hen vou first start

talking to Amar

Kaushik, it is diffi

cult to imagine this

soft-spoken man as

the director of

movies like Stree,

Munjya and the cur-

rent reigning block

buster Stree 2. You

would imagine him

to direct a gentle romance rather

than a horror comedy. But then,

appearances can be deceptive.

When he gets talking, his tales can

completely captivate you, and

• What are your earliest

My father was a forest ranger.

When he was posted in Arunachal

Pradesh, we used to hire VCRs and

vatch films. We always had elec

tricity outages. So, we used to fin-

ish one film in three days depend-

ing on the electricity. So, when I

would watch the movie, it would

stay with me for all the time. I

remember watching movies like

Khoon Bhari Mang, Maine Pyaar

Kiva, and all those Hindi classical

So, did your time there

Yes, my movie *Bhediya* has a lot of

influence from that part because I

have lived near jungles and

watched my father. At that time.

he had to battle a lot of smuggling

of wood and trees. So, I did use a

lot of those memories in *Bhediya*.

What about Stree and

These movies have been inspired

movies come from?

Munjya? Where did those

you have made so far?

influence the movies that

memories of your child

such a great storyteller.

Some excerpts:

then you realize what makes him

ends. People are bringing it up on the internet that

there's a British Army offi-

cer in Lansdowne whose

head was chopped off and

he roams around as a headless ghost. Did you do any

No, not at all. In the film when

Chanderi Puran is being narrated

by Rudra Bhaiya, it was said that

Stree came back and chopped off

the head of the person who mur-

dered her. So, when he comes back.

his whole body can't come with his

head. His head will have to be

shown as separated from the body.

Any scary incidents on your

Yeah, a little bit. Whenever we go

for a shoot, we go to locations

where there are spooky locations.

Because it makes our work easier.

look for spooky locations. So,

when the actors reach there, they

get to know the stories of the place

and obviously, they are scared and

when they shoot the scene, they

look scared. So, half of the work is

You didn't get scared while

Yeah, but that's why I made the

my audience should always be

engrossed in the movie completely

because I get irritated when some-

one is looking at their mobile in

the middle of the movie.

To be continued...

making the film?

intentionally ask the team to

anything happen?

film set while filming? Did

research on this?

#TEACHER'S DAY SPECIAL

Young authors weaving their own stories

Teaching since 2009, Varnika has impacted various lives over different cities. Finding her beat in education and shaping the lives of students, teachers' day for her is one where the children, whom she has taught, have learned to imagine and create.

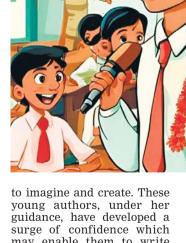




and one child can change the world. With this very intent, an English language teacher Varnika Agarwal has taught students how to weave stories. On Teacher's day, her gift to her students and herself was the stories, that they've written, come to life through the form of physical books by each of them. Aarush .Leisha Manika, Yuvaan, Avaan. Varidhi, Ishaya, Amairaa, Kashvi, Aarika. Aadva. Aaarav. Shiven and Shivang have seen their first book come into light. They've learned the process of writing, over the course of time, after several baby steps. After multiple drafts and mind maps, they weaved their stories on different settings, striking a chord with a vast

Teaching since 2009, Varnika has impacted various lives over different cities. Finding her beat in education and Surely but slowly, more readshaping the lives of students. teachers' day for her is one ers and voung writers are leaving a little sparkle wherwhere the children, whom she has taught, have learned ever they go.





Amar Kaushik on the sets of Stree 2.

Spooked out and Laughing too!

This is what my agenda has been whenever someone watches my movie, they should always remain on the edge. They should be so involved that they don't want to miss any dialogues. So, I try to pace the movie in such a way that my audience should always be engrossed in the movie completely because I get irritated when someone is looking at their mobile in the middle of the movie.

(a lot) from Kanpur, where I did

my college. Things like friendship

of friends, the small town environ-

ment, how friends keep talking for

hours about the same thing, how

in every group, there is a person

who gives gyan, how every little

Let us talk about the Stree

movies. In the first one, the

Stree abducts the men and

in the second one, the

women are being abducted.

How did you come about the

idea for the second one?

This was the demand of the script.

In the first one, Stree has left, so

what was next? Niren Bhatt, the

writer, and I had a lot of discus

sions. In the first part, we already

had established the back story of

why Stree was killed and how she

comes back to exact vengeance

from those who killed her. So, we

decided to bring back the charac

ter who had killed her, and whom

she had killed in return by chop-

ping off his head. So, we got this

character called Sarkata. He was

ed by Stree, but in the second part,

when the girls were disappearing,

no one thought that someone was

someone who could not handle

modern women and believes

that women should be sub-

So, he comes back

jugated and enslaved.

as a ghost and starts

abducting those

their

thinking.

takes time

realize

thing is blown into a big thing.



#STREE STRIKES AGAIN

most movies, we see that once the

ghost gets into the body, you just

see the other person and not the

ghost. I wanted to see both of

his body. So, that was something

So, how do you create bal-

When it comes to horror come

dies, we are very clear that if this

is horror, then, we should treat

this as a proper horror sequence.

We should not buffoon this. We

should go full horror in those

things. And people should feel

that. And then, comedy should

come very organically from that

scene. It's a very difficult thing.

Actually, while doing such scenes

of horror, one has to be serious.

And then, you also have to be

sets. For example, in the case of

horror, no one should laugh or

between that sequence where

humour comes from. For example,

let's say everyone is quiet in a

scene and then someone will sud-

denly say 'Bhago' and his way of

running will be very funny. Or

maybe, they are running and

someone has said something and

the other person reacts to it,

which can be very funny and then

they realize that they are being

pursued by the ghost and they

start running again. So, it's these

little things that strike a balance

between horror and comedy. So.

first, you need to get it down on paper and then handle all the

sequences on a scene-by-scene

the most difficult things to

aware of the kind of mood on the

ance to enhance your hor-

ror elements without over-

shadowing the comedy

we experimented in VFX.

parts?

them, even though, she entered



Amar Kaushik with Varun Dhawan, Rajkummar Rao and Ayushmann Khurrana.

and

abducting them. So, our film starts from that point where we see that *Sarkata* has captured this girl, and taken her to his realm by breaking the wall of her house in the process. It is then, everyone realizes, that the girls are not running away but they are being abducted. And that's how the story started.

women who were modern We then started developintegratstories townspeople to that tried to figure someone is abductout who would resing the girls. Initially, cue these women and who Shraddha Kapoor's everyone thinks that since the girls were modcharacter was. Every ern, they were simply runanswer came after that. ning away in pursuit of better • The VFX in Stree 2 are opportunities. The irony was that even better than the first in the first part, when the boys were disappearing, everyone knew that they were being abduct-

part. How did that happen? We used to see a lot of foreign movies with such amazing effects and often get frustrated about why can't we do it in Indian cinema. These effects demand a lot of noney, and obviously, one doesn't have that much money because the collections are not that great. So, you need to be smart enough to invest your energy and money in small sequences and show parts of the entity. Sometimes, you show the head, and sometimes, you show the hand or the leg in small sequences throughout the movie. to create the mystery and so that vou can spend more money on making the climax grand. Yes, it has been a gradual learning process, and now, we have an excellent VFX team. For each scene, we had a lot of discussions. For example, in the scene where Shraddha Kapoor gets into the oody of Rajkummar Rao, I used the concept of Ardnarishwar, but I wanted to do it differently. In

go by my instinct. I keep looking at my script and monitor. And the scenes are shot quite organically. One character says something and the other one replies. So, you have to take shots with three different cameras. But then, the magic also lies in editing. How you will cut the scene, how you will edit it out, where you have to stop the punch, where you have to make the music stick...

laugh or not. I go by my instinct. I keep looking at my script and monitor. And the scenes are shot quite organi cally. One character says something and the other one replies. So, you have to take shots with three different cameras. But then, the magic also lies in editing. How you will cut the scene, how will edit it out. where you

vou have to make the music stick, where you need silence, all those things add to that horror. If you're just standing and saying the lines, but the reaction isn't correct, or the music isn't correct, or the situation isn't corsmile. Then, I put something in rect, or the camera angle isn't correct, then, it doesn't work. But when everything comes together. obviously, you need the best of the actors to do comedy. The way they react to the dialogue, they have to keep on repeating every time. For example, if there are five takes or ten takes, they have to keep on repeating the same energy, the same joke in the same manner. So, you have to have very great actors to do comedy. And then, there are some other aspects like the music, how to sound, how to edit. So, when the public sees all of this. they enjoy it. That's interesting. Because vou sav a joke, so vou have to say it once and laugh. How do you make them laugh again? • Laughter is probably one of How do you do this, and then, you have to ask yourself, 'yes, this will

do. While shooting, do you work, this won't work.' Ultimately have a measure of how depends on the director's instinct. would the final scene be? When you do a movie or an Whether the intended artwork, it's like your own humour will make people child. Don't you get biased

mouth. So, the actor has to be very comfortable while saying that line. You need to understand every ioke's germ. Why is this joke coming out? Sometimes what happens is, vou've written it well, but when you say it, it doesn't work. Then you need to, as a director, you change a few things, change a few lines, and then change the mood, change the lines and the way it is to be said. Like how to say it. This isn't working, let's say this. Then, you develop by gelling up with the actors, that this isn't working, let's do something more. And then, they give you a character-related

You've had the same actors for the two movies. Have the actors also helped vou by evolving their characters? For example, there's Shraddha Kapoor, or there's Rajkummar Rao. He probably knows more about Vicky because he's lived

towards it? Like how do you

develop an objective view?

One understands these things.

actor is not comfortable while say-

ing that line. It all depends on how

that line is coming out of his

movie. To exorcise my fear! it. So, does that Normally, in every movie, help the directhere is a point when people see their mobile phones because the sequences get repetitive. How did you ensure that the audience remain interested? This is what my agenda has been actors, like Vicky whenever someone watches my and Jana, they movie, they should always remain know their characon the edge. They should be so ters. So, it is very easy involved that they don't want to miss any dialogues. So, I try to for them to just come and pace the movie in such a way that start doing the same thing.

ter. And they've lived the characters for the last five years. They know that character very well. But after that you have to stop them from overdoing anything because there is a chance of that too.

Get into the skin of the charac-



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

#READING

Chanda Mama

Here are some of the best books about the moon for those interested in all aspects of our nearest neighbour

played a central role in human history and culture, unsurprisingly so. impacts the tides, and the changing phases of the moon have been used to mark time since the earliest days of human history, providing us with a natural calendar before we had the ability to

Scientists and astronomers from various cultures have focused on the moon, calculating its age and trajectory, and positing theories and writing books about the moon and where it might have come from, long before the space race allowed us to reach the surface of the moon itself.

The beauty of the moon has also made it a frequently-referenced figure in legends, literature and songs. A huge number of cultures have made the moon a religious focus, develop-

legends around this celestial object. Hundreds of songs include the moon in their lyrics, and poets and novelists often create moon-based metaphors in their work.

V dess, as the moon was so central to historic human life, often providing the most reliable calendar.

moon goddess Chang'e, following her daughter Xingyin, as she infiltrates the Celestial Kingdom in order to find her exiled mother.

. Aderin-Pocock, renowned astronomer and presenter of the BBC's famous show The Sky at Night, has always loved studying the moon. In The Book of the Moon, she introduces readers to many dif-

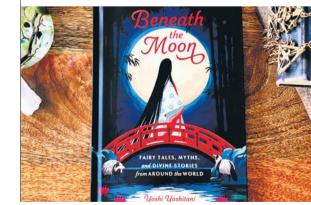
The Moon: A Celebration of our Celestial Neighbour

By: Royal Observatory Greenwich and Collins Astronomy

the science and social impact of our orbiting neighbour, *The Moon* was produced by Royal Observatory Greenwich to mark the 50th

astronomers have observed the moon over the centuries, and the events that led to the first expedi-

will also undoubtedly find new information and trivia in its pages. It looks at myth, fiction, and the impact of the moon on our everyday lives, as well as the science behind



moon has played such an important role in human history and culture that it's unsurprising that it has been eatured in so many legends and stories from across the world. In Beneath the Moon, Yoshi Yoshitani retells myths from across the globe, including sto-

calculate time ourselves

ing stories of moon gods or creating

Our fascination with the moon has continued into the present day, with stargazers often turning their telescopes on its surface, and people returning to the lunar calendar as a way to reconnect with nature. Here, are some of the best books about the moon for those interested in all aspects of our nearest neighbour.

The Book of the Moon

ferent aspects of moon study,

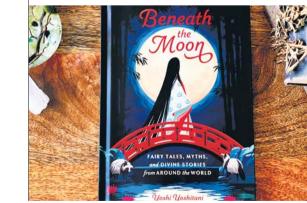
↑ n excellent overview of the anniversary of the Moon Landing

tion to the moon.

beautifully-illustrated book A about our history and cultural relationship with the moon, Hannah Pang's *The Moon* is a perfect guide to lunar studies for beginners, although, seasoned moon-watchers

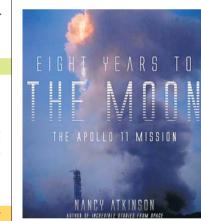
our history with the moon.

Beneath the Moon: Fairy Tales, Myths, and Divine Stories from Around the World



ries about moon gods

Eight Years to the Moon: The History of the Apollo Missions



early everyone knows a little of the story of the 1969 Moon Landing but while the names of the astronauts and the first words spoken on the moon are common knowledge, the long journey to get there is less well-known. Eight Years to the Moon contains stories from many of the background figures such as engineers and other scientists who worked on getting the Apollo astronauts safely to their

The Quiet Moon By: Kevin Parr

umanity's relationship with \square the moon doesn't always mean venturing into space. The moon has also had a huge impact on our earthbound lives. In The Quiet Moon Kevin Parr uses a focus on the moon as a framework for exploring a year of engaging with nature, working from a lunar calendar and drawing on Celtic history.

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

THE WALL



BABY BLUES



ZITS



VOLUNTEER FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD





Daughter of the Moon Goddess which will appeal to amateur and seasoned sky-watchers alike. The Book of the Moon looks at the history of humanity's relationship with the moon, the moon's topography, and the potential future of