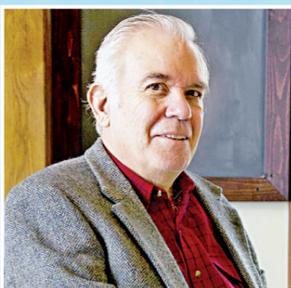


THE YETI IS A BEAR

The mystery surrounding the Yeti has come alive in our collective imaginations since the Indian army claimed to have spotted Yeti footprints. Daniel C Taylor, an American scholar and author of 'Yeti: The Ecology of a Mystery', spent 60 years trying to solve the Yeti mystery. Having determined that the Yeti was an Asiatic black bear in 1985, he spearheaded the creation of several national parks, including Nepal's Makalu-Barun National Park. He speaks about why the Yeti myth has persisted. Excerpts:



'YETI: The Ecology of a Mystery'
This endearing memoir is the conclusion to the American author and scholar's lifelong search for the Yeti that began when he was a boy. Taylor, a son of medical missionaries, grew up in the Himalayas and began his quest when he happened to come across Eric Shipton's 1951 photographs of mysterious footprints in the snow near Mt Everest

him out in her mouth. The ayah who was sleeping there hit the wolf with a 'topi,' and the animal dropped him.

How did you solve the mystery?

My process was to be loyal to the question: what is the Yeti? I was lucky to live near the jungle. Being on my own meant carrying my backpack, talking to the villagers in languages like Hindi, Nepali and Tibetan. I wanted to get their understanding of the Yeti. My process was based on trusting local people, not science. I concluded that it was a 'bhaloo' based on three things. One, after 23 years of keeping meticulous notes, I realised that all Yeti footprints recorded were going uphill. When I found the footprints and studied them, I saw the nail marks. Hominoids — monkeys or humans — don't have those nails.

That's when I realised it was an animal. Now, the question was which one. Then I found that it was making nests, and in the nests, I found hair. We took DNA samples, and it was a 'bhaloo'. Turns out, it's a special kind of 'bhaloo' that is called 'rukhi bhaloo' in Nepali, 'rukhi' meaning tree.

Why are we fascinated with the Yeti?

It is fascinating to me that there are more Yeti sightings today than 30 years ago, when we had more jungles. As humans, we know we're destroying the planet. We need some connection to the wild. Why do we have Hanuman? Did Hanuman really pick up a mountain and carry it to Sri Lanka? These are ways in which we understand the great forces of life, and our responsibilities towards

nature. It is a process of meaning-making. We're more desperate for meaning as we see a greater crisis coming upon us. We're grabbing for answers in a mythical animal instead of understanding that the answer is within ourselves.

What made you turn to conservation?

I was making a lot of money giving Yeti lectures in a Chewbacca costume from the 'Star Wars' movies! I knew I had to walk away from the money. What was important was preserving nature, through the national parks I built together with the local communities.

You have said that all the expeditions to solve the Yeti mystery were by Westerners who had their own biases. What do you mean by that?

Look at the evidence: are there any expeditions led by Indians? No, at best they get Indian mountaineers to carry their backpacks. This is neocolonialism. They're outsiders taking advantage of local people for their own gains. They're making no effort to understand how the community feels about the Yeti. If you want an authentic answer, you must change your perspective to one that is more oriented to how people who actually live in these areas feel and think. **TNN**

What do you make of the picture of so-called Yeti footprints released by the Indian army?

I am quite sure these footprints were those of a mother bear with a cub that was sort of hopping behind. The size of the footprint is 35 inches — only dinosaurs make prints that size, and a population of dinosaurs on Mt Everest would be a more remarkable find than Yetis.

As a young boy, what was it about the Yeti mystery that drew you?

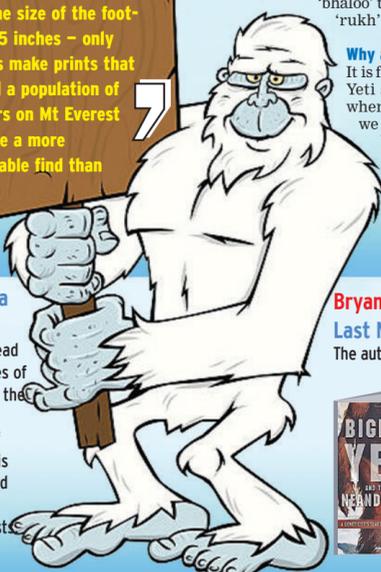
It is very exciting when you are an 11-year-old in Mussoorie and you see an article with a photo in 'The Statesman' newspaper and you realise that you have read something that is completely impossible.

ble. The piece quoted the curator of the British Museum as saying the Yeti footprint was that of a langur. Well, the langur was all around our bungalow so I realised he was wrong and it was my job now to go into the jungle — which was right outside our door in Mussoorie — and start looking. Twenty-six years later, I found that the Yeti was a bear and 10 years later, we started creating national parks in India, Nepal, Bhutan and Afghanistan.

How did your parents feel about you chasing the Yeti at such a young age?

They encouraged me. My family has been working in the jungles of the Himalayas for a long time. My father was born in the jungle near Haridwar. When he was six months old, a she-wolf came into the tent, picked him up from his crib and was carrying

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EXPLORE BIGFOOT IN BOOKS

Reinhold Messner's My Quest

The author, an avid mountaineer from Austria, was the first person to climb Mount Everest without oxygen and the first to climb all 14 of the world's tallest peaks. In the book, he recounts his run-in with an actual yeti.

Ivan T Sanderson's Abominable Snowmen

A report by some of the world's leading naturalists on the four kinds of yetis who still walk the earth.

Charles Stonor's The Sherpa and the Snowman

The author describes a quest that led him to the lower slopes of Everest in search of the snowman. However after five months of wandering he and his companions returned sans any proof that such a creature exist

Bryan Sykes's Bigfoot, Yeti, and the Last Neanderthal

The author, a world-class geneticist, hunts for evidence for the existence of Big Foot. Along the way, he visits sites of alleged sightings of these strange creatures, attends meetings of crypto-zoologists, recounts the stories of famous monster-hunting expeditions, and runs possible yeti DNA through his state-of-the-art lab in Oxford.

Loren Coleman and Patrick Huyghe's The Field Guide to Bigfoot and Other Mystery Primates

This book is a comprehensive study of the astonishing variety of puzzling primates that are being reported by eyewitnesses around the world — that science has failed to recognise.

POP QUIZ

Who wrote this?

- "When I think of my wife, I always think of her head."
- "I was arrested in Eno's diner. At twelve o'clock. I was eating eggs and drinking coffee. A late breakfast, not lunch. I was wet and tired after a long walk in heavy rain. All the way from the highway to the edge of town."
- "Some years later, on a tugboat in the Gulf of Mexico, Joe Coughlin's feet were placed in a tub of cement."
- "Coffee and corpses, that's my life. Sometimes I hate being me."
- "Be careful when you pray for help. Because when you pray to God, the Devil hears you too."

ANSWERS

- 'Gone Girl' by Gillian Flynn
- 'Killing Floor' by Lee Child
- 'Live by Night' by Dennis Lehane
- 'A Local Habitation' by Seanan McGuire
- 'When the Devil Whispers' by Afnika Bhasme

A book that guided a space odyssey promises the moon

WATCH OUT FOR

The Apollo 11 lunar module timeline' book is up for auction. The detailed manual used by the US astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin to land on the moon in 1969, is going up for auction in July and could fetch up to \$9 million, New York auctioneers Christie's said.

The 44-page ring-bound 'Apollo 11 lunar module timeline' book details every procedure that was needed to undock, land and rendezvous the Eagle with its Columbia command module when Armstrong and Aldrin became the first men to walk on the moon.

"These are step-by-step instructions that cover the entire portion of the Eagle flight. It is a series of instructions on everything from 'don your helmets' to 'check your power system'," Christina Geiger, head of books and manuscripts

at Christie's said. Along with technical data, the book, which was carried aboard the Eagle, contains drawings and almost 150 check marks and annotations written in real time by Armstrong and Aldrin. Since there was no audio or video recording of what happened in the cockpit of the Eagle, the manual is regarded as a unique witness to space history. It also marks the first writing by a human being on another celestial body. It is being sold by a private collector who purchased it previously from Aldrin.

Collectors pay huge sums for space exploration artefacts. In 2017, Sotheby's sold a zippered bag used by Armstrong and laced with moon dust for \$1.8 million. Christie's has placed a \$7 million to \$9 million estimate on the timeline book, which is on public view in New York. **ET**



WHAT'S ON YOUR BOOKSHELF?

This week's selection is about understanding the world of news, how it gets delivered to you, and a bit of self help. First, educate yourself on censorship and freedom of expression; then trace the rise of television journalism and its current status. And if it all gets too much, switch gears and learn why women tend to undersell themselves

'War over Words' by Devika Sethi

Debates over freedom of expression make a significant chunk of the civic thought in a democracy like India. Censorship, too, has been an universal phenomenon throughout history. This book is about the history of censorship of publications in India over three crucial decades... encompassing the Gandhian anti-colonial movement, the Second World War, Partition, and the early years of Independent India. The author teaches Modern Indian History at IIT Mandi, Himachal Pradesh.



'The Indian Newsroom' by Sandeep Bhushan

The author, a veteran journalist, addresses important questions about television journalism including: What caused the death of field-based reportage, and the marginalisation of reporters? What is access journalism, and what is wrong with it? How did India evolve the star system? Is the reporter-editor relationship necessarily adversarial? How does India compare to more mature industries, like those in the USA or UK? A must read for those who are planning a career in TV journalism. **JANS**

INCREDIBLE FACT 198



Is the number of pseudonyms that were used by Daniel Defoe, author of 'Robinson Crusoe', which turned 300 years old last month. His real surname was Foe, and he added 'De' to it, to make it sound aristocratic. **TNN**

'Girl, Stop Apologizing' by Rachel Hollis

"...Like many other women, I'm still in the process of overcoming a lifetime of people-pleasing", that's how the founder of a lifestyle website, Rachel Hollis, introduces her book. Hollis says that she has seen it too often: women not living to their full potential. They feel a tugging on their hearts for something more, but they are afraid of embarrassment, of falling short of perfection, of not being enough. The book, tailor-made for women who undersell themselves, identifies the excuses to let go of, the behaviours to adopt, and the skills to acquire on the path to confidence and believing in yourself. **NYT**



BOOK BRIEFINGS

THE NEWS



Danielle Steel, the famed author of dozens and dozens of romance novels, including 'Star', 'Heartbeat', and 'Daddy', writes so much that she barely has time to sleep. If she gets four hours, she considers it a restful night. The successful writer was recently profiled by 'Glamour', where she discussed her secret (she's worth \$350 million, according to 'Forbes'). She has 20-22 hour workdays, but on some occasions, she doesn't leave her desk for 24 hours. Her process is always the same, decade after decade: sitting down at her desk (which resembles three giant books stacked on top of each other) at 8 am, eating a piece of toast with a decaf iced coffee, and getting to work. **BI**



Beloved children's author Roald Dahl's classic 'The Witches' will now be turned into a graphic novel. Publisher Gallimard, in France, has struck a deal with the Roald Dahl Story Company for publishing the new graphic novel, reports 'The Bookseller'. 'The Witches' will be adapted into a 300-page graphic novel by artist Pénélope Bagieu. **TNN**

MAY 15, 2019

TELEVISION

- SCIENCE OF STUPID, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL, 3.00 PM:** The host presents videos of people getting injured or humiliated while using gadgets and then explains the science behind the bizarre accidents.
- STORAGE WARS, HISTORY TV18, 5.00 PM:** Ivy misleads the competition while Rene and Casey space out and Darrell uses his old tricks; Jar-

MUST SEE

- WHAT WENT DOWN, DISCOVERY CHANNEL, 7.00 PM:** A team uses scientific methods to get to the bottom of and dissect certain events that took place in history.
- CHASING MONSTERS RELOADED, ANIMAL PLANET, 8.00 PM:** Cyril travels to the waters surrounding the remote archipelago of the Bissagos Islands, home to the cubera snapper. However, deadly mambas and cobras block his path.

MUST DO

MOVIES ON TV

- LIFE OF PI, STAR MOVIES, 4.35 PM:** Pi Patel finds a way to survive in a lifeboat that is adrift in the middle of nowhere. His fight against the odds is heightened by the company of a hyena and a male Bengal tiger.
- DREDD, &FLIX, 5.20 PM:** A report of a horrible crime in a futuristic Mega City One makes a policeman, Dredd, travel to a perilous zone with Cassandra, a psychic. There, they have to fight against a vicious drug lord.
- TOY STORY 2, &FLIX, 7.10 PM:** When Woody is toy-napped by a greedy toy collector and is nowhere to be found, Buzz and his friends set out to rescue him. But Woody too is tempted by the idea of becoming immortal in a museum.

THIS DAY THAT YEAR

- 1618:** Johannes Kepler discovered his harmonics law.
- 1702:** The War of Spanish Succession began.
- 1817:** Debendranath Tagore, philosopher, religious reformer, and father of Rabindranath Tagore, was born.
- 1856:** Lyman Frank Baum, author of "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," was born.
- 1886:** American poetess Emily Dickinson passed away.
- 1957:** Britain dropped its first hydrogen bomb on Christmas Island in the Pacific Ocean.

- 1958:** Sputnik III, the first space laboratory, was launched in the Soviet Union.
- 1988:** The Soviet Union began their withdrawal of its 115,000 troops from Afghanistan.
- 2010:** Jessica Watson at age 16 became the youngest person to sail solo, non-stop and unassisted around the world.
- 2014:** The National September 11 Memorial Museum was dedicated in New York City.