

POCKET DIARY BOOK CLUB
MINUTES OF THE MEETING

YEAR 2024

22/12/2024, 03:00 pm

Edition No.: 45, Secret Santa

Venue: Akshat Drama Group Studio

Facilitators: Anushri

Written by: Shailee

Edited by: Priya



It's time to grab a cup of hot chocolate or any cozy drink of your choice as we dive into the highlights of our book club's 45th edition!

The event kicked off with an attack on bookmarks (*I snagged a black cat one—it sums up my personality perfectly, XD*). Next, we jumped into Secret Santa, where we unwrapped books lovingly wrapped in newspapers and read heartfelt notes from the givers.

After all, receiving the same warmth and love you give out perfectly captures the spirit of Christmas!

A Gist of Readings:



We covered a mix of intriguing topics, from deep discussions to lighthearted moments. Everyone shared their thoughts, and the conversations flowed smoothly, adding layers of meaning to each piece. Some readings sparked laughter, others reflection, but all of them brought something valuable to the table.



1. Meghna read *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*- a play by Tom Stoppard

Set in the same castle as Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, this play gives us Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, two characters so similar that even they seem confused about who's who. (*Seriously, their lines could swap, and you'd still have no clue!*)

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$2+2=4$

N₂0

The witty humour, perfectly timed pauses, and hilarious expressions from the cast (**Meghna, Abha and Gautam**) will have you giggling nonstop. (*Who knew existential dread could be this funny?*)

The scene enacted was from Act 3, where the duo and Hamlet are on a boat to England. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern discover they're carrying a letter ordering Hamlet's execution until Hamlet sneakily swaps it. The twist? The letter now seals their fate, and they hilariously and tragically, accept their doom.



If you love clever humour with a side of existential crisis, this one's a must-watch!

2. Naisargi read **When Fairyland Lost it's Magic** - Bijal Vachharajani

The second read had all of us re-imagining what a day in Rapunzel's life would look like in today's world. The water crisis in Fairyland, making it difficult for Rapunzel to wash her hair, perfectly sums up why she would want to chop it off. (*Me too, girl, me too.*)



The mention of Snow White being named "No White" had us cackling and crying at the same time. (*I guess we're not naturally hot—it's global warming. *sigh**) The book got us all thinking about climate change, and for once, we could actually see ourselves on the same level as these princesses!

This is the perfect book to gift to friends who think buying bottled water, wasting food, and littering makes them cool. (*Nope, it's just making the world hotter than Henry Cavill!*)

3. Ankit read **The Best of Ruskin Bond: "The eyes have it"**

Have you ever wondered how someone with little to no eyesight perceives the world? This story gives you a glimpse into the lives of two people who see the world in their own unique way.

The narrator, who is blind, notices the smallest details of a female passenger, which highlights the importance of our other senses. From the sound of the railway engine, the rustling of leaves, to admiring her face, the sound of her slippers, and the lingering scent of her perfume, the narrator shows us how beauty isn't just a "pretty face"—it's so much more when you listen closely.

It's all Black! 

This story felt like a warm hug I didn't know I needed. (*Jappi paa lo, guys!*)

4. Sameer read **The Book of Simple Living - Ruskin Bond**

"We must love someone. We must keep loving, all our days, Someone, anyone, anywhere Outside ourselves; For even the sarus crane Will grieve over its lost companion, And the seal its mate."

This book beautifully describes Himachal through the eyes of Ruskin Bond. As it showcases Ruskin's love for nature and the beauty of Himachal, it has the power to transport you right to the writer's desk in his house, where you can smell the pine trees, meet the squirrel that comes to fetch its titbits left by the author, and just immerse yourself in the beauty of the place.

(*A time travel machine indeed. Someone tell Dr. Doom that Ruskin Bond did it first 🤖*)

5. Shailee read **On Earth, We're Briefly Gorgeous - Ocean Vuong**

Who was cutting onions? I thought this was a book club and not Gordon Ramsey's kitchen

** cries more **

This read managed to reach every corner of my heart, cut it open, and seal it right at the end. This semi-autobiographical novel, based on the author's childhood, paints a vivid picture of a Vietnamese American kid's experiences. It's filled with both the gruesome and beautiful aspects of life, all about embracing everything you are and everything you'll become.

(*Just read the book already, I will pay for your therapy session*)

6. Abha read **Winter Stories: Father time and his pattern book - Enid Blyton**

Who said Enid Blyton is just for kids?

This story is all about self-realization, chasing your dreams, and doing things out of love. A little boy named Robin reflects on his life, where colourful ribbons represent all his happy moments, acts of kindness, and precious memories.



This read made me realize that nothing good ever goes in vain (*and as for the bad deeds, well, they'll catch up to you—run, haha!*).

A sweet December read for kids, a little scary for adults.

7. Aneree read **The Adventures of Christmas Pudding** - Agatha Christie

"It is a problem certainly, that Christmas plum pudding. There is here something that I do not understand at all."

(I'm usually a fan of pudding, but when it comes to Agatha's Christmas treat, I'll pass.)

The read follows Hercule Poirot, who's asked to investigate the theft of a valuable ruby from an English country house. It dives into Hercule's behavioural analysis as he works to keep the valuables hidden from the robbers. Everything is merry and festive during Christmas—until news arrives that someone's been murdered.

Where? When? How? Only Agatha can tell you.

(Murder and Agatha are like coffee and me—we just can't survive without each other!)

8. Hetvi read **The Lost Bookshop** - Evie Woods *(see last page...)*

"A good story always opens with a tea"

The Lost Bookshop is like stepping into a bittersweet fairy tale with a sprinkle of magic and a whole lot of hope.

It kicks off with a young guy stumbling across a mysterious bookshop and then takes a deep dive into the tough-as-nails lives of women in old-school London. (*Imagine a woman running a bookshop back then—pretty badass, right?*)

The guy also spills the tea (sorry, *'slurps' the tea*) about how his dad gave him Wuthering Heights! and bam, it turned into his personal time machine. (*Have to make sure if he ain't my twin or something*) From that moment, books became his ultimate escape hatch from reality. A cozy, magical read that hits you right in the feels!

9. Divyansh read **The Hitchhiker's Guide to Galaxy** - Douglas Adams

First of all, whenever someone tells me “Calm down” or “Don’t Panic,” I’m immediately filled with rage and run around my house screaming with panic.

Imagine if your favourite sci-fi got drunk at a pub, had an existential crisis, and then decided to write a book. It kicks off with Earth being casually demolished to make way for an intergalactic bypass (“Not funny, Anjali”, says Srk) and follows Arthur Dent, a perpetually confused human in a bathrobe.

You’ll meet Marvin, the clinically depressed robot, and Beeblebrox, the two-headed, chaos-causing President of the Galaxy (*we all have a friend like that*) And let’s not forget the Guide itself—a snarky, all-knowing travel book that insists a towel is the key to survival.

(Please keep a towel handy while reading this. If you can’t find one, feel free to reach out to me at Street 42.)

10. Gautam read **How I killed Pluto and why he had it coming?** - Mike Brown

Pluto is that one friend who's always left out of the group. *sad* Well, that’s not how **Gautam** and **Mike Brown** see it. (*Evil yaar*)

This read dives into Mike Brown’s rebellious take on why Pluto isn’t a planet, and how schools rushed to declare it the 9th planet. Mike breaks down how planets like Uranus and Neptune were discovered using Newton’s gravity formula.

The book feels like a heated debate between Mike and other scientists, with arguments that turn into backlash, revenge, and even the creation of a fake Greek god name while discovering a planet bigger than Pluto. (*Mike Ross moment, sorry, I mean Brown*)

(My tip: Grab some popcorn, play the Aap Ki Adalat theme song, and dive into this read!)

11. Neeja read **Steppenwolf** - Hermann Hesse

“But it's a poor fellow who can't take his pleasure without asking other people's permission.”

“Is this whole play about us...?” said Maddie from Euphoria (*I felt the same when **Nija** started reading a passage from this book*)

This book takes one on a journey of self-introspection while highlighting the constant battle within one’s mind. Instances like feeling lonely as well as inspired to write poems when the weather is gloomy showcases how a human brain is at a war, fighting to be whole while feeling empty at the same time

‘If you’re feeling that you’re stuck somewhere in the middle, just start walking, I will find you on either end’, is the feeling this book will leave you with.

12. Ravi read Build, Don’t talk - Raj Shamani

Raise your hand if you’ve ever fallen into the trap of purchasing overhyped books or watching movies highly influenced by your social media algorithm. This book serves as a proper guide for taking a leap of faith in this highly conventional society and carving a place for yourself by challenging it. If you’re in your 20s or still feel like you’re in your 20s, this book is for you (*Dil toh baccha hai ji...*).

13. Keyur read A Moveable Feast - Ernest Hemmingway

Get ready to stroll aimlessly through the streets of Paris as Ernest and his beloved take a pause to enjoy the simple pleasures of life.

While Keyur guides us through Ernest's journey, he also shares his personal experience visiting the famous bookshop-cum-library in Paris. Sadly, these days, people are more focused on taking selfies than embracing the beauty or significance of the place. Yet, there’s still a typewriter where famous writers once sat, writing next to a window that helped them discover a whole new world. (*My tip: Save up, head to Paris, and read this book right there!*)

14. Asad read Diwar me ek khidki rehti thi - Vinod Kumar Shukla

This story is of a small-town math teacher living in a rented room and gearing up for married life. (*You’d expect the story to dive into struggles or social issues, right?*)

Instead, it takes a wild turn through a mysterious window in the wall, and suddenly, you're in a whole new world. The writing is simple yet poetic, with short sentences that pack a punch. The slow pace feels relaxing, letting you soak in the magic of it all. (*Seriously, who knew a window could be this exciting?*)

If you're into imaginative stories that keep you guessing, this one's a gem!

15. Kavita read **The Legend of Lakshmi Prasad** - Twinkle Khanna

This book tackles important issues like menstruation and basic sanitation in India, all wrapped in a relatable Indian household setting. It starts with Bablu cycling through town, noticing every little thing, until a neighbour accuses him of staring—and that's when the drama begins.

If you're looking for a light yet eye-opening take on the basic-necessities in India, with a sprinkle of daily soap drama, this one's for you. It's equal parts entertaining and thought-provoking

End of Readings... and the Beginning of Tea Tales

After the readings wrapped up, we all gathered for tea and endless chatter—so much so that our teas went cold. (Though, honestly, some people *were* the tea themselves.) From planning the next edition to gossiping about *Noor* (Samir uncle's dog), cracking jokes about the readings, and even diving into someone's love story, it hit me—having chai and spilling *chai* (yep, the tea) is a total vibe.

Till then, don't miss out on your daily dose of chai—and save some gossip for the next meet!

