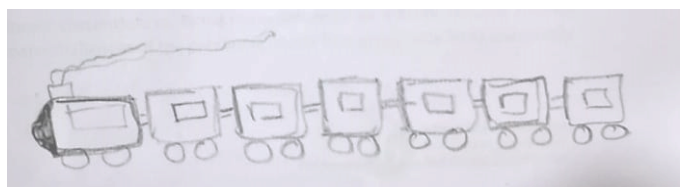
Chirag the protagonist goes through what we can safely call as emotional awakening as is described in a very raw and unfiltered way in the form of snapshots... On that note I would say Pocket Diary Book Club is adulting and how (wink wink)

Mitesh seems completely at ease sitting amongst us... he looks (only looks) like a shy, demure fellow, he was actually singing unabashed a little bit (very much) out of tune...

चिराग उन्हें जब तक देख सकता था, देखता रहा। रोता रहा। और रोते रोते गाता रहा।

'प्रीत बना के तूने जीना सिखाया
हँसना सिखाया, रोना सिखाया
जीवन के पथ पर मीत मिलाए
मीत मिला के तूने सपने जगाए

सपने जगा के तूने काहे को दे दी जुदाई
काहे को दुनिया बनाई तूने
काहे को दुनिया बनाई ।'



और फिर एक दिन - कुछ यादें by नस्सुद्दीन शाह

Read by Raxil

A memoir, one of its kind, honest (which can be perceived on the verge of being brutal). Filled with fun anecdotes from the life of the veteran actor's days of struggle to making a name in the hindi film industry. Raxil read with an increasing crescendo - me and Priya looking at each other - the passage talking about films never made - Sandeep and Chirag discussing about movies that never saw the silver screen - some masala on bollywood families, the who and which of the who in the passages.

Veronika Decides to Die by Paulo Coelho

Read by Bhavita aka Veronika

Villette was the place from which no one had ever escaped, where genuine madmen —sent there by the courts or by other hospitals—mingled with those merely accused of madness or those pretending to be mad.

Bhavita is a shape shifter, she turns into the character she reads..So now we listen to Veronika and her failed truce with death. The doctor who saved her gave her a false hope of the eternal peace. Hence, Bhavita begins with “Heart will stop finally”; well when? You fickle ferocious little thing when????

Little did Veronika knew that the doctor too was the part of the coup pulled off by death, its not that easy to die, you have to live a lifetime to deserve it.

Its almost like Veronika here is a prototype of each and every one of us toying with the idea of life and finally considering ourselves as the most eligible in a psych ward. Reading this book might make you contemplate the “Would living in a mad house actually be my salvation.”

Tranquilizers. And we just had hallucinogens.

"A psych ward to help you get rid of your relatives? Sign me up?"

She is waiting to die; is it too soon to say good things come to those who wait? When the story ends, I realize it was too soon. Veronika has been duped by death, death comes knocking only to tell her, delivery not today.

"You can be yourself only in a psych ward."

Nirali is a genius. This is a true account of Neha having a eureka moment and acknowledging a fellow reader's genius life hack.

17:21 Nirali dropped a third thing

17:34 Nirali dropped a fourth thing

17.40 Nirali dropped a fifth thing



Somehow Neha was amazed at how a human being, sitting on a chair with a gazillion things in possession was dropping things one after another. Maybe it was the aftereffect of Piyush Mishra being recited by Sandeep.

मखमल की नाज़ुक दीवारें भी होंगी
कोनों में बैठी बहारें भी होंगी
खिड़की की चौखट भी रेशम की होगी
चन्दन सी लिपटी हाँ सेहन भी होगी
संदल की खुशबू भी टपकेगी छत से



जब शहर हमारा सोता है play written by Piyush Mishra hides this gem of a poem which when sung serenades any stone heart to mush.

With hearts dreaming of उजला ही उजला शहर, comics, one more kulhad of chai, travels, light years and what not we part our ways to meet at the tea spot to spot an insane grasshopper.

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