

THE LITERATURE JAYANTHI SANKAR TODAY

**COVER FEATURE—
JAYANTHI SANKAR**

**TABULA RASA — LONGLISTED FOR
THE CHOMMANAD WOMEN'S
LITERARY AWARD.**

**EXCLUSIVE CONVERSATIONS WITH
TODAY'S VOICES
JAYANTHI • SHRESTHA • BIJOY •
DHAVAL**

**ORIGINAL WRITING YOU WON'T
FIND ELSEWHERE
NEW WORK BY JAYANTHI SANKAR
& DR. JAYANT KASHIKAR**

**AUTHOR SPOTLIGHTS SHAPING
THE FUTURE
DR. SACHIN SHARMA
PIYUSH MAHISKEY**

**BOOKS UNDER THE LENS
KHANDAV BY MAHESH
RAJMANE & OTHER
EXCLUSIVE REVIEWS**

**THE LITERARY
WORLD AT A
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From The Editor-In-Chief

January arrives with quiet resolve—bringing with it crisp mornings, reflective pauses, and the promise of beginnings yet to unfold. It is a month that invites us to slow down, to listen more closely, and to return to stories that illuminate thought and stir the imagination.

As the first chapter of the year opens, we are delighted to present **Volume 6, Issue 1** of *The Literature Today*—an edition shaped by reflection, resilience, and renewal. What began as a simple idea has grown into a shared literary space, embraced by readers and writers alike, where voices converge and ideas find meaning beyond the page. With each new issue, our purpose continues to evolve: to curate writing that resonates, perspectives that matter, and stories that endure.

This January edition opens with a compelling cover feature on **Jayanthi Sankar**, whose *Tabula Rasa*, longlisted for the **Chommanard Women's Literary Award**, reflects courage, clarity, and literary reinvention—setting the tone for an issue that is reflective in spirit and forward-looking in vision.

Our **Exclusive Conversations with Today's Voices** bring together Jayanthi, Shrestha, Bijoy, and Dhaval, offering thoughtful insights into their creative journeys and the ideas shaping contemporary literature. Complementing these conversations is original writing by **Jayanthi Sankar and Dr. Jayant Kashikar**, presented exclusively to our readers.

In this issue, we also turn our gaze outward through a series of **Exclusive Coverages**. We celebrate **Mahasweta Devi's** centenary by tracing her legacy *from the streets of Bengal to the stages of London*, highlighting the evolving landscape of Indian translation. The **January Odyssey** takes readers through India's vibrant literary season—Delhi, Jaipur, and Kozhikode—offering a curated guide to the country's most anticipated festivals. For lovers of mystery, The **Agatha Christie Legacy** explores five defining tropes that continue to shape modern crime fiction, while **What Real Feminism Truly Means** by Mariyam Yasser presents a reflective and timely perspective on gender and identity. Rounding off this section, **5 Books to Reset Your Soul This January** offers a thoughtful reading list for reflection and renewal.

Further enriching the issue are our **Author Spotlights**, featuring **Dr. Sachin Sharma** and **Piyush Mahiskey**, alongside in-depth reviews, including *Khandav* by Mahesh Rajmane. Our coverage of global book news keeps readers connected to literary trends worldwide, while poems by aspiring writers celebrate emerging voices and fresh expressions.

At *The Literature Today*, we remain committed to nurturing a literary culture that values depth, dialogue, and discovery. As winter unfolds and the year finds its rhythm, we hope this edition brings warmth to your reading moments, inspiration to your thoughts, and a renewed appreciation for the written word.

We welcome your reflections and feedback at theliteraturetoday@gmail.com.

Here's to a new year of meaningful reading—and to the stories that continue to connect us.



**Dr. Mayurkumar
Mukundbhai Solanki**

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Editor,
The Literature Today, India
Best Regards,

M. M. Solanki

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Author Spotlights

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INTRODUCING

Jayanthi Sankar



Jayanthi Sankar's literary journey is defined by fearless experimentation, intellectual depth, and an unwavering commitment to storytelling that probes the complexities of the human condition. A **Singapore-based author** with deep Indian roots, she inhabits a creative space where history, psychology, and postmodern sensibilities intersect with emotional realism. Born and raised in India and residing in Singapore since 1990, Jayanthi's transnational life experience has profoundly shaped her narrative voice — one that is both culturally grounded and globally resonant. She approaches fiction as an immersive dialogue, interacting closely with her characters as they evolve, allowing each story to unfold organically through layered perspectives and inventive narrative structures.

Professionally multilingual and culturally agile, Jayanthi currently serves at the Ministry of Manpower in Singapore as a frontline interpreter in English, Hindi, Tamil, and Malayalam. This daily engagement with diverse human stories has further sharpened her sensitivity to language, nuance, and lived experience — elements that are deeply embedded in her writing. Alongside her literary career, she brings more than two decades of freelancing experience and a formative three-year stint in journalism, which together have contributed to her precision, discipline, and keen observational eye!

Her body of work stands as a compelling testament to her versatility and courage as a writer. Her debut short story collection, ***"Dangling Gandhi"***, made an immediate international impact, winning the '2020 *International Book Award for Fiction: Short Story*' presented by the American Book Fest, along with the 'Literary Titan Gold Award.' The collection signalled the arrival of a writer unafraid to interrogate history, memory, and identity through bold, unconventional lenses. She continued this trajectory with ***"Misplaced Heads,"*** a work of postmodern historical fiction that reached the final list of the '2020 *Eyeland Book Awards (Greece)*' in the Historical Fiction category, further cementing her reputation for innovative storytelling.

Jayanthi's second novel, ***"Tabula Rasa"*** expanded her global recognition, earning the title of 'Distinguished Favourite' at the 2022 NYC Big Book Award in the Historical Fiction category and receiving an 'Honourable Mention' at the 2022 San Francisco Book Festival.

The novel exemplifies her signature approach — blending meticulous research with experimental form to explore history not as a static record but as a living, contested space. Her fourth book, the novella *“When Will You Die?”* marks a deliberate shift inward, delving into the intricacies of the human psyche. The work resonated strongly with readers for its emotional intensity, psychological insight, and narrative restraint, showcasing her ability to navigate both expansive historical canvases and intimate inner worlds with equal authority.

Beyond her books, Jayanthi’s influence extends into the global literary community through active participation in major international forums. She has been a featured voice at platforms such as *APWT 2018 at Gold Coast*, the *Singapore Writers Festival*, the *Seemanchal International Literary Festival*, and the *ASEAN-India Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Writers Festival*, where she has engaged in cross-cultural conversations on craft, narrative innovation, and the evolving role of literature. Her contributions to the literary ecosystem have been widely recognized through numerous honours, including the *CLS Global Award*, the prestigious *Tagore Ratna Award*, the *LitFest Excellence Award*, the *Sahityakosh Samman* by NE8x, and her inclusion among the *Top 50 Most Influential Authors of 2021* by *DelhiWire*.

Firmly believing in literature as a catalyst for community building, Jayanthi has consistently invested in collective literary growth. In 2023, she curated and edited two significant anthologies, *“Dancing Gold Flecks”* featuring 27 unpublished stories by 18 writers from India and the Indian diaspora, while the another one titled, *“An Iron Fist in a Velvet Glove”* which is an international anthology comprising 32 previously published stories by 27 contributors from the USA, Singapore, India, the Philippines, and Myanmar. These projects reflect her editorial vision — one that values diversity of voice, thematic depth, and global collaboration.

Her commitment to nurturing emerging talent culminated in the founding of the Jay Yes Foundation, a literary initiative dedicated to building sustainable writing communities. In 2025, the foundation conducted a student workshop and successfully organized two widely acclaimed Jay Yes Short Story Writing Contests, earning recognition across the Indian subcontinent. The same year also saw the publication of two anthology volumes, *“When the Trees Remembered”* and *“The Year I Forgot to Hum”* released under Zero Degree Publishing and Kaleidoscope Publishing respectively.

Complementing her written work, Jayanthi co-hosts the podcast *L.O.L – Love Of Literature*, where she offers the vital practical insights, industry perspectives, and creative guidance to the aspiring writers and the authors. A hobbyist water colour painter, she brings the same sensitivity to colour, form, and mood to her visual art as she does to her prose. Across genres and formats, her work is united by a singular philosophy, and that is literature must question, connect, and create spaces for the meaningful dialogues!

Today, Jayanthi Sankar stands as a globally recognised author, editor, curator, and literary mentor — one who continues to push the boundaries of narrative form while remaining deeply attuned to the emotional truths at the heart of storytelling. Her journey reflects not only personal creative evolution but also a sustained commitment to fostering vibrant literary communities, making her a vital and influential voice in the contemporary literature.



QUESTIONNAIRE:

Not only is the title “When Will You Die?” is unsettling, it is also irresistibly intriguing. What led you to use a question to set the emotional tone of the novella, rather than a statement?

Jayanthi Sankar: The title came only later in the editing process, just before the manuscript was ready to reach my publisher. During that phase, I strongly felt it fit the fiction because the core plot becomes more intense with each page, as if building toward that question during a key event. The question is posed by a secondary main character to the protagonist—characters once damn affectionately close but who grew apart over time. This did spark initial debates, yet it has been widely read and reviewed.

The novella is lauded for its intense brevity. What challenges did you encounter while creating such psychological depth in a compact format?

Jayanthi Sankar: My earlier novels were historical fiction, vast in scope. My goal was to create a novella that was easy to read yet carried significant depth. As I rewrote, I had to cut out many parts I liked but that slowed the story, and that was quite difficult.

You’ve often spoken about being absorbed in your fictional worlds and interacting with your evolving characters. How did the story’s psychological tension evolve during this creative process?

Jayanthi Sankar: I had only a vague idea of the story when I began writing. My thought was to write a novella. As chapters unfolded, the story took its own turns and twists, and I let that happen. All I had to do was think like the main character and argue with other characters of the incident or scene. The chapters took shape, making the characters even more distinct.

The entire process led naturally to psychological tension and the sociopsychological element—which was not even planned to begin with.

This novella delves into unresolved traumas, suppressed fears, and silent emotions. Which elements of the human psyche did you find most intriguing to portray?

Jayanthi Sankar: Looking back, I saw strong sibling love transform into intense resentment as the story developed, and I used that shift to anchor my story. I suppose that’s the focal point I was drawn to explore.

The book adopts an epistolary and postmodern structure. What attracted you to the form, and how did it help you express yourself in ways conventional storytelling couldn’t?

Jayanthi Sankar: The epistolary form enabled me to comfortably write in the first person singular, allowing expression in plot advancement and past and background. Readers, as we all know, want a memorably lasting experience in addition to the story. Therefore, I experimented with other diverse tools to build the postmodern structure, though they weren’t preplanned.

You’ve lived across different cultures, especially in India and Singapore. How did this cross-border experience affect the emotions and relationships portrayed in your writing?

Jayanthi Sankar: Having an engineer father with a central government job meant that, as the eldest of four, I grew up in eleven different cities and towns across the subcontinent, from Coimbatore in the south to Shillong in the northeast. Life through a quiet childhood, formative teen years yearning for friendships, and an indecisive young adulthood ultimately equipped me for my future in Singapore, in retrospect. Subsequently, thanks to the fabulous branches of our National Library, I began reading extensively, like there was no tomorrow, and that led me to try writing—both of which I’d never expected earlier in life.

I've lived here for thirty-six years, which is the longest I've resided in one place. I could adapt to the new place, people, and culture quicker than many of my contemporary immigrants. Our island nation is a typical example of a diverse population with a substantial floating population as well. Therefore, my stories naturally include dynamics across cultural and emotional spaces.

Q **Considering your language abilities and interpreting work, how do language sensitivity, silence, and nuance shape your narrative approach?**

Jayanthi Sankar: Language is mostly selected by the setting, in my honest opinion. My characters are certainly influenced by their background, geography, and therefore language, tending to have specific linguistic patterns. I can easily picture the way they speak and their body language.

Q **You are always experimenting with form and content. Where does “When Will You Die?” sit within your broader literary journey, especially after award-winning works like “Tabula Rasa,” “Misplaced Heads,” and “Dangling Gandhi”?**

Jayanthi Sankar: “When Will You Die?” is my fourth book and has reached more readers than my previous novels, most probably because it turned out to be an easier and shorter read. Numerous readers have shared this sentiment. I think authors inevitably produce a variety of work—lauded, popular, and accessible. One piece of work doesn't need to resemble another within one body of work.

Q **Readers often feel this story's impact long afterward. What kind of emotional residue did you want the book to leave behind?**

Jayanthi Sankar: I think any residue should make readers wonder about the layers of fiction, not just the events. However, it isn't predictable. As an author, it would make me happy if readers contemplated the philosophical and psychological depths of the unsaid.

Such experiences are possible only with genuine participative reading—something I value deeply. That is nearly impossible when reading happens solely for consumption. Dissatisfaction may occur in some readers, and the writer could be discouraged, but other readers are always available—ready to invest their time and focus—and with them, the magic might eventually happen.

Q **We hear you designed the book cover of your novella. What would you suggest to an author who wishes to design her own?**

Jayanthi Sankar: If I can do it, any creator should be able to do it. An author knows her book best, in depth—often better than AI—and so her cover idea will suit her fiction. She can at least use it as a base to show a professional designer. I'm currently designing the draft cover of my WIP. Sometimes, I'm also commissioned to design book covers by fellow authors for their publications.

Q **What comes first for you—the plot or the characters—and why?**

Jayanthi Sankar: With a grand backdrop and a strong protagonist, *Misplaced Heads* was more plot-driven, while *Tabula Rasa*, with its organically unfolding characters, was nearly character-driven. Certain characters from *Tabula Rasa* led me naturally to create this novella, which in turn has inspired my current WIP.

Q **Your faith in literature as a tool for community building shines through the Jay Yes Foundation and your anthologies. How does this belief relate to the novella's themes of connection and disconnection?**

Jayanthi Sankar: The novella is an imaginary world I created, inviting readers to come explore to experience, but the initiatives of the foundation are real—and they don't meet, you see. I keep one thing in mind while creating my characters—human beings are flawed.

I've also learned that my fictional characters often give greater insights into real people than real-life individuals give for my character building.

The foundation, on the other hand, genuinely aims to build communities that write and to remain an inclusive platform—bringing in new jury members and media partners each year—and to continue building literary communities where both human minds and hearts can come together to create meaningful literary art. With no monetary investment, it commits only consistent time and collective efforts towards literary causes to discover fresh voices from across the world. I had no guidance, mentor, or support when I began writing, so I mentor many aspirants, and the foundation emerged from that. With no submission fee and the opportunity to win a traditional publishing deal, the contest hopes to set a positive example for similar initiatives in the future. Not all creative minds are self-motivated, and many retreat upon seeing “submission fees.” An anthology volume will be published. None of this would have moved beyond an idea without the generous support of my publisher.

Q With your journalism background, how do fact, observation, and imagination combine in your fiction, especially in psychologically intricate works like this one?

Jayanthi Sankar: It took me three full years to conclude that journalism wasn't my cup of tea—it clashed with my sensitivities as a fiction writer. When I observe situations, freezing as an affected person, I analyze my own and others' psychology better, and this has helped me overcome some of the hardest psychological struggles. This has always helped in my creative art. Often, my craft observes my characters develop, soon taking control, pushing me aside or even completely out. I simply have to get inside their minds. That's the beginning of my process, and from there, it's set. Then, I'm constantly surprised by how layering happens organically. I just need to let it happen without resistance.

Q Do you identify with your main character, or do you create characters who are your opposite?

Jayanthi Sankar: I want to live lives that are completely different from mine. So, my characters naturally possess none of my traits, and I love creating varied characters regardless of whether I like or dislike them, inhabiting my fictive world with them. They are my exact opposite. That's precisely why readers are puzzled by the absence of the author. Their curious search for the author's life is often disappointed. My fiction largely reflects Singapore and its people, as I've lived here for more than three and a half decades.

Q Did you always want to be an author?

Jayanthi Sankar: Few years after I started reading seriously during my twenties, I didn't realize that a critic was forming in me. And when I came to know of her after a few years, I had to find out how difficult it was to write before I could even think of criticizing others' works. Turning Point, a short story based on an early morning dream, got published in print. Yet, it took me several more years before I believed I could pursue writing. Many elders in my extended family don't believe I write, even after 30 years.

Q Where is your storytelling headed next, now that you've explored identity, history, and the darker corners of the human psyche?

Jayanthi Sankar: I anticipate fictionalized stories of loss, betrayal, scams, and challenges drawn from the lived experiences of migrant workers emerging from me, though the time is not ripe yet. Their cries are building within me and need to reach a larger audience. There are many instances of affected businesses and companies as well, with individual employment agents often exploiting ignorant and naïve workers. I listen daily to countless heart-wrenching and frustrating voices at work, and together they form a significant part of the human experience in this ever-changing world. It is a completely different world, especially for people like us—the privileged section of society.



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AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH

Dr. Jayant Kashikar

About the author

Dr. Jayant Kashikar is an orthopaedic surgeon, fitness enthusiast, and advocate of holistic well-being. With years of medical experience and a deep understanding of the human body, he believes that true fitness extends beyond physical strength to the harmonious alignment of body, mind, and soul.

He is the author of *Fitness and You: A Holistic Approach to Well-Being*, a book that blends medical insight with mindful living. Drawing from his professional journey, Dr. Kashikar explores how physical ailments often stem from mental and emotional imbalances, encouraging readers to view fitness as a path toward inner balance rather than mere physical perfection.

A passionate marathon runner, long-distance cyclist, and swimmer, he has completed multiple marathons, cyclothons, and swimming events, embracing endurance as a way of life. His philosophy emphasizes conscious movement, self-awareness, and gratitude, inspiring individuals to treat the body as a sacred space and fitness as a lifelong practice of connection and purpose.



QUESTIONNAIRE:



As both an orthopedic surgeon and a competitive hybrid athlete, how did your medical training influence the way you define the concept of ‘True Fitness’ in your book, “Fitness And You”?

Dr. Jayant Kashikar: My medical training taught me one fundamental truth: the body is not a machine built only for performance, but a living system designed for balance, longevity, and adaptation. As an orthopedic surgeon, I see the consequences of chasing aesthetics or intensity without understanding structure, recovery, or alignment. As an athlete, I experience what disciplined movement can do for the mind and spirit. In *Fitness and You*, I define true fitness as the ability to live fully, pain-free, mentally clear, emotionally stable, and physically capable, across all stages of life, not just at peak performance years.



You emphasise that fitness is not just about appearance but about how one thinks and lives. What moment in your own journey made this belief non-negotiable for you?

Dr. Jayant Kashikar: There was a phase in my life when outward fitness existed, but inner calm did not. Despite training hard and achieving milestones, I noticed mental fatigue, emotional stress, and reduced joy. That contrast became a turning point. I realised that visible strength without inner balance is incomplete. True fitness, as I explain in *Fitness and You*, must support clarity of thought, emotional resilience, and purposeful living, otherwise it remains



Having completed marathons, duathlons, and CrossFit events, what lessons from endurance sports most strongly shaped the philosophy behind your book, “Fitness And You”?

Dr. Jayant Kashikar: Endurance sports teach humility and patience.

They show you that progress is slow, setbacks are inevitable, and consistency matters more than talent. You cannot rush adaptation, physically or mentally. These lessons deeply influenced *Fitness and You*, where I emphasize sustainable effort, respect for recovery, and listening to the body. Endurance taught me that fitness is not about conquering the body, but collaborating with it.



Many people struggle with consistency more than knowledge. From your experience, what is the biggest mental block that prevents people from committing to a fitness lifestyle?

Dr. Jayant Kashikar: The biggest mental block is the all-or-nothing mindset. People believe fitness requires perfection, perfect routines, perfect diets, perfect motivation. When life interferes, they quit. In *Fitness and You*, I stress that fitness must adapt to life, not the other way around. Consistency comes from compassion, not pressure. Small, repeated actions done with awareness build lasting change.



The book connects physical strength with emotional peace and spiritual growth. How can someone with a busy, stressful life begin integrating this holistic balance realistically?

Dr. Jayant Kashikar: Balance does not require extra time; it requires intention. Even ten minutes of mindful movement, conscious breathing, or silent reflection can reset the nervous system. In *Fitness and You*, I guide readers to integrate wellness into daily life, how they walk, eat, breathe, and rest. When movement becomes mindful, and rest becomes intentional, even a busy life can support holistic growth.

Q

You describe fitness as a lifelong journey rather than a short-term goal. How can the readers shift their mindset from ‘results-driven’ to ‘process-driven’ wellness?

Dr. Jayant Kashikar: By redefining success. Instead of asking, “How do I look?” one should ask, “How do I feel? How do I function? How do I recover?” In *Fitness and You*, I encourage readers to celebrate daily discipline, improved energy, better sleep, and emotional stability. When the process becomes meaningful, results follow naturally, and stay longer.

Q

Your book speaks to beginners and seasoned fitness enthusiasts alike. How did you ensure that the guidance remained practical and inclusive for all age groups and fitness levels?

Dr. Jayant Kashikar: I focused on principles. Human bodies differ, but foundational needs, movement, recovery, nutrition, and mindfulness remain universal. In *Fitness and You*, I offer adaptable frameworks rather than rigid programs, allowing each reader to personalize their journey based on age, ability, and lifestyle. Fitness should empower, not intimidate.

Q

Mental clarity is a recurring theme in the book. In your personal routine, how do physical training and mindfulness practices complement each other?

Dr. Jayant Kashikar: Physical training sharpens my focus, while mindfulness keeps me on right track. Training teaches discipline; mindfulness teaches awareness. Together, they create clarity. Even during intense workouts, I remain conscious of breath, posture, and intention. This integration, which I emphasize in *Fitness and You*, transforms exercise into a form of moving meditation.

Q

As someone who truly lives what he teaches, how do you stay motivated on days when discipline feels harder than inspiration?

Dr. Jayant Kashikar: Fitness is not something I do, it is who I am.

On difficult days, I lower intensity but never abandon the habit. *Fitness and You* teaches that showing up imperfectly is still progress. Discipline, when rooted in self-respect rather than pressure, carries you through low days.

Q

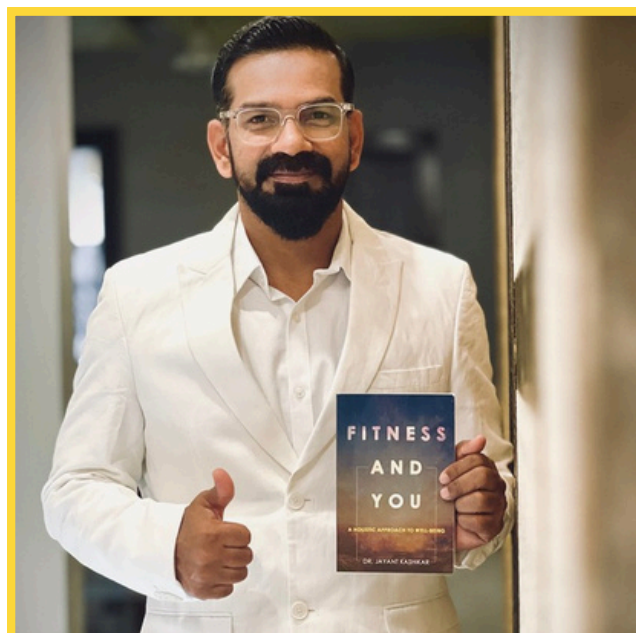
You encourage the readers to listen to their inner voice. In a world full of fitness trends and misinformation, how can one learn to trust their body and intuition?

Dr. Jayant Kashikar: By slowing down and observing. Pain, fatigue, and emotional resistance are signals, not weaknesses. In *Fitness and You*, I urge readers to become students of their own bodies. Trends change, but bodily wisdom remains constant. When you move with awareness and reflect honestly, intuition becomes a reliable guide.

Q

If a reader were to take just one life-changing habit away from your book, “Fitness And You” what would you want that habit to be and why?

Dr. Jayant Kashikar: I would want them to build a daily practice of “Conscious Movement” no matter how small. Movement done with awareness heals the body, calms the mind, and reconnects one with purpose. This single habit has the power to transform not just physical health, but the way one lives, thinks, and grows. That is the heart of *Fitness and You*.



AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH

Dhaval Birajdar



About the author

Dhaval Birajdar is a bestselling Indian author and academician based in Mumbai. He gained national recognition with his crime-thriller novel *Mumbai Experiment*, which achieved the #1 Best Seller position on Amazon Kindle India, ranking first across the Crime, Thriller & Mystery and Action & Adventure categories. The novel was widely appreciated for its realism, psychological depth, and authentic portrayal of urban crime, establishing him as a strong voice in contemporary Indian fiction.

He is also the author of *366 Days*, *A Knotty Affair*, and *The 3 Musketeers*, showcasing his versatility across genres and narrative styles. His writing reflects a structured and analytical approach, influenced by his background in engineering, while remaining emotionally grounded and character-driven. Alongside his literary career, Dhaval Birajdar serves as an Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering at D. J. Sanghvi College of Engineering, Mumbai, with over a decade of experience in teaching, research, and student mentorship. He integrates real-world applications, interdisciplinary thinking, and innovation-driven perspectives into both his academic and literary pursuits, bridging engineering rigor with creative storytelling.

QUESTIONNAIRE:



You balance life as an engineering professor and a bestselling novelist. How does your analytical training shape the way you construct a crime narrative like, “*Mumbaii Expeeriment*?”

Dhaval Birajdar: For me, engineering and fiction are not opposites but extensions of the same thinking. My analytical training leads me to treat crime as a system under stress, where failure emerges from small, ignored compromises rather than sudden events. In *Mumbaii Expeeriment*, crime is never isolated it grows out of institutional pressure, ambition, fatigue, and silence, with every action following a clear cause–effect–consequence chain. I avoid narrative shortcuts, ensuring that clues, investigations, and revelations are earned, yet I also recognize that human behaviour is the most unpredictable variable of all. Ultimately, I write crime fiction the way I approach engineering by tracing failures, only this time within human systems.



The novel is built on two parallel timelines that function as equal pillars of the story. At what stage did this structure emerge? Was it planned like an engineering blueprint or discovered during writing?

Dhaval Birajdar: The structure has a long gestation, but its final form is very recent. The core story of *Mumbaii Expeeriment* was first developed in 2012. At that stage, the idea of parallel timelines existed more as an instinct than a formal structure. I knew the past mattered deeply to the present, but I didn’t yet have the narrative maturity or the life experience to let both timelines carry equal weight. Over the last six months, I revisited the manuscript with a very different lens both as an engineer and as a writer who has evolved over time.

That’s when the two-timeline structure was consciously refined and strengthened. The updates were not cosmetic; they were structural. I re-engineered the narrative so that the past and present function as equal pillars rather than a primary story with a secondary backstory. Those six months were less about rewriting and more about recalibration tightening causality, deepening psychological continuity, and ensuring that events in the past actively shape choices in the present. What was once intuitive became deliberate.

So while the story’s emotional and conceptual roots go back to 2012, the version readers see today is the result of a recent, focused update one that reflects years of professional, personal, and creative growth.



The protagonist, an IPS officer, is battling both a brutal investigation and the fragile demands of new fatherhood. Why was this emotional duality essential to the story you wanted to tell?

Dhaval Birajdar: That layer became deeply personal for me after I became a father two years ago. Fatherhood transformed duty from something I could intellectualize into something visceral risk was no longer abstract, and every decision carried the weight of shaping another life. When I revisited *Mumbaii Expeeriment*, this experience naturally flowed into the protagonist. Placing an IPS officer in the phase of new fatherhood felt honest: you don’t get to compartmentalize brutality at work and tenderness at home. The investigation demands toughness and moral clarity, while fatherhood demands patience and emotional presence, creating a quiet inner conflict no uniform can shield. That duality pushed the novel beyond crime-solving into something more intimate, exploring how power, fear, love, and responsibility coexist within the same individual.

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH

Piyush Mahiskey



About the author

Piyush Mahiskey is a novelist and Technology Architect based in Nagpur, India. He holds an academic background in Electrical Engineering from YCCE College and Software Systems from BITS Pilani, and brings the same clarity and discipline to his writing that defines his work in technology.

His debut novel, *Durga in Nigeria*, is a quiet and contemplative exploration of diaspora rituals, emotional inheritance, and identity. Set during Navratri and Dusshera in a Nigerian city, the novel reflects on silence, memory, and myth, favoring emotional depth and restraint over spectacle.

Professionally, Piyush leads digital transformation initiatives at Infosys Nagpur, specializing in full-stack development and software architecture. His literary practice mirrors his technical precision—iterative, deliberate, and rooted in psychological realism. Deeply influenced by Nagpur's cultural landscape and festivals such as Pola, Marbat, and Navratri, he approaches literature as emotional architecture rather than performance, offering stories that honour silence and earned revelation.

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