

MEANDER

ENGLISH LITERARY SOCIETY, IIT KANPUR



IN THIS ISSUE

PROSE AND POETRY BY OUR CLUB MEMBERS

Page 1

WINNING ENTRIES OF THE SCRIBBLES COMPETITION

Page 7

BOOK REVIEWS : PG WODEHOUSE AND AYN RAND

Page 12

A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE PORTRAYAL OF TRIALS IN LITERATURE

Page 15

WORD GAMES TO EXERCISE YOUR MIND AND VOCACBULARY

Page 20

A Winter Evening

by Namgyal Lhamo Dolma

Oh beautiful winter evening!
When did you become so paradoxical?
I remember when all you ever could do was send cold
shrills down my feeble spine; always forcing me to
put on a warmer layer of a thicker fabric.
Oh! So much for sustainability!
Well, I anyway always was the kind to oblige
immediately.

Oh pulchritudinous evening!
You're so quick and wee; warm and cold.
Now that I think - you've always been paradoxical;
And will be, for ever more.

Chilly winds, foggy glasses, desiccated skin, many
frozen lakes, and many more frozen hearts - these
are the words that could sum your conduct fully up.
But dare I say that you bring an unorthodox kind of
warmth in the midst of my fickle heart?
Oh beautiful winter evening!
Time has surely passed by, hasn't it?
Yet you enter the nights: as young as ever,
And I seem to have slowed down a little.



And even so I'd want to, I can no longer deny;
mortality becomes me-
But dear winter,
You make me feel otherwise!
You fly faster than Katrina, and possibly higher
than Everest.
Yet your icy touches never fail to enlighten my
body with your light; so full of proclivity.

So tell me, Winter -
Did I change?
Or did you change with time?
I remembered you to only be a season prior
spring - how did you become so pleasing to
the eye?

Oh beautiful winter evening! Tell me!
When did you become the paradoxical beauty?
Oh beautiful winter evening!
Spill out those infinitesimal secrets beneath.

The Parallel Decision

by Ankur Banga

Sunlight enters through the shutter in the corner of my room and falls on my eyes, forcing me to wake up, disgruntled. I slide off the side of my bed and walk up to the tally engraved wall to mark another day spent in isolation. There are too many sticks to count. I make my way to the kitchen to make some coffee to hide my sleep deprivation from my body. But then again, sleep is as irrelevant for my existence as my day. Comparing the ratio of time spent in both sections of the day would be foolish. My house is quite a waste of space for my sedentary self. I barely manage to step out of my own room. There are two floors, wood flooring, a back garden and a winding staircase. They told me my parents are rich, and I have no option but to believe them.

I walk out to the front door to get my newspaper. I bought a new subscription last week after my therapist asked me to try to get a grasp on the real world. It might be time to leave the safe walls of my mansion. "Baby steps", he said. I read the headlines - "Politician makes an inflammatory remark causing a viral hashtag trend on social media and television debates". After a week of reading the newspaper, one genuinely begins to wonder whether the real world is worth coming back to or not. It's a pinata of things that could trigger the switch in my mind that tells me that my vision is being envisioned by the likes of Tolkien. That reminds me, Dr Pruthi should be here soon for his weekly visit. I finish reading whatever seems worth the time, take a shower and get dressed.

My psych eval follows a straightforward routine, unoriginal answers in response to standard questions. Today, however, he popped the question every patient of his awaits.

“How do you feel about stepping out today? Go for a walk maybe. To the nearby park?”. Flashes of my deceptive memory cross my mind at the mention. I shudder, and answer “I...I don’t know. I haven’t had a disturbing episode in months now.” The flowers, the swings, the winds. “You know what? I can do it. I want to go. There’s no point in rotting away here”. Dr Pruthi’s beamed with joy at my remarks. He was more excited than I was. “I’ll accompany you to the park.” I found it a bit odd, but I understood his inclination to help me to the best of his capabilities.

“So, do we leave now?” I asked. “Sure, just change into something more.. sporty. We’re going to a park, not a gamer convention.” I pick out a pair of pants and a shirt from the dusty untouched corner of my wardrobe and put them on. I take the first step outside of my house and take a deep breath of the fresh polluted city air. I see the kids cycling in the distance, the birds sitting on the power lines, the monster truck coming to ram me. No, no! It’s just a friendly old Maruti. Okay so far, so good. I take a deep breath and start walking towards the park along with Dr Pruthi. It’s a 10-minute walk, I remember coming here every day as a teenager and playing all sorts of sports with my group of friends. That was before Aishwarya came along. She entered my life like a tsunami and swept me off my feet. Wow when did I become so cheesy, I think to myself. Moving on, she was the most beautiful and kind person I had ever met. I could ramble on and on about talking to her, being with her, kissing her. She was there for me, day and night. It’s so vivid that I can almost re-live everything, but I now know she was never real. The first love of my life was an illusion. Dr Pruthi taught me a neat trick to lock any memory away in the depths of my brain. I just have to think of a memory that has to be fantasy. For Aish, it’s the day we flew on brooms and played quidditch together. It’s also the day that I fell from the fourth floor, trying to chase her.

“What are you thinking?” asked Dr Pruthi.

“Trying to remember where the divisive lines are in my brain. That park... it’s a big part of my emotional core. I am confident I can maintain my sanity though.”

“That’s good to know. Look, we’re almost here.”

I look around at the swinging swings and the slippery slides ridden by the brave kids with worrying parents at the side. The cricket pitch, run over by kids who just wanted a chance to bat. I remember the swings being able to swing completely in any direction, the slides never-ending, and cricket being played with equality and not by the bat-ownership rules.

We sat down on the bench in the middle of the park. To my shock, Dr Pruthi took my responsibility of fulfilling the bizzaro criteria for today.



"Pretend we're having a serious conversation about your health and do not freak out. Also, smile and laugh a bit, I am known for being humorous.

"What the-?" "Say something," he ordered.

"Um yeah, okay," I said, clearing my throat.

"They won't be listening here but we need to get back quickly. I-"

"Who's they?!" I ask, interjecting him.

"Just stay shut and listen. You do not have Oneirataxia. Please, I beg you, maintain your composure. I'm going to summarize your life story that doesn't deserve summarization so I need you to cooperate. Aishwarya was real. You both did fall in love. Then she took you back to her world, a world where scientists have unlocked the secrets of space-time and know how to travel between parallel dimensions. All the fantasy elements that we had you lock away are from the other dimension. Your knowledge of this would have risked the sanctity of the space-time continuum or an expose in the press. One scared the scientists and the other terrified the government. Naturally, you were pushed off the fourth floor, diagnosed and brought to me. I taught you how to separate the two worlds into real and fantasy, waiting desperately for the opportunity to tell you this."

I think the word 'flabbergasted' was invented for the exact expression on my face. Did Dr Pruthi actually say that? Is this real? Am I imagining this? There was no way of knowing. I looked around. The park seemed normal. Nothing, or no one, was flying. My feet, on the ground. The sun was the correct size and my clock showed the expected time. Dr Pruthi was maintaining a calm expression, and he expected me to do the same.

"I don't know if I can, or should believe this. Did you really just say what you said? A parallel dimension, space-time, what is this Nolan bullshit?"

"It's a red pill-blue pill situation. The choice is yours, take the red and explore the normal world knowing you were never insane. Take the blue, and slowly adapt to the world with fear in your mind."

Of all the times I've wanted to move around the Matrix like Neo, I never considered the prerequisite of decision making. That's the most difficult part of the entire movie. I look around and I see a familiar face. Dr Saraswat was coming towards us. She was the co-therapist who was involved in my initial diagnosis. I started to wave at her when Dr Pruthi exclaimed something in a manner lying somewhere in the spectrum between yelling and shrieking, "Hey!" He should not be the one lecturing me on how to maintain composure.

"Dr Saraswat, it's been a while," I say, trying to act normal.

"What a wonderful surprise. I didn't think you would be joining us," said Dr Pruthi.



“Well, Ankur is our common patient and I would like to be informed about any major step that you decide to take. Going to the park is the size of Big Foot. Thank God your secretary knew where you were because Ms Lohani wants to see both of us.” Dr Pruthi’s face went pale. “Ms Lohani... Why? I’ve done everything right, we were just discussing health I-”

“Now now, do not panic. Consider it a regular checkup. Even doctors need one, don’t we?” she chuckled. “Ankur, should we head back home? I think it’s been long enough,” she ordered.

As we walked back, Dr Pruthi’s face maintained the jump-scare expression. Dr Saraswat walked on confidently. I needed to make a decision. Is any of this real? Both the doctors seem real. Should I test it by hugging Dr Saraswat? No, that would be weird. Okay, step 1 doctors are real, check. Step 2, if Dr Pruthi was right, and he’s scared of Dr Saraswat, does that mean she’s from the other dimension? I looked at her for a while, and quickly looked away when she turned around for a glance. Red or blue, red or blue, red or blue. Is Dr Pruthi going to die? There’s no way. That’s ridiculous!

I started feeling flustered, my mind started going at an enormous pace and I turned around and started running. Away from everything, away from the false promises of a normal life. I was fine in my room. Why today? Why? My legs took control as I started running. I ran into the sun setting on the horizon, filling the world, or worlds, with a tiresome melancholic orange hue. Forrest was a much better runner, I realized, as I fell on the ground and fainted.

Sunlight enters through the corner of my room and f- wait, what? I leapt off my bed and ran around my house. I looked out the front windows and started searching for any message left behind explaining the events of yesterday. Was it yesterday? I go my tally-wall aimlessly and finally settle on my couch, utterly perplexed, trying to assimilate what happened.

Ding-Dong. I rush to the door and open it to see Dr Saraswat standing there, smiling.

“May I come in?”

She tries to make me understand what exactly occurred. Lost your grip on reality - it was too early - Pruthi misjudged your situation - he has been reassigned - I’ll do the weekly visits.

I say I understand, and bid her goodbye. I don’t question her, or contradict her timeline for the sake of Dr Pruthi’s trust in me. I go back to my room, pick up a sheet and two crayons. Red, Blue. I draw the pills, and I brood. I assume that the words that came out of Pruthi’s mouth were not adulterated by the alleged demons of my mind. After a few minutes, I tear it up. There’s only one outcome, the only disparity is the history. And even though it’s a massive difference, I need to move on and live my life. Whatever happens, happens.

“Better pass boldly into that other world, in the full glory of some passion, than fade and wither dismally with age.” - James Joyce

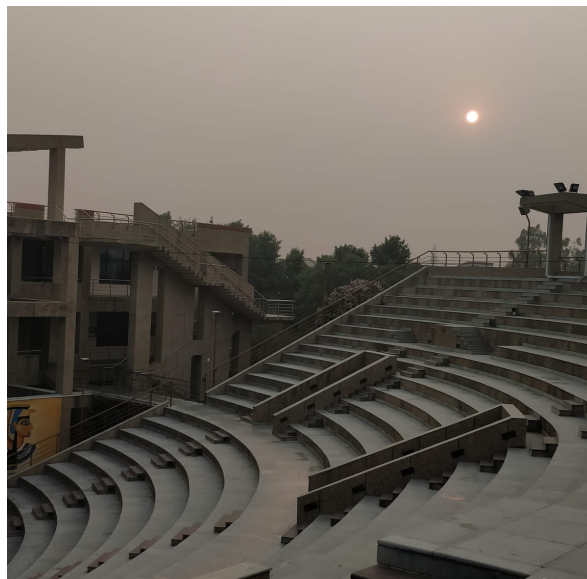
Fall-ing

by Sanyukta Agarwal

Spring of the new decade, hopes high on rise
Had I known better the doom that will arrive
Naive me waved them for a short goodbye
A week of peace, rest and solace.

Months now, I've been living in distaste
Summer swept by without any splashes
Airstrip missed those suit&short dances
The OAT theater remained dust laden
IPL matches watched all byself
Someone tasted a bat soup
Here I am missing CCD coffee brew

Haunted by their absence
Ghosts sleep on RM couches
RO at BSBE left untouched
Streets stranded, cycles rusting
It's the silence that tortures me



Every night pray for their return
Bring me back to life as I were
This fall will pass
streets will be cleared and gates held ajar
They will return at last
They who make me what I am

Haikus

A Japanese short poetry style. The format consists of 3 lines which have 17 syllables arranged in a 5-7-5 pattern.

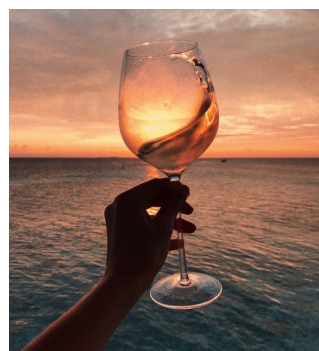


winter hailstorm-
red footprints and his
typographic killer song

- Saksham Pruthi

spring bloom-
on a sunny walk
my drink overbrims

- Rishika Saraswat



Scribbles

WINNING ENTRIES

Scribbles was a lockdown themed creative writing contest held in September

An Introspect's Cost

by Rijul Tandon

It begins with blue. The past waits for you to take a look, the dead memories rise from their graves and the reckoning is here. You know you can't resist, the tempts of a nymph with the devil lurking behind. Dreams are the only safe haven, your recluse from the monstrosities of the endless drudge outside, yet one fails to distinguish where the boundaries are. Your mind riddled by the infinite questions when there appears only one way out. How the destiny must fulfill, Shakespeare's immortal question takes the form of an ethereal thought. It is a subliminal ghost you end up passing through whenever you try to comprehend it. In order to lend some meaning to it, you wish to rid the world of its strife. No more silly autocorrects, no tracking of follower count, endless supply of MDMA, LSD (just wish for any), no illusion of free will. After all, freedom of choice is not having two buttons to press every 4 or 5 years.

I wonder what would be really cool, an evil Batman or a good Joker. One who kills as he judges them less worthy according to his standards or someone who wishes to expose them to their filthiness and leave them to die. Somehow, it still feels good to be a vigilante despite the haziness of it all. It really is a murky territory, the one of morality, seeing they all are so pathetic. Doublethink, as one should say, is the way out of it. I am a rebel to a society who tells me to be myself but only when I am aligned with them. Yes, the society which rummages its iota of thinking capacity over trivial questions of sexuality, authority and sometimes, in vain, meaning. A society can never be concerned with an individual, its focus, the centre of its meagre attention will always be itself. Hence, the questions it raises can never be those that seek to help its constituents. Still, I wish to strive for its excellence. Notwithstanding the dichotomy I doubt whether I truly am good or just want to kill, still the two do not differ.

Therefore, one must turn their attention to their first - victim. The list seems endless, but one must make a start. The basis of choice could be anywhere from categorical to utilitarian to existentialist. To me, it was obvious. Could she be a way to enhance and challenge my culinary skills? For sake of privacy, let's name her on the tenth letter of the English alphabet or the fourteenth. I would like to dedicate a poem to her, but not here.

I had to cook a plan more worthy of my intellectual capabilities, something a bit more attuned to my artistic inclinations; it came up amongst the most primal of our fantasies. Someday, and I do not mean to procrastinate indefinitely as people do, but when the time feels high, I will sneak her into a lone place far into the woods and bring over my buddy. You know your friend hates her more than you do, and together you could be the ultimate trio. Ahh, how it delights me to think how ecstatic he would be and he won't be able to thank me enough for it. It will not be primal then, it will be humane of the highest order, a moment of pure genius.

This summarises the ravings of Logan as he moves ahead to the more demanding problems of the world. Tired, he is forced to lean against a wall in a dark, possibly infested alleyway. The stench of rats and sewers rebukes him, while the thoughts he had on the walk there have charged him for another lifetime. He moved on towards his apartment, betwixt not so dissimilar ones. He turned the key in, threw them in the bowl on top of the shoe box to the right and headed towards the kitchen. He scoured the fridge to cook up an extravagant meal to satiate the new found excitement in his life. He dimmed the lights of his study such that only the light coloured objects were visible, barely to the sensitive eyes of his, given the nature of his work. He could truly be considered the backbone of the world economy. In his eyes, he was the greatest hero ever; the saviour no one asked for, yet couldn't deny his greater-than-jesus status had they known. Were he to deny a day of work, the world would probably fall to a much greater disorder than it already is in. The market would crash, internet would be down, servers would burn to ashes, one may not be able to comprehend it all. He was an underwater repairman. He took a dive every week, patted the good ol' reliable cables and resurfaced, sometimes taking a detour to play with fishes and see the corals, whatever's left of them.

Back on his prized seat, a carved wooden chair with hand stitched leather, he would pick up a book or turn the music system on. It was his sole escape from himself; a place of endless horror that could rival the hell of any sin. A mind occupied with mazes of one comedy after another, it was an inescapable prison designed by himself, the only one capable of it. He had cried out for help several times, only to find them beyond comprehension of those who heard. He couldn't himself tell what it was, but could only be understood by someone if only the wish could be mustered. He had realized in all these years that his life was not a timer - but a stopwatch. It could be classified as a helpless craving; a diminishing shade of white engulfing a hollow space is the closest one can get to describing it all.

Back at home, if it was the right term at present, he was a victim of birth. His earliest memories were of him sitting at the window pane watching the trains go by, the humongous black grill, the swirling clouds of steam and fumes, the never changing wheels, it was all intact in his mind. The operator would sometimes see it fit to slow the train down, just so Logan could run along and as he would grow up, maybe outrun it. He could feel that it was when it might have begun. He always thought back then how it would be to sit and travel across the lands, he dreamt it must pass through some mystic lands of joy and elation, a state of consciousness perhaps only read or talked of, one can't really know but only understand.

Somewhere along his teens, the track shifted to a more approachable location. He would say to himself, " A thing of beauty is a joy forever..... ." Amidst the fog of memories, he still could elucidate the shape of the horses, the air filled with warm exchanges of morning birds, the added dimension by the variety of flora, all of it subject to transience, if only one could find its tranquility. He liked the sweltering time of June, the blizzards of January and above all the rejected October. The dewy grass tickling his little feet, his hands blessing the spikes of wheat, the offing pushing against his chest, were mere artifacts of his mind. It wasn't the absence of them now, it was the absence of him.

He would move his arms through empty air in an abstract manner, as if trying to hold someone. His hands would convey a dejection of whoever tried to hold them, this apparent disparity of his own body could not be attributed to anything. He had spent years trying to understand his condition, only for it to reveal something new each day. There remained no chain of thoughts, no sense of coherence, the delusive euphoria grew indefinitely. It ended with red.

Eternal Whine of the Listless Mind

by Somya Lohani

Macbeth, Scene 5, Act 5

...Life, is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury

Signifying nothing....

A solitary tear rolls down my cheek as my fingers reach out for my pen, one last time. This soliloquy has been the sum total of my life's ideologies since forever and still is my *raison d'être*, but in a way it never was before.

In all of my vanity, I perform Sir Macbeth's monologue out loud and something about his expression tells me that my recital is not being taken seriously. Seriously? What does seriously even mean? It's not like my words or for that matter even my actions solve a purpose, there's no imaginable aspiration they seem to fulfil. A familiar ache grips my heart as I seamlessly fade into my coliseum of existential credence. Regardless of how irrelevant life seems to me, I still continue through each day and regardless of how irrelevant others perceive my writings to be, I still continue to write. "Why?" is a question that puzzles me every night.

"A meaningless, insignificant life", what was before the pandemic just shower thought for some intellectuals, now echoes through everyone's mind on an hourly basis. The pandemic has created a new world order. Everyday is fraught with untold perils. The world is now rife with a lack of resources and morals alike. People, without their conscious binding them anymore, roam the lands scouring for food and whatever else they can lay their hands on. But then there are a few others too, who work towards establishing order amongst them.

The only thing that is common to both parties is their instinct for survival. When compared to the two, I find myself to be a dazed entity tottering on a middle path. On one hand my mind refuses to acknowledge any emotion and on the other, my body forces me to struggle for just one more day to nourish itself. An unexplained listlessness has taken refuge inside me ever since the pandemic broke out. I still do things that I did before but they just don't have my heart anymore. Every paltry article published by me, that passes unnoticed, is a reminder of how worthless my writings are and everyday, a reminder of how worthless my time here is. And as if my self-loathing wasn't enough, the better judgement of the people around holds likewise. Other than that of the person sitting opposite to me on the teal rug, I don't think my writings have anybody's sanction.

At this point, it feels like I am effortlessly piling things up on the quintessential villain of our time, the pandemic. But then in my defence, I feel that we are inextricably tied to the larger societal fabric and that any ripple on this vast web is bound to affect me as much as it would affect anybody else. And the pandemic well, was much more than just a ripple. There are times when I want to believe that there is somebody who is watching over us and there are powers greater than I fathom, which maintain the harmony of our universe. However, the myopia of my senses only gives me so much to hold on to, only so much make sense out of. Right now, my thoughts, they yearn for something to latch onto before I ultimately spiral down to delve on the irrelevancy of our lives over and over. And just then, as if on cue, he punctuates them.



As I look up, I see him smiling at me earnestly. I know how with that smile he hopes to cajole me into making his favourite dalgona coffee which I learnt to prepare over the great pandemic of 2020. His wayward gaze forces me to the kitchen and I start to put together the few morsels of food that remained in the kitchen. There are only a few things that I can be grateful for in life, and a comfortable access to food is paramount amongst them. The bell rings, it's the neighbours, they've run out of food again and this time apparently humanity too.

I come back to find my drawing room vandalised with everything of value gone, including him. I see large swathes of red spewn over the beige of my carpet, the scene sends a shiver down my spine. Crossing over the morbid scene, I walk over to my desk.

This brings me back to the present, the teardrop trickles down from my cheek to create a blot on my register. My mind which had not felt emotions in a long long time, is somehow bubbling with emotions. And now, of all the times possible, the answer to all my questions falls right into my lap. I will not pin it on you if you attribute my words to a misplaced sense of nostalgia and to be honest, a part of me really hopes that by virtue of my writing I'll be able to find my way back to the happier times I spent with my friend.

Macbeth, Scene 5, Act 5

...Life, is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury

Signifying nothing....

Everytime I performed the soliloquy, my friend just smiled and asked me to pay attention to the whole piece. Up until now, I paid attention only to the last line and not it's antecedents and now when I read it, its like my friend has come back. He says, life's value lies, not in what it signifies but in the melodious sounds that accompany it, in the fury of emotions it engages and most importantly in how the idiot narrating it narrates it. He says, there is so much life throws at you, a win, a loss, a heartbreak, a mistake and that it does not do to go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands, you should be able to throw something back at it too. Every experience that life creates is what creates you. He says, no matter how terrible life seems today, it does go on, it goes on to become better one day. You need not do much, you've just got to go ahead and enjoy the beautiful skies it paints for you at every dusk and dawn. He says, one day you will wake up and there won't be any more time to do the things you've always wanted to do. Today is all that you have, start doing it today.

He says, there so much life says to you, and so much I've said as well but are you listening? Will you remember? I listen to all that he says and with a smile I reply "I've learned that people might forget what you said, or maybe also what you did but never how you made them feel." You'd wonder why I'm penning all of this profanity down. Nobody around me, especially after the breakout of the pandemic believes that life has a meaning anyway. And the only one who did, isn't here anymore. But the same Shakespeare who wrote the above piece on life's impertinence, also wrote his sonnet 55 "Not marbles, nor gilded monuments" And as I lament over my friend and write in his memory, I too like Shakespeare hope that my piece outlives the ravages of time.

BOOK REVIEWS

Abhimanyu Sethia reviews:

Joy in The Morning by PG Wodehouse

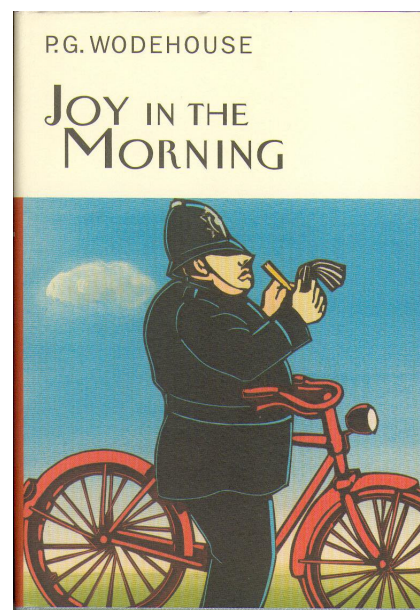
"It is true of course, that I have a will of iron, but it can be switched off if the circumstances seem to demand it."

Overview

A witty narration, a delicately put-up comedy of errors, with slapstick but hilarious characters- that is Joy in the Morning for me.

The story revolves around the visit of Bertie Wooster and his butler, Jeeves to a rural neighbourhood, getting involved in an interesting love triangle, a secretive trade deal, a problematic matrimony and what not!

While for most novels, humour is only a means of making the narrative more interesting, Joy in the Morning is one of the few novels (and probably one of the best) which has humour at its very core.



Use of Story, Characters and Narration to Evolve Humour

Unlike movies wherein visuals and audio are exploited to evolve humour, a written text enjoys limited creative faculties, namely storyline, writing style and characters, to convey the comedy. Wodehouse has exploited each of these creative instruments to create a rib-tickling novel.

The storyline, is made up of a delicately thought-out 'concatenation of events.' These events, however, seem absurd and stupid, when seen in isolation (for example, a school boy burning a house or a fiancé repeatedly changing her to-be husbands after her engagement).

Similarly, the characters although hilarious, are unreal. Instead of building believable, deep characters, the novel relies on the oft-used technique of slapstick comedy- overly pronouncing a particular character trait of every character, so as to make them seem stupid and hence, funny. However, in doing this, the author has ended up making one-dimensional character with little depth. That said, the witty narration more than compensates for the slapstick characters and absurd storyline. Unusual phrases, strange words and exotic literary quotes (and misquotes) have been employed to describe events, so as to make the narrative amusing and witty.

For example, consider this extract from the novel, which talks about the narrator's visit to a bar- *"The appointment to which I had alluded was with the barman at the Bollinger. Seldom, if ever, had I felt in such sore need of a restorative. I headed for my destination like a hart streaking towards cooling streams, when heated in the chase, and was speedily in conference with the dispenser of lifesavers."*

The witty narrative, slapstick characters and farcical storyline- put together, make an amusing laugh riot!

History of the Novel and Its Reflections in the Text

Most of the novel was written by Wodehouse in France, during the Phoney war. However, he was interrupted by the German occupation of France, in 1940, imprisoned for being a British national. He left the unfinished manuscript of the novel with his wife.

When he was released in 1943, he made a set of comic broadcasts from German radio, which prompted controversy in Britain and a threat of persecution. As a result, he never returned to Britain, where *Joy in the Morning* is based.

He completed the unfinished manuscript in Germany and finally published it in 1946. Wodehouse wondered about how *Joy in the Morning* would be received, given its delayed publication. In a letter from 1946, he wrote, “my stuff has been out of date since 1914, and nobody has seemed to mind.”



In view of the circumstances under which *Joy in the Morning* was written, Wodehouse's biography calls it a ‘brilliant example of Wodehouse's literary escapism.’

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note how circumstances in which a novel has been written reflects in the novel itself. For example, Wodehouse refers to a fire in a house as a ‘holocaust’ and talks appreciatively of Napoleon.

“Well, everybody enjoys a good fire, of course, and for a while it was in a purely detached and appreciative spirit that I stood eyeing the holocaust”

“Well, there it is. That's Jeeves. Where others merely smite the brow and clutch the hair, he acts. Napoleon was the same.”

Why You Should Read It

If you are looking for a fun-to-read, refreshing and amusing 300 pages, this is the book for you. I suggest you to read *Joy in the Morning* to appreciate the use of superior forms of language to evolve humour and succinctly describe emotions and realisations.

“There was a sound in the background like a distant sheep coughing gently on mountainside. Jeeves sailing into action.”

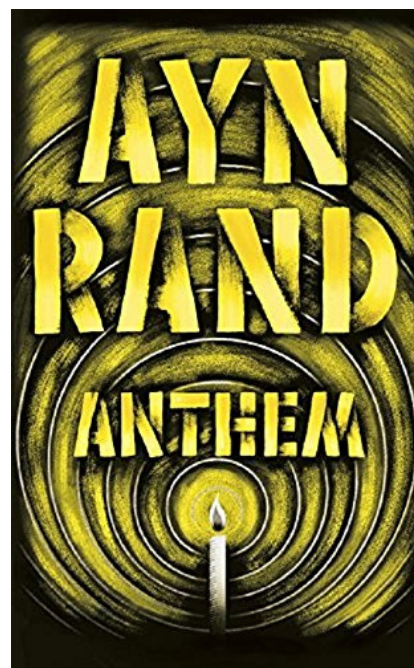
Gaurvika Kapoor reviews:

Anthem by Ayn Rand

"I understood that centuries of chains and lashes will not kill the spirit of man nor the sense of truth within him."

Overview

The story of *Anthem* takes place in an unnamed Communist- or Fascist-like dictatorship of a dystopian future, where an individual has no rights, existing solely to serve the state. The citizens of this society are pawns without rights who exist as wards of the state. Even their names are variations on collectivist slogans — Unity, Fraternity, Liberty, and so on — followed by numbers. Above all, the word "I" has been outlawed; it is the "Unspeakable Word" that has been erased from the language and from the thoughts of citizens. All first-person references have been expunged from individual thought.



When individuals speak of themselves, they use the collective "we," there being no individualistic concepts or words available. The protagonist, Equality 7-2521, is a brilliant young man who yearns to be a scientist, but who is commanded to be a Street Sweeper by a government that fears his independence of mind. Equality 7-2521's struggle to think, live and love on his own terms forms the core plot of 'Anthem'. The book traces the development of events in the form of diary entries by Equality 7-2521 as he discovers the "Unspeakable Word" and the significance of freedom and individualism.

What I Liked

One of the most striking features of the novel is the absence of singular personal pronouns such as "I" and the use of first person plural "we". This language is often confusing, but must be clear if the book's meaning is to be cleared. The state's main weapon against individuality and free thinking is not brute force but the effective form of thought control it practices. The deluded citizens have only one self-concept available to them — splintered fragments of the group. Everyone thinks of themselves as merely nameless, faceless, individuality-less chunks of an amorphous mass. Even under such a dictatorship, few people retain their individuality because it is the nature of humans to think.

Another interesting aspect of the book is Ayn Rand's philosophy that a communist state controlled society will regress into a scientific and industrial collapse, much like the Dark Age after the fall of Rome. This can be contrasted to George Orwell's society in his novel "1984" where a totalitarian state leads to scientific and technological advance. On the other hand, 'Anthem' shows that a prohibition of freedom results in a decline into primitive subsistence. Rand argues that scientific development is the product of a free and rational mind which is oppressed in an authoritative government.

Why You Should Read it

Ayn Rand lays down the fundamentals of her philosophy of Objectivism in a crisp, short novella. This book is a good gateway to Rand's lengthier works such as 'Fountainhead' and 'Atlas Shrugged' where her philosophies are more developed. The author fiercely advocates the horrors of a communist state and the importance of individualism and the enormous creative and productive potential of an independent mind while flatly rejecting the concept of altruism.



"At first, man was enslaved by the gods. But he broke their chains. Then he was enslaved by the kings. But he broke their chains. He was enslaved by his birth, by his kin, by his race. But he broke their chains. He declared to all his brothers that a man has rights which neither god nor king nor other men can take away from him, no matter what their number, for his is the right of man, and there is no right on earth above this right. And he stood on the threshold of freedom for which the blood of the centuries behind him had been spilled."

Case Analysis: Trials in Literature

by Aryan Mundada, Naivedya Amarnani, Keerthna M

Court scenes and criminal trials in books and novels have enraptured readers for a long time. Their depiction in books as well as in theatre or movies, when executed well, can leave us wanting more. Be it Jack Nicholson's famous testimony in 'A Few Good Men' (film by Rob Reiner), the 'OJ Simpson Trial' (real incident adapted twice on reel), or the trial in 'To Kill a Mockingbird' (novel by Harper Lee); all of these possess the power to become etched in our brains. In this article, we attempt to analyse and compare few such trials, actual and fictional, to understand better why we are so drawn towards them and how pivotal they are to the plot.

1) A Prisoner of Birth by Jeffrey Archer

"I have discovered with advancing years that few things are entirely black or white, but more often different shades of grey."

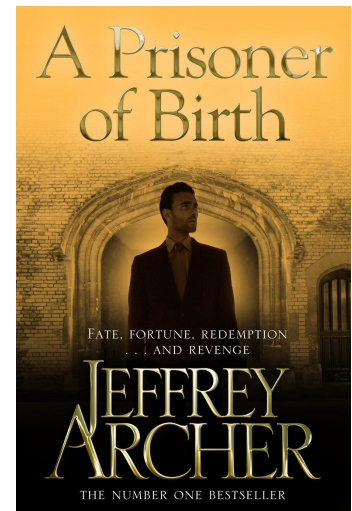
Build-up to the Trial

Danny Cartwright was wrongfully convicted of his friend's murder. The actual perpetrators of the crime, being wealthy, successful, and well-reputed, got away by pinning the blame on him. The book revolves around Danny, his life in prison, and how he manages to escape a highly secured prison only to get caught again in a couple of years. He is then tried on the counts of escaping from prison, identity theft, and fraud.

Role of the Trial

Although the trial is not very long and only serves as a climax of the novel, the trial scene has been written beautifully, with great attention to detail. It keeps you engaged for the entire duration of the trial as you are thoroughly invested in the main character's ultimate fate and are hoping he gets justice.

Through the writing, the author also subtly casts aspersions on the classism prevalent in the society that, in a way, leads a person to become 'a prisoner of birth'.



Writing Style

Jeffrey Archer employs simple vocabulary with certain technical law terms, making the trial seem more authentic and believable. He describes the scene-setting and how each person feels in a way that makes you feel like you're sitting in the courtroom. In the course of the trial, certain lines spoken by some characters carry so much meaning and truth that they stay with you long after you've finished reading the book.

Law and the Lawyers

The trial is an engaging affair and a page-turner without a doubt. The lawyers' characters seem to be well-researched, and their dialogues reflect an excellent knowledge of the law on the author's part. The defence lawyer traps and catches witnesses in a lie multiple times, making it an entertaining read. It also points to the author's tremendous ability at writing a court scene, which is both exciting and legally sound. The intermittent banter between the judge and a senior defence lawyer provides a certain comic element to the scene. However, certain aspects of the trial do seem unrealistic and over-dramatized, like the constant jibes of a particular defence attorney and little resistance from the prosecution during the defence's case. The trial ends abruptly, and you wish that it'd have been a more central theme of the novel.

2) The Rainmaker by John Grisham

"I'm alone and outgunned, scared and inexperienced, but I'm right."

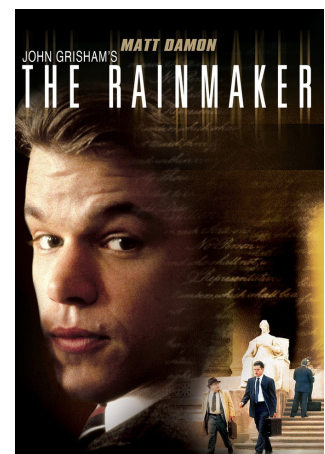
Build-Up to the Trial

This story revolves around Rudy Baylor, who is about to graduate from Memphis State Law School and is getting accustomed to practising law in the real world compared to an ideal classroom situation. He loses the job he was promised in a big law firm due to no fault of his and has to compromise by working with a less than the best lawyer J. Lyman Stone, a.k.a, Bruiser. Bruiser is the epitome of ruthless practicality, and Rudy is torn between making a living by any means and being the paragon of lawyerly virtue.

The centre of the story is the legal case of Dot and Buddy Black, whose son Donny has leukaemia and a twin who can be a donor. The conflict arises in the form of the refusal of the insurance company Great Benefit to cover this procedure. And then enters Rudy, to fight this case. Great Benefit hires the law firm which had previously unethically terminated Rudy's employment. This becomes a fight between the righteous and everyone who had ever wronged him or his clients.

The Trial

To no reader's surprise, he accumulates enough evidence to get the court to make Great Benefits pay settlement money. Further, it is said in the end that this case triggered many such lawsuits and Great Benefit became bankrupt. The only tragic moment is when Donny dies, but this plays a critical role in the court drama. And simultaneously, Rudy's personal life blossoms, and the readers get the promised Happily-ever-after in a new place.



Proximity to Reality

Litigators often investigate all the relevant documents and find evidence that might help understand and defend their case. In this book, Rudy finds documents related to the insurance policy and can find incriminating evidence against the insurance company. So, this is not an unrealistic idea of litigation and the role of a lawyer.

In this book, this one case causes many more lawsuits to be filed, ultimately leading to the closure of the insurance company due to bankruptcy. Most cases, in reality, do not have such far-reaching effects. They are mostly settled without ever going to court or having a full trial. Moreover, the number of cases with such a massive impact are very few, unlike what books would like to tell us.

Overall, this book is realistic when it comes to the nature of a lawyer's work and does not seek to glamorize it. But it does make things look brighter than what it is in reality when resolving the case and its impact.

While trials are an important plot device and are full of action, the real ones are seldom so dramatic. But few cases do stand out and are worth comparing with the fictional ones. So, let us look at arguably the most important trial of the 20th century, the Nuremberg Trials, held after the Allies' victory over the Axial powers in World War 2.

3) The Nuremberg Trials

Described as the biggest trial of the 20th century, Nuremberg Trials were held against the Nazis for war crimes and genocide. A series of 13 trials from 1945 to 1949 ended with a death sentence to 12 and a life sentence for 8 for the death of about 3 percent of the world population and destruction of livelihood for even more.

Build-up to the Trials

The first declaration for the trial was made in April 1940 jointly by the British, French, and Polish government, and the demand only increased with the war. On 1st November 1943, even the US and USSR declared a full warning of a trial. While there was no consensus on the severity initially, by the end of the war, there was supposed blood-thirst in both the superpowers with a plan to execute 50,000 German staff. The trial became certain with the allied victory, but several fundamental decisions were needed before becoming a reality.



The biggest hurdle for the trial was the lack of precedence. While there had been international trials before (American POW trial), conducting one while respecting laws of 4 different nations (Britain, USA, USSR, France) was unprecedented. Historic London Agreement for establishing the International Military Tribunal (IMT) was signed on August 8, 1945. Nuremberg, the host to annual Nazi rallies, was chosen as the trial's site, symbolizing the end of Hitler's Third Reich.

The Trials

The Major War Criminals' Trial began on November 20, 1945, for 24 individuals and 7 organisations. There were several firsts. As the trials were conducted in 4 languages, IBM provided technology and workforce for on-the-spot translations. There were prosecutors and defence attorneys but a tribunal instead of a single Judge. Military, as well as civil officers, could now be tried under these laws. Even the definition of allowed evidence was extended.

The defendants put forth several arguments, including lack of law before the crime(ex post facto laws), partiality wrt trials of allied soldiers' crimes, the crime of institution and not individual, etc. While few of the arguments were valid, the tribunal found all but three defendants guilty. The death sentence was carried out via hanging as the guilty were found not worthy of death by shooting(usual in court-martials). Out of the 12 issued death sentences, one died during an attempt to flee while one other was deemed physically unfit for the hanging.

The growing rift between the four nations led to the remaining trials being held in front of the US military tribunal instead of IMT. These trials included the Doctors Trial(for experimenting on POW), Judges Trial, and several other trials dealing with crimes against humanity. Several received death sentences, although the punishment was reduced later.



Aftermath

While the guilty were proven beyond doubt, the trial faced several controversies. Several criticized the ex post facto laws that were differently used for Allied and Axial soldiers. Even the hanging of the guilty was modified to make the person die slowly. Reports said that the rope was shortened to increase death time to 20 minutes with extreme pain.

Nonetheless, these trials paved the way for establishing International Laws, The Geneva Conventions, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Its effects were far-reaching, with even the tribunals for war crimes in Rwanda(1994) using the laws of IMT. Several new crimes were defined, and International Laws for Wars made during Nuremberg Trials continue to operate.

This trial was messy and studying it from an analytical point of view shows that there are no clear boundaries between the good people and the bad people, unlike the literary cases where it is very evident. Another clear difference is the ending of the trial. In the Nuremberg trials, several of the guilty escape scot-free and some of the punished are in the grey areas of where survival of the self ends and apathy for humanity begins. This seldom happens in a work of fiction where, in most cases, a conscious attempt is made to give a non-ambiguous ending and all the “bad guys” receive justice and we know who they are. On the whole, the real world is messy and complex and real-life court dramas reflect this.

WORD GAMES

Access answer key at bit.ly/wordgamesans, but only after an earnest attempt.

Pyramids

Fill the blanks as per the clues. Add or remove a letter from the previous as required. Same order is not necessary.

_ control this to find
 _ _ privacy is a joke
 _ _ _ grand
 _ _ _ _ drive round and round on mountain
 roads to achieve this
 _ _ _ _ _ Priyanka's best? (arguably)
 _ _ _ _ _ imagine if IITK had textile engineering
 _ _ _ _ _ don't let this dog bite you
 _ _ _ _ I would have abs if not for these
 _ _ _ forbid
 _ _ pokemon go is an example of this tech
 _ between T and E

_ who's reading this?
 _ _ CSE buzzword
 _ _ _ afflict
 _ _ _ _ pants on fire
 _ _ _ _ _ witness gavel banging here
 _ _ _ _ _ selling consumer goods
 _ _ _ _ _ vigilant
 _ _ _ _ this pyramid is brilliant, superb
 and an absolute 10/10
 _ _ _ _ _ pied piper's genocide
 _ _ _ retweet
 _ british people drank the

Spoonerisms

A spoonerism is an error in speech in which corresponding consonants, vowels, or morphemes are switched between two words in a phrase. E.g. : blushing crow – crushing blow

In the following, the brackets contain the meaning of the spoonerism of the phrase that's supposed to fit the blanks in the sentence. (Blank size is not indicative of the answer)

E.g. : It's been three days you smelly idiot. You need to _____ a _____.! (jiggle a tall structure)

Ans: take a shower – shake a tower

1. I know that you are tired of my constant chatter, but don't you try to _____ up! (a popular instant meal)
2. Why is he asking my CPI? I haven't seen a more _____ fellow than him. (a Japanese Tech MNC)
3. Congrats for qualifying to IIT Kanpur! By the way, apni _____. (financial resources used to back a person)
4. This journey has come to an end and I must bid everyone farewell. _____! (crucial organ for vision)
5. It's tough reconciling them; they had a _____ after hurling abuses at each other. (the ability to predict what will happen)
6. It is basic courtesy to walk on the _____ instead of straying out on the road. (broad piece of garment)
7. It's so tough to believe my friend. He's just a _____ of _____. (deficiency of a baked dish)
8. Guess what these duplicate cards are with me? All of them are _____ of _____. (despising a certain form of expression or creativity)

Tom Swifties

A Tom Swifty is a phrase in which a quoted sentence is linked by a pun to the manner in which it is attributed. We'll give you an appropriate synonym in the brackets. Examples:

"The weekly load has become much larger," said Tom with a _____. (sigh)

Ans: groan (pun on **grown**, or becoming larger)

"I have a delivery of shoes for the prisoners," said Tom _____. (comfort)

Ans: consoling (con, or prisoner + shoe sole)

1. "Now that you've broken up with me, leave fast! Stop slogging, for god's sake!", Tom _____. (burst)
2. "Your posture and attitude is perfect, why don't you become a professional model?", Tom _____. (suggest)
3. "Mom, Joe knocked over the glass with the expensive wine!", Tom _____. (divulge)
4. "I am a well-mannered man from the capital of India", said Tom _____. (meticulous)

Palindromic Sentences

A Palindromic sentence is a sentence which would have the same sequence of letters if reversed. We'll give you a sentence very similar to a palindromic sentence in terms of structure and meaning. Find the palindrome! For help, we've provided the length of words in the palindrome in the brackets. For example:

Label no single male. (4,3,3,3)

Ans: Name not one man.

1. Did I see an automobile or a small carnivorous animal? (3,2,1,3,2,1,3,1,3)
2. Gross rodent in a clean wildlife park. (4,3,2,1,8,4)
3. So unpleasant, I concealed a shoe. (3,3,1,3,1,4)
4. Won't couples rebel currently? (4,6,6,3)

What's the Good Word?

The question consists of three words: a synonym, an antonym and an anagram (not necessarily in the same order) of the word that is the answer. Figure out which is which! For example:

ranged, peril, safety

Ans: Danger - anagram of ranged, synonym of peril and antonym of safety

1. misaligned, pseudo, correct
2. overstretched, downplayed, desserts
3. discrete, alerted, parallel
4. desperation, praised, optimistic
5. inserted, occupant, visitor

Switch One, Get One

The question will consist of a sentence with two blanks. The answers of the two blanks would have the same letters, except for one. Try to make pairs and see what fits in the sentence semantically. For example:

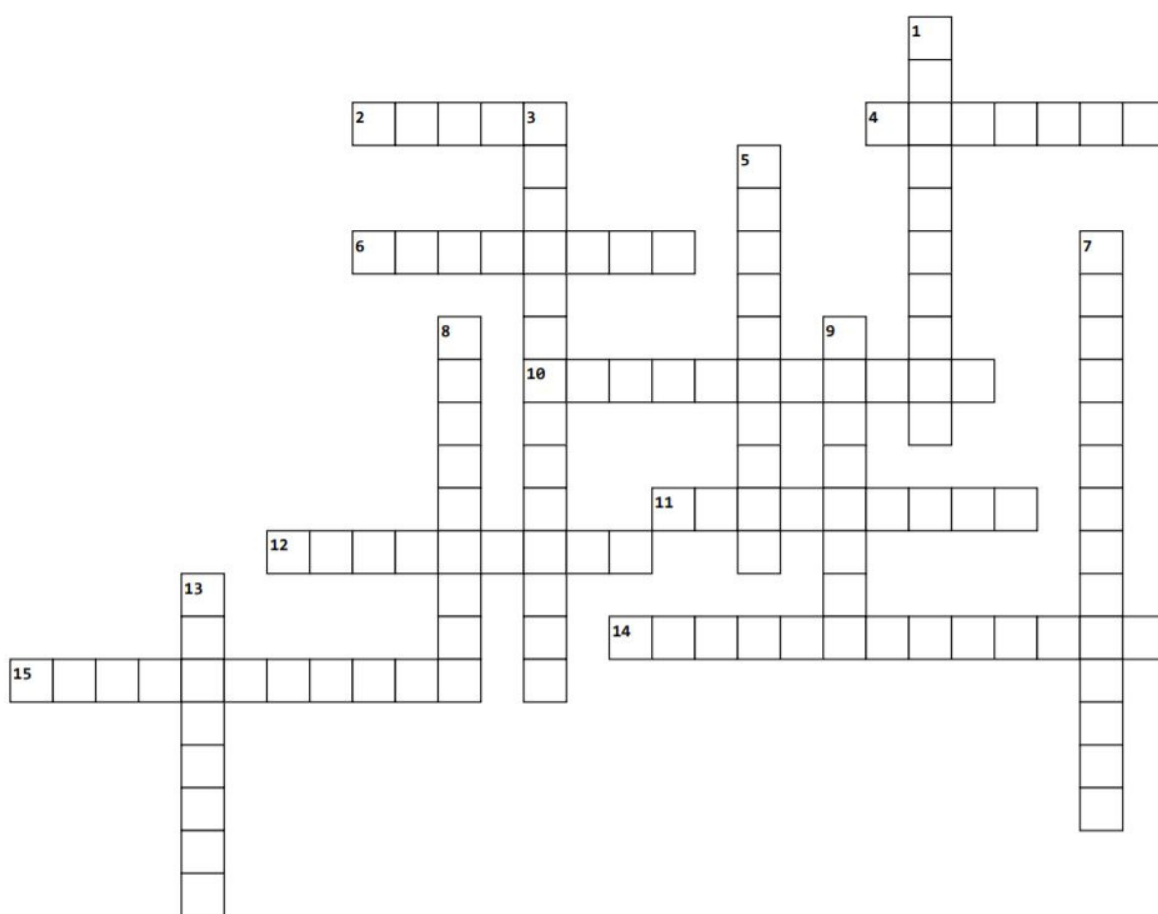
You're lucky the bullet didn't do anything but _____ your cheek. Otherwise you would have been lying in your _____.

Ans: graze, grave

1. It was ten at _____, when I told him not to take the street on his _____.
2. Do you have any idea what the _____ profession of your father was? He worked as a _____ for ten years!
3. If you do not want a _____ job in your department, then learn how to _____ now.
4. You're fired! You cannot give a _____ to a small kid, and then _____ him for ending up in the hospital!
5. It was a weird house-warming _____. They handed us sticks with pointy ends and asked us to _____.

CROSSWORD

Theme - Film adaptations of novels



Across

2. Being Percy Jackson, Hermione Granger, The Flash, or Ant Man, all have their _____. (5)
4. This Tom-Hanks starrer should invite no inference to an intra-college sports competition. (7)
6. still a better love story than--, oh wait. (8)
10. Two British, One Irish, One Australian playing Four American siblings in the 1800s. (6,5)
11. An average teen comedy (4,5)
12. Underground soap making society (5,4)
14. Lex Luthor dumps Spider-Man for NSYNC and pisses off the Lone Ranger. (6,7)

15. Sharp Sprinter (5,6)

Down

1. A sensible, proud and persuasive author. (4,6)
3. A list of names to win Oskar. (10,4)
5. Wise guys become gangsters (10)
7. 11 hour New Zealand tourism commercial (4,2,3,5)
8. A Facebook profile picture might give you the answer. Not kidding, I'm Sirius.
9. Chasing (amazing) Amy (4,4)
13. Two magicians duel for their reputation (7)