

## #NORSE CULTURE

### A Historic Discovery in Norway

World's Oldest Runestone May Have Been Signed by a Woman.



Archaeologists have made a groundbreaking discovery that could reshape our understanding of ancient inscriptions, the world's oldest known runestone may have been carved by a woman. Unearthed in Norway, the

nearly 2,000-year-old stone features intricate carvings that predate previous findings by several centuries. This remarkable artifact not only pushes back the timeline of runic writing but also raises fascinating questions about gender roles in early Scandinavian societies.

### Challenging Traditional Assumptions

Traditionally, runestones have been attributed to male carvers, warriors, or tribal leaders. However, researchers analyzing the inscriptions suggest that the delicate and precise nature of the carvings could indicate a female hand. If confirmed, this discovery challenges

long-standing assumptions about literacy and artistic expression in the ancient Norse world. The possibility that women played a more active role in early written communication could redefine historical narratives about gender dynamics in ancient societies.

### The Svingerud Runestone: A Closer Look

The stone, named the Svingerud Runestone, contains a series of inscriptions that include what appears to be a signature or personal mark. Linguists and historians are still working to decipher the full meaning of

the text, but early interpretations suggest that it may have been a dedication or memorial. The inscriptions offer insight into how early Scandinavian communities may have recorded important events or honored their loved ones.

### Women and Early Literacy

If a woman indeed inscribed this runestone, it would add a new layer of complexity to our understanding of ancient Norse culture, literacy, and social dynamics. Historically, literacy in early Scandinavian societies was believed to be restricted to a

select few, mainly men of high social standing. However, this discovery suggests that women may have also had access to and proficiency in writing systems, highlighting their potential role in the creation and preservation of history.

### What's Next for Research?

Further studies and technological analyses will be required to confirm the carver's identity but for now, this runestone stands as a testament to the possibility that women played a more significant role in early written communication than previously believed. Experts will continue using advanced imaging

techniques and linguistic analysis to uncover more details about the text and its origins. As researchers continue to decode its secrets, the Svingerud Runestone may redefine history in more ways than one, shedding light on the literacy, artistry, and societal contributions of women in ancient Scandinavia.



# The Evolution of Stardom



"As stardom evolves, so does the way fans connect with their idols. From handwritten letters and secret fan clubs to social media interactions and live spectacles like IIFA, the relationship between stars and their admirers has transformed, but does greater access mean deeper connection, or has the magic of stardom faded in the digital age?"



Shailaza Singh  
Published Author,  
Poet and a YouTuber

## When Did the Word 'Fan' First Appear?

The word 'fan' is derived from 'fanatic,' which originally had religious connotations, referring to someone with intense, almost obsessive devotion. It was first applied to sports enthusiasts in the late 19th century, and soon found its way into the entertainment industry, where moviegoers, captivated by silent film stars, were labelled 'fans.' One of

Raj Kapoor and Madhubala were considered larger-than-life figures, often worshipped like deities. Fan clubs were formed in secrecy, love letters were written in blood, and fans waited outside film studios for a mere glimpse of their idols. Across the globe, Hollywood's silent-era stars like Charlie Chaplin and Mary Pickford saw similar levels of devotion, with fans lining up for hours just to watch their films on the big screen. The mystique was real, stars were distant, unapproachable, and their aura was built by studios that controlled their image carefully.

the earliest recorded uses of 'fan' in a cinematic context was in the 1920s, when Charlie Chaplin and Douglas Fairbanks had massive followings. In India, the first Bollywood 'fans' emerged around the 1930s and 1940s, as the film industry grew, and actors like K.L. Saigal and Devika Rani began gathering loyal admirers.

## What is a Fan? What Do They Do, and Why?

A fan is someone who emotionally invests in a public figure or an art form, deriving joy, inspiration, and identity from it. But what do fans actually do? The answer varies. Some collect memorabilia, write letters, run fan pages, attend live events, create art, and defend their idols fiercely on social media. Others simply admire from afar, holding onto the emotional connection that a film,

a performance, or a personality brings into their lives. The reason fans exist is rooted in human nature, the desire to belong, to connect, and to dream. A star represents something larger than life, an aspiration, a guiding light, or simply a presence that brings joy in difficult times. Historically, fans have played a significant role in an artist's career, dictating their success and longevity.

## From Letters to the Digital Age: How Fan Culture Evolved

As media evolved, so did fandom. The advent of radio and magazines brought Bollywood stars closer to their audiences. Handwritten letters turned into fan clubs, radio shows began airing star interviews, and movie magazines like Stardust and Filmfare turned actors into household names. Fans began collecting posters, keeping track of gossip columns, and even making annual visits to Mumbai in the hope of meeting their favourite stars. The 1990s

brought a shift, television interviews, Bollywood award shows, and eventually, the rise of the International Indian Film Academy Awards (IIFA) changed the game. IIFA, with its grand international stage, gave fans a new way to see their stars up close. No longer just distant figures on a screen, celebrities now performed in front of thousands, waved to screaming fans at the green carpet, and participated in meet-and-greets that made the dream of proximity real.



## #IIFA



### IIFA and the Era of Global Stardom

The first IIFA in 2000, held in London, was a landmark event in the evolution of Bollywood fandom. For the first time, Indian cinema was celebrated on an international platform, and the event

brought Bollywood's biggest names closer to their global audience. From Amitabh Bachchan walking through a sea of fans in London to Shah Rukh Khan being mobbed in Dubai, IIFA became a bridge

between Bollywood and its international fanbase. But while IIFA kept the glamour alive, something was shifting, the internet was changing how fans interacted with their idols.

### Social Media and the Death of Mystique

With the rise of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, the fan-star relationship transformed entirely. No longer waiting months for a Filmfare interview or a television appearance, fans now had direct access to their favourite celebrities' lives. A simple tweet could be liked by a superstar, an Instagram story could show an actor's behind-the-scenes life, and YouTube vlogs brought the audience into their personal spaces.

### Memorable Fan Moments Over the Years

Some of the most iconic interactions between stars and fans have happened at IIFA over the years.

**Shah Rukh Khan in Toronto (2011):** When SRK took the mic and spoke directly to his fans outside the stadium, saying, "You made me who I am," the crowd erupted. Fans had travelled across the globe to see him, proving that even in a digital world, real-life devotion still exists.

**Amitabh Bachchan's Bangkok Surprise (2008):** Big B, known for valuing his fans, broke protocol to meet a young paraplegic fan, who had travelled miles just to see him. The moment became a testament to the emotional bond between celebrities and their admirers.

**Ranveer Singh's Dance with a Street Performer (2017):** In New York, Ranveer Singh spotted a street performer, dancing to a Bollywood song, outside the IIFA venue. Instead of just waving, he jumped in, danced with the fan, and made it an unforgettable moment.



**The Dark Side of Fandom: When Devotion Becomes Obsession** While fandom is often associated with admiration and celebration, it also has a darker side. When admiration turns into obsession, the consequences can be unsettling, even dangerous. Some fans overstep boundaries, refusing to see their idols as individuals with private lives.

### Does IIFA Still Hold the Same Magic?

In an era where every fan can directly interact with their favourite stars online, does an event like IIFA still hold relevance? The answer is yes, but in a different way.

**A Live Experience Like No Other:** Despite the digital age, nothing beats the excitement of seeing a star live, performing on stage, or winning an award in person. The energy, the grandeur, and the shared excitement of thousands of

fans still make IIFA a spectacle to witness.

**The Green Carpet Phenomenon:** Unlike virtual interactions, where responses can be controlled, IIFA's green carpet moments are raw, real, and unpredictable. Fans still travel across cities and countries to get a glimpse of their favourites.

**The Old vs. The New Fans:** For older generations, IIFA is a continuation of tradition, a place where cinema is celebrated as an event. For younger fans, it's a chance to bridge the digital with the real, to turn likes and retweets into real-life experiences.

## World Wildlife Day

Nature's untamed wonders are always captivating, from the majestic beasts of the savanna to the tiny creatures in your backyard. The World is full of amazing creatures from every possible medium. From the birds of the air to the majestic whales of the sea, wildlife abounds in the most unusual and unexpected places. Wildlife benefits us in many ways and has since time of old. World Wildlife Day is a day to remind us of our responsibilities to our world and the lifeforms we share it with!

## Stalker Incidents and Extreme Fan Behaviour

**Shah Rukh Khan's Overzealous Admirers:** SRK has had numerous encounters with obsessive fans, from people camping outside Mannat (his residence) for weeks to a fan sneaking into his house pretending to be a staff member.

**Salman Khan's Death Threats:** Over the years, the Bollywood superstar has received several threats from self-proclaimed 'die-hard fans,' who either wished to protect or challenge him.

## The Pressure of Fan Expectations

Fandom often places immense pressure on celebrities to maintain an unrealistic image. Many actors have spoken about the stress of constantly living up to expectations.

**Justin Bieber's Public Breakdown:** The pop star has admitted that intense fan scrutiny, social media pressure, and constant paparazzi intrusion contributed to his mental health struggles.

## What Does It Mean to Be a Fan Today?

Today, fandom is both intimate and overwhelming. While social media brings stars closer, it also makes them more vulnerable. The rise of trolling, cancel culture, and over-expectation from fans has put immense pressure on celebrities. The love

is stronger than ever, but so is the scrutiny. At its core, being a fan is still about connection, admiration, and inspiration. Fans make stars who they are, and in return, stars give them dreams, joy, and a shared sense of belonging.

## When Stars Ignore or Disrespect Their Fans: A Career Downfall

**Katherine Heigl's Public Fallout:** Once a rising star, Heigl's negative comments about the projects she worked on, and an alleged dismissive attitude towards fans, led to her career decline. Many fans felt alienated, and industry insiders noted how her reputation impacted her opportunities.

While fans elevate a star's success, history has shown that ignoring or disrespecting fans can sometimes lead to a career downfall.

## Hollywood Examples

**Sean Young's Infamous Moments:** The actress had a promising start in Hollywood but was often criticized for her erratic behaviour, which included negative interactions with fans and industry members, ultimately affecting her career trajectory.

ing fan events and his refusal to adapt to changing industry norms caused his career to fade.

**Kangana Ranaut's Fan Disconnect:** While undeniably talented, Kangana Ranaut's frequent controversial statements and criticism of Bollywood have created polarizing opinions among fans, leading to mixed reactions at the box office.

## The Future of Fandom and IIFA

While stardom has changed in the digital age, IIFA remains a powerful bridge between celebrities and their fans. It is more than just an awards show, it is a spectacle where fans and stars meet in a shared space of admiration and excitement. It is a celebration of cinema, but more importantly, a celebration of the emotions that films evoke in audiences worldwide.

Through grand performances, heartfelt speeches, and candid moments, IIFA keeps the magic of fandom alive. It is here that fans still wait for hours, still cheer at every glimpse of their idols, and still experience

the thrill of seeing their favourite stars in real life. Even in a world where social media has made celebrities more accessible, the power of a live moment, an eye contact, a genuine connection at IIFA remains unparalleled.

In the end, fandom is not just about watching from afar, it's about feeling a part of something bigger. Whether through a screen or in a stadium, the love for cinema and its stars remains unchanged. And as long as there are stories to tell, IIFA will continue to be the stage where dreams and reality collide.

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## #AROUND-D-WORLD

# World's Best Hiking Trails



Some of the most beautiful scenery in the world can only be reached by foot.

For some nature lovers, the simplicity of lacing up a pair of hiking boots and heading off into remote country holds a strong appeal. The crisp fresh air, the solitude, and the stillness of the landscape are some of the things that motivate hikers to tackle treks and hiking trails around the globe. Some of the most beautiful scenery in the world can only be reached by foot. And while many of the best treks in the world are multi-day journeys, some are day hikes, that can be tackled by anyone in decent physical condition. For inspiration to help plan your next epic adventure, see our list of the best hikes in the world.



**Inca Trail, Peru**  
Descending from the Inca Trail into Machu Picchu at sunrise is one of life's great experiences. Not for the faint of heart, the Inca Trail is a 42-kilometer (26-mile) trek that takes you up over two 13,000-foot passes. The trail follows the route that the ancient Incas took over 650 years ago, and much of the original stonework is still in place. Along the way, you'll pass through two tunnels created by the Incas, the ancient ruin of Winay Wayna, and many waterfalls.



**Everest Base Camp, Nepal**  
Up and down are probably the two best words to describe the Everest Base Camp hike (EBC). This 65-kilometer, one-way trail literally climbs a mountain ridge, then drops down to a river, then climbs another mountain ridge as it makes its way to base camp.

**Samaria Gorge, Greece**  
The Samaria Gorge hike is the best hike on the island of Crete and one of Crete's top attractions. Starting in pine forests, this one-way hike descends through a narrow valley, eventually ending at the Libyan Sea. The hike is just over 16 kilometers in length, and you'll drop over 1,500 meters.

**Annapurna Circuit, Nepal**  
The Annapurna Circuit trail is a 17-day, 205-kilometer, (108-mile) journey through some of the tallest peaks on the planet. The trail starts down in a steamy jungle and ascends well above the tree line. You'll top out at 5,394 meters (17,770 feet) on the Thorong Pass, where the trail is surrounded by a dazzling panorama of mountains, all over 6,096 meters (20,000 feet).

**W Circuit, Chile**  
Located down at the southernmost region of Chile, the W Circuit in Torres Del Paine National Park, is one of the world's most famous hikes. Easily identifiable by the rugged towers of rock and glacial lakes, this rugged and remote region draws hikers from around the world. Improvements in the trail and services over the past few years have made the trail more accessible, you no longer need to

**Milford Track, New Zealand**  
The Milford Track is a 53-kilometer (33-mile) epic trek on New Zealand's South Island, that takes in some of the finest scenery that the country has to offer. Over five days, you'll pass by innumerable waterfalls, including Sutherland Falls, New Zealand's highest. Cold, clear alpine lakes, beautiful meadows, glaciers, and towering mountain peaks take their turn, amazing you, as you stroll along each day.

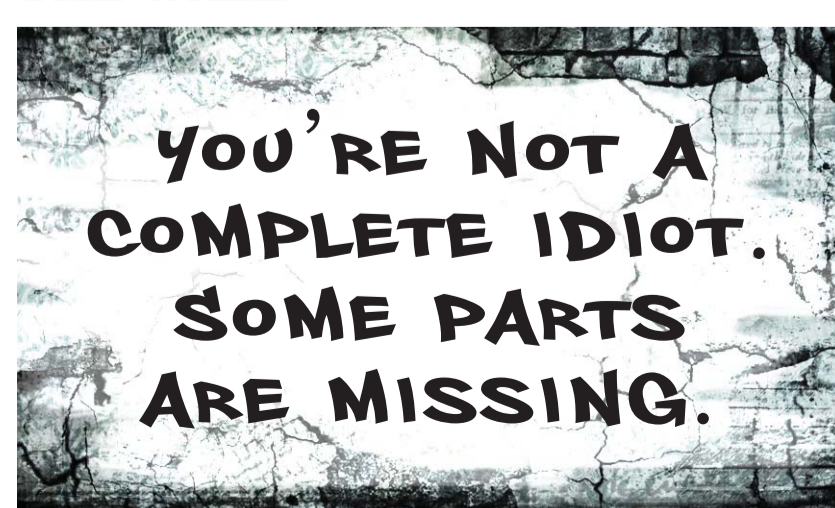
The best way to walk the Cinque Terre hike is to start at Monterosso and end at Riomaggiore. Take your time and stop for a mid-morning cappuccino and biscotti, follow it up with a bit more walking before you stop for a delightful lunch.



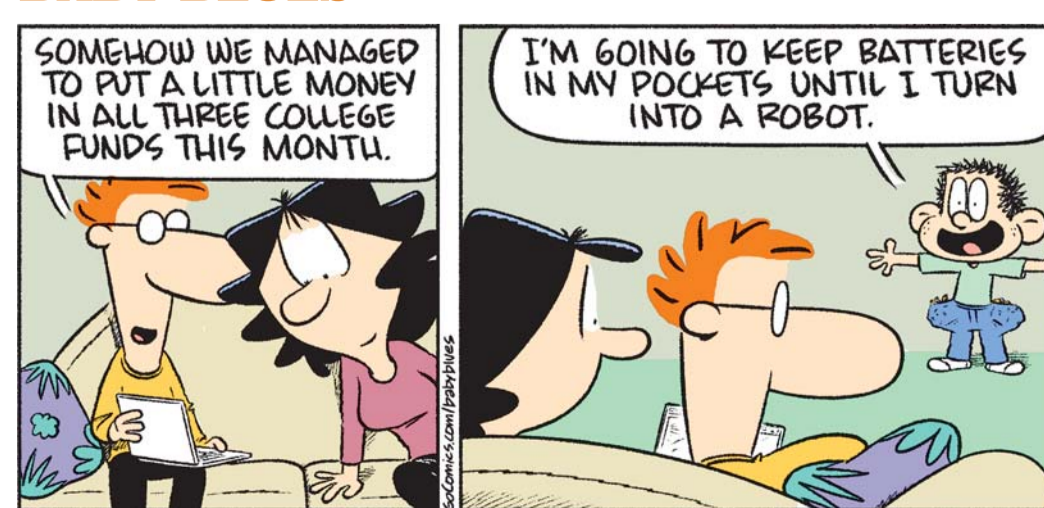
**Cinque Terre Hike, Italy**  
Long regarded as one of the most beautiful hikes in Italy, the Cinque Terre hike is an easy day hike between villages perched on the rugged seashore mountains. Strolling along this ancient route with the sparkling blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea below will make you forget about the effort expended.

**Kilimanjaro, Tanzania**  
Kilimanjaro is one of the most iconic sites in all of Africa, and the hike to the top is on many people's bucket list. In fact, around 30,000 people attempt this hike each year. Depending on the route, your chances of completing the trek are pretty good.

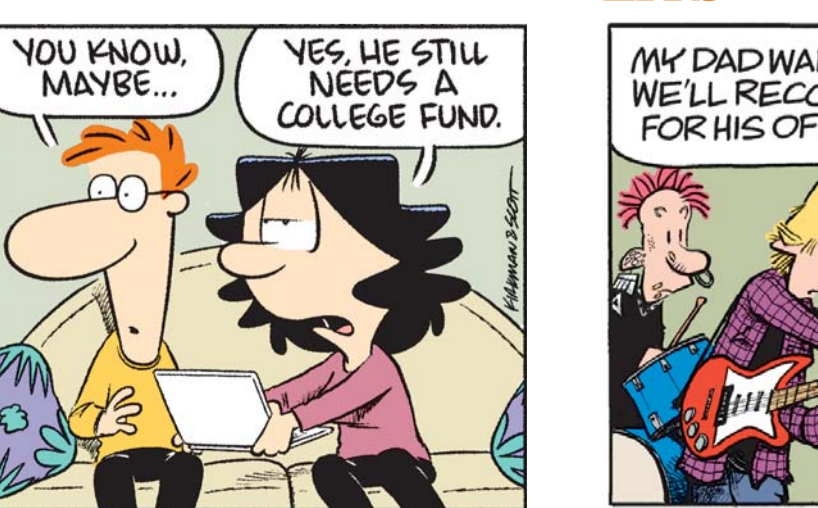
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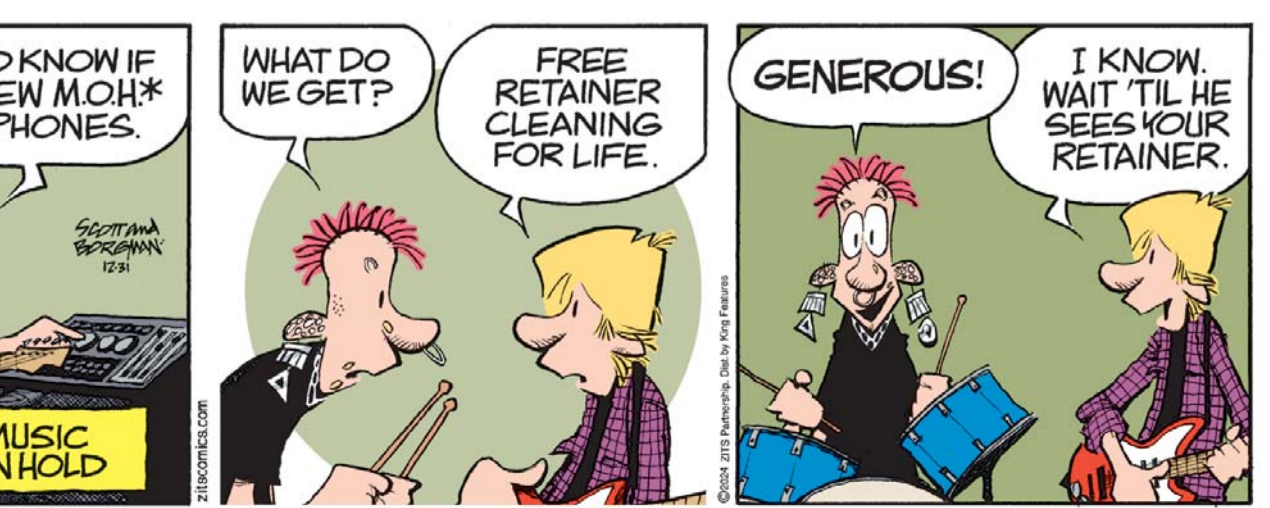
## BABY BLUES



## ZITS



## ZITS



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

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