

MARCH 23-29, 2025

SUNDAY POST

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WORLD THEATRE DAY - MARCH 27

Digital Divide

COVER STORY

P
34



MY SUNDAY

Family time

Sundays are mostly for family. Apart from having get-togethers and feasts, we go on a short road trip to enjoy the holiday.

Taking over kitchen

Sundays are my time to take over the kitchen. I love to cook mutton dishes. However, I allow others to chip in if they show interest.

Hanging out with buddies

Evenings are mostly reserved for my friends. As a true Cuttack native, we love spending time at Barabati stadium and enjoying our 'khatti' time together.

Working on to-do list

I use Sundays to wrap up my unfinished household chores, as shooting schedule keeps me busy on the other days of the week.



Salman fangirl

As a devoted Bhaijaan fan, my leisure time is incomplete without watching a Salman Khan movie.



ANISHA KHATUN, OP

From being a crowd artiste during her school days to headlining a series of mega serials, actress Alaka Sarangi has traversed a long path. Her success story began after she grabbed second slot in reality show 'Kie Heba Mo Heroine', aired on a popular local TV channel. Jagatsinghpur-born and Cuttack resident, Alaka is known for her work in shows like

'Neijare Megha Mate', 'Sargam', 'Kie Para Kie Apanara', 'To Ankhi Mo Aaina', and 'Mo Sindurara Adhikara'. Sundays for Alaka are booked for family and friends



WhatsApp This Week

Only on **Sunday POST!**

Send in your most interesting WhatsApp messages and memes at: features.orissapost@gmail.com And we will publish the best ones

THE BEST MEMES OF THIS ISSUE

- What do you call Watson when Sherlock isn't around? Holmeless.
- You are proof that evolution CAN go in reverse.
- Brains aren't everything. In your case they're nothing.
- Any married man should forget his mistakes, there's no use in two people remembering the same thing.



New breed of celebs

Sir, This refers to the previous week's cover story on how influencers are turning actors. The entertainment industry has always been a dynamic and ever-changing landscape. With the advent of streaming platforms and the increasing demand for content, there has been a surge in opportunities for new talent. In today's digital age, the rise of social media has given birth to a new breed of celebrities - influencers. With millions of followers at their fingertips, influencers have built massive online followings by sharing their lives, opinions, and expertise on various platforms. However, in recent years, there has been a noticeable trend of influencers transitioning into the world of acting. This shift from influencing to acting can be attributed to several factors, including the evolution of the entertainment industry, the power of their personal brands, and the desire for creative fulfillment.

Kishore Sahoo, RAGHUNATHPUR

LETTERS



A word for readers

Sunday post is serving a platter of delectable fare every week, or so we hope. We want readers to interact with us. Feel free to send in your opinions, queries, comments and contributions to

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The digital age has thrown an array of challenges to traditional theatre shows but at the same time it also has offered opportunities for creative expression and wider audience outreach

WORLD THEATRE DAY - MARCH 27

Digital divide

In this digital era, where streaming platforms, virtual reality, and social media dominate the entertainment landscape, traditional theaters are believed to be on the wane, according to many. This belief is gradually gaining ground, as evidenced by the rapid drop in footfalls in some prominent auditoriums across the state.

It is now a thing of the past when drama shows like *Ashanta Graha*, *Janani*, or *Tata Niranjana* ran to packed houses for weeks. Actors and technicians used to eke out a living by performing in theaters. Is theater merely a medium of entertainment, or is there more to it? Is this form of performing art dying a slow death due to the onslaught of digital mediums? Will the golden days return? These are questions that have been a cause of concern for theater enthusiasts.

With World Theatre Day just around the corner, Sunday POST reached out to several masters of the craft, and here's what they have to say.

'No digital platform can match emotional depth of live shows'



Eminent theatre personality **Dhiru Mallick**, President of Kalinga Natya Sangh, and a founding member of Satabdira Kalakaar, one of Odisha's oldest theatre troupes, firmly believes that there was no threat to the survival of theatre in the past and there will neither be in future. He says, "As long as society exists, theatre will thrive. Rooted in the Natya Shastra, theatre has a history spanning over 5000 years. While technological advancements have transformed lighting, set design and direction, the essence of the performance remains unchanged because it is a form that breathes. Unlike digital screens, it allows the audience to feel the pulse of the performance in real-time. No digital platform can recreate the spontaneity, energy and emotional depth of a live performance."

He continues: "When an actor performs on stage, the connection with the audience is immediate and electric. Historical, mythological and musical operas, enriched with the nine rasas, continue to captivate audiences. Theatre constantly integrates new ideas in costume design, music, lighting and stagecraft, ensuring its relevance in an ever-changing world. Theatre has survived for over five millennia, continuously adapting to new challenges. However, like all performing arts, it faces significant hurdles, including inadequate performance venues, limited rehearsal spaces and insufficient financial support."

So, there is a need for a unified cultural policy is urgent. The government must take proactive steps, such as staging at least five Odia plays in different state capitals each year to promote Odia language, literature, and culture, suggests Mallick.

Establishing a state-funded repertory group that performs year-round would further strengthen the theatre movement. Additionally, the formation of a Theatre Development Corporation could provide structural and financial support, ensuring sustainable growth, he adds.

Mallick, explaining how digital revolution can help the form, said "Theatre is Odisha's heartbeat as it carries our history, language, and traditions forward. Previously, theatre performances were rarely recorded due to limited resources, resulting in the loss of valuable productions. However, the digital age has transformed this landscape. Today, most theatre groups are digitising their plays, ensuring their preservation for future generations. DD National's initiative to record and broadcast theatrical perfor-

mances has further expanded audience reach, bridging the gap between traditional theatre and modern technology."

'Digital platforms, theatre exist in different realms'



Manoj Kumar Pattanayak, President of the Odisha Natya Sangh, a federation of over 150 troupes in Odisha and recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for Direction, shares his vision on the relevance of theatre in the digital age. He says, "An era cannot exist without life. The live expression of life will always resonate with the spirit of any era. Theatre, therefore, remains always contemporary. What is contemporary today will become historical in the next

era. The magic of digital media catches our eyes for a brief moment, but it does not leave a lasting belief. It's a temporary effect. Digital platforms and theatre stages exist in different realms, and one does not affect the other."

On being asked about the coexistence of theatre with digital media, Pattanayak explains, "Yes, as I mentioned, their platforms for performance are distinct. Digital platforms require a specific financial investment for access, whereas theatre is shared organically by the masses, often for free. Theatre will continue to exist for a long time, indeed; it will stay relevant as long as human society exists." He further says, "Theatre responds to the present moment. It will adapt to the digital scope if necessary, but without compromising its essence as a live medium. Theatre should not be dominated by digital influences, but it can certainly reflect upon digital life. For me, digital life is fluid and transient, shifting quickly, like how Facebook gave way to Instagram."

Addressing the future of theatre and its challenges, he notes, "The future of theatre is brightening every day. In the past, there was no formal education or institutions dedicated to acting, but now young people are searching for acting courses and many institutions in Odisha and across India are well-established."



Though there are no dearths of training centres, the challenges lie somewhere else.

On this, he states, "The quality of live action and interaction is increasingly being replaced by the quantitative reach of digital platforms, where reactions are delayed or vague. Youngsters are preparing for digital platforms through theatre, but they are not always paying attention to the foundation that theatre provides. It's like a son forgetting his father, who gave him life and training. Another challenge is that professional theatre productions backed by big-budget investors are drawing artists away from non-profit, committed artistic groups. This is leaving amateur theatre groups, which have earned national recognition, struggling with a shortage of artists."

'People recognise theatre's value beyond entertainment'



NSDian **Satyabrata Rout**, a distinguished theatre director, scenographer, author and theatre academic, says theatre is a live medium, fundamentally based on the interaction between actors and the audience. So, unlike

digital platforms, which operate mechanically, theatre remains an immersive and participatory experience.

"Therefore, despite advancements in digital media, theatre continues to hold a distinct space as an interactive and transformative medium. Live theatre remains unparalleled because it fosters direct engagement. Unlike cinema, television, or OTT platforms, where actors are disconnected from their audience, theatre thrives on real-time interaction. While digital media offers new possibilities, it cannot replicate the active participation that defines theatre," according to him.

Rout further says, "Traditional theatre continues to coexist alongside digital entertainment. Despite the proliferation of digital content, folk and traditional theatre forms such as Pala, Dasakathia and Jatra remain vibrant, particularly in rural India. These performances continue to draw thousands of spectators, demonstrating their enduring appeal."

When asked how theatre can remain significant in this digital age and about its future and challenges, he says, "It must evolve with the times. The art form needs to engage with contemporary themes and societal changes. Ancient scripts require reinterpretation to align with present-day sensibilities. Theatre must also integrate modern scenography, lighting design and stagecraft while retaining its core essence as a live performance medium. The future of theatre in India appears promising, as people increasingly recognise its value beyond entertainment. Theatre fosters humanity, empathy and social awareness. However, challenges persist as digital platforms continue to reshape entertainment consumption. Theatre practitioners must refine their presentation styles, incorporating innovative techniques while maintaining its interactive nature. Theatre is also expanding beyond traditional performance spaces, finding applications in education, rehabilitation, corporate training and personal development. Incorporating

rating theatre into various sectors can further strengthen its relevance. Theatre in education can enhance learning experiences through demonstration and performance-based teaching methods. Additionally, theatre can be a transformative tool in rehabilitation, helping individuals develop emotional intelligence and communication skills. As theatre progresses into the 21st century, embracing new methodologies and interdisciplinary approaches will be key to its continued impact."

'Digital systems are one-sided communiqué'



Subodh Patnaik, a distinguished theatre director and playwright, is known for his significant contributions to the theatrical form of performing arts. He founded Natya Chetana, a Bhubaneswar-based theatre group comprising

25 artists, which is known for its innovative approach, focusing on minimalist sets and expressive body movements.

Sharing his thoughts on the importance of theatre in this digital age, he explains, "Digital systems are one-sided communication. The actor does not know when, by whom, and where they are being witnessed. The viewer's reaction cannot be felt, whether genuine or not. But theatre is alive, here, now, with immediate responses, whether it's a clap or an invisible slap."

He compares the impact of digital entertainment platforms to the difference between "loving a photo and loving in real life."

Patnaik says, "Digital media divides and provides individual entertainment, whereas theatre creates unity and shares pleasure among the masses. The impact here is powerful because, in theatre, quality matters, not quantity."

He also believes that traditional theatre can coexist with digital media, stating, "Folk and traditional theatre have thrived for 300 to 600 years through

waves of modernisation. Digitalisation is just one wave, and we've already seen a shift back from hybrid agriculture to traditional organic farming. A similar return to folk and traditional theatre is inevitable."

To remain relevant in the digital age, he suggests, "Theatre should take advantage of preserving and documenting the reality of live performances for future generations to research and develop 'relevant theatre' that responds to the loneliness of human society, an emerging issue caused by the impact of digital life."

Shedding light on threats, Patnaik says, "Currently, a narrative is being imposed that theatre is old-fashioned or a prehistoric form. Attempts are also being made in Odisha to adopt Broadway-style mega productions funded by digital masses, with online ticket sales. These factors may seriously affect the voluntarism and sacrifice that theatre has been built on, potentially creating a generational gap where the old becomes mere memory and gradually fades into unbelievable stories."

'True theatre enthusiasts will never desert the stage'



Sourav Gupta, Founder & Creative Director of Nandanik, a prominent theatre group based in Koraput and an Associate Professor in the Department of Journal-



ism and Mass Communication at the Central University of Odisha, emphasizes the enduring significance of theatre in the digital age.

According to him, "Theatre liberates people from the virtual feel of the digital world and provides the tangible experience of human connection." Discussing the impact of digital entertainment platforms on live theatre, Gupta acknowledges that streaming services and online content have altered audience behavior. "Digital entertainment discourages people from stepping out and visiting theatres. However, true theatre enthusiasts will always seek the magic of live performances," he asserts. Despite the shift in entertainment consumption, he firmly believes that theatre and digital media can coexist because the nature of experience is entirely different.

When asked what additional measures can be adopted to boost theatre in the digital age, Gupta stresses the importance of social engagement. "Theatre must reflect contemporary social issues. Only then will it continue to hold significance. It has nothing to compete with digital media because its purpose and impact are distinct," he states.

He goes on to elaborate, "Theatre connects us to our roots. While digital media provides information, theatre offers interpretation and guidance. It is a medium that not only entertains but also educates and inspires. Unlike digital platforms, theatre functions independently of technology, standing as a powerful tool for positive social transformation."

Gupta believes that theatre is not an outdated art form struggling to compete with digital media but a timeless medium with a distinct and irreplaceable role in society. For him, theatre is not about rivalry but about offering a unique perspective on society. Gupta sounds optimistic about the future of theatre in the face of future challenges.

"Theatre may experience fluctuations in popularity, but it will never die. The real challenge lies in the commitment of those who practice it. Theatre practitioners must stay dedicated and not succumb to compromises," he suggests, adding, "The survival of theatre depends on the passion and perseverance of its artists rather than external influences."



BLACK CAT FACTS

The idea that black cats bring bad luck is a cultural construct, not a fact. They, like all animals, deserve love, respect, and a safe home, free from the burden of unfounded superstitions

Superstitions have been a part of human culture for centuries, often rooted in ancient beliefs, folklore, and misunderstandings. Among the myriad of superstitions, those surrounding black cats are some of the most enduring and widespread. Sunday POST takes a look at its origins, cultural significance, and modern perceptions of black cats, exploring whether these beliefs are based on fact or are simply products of human imagination.

Revered black cats

The association of black cats with superstition dates back to ancient civilizations. In ancient Egypt, cats were revered and considered sacred. Bastet, the goddess of the home, fertility, and childbirth, was often depicted as a cat or a woman with a cat's head. Egyptians believed that harming a cat, regardless of its color, would bring severe punishment from the gods.

Some cats were even mummified and buried with their owners. And this positive reputation continued for thousands of years. Moreover, the Romans continued to view black cats as a good luck symbol; down to the early first millennium AD, they were often carried on board ships to ensure the safety of the voyage.

This, though, may have been as much owing to a desire to root out rodents on board the ship as any belief in the intrinsic luck that black cats conveyed.

Declining reputation

Association of black cats with bad luck emerged much later.

In medieval Europe, black cats became symbols of evil and witchcraft. During the witch hunts of the 16th and 17th centuries, black cats were often seen as the familiars of witches—supernatural entities that assisted witches in their dark practices. This belief was fueled by the Church, which sought to eradicate pagan practices and superstitions. Black cats, being nocturnal and often seen prowling at night, became easy targets for these superstitions.

Cultural superstitions

In Western cultures, particularly in the United States and parts of Europe, black cats are often associated with bad luck. One common belief is that if

a black cat crosses your path, it will bring misfortune. This superstition is deeply ingrained in popular culture and often depicted in movies and television shows, especially around Halloween. The black cat has become a symbol of the holiday, often shown with witches and other supernatural creatures.

In contrast, some Eastern cultures view black cats differently. In Japan, black cats are considered symbols of good luck. They are believed to bring prosperity and ward off evil spirits. The Maneki-neko, or 'beckoning cat,' is a common symbol in Japanese culture, often seen in businesses to attract good fortune. In some parts of Asia, black cats are also seen as protectors against evil spirits and are kept as pets for their perceived protective qualities.

Modern
cep-

perceptions and miscon-

ceptions and misconceptions. Despite the prevalence of these superstitions, modern science and logic debunk many of these beliefs. Black cats, like all other cats, are simply animals with no supernatural powers. They exhibit the same behaviors and characteristics as cats of other colors. The idea that black cats bring bad luck is a cultural construct, not a fact.

However, these superstitions have real-world consequences. Black cats are often the last to be adopted from animal shelters and are sometimes subjected to cruelty and neglect. This is a significant issue in animal welfare, as black cats are just as loving and deserving of

homes as any other cat.

Role of media and popular culture

Media and popular culture play a significant role in perpetuating these superstitions. Movies, television shows, and books often depict black cats as ominous and evil, reinforcing these beliefs. For example, in the classic horror film *The Black Cat*, the titular character is portrayed as a malevolent force. Similarly, in literature, black cats are often used as symbols of evil or bad luck, further cementing these superstitions in the public consciousness.

Challenging superstitions

It is essential to challenge and educate people about these superstitions to change perceptions and improve the treatment of black cats. Animal welfare organizations often run campaigns to raise awareness about the plight of black cats and encourage their adoption. By promoting the idea that black cats are just as deserving of love and care as any other animal, these organizations hope to reduce the stigma associated with them.

Final word

Superstitions around black cats are deeply rooted in history and cultural beliefs. While these superstitions may seem harmless, they have real-world implications for the treatment of black cats. By understanding the origins of these beliefs and challenging them with facts and education, we can work towards a more compassionate and informed society. Black cats, like all animals, deserve love, respect, and a safe home, free from the burden of unfounded superstitions.

OP DESK



Anushka Sen recently shared that South Koreans have a strong appreciation for Indian cuisine, particularly dishes like Garlic Naan and Butter Chicken, as well as Bollywood films and stars such as Shah Rukh

Anushka busts myths on Korean culture

Khan. When asked about any misconceptions she'd like to address, Anushka chose to tackle a common misunderstanding about South Korea—many believe it lacks vegetarian, vegan, and Jain food options.

She quickly refuted this claim, emphasising that there are plenty of places offering vegetarian food in South Korea.

Anushka is also working to strengthen the cultural connection between South Korea and India, as she ventures into the South Korean entertainment industry with upcoming projects. She will star in the international Korean film *Asia* and its spin-off series *Crush*, alongside South Korean Olympic shooter Kim Ye-ji.

Notably, Anushka is the first Indian celebrity to appear on billboards in South Korea, expanding her influence beyond India. She has also collaborated with Grammy-winner Ken Lewis and musician AY Young on Project 17 and became the first Indian performer to take the stage live in Times Square, New York City. Her upcoming ventures continue to capture significant attention. AGENCIES



Rashmika: The new BO queen

Rashmika Mandanna is on a winning streak, ruling the box office with back-to-back blockbusters. Dubbed the 'National Crush,' she continues to impress with her talent, screen presence and impactful roles. In just 16 months, her films *Animal*, *Pushpa 2: The Rule* and *Chhaava* have reportedly amassed a massive ₹3,300 crore combined.

With *Animal* alone earning ₹502.98 crore in Hindi, *Pushpa 2* collecting ₹812 crore and *Chhaava* grossing ₹700 crore globally, Rashmika has become one of the highest-grossing actresses in Indian cinema. Her rise puts her in league with Bollywood's top stars, and many believe she's poised to lead the box office by 2025.

According to a report in an entertainment portal, trade analyst Taran Adarsh praised her success, calling her streak a "hat trick" of blockbusters. Once the industry debated Alia Bhatt vs. Deepika Padukone—now, Rashmika is clearly a top contender.

Her momentum doesn't stop here. Rashmika is set to star in *Sikandar* opposite Salman Khan, releasing on Eid 2025. She also headlines *Kubera* with Sekhar Kammula and *Thama*, her first film with Ayushmann Khurrana, slated for Diwali 2025.

With her stellar performances and powerful lineup, Rashmika is rapidly cementing her place as one of Bollywood's biggest stars. AGENCIES



Earlier this month, Bollywood saw the debut of actor Saif Ali Khan's son, Ibrahim Ali Khan, in *Nadaanian*. Alongside him was Khushi Kapoor, daughter of the late Sridevi, who already had experience with two films before this teen rom-com hit OTT platforms. While Ibrahim is still finding

his footing in the industry, Khushi has explored various roles and genres. In her debut film *The Archies*, she played the sweet and caring Betty Cooper, while her first theatrical release, *Loveyapa*, showcased her as the vibrant, bubbly Baani. But what's next for Khushi?

Despite her roles being part of light-hearted and breezy genres, Khushi is now eager to explore darker themes. In a recent interview, the

Khushi's aspiration

star kid expressed her curiosity about the process behind thriller and horror films. She says, "I've always been curious to see what the process of a thriller-horror movie would look like; maybe not completely horror but something a bit darker than the movies I've done so far. It would be interesting to explore a slightly darker film. I like doing dramatic and emotional scenes, so I think it would be interesting to do a film that was heavier on those kinds of notes." AGENCIES



Actress Karisma Kapoor took to social media to share a series of her stunning photos, perfectly capturing her blissful mood. Last week, the *Dil To Pagal Hai* actress took to her Instagram handle and shared a couple of her photos, captioning, "Follow ur bliss #Mood." In the photos, Karisma can be seen posing against a picturesque backdrop, with the stunning scenery adding to the serene

Karisma captures essence of 'blissful mood'

and blissful vibe. The images appear to be taken during her vacation. The actress looked lovely in a white and black floral dress as she struck a pose standing on a ship.

Known for her striking presence on social media, the 50-year-old actress frequently shares gorgeous photos and stunning photoshoots,





SUDHADEVI NAYAK

Gilead: A tale of grace

Geographically, Gilead is a mountainous region east of the Jordan River, associated with the themes of refuge, healing, and promise as mentioned in the Old Testament. The eponymous novel by Marilynne Robinson, a Pulitzer Prize winner, is an amazing work of grace and benediction that leaves the reader spiritually awakened. It is a meditation on the human condition and the obligations we have towards each other, our vulnerabilities, and mutual dependence. It explores the themes of love, forgiveness, and hope, and in the process, an exploration of one's own conscience.

Gilead is a nondescript town in rural Iowa with a farming community, its grocery store, dry goods store, barbershop, gas station, and bank. It is an epistolary novel where John Ames, a congregational minister confronted with mortality, in a series of rambling letters to his seven-year-old son who will never see him as an adult, lays bare his soul, motives, ideology, reflections on the past and present, and his faith in human existence and beyond.

The book's pathos stems from the contrast between the acute awareness of his imminent demise and the son's childhood innocence. The opening lines capture the tension, setting the stage for the novel to explore the human condition in all its beauty and pain: "I told you last night that I might be gone sometime, and you said, 'Where?' and I said, 'To be with the Good Lord,' and you said, 'Why?' and I said, 'Because I am old,' and you said, 'I don't think you are old.'"

It is a story of four generations of men: a grandfather who is a firebrand antislavery pastor, his father a pacifist, himself a minister for more than forty years after inheriting the congregational pulpit from his father, recounting his life's struggles and experiences to a young son. The pastor believes in and lives by the church, though challenged by existential doubts and has the strength of his calling in the midst of great personal tragedy, losing his first wife and child. He is respected for his wisdom, and his sermons, inspired by his reading, are daunting in sheer volume, weighing on his spirit as he wonders at their disposal.

Gilead is tightly crafted, intimate in tone, a monologue that addresses questions of spirituality, faith, restoration, and redemption. With much elegance of style, he evokes the rhythms of weeks and years in the life of the church in his letters. The plot centers on his relationships and his attempts to grapple with longings, regrets, and fears inevitable to the human condition. He tries to reconcile these feelings with his convictions of God's goodness. Ames has endured agonizing loss in the course of his life and waited so long for a wife and child, yet so soon he has to leave them. He exhorts his son to abide by the fifth commandment and honor his mother. He talks of his love for his young wife: "When you love someone to the

degree you love her, you see her as God



sees her, and that is an instruction in the nature of God and humankind and Being itself."

His fraught relationship with his godson, the son of his old friend, who is guilty of many transgressions, is an important part of the book. Jack, a ne'er-do-well, brings much distress to his loving family. His taking advantage of a young, helpless girl who bears him a child and abandoning them, his subsequent marriage to a colored girl whose family does not accept him and whom he is not in a position to support, leaving his dying father, are transgressions he is not able to condone.

John Ames struggles with his stubborn righteousness and journeys from his inability to forgive to an effort at reconciliation, which is his grace. To do this, he must relinquish his ego, his sense of entitlement, and there follows an inner struggle and much prayer. Jack's sins and consequences are not up for dis-

pute, but the question of forgiveness is. The inability to forgive is the pastor's sin, not a rigid moral standard that Jack must adhere to before he is afforded the grace of forgiveness. His wife Lila offers hope: "A person can change. Everything can change."

His forgiveness of his godson is the culmination of his spiritual journey, and he realizes that Abraham himself had to leave his father's house, and "this was the narrative of all generations, and by God's grace, we become instruments of His Providence and participants in a fatherhood that is ultimately His." He blesses Jack a second time as he leaves, and the second blessing is more heartfelt and significant than his earlier blessing, where he feels the child was not honored enough. "There is a reality in blessing. It doesn't enhance sacredness but acknowledges it, and there is power in that." Total reconciliation involves acceptance of forgiveness by the offender, and we do not know this of Jack. What the aging pastor teaches is the abundance of love that God gives and is ours to freely give. "Love is stronger than death, hope more powerful than despair, grace capable of making transgressions inconsequential." Ames believes in the holiness of living an earthly life. "Our dream of life will end as dreams do end, abruptly and completely, when the sun rises, when the light comes. And we will think, All that fear, and all that grief was about nothing. But that cannot be true. I can't believe we will forget our sorrows altogether. That would mean forgetting that we had lived, humanly speaking. Sorrow seems to me to be a great part of the substance of human life. For example, at this very moment, I find a loving grief for you as you read this because I do not know you and because you have grown up fatherless."

Each individual is unique and of inestimable worth, as manifest in this novel. "Any human face is a claim on you because you can't help but understand the singularity of it, the courage and loneliness of it." As the novel ends, we realize Ames's love and loyalty for the place he has always lived in. "I love this town. I think sometimes of going into the ground here as a last wild gesture of love—I, too, will smolder away the time until the great and general incandescence." He prays his son grows up to be brave in a brave country and useful. As for him, "I'll pray and then sleep."

Robinson is that rare writer whose faith is defiant and unwavering but also searching and humble. Her words are sermons written with the sublime simplicity of the Bible, with imminent grace. She reminds us that words have the power to spare, to forgive, to do justice. Kirkus Review says, "It is a novel as big as a nation, as quiet as thought, and moving as prayer." The novel, published sixteen years ago, seems today, prescient, gesturing to our own time, asking us to be human, to see the world more deeply, to seek meaning in life. In a world that runs on tweets and whose attention span is woefully inadequate, the book is a quiet retreat into the inner self.

Sushree Sangita



PHOTO : KESHAB

WANT TO BECOME A MODEL?
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