

An elegant raconteur

The Fountain Pen Gets A Chance To Write Its Own Tale

Myra Gupta, AIS Noida, XI H

Allow me to introduce myself before you mistake me for an antique paperweight. I am Mr Fountain Pen. For centuries I've lived pressed against the hearts of poets. Breast pockets of the elite and the laymen were my first home; pocket watches and scruffy lint my first friends.

I am an 1880s fountain pen, finished in marbled 'blue pearl' that catches the light like a Mediterranean cove. My most prized possession is my tip - a gorgeous 14-karat gold tongue that has signed treaties, witnessed government secrets, failed mathematics tests, and probably given rise to a few family feuds.

I vividly remember the Victorian era - a time of delicious, ink-stained drama! My ancestors, the temperamental quills, hissed and squeaked, shedding feathers everywhere, requiring constant dipping into ink. But then came my creator, Lewis Waterman. In 1884, a leaking pen ruined an important contract, inspiring him to invent a more reliable fountain pen with a three-channel capillary

feed that balanced ink flow with incoming air. One can say I was born not from destiny, but from disastrous paperwork.

Oh, those were the times! I reminisce about being dipped into ink pots, the cool liquid rushing through my veins. I remember the tremble of writing by candlelight in 1925. My ink blurred slightly when a tear fell on the page. I moulded myself to my masters, bent and worn down to the angle of their grips. Yet, despite my elegance, I have always found humans remarkably messy. They spill coffee on essays, lose homework, and somehow misplace me every two business days. But then came my greatest tragedy, the arrival of the ballpoint pen in the 1940s. Suddenly, everyone wanted cheap, practical writing tools that didn't leak in shirt pockets. Apparently, not staining a favourite shirt became more important than artistry. Outrageous! The ballpoint was efficient, but had the charm of a parking ticket. Its oily ink rolled across paper without personality, while I glided like a figure skater

on fresh ice. Then came gel pens, copying my smoothness, with glitter and far too much confidence. But technology is my true enemy. Humans abandoned handwritten letters for emails, essays for Google Docs,

and diaries for social media. They began tapping on glowing rectangles all day. A shocking decline in standards. Today, I am a hobby; kept alone in a dry little box like a retired soldier. Yet I remain a serrated ghost of the

Victorian age, refusing to fade away. When screens crash and Wi-Fi disappears, I shall still be there, patiently waiting.

Because while others merely write, I leave a piece of myself on every page. I bleed for my art. In this modern era of rapid typing and fleeting digital notes, I stand as a testament to patience and craftsmanship. My ink flows deliberately, each stroke a dance of expression, far removed from the impersonal tap-tap of keypads. Though relegated to shelves and forgotten drawers, I harbour stories untold and emotions unspoken. I am not merely a tool but a companion to those who seek to slow down and savour the intimacy of writing. When a writer dips me into ink, a silent pact is made, one of trust and creation. I remember the careful hands that polished my body, the whispered words of inspiration I helped capture, and the quiet moments of reflection I witnessed. My legacy is not just in the words I help form but in the timeless connection I foster between mind and paper, a bond no technology can replace. So, as the world rushes forward, I remain, quietly waiting to inspire anew.



Towering TBR lists

The Unabridged Confessions Of A Serial Book Buyer

Ishi Pandey, AIS VYC Lko, Alumna

The sweet, compelling smell of a new book has once again convinced me to buy another one. 'I'll complete this one' - a promise that I make and break every time. This vicious cycle began harmlessly, with a few books my friend assured me would 'change my life'. They didn't. What did change was the structural integrity of my bookshelf. My to-be-read list is no longer a list; it's a lifestyle worthy of its own feature.

The collector syndrome

Acquisition is the true goal: colourful paperbacks, 'Buy 3, Get 1 Free' deals,

stunning covers I'd frame as art, and books bought as souvenirs on trips. I collect books the way some people collect antique teacups; not to use them, rather to admire the fantasy of one day doing so.

Shelf-introspection

My shelf resembles a leaning tower of literary ambition: part self-improvement plan, part identity crisis. If my TBR list could talk, it wouldn't whisper poetic encouragement but sigh like a disgruntled teacher. "Another one? Really?" My Goodreads shelf is a graveyard of ambitions. At last count, I'm 'currently reading' 14 books. Those are 14 very good lies, for my reading ability is currently limited to tweets and food menus.

The purchase of potential

Here's the thing though, readers are dreamers. We don't only buy books; we buy potential. A book isn't just paper and ink. It's a doorway to a wiser, more interesting version of ourselves. Owning many of them feels like a life full of possibilities. But books require time. And presence.

Yes, my TBR list is taller than me. It judges me every night as I watch sitcom reruns. But it also represents hope. Every unread book holds a version of me I could become. And one day, I'll read them all.

(Ishi Pandey is currently pursuing BA (Hons) English from Maitreyi College, DU.)