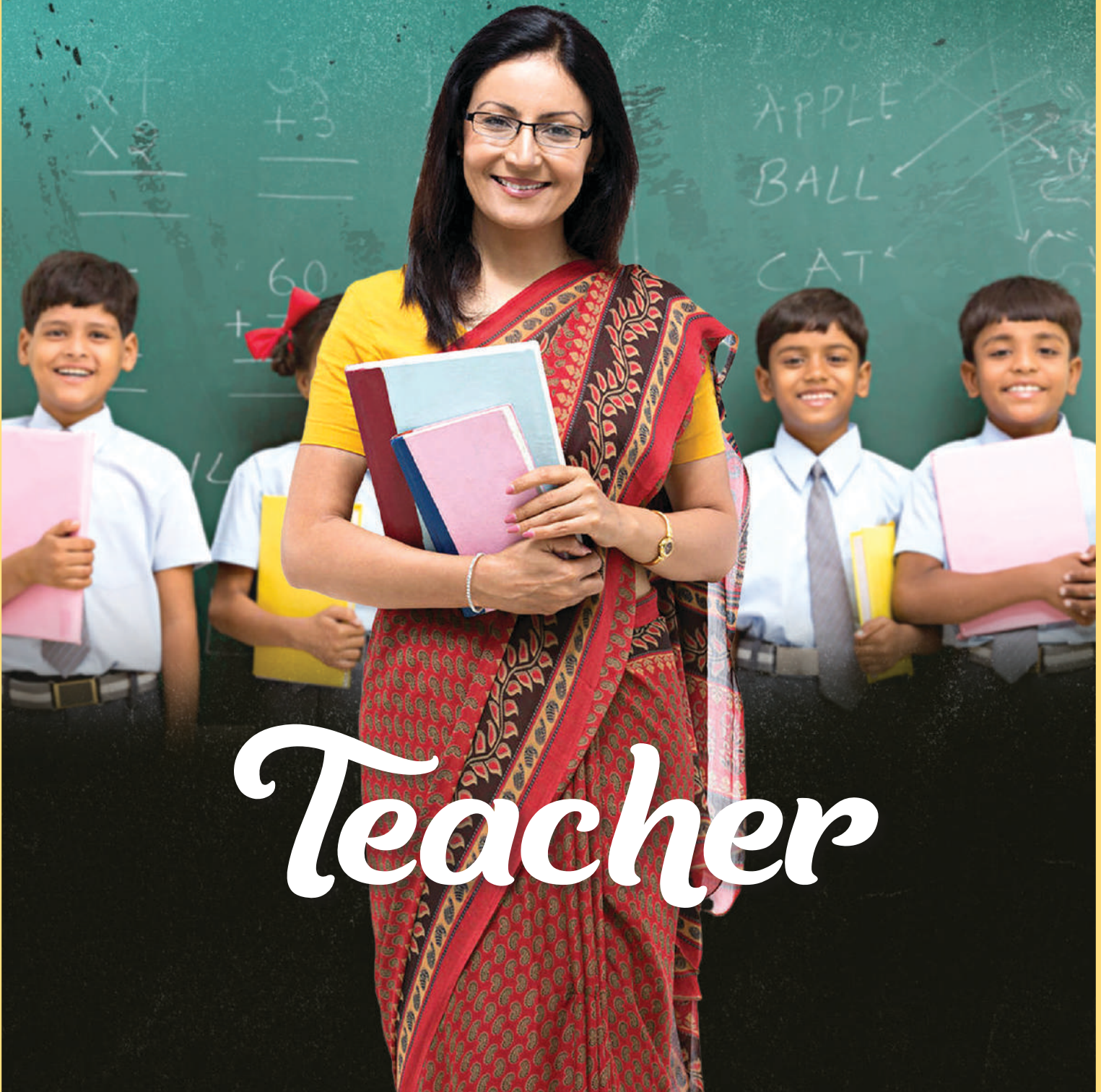




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FROM THE DESK OF
GROUP EDITOR

5TH SEPTEMBER – TEACHERS DAY!

On this day, we extend heartfelt gratitude to the dedication and passion of all those teachers and mentors who shape our life. Every lesson they teach, every word of encouragement they offer, and every challenge they help us overcome is saluted because their influence extends far beyond the formal instruction hours and actually inspires and guides our potential to strive for excellence at each step of existence.

My mind is also dwelling upon the wise student who is humble enough to learn not only from human beings but also from others - be it an ant that 'never gives up' carrying food for storage or a 'busy' bee that hops from flower to flower collecting honey that is finally snatched away. He even learns from the tree that despite being imprisoned in the 'dark' at the roots strives to move upwards, wanting to grasp the eternal 'light'.

This issue of Rhyvers Beat not only offers various dedications to teachers but also celebrates the occasion with the "Teachers Day Thought" penned by Roma Wani. A poem that is a puller, back to the One Real Teacher.

Why Only Today Dear Teacher
When Every Day You Teach Me
With Your Mercy And Grace
To Live Each Moment Of Life
With Faith, Patience And Gratitude

Let Me Thank You
Again And Again
For Your Blessings
O My Eternal One

Happy Teachers' Day to all!

Ayesvi

Affan Yesvi



RHYVERS BEAT

Inviting contributions for the next edition of our magazine,
slated to be published in October 2024

Theme

Missing You

Send your original contributions in the form of

Short Story (550 words max)

Essay (750 words max)

Poems (20 lines max)

Flash fiction, Artwork, Photo Essays

Book / Movie Reviews

Graffiti etc.

Last date to send entries

30 September, 2024

Please email your contributions to

rhyversdesk@gmail.com

For further details please visit

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Life as a Teacher

*Chalk in my hand, near the blackboard, I stand
Excited and eager young students, sitting across the table
A broad smile on my face, my eyes lit up with joy
Chalk is my chisel, young minds my granite.*

*With ease, with love, with patience
My words work like sharp incisions
Chemistry formulae on board, Life stories beyond the classroom
I see their eyes shining.*

*Understanding chemistry, understanding life
New dreams being carved out, new goals being set
Ready to spread their wings
To their Alma mater, they bid adieu.*

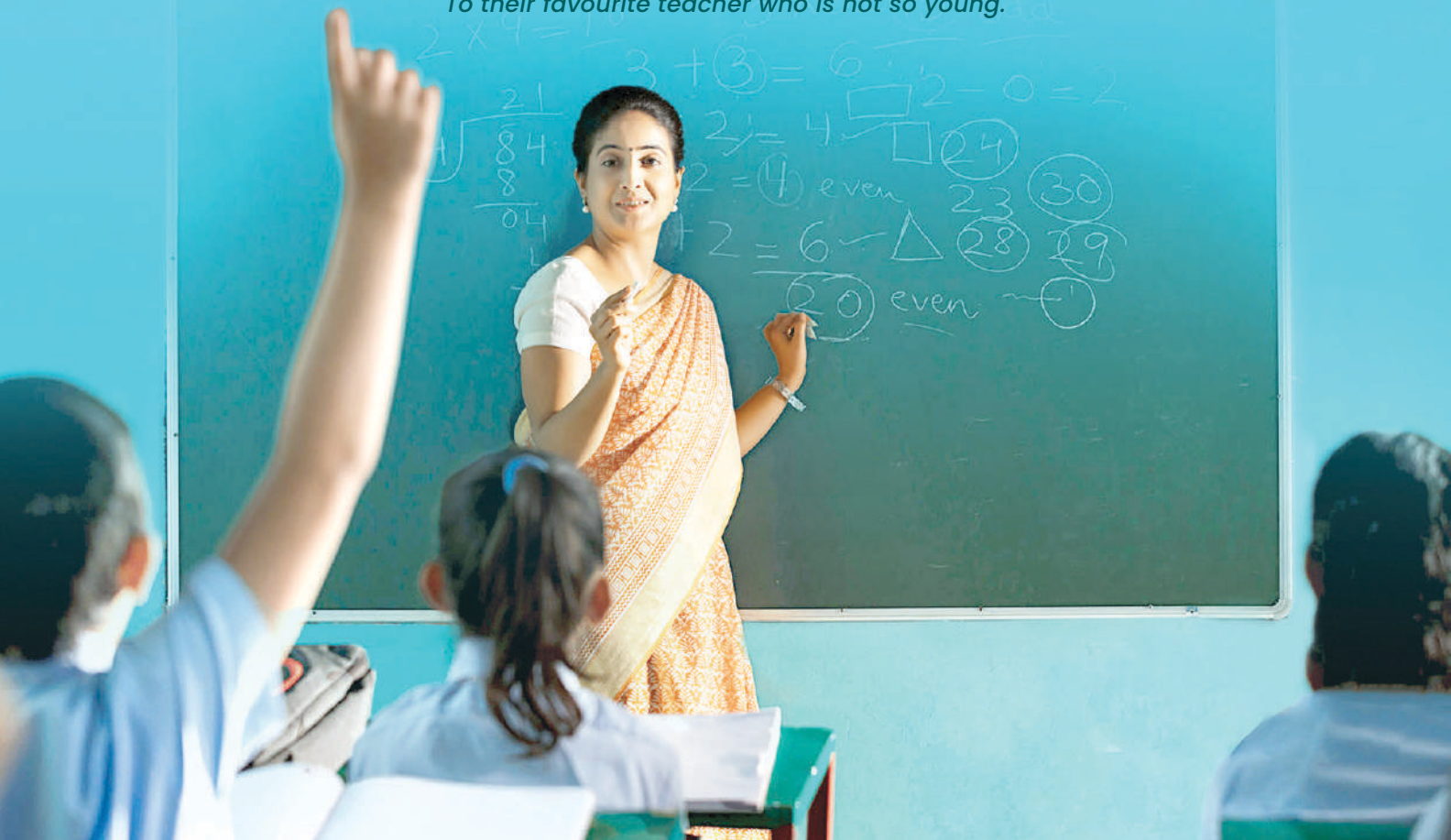
*I have reached superannuation
My young girls are now women of substance
Once again they come back,
Connecting on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.*

*Now looking for love and blessings
Once again looking for inspiration and encouragement
Expressing appreciation and gratitude
To their favourite teacher who is not so young.*



Alka Kansra

is a retired Professor of Chemistry from MCM DAV College, Chandigarh, an author and a poet.



This too shall pass...

"This also shall pass away" said Solomon on being asked for a motto that holds true in joy as well as sorrow. I find these words reassuring in trying times and balancing at times of prosperity. They advocate stoicism as our life's best guide. Stoicism is a saintly and nurturing way of life. The aforementioned words are a reminder of the inevitable fleetingness of moments, circumstances, and life itself. They motivate us to trust God's plan above our own failed convictions. I have been tutored on this invaluable lesson by life itself.

Life has been my greatest teacher. It has taught me to maintain composure despite the conundrum that I could be in. The moment I begin to get overjoyed at achievements or accomplishments, it bursts my bubble of mirth. The moment I am on the verge of giving up, it uplifts me. It has seen me rise and fall numerous times.

I have two beautiful daughters. When my second one was born, I encountered extreme negativity around me. From people saying "Congratulations!" to "It's OK!" in the same breath to my family anxious over who will light my pyre. They were angry that I wasn't sad.

I was made to understand that my daughters are a burden who will have to be married in 20 years or so. I even got schooled on ancient scriptures that exclude girls from all auspicious and essential acts. I had to bear the

brunt of being vocal about the essence of feminism. They said that I got two girls because I never call daughters undesirable.

It is simple enough to understand that I respect myself and cannot call myself unwanted. Some even blamed the evil deeds of my previous life for not being blessed with a son. People declared that I'd always be inferior to the parents of sons all my life and am doomed for a restless afterlife.

My choice of my daughter's name was also questioned. How can a second daughter be a blessing? I even speculated on leaving such people behind and moving on with my life. I was so consumed by this barbarity that I began doubting myself. I felt insecure about being an incomplete mother, and an incomplete family.

It was when I hit rock bottom that I realized I am my daughters' anchor. If I give up now, I'll never be able to raise confident and self-assured girls. I must trust my beliefs, and commit myself to providing them a worthy life regardless of what people might say. When I decided to be unbothered by this torture, life got better. People have started accepting them. It is quite better now.

As I said earlier, life has been the best teacher I have ever had. Thank you for making me believe that nothing, good or bad, lasts forever. The famous English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley has reiterated a similar thought in the poem 'Ode to the West Wind':

*If winter comes,
can spring be far behind?*



Dr. Harleen Kaur
is Assistant Professor
of English in Patiala
(Punjab)



Canine Lessons

*Like freshers on a campus-
Like twins on fire,
Whiffing airs, nose upturned at the new friend,
We strolled around, looking cock-eyed
At the early morn sun through the foliage,
We bonded as sparks flew across...
Distant thunders messed up our nights,
Lightning silhouetting shapes scary,
Stolen moments of forbidden junks under table episodes,
Eyes popping out in wonder at the idiot box runs,
Bawling at soaps, jumping with joy to whacky beats,
To bedraggled cuddles tucked in comfort,
Shared secrets whispered in ears eager,
Stories of love, anger, joy, angst
As you brushed my tears,
Always my soul-mate never asking questions,
Just pure trust shining in your round, beady eyes
As your paws tapped in unison,
A touch, a feel, a comfort beyond words
My Canine Cohort!
You were my greatest Teacher,
Lessons in Love...
Care, Share, Joy, Trust and Camaraderie!*



Surekha Srinivasan
works for the
T.I.M.E. Institute and
has 8 Anthologies to
her credit. She writes
a blog
Rhymerhapsody.
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Two Predictions

I never wanted to be a teacher when I was young and attending university. My father had instilled in me the Philistine dream of becoming an administrator. That was the only reason. I also fostered the notion that, in my capacity as an administrator, I could provide the finest possible public service. I became disillusioned when I failed to turn my ambition into reality. I broke away from relying on others for how and what I should be in life, and I realized that neither my father nor I were wrong to have nurtured the middle-class ambition. When my father's aspirations were punctured, I wasn't sure what path I should take in life.

At this pivotal moment, when I was beginning to lose hope and was nearly lost in the wilderness of my thoughts, a philosophy professor and an amateur astrologer, with whom I had a long intimacy, made two predictions about me, after seeing my horoscope drawn by my father at the time of my birth. The first prediction was that I would become a teacher, which stunned me beyond belief since this was not the uppermost thought in my mind in those days. His prediction did not go well with me, so I strongly disapproved of it. He challenged me, claiming that I would end my life as a teacher and that all other possibilities were off the table, even though I didn't want to accept the forecast. I found the prediction hilarious and absurd.

Eventually, I happened to choose teaching not by choice but by compulsion, which proved the astrologer's prophecy to be true. I fell in love with my career slowly but surely as I swam into it, and went on to become an enthusiastic and productive teacher in the classroom. That was it, and I didn't turn around. I came to see that teaching was the



I became a writer like a teacher by accident rather than by choice. More than forty years have gone by swiftly, and I have travelled through writing in tandem with my career as a teacher. During this journey, though I have seen many pitfalls, the two stayed in my life like two eyes and became deep passions.

ideal path since it allowed me to impact young people's lives and do the best for society. I found excitement and ineffable joy in imparting and sharing knowledge with the young buds. Despite challenges, I would have plenty of time to pursue my other goals and interests, most notably spending more time on creativity. So, in a unique sense, the profession moulded me as a writer.



The astrologer-professor's second forecast was that I would become a writer. I scoffed at the thought. I was aware that becoming a writer was a tough task coupled with several difficulties. I had no prior writing experience. So, I wondered how the astrologer made such an outrageous forecast! As the days went by, I proved his second forecast even though I didn't relish it. It wasn't a decision, either. It happened just like a bud blossoming. So, I embraced it. Like teaching, I allowed it to stay with me. I realized that I became a writer like a teacher by accident rather than by choice. More than forty years have gone by swiftly, and I have travelled through writing in tandem with my career as a teacher. During this journey, though I have seen many pitfalls, the two stayed in my life like two eyes and became deep passions. Poetry, however, remained my first love when it came to writing after teaching.

The astrologer-professor's two challenges stayed like Venus as a morning star and an evening star in my

life. I became a teacher and a writer for which I have no regret. I was able to coexist peacefully with two aspects of my personality: a teacher and a writer, not in the traditional academic sense but a creative one. The thing that remains mysterious, though, is how the astrologer-professor was able to make such an accurate forecast based just on the chart, which was a scribbled rectangular table with boxes representing planets.

Despite this, I developed a lovely philosophy out of it: let things unfold naturally and embrace them without resistance; and if things don't turn out the way one had hoped, there should be no regrets or grievances. I have lived with this philosophy all through my life ever since the astrologer-professor's predictions came true—the best philosophical disposition to keep oneself poised and happy in life. This is not to say that one should live a life of idleness and lack of effort. That's a crazy way of thinking. Nobody knows what is kept on file in one's life!



K.V. Raghupathi

is an academic, poet, short story writer, novelist, columnist, and cultural critic from Tirupati. He has fourteen poetry collections, two short story collections, two novels, and eight critical works to his credit.

Teachers – A Tribute

*A clod of clay in the deft hands of my mentors
Who shaped it, infused it with a hunger for learning
Ignited a fire of curiosity
Softened the sharp contours with their patient smiles
And as the wind beneath my wings
Steered this fledging to the infinite skies.*

*Their passionate words, from the distant podium
Still pulsate in my tired nerves, ringing loud and clear
In the ageing ears.*

*I did my bit to return what I received.
Shaping young minds that reposed their faith
In my shaking, unsure hands.*

*A glint in the eye here, a nod of thae head there,
Signs of understanding, my treasure trove for life.*

*Their excellence- my ecstasy,
Their accomplishments- my rewards.*

*Today, in the purple haze of life, I sit back and watch them
Strong and confident, making their mark in the world,
A gratifying smile brightens up the weary soul.
'I didn't fail you, my Gurus!'*



Narinder Jit Kaur
is a retired Associate Professor of English, based in Patiala (Punjab). She has seven books to her credit.



Classroom Chronicles in Hindi Cinema



Hindi cinema frequently reimagines the teacher-student relationship as a profound narrative filled with inspiration, personal growth, and societal transformation. These films often portray the bond with remarkable emotional depth, showcasing the struggles and triumphs of both individuals and society. By highlighting the pivotal role educators play, Hindi movies explore how teachers can be sources of inspiration and change, transcending traditional classroom boundaries. Through stories of mentorship, empathy, and resilience, these films provide a nuanced understanding of how educators impact students' lives and contribute to broader social progress. This portrayal not only celebrates the dedication of teachers but also prompts viewers to reflect on the transformative power of education and its role in shaping a better society.

Inspiration and Guidance

In “Taare Zameen Par” (2007), Aamir Khan’s character, Ram Shankar Nikumbh, exemplifies the teacher as an inspiring mentor. He steps into the life of Ishaan, a young boy grappling with dyslexia and misunderstood by his conventional school.

Nikumbh’s innovative teaching methods and personal connect help Ishaan rediscover his love for learning and regain self-confidence. This film powerfully illustrates how a teacher who looks beyond standard academic metrics can nurture a student’s unique potential. Nikumbh’s dedication encourages viewers to recognize and support educators who make a meaningful difference in their students’ lives, affirming the profound impact of personalized and compassionate teaching.

Personal Connection and Emotional Depth

The emotional gravity of the teacher-student bond is strikingly portrayed in “Black” (2005). Amitabh Bachchan, as Debraj Sahai, mentors Michelle McNally (Rani Mukerji), a deaf-blind girl. Sahai’s unconventional methods and relentless commitment break through Michelle’s isolation, leading her to academic success and personal growth.

“Black” shows that effective teaching transcends academic instruction; it involves forming a deep emotional connection and providing unwavering support. Sahai’s dedication helps Michelle overcome significant obstacles, showcasing how empathy and patience in teaching can lead to profound personal transformation. The film underscores the importance of emotional investment in fostering a student’s development.

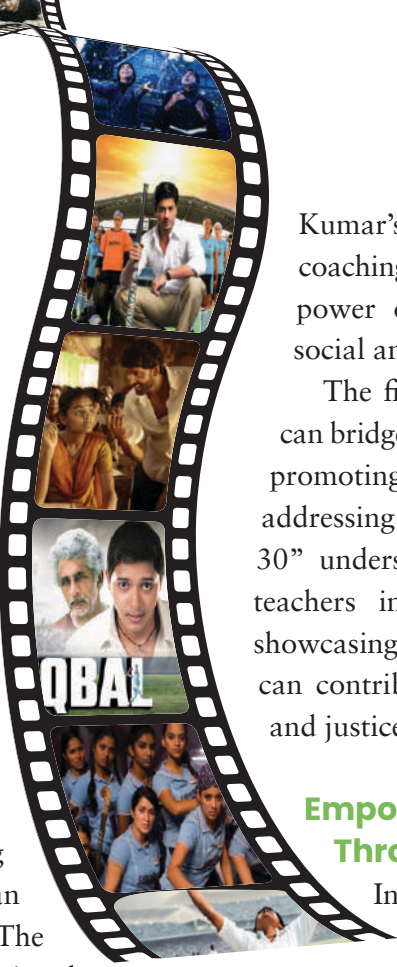
Inspirational Teachers

In “Iqbal” (2005), the character Mohit, a teacher, plays a pivotal role in shaping the dreams of Iqbal, a deaf and mute boy aspiring to be a cricketer. Mohit’s belief in Iqbal’s potential, despite societal and personal challenges, drives the boy toward his goals. The film highlights how a teacher’s faith and encouragement can lead to extraordinary achievements.

Mohit’s mentorship in “Iqbal” exemplifies the power of support in helping students defy expectations and realize their full potential. This portrayal reinforces the idea that inspirational teachers are crucial in guiding students toward success, celebrating the impact of belief and encouragement.

Social and Cultural Impact

“Super 30” (2019) broadens the scope of the teacher’s role by depicting Anand Kumar’s real-life struggle to provide education to underprivileged students.



Kumar’s commitment to offering free coaching highlights the transformative power of education in overcoming social and economic barriers.

The film illustrates how educators can bridge gaps and drive social change, promoting educational equity and addressing societal inequalities. “Super 30” underscores the significant role of teachers in fostering social progress, showcasing how dedication to education can contribute to societal development and justice.

Empowerment Through Sports

In “Chakde! India” (2007), Shah Rukh Khan portrays Kabir Khan, a former hockey player who becomes the coach of the Indian women's national hockey team. Kabir’s role extends beyond coaching; he instils confidence, unity, and determination in his players. Despite numerous challenges, his belief in the team transforms them into a cohesive unit, achieving success against the odds. The film highlights the motivational aspect of coaching, showing how a mentor’s leadership and faith can unite individuals and drive them toward their dreams.

Hindi cinema vividly captures the teacher-student bond, portraying it as a multifaceted and deeply impactful relationship. Films like, Taare Zameen Par, Black, Iqbal, Super 30 and Chakde! India reveal the profound influence teachers have on individual lives and societal progress. These cinematic portrayals highlight the importance of inspiration, emotional depth, and social impact in education. By recognizing their contribution, we gain a greater appreciation for the transformative power of dedicated educators, realizing their crucial role in fostering personal growth and driving positive change.



Sameer Gudhate is a writer and a book reviewer from Maharashtra

An Ode to My Teacher

O Teacher

*Aimlessly wandering around in the ignorant dark world
Naivety was my hallmark; my soul remained amateur
Indifference- at its zenith*

Apathetic I was to the suffering humanity

*Till a glaring ray of knowledge beamed and I saw you
Reminding me of Guru Nanak with a halo around his head
You pulled me from trivialities and the chaos
Widening the horizons, illumining my mind*

And I was no longer the erstwhile novice soul!

*Seeing the world through your learned eyes
I realized that life cannot be plain for a lark
My fellow beings suffered in misery and I could comprehend their pain*

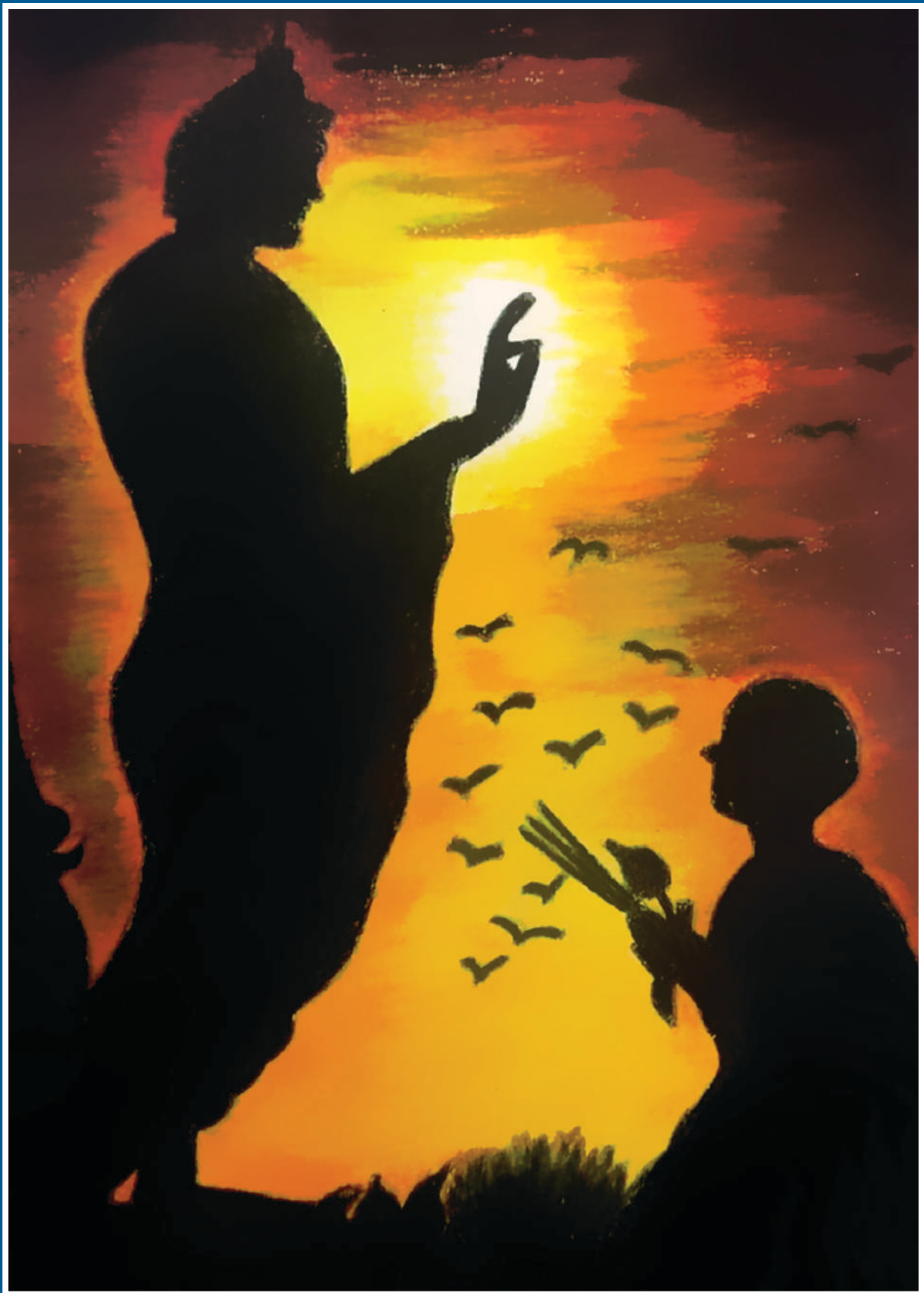
*There was poverty and prostitution, bloodshed and
the brutal dark web of capitalism*

And I could see all!

*Indeed, Teacher, my parents nurtured me,
but you enlightened me.*



Staffy Bhateja
is a poet, editor and painter hailing from the City Beautiful, Chandigarh.



“When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.”



The Final Meal

She sat by the window, her gaze fixed on the darkness outside. As the ticket checker arrived, she calmly produced her Aadhar Card. The officer's grip faltered, the card slipping from his fingers to the floor. The name on it sent a jolt through him, a name from his past that he never expected to encounter again.

Chandrashekhar Rao was due to retire in a couple of months, and the name on the Aadhar Card, Sarveswari Chandrashekhar Rao hit him like a bolt from the blue. He looked up to see the lady had turned her gaze back to the darkness outside. He quickly picked up the card.

Was it her? Could it be her? Yes, she does look the correct age, and the face was strikingly familiar!

"Is everything alright?" Her question cut through his thoughts.

"Yes, here," he said as he took one last look at the Aadhar card before returning it.

"The train is empty. Hardly anyone travelling in this train?"

The quizzical expression on her face startled him. Just like Shantha's. The similarity was uncanny.

He clutched the handle on the nearby seat and sat down.

Her face now displayed concern. "Are you alright? You don't look fine."

He collected himself. "I'm okay. Just a little giddy, that's all. This is the off-season, and so not many travellers. Where are you going?" He knew from her ticket she would be getting off at Gokarna Road.

"Bandikeri Village. I heard it's close to Gokarna

Road station."

His face paled even more than ever.

"Looking for someone there?" He asked, trying very hard to sound nonchalant.

"Maybe! But mostly to join as a primary school teacher in the government school there. Why do you ask? Do you know the village well?"

"Yes, very well! I'm from that village."

"Oh! That's great! So we'll meet often, then. Also,

would you be able to help me find a house on rent there?" She asked hesitantly. "Sorry for piling on to you like this. I won't feel bad if you can't help. I just thought it was a sign that I met you on this train."

"Oh, don't worry, Sarveswari-*avare*. I will do what I can."

"Aah! My Aadhar Card, right? For you to know my name?"

He just smiled back, and said, "Ask anyone in the village for the TTE's house, and they will tell you, My wife, Shantha, will

be at home. I will call her and inform her of your coming. I will return home only tomorrow noon after completing this train journey at Karwar"

"Oh! That is so kind, sir," she replied in gratitude as he walked away, an unfathomable light shining through his eyes.

When Chandra walked into the huge living room of his home the following day after a tumultuous restless night, he found Sarves and Shantha laughing together. He wasn't surprised. Their bonding was natural, right?



“Aah, there you are!” His wife welcomed him, her voice belying the uncertainty in her eyes. “Go, have a bath, and then the three of us can have lunch together. I’ve made *bisibelebath*. Sarves said it’s her favourite dish.” She smiled at the lady who was sitting on the swing in the spacious living room. She looked comfortable as if she had reached home, or so thought Chandra.

He went for his bath, and returned to find three banana leaves laid out on the floor, in the same living room closer to the kitchen. His home consisted of a huge hall, a couple of smaller rooms on either side of the hall, and a big cooking area seamlessly blended into the hall.

This is how most homes in the villages were built, at least the older ones. Privacy, independent thinking and all were unheard of during his young days. You just did what tradition told you to. And he was no revolutionary, was he?

After lunch, the three of them sat in silence. Chandra and Shantha shared a meaningful look, their faces reflecting uncertainty and fear. They knew they had to ask her. But they dreaded her answer. Would they be able to brush this under the carpet as they did their heinous crime? Did she know the truth? Did she come seeking answers or was it just fate that brought her here?

“I know who you are!” Her confident voice raked through their thoughts. They stared at her, the silence becoming uncomfortably deafening.

“My mother told me just before she passed,” she continued.

Shantha sobbed loudly, shame, embarrassment, and fear writ large on her face. She tried to cover her face with her palms but her feelings leaked through the gaps mingling with her tears.

“I don’t know what to say,” Chandra’s voice crackled feebly. “I was and am a weakling. Lavanya called me before she passed. But I didn’t have the courage to reach out to you now just as I didn’t have the guts to go against my parents’ wishes when you were born.”

“You gave me to the midwife with money and instructions to get rid of me,” Sarves said calmly, almost matter-of-factly. “Thanks to her kindness and compassion, I lived. She gave me a new lease of life. She’s my mother, not you. I hope you understand my sentiments.”

Shantha’s sobs became louder. She said or did nothing more, not even trying to hug Sarves.

“Why did you come here? To remind us of our crime? You could’ve chosen any other school to work.”

“That was a lie. I work for the Indian Railways in the Public Relations Department in Bengaluru. I came here seeking closure, wanting to look into the eyes of the people who wanted me dead, abandoning me because I was a girl,” Sarves said, staring at Chandra, her unshed tears mirroring broken pieces of himself, his wife, and his entire life.

“I’m sorry!”

“You did what you did, and are living with it. That you couldn’t bear a child after me must be some kind of a sign, no?”

“We’re not bad people,” stammered Shantha.

“But you are also not nice people. Giving birth to children doesn’t make you parents. Raising children to become good, responsible adults against all odds is parenting. Lavanya was, is, and will always be my mother. While I’m sorry for raking up your forgotten pain, I think it’s a small price to pay for the closure I got. You can think of the food you fed me today as my *thithi oota*.”

Sarves walked out of the house, her head held high while Chandra and Shantha hung their heads.



Ratna Prabha is an ex-banker who is now dabbling in writing. She has been at it for over eight years now freelancing as a ghost-writer as well as creating tales in her own name

Glossary

Avare - a Kannada word/phrase used to denote respect, akin to *ji* in Hindi and sir or ma’am in English

TTE - Travelling ticket examiner, a railway employee whose job is to check tickets of travellers.

Bisibelebath - a staple dish of Karnataka made with rice, dal, vegetables spiced with tamarind, chillies and other spices.

Thithi oota - the meal served to the dead, especially on death anniversaries.



**ANNUAL POETRY
COMPETITION 2024**



**CHANDIGARH
LITERARY SOCIETY**

The Canvas of Emotions

She painted all her raw emotions,
She could hear colours in motion.
Blue on a dreary day, red for anger.
Purple for her love, she lost to war.
White for the wedding gown, alas,
Still behind the showroom glass.

Strokes of slender fingers mirrored stories untold.
But in the night, dark dancing demons took hold.
Her brush unleashed hidden tormented ghouls,
The Canvas spoke, stretched like a lone wolf's howl.
Yet, amid the pain, there were moments of light,
When hope of new life filled her heart with delight.

She painted pink for the babies in prams in the park,
And lavender dreams even though her life was stark.
She painted her pain and rainbow coloured her joy,
The brush held in her taut veinous hand high.
Bled deep crimson strains straight from her heart,
Yes, but some might casually call it, just art.



Dr. Deviyani Singh has a PhD. in 'International Terrorism' and a double M.A. She taught at Delhi University and worked in the Committee of External Affairs, Lok Sabha Secretariat.

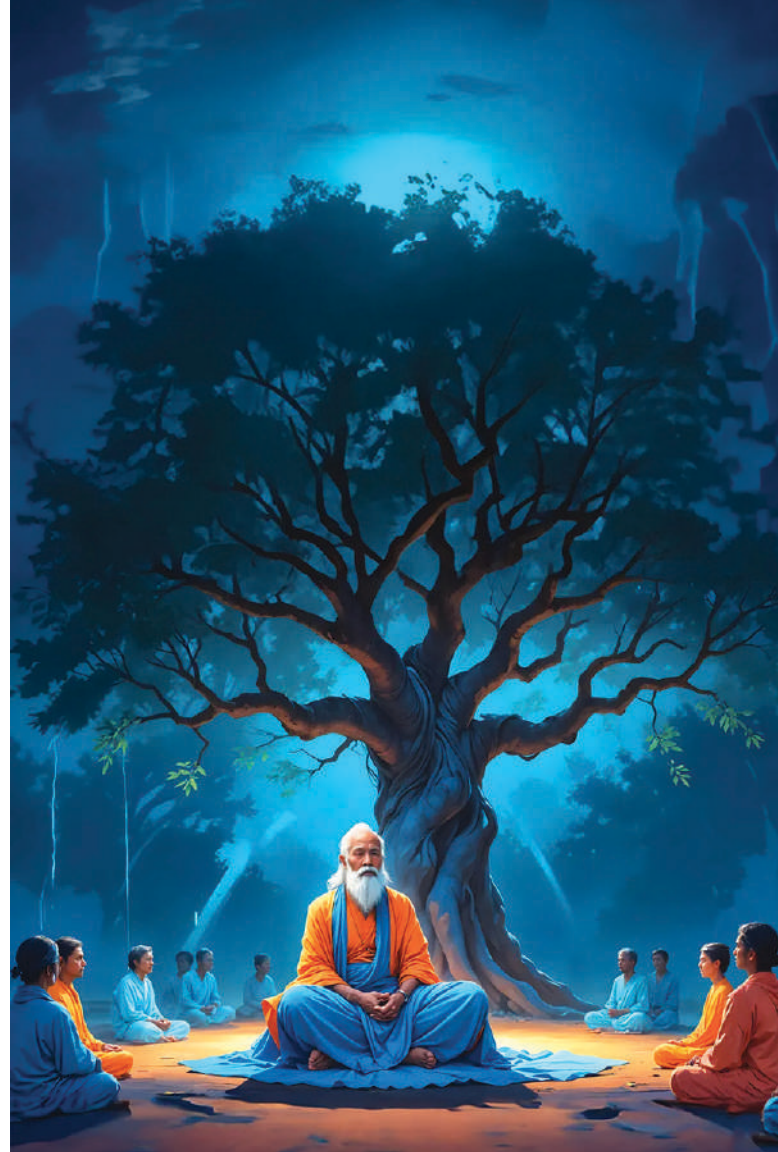
A Guiding Light for all Times

A Guru leads us from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge. In the ancient Indian gurukul system, students lived with their teachers and learnt life lessons, moral principles, and education from them. Traditional Indian culture is enriched with Vedas, scriptures, and spiritual textbooks written by great sages. Is it not amazing that the works of these philosophers and scholars written years ago continue to inspire and mentor us even today?

Tulsidas wrote *Ramcharitmanas* in 1631; the victory of good over evil saga guides our thoughts and actions up to the present time. He imparts the spiritual cure for our ailments in Kaliyug in the form of hymns in *Vinay Patrika* and genuinely counsels us to change our ways because he was hurt by the irresponsible and immoral behaviour of the world around him.

Text in *Narad Bhakti Sutras* recently gave me a moment of epiphany. It clarifies the difference between worldly love and divine love. Whereas the love with a man/woman is associated with the appreciation of his/her qualities and hence is subject to waver when we see those qualities diminish, the transcendental divine love increases day by day and is free of the attributes of the person (lord). *The Gita* tells us that this world is *Dukhalayam* (place of miseries) and *Ashaashwatam* (temporary), and to expect *sukha* (happiness) from worldly activities is foolish. Dispelling Arjuna's *moha* (attachment) through Gyan yoga, bhakti yoga, and karma yoga- teaches us how to aspire to a higher standard of living.

The *Bhagawat* speaks of *Avadhuta*, a mystic who has surpassed all worldly affairs, Sri Dattatreya, who took inspiration from 24 elements of nature as his guru. He learnt forbearance from



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The Earth, selfless service from The Moon and The Sun; screening out the sounds of the material world from The Maiden, who broke her bangles as they created noise while she prepared food for her guests. The moth, elephant, deer, and fish warn against the distractions of desire. Pingala prostitute alerts us against building worldly attachments and serves as proof that anyone can reform their life's path. According to the caterpillar's lesson, one becomes what one focuses on. So, it is imperative to develop *viveka* (wisdom) and distinguish between right and wrong.



Besides exploring the joy of teaching, I realize how privileged I am, as a teacher at a University, to be able to inspire and get inspired. Every day I see students overcome health and family challenges, excel in extracurricular activities, and raise the bar in college activities.

Besides exploring the joy of teaching, I realize how privileged I am, as a teacher at a University, to be able to inspire and get inspired. Every day I see students overcome health and family challenges, excel in extracurricular activities, and raise the bar in college activities. Similarly, our spouse, children, family, and friends also teach us patience, humility, the power of love and sweet words spoken with intimacy.

All of us can vouch for the role played by our school and college teachers in moulding us. Love for learning, a pat on the back, an encouraging word, a kind smile to prod us on, igniting passion and imagination, and empathy have made us the people we are today. Times have changed for the better, of course. Gone are the days when the teacher was feared and had a free hand in punishing the students physically- their mantra being ‘Spare the rod and spoil the child’. We would be hit by a scale on our knuckles if our handwriting was not neat. The PT teacher in our school was the epitome of terror. Today, the teachers are more

approachable and student-friendly than before.

The internet has revolutionized teaching with the teacher knocking at your door to enrol in his class. The easy accessibility to books (online bookshops), audiobooks, social media like Facebook, YouTube podcasts, masterclasses, and courses give a plethora of information on topics ranging from health, lifestyle, creative pursuits and just about anything under the sun. Many teach us through their actions. By adopting minimalism, they have inspired my journey towards being mindful of my choices.

Last but not least, as Shahrukh Khan says in *Dear Zindagi* ‘We are our own teachers in the school of life’. By knowing ourselves better, choosing to follow the values we want in our lives, and filtering out the mental garbage, we can lead the life we dream of.

If selfless teachers did not share their wisdom with us, we would have to go through tedious processes and painful journeys like travelling on the road without GPS navigation! I am thankful to all the Gurus in my life.



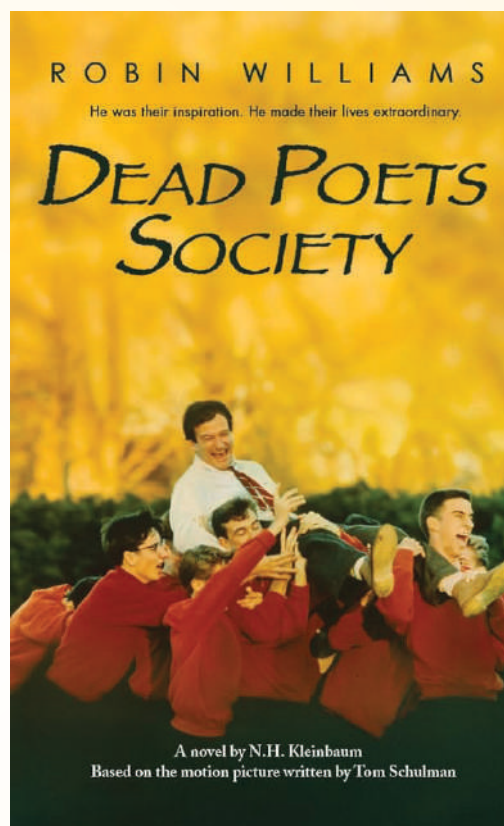
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Rebels with a Cause

The Keating Effect

Dead Poets Society is a film that eloquently captures the nuances of teaching through the story of a group of students at Welton Academy, an elite, conservative preparatory school in the 1950s. The film's central theme revolves around the impact of an unorthodox and inspiring teacher, Mr. John Keating, played by Robin Williams, on the lives of his students. Through Keating's unconventional methods, the film explores how a teacher can awaken the minds of students, encouraging them to think for themselves and embrace the beauty of life.

Welton Academy, with its imposing Gothic architecture and strict adherence to tradition, symbolizes the rigid educational system that prioritizes conformity and discipline over creativity and critical thinking. The school's motto, "Tradition, Honor, Discipline, Excellence," is relentlessly drilled into the students, setting the tone for the oppressive environment in which they live and study. This environment is starkly contrasted by the arrival of Mr. Keating, whose teaching philosophy is summed up by his mantra, "Carpe diem" – "Seize the Day."



Mr. Keating is introduced to the audience and his students with a scene that is as powerful as it is subtle. As the boys file into his classroom for the first time, they are met not with the rigid formalities they are used to but with Keating's unexpected and provocative instruction to tear out the introductory pages of their poetry textbooks. This act of rebellion against the dry, analytical approach to literature that the school endorses is Keating's first step in breaking down the barriers that stifle the students' creative potential. The scene is a visual metaphor for Keating's challenge to the status quo, signalling his intent to liberate his students from the constraints of their environment.



One of the most poignant scenes in the film is Keating's lesson on the importance of perspective. He instructs the boys to stand on their desks and view the world from a different vantage point. This act, though simple, is profoundly symbolic. It represents Keating's belief that education is not just about learning facts but about challenging one's perceptions and assumptions. The scene is underscored by Williams' ability to convey Keating's passion and empathy, making it clear that he sees teaching as an art form, one that has the power to change lives.



The characters of the students, particularly Neil Perry, Todd Anderson, and Knox Overstreet, are central to the narrative and demonstrate the varied impact of Keating's teachings. Neil Perry, portrayed by Robert Sean Leonard, is a bright and charismatic student who dreams of becoming an actor but is suffocated by his domineering father's insistence on pursuing a career in medicine. Keating's influence reignites Neil's passion for the arts, leading him to audition for the role of Puck in a local production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The scene in which Neil performs on stage, filled with joy and fulfillment, is one of the film's most emotionally charged moments. However, it is tragically countered by the devastating scene of Neil's eventual suicide, which highlights the dangers

of suppressed passions and the destructive power of parental expectations.

Todd Anderson, played by Ethan Hawke, represents the more introverted side of the student body. Initially shy and lacking in confidence, Todd is terrified of public speaking and self-expression. Keating recognizes Todd's potential and gently encourages him to find his voice. In one of the most memorable scenes, Keating forces Todd to create a poem on the spot, drawing out his emotions and helping him realize his own worth. This moment is a turning point for Todd, who slowly begins to emerge from his shell, culminating in his climactic stand on the desk to salute Keating at the end of the film.

Knox Overstreet, another student inspired by Keating, channels his newfound confidence into pursuing his romantic interest, Chris Noel. Knox's story arc, while lighter in tone, illustrates the theme of seizing opportunities and living life to the fullest, a direct result of Keating's influence.

The climax of the film is both heartbreaking and uplifting. After Neil's death, Keating is blamed for the tragedy and is forced to leave Welton. In his final moments at the school, as he collects his belongings from the classroom, the students, led by Todd, defy the headmaster's authority by standing on their desks and declaring, "O Captain, My Captain!" in a gesture of solidarity and gratitude. The scene is a testament to Keating's lasting impact on the students— he has not only taught them about poetry but also the importance of courage, individuality, and the pursuit of one's path.

Dead Poets Society is more than a film about a teacher; it is a celebration of the deep influence that a passionate educator can have on the lives of their students. Through its vivid characters, powerful scenes, and emotional storytelling, the movie leaves an indelible mark, reminding viewers of the importance of embracing life with both hands and never being afraid to stand up for what they believe in.



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