

The Doon School WEEKLY

"I sketch your world exactly as it goes." -Arthur Foot
October 16, 2021 | Issue No. 2621



BAKHLE LITERATURE PRIZE TEST

Varyam Gupta and Vivasvat Devanampriya's
winning entries

Pages 2 - 6

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Take a trip through momentous events that
took place this week in history

Page 3

Reviving Doon

Kabir Singh Bhai *comments on the nature of and change in School's culture during COVID.*

I stared into the mirror, baffled by the tie that hung loosely around my neck. I lifted one end and tried to stuff it into my reckless knot. Frustrated, I pulled the tie off my neck and hurled it at the wall. It was a strange feeling. I remembered the first time I learned to tie a double Windsor in D Form. A line of D Formers patiently waited for ANK Ma'am to come around and walk us through the steps. Making the perfect tie was pseudo ceremonious in cementing our induction into School. As I gazed at the fallen tie, I realized that I had not just forgotten how to knot a tie but I had forgotten how to be a Dosco! The more I reflected, the more I realised that my failure was simply a symptom of a far more vicious malady: as an institution, we were forgetting the values that differentiated us.

In the series of unfortunate events that have befallen School, COVID has probably been the worst. Since March 2020, most of our education shifted online: a model that challenges the very fabric of a boarding school such as ours. Amongst a list of qualities that set us apart as an institution is our holistic approach to education at School. An approach that is developed inside the structure of School and under the watchful eyes of involved Seniors. A usual (now unusual) day in a student's life would comprise an

amalgamation of activities: from writing to sports to speech and drama. These activities along with the mentorship of Senior boys served to build a temperament of dedication, risk and service. Since the outbreak of COVID, these activities have suffered: greatly due to physical constraints but also due to a neglect of duties to some extent.

As we sit at our homes, staring into our screens, the distance to Chandbagh seems far greater than a few hundred miles. Memories of School seem to visit us only at night. As this distance grows, it becomes easier to neglect the duties we have been assigned. I have noticed this as a growing trend. While I do not disregard that many activities such as sports cannot take place via the online medium, many can. It is far easier to list the activity on our resumes rather than put in the work to adapt to an online medium. When posed with challenges, it is built into the fabric of Doscos to face it head-on and we must try our best to keep these activities and values alive.

Furthermore, in times of COVID, many of us have also lost contact with peers we would once consider family. In our separate homes across the world, we have forgotten the spirit of camaraderie that bound us together during exhausting days of Mid-terms,

collective extra PTs or inter-House events. This distance poses a far more frightening prospect to students whose school lives near an end: a premonition of a time not too far away. However, all is not lost. We can and must make an effort to revive these friendships. We must revisit our time together in School to remind ourselves of the instances these students supported us. A short WhatsApp message will go a long way in bridging this gap. This applies to our relationships with teachers as well. We are all aware of the revered relationships with Masters that Old Boys talk about when they return to School. These relationships are essential to motivate teachers and students to go the extra mile in their pursuit of knowledge.

Furthermore, there are a variety of intangible values that are imbued in the spirit of the School that seems to be fading. As we return to School, we must remember these values and pass them on to the next generation of students. These would even extend to seemingly mundane practices such as polishing our shoes, respecting Masters or not cheating during exams. From the perspective of a senior student, it appears that it is a part of our collective job as Seniors to support and guide School in these changing times. There are a full set of students

(Continued on Page 2)

(Continued from Page 1)

who join B Form, but they are almost as uninitiated as D Formers. For them, and forms below them, and in the tradition of senior boys, we must take them under our wing and nurture them the way we were raised by our Seniors. This guidance must extend also to the new Masters on campus as well, as they too are likely to be unaware of the culture in School, having had to confine themselves due to COVID restrictions.

At this juncture, at least for us Sc's, we need to decide how we want to be remembered when we leave School. The legacy we leave behind will define the future of Doon. With college applications looming, it would be naive to request you all to shift your attention to these issues, however, taking out a little time to mentor Juniors can go a long way. This could be as simple as correcting them for not wearing belts or arriving late to a meal.

Bakhle Literature Prize Test

Varyam Gupta | Winner of the Bakhle Literature Prize Test, 2021 (Senior Category)

Prompt:

They finally stepped out of the cupboard and sat down next to your bed. The two protagonists from the two books you have read, believe that you are the "Ink-heart", the mythical author who creates alternative reality just by writing it down. How will you change the outcome of the novel by changing the one key episode in each book by just making the characters make a different choice? You may not change any aspect of setting or context. Rewrite the extract with your "Ink-heart" penmanship. Provide 500 word (each) justifications of how your rewriting will change the outcome of the novel for your character.

Book 1: The Book Thief by Marcus Zusak (rewritten episode)

Snow fell and collected on the ground; yet another shroud for Liesel's beautiful, barren, bloody world. She welcomed its burning embrace on her skin.

Only when she felt her mother's hand rest on her quivering shoulder did she realise how hard she had been shaking. She felt herself being pulled away.

Some twenty metres away, the girl and her mother stopped and stood and sobbed. They didn't let go of their hands. No words were spoken.

Through the haze that had formed on her eyes, Liesel saw the jagged outlines of a black book lodged in the snow. It was encrusted in silver words. She remembered her dream about the Fuhrer.

"Is that the Mein Kampf?" she thought, livid. The book dropped to the ground. She knew now, who to blame.

Mercifully, it wasn't me.

An angry scream rumbled from the pit of the girl's stomach as she realised all the men in her family were gone. Glancing up to her mother's face, she said to herself her last goodbye.

At least there wasn't much more loss to be had.

Justification

Before her arrival at Himmel Street, Liesel did not know how to read or write. In the book, when she pockets the black book, she does not know that it is The Gravedigger's Handbook. I believe her act of stealing a possession she barely knew what to do with was an expression of anger; an act of bleak wretchedness.

In my version, Liesel assumes that this piece of writing is Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, given that the popularity

and formidability of Germany's Führer had made the book a ubiquitous commodity in Nazi Germany. She thinks back to the dream she had on the train while her brother's frail body grew colder and limper on the seat opposite her. And just like that, a fatherless girl, who has never had a full belly, loses the one member of her family who was supposed to stay.

And so Liesel makes a different choice. A bolder one. A political one. A personal one.

She hates.

This moment is a crucial one in the story because it musters some of the tragedy that lies ahead. It is also important because it is serendipitous. This is the instant that the book derives its name from. Rewriting this scene to omit a seemingly trivial, childish act of retaliation, hollows it from its core.

Liesel Meminger's act of stealing the book that helped lower her brother into the ground sets in motion a series of events that eventually save her life. On the fateful day that American bombs buried Molching's people in their beds, Liesel lay peacefully in her basement, having fallen asleep after scribbling all night in her autobiography, *The Book Thief*.

Not stealing The Gravedigger's Handbook wipes off the alphabets on the basement wall, estranges Liesel and Frau Hermann, and leaves Liesel to the vulnerability of her nightmare-ridden bed.

Liesel would finally be with the part of her brother that lies on the other end of their bed when the bombs would drop.

In a way, this ending is a mercy. It spares the girl from the parasitic regret of not kissing the boy she loved and the puncturing emptiness of losing her parents, again.

(Continued on Page 4)

TOMORROW'S TYCOONS

Aditya Gupta, Abhay Jain, and Satvik Petwal participated in the recently-concluded **Maa Anandmayee Memorial School Business Competition**. As part of the competition, the team took part in a week-long Boot Camp in which they were exposed to various entrepreneurial and financial practices that are prevalent and in use presently. This learning experience was put into practice when they devised their business proposal about creating a commercially viable and sellable **Meal Ready to Eat product** to resolve the food shortages that arise after natural calamities. The team was selected for the **Final Jury Pitch Round** for being in the **top 10** out of a total of **34 teams** for their commendable business proposal.

EMPHATIC ELOCUTION

The results of Vikram Seth Junior Statesman Poetry Recitation Competition are as follows:

Juniors

First position: Arjun Mitra
Second position: Ayaan Mittal

Seniors

First position: Vihaan Gupta
Second position: Satvik Petwal

Well Done!

APPOINTMENT

Samar Kumar has been appointed as the **Games Committee Secretary** for the **2021-2022** term.

We wish him a fruitful tenure.

This Week in History

- 1727 C.E.:** George II of England is crowned.
- 1912 C.E.:** Theodore Roosevelt is shot in Milwaukee.
- 1943 C.E.:** Italy declares war on Germany.
- 1949 C.E.:** Eugenie Anderson becomes the first woman U.S. ambassador.
- 1964 C.E.:** Martin Luther King, Jr. wins Nobel Peace Prize.

EXPERT ESSAYISTS

The **Smt. Meerchandani Hindi Essay Competition (Juniors) 2021** was organized online on **August 25**. The results of the competition are as follows:

- First position:** Arjun Mitra
- Second position:** Sriyash Tantia
- Third position:** Aayan Gupta

Congratulations!

Around the World in 80 Words

A bow and arrow terrorist attack in Norway killed five people, with the suspect being a Muslim convert who was previously flagged for being radicalized. India ranked 101 out of 116 countries on the global hunger index, down by 7 from last year. Chennai Super Kings beat Kolkata Knight Riders by 27 runs in the IPL finals as Faf du Plessis was judged Player of the Match. In a thrilling 2-2 draw, Manchester City and Liverpool ended in a nail-biting finish.



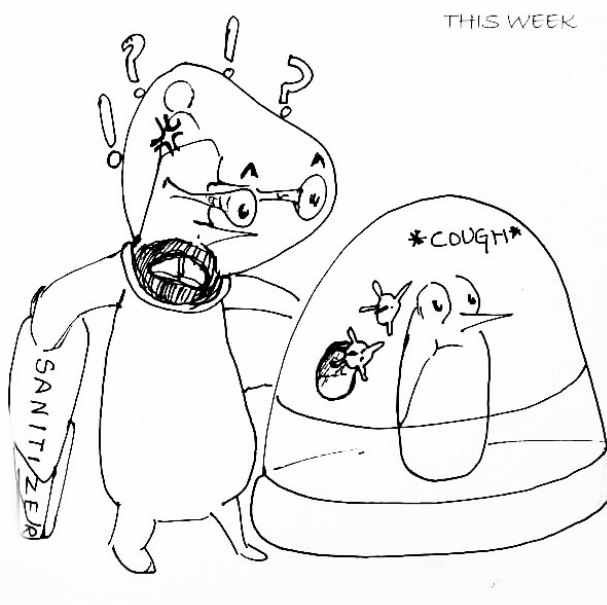
Spoke Too Soon ...

Roban Taneja

LAST WEEK



THIS WEEK



(Continued from Page 2)

It spares her more farewells.

In a way, it can be argued that *The Book Thief* would not exist without Liesel's thievery. That Death wouldn't salvage it for this narration. This is a mercy too. For those of us who ached brutally in its reading.

This rewrite is not a better one. And by that I mean, it's not the one I prefer. It is merely a way to articulate that it is books that save Liesel. Stealing *The Gravedigger's Handbook* in a moment of numbness opens Liesel up to the bountiful world of literature in a time of pervasive desolation. It helps her find a friend in Max, as she sits over him, reading, and a father in Hans Huberman.

And in not stealing it, in a way, she digs her own grave.

I, Inkheart, rob her. Of her words. Of her worth.

Book 2: All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr (rewritten episode)

The scales of cruelty tip. Maybe Bastian exacts some final vendetta; maybe Frederick goes looking for his only way out. All Werner knows for certain is that one April morning he wakes to find three inches of slush on the ground and Frederick not in his bunk.

He does not show up at breakfast or poetics or morning field exercises. Each story Werner hears contains its own flaws and contradictions, as though the truth is a machine whose gears are not meshing. First, he hears that a group of boys took Frederick out and set up torches in the snow and told him to shoot the torches with his rifle—to prove he had adequate eyesight. Then Werner hears that they brought him charts for eye exams, and when he could not read them, they force-fed the charts to him.

But what does the truth matter in this place? Werner imagines rivulets of blood running across Frederick's face as blond heads crouch over his black one, in punitive justice against each part of him that dares to remain humane. Werner recalls his own helplessness. The burden of a swaying flag pushing his heels deeper into the ground. Jutta's eyes swim to his mind, the righteousness in them beckoning him to do better. To be better.

Which is the worse betrayal?

Werner trudges towards the infirmary, his hunger impoverished by guilt. He bursts through its metal doors. Amid a haven of peeling white paint sit pools of red. Intrepid. Commanding. Domineering. Denying all signs of weakness.

Bandages lie unspooled. Silence snakes across the hall. Ravages of a war waged by one side, resisted by the other.

"Your problem, Werner, is that you still believe you own your life," he hears Frederick say.

The nurse looks at Werner, constantly. Expectantly.

"Where is he?"

"Leipzig. For surgery." She touches a round white button on her uniform with what might be an inconveniently trembling finger. Otherwise, her manner is entirely stern.

"What happened?"

"Shouldn't you be at noontime meal?"

"Just tell me," says he, shaking. "When will he be back?"

"Oh," she says, a soft enough word. She shakes her head.

Werner marches out to the stoic beats of his own conscience. The corridors are empty, but for the lingering stench of sensation. An institution that cares neither for pariahs nor for its own, he observes. He pictures Frau Elena set his tie right before he left for Schulpforta.

Werner reminds him of himself. Kind. Intelligent. An asset. Only for the wrong side. He finds himself in Hauptmann's laboratory. He understands, for the first time, the implications of his technology. The hypnotic Frenchman's voice of his childhood floods into his ears. As a 15-year-old, Werner decides against the brick and bones around him.

"Frederick wasn't the weakest man amongst us, he was the only man," he whispers into the sky.

Nothing would stop him now.

Justification

Doerr's *All The Light We Cannot See* is a tale of two children who grew up at the same time, but believing in different things. In the book, although Werner is a kind and decent young man, he finds that his only way to pursue education is tied to the Nazi war effort. Werner's single-minded pursuit towards the passion he developed in the dream-like cocoon of his childhood, however, leaves much collateral damage in its wake.

Werner silently supports his friend Frederick, but never enough to save him. He loves his sister with all his might but deserts her, only for her to do her share of growing up on her own. He gulps all the horrors his world prop up without really questioning them. He forges on, thinking his cowardliness to be bravery and his complicity to be innocence. It is only when he hears Marie-Laure's frail voice through the radio, reading aloud to herself, that he weighs the scale of wrong and right himself, to ascertain the truth.

In my version, Werner does not wait for the poignant memories of the radio broadcast of his childhood to reach out to the people who need him and to reject a nation that serves as his puppeteer. Upon witnessing the aftermath of his silence in Frederick's

(Continued on Page 5)

(Continued from Page 4)

blood, Werner is able to identify the hypocrisy, apathy and ruthlessness inherent to the Nazi regime. His decision to reject the German war effort will enable him to expedite the defeat of Germany in France, by impaling it from the inside, as a spy. He will serve as a key player in the French Resistance, protecting the innocent lives that would've otherwise been lost at the behest of a supremacist establishment. Having aided the French, Werner would be spared the tragedy of his capture and eventual demise as he steps on a landmine.

A small change in Werner's choice and convictions would cascade down to give him a new lease on life, complete with Marie-Laure by his side. He would discover the broadcast radio belonging to the girl's grandfather that nurtured in him the wonder and passion that eventually helped save the life of the girl

he falls in love with. This would allow the book to come full circle.

In the original version, the symbol of the stone, the Sea of Flames, is prioritized over other narratives in that the book is complete after it is buried in the grotto. I believe, however, that the improbable coincidence of Werner making his way to the radio that belonged to his childhood memories was the most debilitating motif of all. His radio helped him connect to a grandfather and granddaughter in moments of sheer serendipity, both of whom change his life most indelibly. I believe such a coincidence demands to be fruitful and a rendezvous such as Werner and Marie-Laure's deserves a future.

As the pivot upon which this future rests, Frederick, allowed Werner to translate the hollow conviction that he owned and controlled his own life into real, palpable truth.

Vivasvat Devanampriya | *Winner of the Bakhle Literature Prize Test, 2021 (Junior Category)*

Prompt:

The main characters of both the novels you have read have retired from their adventurous life. They are in their 30s now. They are looking for jobs. Create a job advertisement of not more than 80 words. Then, as their consultant help both your heroes draft a CV and a letter of intent for the job. The total word count of each CV and letter of intent may not exceed 400 words each.

WANTED: HEAD OF STRATEGIC WARFARE AND ESPIONAGE In light of the recent conflicts in Afghanistan, we look to deploy American troops back to mitigate the ever-growing threat of the Taliban. However, since the Taliban have now established themselves in all major Afghan territories, we are looking for someone to spearhead the military strategy and espionage front. The candidate must have high expertise in strategic thinking and planning, be able to think on their feet, can manage 264 employees, and have experience with strategic warfare. All operations will be from Washington, DC with the salary being \$10,000 a month.

For applications, please write to John Maynard Keynes, 23 Main Street, Washington, DC 10030

Curriculum Vitae:

ODYSSEUS,
Military strategist and former warrior.
Vathy Palace,
Ithaka,
Greece
odysseus.thetrojanhorse@gmail.com

SKILLS: Strategic warfare, planning, and execution; specialized in both espionage and hand-to-hand combat; a master at playing the Devil's Advocate and predicting the enemy's next move; performance under pressure; always in possession of wits.

EXPERIENCE: The Trojan War, the escape from Scylla and Charybdis, the Lair of the Lotus Eaters,

the Battle against Polyphemus, the Battle against the Suitors.

EDUCATION: PhD in Mathematics: Heidelberg University; Degree in Law with Honours: Universiteit Leiden; Advanced Armed Forces training: Ithaka.

Dear John,

As an experienced warrior and adept military strategist and former intelligence agent with over thirty years of experience infiltrating, outsmarting, fighting, and turning uncomfortable military situations around using strategy and improvisation, I'm intrigued by opening at Head

of Strategic Warfare at the U.S Armed Forces. Your advertisement in the Washington Post says you are in search of an able leader who can mastermind strategic plans and decisions, outsmart the opposition in any given situation, improvise in case of unforeseen complications and help mitigate the threat of the Taliban. I believe you might consider my resume, if not these highlights:

As the king, general, and leader of Ithaka for over 20 years, I've had the privilege of fighting alongside and against true legends in warfare; Achilles, Agamemnon, Ajax, Nestor, and Hector, to name just a few. I was given the opportunity to spearhead the espionage and strategic fronts that contributed to the fall of Ilium. A little project I masterminded which I can't help but mention was the episode of the Trojan

(Continued on Page 6)

(Continued from Page 5)

Horse. My skillset excels at giving us a strategic edge regardless of the situation, while also being able to handle unwelcome complications when things don't go according to plan. I may not be the most brilliant, or the most accomplished in my field, but I do believe that I can maintain my high levels of skill and wits under extreme pressure, and I think that this is an essential factor to help escape the dilemma we find ourselves in.

What draws me to this position is the situation that the Taliban puts innocent subjects in. As a king myself, I've come to learn that it is impossible to let innocent citizens suffer and just stand by. That said, I think my expertise, skill, and temperament can add a dimension to the mission objectives and execution of the Armed Forces. I'd be happy to fly down to Washington at your convenience, for I believe that if action must be taken, it must be taken promptly.

Curriculum Vitae:

Charles Nancy,
Former Spy, accountant, and Demigod
18, Reagent Street,
London,
England
fatcharlienancy.sonofanansi@hotmail.com

SKILLS: Espionage, planning, and execution; specialized in both espionage and hand-to-hand combat; mastery of the Silver Tongue; performance under pressure; ability to improvise.

EXPERIENCE: The Battle against Tiger and Bird, the retention of Song and Story at the Beginning of Time, Espionage conducted on Mr Grahame Coats.

EDUCATION: Degree in Accounting and Finances with Honours: Yale University; Degree in Law from Harvard University.

Dear John,
As an experienced spy, public speaker, and skilled

demigod with over eleven years of experience infiltrating, collecting inside information, and improvisation, I'm interested in applying for the opening at Head of Espionage affairs at the U.S Armed Forces. Your advertisement in the Washington Post says you are in search of an able leader who is capable of quick thinking, improvisation, and always a step ahead of the enemy to help nullify the imminent threat of the Taliban. I don't believe that my resume is anywhere near as attractive as other candidates may possess, but I would request you to consider the following.

As an experienced spy and demigod, I've had the privilege of working with the FBI, CIA, MI6, and Interpol. I was able to fight off an Old God, Tiger, with nothing but my wits, smooth tongue, and a little help from my abilities as a demigod. My skillset excels at giving us an inside edge which may prove instrumental in a variety of situations, while also being able to handle unwelcome complications when our cover gets blown. I'm certainly not the most accomplished in what I do, but I do believe that I can maintain my high levels of skill and wits under fire, as well as being nearly indestructible, as my talents as a demigod make me near invincible to mere mortals; and I believe that gives me an advantage over other candidates.

What compels me to apply for this position is that I resonate with the situation the Taliban places native Afghans in. As someone who, for the better part of their life, has been bullied, manipulated and been treated as though they were invisible, I believe that no person should have to go through that kind of pain, especially at gunpoint. Of course, we can't make everyone happy, therefore I think my expertise, skill, and temperament could be instrumental in vanquishing the Taliban forever. I'm willing to fly down to Washington as and when I am expected to, for I believe that prompt action is the way forward if we are to depose the Taliban.

Sources

- 1 Books: *Anansi Boys* by Neil Gaiman and *Ithaka* by Adele Geras
- 2 <https://zety.com/blog/letter-of-intent>
- 3 https://hero.fandom.com/wiki/Charlie_Nancy
- 4 <https://www.cv-library.co.uk/recruitment-insight/write-job-advert-with-examples/>

The views expressed in articles printed are their authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Weekly or its editorial policy.

Online Edition: www.doonschool.com/co-curricular/clubs-societies/publications/past-weeklies/ weekly@doonschool.com



©IPSS: All rights reserved. **Printed by:** The English Book Depot, 15 Rajpur Road, Dehradun, Uttarakhand-248001, India. **Published by:** Kamal Ahuja, The Doon School, Dehradun.

Editor-in-Chief: Advaita Sood **Editor:** Aryan Agarwal **Senior Editors:** Aditya Jain, Kabir Singh Bhai **Hindi Editor:** Keshav Tiwari **Associate Editors:** Ahan Jayakumar, Armaan Rathi, Saatvik Anand, Vihan Ranka **Special Correspondents:** Anshul Khakhar, Tarun Doss, Abhay Jain, Aryan Baruah, Yashovath Nandan **Correspondents:** Arjun Prakash, Neelotpal, Sriyash Tantiya, Vivasvat Devanampriya, Vivaan Sood **Cartoonists:** Saatvik Anand, Rohan Taneja **Webmaster:** Kritika Jugran **Assistant Managers:** Arvindanabha Shukla, Moulee Goswami, Purnima Dutta **Technical Assistant:** KC Maurya