A R B **it happens here...**

#EVENT @ JKK

CELEBRATING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Bookaroo Children's Literature Festival, held at JKK, delighted young minds and parents alike, with its array of creative activities and engaging storytelling sessions. From immersive storytelling to hands-on craft workshops, the festival celebrated the 'magic of literature' in nurturing young imaginations.







arts center. Jawahar Kala Kendra (JKK) recently played host to an exuberant athering of young hinds and literary

enthusiasts at the two-day Bookaroo Children's *Literature Festival*. The event saw an overwhelming turnout of children and parents alike, all eager to immerse them selves in the world of stories, creativity, and imagination. In fact, a couple even travelled all the way from Delhi so that their children could partake in the event. Despite the soaring mercury laughter echoed through the Kendra's dome area as children eagerly made their way to the different festival venues, their faces beam-

ing with anticipation. The first day of the festival kicked off with a flurry of activities, with children eagerly participating in 26 different engagements, tailored to their interests and age groups. From storytelling ses sions to craft corners, doodle walls to theatrical performances, there was something for every young mind to explore and indulge in. Over the course of two days, there were 50 sessions with 27 speakers

The festival grounds were meticulously divided and colour-coded into various zones according to different age groups, each offering a unique experience. The Kahani Kund created in the amphitheater, adorned with vibrant hues and puppets, transported children into a realm of storytelling magic.

Here, they were regaled with tales spun by master story tellers, who breathed life into the characters with their narratives. anwhile the Krishnayan ditorium witnessed the ransformation of young participants into budding thespian, under the guidance of drama director, Abhishek Mudgal. Here, they learned the art of voice modulation and theatrical expression, delving into the world of

drama and performance. Throughout the festival, children were encouraged to unleash their creativity in various workshops and interactive sessions. From crafting intricate pieces in the Craft Corner to expressing themselves on the Doodle Wall, every corner of the festival resonated with the hum of

creativity. Swati Roy, the Festival Director, emphasized on the profound impact of literature on children's lives, highlighting the importance of nurturng a love for 'reading' from an early age. "Books are children's best friends," she remarked, underscoring the role of literature in shaping young minds and fostering empathy and understanding.

In today's fast-paced world, where parents express concern about their children drifting away from academics. it is imperative that we reevaluate our approach. Writers possess a unique ability to connect with children, as they intricately weave emotions and experiences into words offering a perspective that resonates deeply with young minds. The Bookaroo Festival serves as a platform to introduce children to these insightful authors, providing them with the opportunity to explore literature that speaks directly to their hearts and imaginations.



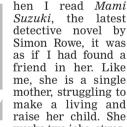
Simon Rowe loves a good story PART:1

Simon Rowe loves a good story. In fact, he is so fond of storytelling that he signed up for an English teacher's job in Japan and taught his students to talk about the Japanese culture in English. His students learnt English and he became a storyteller.



Mami Suzuki, the latest detective novel.





make a living and raise her child. She works two jobs, strug ess that come with being a 'single mother.' and tries her best to cope with it. Mami Suzuki seemed so real that I had to know from her creator Simon *Rowe* if he had really met her in real life or if it was a channelling

of sorts. Some excerpts from the rendezvous at the Jaipur Literature Festival are here.



Simon Rowe, with his wife Masami, daughter Marina and son Aiden.

THE WALL



Simon Rowe with other authors at the Jaipur Lit Fest

Are you anything like your heroine 'Mami Suzuki?'

(Laughs). Yes, to some extent, I am. I am middle-aged, I live in Japan but that's where the similarity ends. Mami is a composite character, a figment of the imagination but drawn from all the women whom I know in Japan, who are middle-aged, who are working hard (in some cases, two jobs), might be single mothers. My wife too is a middle-aged Japanese woman. She is very busy too. Mami means 'true beauty.

So, was this character inspired by your wife?

(Smiles). That is what I will tell her! But it is much more than that. As a foreigner, I guess I can see and observe more details about the 'Japanese' people and a lot 'differently' as compared to the natives. Though, I have been here for the last 27 years, Japan still looks new and fresh to me. In a way, it is death by stimulation. There is just too much for a writer to take in.

#JAIPUR LITERATURE FESTIVAL 2024

Did Mami walk into your brain 'preformed' or did you have to 'think' her up?

🔽 irst of all, we start with the 'motivation.' I wanted to tell a story, where the character overcomes a lot of difficulties and succeeds in the end. About that time in 2020, I was creating a collection of short stories which was to be self-published through crowdfunding. The motivation for the last story came from a leaflet advertising services of a female detective in Japanese language, which is very rare. It showed a middleaged woman dressed in short suit. I filed away this idea but then, ideas have a life of their own. They pop up at unexpected times. I was reading detective series like Agatha Christie, Raymond Chandler, Arthur Dovle Conan Alexander McCall Smith (author of The No.1 Ladies Detective Agency). So, the idea

HAWTHORNDEN

FOUNDATION

PRESENTED BY

came to me of a single mother, who lived in Kobe, a place where I live in western Japan. A tale of triumph and adversitv! So. that is where I found the story. That's how the character came about and it was built by research, which included interviewing some Tokyo detectives as well. The thing is that there aren't many *female detectives* in Japan, so the thing is you need a 'new spin on the old stereotype' of wine drinking, chain smoking detective, with a woman waiting for him in the bar. So, I flipped it upside down. So, now I have the hard working, beer drinking single mother, who has two jobs and she has her love interest waiting in the bar!



Mami, you say, is a work of fiction. However, when one reads the book, it seems as if she is real woman. Did you study single mothers to write Mami?

M ami feels like a woman whom I know well, although I've never met anyone exactly like her. I know quite a few single mothers, here, in Japan. They are friends or acquaintances of both my wife and I, and so often, we hear about their trials and tribulations, but not so much about their 'triumphs.' I guess that was the motivation behind writing this

BABY BLUES



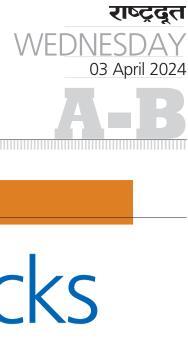






World Cloud Security Day

orld Cloud Security Day is like a lighthouse, helping us break through a dense fog of, well, clouds. It's a time when the invisible cloud-based threats, we too often ignore, become visible. The day also reminds about the sometimes forgotten idea of 'ironclad security' in our cloud-based adventures. This day seeks to bridge the gap between data clouds and online safety. By doing so, we all play an active role in enhancing the safety of our digital footprints. Whether you use cloud-based apps for personal use or to run a business, vigilance is needed.





story. I wanted my protagonist to finish victorious. That is, by the end of the story. *Mami* retakes control of her destiny, by going professional and ridding herself of the male-dominated hotel executive world. To go it 'alone' is very risky in Japan. It takes guts and determination, but there aren't too many options for single mothers, many of whom have to juggle work

elieve their lot has even gotten worse due to inflation (and wages not keeping pace with rising prices) and the ongoing recession, which means less full-time jobs with benefits (although, childcare remains sparse here in Japan), and more part-time jobs without benefits I find that there is more social stigma attached to 'single mother-

and family life to the best of their

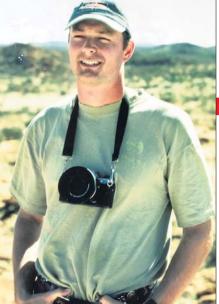
financial and emotional) abilities.

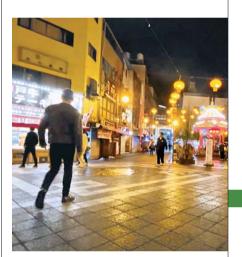
hood' in Japan. My sister, who lives in rural Australia, is a single mother but she is lucky that she has a full-time job (with benefits) which allows her to work from home. There isn't the same stigma in Australia either

Japanese single mothers struggle to find childcare possibilities because they must travel to their place of work, which is more likely to be part-time rather than fulltime, and therefore not possible to do from home. Japan was ranked 125 out of 146 countries for gender inequality, which is very negative, indeed

I guess the other source of research has been my job as an English teacher. Most of my students now are female (I teach at Kobe Women's University) and so, I often read their very honest stories of family life and relationships with their parents. Writing gives them a chance to say things they wouldn't say aloud in class. In a way, writing is a 'cathartic' exercise and I feel many of them enjoy it for this reason. I certainly don't mine their lives for details to add to my stories, but as a whole, they give me a feeling for the single parent dynamic, which exists here in Japan.







Tell us about your growing up days.

grew up in New Zealand. We immigrated to Melbourne for the final days of the schooling. have younger siblings too. I finished the university and I became a travel writer. I was always fond of writing and I realized travel and writing *together* were really a good way to see the world. So, for the next 10-12 years, I travelled around the world. I used to write a story, take photos and make a package and send it to multiple publications and be paid multiple times. We can't do that now. I had a self-perpetuating existence, where I was travelling with a backpack and had cameras, and I had pretty wildlife. Things I won't do now! Like take small boats way, way up to the *jungle* or ride a bus to Morocco. A lot of hard travel. It was stimulating and gave me something to write about because I believe if vou write a travel story, it should be authentic. Like for example, I met this guy, who is a chef and he makes the best *chick* en biryani in Delhi. So, it is not just about the food but the man also. With time, the competition became great to the point. where I would go to a small island in the Pacific and discover that someone from my rival publication was already there. Though, I was work ing freelance, yet the competition was great.

> ... To be continued rajeshsharma1049@gmail.com

Offbeat Tracks

From Himalayan slopes to coastal vistas, embark on a summer escape through India's diverse tapestry, on these iconic train routes.



Kalka to Shimla

5.5 hours, Himalayan Queen

scape the Delhi furnace

laboard the iconic '*Himalayan* Queen.' This toy train winds

through pine-clad slopes and verdant valleys, culminating in Shimla, a charming town where Victorian-era architecture meets crisp mountain air. Picture horsedrawn carriage rides, colonial-era buildings, whispering stories of the past, and breath-taking views, that will leave you breathless.

rain travel paints vibrant pictures in our minds, often featuring the exciting journeys that we share with loved ones. When the rhythm of the rails sets he pace of travel, journeys are filled with simple pleasures, books, steaming chai, laughter echoing through card games, and landscapes painting themselves onto our memories. India's diverse tapestry unfolds beautifully, from the window of a train, offering

#TRAVEL







Mettupalayam to Oo 4.5 hours

Nilgiri Mountain Railway 🗔 mbark on a journey through L time and mist aboard the 'Toy Train of the South.' Snake through emerald hills and verdant valleys, arriving in Ooty, the 'Queen of the Hills.' Rolling hills, colonial charm,

refreshing lakes, and, of course, the

promise of delicious strawberries

await in this summer haven.



endless

Hassan to Mangalore 5.5 hours Various train options are available

mbrace a sensory overload on 上 this Western Ghats adventure Lush rainforests, cascading waterfalls, and verdant coffee plantations greet you as the train chugs through the landscape. In Mangalore, pristine beaches, delicious seafood, and the unique Tulu culture await, offering a perfect summer escape from the ordinary.



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott GIVE HIM THE COOKIE. WE'LL FIGURE OUT WHO HE REALLY



ZITS

unique experiences and breath-tak ing sights at every turn. If you yearn to capture the magic of rail travel or simply embrace a more relaxing pace, we have curated a list of incredible train journeys that you can take during the summer.

Siliguri to Darjeeling 7 hours Darjeeling Himalayan Railway

🗨 tep back in time with this 🔊 UNESCO gem. Meander through emerald tea plantations and soak in the breathtaking Himalavan vistas. Darieeling, vou lestination, awaits its iconic architecture, fragrant Darjeeling tea, and the promise of misty mornings and cosy evenings by the fireplace

Kanyakumari to Trivandrum 2 hours

Various train options are available

itness the confluence of three oceans, the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, and the Indian Ocean, on this coastal journey. Watch the sun rise and set over the horizon. reaching Trivandrum, with its historica backwaters, lush greenery, and delicious South Indian cuisine. This is a summer escape for those who love the serenity of the sea and the charm of Kerala's backwaters.