

"This above all: To thine own self be true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man."

— William Shakespeare, Hamlet



The message of MIYAZAKI



Great news! Hayao Miyazaki, the Oscar winning Japanese director of films like 'Spirited Away', 'My Friend Totoro', is coming for your bookshelves. According to the latest buzz, his graphic novel 'Shuna's Journey', published nearly 40 years ago in 1983, is being translated into English. An avid reader, much of the acclaimed director's work has been fuelled by his literary inspirations...

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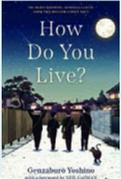
I do believe in the power of story," Hayao Miyazaki once said. "I believe that stories have an important role to play in the formation of human beings, that they can stimulate, amaze and inspire their listeners." As a self-described "physically weak" child, Miyazaki — the co-founder of Studio Ghibli, filmmaker, writer, animator, and manga artist — read a lot. It was only in 2010, when he revealed his profound love of children's literature, and 50 of his favourite books for an exhibition honouring publisher Iwanami Shoten. His 50 favourites ranged from tales of American

adventure to talking animals and fantasy worlds. Here are some of them:

HOW DO YOU LIVE?

by Genzaburo Yoshino

First published in 1937, Japanese author Genzaburo Yoshino's coming-of-age classic was a bestseller that year, and has sold millions of copies since then. Today, Yoshino's classic is an essential part of a Japanese classical arts education and has been called a major influence by Miyazaki, who cited it as his favourite childhood book. Set in 1930s Japan, 'How Do You Live?' is about 15-year-old teen



Hayao Miyazaki is a popular Japanese animator, director, producer, screenwriter, author, and manga artist. He is regarded as one of the related animators in the world! He is best known for his Studio Ghibli movies. His works take the viewers into relatable fantastical worlds, and through his loveable characters, one can learn important life lessons.

protagonist Copper, who is dealing with bullies at school and the loss of his father. The story's central plot leads him to confront some hard truths about himself before he can do the right thing. However, in between the drama unfolds a series of long, thoughtful conversa-

tions between Copper and his uncle. The two take long walks through the streets of Tokyo, exploring ideas as they talk, and the uncle writes his own reflections on their conversations in a notebook that he leaves for Copper to read. Interestingly, in 2018, artist Shoichi Haga published a manga adaptation of 'How Do You Live?' which sold more copies — a whopping two million — than any other Japanese book that year. 'How Do You Live?' takes readers on a simple yet profound quest that should not be missed. At some point it has been announced that Miyazaki was returning from retirement to make a film based on this book with a tentative release scheduled in 2023.

THE SECRET GARDEN

by Frances Hodgson Burnett

If you have watched his film, you know Miyazaki is famous for creating characters (frequently children) who exhibit courage, generosity, honesty, and a willingness to try new things. A favourite from Miyazaki's list, 'The Secret Garden' is a children's classic about Mary Lennox, the headstrong, emotionally neglected heroine, through which author Frances Hodgson Burnett taught the world (in 1911) that it was possible to heal oneself. Mary's journey echoed in Miyazaki's film 'Spirited Away' which also began with a 10-year-old protagonist Chihiro who is spoiled, disagreeable and selfish. Like Mary, Chihiro yearns for the love of her well-to-do but inattentive parents and eventually learns to heal herself emotionally.



female characters weren't weak princesses but strong, and sometimes, fierce humans. For example, Nausicaa from 'Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind' and San from 'Princess Mononoke', Sophie in 'Howl's Moving Castle', and Kiki in 'Kiki's Delivery Service', are fearless in the pursuit of their goals. Perhaps, it is unsurprising then that Eleanor Dooley's 1939 children's book — a biography of famed (and courageous) scientist Marie Curie — features in the director's list. Miyazaki also listed Lewis Carroll's 'Alice In Wonderland' and 'Heidi' by Johanna Spyri among his favourites.

IVAN THE FOOL

by Leo Tolstoy

First published in 1886, Leo Tolstoy's fairytale for children 'Ivan the Fool and His Two Brothers' spoke warmly about the values of living simple, generosity and being truthful to oneself. The story is about Ivan, deemed foolish for being a kind simpleton by his ambitious brothers who constantly pursue their greedy desires, money, power etc. And yet it is Ivan who has a happy ending in the story, revealing Tolstoy's philosophical condemnation of commercialism. This story reflected themes of simplicity and kindness that have often appeared in Miyazaki's films.

Ivan The Fool
A LITERARY FAIRY TALE



TISTOU OF THE GREEN THUMBS

by Maurice Druon

Most of Miyazaki's films are anchored powerfully in nature which comes through his vivid depictions. The environment is a recurring element both as a physical presence and as a source of inspiration. In several instances, nature and people co-exist in various settings, such as the countryside, towns, and even cities. Miyazaki believed people could and should live in nature, or at the very least co-exist in harmony. This idea is prominent in 'My Neighbor Totoro', as nature appears to look after the children. As it did in the story of 8 year old Tistou who discovers a remarkable gift — that he has green thumbs. Everything he touches sprouts beautiful plants. Tistou is a French children's classic that ranks with 'The Little Prince' and 'The Man who Planted Trees'.



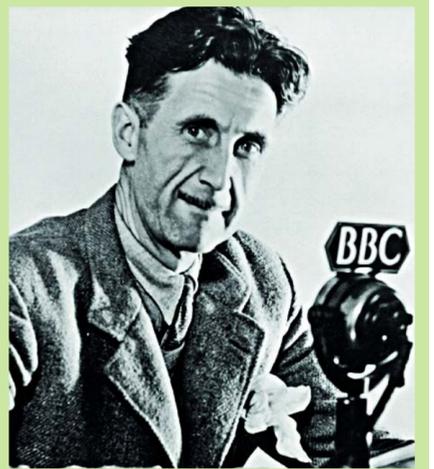
GEORGE ORWELL'S Rules of WRITING

As the writer of seminal novels like '1984', 'Animal Farm', and 'Down and Out in Paris and London', and essays like 'Shooting an Elephant', George Orwell was passionate about good writing. According to reports, he asked himself the following four questions for every sentence that he wrote:

- What am I trying to say?
- What words will express it?
- What image or idiom will make it clearer?
- Is this image fresh enough to have an effect?
- And then he would ask two more: Could I put it more shortly? And Have I said anything that is avoidably ugly?

In his essay, 'Politics and the English Language' Orwell wrote the following rules of writing:

- Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
- Never use a long word where a short one will do.
- If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
- Never use the passive where you can use the active.
- Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
- Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.



ALL OF US CAN BE BULLIES!

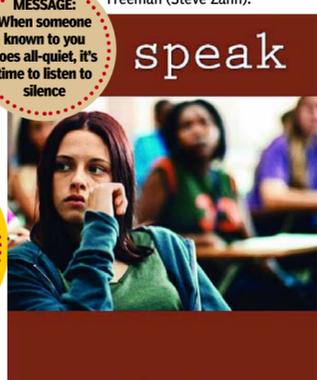
But all of us can also learn how not to be one; or help friends and classmates open up to us. No one should suffer in silence. It's time to take a stance. Watch these films with your parents to start an honest conversation about the subject that's on everyone's mind right now...



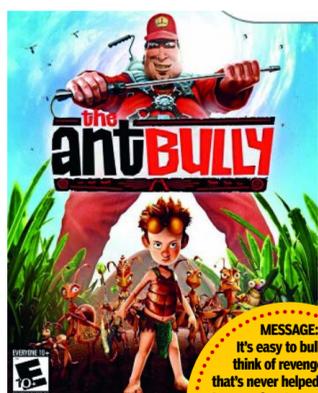
BILLY ELLIOT (2000)
STORY: Billy Elliot has an aspiration at odds with his father's. Billy wants to become a professional ballet dancer, while Jackie, his coal-miner father, sends him to the gym to learn boxing.

MESSAGE: Your dreams and aspirations are yours no matter what the world says. Find one person who believes in you, and courage will follow...

SPEAK (2004)
STORY: Freshman high-school student Melinda (Kristen Stewart) has refused to speak ever since she called the cops on a popular summer party. With her old friends snubbing her for being a rat, and her parents too busy to notice her troubles, she folds into herself, trying to hide her secret. But Melinda does find solace in her art class headed by Mr. Freeman (Steve Zahn).

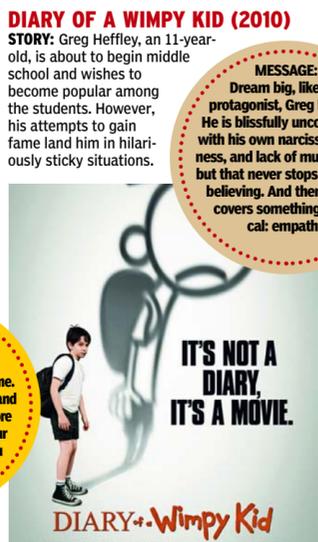


MESSAGE: When someone known to you goes all-quiet, it's time to listen to silence



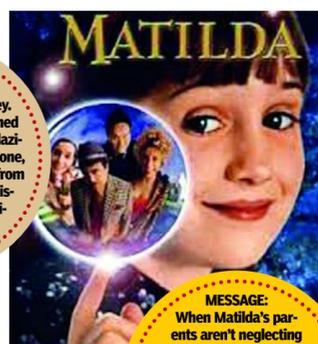
ANT BULLY (2006)
STORY: Tired of weathering constant attacks on their colony, ants shrink a destructive boy, named Lucas (Zach Tyler Eisen), to his size and sentence him to live among them until he learns the errors of his ways.

MESSAGE: It's easy to bully or think of revenge but that's never helped anyone. Compassion, teamwork, and loyalty can get much more done, while calming your senses and making you believe in goodness



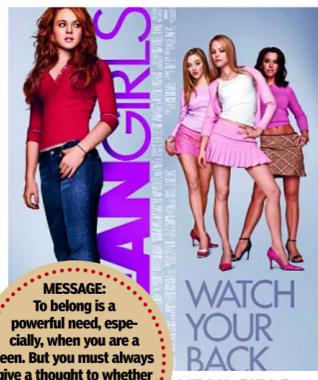
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID (2010)
STORY: Greg Heffley, an 11-year-old, is about to begin middle school and wishes to become popular among the students. However, his attempts to gain fame land him in hilariously sticky situations.

MESSAGE: Dream big, like the protagonist, Greg Heffley. He is blissfully unconcerned with his own narcissism, laziness, and lack of muscle tone, but that never stops him from believing. And then he discovers something magical: empathy



MATILDA (1996)
STORY: Matilda shares a home with her parents and brother, who do not appreciate her. When her principal torments her and a kind-hearted teacher, she uses her telekinetic powers to settle scores.

MESSAGE: When Matilda's parents aren't neglecting her, they are berating her — so she decides to punish them. But she also stands up for the principal's victims. The film explores themes of youthful independence and personal identity



MEAN GIRLS (2004)
STORY: Cady joins a new public school and befriends Janis and Damian. They warn her to avoid the Plastics, a group led by Regina, but things get worse when she falls in love with Aaron, Regina's ex-lover.

MESSAGE: To belong is a powerful need, especially, when you are a teen. But you must always give a thought to whether belonging comes at the cost of your conscience

CHICKEN LITTLE (2005)
STORY: When a piece of sky falls on the head of Chicken Little, no one believes him. However, his friends trust him and together they save the world from ending.



MESSAGE: Have courage, even when it feels like the sky is literally falling and no one seems to believe you. Speak up till they hear you out



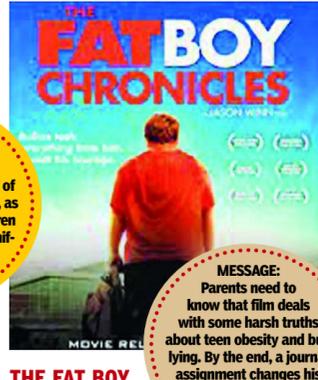
THE KARATE KID (1984)
STORY: Teenager Daniel LaRusso is bullied by Johnny Lawrence, who is adept at martial arts. In order to defend himself, he tries to learn karate from Mr Miyagi, his apartment's kind handyman.

MESSAGE: Decide what it is you want from life and work how best you can achieve it, with 100% commitment you'll fulfill your goals. "It's okay to lose to opponent. It's never okay to lose to fear," as said Mr Miyagi



STAND BY ME (1986)
STORY: After learning that a stranger has been accidentally killed near their rural homes, four Oregon boys decide to go see what's happened. On the way, they encounter a mean junk man and a marsh full of leeches, as they also learn more about one another and their very different home lives. Just a lark at first, the boys' adventure evolves into a defining event in their lives.

MESSAGE: The movie defines coming of age and captures the essence of childhood friendships, as well as the way children are naive to their significance during youth



THE FAT BOY CHRONICLES (2010)
STORY: An overweight teen focuses on his goals of losing weight and getting the girl of his dreams despite being teased and tormented by his classmates.

MESSAGE: Parents need to know that film deals with some harsh truths about teen obesity and bullying. By the end, a journal assignment changes his life as he realises he is in control of his future

Photo: ANI



TIME FOR A CHECK AND MATE

Indian teenage grandmaster **R Praggnanandhaa** stunned the world when he got the better of world No.1 Magnus Carlsen in early February, the youngest at 16 to beat the Norwegian. As India bids to host the 44th edition of the Chess Olympiad this year, we take a look at rising prodigies India has nurtured since Viswanathan Anand and Koneru Humpy first made their mark on the board...

ARJUN ERIGAISI

Fide Rank - 2633

Grand Master - 2018

International Master - 2018

FIDE Master - 2017

Candidate Master - 2016

A name to be reckoned in the future, eighteen-year-old Arjun Erigaisi is slowly getting used to the analogies. In August 2018, he became India's 54th chess Grandmaster after earning his final GM norm at the Abu Dhabi Masters. In 2021, Arjun became the first Indian to qualify for the Champions Chess Tour 2021. Recently, he won the coveted Tata Steel Chess 2022 Challengers, and is currently the 9th ranked Indian chess player.



Photo: ChessBaseIndia

NARAYANAN SL

Fide Rank - 2658

Grand Master - 2016

International Master - 2014

Hailing from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, Narayanan won his first championship, the Kerala State Under-9 Championship, in August 2007. He became the Asian under-16 champion in 2012. In August 2021, he finished second in the Riga Technical University Open 'A' tournament. In October 2021, he finished second at ChessMood Open 2021.

Photo: ChessBaseIndia



Photo: Twitter

VAISHALI RAMESHBABU

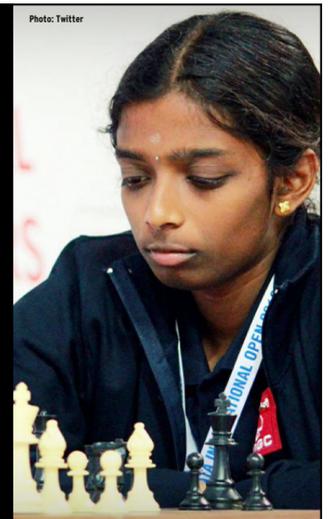
Fide Rank - 2403

International Master - 2021

Woman Grand Master - 2018

Woman International Master - 2016

The Chennai-based player won the woman Grandmaster title after completing her final norm in the Riga Technical University Open chess tournament in Riga, Latvia in 2018. The 2001-born player won the Girls' World Youth Chess Championship for Under-14s and Under-12s. In 2016, she was ranked second in India and World no. 12 U16-player, with an Elo rating of 2300. Her brother is Praggnanandhaa R, the second youngest IM in history and the fifth youngest GM in history.



BHAKTI KULKARNI

Fide Rank - 2388

International Master - 2019

Woman Grand Master - 2012

Woman International Master - 2010

Candidate Master - 2009

Woman FIDE Master - 2005

Bhakti Kulkarni, Goa's first woman IM, won the Asian Junior Chess Championship in 2011. In 2013, she was the first at the international women's chess tournament in Czech Republic - Open Vysocina. In 2016, she won the Asian Chess Women Championship. She was part of the Indian team in the Women's Asian Team Chess Championship, in 2009 and 2016, where she won an individual bronze in 2009. Bhakti had a great 2020, winning gold with the Indian team at the Online Chess Olympiad and Online Asian Team Championship.

NIHAL SARIN

Fide Rank - 2652

Grand Master - 2018

International Master - 2017

FIDE Master - 2015

Candidate Master - 2014

At 14, he was a Grandmaster and the fourth youngest ever to cross the Elo rating mark of 2600. He won World Blitz Under-10 championship and gold medal for the Indian team in the 2020 FIDE Chess Olympiad. In 2019, aged 15, he became the youngest Indian to play in the World Cup. In 2014, he scored 9/11 in the World Youth Chess Championship and won the Candidate Master (CM) title. He won World Online Youth Championships 2020 in U-18 category.



Photo: GETTY IMAGES

VANTIKA AGRAWAL

Fide Rank - 2381

Woman Grand Master - 2021

Woman International Master - 2017

As part of the Indian national team, she won the FIDE Online Chess Olympiad 2020. She saw great success in the year 2021, winning silver in Indian Junior Girls Online Chess Championship and gold in Indian Junior Senior Women Chess Championship. She also won FIDE Binance Business Schools Supercup. She was ranked in 14th place in FIDE Women's Grand Swiss Tournament 2021. In 2016, she won the bronze medal in World Youth Chess Championship in U14 girls category.



Photo: YouTube

ADHIBAN BASKARAN

Fide Rank - 2648

Grand Master - 2010

International Master - 2008

Hailing from Chennai, this prodigy is currently the 7th highest-rated player in India. Known as 'The Beast' for his hyper-aggressive style of play, Adhiban secured his Grandmaster title at age 18 in 2010 after completing his final norm at the Olomouc Chess Summer Tournament. This former U16 World Youth champion won the Biel Open in 2014 and Barcelona Open in 2013 and was part of the Indian team which won bronze in World Olympiad in 2014. He became the 5th Indian to cross the 2700 FIDE rating mark. A prestigious feat indeed!



Photo: Wikipedia

VIDIT SANTOSH GUJRATHI

Fide Rank - 2723

Grand Master - 2013

International Master - 2009

FIDE Master - 2005

He is the second-highest-rated player in India and is the fourth Indian player to have crossed the Elo rating threshold of 2700. Born in Nasik, Vidit was coached in chess from an early age. In 2008, he won the World Youth Chess Championship in the Open U-14 section, the first Indian to do so. He finished 2nd in the U16 category of the World Youth Chess Championship in 2009. He was the captain of the historic gold medal winning Indian team in FIDE Online Chess Olympiad 2020.



Photo:TOI

PADMINI ROUT

Fide Rank - 2350

International Master - 2015

Woman Grandmaster - 2010

Woman International Master - 2007

From her first U11 national title in 2005, Rout has come a long way. She won the U14 girls Asian and World Youth Chess Championships in 2008. Rout played for the Indian national team at Women's Chess Olympiad, Women's World Team Chess Championship and Women's Asian Team Chess Championship. She was part of the Indian national team at Asian Individual Women's Championship in 2011 and she won an individual gold at the 2014 Women's Chess Olympiad in Norway. In 2015, she became the Commonwealth Women's Champion. She won the National Women's Championship from 2014 to 2017.

P V NANDHIDHAA

Fide Rank - 2380

Woman Grand Master - 2020

Woman International Master - 2015

A tenacious player, she won the Asian Junior Chess Championship in 2015 and 2016, followed by the Asian Nations (Regions) Online Chess Championship Team in 2020 and the Asian Youth Chess Championship in 2011 and 2012. She was part of the Indian women chess team which won the Asian Nations (Regions) Online Chess Championship 2020. The team won the gold medal for India beating 31 Asian countries. This Tamil Nadu born player earlier won a silver in the U20 World Junior Chess Championship, in 2016, and bronze in U14 World Youth Chess Championship in 2010.



Photo: Wikipedia

ABHIJEET GUPTA

Fide Rank - 2682

Grand Master - 2008

International Master - 2005

A five-time winner of the Commonwealth Chess Championship, hailing from 'textile city of India', Bhilwara, Abhijeet earned his Grand Master title at the Balaguer 2007 International Open. In the 2012 Chess Olympiad in Turkey, he won an individual silver. He is the third Indian to win the World Junior Chess Championship, after Viswanathan Anand and Pentala Harikrishna. He was awarded the prestigious Arjuna Award in 2013. He is currently the 10th ranked Indian chess player.



Photo: Wikipedia



Photo:TOI

SOUMYA SWAMINATHAN

Fide Rank - 2360

International Master - 2020

Woman Grand Master - 2008

Woman International Master - 2007

A World Junior Girls' Championship in 2009, she was only the third Indian to win the title. She became the Commonwealth women's champion in 2012. She was Women's World Championships in 2010 and 2012. She finished second at the Moscow Open 2016, and won bronze in the Women's Asian Individual Championship 2016. She was part of Indian team in 2012 and 2016 Chess Olympiads and won Women's World Championship with bronze in 2013.

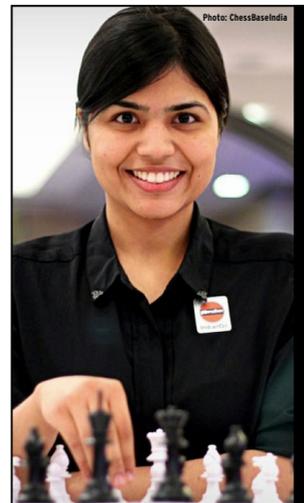


Photo: ChessBaseIndia