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*The Doon School*  
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REGULARS **2**

CULTURE  
CORNER **2**

SHORT  
STORY **3**

POETRY  
PAGE **4**

## Lines for LAMDA

*Abhaas Shah and Uday Shriram round-up the LAMDA experience and speak with this year's examiner*

The examinations conducted by LAMDA (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts) are coming up as a major activity in school, with far more students participating than ever before. Standards this year were definitely higher, though some would credit the high scores to the week's delay in the exams, since very few people were prepared for November 11 (the date specified earlier). However, Doscors were seen hurrying all over campus, seeking help in the recitation of their pieces from various masters. Everyone was confident, especially after the highly productive sessions with the visiting actor from London, Bridget Virgo, who gave us invaluable advice, during sessions of training.

The credit for the introduction of LAMDA to school goes to Mr. Mason. It all began with a seminar hosted by Catherine Weads in New Delhi in 2000. HMD, attended this seminar and subsequently started off LAMDA in school. The Gold standard of LAMDA is prestigious and one may become a teacher in LAMDA after attaining the Gold award. As HMD puts it, "LAMDA is a beneficial life-skill which helps build confidence in a person."

Four levels of LAMDA are offered in school i.e. Grade 5, Grade 6 (Bronze), Grade 7 (Silver) and Grade 8 (Gold). Grades 5 and 6 involve the recitation of a prose and verse piece, whereas Silver and Gold levels require an additional extract from a Shakespeare play or a sonnet. Each of them have an increasingly difficult theory segment also, which is to be studied and is evaluated through a viva. This involves the study of production and modulation of sound, the biographies of various literary persons and different styles and rhythms of speech. The literary pieces range from Oscar Wilde to HG Wells, from Robert Louis Stevenson to Maya Angelou, and from J.R.R. Tolkien to Isaac Asimov.

**The Doon School Weekly (DSW): Tell us something about yourself.**

**Vivien Heilbron (VHB):** I am an actor and examiner. I have done several plays on BBC Radio, and have also narrated talking books. Recently, I directed an opera at Naples. I live in Oxford, near London, and trained as an actor at LAMDA. I did LAMDA myself as a girl. My favorite playwright is William Shakespeare. I have even trained in the British-American School of Drama at Stratford-upon-Avon. What I like about Shakespeare is that one does not need to focus heavily on the acting – the words themselves do the magic.

**DSW: How widespread is LAMDA?**

**VHB:** Besides England and Ireland, LAMDA spreads to Greece, Bangladesh, California, Malta, Italy, Spain, South Africa and Sri Lanka.

**DSW: Is this your first visit to India?**

**VHB:** No. In fact, I ran a Shakespeare workshop at Doon, in this very room, a few months ago. My first visit to India was in 1983. I have also been to Kerala in 1993.

**DSW: Have you examined elsewhere?**

**VHB:** I came to India from Italy and am going to Sri Lanka in 2007. Otherwise, I have examined in Ireland and all over the UK.

**DSW: What do you look for in a LAMDA student?**

**VHB:** I like to see clarity of thought and speech. A student should appreciate the thoughts of the writer. He should take care of the style of the writer, like Shakespeare, whose pieces must be recited keeping his unique style in mind. One should take off smoothly right into the piece and should take away the listeners and be taken away himself by his recital. The preparation, of course, is important. Excellence in speech is not God-given – it has to be practiced. As my old father said, "Time spent in reconnaissance is never wasted".

**DSW: What do you think about the recital prowess of students of The Doon School?**

**VHB:** I feel that getting ninety percent in any medal exam, as many of the students here got, is remarkable. I am well within the average bandwidth as an examiner. I feel that the standards here are terrific as compared to several schools abroad. The work that I saw was done with meticulous passion. To see junior students talk about modulation at such a young age is heartening.

## REGULARS

### TRIALS – AUTUMN 2006

The **Trials** began on December 1, as per schedule. We wish the school community the very best for the remaining exams.

### DEBATING CREDITS

The results of the **Navin Chandola Best Hindi Debator's Cup** are as follows:

- 1st:** Vishesh Goel
- 2nd:** Aruj Shukla
- 3rd:** Vishal Sonthalia

### PENNING VICTORIES

In the **B.P. Chandola Hindi Essay Writing Competition**, the following were the positions:

- 1st:** Skand Goel
- 2nd:** Amit Gupta
- 3rd:** Tanay Garg

The results of the **English Short Story Writing Competition** are as follows:

- 1st:** Vansh Bhatia
- 2nd:** Shubham Gupta

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## Just Desserts

*Nargish Khambatta*

*“There is too much democracy in this school. Things are too slack and the discipline needs to be improved. I have been to so many schools and this is what I have observed.”*

**T**his post-dinner speech was no toast to Doon. The speaker, a recent incumbent in the community, was speaking with conviction rather than concern. As was wont to happen, the five of us who happened to be late diners, jumped headlong into a discussion over dessert. A healthy debate ensued on the merits of a democratic, active involvement of students in decision-making approach versus the regimented, autocratic ‘do it or else...’ manner of functioning. Our quorum had two ‘for,’ two ‘against,’ and one fence sitter.

After 15 minutes of school-centric anecdotes and a couple of jokes, we parted company without having come to a decisive conclusion (how could we?!)

As a parting shot, this incident was narrated: a father was annoyed with his son over a misdemeanour. He severely reprimanded him, trampled all over his self-esteem, and thrashed him soundly. After about an hour or so, feeling very bad about the incident, he went over and apologized. “Son, I’m sorry I had to shout at you and beat you so badly. But what can I do? It’s only because I love you so much and want the best for you.” The son wiped his tears, hugged his dad, and said, “It’s okay, Papa. I understand. But I feel sorry that I cannot express my love for you in the same manner.”

It was the parting shot that convinced the fence-sitter.

## Culture Corner

*Vishesh Goel's report on the wall-paintings in havelis around Dehradun*

This Sunday our tutorial group went on a short trip to visit a *haveli* in Raipur, six kilometres from Chandbagh. There still are a few *havelis* remaining in Dehradun. These can be seen at Ajmal Khan Road, opposite Rama Market, Tilak Road, Akhara Mohalla and nearby villages like Navada, Rampur Mandi and Ranipokhri.



The unique thing about these *havelis*, that compelled us to click roll upon roll of film on our cameras, were the intriguing wall-paintings. These fresco paintings are greatly influenced by Pahari, Bundi and Mughal miniatures and Rajasthani *phad* – painted and framed narration of folklore. The predominant colours used are red and blue. The eminent Garhwali painter, Maula Ram, was instrumental in the making of these frescoes in the Garhwal and Kumaon regions.

Dehradun has a local culture called Kathmali, which is a mix of Garhwali, Kumaoni, Jaunsari and Maidan (plains) cultures. It has had a major influence on many famous artists such as H.N. Misra, which is very evident in their art.

Former director of the Lalit Kala Academy, B.P. Kamboj, has written about this in great detail. From this we can see that Dehradun has its individual art form which is unique. Another interesting example of fresco work can be seen in Sai Guru Ram Rai Darbar in Jhanda Mohalla.

We must understand that these unique works of art are of great importance and value, and the need to conserve and restore them. We all know that these works are in danger of being demolished and lost forever. What could be the role of the Art School here? The Doon School can do restoration projects to save what really is of value to all of us, our culture, our identity and local history and art.

## Unquotable Quotes (Masters' Special)

*Today is a very chilled, thanda day!*

**VKL** gets a double dose of Dehradun weather.

*Give me a glass and a water.*

**NTC**, thirsty beyond caring about grammar.

*Doesn't I say?*

**SDA** is quizzical.

*Switch off the curtains.*

**RSF** demands darkness.



| Short Story |

# Single Action, Double Recoil

Angad Singh



“Down, silly!” I said, and immediately grimaced at my abominable choice of words.

“What kind of gangster says ‘silly?’” sniggered the bespectacled, manacled man in front of me. I lost my patience.

“This kind.” I said and emptied my gun into his seated form. “He wasn’t going to talk anyway.” I said, by way of sheepish explanation to the empty room.

I pulled off my gloves and sprayed some deodorant on myself to mask the acrid smell of cordite, and left the cell. Once outside, I told one of the oafish minions I was obliged to surround myself with to feed the corpse to the pigs. They are remarkably efficient at disposing of bodies. The pigs, not the minions.

I was nearly out of the building when I ran into Paolo. As expected, he began moaning about Luciano, and I, to avoid a scene, grabbed his arm and ducked through the nearest doorway. It was a broom closet. Not in the least perturbed, I said “Now look here you, I have told you only about a million times that I am doing all I can about Luciano. Give me the funeral date, and I’ll be there. Need money? Call the secretary.”

He looked pained. “It is not the money I am wanting signor; it is that Mario’s head. Give the permission and I will go and kill him.”

I pulled my pistol from my blazer pocket and waved it in his face. “Look, you oaf, it weighs nearly two kilos, and I’ve just emptied it into Mario’s secretary’s face. The recoil can probably rip your arm off your shoulder and send it to Timbuktu!”

“I know the difference between your weapon and a smaller one,” he said.

“Obviously,” I muttered.

“Please, signor,” he was pleading now. “Luciano’s death must be vengeance, if not for your own pride, then for the honour of my family.

“Son, it’s scary things like pride, honour and courage that kill more people in my organization than anything else. I’m doing all that I am, not for pride or honour, but simply because I can’t take competition in this business. I’m basically a greedy, selfish and lazy guy.”

“But signor, if I succeed, we both stand to gain, but if I die, you can continue your war, and you cannot sit to lose,” he said.

I was losing my patience with his grammar, and I actually saw a little sense in his argument. So, still with a few misgivings, I pulled my old single-action Colt from an armpit holster and handed it to him.

“It’s single-action, and for God’s sake remember the recoil.” I warned. “I’m not paying any medical bills for your broken arms.”

He nearly wept with gratitude. “Thank you,” he managed to stammer.

“Don’t mention it,” I said, and after tipping a can of cleaning fluid over his head, I left the closet.

I made it to my chauffeured sedan without further incident, and instructed the driver to take us to ‘the office’.

\*\*\*\*\*

An hour and a half later, with a sumptuous lunch of microwave lasagna and cheap wine settling in my stomach, I pushed open the wooden double doors of my office and seated myself at my desk. There, I signed a handsome check for Paolo, promising myself that I would give it to him at the funeral, or whenever we next met. That was when the double doors swung open and he strolled in.

I smiled and opened my mouth to greet him when I realized that he exuded a calm confidence that he hadn’t possessed before this moment, and that, more importantly, he had a gun pointed between my eyes.

“You treacherous ba —” I managed to say before, as if from a great distance, I heard a muffled bang.

When my brain next took stock of the world, I found myself standing two feet away from where I had been a second ago, my left hand clutching my chest, with no recollection as to how I had got there. I looked down and saw the shredded lapel of an Armani suit. I heard a furious clicking and looked up to see Robin pumping futilely at the trigger of his revolver.

My right hand which was clutching my own pistol was free of my pocket, and I levelled it at my treacherous ex-employee.

“It’s a single-action gun, you moron. You have to cock it after each shot” someone said.

By the time I realized that it was in fact me who had uttered those words, the floor rose up and smacked me hard on the face. Then everything went black.

## Learning from Life

Utkarsh Agarwal and Seif Khan

*He was there, but now he is not. Like so many things in life. Insignificant and unimportant until they are absent. Things come back, and hopefully it too will return to its place, outside the CDH. What are we referring to?*

*It is indeed the CDH dog. From being a silent spectator to giving company to the bearers before meal times, the dog was a permanent presence on the newly-constructed steps of the dining hall. Earlier he used to be outside the MPH but with food service changing places, he too decided to relocate. Many of us have felt like caring for him. Some chose to ignore him. Some cared enough to give him the two slices of bread that he craved, but for most, he was non-existent.*

*It is just not about the dog. So engrossed are we in life at school that we don’t even get time for ourselves, let alone for others. Rarely do we reach out to others in their times of despair. We are happy till the time everything is going smoothly, but once things go wrong, our life collapses. We then miss the good times and hanker for what is not. We have developed into opportunists and self-centred beings. We care only for our narrow interests, without appreciating the world around us. And when those interests are thwarted, our life crashes down like a pack of cards. We suddenly realise the importance of what we were fortunate to have and regret its neglect.*

*Passing by the CDH one fine Sunday morning I saw someone kicking the dog out of the way. The dog slunk silently away, without a backward glance. A couple of days later, someone suddenly remembered the dog and enquired about him. A friend replied in a sad tone, “He was there, but now he is not.”*

## I SAID I'M SORRY

*Dilsher Dhillon (A Form)*

Mistakes made,  
Foolishly.  
The price paid,  
Willingly.  
I said I'm sorry,  
Please don't kill me.  
A lack of maturity,  
Has catapulted me into notoriety,  
This wasn't supposed to happen,  
But it did.  
I said I'm sorry,  
Now let's forget it.  
An idiot is not the one who makes mistakes,  
But the one who does not learn from them.  
At least that's what I discern.  
Thus, as I sit here, shattered and lonely,  
From my mistakes I vow to learn.  
I said I'm sorry.  
Please don't hurt me.  
For every wrong act ever done,  
And for every mistake ever committed,  
I beg forgiveness.  
I have resigned to my fate.  
Frivolities will have to wait.  
I said I'm sorry.  
Don't kill me.  
I hope to start afresh,  
However hard it may be.  
At the end of the day,  
When all is said and done,  
I come to realize,  
There's more to life than just fun.

## Assembly

*Shaurya Sinha (D Form)*

Tick-tock, tick-tock,  
Children marching in,  
Seeing prefects giving changes,  
Until the song begins.  
Tick-tock, tick-tock,  
Teachers zooming in,  
Sitting on their chairs,  
Waiting to return to their lairs.  
Tick-tock, tick-tock,  
Children marching away,  
Returning to their classes,  
To start a brand new day.

## The Beetle

*Milind Pandit (C Form)*

The wind is blowing high,  
The moon is drenched in silver,  
The thatched house  
Reflects silver light.  
The leaves are dark  
And do not rustle,  
A small beetle is climbing  
A silhouetted tree  
A tiny beetle is the only  
Creature which is visible from far.  
The beetle has small antennae  
Which are searching for food,  
The dog gets comfort, the cat gets love,  
But the small beetle gets ignored.  
The beetle which takes care of itself.  
The beetle which teaches  
Us the values of life and  
How to live.

## Karna's Ordeal

*Pranjal Singh (B Form)*

Into the battle as the sun rose high,  
Rode Karna, knowing the end was nigh.  
He looked at the orbed fire,  
As it went higher and higher.  
"Oh father! Pardon me my mistake.  
By giving my armour to Indra,  
I earned this wrath of yours,  
And put my life at stake."  
\*\*

Suddenly Krishna came to him,  
Driving a chariot glowing dim.  
Arjun shone brightly in it,  
With the solar armour brightly lit.  
\*\*

Karna remembered the morning,  
When Indra had come as the Brahmin,  
And bade him doff his armour,  
Remembered, too, that when he did,  
Astonished Indra blessed him then...  
\*\*

But now his own son had come,  
Blazing in the armour of the sun,  
Beating the war drum.  
Arjun's challenge rang through the field,  
And only then did Karna,  
Pay the battle some heed.

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