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Phoenix Pro

PHOENIX  
PRO  
TIMES

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER '23

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

SRI AUROBINDO COLLEGE

UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

PROF. VIPIN KUMAR AGGARWAL  
PRINCIPAL

PROF. MEETA MATHUR  
TEACHER-IN-CHARGE

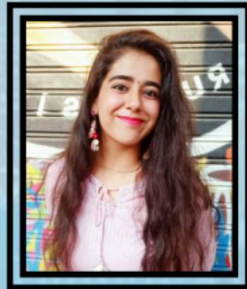
**The duties of life are sore indeed,  
And its pleasures fleeting, vain,  
The goal so shadowy seems and dim,  
Yet plod on through the dark, brave heart,  
With all thy might and main.**

**- Swami Vivekananda.  
*Hold On Yet A While, Brave Heart.* (1992)  
Complete works Vol. IV.**

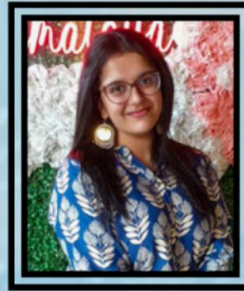
# LEADERS THIS YEAR



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**VIDUSHI SHARMA**  
VICE-PRESIDENT



**MRINALINI SODHI**  
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**TANVA BOSE**  
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**KIRTI**



**MAHIMA NAYYAR**



**SONAKSHI ARORA**



**MADHU JHA**

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**PRASHANSA PRANJALI**



**SONIYA TIWARI**  
HEAD



**KASHISH ARORA**

# Teacher Coordinators

**Ms. Sukriti Sobti**

Assistant Professor  
Department of English



**Ms. Pratibha Kumari**

Assistant Professor  
Department of English



## Editorial Team



**GOURAV MOZUMDAR**  
EDITORIAL HEAD  
3rd Year

"Fearless and peerless,

To reach the highest and meditate."

Fearlessness should truly be our aim, and anything that induces us to become cowardly only deserves to be driven away. Following such beliefs, I took up the responsibility as an editor and all the pieces herein contain certain memories that in day to day life would be impossible to deal with openly, giving all an opportunity to display that strength that we all have in us,  
the strength real,  
the strength within.



**VANIA SYED**  
2nd Year

Even if the world slaps me down,

Even if it makes me fall to pieces,

Even if all I want to do is drown,

Even if all the vibrancy of my life ceases,

I'll hold onto literature the way Adam held onto the hope of being forgiven after the sinful act.

Literature, for me, is my saviour. My saviour from this tedious world. For years I had my heart set on this field and I cannot be more grateful to be a part of Phoenix-Pro and I know I need to give back whatever I possess. As an editor of the Phoenix Pro Newsletter, I carry a commitment to provide the viewers with the best pieces... pieces that carry within them a treasure, memories that are trifling as well as consequential.



**NAVVA SHUKLA**  
2nd Year

"When people don't express themselves, they die one piece at a time."

Literature is my way of making sense of the world around me. It captures the essence of the human experience - the joys and sorrows, the triumphs and struggles, the love and loss that shape our lives. As an editor of our departmental newsletter, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the latest edition of our publication, an issue that is bursting with artistic endeavours that you'll love.



**SWAPNIL SHASHWAT**  
2nd Year

"Art is the most intense mode of individualism that the world has known" - Oscar Wilde

Each one of us carries a unique story within; that ardently yearns to be painted across on a blank canvas. Emotions are kindred to colours, spanning across a wide spectrum, expressing a vast array of hues. While a painter manoeuvres through different pigments and tinctures of shades, a writer employs words, thus transforming emotions into blotched spots of ink. Literature and art provides us with a medium to express and confront our inner aspirations and apprehensions, our desires and detestations, our deception and authenticities, vulnerabilities and the subsequent character strength.

With this in mind, I am exhilarated to bring forward the 2022-23 edition of "Phoenix-Pro Times", that continues to provide the students a platform to realize their artistic visions and bring them to life.



**SAUMYA BHATT**  
1st Year

My insatiable thirst for knowledge has led me to various places including the editorial team for Phoenix-Pro Times 2023. I have been inspired by the power of words to connect people from diverse backgrounds, seeing writing as a means to break down barriers and foster understanding between individuals and communities. Being on the team allows me to contribute to this mission by sharing stories that showcase the talents and perspectives of my peers, seniors etc. I am excited to be a part of the newsletter 2023, and future projects that the society takes up.

## Designer



**Zehra Abbas**  
2nd Year

Art inspires and design motivates !

The style of presenting the newsletter is what I have got my hands on. Designing is my passion and literature is my comfort. The team has combined a beautiful bunch of literary pieces, while the design does its bit by ensuring a smooth read.

Feast your eyes!

# Department Activities

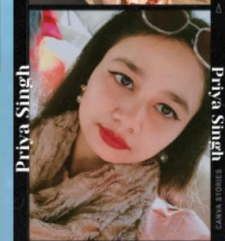
## Mehfil-E-Bollywood

Phoenix-Pro organized a warm and cozy event to formally welcome its freshers into the institution. The event was a celebration of the incredible range of talents possessed by students of all years, who put on a stunning display of rapping, singing, dancing, and enacting different Bollywood roles in perfect harmony with the event's theme: 'MEHFIL-E-BOLLYWOOD'. It would be remiss not to acknowledge the tireless efforts of the entire team of Phoenix-Pro, whose hard work and dedication could be seen in the beautiful seminar room, now filled with countless pictures of the memorable evening.

One particularly distinctive feature of the event was the exclusive use of the 'Mx' title, doing away with the age-old gender binary that has plagued society for centuries. This was a beautiful reflection of the spiritual parallel of giving up the cognizance of the body or gender. The event began with inspiring words from Prof. Meeta Mathur, Head of the English Department, whose wise counsel set the tone for the entire evening. Soon after, our beloved principal, Prof. Vipin Kumar Agarwal, took the stage and pointed out that having a big name as "Mahismati" does not make a great kingdom but an open heart does, similarly the greatness of an institution does not lie in its infrastructure, but in the brilliance of its faculty and the ability of its students to learn.

Based on their exceptional performances, a select group of participants qualified for the final round, where they were asked questions in a Bollywood-esque style. The audience was captivated by the insights into the intriguing minds of the freshers based on their answers. The following titles were awarded to the most deserving participants: Mx Quick Witted (Ria Sen, Vyomica Nanchahal), Mx Fashionista (Gurpreet Kaur, Priya Singh), and Mx Fresher (Ridhi Jha, Shivam Rai).

Overall, the event was a resounding success, filled with joy, laughter, and a sense of camaraderie that will undoubtedly last a lifetime. Phoenix-Pro has truly outdone itself once again!



## English Speaking Course

The Department of English conducted a prestigious online certificate course in English speaking, which spanned from 22nd July to 12th August 2022. This intensive three-week course focused primarily on developing the rudiments of the participants in English, conducted entirely online, allowing for maximum accessibility and flexibility for all students.

The wide ambit of the course covered several critical aspects of the English language including grammar, tenses, translation, agreement of the verb with the subject, enriching vocabulary, and various common errors. The course emphasised practical aspects of the language, empowering students with the skills and confidence necessary to deal with day-to-day activities that require a basic proficiency in English. The course was open to all the students of the college, irrespective of their chosen disciplines. Students who successfully completed the course were awarded certificates, attesting to their dedication and proficiency in English. It was a remarkable opportunity for students to enrich their language skills and gain valuable knowledge from experienced instructors, creating a remarkable learning experience that will serve them well in their future endeavors.

## Meet with Author Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni



The English Department has always been a trailblazer in the pursuit of knowledge, eagerly exploring and amassing it through visits to book fairs, literary meets and festivals. One such event that left an indelible mark on our memory was the meet and greet with the illustrious virtuoso of literature, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. An inspiration to many, she towers over the literary world and is a beacon of hope for literature students. From reading her works in class to finally coming face to face with this ingenious figure, it was a dream come true.

The rendezvous was scheduled at Shelfebook store, Select City Walk Mall on the 1st of February 2023. As we waited for the author's arrival, our excitement grew by the minute. Finally, she appeared, and the crowd erupted in applause as she made her way through the aisle of the mall, waving to her fans. Accompanying her was her esteemed Publisher, Ms. Poloumi Chatterjee. It was also the promotion of Divakaruni's newly released book 'Independence'.

Our happiness knew no bounds when we were called to make our appearance in front of her. We got our books signed, and clicked so many photos with her that we lost count. The visit ended on a joyous note, our faces beaming with pride and jubilation for having had the privilege of meeting such a brilliant personality.

The Sayonara Soiree brought about  
Tears in our eyes,  
Sorrow in our hearts,  
We bade farewell to,  
Our brothers and sisters of 2019 - 2022.

We welcomed the new batch  
Of 2022-2025,  
With fresher faces,  
Like the morning's dew  
To begin again... All anew.

### Farewell Orientation Pride Month

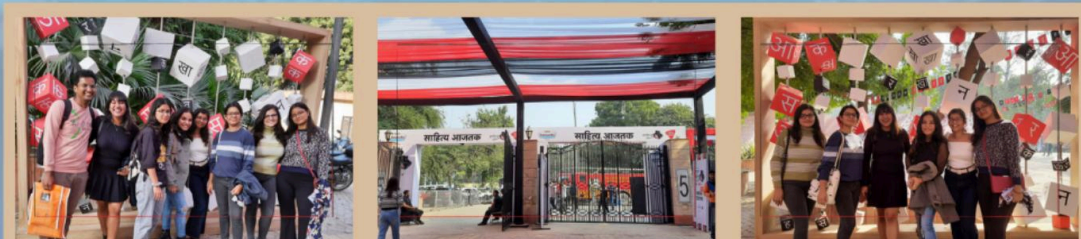


Ms. Naaz Joshi, the first Indian trans woman to win Miss World Diversity thrice, impressed the Department with her inspiring journey of resilience and determination. Her example reminds us of the ongoing struggles of accepting and embracing our true selves, and the importance of self-love and perseverance.

## Visit to Aaj Tak SAHITYA LitFest

The English Department students were elated to be a part of the prestigious literary fest, Sahitya, hosted by Aaj Tak at the Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium. This event brought together a diverse range of literary perspectives, not just classic worldviews, but also contemporary ones of significant importance. The fest commenced with an enthralling introduction by Ms. Kalli Purie, the Vice Chairperson of India Today group, who heads all major programs hosted by Aaj Tak. Ms. Purie eloquently elucidated on the various programs and introduced the guests and their consecutive events. The line-up of luminaries was awe-inspiring, including the likes of Chetan Bhagat, Bhuvan Bam, Anamika and Neha, Zakir Khan, Afsana Khan, Dr. Hari Om Panwar, Bismil group, and Cabinet Minister Bhupender Kumar. Their profound knowledge regarding literature and Hindi Sahitya left the audience spellbound.

The last day of the event, being a Sunday, saw an influx of literary aficionados; the guests were Zakir, Bhuvan, and Afsana. Another event followed, titled "MIKE KE LAL," where Priya and Tanya from Phoenix-Pro, amongst other struggling writers, showcased their talent. It was an event that left an indelible impression on everyone, a fantastic experience packed with entertainment and education, and a memorable chance to witness our favorite anchors and celebrities.



# Creative Expressions

## Like a Phoenix, I Rise

Standing dazed at the bay, with cluelessness in the heart;  
Is this the end? - the mind asks in its blues  
; A weary sigh escapes my lips, as my body breaks apart.  
Withered and vulnerable, I stayed up, weeping, from the extended abuse  
Feels like the last ounce of strength has left,  
From me, to outlive this pain.  
Crushed and cursed, the life seems bereft;  
And in a head full of fears, to carry a dream, now seems vain.  
The invisible wounds which I try to hide,  
How long do I have to wear this facade of happiness?  
This never ending battlefield, where peace is tied  
In iron chains; I wonder where my solitude lies.  
But Hope speaks to me, this anxiety is temporary;  
And the scars which I bear are the stars to my beauty.  
Now that my tearstained pillow has dried up;  
I emerge as the strongest soul, burying my afflicted memories.  
Like a Phoenix I rise, from the ashes of failure;  
Returning from the flames, wearing no accessory but my strength;  
While realizing, the tornadoes of lives cannot endanger,  
The constellations in my eyes.

- Ridhi Jha, 1st Year

## Contradictions

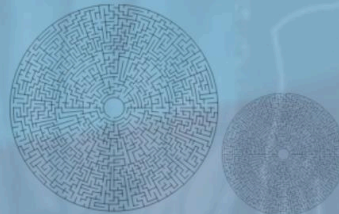
So full of deceit,  
My life's a contradiction,  
One day it's reality,  
The next one is its fiction...

I'm lost without reason,  
Because I made it so,  
To increase the complexity,  
And force myself to grow.

I'm so full of life today,  
But tomorrow it dies,  
I'm so full of optimism,  
But the pessimist inside cries.

The two extremes of who am I,  
Are what I hate to be,  
I'm so scared to waste it,  
Then scared to run free..

Can I live it day by day,  
Or do I even care?  
I'm so full of wonder now  
But tomorrow I Won't care



- Shreya Jain, 3rd Year



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## **1 Find You**

I find you  
Heaven has fallen for me, but I find you.  
I am a woman not a tissue, I remind you.  
I want myself to fulfill your individuality, Continuously praying what I believe, to be reality.  
Prediction made by prophet says you are mine. I just want you to be my darkness's sunshine.  
You are the illusion, I wanna live in. The original scenario I wanna believe in.  
Be the aesthetic occasion I wanna celebrate  
Let's show the chemistry, they can't even imagine to create.  
Don't go for the people, who just wanna grind you  
Look here heaven has fallen for me, but I find you.

**- Mahima, 1st Year**

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## **Old Peepal Talks People**

Old Peepal talks people, "why are you so weary?"  
"I am a sacred fig since fifty years, do I look so scary?"  
Little Dolly bumbles down, "Where are your parents, biggie?"  
"An Old Farmer planted me, ten years and then he was forever sleepy."  
"His son had some mega dreams,  
He sold this field in short reams;  
Bought a wine shop, went bankrupt,  
With shattered hopes and an unachieved ambition, now he drinks and screams."  
Old Peepal talks people, "Who are your favourite friends?"  
"A little girl like you used to climb my shortest branch, until she chose to apprehend.  
Her parents realised her breasts were round now and once in a while she bled.  
Distant land in the North with a 'decent' groom, they said, she was fled."  
Little Dolly, felt sorry, "I befriend you forever," She spoke.  
"Forever is a lie, nothing stays by, don't have false hope."  
Old Peepal talks people, "Who loves you the most?"  
"The stranger under the shade, the devotee with the holy thread said I am their support  
when the times are worst.  
The bird has a nest on my branch which early morning she weaves,  
The vendor who used to work in the circus sold my branches and leaves.  
They said I gave them support and I made them freed.  
The one who loves me the most is the one with most urgent need."  
Old Peepal talks people, "What are dreams and disappointments?"  
"Dreams are what wake you up at night and fill your eyes with aspirations.  
Disappointments are the response of actions opposite to expectations.  
Little Dolly, don't you have dreams, do you not worry?"  
"I don't share my dreams and don't mention my worries, I am sorry.  
People can't see beyond their perspectives, they'll call my dreams a fantasy and shrug  
about my pain in a hurry."  
Old Peepal talk people, "What do you see and do?"  
"I see people and talk people just like I did with you.

**- Aadhya Jha, 1st Year**

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## Humility and Shame

The origin of mankind is somewhat debatable. According to science we come across the term homosapians. From religion we know of Adam and Eve.



" And the Lord God  
commanded the Man,  
saying, of every tree of the  
garden thou mayest freely  
eat: But of the tree of the  
knowledge of good and evil,  
thou shalt not eat of it: For in  
the day that thou eatest  
there of thou shalt surely die."



So for a fact, humans came into existence from the fall of man. When he first chose to eat the forbidden fruit, from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. What I actually wonder about is, the fact, did the humans descend from one couple? Does that mean brothers and sisters were the creators of further generations? That is, assuming Adam and Eve had two children. What if they only had one? For centuries man has been considered the smartest of all, when he has merely descended from the foolishness of one! Imagine, man gets to know of good and evil, causes death, destruction, war, and tragedy, from which, the world is yet to recover. Is there not even a single pure human till date? (Scoffs) Even the first one was easily compelled to cause chaos for the seven billion who came next! Even today, man thrives for adventure and thrill in his life. He wishes to overcome even the most dire situations with triumph. Isn't this exactly why Adam ate the apple? To prove God, that he can thrive in even the darkest of the circumstances? The single adventure that Adam wanted, simply because he was given everything on a platter to live with, in the paradise, away from war, worry, sadness, and every other thing that fills the today's world, had caused him to create the most terrible agony for the mankind. The God stripped the serpent (who enticed Eve to commit the sin) off of his legs. But, did evil truly end? "God" is the creator of all. (Not that I firmly believe this) Man wishes to be like God,—be "The God ". The greed and lust to be the almighty not only exists in this phase and era but has existed since the beginning of mankind. Adam and Eve ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, only because they wanted to stop being the "innocent nothings". They wanted to be like God. At least now I know where the human ego comes from! So, how do we come out of the cycle of evil created by the first couple? The cycle we created? It would be, and is too, very lame to say that "love overcomes the hate", —NO. We can't achieve this. The countries will still need to protect their borders, the poor will still need to steal, to feed his family. The world will still be full of "the evil serpents". The embodiment of evil. Then how?

Humility and Shame. Yes, these are the little keys to the closed doors of the paradise that we have been banished from. The deeper we dig for them, the more we grow closer to reverse the Original Sin.

- Mrinalini Sodhi, 3rd Year

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## Dear Diana

A Glance at her  
and I find myself falling  
Watch her,  
owning her blemishes and flaws  
Imperfectly perfect with all her dark spots.  
Levitating in the night sky  
I wish I was hers, I wish she was mine.  
Oh! You Elysian beauty  
lover of Endymion,  
plunderer of my heart  
cause of many of my sleepless nights  
giver of eternal sleep to some.  
Would you ever love me  
the way you loved him?

I steal a glimpse at you,  
I long for you to grant me the same  
Your love is a siren's song  
could never compare to Achilles' lyre,  
Bathing in your divine light  
rekindles my inner fire.  
This wishful thinking,  
this intense desire

Your immortality contradicts my transient memory  
I feel so callous  
never felt so tame,  
You whisper with a daunting voice  
It's indeed all in vain.  
I am falling apart,  
And Its all your fault  
You are breaking my heart,  
You are wreaking havoc on my brain  
You are stomping on my chest,  
You take my breath away  
Oh Diana, my love  
Would you be so kind  
As to Let me kiss you, One last time.  
Since the beginning of time immemorial  
Your seraphic beauty had me enslaved  
Absorb my soul,  
make it all yours  
Accompany me now to my Empyrean grave.



- Swapnil Shashwat, 2nd Year

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## Don't

Don't  
A note to myself... .  
You are a beam of light,  
Equally inside as in sight,  
No worries  
If people gave up on you,  
You know yourself, be true  
With hope,  
See the future shining bright,  
Don't let go, hold on tight  
Always remember,  
Till the grass is green and sky is blue,  
No one can put you down beside you



- Diya Sabharwal, 2nd Year

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## Lost Childhood

Everything feels like silk when I dream, floating amongst the formless clouds of thoughts. Often, I find myself walking in the parks and the desolate lanes that I encounter on my way home from college. I find it a bit queer that even though I never actively exert myself to go on any of these walks, yet I wander around in solitude when I am desperately out of breath, energy or my mind. The partially faded yellowness of the leaves reminds me of the borders of washed-out rusty photographs. Closing my eyelids to feel the lightly burning sensation of the sun upon my permanently half tanned skin, I go back in time. I have a vivid memory from my childhood of visiting a temple with my family. As we walked out, I could see a whole queue of people abandoned by the gods, near the boundary of the temple. The threshold separating the ideal and the reality. The natural compassion that is often found in innocent children drew me towards them. My father gave me and my younger brother money to distribute among them. And we did. We began putting in a few perfectly round copper pieces in each of the polished steel bowls, producing a series of high pitched sound, "clink", "clink" and more "clink", As a child I was not completely unaware about the value of those small round tokens but I had hardly ever known anybody to have their eyes lighten up by the mere sight of a piece of metal that could not even buy me a packet of chocolate. The music went on and soon after we reached the last of the deserted being, we realised we were out of coins. She was an old woman past her fifties, with a frail and failing body, unkempt hair and gorgeous black eyes, drowning deep among the sea of wrinkles that covered almost all of her face. I looked into her eyes and I felt a wave of sadness wash over me. She looked at me just like how an honest defendant looks upon his judge in the court of law to deliver justice to him. And I looked upon her as though I were her criminal. Her cold stainless steel bowl was left empty, waiting for a piece of round copper alloy to produce a "clink". I had no other option except to move on since my parents had already walked way ahead of us and I was anxious about getting lost in the crowd, but my mind never let go of her eyes, her hauntingly gorgeous eyes. More than ten years have passed, I still wonder about her. The guilt which once filled my heart contracted over time to a small marble ball that soon lodged deep inside one of my pulmonary veins. Now, when I come across small kids in the markets in their soiled clothes, holding delicate and sweet smelling blood red roses in their soot stained black hands, my mind wanders away. Organised begging, drug addiction, child abduction, and many other reasons were listed to me by many people as to why we should not give alms to children. My former guilt does not move me anymore and this made me realize that I am now a part of this world. This cynical, unfair, morally corrupt adult world. The air in this city is tainted and the stars in the night sky are hardly visible. The only visible star shines like the singular marble in my heart and I wonder when did I decide to let go of the hand of the child from my past.

- Swapnil Shashwat, 2nd Year

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## **Whose House Is It Really?**

Whose house is it really-  
Is it the one who toils all day at work,  
Meeting deadlines, listening to the boss's rambling talk?  
Drained of energy, giving assurance to the house members,  
Making sure they have everything they need.  
Or is it the one who stays back,  
His labor going unnoticed and unappreciated,  
Transforming the house into a loving home,  
Where children sing and tired souls find respite.  
But why should we separate one from the other,  
When both are equal in all matters?  
Each can handle the other's work with love and care,  
And that, my friend, would make all the difference.  
For a home is not just brick and mortar,  
But the love, care, and warmth that resides within,  
Shared equally by those who call it their own,  
And make it a haven of peace and kin

**- Navneet Rohilla, 3rd Year**

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## **Life to live is a secret beautiful**

Life to live is a secret beautiful  
To discover which you require skill graceful.  
Do you choose to sit down or do you choose to fight,  
An often wish sought  
By seekers of truth,  
Their hearts churn in great turmoil  
To do or not to do.  
To see the truth that lies within,  
Beyond the reach of despair like thought.  
Thus to see what pervades this realm,  
Calm one must the venerated emotions,  
Like the time of pause,  
Where the wind flows free  
Against the calm temple of Buddha,  
Where deathless birth and stillness thought  
Become clear  
Thus blossoms wisdom amidst turmoil,  
As the tender jasmine,  
Among the violent violets,  
Engaged though in a thousand works,  
Free one becomes like the supple soul

**-Gourav Mozumdar, 3rd Year**

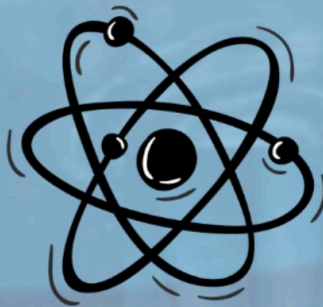
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## **Real Learning through Experience**

We've always heard 'real learning takes place through experience' but most of us don't perceive the actual meaning behind it. We all commence learning new things from Pre School but the assiduous lessons of our life comes via experiences. Our life is the perfect way of swotting and obtaining knowledge. The more we thrive, the more experiences we have, the more we pickup fast. Real life experiences help build self-reliance. People who had to undergo such experiences are always ready to help others who are facing similar challenges. There can be a number of afflictions we come across in our lives but it is up to us to decipher the good and bad. Along with that, I wish to express how one of the events of my life incited me with different emotions. Before 9th standard, I used to attend a different school. My life was no sweat, it was effervescent, full of amusement. However, I was oblivious of the ways of the world. Whatever I perceived and grasped in school was everything to me. Notwithstanding the emotional impact of changing schools, I was all exhilarated to make new friends, meet new people but during my initial days, I found it too laborious to adjust. When it was my chance to interact with my classmates, I perceived that my personality was really different from them and the whole school. Their beliefs never corresponded to mine and I was not used to living in that kind of environment. My feelings were blurred and I believed that the whole universe was up against me. The place made me feel undesired and unwanted. I couldn't make any friends, It led me to stay alone and cry frequently because I felt isolated. I was frustrated at the drastic turn my life had taken. Spending even a single moment there had become unbearable, I couldn't do anything about it, even when the elders got aware about the state of affairs, nothing changed. But then gradually, when my isolation became solitude, it enhanced me more, I began to explore my life, my personality became self assertive, resulting in acceptance. Now I exhibit qualities that make me proud of myself. It made me perceive why God put me through such circumstances as I needed to recognize my worth, the significance of self reliance, the fact that wherever you are, whatever you carry out, give your best shot. No matter what kind of individuals you are surrounded with, just rely on yourself. The real wisdom that I absorbed through this ordeal is that life is not always as you want it to be, life will not always bestow you with fruits, sometimes you need thorns too.



**- Vania Syed, 2nd Year**

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## Let The Truth Speak

Maybe, not have chinchilla fur on  
Maybe, not have delicacies rolle  
Maybe, not have penthouse mol  
But breathe in the solitude freedom fo  
The ones who gave the blood and slee  
They were the ones who let the truth spea  
Freedom is not given, it's take  
Bose, the legend, his memories unshake  
The ones who pour their heart out  
Doesn't need anything more to shou  
The ones whose hearts were antiqu  
They were the ones who let the truth spea



What's courage? What's a stor  
When your soul's intact and not tor  
How glorious stories get their plot  
How does bravery flow through their form  
The ones who were not meek and blea  
They were the ones who let the truth speak  
We are in debt of our Akhand Bhara  
And the blood that built Sashakt Bhara  
What's so powerful in truth  
That made the brave hearts get rid of ruth  
The ones who got the souls of truth, Midas touch gutsy peak  
They were the ones who let the truth speak

**Riya Tomar, 3rd Year**

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## Human Is

Human is..... indescribable  
A lump of flesh and bones describing history,  
Human is..... ingenious  
Leaving it's footprints between the expanse of never ending void,  
Human is..... complex  
Tumbling across the space of sentiments wondering how to express them  
Human is..... catastrophic  
Plotting wars, separating families, piercing bodies with swords  
Human is..... sickening  
Swimming through life in the ocean of lies and cruelty  
Human is..... not human  
Human lost everything that makes it human



**Shivangi Pandey, 2nd Year**

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## The Royal Dagger

Running is a humanoid in that storm,  
In his hands held a baby to bemoan,  
Blood dripping from his trench coat that's worn  
Holds a dagger encrypted that flashes royalty,  
Unconsciously taking lives and giving in some form.

In Latin reads the bloodstained blade,  
When rays are stained  
All will gain what's lost in vain,  
Every century added a half with a decade one less,  
History will flash itself again.

The boy christened Victor is surrendered,  
By the murderer who then condemned self-murder,  
Over to the Catholic church in Strasbourg.  
Adorning him a silver chaplet,  
Tucked in it was a miniature bayonet.  
The royal dagger went unseen  
The boy who'd grown up now seventeen  
Sky and cryptology made him keen  
Since the miniature tells something foreseen  
Carried it since nonage; to know the reason why it has been.

Alsace all traveled by him to find the keys  
Of all the locks he's opened unknowingly  
The language that the midget reads  
Latin it is conveying a message indeed  
But deciphering it isn't all he needs.

A century and a half he said One-fifty,  
A decade one less means nine simply  
Put together, it's One fifty-nine in terms of years,  
But what does staining of rays means here  
Found! at last, he reached somewhere near.

Decoded stains to eclipse and rays to Sun  
Once in a One fifty-nine years is a rare phenomenon.  
The Hybrid solar eclipse is the one  
That has something to do with the dagger he had on  
Thus, finding the answers one by one.



Went to the national library in Paris  
Read something about King Harris  
In the book, saw him holding an identical dagger  
Wore the same chaplet with the miniature dagger.  
He's the royal son of son, of whose king Harris is the father!

Strasbourg he went with some clues in his hand  
Went to the castle where his father was stabbed  
Found out the place, where laid down his grave  
Fifty rooms with a hallway there  
Which one is his', he thought and things became clear.

The books he read told him what was done  
The royal who died, his father was the last one  
Others killed in conspiracy one by one.  
Newest must be his grave, found it, thought it was done  
His bayonet was the key to open the coffin uncommon.

Opened it, mourned, found a bloodstained letter  
Addressed to him telling about the flatterers  
That the dagger was cursed but not for the real heir,  
His brother stabbed him, took away the heir,  
And the dagger will come back to the original heir.

In a hope to end the curse, taking heir's blood and with prayers,  
His brother would try to claim the treasure that was theirs.  
The curse was inevitable, nothing would work,  
Rather he will be killed, his death lurked.  
As further he read the letter, learned his father was the keeper.

Under his grave was the treasure  
If opened at the right time, he would prosper  
The dagger will be found if the grave was turned  
He now knows what needs to be done  
Then Arrived the day when stained will be the sun.

Slid open the roof so eclipse could be seen  
Slid aside the coffin; defender of the fortune it has been  
Found the dagger, the heir will be deemed  
His hands and rays when touched the dagger,  
Revealed to the heir was the bloody treasur

- Riya Tomar, 3rd Year



## Math And Me

Math, of all the vicissitudes of life, has been the most crucial one. The realisation of which came after completing five semesters in English honours. Not that the subject in itself was problematic, despite all the horrific ways (or creative) it has been dealt with, the teaching of which is the most difficult part, perhaps nobody knows how to teach the subject most appropriately, nevertheless some do get better teachers, whereas some end up with the likes of mine. A common pedagogy that was or is still used (Yes! This danger might be looming large) is to never ever spare the rod, no never, to beat down all differences, and to force all herds (innocent or guilty) into that one mould, by that one way alone, smartness is adored whereas fools cry and lie. This Event that I talk about might be as important as Marquez' *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, no it's not about an honour code, but yes, it is about the oppression felt by thousands of Angelas out there, whether a boy or girl, whether homosexual or a heterosexual, whether it be a Hindu or Muslim doesn't matter but this sheep like, exhausting foolishness that people misnomer as innocence.

Why does a child lie, coming straight to the point, is it with an evil invention, to beguile someone into giving a crore rupees, no, a stark and a big No, maybe the child is afraid, just afraid to tell the truth, afraid to face the ostracism, afraid of facing the consequences that are a result of acting foolishly, acting without smartness not able to grasp things that are sheer common sense to those, who either have loved it or have been beaten and ostracised into (at least) doing them somehow, bare enough to pass. Often accused of lying, I would often be perplexed by the fact that I had consciously or unconsciously lied, to the utter dismay of somebody, none even for once had come close and warm enough to have simply asked this one question, not as a superior, not with a pen shaped baton with glaring eyes, "How much did you score in the topical test?" I repeated with a wee bit of fear and obviously my mother had revealed it to the teacher, "15." She, bringing it up in front of fifteen people, said, "Was it fifteen or five." What happened after that I don't remember, it was not having to gain something that a falsity was uttered but the horror of being treated, or mistreated, that brought this circularity upon me. The fear of standing out, and being proud of failures is very scarcely regarded as a virtue but more as an audacity. Many harrowing experiences had followed, and somewhere it was tacitly accepted, it is Math after all, either like it or be beaten into it. There is a lot that is left to say, the post Covid generation knows this or not, I am ignorant of the same, but fear, is it not known to all. Vivekananda probably was not wrong when he proclaimed fearlessness as a virtue, but really, it takes out your guts, literally, tearing them out of you, to confront your failures and with a warm heart full of affection and love confess that it is not Math that is faulty but the LHS and RHS of all people might not be the same.

No words none there are

to put things as they are

why is Cos, What is Theta

Can anybody please explain, not to gain marks but with love, it's fine,  
if you don't understand, lovingly, BETA.

Fear, Fear, Fear, all must pass,

Oh such a shame, Bitu can't pass,

Of don't fear your love is not blind,

just send him to tuition,

by hook and angry hook they will force him to pass.

But all efforts in vain, all efforts in vain, a meagre P7!

Oh the system, oh the force, oh the hardcore porn,

Now I have come to power,

with ties of humanity,

Now the empire will write back,

proud of it's foolishness

This is not catharsis, yet, loads is still left to say, most ironically, I was the one who began it all, "Can't you see what others are doing, just send me to tuition and that's when, KARMA said, "Got him." When mother said, PUCCKA then don't crib that you have been sent to tuition." (not all tuitions are bad, some are love too).

**-Gourav Mozumdar, 3rd Year**

$$\begin{aligned} ax^2 + bx + c &= 0 \\ \frac{x}{a} + \frac{y}{b} &= 1 \\ x &= \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a} \end{aligned}$$

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## Music n Literature

Art is one of the most significant creations to ever come from man-kind. Art is the one thing that truly makes us unique from the rest of the species in the animal kingdom. The different varieties of art forms provide a path to escape our own lives for a while and be teleported to the different worlds that these various art forms provide. Two of these art forms that stand out are music and literature. At first glance, the two may seem very different and not have much in common; however, when properly juxtaposed, a lot of their similar qualities are visible. Music has been the one factor that has defined my life for the past decade, and it continues to do so even now, as it undoubtedly will continue to do so throughout my life. I am sure music plays a very important role in the lives of people in general, whether it's something as simple as listening to your favourite artist on the way to college or the office, or something more serious like composing your own songs to be put out there into the world. Music has a perpetual effect on our lives, providing a form of escapism. Such is also the case with literature and the works of various writers, past and present. Everyone has read a book at some point or another, and undoubtedly, books have provided the same kind of escapism to people as music does. The sonic waves that hit our eardrums and triggered memories from the past are the same words that bless our eyes and trigger our imagination. Literature has been that art form for an insurmountable amount of time, and such is the case with music as well. Music has been known to exist since the dawn of time, and literature not too long after that. Another aspect that music and literature share similarities in are the emotions of the consumers. Some people like to listen to the aggression that certain musical artists portray in their songs, and this helps people get their own feelings of anger and aggression expressed for them in a way they aren't able to. Some people like to read fictional and fantasy novels in order to escape into the worlds portrayed in them and, in doing so, trigger emotions of bliss, joy, and excitement. Music and literature go hand in hand when it comes to expressing emotions. Moreover, music and literature are also important in representing the cultures of different masses. Each musical style has an origin and is tied to the culture that it originated in. Music becomes an identity for the people of that region. For example, Indian classical music is one that originated in India and gives India its own identity among a sea of musical styles. Such is also the case when it comes to literature. We know of so many poets and writers from various parts of the world who have contributed to the culture of the country that they hail from. Perhaps the most important aspect of music and literature, or art in general, is making statements known. Time and time again, artists, whether musical or those of the novel kind, have been known to use their art to convey messages to the public and to the world. This is another perpetual aspect of art that ties music and literature together. For so long, music and literature have been at the forefront of making statements and making voices heard. The topics ranging from oppression of women to the effects of war, etc. have all been tackled by literature and music alike. Music and literature also bring a sense of empowerment to those that consume them. Those who immerse themselves in the creative arts also develop a new sense of perspective towards everyday life. I myself have immersed myself in music and guitar, and my seemingly dull everyday life suddenly has a connection to music, as I notice these similarities. The concept of synchronisation in music is one that transfers over to life as well. In order for our relationships and work lives to thrive, we must be in sync with ourselves. In music, we have dissonant sounds that resolve to another sound. Dissonant musical notes are some of the most heinous sounds known to mankind, and one would think not to use them; however, these dissonant notes used in the proper context provide a sense of tension that makes it even more impactful when the sound gets shifted to a mellow note. The mellow and sweet-sounding note wouldn't be as impactful if it weren't for the tension created by the dissonant note. This can be applied to life in general; we are no strangers to ups and downs, but the sense of tension and release is one that is even more pleasing when you've had to struggle for the things you've earned. The destination wouldn't be as relieving and fulfilling if it weren't for the journey you had to go through.

- Jeremy Ganguly, 3rd Year

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## Valiant like Macbeth

Things might seem tough at the moment  
You might feel like there's no light at the end of this tunnel,  
The darkness is engulfing you step by step,  
Waiting for you to give up,  
You are exhausted,  
Your eyes are red and swollen,  
From crying to sleep every night,  
Everything seems blurred and dimmed,  
You are not able to keep track of the day and the night,  
You are dying inside,  
But everyone is oblivious of what you are going through,  
Hold on,  
Do not lose hope,  
Not being okay, is not wrong  
Waiting for the right time,  
Might take long,  
So take a deep breath,  
Things might seem tough at the moment,  
You might feel like there's no light at the end of this tunnel,  
The darkness is engulfing you step by step,



Waiting for you to give up,  
You are exhausted,  
Your eyes are red and swollen,  
From crying to sleep every night,  
Everything seems blurred and dimmed,  
You are not able to keep track of the day and the night,  
You are dying inside,  
But everyone is oblivious of what you are going through,  
Hold on,  
Do not lose hope,  
Not being okay, is not wrong  
Waiting for the right time,  
Might take long,  
So take a deep breath,  
As you are valiant like Macbeth,  
And I have always said,  
Bad days don't last,  
It will soon become your past,  
When you feel like you're done  
Just wait, better days are yet to come  
Write yourself some letters at home,  
As together they'll make sublime poems



- Vania Syed, 2nd Year

## I'M SO MANY PEOPLE

I'm out with lanterns, looking for myself.

- Emily Dickinson

"You act differently around different people," hit me on our drive back home, and I found myself in the bottomless abyss of introspection. I managed a "How does it matter?" "Be yourself," was the reply and I could not help but roll my eyes. Fortunately, the self-deprecating humour arrived just in time to help me deflect from the confounding topic.

Are you that self of yours who pirouettes at the littlest of joys, or the one you put on after your latest web series watch? Are you your physical self or the multitude of thoughts crowding your brain? Are you your restlessness or the self that, for the life of you, just can't care enough? Most importantly, how to be yourself when it's hard to figure out who you are, or more simply put, what's more you? It's all these perplexities that make me just want to sit back and marvel at all my random musings, ranging from personal to political to philosophical (yes, I'm pretentious). Nothing irks me more than the nonchalant tone people adopt when talking about being "oneself." I wonder if it's the envy surfacing given my abstruse relationship with the latter. I'm not sure if describing people accurately is a skill to be smug about, but you bet I am. Describing others is something that comes naturally to me, but for the love of God, do not ask me about myself. I do not fancy seeing myself lost in the labyrinth of unnerving thoughts. Perhaps it would be easy if I attempted to view myself as "other," something alien, an artefact in some museum. Maybe that's how it should be. When you describe something, you put it at a distance; you observe it. Maybe it's easier to observe, far harder to be observed. And being the subject of your own ruminations is easier said than done. To find a middle ground, marvel at the stupefying nature of your "being," not flinch at all things malign in you, and leave it be. It's exhausting to be 'a' self, so I choose to shed some and put on the one that suits me the best. One that would metamorphose me into a "self," the other would find tolerable.

So what if I shed a self or two? I still encapsulate all that I've borrowed from all the souls I've brushed against. I'm all those fragments jammed together. I'm all my infatuations and all my limitations. I'm all my 'selves' at their extremes and all that ricochets in between.

"Too much and not the mood."

-Navya Shukla, 2nd Year

## An Interview with Author Priyanka Sachdeva

A person? Check

A friend? Check

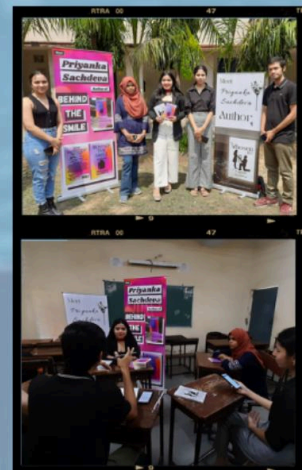
A DU student? Check

A Senior? Check

An Author ? Double check

What am I hearing? You want a glimpse into this person's life? Count your wishes as we just fulfilled this one ;)

Priyanka Sachdeva, an alumni of Sri Aurobindo College, elevates the Department of English with her books of success and courage! The Editorial Team asked her what you wanted to know (and what you didn't!). Let's delve into her journey; from an English Honors student to a self published author with her books *Behind the Smile* and *The Chosen One*



1. Why have you chosen English literature as your main stream?

There's an interesting story behind my real 'push' towards English literature. My 8th grade teacher was so impressed by a poem I wrote, she decided to take me to the principal and present my poem to her as well. As a prize, I was offered a book of my choice from her collections. I chose *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank. Despite having a thirst for digging deeper and analysing their roots, Math and Natural Sciences never satiated me the way literature did. I come from a 'Thet' Punjabi family and my mother tongue, being both Hindi and Punjabi, resulted in me being great at either in school, but as a writer, I always knew that writing in English would mean global reach.

2. Your views on the English discipline and any favourites of yours that we can bank upon?

We often tend to give-in to the stigma of course books being 'boring', but I have found that mine have not just helped increase my proficiency, but also exposed me to greater works. When we read, we put ourselves in the shoes of others. One can never have a broad outlook towards life being limited to a select few experiences of their own. For the maturity that it gives, irrespective of one's discipline, reading is a must for all. There are many books that I find myself going back to, but *Secrets* by Rhonda Byrne has had a great impact on me and would recommend the same.



3. Why have you opted for 'love' as the central motif for your works?

The strength of love can be gauged by the saying 'Love conquers all'- a solid belief of mine. It's not just about the typical romance involved between conventional partners, it's also about the fraternity that blooms in various relationships like that of a mother-child, teacher-student, human-pet or among friends. For me, love is inexplicable, and its choice would stem from my own experiences. We all must make sure that we are heard. To me, writing isn't just cathartic. While making a living out of it, I want others to find motivation from my struggles and their own.

4. Could you comment on the use of AI tools like Chat GPT and the erasure of certain words to 'sensitise' texts?

Relying on Chat GPT as a need to deal with a hectic time schedule might be a viable alternative but it is crucial to mark a clear difference between life and practicality, and words that emerge out of AI configuration would inevitably lack originality. The mere removal of words cannot, in any way, go about changing the intentions of people. Though in certain cases, it is permissible, such as in primary textbooks where racism is often evident.

5. How much time did it take for you to finish *Behind the Smile* and what is more gratifying: the journey or the destination?

The basic framework of the novel had existed in my mind since childhood. My friends urged me to pen it down. I started working on a handwritten manuscript during Covid and had the final draft ready in approximately one and a half years. The time taken by an author to finish their work cannot be the criterion to judge the final piece, since the input is not always proportional to the time taken. I take inspiration from ways of the stoic Marcus Aurelius who practised 'Memento Mori' emphasising more on the journey.

6. Any sage words of experience to the young readers who are apprehensive about their dreams working out?

The greatest advice would be to have faith in yourself and remember the reason why you started your journey in the first place.

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## MOVIE REVIEW

### FORGED GLORY: CAN YOU EVER FORGIVE ME?

Do you ever feel that anything you write isn't original? Do you feel that your brain tricked you into thinking that it was indeed your own doing, and you feel proud of yourself for a bleak moment? Finally, the light shines through the cobweb-ridden confines of your brain, and you realise that "your own creation" wasn't really your own.

The 2019 movie "Can You Ever Forgive Me?" allows us a glimpse into the world of copying and originality. It involves an "intelligent sort of copying" that, during the course of the film, you'll grow to resent while begrudgingly admiring the same. Based on the real-life book by literary forger Lee Israel of the same name, the film revolves around a character you are most likely not going to want to relate to. The protagonist works in a mundane environment and possesses an inexplicably intense rage against humankind with an equally passionate allegiance to her pet. What's not relatable, then? Well, during the course of the film, you realise that Israel is somewhat of an outcast, quite visibly so. All of us feel like outcasts, but we've got several tricks up our sleeves to try and not feel like one, aka pretend. Israel does not even make the effort. She couldn't care less.

Lee Israel is trying to make ends meet in 1990s New York. She found a quick workaround: forging letters from infamous personalities. She sold hundreds of such letters before getting caught by the FBI. Melissa McCarthy is so believable as Israel that you can't help but think of the "hamartia" that cripples the life of the once popular literary figure. McCarthy showcases how her existential dread is one of the contributing factors, if not "the" factor, for her generally bizarre and rude behaviour. Once a best-selling author, a middle-aged crisis kicks in both in her personal as well as her professional life, causing her to find herself in the depths of human and publishing indifference.

Upon revealing her idea of writing a biography, Israel's agent turns it down, calling it an uncommercial idea. Israel retorts to the selling of letters by infamous personalities. Upon further research, she finds out that she can extract even more money if she improves the letters with added postscripts from old typewriters. Israel wrote the line "Can you ever forgive me?" masquerading as Dorothy Parker in one of the several edited letters. Parker would never have apologised for her drunken shenanigans, and neither would Israel. The title is befitting since McCarthy's Israel seems to be yearning for forgiveness. She is a wizard at cloning others but when it comes to expressing herself, all she ends up with is a sigh. Her loneliness is so palpable that you can't help but feel for her. When the dealers realise her patterns, she has her couch potato sidekick and fellow drinker Jack get his hands dirty for her, which he willingly and shamelessly does.

No one's cheering for Israel (Melissa McCarthy) in this true-crime black comedy. Unkempt books, cat excrement, and a layer of dust and filth adorn her manky apartment. Her moral compass has as much efficacy as the cat excreta that lie there. This trait of hers especially shines through during the final courtroom scene where she promises to give up alcohol, with the next scene showing her getting drunk and amusingly fantasising about tripping up an AIDS patient.

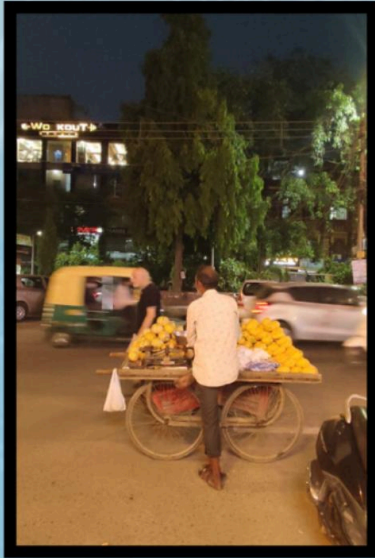
McCarthy is phenomenal as Israel. She plays the role of Israel with convincing accuracy, who is delusional in the sense that she considers her forgery an imaginative adventure of sorts, a tribute even, to all those she's admired all her life. Imitation might be the highest kind of flattery, but forgery is nonetheless a crime. Israel finds these lines blurred, and McCarthy persuades us that this indeed is the case. The movie also sheds light on how people would pay a fortune for anything without a care in the world solely based on "who" did it?

Caught in the storm of human ignorance, Lee finds her voice by imitating that of others. Even with its seemingly unlikeable premise, the film will surprise you with how much you like it. The display of raw human emotions in the film is commendable. The film is utterly fascinating, and the actors, hypnotic as their characters. It makes you feel every emotion on the emotion spectrum—disgust, despair, rage, pity, and whatnot.

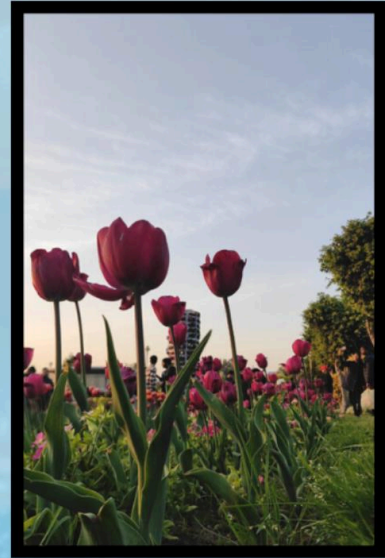
- Navya Shukla, 2nd Year

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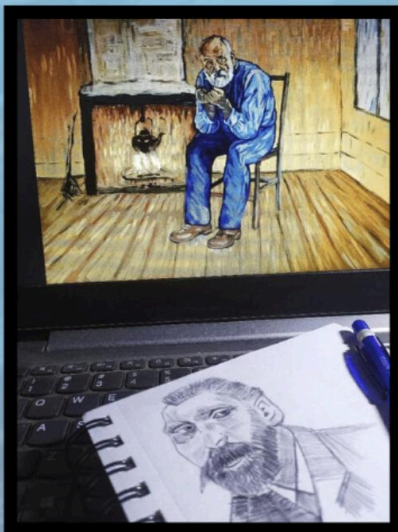
# Moments in Time...



**Swapnil Shashwat  
2nd Year**



**Shreya Jain  
3rd Year**



**Abhigya Singh  
1st Year**



"If I have learned anything in this long life of mine,  
it is this: in love we find out who we want to be; in  
war we find out who we are."

- Kristin Hannah, *The Nightingale*

"I hope I will be able to confide everything to you,  
as I have never been able to confide in anyone, and  
I hope you will be a great source of comfort and  
support."

- Anne Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl*

"Here is a small fact:  
You are going to die"

- Markus Zusak, *The Book Thief*

"There is but one truly serious philosophical problem,  
and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not  
worth living amounts to answering the fundamental  
question of philosophy."

- Albert Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus*

Success is counted sweetest  
By those who ne'er succeed.  
To comprehend a nectar  
Requires sorest need.

- Emily Dickinson, "Success is Counted Sweetest" (112)