ARBiT
it happens here...



1971's D.B. Cooper Hijacking

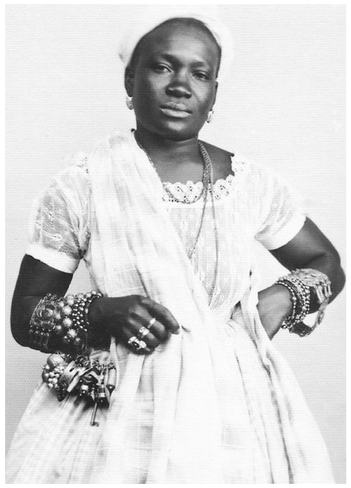
On November 24, 1971, an unidentified man known as D.B. Cooper hijacked a Northwest Orient Airlines flight traveling from Portland to Seattle. Calmly claiming he had a bomb, he demanded $200,000 in cash and four parachutes. After receiving the ransom in Seattle, Cooper ordered the aircraft back into the air towards Mexico. Somewhere over Washington state, he parachuted into the night with the money and disappeared without a trace. Despite one of the longest and most expensive FBI investigations in U.S. history, Cooper's identity and fate remain unsolved, making it one of aviation's greatest mysteries.

राष्ट्रदूत
TUESDAY
24 November 2026
A-B

#SLAVE RICHES

The Silver Pendants That Became A Bank Account

But these ornaments carried cultural and spiritual significance as well. Their individual elements were often chosen for their symbolic meanings



In 19th-century Brazil, jewellery was more than an ornament for many women who had bought their freedom from slavery. It was a symbol of independence, financial security and protection. Among the most remarkable examples were elaborate silver pendant clusters worn by formerly enslaved and freed Black women, some of which could weigh more than a kilogram.

These heavy ornaments were not simply fashion statements. They served a purpose similar to a portable bank account.

Many of these women worked as street vendors, selling food, sweets and other everyday goods. Their businesses allowed them to earn money and gradually build financial independence. However, keeping their savings in cash was not always practical or safe. Instead, they invested their profits in precious metals, particularly silver, transforming their earnings into jewellery that they could wear and carry wherever they went.

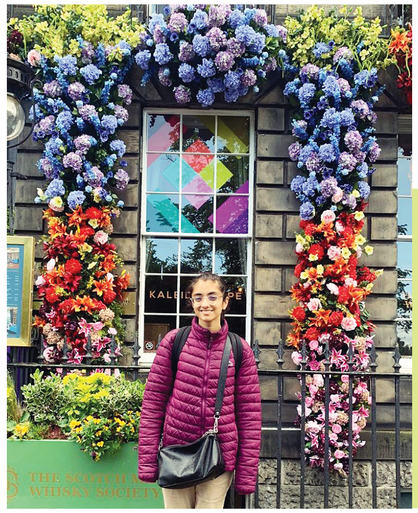
The pendant clusters became a visible record of their accumulated wealth. Each additional piece represented money saved through hard work and business transactions. Unlike cash, silver had material value and could potentially be sold or exchanged when necessary. Wearing their savings also meant keeping their wealth close rather than depending entirely on financial institutions or other people.

But these ornaments carried cultural and spiritual significance as well. Their individual elements were often chosen for their symbolic meanings. The central hand-shaped charm, associated with protection against the evil eye, was believed to ward off misfortune and negative forces. Silver pomegranates, meanwhile, symbolised abundance, fertility and prosperity, attracting hopes of greater wealth.

The combination of these charms turned the jewellery into something far more meaningful than an expensive accessory. It represented a woman's economic achievements while also expressing her beliefs, identity and aspirations.

For formerly enslaved women in Brazil, who had struggled to secure their freedom in a society marked by racial and economic inequality, such jewellery carried a particularly powerful message. They were not merely displaying silver; they were displaying the wealth they had earned and the independence they had fought to achieve. These remarkable pendant clusters reveal how jewellery can function simultaneously as currency, personal protection and a declaration of freedom. What looked like an extravagant arrangement of silver was, in reality, a carefully accumulated fortune worn around the neck.





MCGS - My Home Away From Home

Reflecting now, Mayo taught me curiosity, empathy, and friendship, and shaped me into a confident, grounded individual. From trembling at injections to holding patients' hands with care, I've learned that courage grows step by step, in small acts of persistence. University halls, living with friends and sharing meals remind me of my dorm days at Mayo, where I grew up alongside my classmates.





● Nandani Kumari Rathore

A 19-year-old girl from Jaipur entered the grounds of Mayo College Girls' School full of innocence, curiosity, and a massive fear of needles. I still remember the first day in 2012, carrying my trunk, suitcases, and all my belongings. The first pav bhaji meal, the smell of the red-brick campus after the rain, and the friends I met that day, friends who have since become lifelong companions, remain etched in my memory. My journey at Mayo began as a shy student whose biggest fear in life was needles. I would clutch someone's hand at every injection, convinced I would never get through it. Today, I am a medical student who gives injections, draws blood, and even assists in surgery sometimes, a journey that feels almost surreal.

I study medicine at Queen's University Belfast in Northern Ireland (United Kingdom), a Russell Group university, where 600 applicants vie for just 26 international spots. Placements across my university's teaching hospitals have been nothing short of extraordinary.

Medical school has offered moments that are thrilling, challenging, and profoundly memorable. I've survived ward-round pimping sessions, where doctors fire rapid questions in front of the team, keeping you on your toes. In theatre, a consultant once posed a question just as I was about to answer, only for a junior doctor to prompt me with the reply. The consultant noticed and laughed, saying, "Medical students and junior doctors have a pact!" and the theatre erupted in laughter. In 3rd year, I was placed at Antrim Area Hospital near Coleraine, once the constituency of Lord Mayo. There, a surgeon sparked my love for surgery, introducing me to patients as "a young lady who's a medical student" and always reminding me, "There's no such thing as a bad student."

I've also had the privilege of attending placements at Royal Victoria Hospital, the largest trauma centre in Northern Ireland, and Belfast City Hospital, a major cancer centre. The diversity of cases I've encountered at these teaching hospitals has been remarkable. On one memorable day, a doctor was advising a patient with diabetes about reducing sugar and then confided to me, "I apologise for being the sugar police. I consume a large amount myself." All three of us laughed, a small reminder that medicine is as much about humanity as it is about science.

At one point, during a flight, a passenger had a panic attack. The crew called for a doctor, and my mother nudged me awake. I explained that, as a junior medical student, I could help within my competencies. Kneeling beside the passenger, I offered reassurance, water, and distraction techniques until we landed safely. In that moment, I realised how the bedside skills we learn, communication, empathy, and calm, are vital far beyond the hospital.

Back at Mayo, life was equally rich and lively. Seniors shouting, "Run up to the mess!" could turn casual conversations with friends into full-blown sprints, hearts racing, laughter echoing, and breath caught in excitement. Now, it is precisely that frantic dash I miss most. Midnight birthday celebrations with fudge, campus rounds filled with philosophical debates and dreams, and inter-house competitions fiercer than the Olympics made school life unforgettable. As a proud Samite, the house spirit remains close to my heart. And of course, M for Mayo also stands for Maggi, our ultimate comfort food, even a steaming bowl instantly transports me back to the laughter-filled mess hall.

My journey towards formally pursuing science began in Class 9, when I chose Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics, and Computer Science. Around that time, I visited Oxford while representing Mayo at Oxymun, a turning point that opened my eyes to academic opportunities in the UK across engineering, technology, information science, and medicine. After returning, I shared with my parents my dream of pursuing higher education in the UK, particularly in medicine or computer science engineering. While preparing for ICSE Class 10, I immersed myself in IT quizzes, debates, IPSC competitions, Model United Nations conferences, Round Square events, Power Point competitions, IT festivals across India, GK quizzes, and extempore competitions. Representing MCGS nationally, from Cathedral MUN to Daly College's Surya Uday competition, was invaluable. Interactions with students from The Doon School, Welham's, and visits to RIMC broadened my perspective from AFMC to leading Russell Group universities.

In Class 10, I scored 95.6% with 99% in Chemistry and Computer Science while travelling across India with teammates, dreaming of Ivy League and top UK universities. In Class 11, I chose the challenging PCMB combination, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Biology. My friends teased me that I had reached the "dark side" and would one day discover a new element, Rathorium, a light-hearted joke that has evolved into my dream of discovering a new surgical technique, the Rathore Technique.

MUNs, particularly the All India Political Parties Meet (AIPPM), were hilarious highlights, with classmates impersonating politicians while debating national issues. Recently, my parents met the Earl of Mayo, Lord Mayo's direct descendant, who also attended Queen's University, linking these two institutions with shared history.

Reflecting now, Mayo taught me curiosity, empathy, and friendship, and shaped me into a confident, grounded individual. From trembling at injections to holding patients' hands with care, I've learned that courage grows step by step, in small acts of persistence. University halls, living with friends and sharing meals remind me of my dorm days at Mayo, where I grew up alongside my classmates.

My advice to juniors: cherish the campus rounds, house spirit, mess food, and even the run up. One day, when you cook for yourself in college, you'll realise how precious these moments truly were.

rajeshsharma1049@gmail.com





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#SCHOOL





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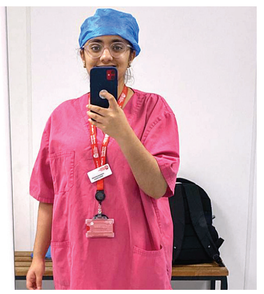


#MUSE

A Shakespeare Called Bhikhari Thakur

His most famous work, *Bidesiya*, told the story of a man who leaves his village for Kolkata, marries another woman there, and leaves his wife behind

No degree. No theatre school. No literary family. No established stage. Just a barber from a small village in Saran, Bihar, who watched his people leave home in search of work and decided to tell their stories.

His name was Bhikhari Thakur.

Born in 1887 in Kutubpur village of Saran, Bhikhari Thakur grew up in a poor rural society where opportunities were scarce. In the early decades of the twentieth century, thousands of men from Bihar left their villages every year. They travelled to Kolkata, the coal mines of Jharia, Kharagpur and the tea plantations of Assam in search of livelihoods.

But every man who left created another story at home.

A wife waited. A mother waited. Children waited for their fathers. Some migrants sent money home. Some returned after years. Others never came back. For the women left behind, waiting could stretch from months into years, sometimes, an entire lifetime.

Bhikhari Thakur understood this world.

Like many young men of his generation, he travelled outside Bihar. He went to Kharagpur and later to Jagannath Puri, where he encountered performances such as Ramleela. In Kolkata, he witnessed the flourishing Bengali theatre tradition. He watched carefully, learned from what he saw, and eventually returned to his village with an ambition of his own.

He formed a small troupe and began performing Ramleela. But a barber entering the world of theatre was not readily welcomed by sections of the social elite. Bhikhari Thakur persisted. Around the 1910s, he began writing his own plays, drawing not from books but from the lives unfolding around him.

His most famous work, *Bidesiya*, told the story of a man who leaves his village for Kolkata, marries another woman there, and leaves his wife behind. When the play travelled through villages, women reportedly wept, not simply because they were watching fiction, but because they recognised their own lives on stage.

Bhikhari Thakur made women's suffering visible. *Beti Bechwa* confronted the exploitation of daughters through unequal marriage practices, while *Bidhwa Bilap* portrayed the loneliness and suffering of widowhood. His theatre also explored migration, poverty, caste, alcoholism, family conflict and social inequality.

He eventually wrote nearly thirty plays and a vast body of songs and poems. His performances combined folk music, dance, humour and social criticism, creating a distinctive tradition of Bhojpuri theatre.

The scholar and writer Rahul Sankrityayan famously called him the "Shakespeare of Bhojpuri." In 1944, he received the title Rai Bahadur.

Bhikhari Thakur died in 1971. But the people he put on stage never really disappeared.

The migrant still leaves. The wife still waits. The widow still mourns. The daughter still struggles against decisions made for her.

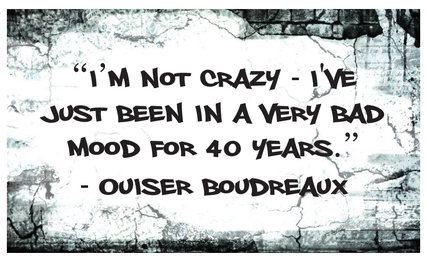
Perhaps, that is why Bhikhari Thakur remains so powerful. He did not inherit literature. He created it from the lives of ordinary people. He had no grand stage when he began. So, he built one, and invited an entire society onto it.



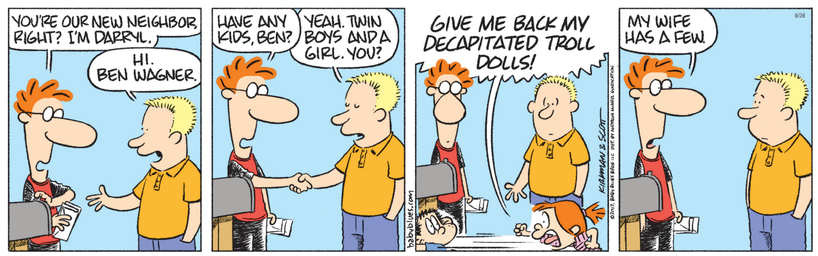




THE WALL



BABY BLUES By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



ZITS By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

