



THE ASIAN SCHOOL
DEHRADUN

Reflections

Books are always a good choice



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An anthology of short stories written by the budding
authors of The Asian School.



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From the Principal's desk



Mrs. Ruchi Pradhan Datta

“After nourishment, shelter and companionship,
stories are the thing we need most in the world.”

— **Philip Pullman** (English writer)

“Start writing, no matter what. The water does not flow until the faucet is turned on.”

So said, American novelist and short story writer Louis L'Amour and it was similar advice that we gave to our students, as school life began, slowly but steadily, progressing towards normalcy.

The path ahead for those who attempted was challenging as after nearly two years of losing touch with writing, most found the idea of channelling their thoughts into text a tad bit daunting.

Nevertheless, a few brave ones did put pen to paper or rather clicked away at the keyboard to come up with stories and sharing of life experiences, which our English teachers then meticulously collated and curated in the form of this book.

The writers are all amateurs and students of our school and I am positive that with more such opportunities and endeavours and a further honing of skills, their writing acumen will grow from strength to strength. Till such time they need our support and encouragement so that the writer's flame remains ignited.

A special word of gratitude to Mr Madanjeet Singh Juneja, Vice President of the school, whose vision gave wings to this idea. Also, a special mention of Ms Namrata Kapoor for editing and Mr Manish Dhasmana for designing the book, which we have fondly christened, 'Reflections'.

Happy reading!

Editor's Note



Mrs. Namarta Kapoor

Debuts and inaugural moments of any journey are special. Undoubtedly, it is same for us as we bring you the first edition of 'Reflections'- an anthology of short stories by the Asianites. A few months back it all started as a dream, not being sure it would come true or not. But we believed that writing potential exists in all, it is the urge to write that a few possess. It has been a constant endeavour here at The Asian School to stir this urge by getting children to write about the things that they face, see or do. Hence gradually we started to work on this. Mistakes were inevitable in the beginning and everyone was skeptical whether this would be a success. It was just one of those journeys that people would eventually give up after a single breakdown. Yet against all odds I'm proud to say that 'We Made It'. We are proud of a small group of students represented here and hope that this bead start will help them develop into writers they want to be realising with time that writing is an almost entirely unique cognitive art, an entirely unique form of thinking. The anthology comprises stories that brim with the storytelling verve, imagination and talent of the writers. All are a product of hardwork and commitment. For all of the authors this is their first brush with the printer's ink. There are time- slips, childhood trauma, historical fiction, spectacular fiction and slices of life, an abundance of stories. What we have here is a fusion of beautiful sparks, glinting fragments, wonderful suggestions. Each of these tastes and samples hints at something great to follow. Pulling together this bundle of stories and then sharing this tangible gift with you is pleasurable.



Mothers are God's own Angels to be Cherished

The first hug of comfort a newborn gets is from his own mother, the first loving glance with a sweet smile that's how I remember my mother.

I have never seen someone so down to earth and a human being so kind and pure. She always would tell me “Sania, the first word you uttered was Maa and I was so overjoyed on hearing it’.

I was her rainbow and she always made me feel like I was a precious gift received from God. She was my very own guiding light. Why God called her to heaven, I am not able to comprehend, surely, I needed her the most. Without her the life's path seems a long winding road, I find myself lost.

Maa was a person a lot ahead of her time, she had this knack of making predictions come true. A total problem solver she was.

I remember opening my eyes each morning to the merry sound of her voice calling my name softly. Getting me ready for school, all neat clean

Mothers are God's own Angels to be Cherished

and pretty in the most beautiful frocks, serving me my favorite breakfast and walking me to my kindergarten school. . She kept me like a princess and never let me know how weak she was getting day by day battling with the disease that was making home in her body.

I was too young and immature at that time to understand my mother's struggles, for her sweet face always radiated a smile probably because she never wanted to see her family sad. I wish I could have been her support when she was being body shamed by her uncaring near and dear ones.

The only treasure now left with me is her memories, of our times spent together. I can never erase her lasting impressions from my heart. I've lost count of times I've cried, missing her presence. I can recall so many instances of her compassion, like the times when she would open the windows to let out the bees which would at times mistakenly enter our rooms. No beggar went away without alms from her doorstep.

Mothers are God's own Angels to be Cherished

She was an inspiration to me. 'Sania always carry yourself with your head held high “that's what she often said to me. Now life without her is just like a body having a functioning heart and brain but the spirit missing.

The last time I held her hand, I remember the gentle manner in which she separated my hold and told me “Sania, you must learn to have faith in your abilities and be independent '. Perhaps she knew that time was running out for her and my attachment to her would cause me grief when she would be gone, so in her own way she started avoiding me.

One day she asked me if I would like to go to a far away boarding school to study and live in its hostel. I lied to her, pretending to be strong said “Yes, of course “. But inside me I was in tears, I never wanted to leave her side not even for a moment but she left me forever.

I wish I had told her the truth then, that I loved her very much and had never let her leave my hand, perhaps she would have been with me now.

Mothers are God's own Angels to be Cherished

I 'am always going to regret that I was not there beside her in her illness, when she needed me the most. I remember when I use to be down with cold and fever, my mother would stay awake the whole night and attend to me.

But I never got the chance to look after her in her last days. I was not by her side when she was fighting for her last breath. Ever since, never a day has passed when I have slept in peace. Nothing feels like before, I miss her so much. I feel wounded with the loss of the priceless bond that was between Her and Me.

Sania Mirza
Class 12 C



The Book of Dreams

Jace was heading towards his school. He noticed a leather-bound book sprawled on the footpath. He picked it up and when he was fairly sure that it was discarded, shoved it in his bag.

He was already running late so he rushed to school but not before he noticed that the book gave off sleepy vibes.



The Book of Dreams

At school he wasn't able to focus at all because he was feeling sleepy. When the dispersal bell rang, he approached his friend Rahul and expressed his doubts about the book. Together they decided to explore the book.

They went to Jace's house where his mother told them to wait in Jace's bedroom while she prepared the food. They were so eager to explore the book that they didn't even bother taking off their shoes. The preface said; Read this book, sure, if you must; to get sweet dreams, us, you trust. Jace thought this was peculiar.

Nevertheless, he flipped ahead. Soon, both of them were going through captivating and mesmerizing dream stories. Only when Jace's mother arrived and woke them up did they realize that the book had worked its magic.

Ansuman Panwar
Class IX E



血清素 [SEROTONIN]

“Mom please don't leave me, don't leave me behind” Alice said with tears in her eyes, “if you leave who'll be there to take care of me, who'll hold me close when I'm in pain? Please don't leave, mom, this is not fair” she said, her voice shaking. “My darling, I'm not leaving forever, I'll be back soon, sweetheart” Alice's mother, Amelia Sinclair was leaving for the moon, literally. Amelia Sinclair was an astronaut who's dream since birth was to go to the moon and it was finally coming true but the only person making her hesitate was her own daughter, a daughter who was always pessimistic. Any other kid would be proud of the fact that their parent is an astronaut and brag about it but Alice was a total opposite, she hated her mother's profession.

“We've talked about this for so long now, Alice. Let's not be the buzz kill and ruin this moment, just hug me and tell me you'll see me glide

血清素 [SEROTONIN]

off on TV and cheer for me as loud as you can, how about that?" Amelia said, holding hands with her beloved daughter. The only thing that could ever actually stop Amelia from achieving her dream would be Alice. "Mom this isn't a joke, you can't actually be risking your life for this, please don't do it, please" Alice said, pleadingly. Alice loved her mom more than anyone else in the whole world and the only person she's ever fully trusted is going to risk her life for her dream; it's hard to accept that. "My sweet girl, I love you; you've got to know that. I'm not going to die, everything's already in motion and this has been my lifelong dream, isn't that an enough reason to let me go?" Amelia asked, looking down at her daughter's beautiful face.

Amelia had never doubted this trip to the moon. Why? Because she was the exact opposite of her daughter, she was always positive and happy but that's what made it so hard for Alice to let go, because her mother was her source of serotonin. "Ok! Let's make a deal. I will go to the moon and wave you hi, and you, my pretty girl" Amelia

血清素 [SEROTONIN]

squeezed Alice's cheeks like they were marshmallows, “will record that moment and we'll watch it together when I come back, how about that?” Amelia stopped talking and brought out her hand to shake it with Alice's. Alice tried to resist it as much as she could but a soft smile appeared on her face despite the tears running down her flushed cheeks, “You're such a nerd” she said as she wiped her face with the sleeve of her hoodie, “why did you have to do this on my birthday though, that is totally uncool of you.” Alice said as she looked up at the sky with one hand interlocked with her mother's and the other hiding direct sunlight from falling onto her eyes.

“Is this a yes? Are you really letting me go finally?” Amelia beamed with happiness, “yay! My daughter said yes!” she said, jumping up and down like a little toddler who had just got a toy after hours of nagging. “Mom, stop it, this is embarrassing.” Alice said in an annoyed manner even though she had a big smile, similar to her mother's, plastered on her face. “My hello from the moon will be your

血清素 [SEROTONIN]

gift for today, isn't it so cool?" Amelia said, hugging Alice right after, "sure, mom, whatever you say." Alice replied in a nonchalant manner, meanwhile, she had felt happy inside just because her mom was happy too.

"Amelia, we need to leave now, conclude your goodbyes." Amelia's co-worker, also the astronaut who'd be going to the moon with her on this very day, said. "Okay, now you *HAVE* to remember our deal, alright darling? When I come back, we'll have your favorite – brownie with ice cream on top, deal?"

"Deal. Now go before I change my mind."

-A year later -

"Alice, I'm going to need you to cooperate with me if you want to get better." Millie, Alice's therapist said. Alice was looking out of the window like she always did ever since she had started coming for therapy, "what if I don't want to get better? What if I don't want to move on?" she said in a monotone our voice, still looking distantly out of the window.

血清素 [SEROTONIN]

“We know all this started when your mom died on the day of your birthday but we need to go deeper in order to help you to come back to the real you, Alice. Please, let's help each other out here, how about it?” Millie said sympathetically. “the '*real me*' died along with mom, and if she's never coming back, neither is the '*old me*'.” Alice replied.

Yes, Amelia had died that day when she had left for the moon but not on her way there; she died on her way back. She completed her part of the 'deal' but couldn't witness her daughter doing the other part. The moon became a little selfish in keeping Amelia with itself, making Alice's worst nightmare come true. “Millie, do you think she died in a painful manner or she died peacefully? Knowing the type of woman she was, you could never tell.” Alice said. Millie looked at her, knowing how it feels to lose one's mother but being a therapist, she also knew that everyone feels and deals with pain differently, you can never actually, genuinely know what it must be like for someone else.

血清素 [SEROTONIN]

“I actually saw your mother leave for the moon, you know? I had followed her career for a long time before she passed away and you're absolutely right. When it comes to Amelia Sinclair, you can never tell.” She answered, “but you know what? I think she actually died satisfied. She had a beautiful daughter, she accomplished her dream by reaching the moon and she had a loving family. There's nothing more she could've ever wanted. I saw her interviews and she always smiled, and it wasn't a smile-for-the-camera, it was a genuine happy smile. So yes, I do think she died peacefully.” She stopped and looked where Alice always stared and saw the faint moon that you sometimes see during the day. Alice never stopped loving her mother, it wasn't ever the physical being she adored, it was the spirit inside.

Alice smiled softly like she did when her mom was leaving, she was on the verge of tears, “can death be peaceful? If it can, I wish my mom was at the peak of peace in her last moments. I hope my mom died knowing how much I loved her

血清素 [SEROTONIN]

and how proud I was of her. It's too late to brag about an astronaut for a mother but its never too late to say 'I love you too, mom. I love you so, so much. More than you can ever imagine'," Alice said, finally breaking her outer shell and crying, "I miss her, I miss her so much but I can't tell her that because she's gone and I despise her for leaving me behind. I hate the fact that I love her so much and the fact that I knowingly let her go. I knew the risks yet I let her go." Alice had her head in her hands, sobbing non-stop. Millie could feel the pain in her voice and that was the worst part of her job. She loved helping people but the journey there was painful for both parties.

Millie stood up, sat next to Alice and gave her a warm hug, "she would've been proud of you for letting it all out. You're a brave girl, Alice. Losing a parent is the worst feeling in the world but after a year of staying in your room and starving yourself, you finally had the courage to bring yourself here for so many days and that makes you such a strong person and I hope you're aware of

血清素 [SEROTONIN]

that.” Millie said. “I wish I knew. I wish I had kept my ground and not let her go.” Alice said, embracing the hug.

“I know, sweetheart. But if she never had the feeling of regret, you shouldn't either.”

“How do I know she died peacefully?”

“Because she had you and that's all she ever needed to be at peace, nothing more, nothing less.”

“Because of me?”

“*You* were her serotonin, Alice. You were her peace of mind.”

Siyaa Sarkar
Class XI F



Mistletoe

It was the last month of the year, cold and chilly gloomy but filled with joy, as the snow fell on the window sill, a pretty little girl sat on her bed at the regional hospital, so weak and pale, her high cheekbones, darkened under the eyes, so weak that one could count her ribs. Oh how wonderful it was, Christmas was near and fresh snowflakes fell on the ground, the neat white streets, huge green lampposts covered with white dust one calls snow, frost on the glass and the lit-up stores filled with the smell of cakes and brownies and candies, Christmas was her favourite festival after all. The little girl was loved by everyone in the hospital, smiling every day and was the sweetest and most generous girl but the poor soul had got her legs paralysed, but that did not stop her, she never felt bad for herself and always gave back love to everyone, she was the joy of the hospital. She sat in ward 999, aesthetically decorated and filled with

Mistletoe

presents from every man in the hospital, she couldn't speak well, spoke a few words that too were very unclear.

The nurse entered and started changing her drip when a man entered who was about six feet tall wearing a long black coat and huge boots. The nurse greeted him with concern trying hard to smile. The man had a bouquet of white roses and two big boxes neatly wrapped in brown, with a tag stating; mistletoe. He entered the room and the sweet little girl was delighted to see him, she never knew her parents, they never told her about them either, but the man was the only person who came to meet and spend time with her, she did not know who he was but he cared for her a lot, he always looked after her as his very own. The man gave the bouquet of white roses to her, the girl took a huge sniff, smiled and bowed her head as a gesture of gratitude she then took one rose and gave it to the tall man and in a weak voice she said “tttt-ake -it.”

He accepted it with a small comforting smile and then said “ did you like them Mistletoe

Mistletoe

?”Mistletoe smiled. He then took her weak little hands in his huge hands and gave them a soft kiss and spoke “you loved these flowers which we grew ” and paused, He then rephrased his sentence and said, “I know how much you love white roses .” Mistletoe looked at him and tried hugging him, he then said “well mistletoe look what I have got for you in this box ” he said while handing her this big brown box. The little girl opened the box and it was full of brownies.

The man said “it's your favourite brownies, I made them today morning, fresh with gran- ” he gulped and said “with my mother, she especially sent these with love for you.” The girl was so happy that she took his hands, put them on her heart, and smiled.

Mistletoe then started eating her favourite brownies, they were a little hard to bite so the man took out the special sweet-smelling syrup the syrup was so delicious that as he opened the box the smell of the syrup floated around the hospital , he dipped one brownie in it and asked the girl to eat it, they

Mistletoe

were now soft and delicious, the man then said “I know you like your brownies soft with this syrup ” and chuckled. The girl ate her brownies and looked at the man with those big emerald eyes, so beautiful, cunning but innocent.

Mistletoe then tried to say “ Elp- story ” the man understood and said, “oh you want to listen to more stories of my little girl Elpis, don't you ?” he said with a naive voice. The girl enjoyed the stories he told her about his little girl and she keenly used to listen to them, her innocent adventures, funny words and what not, she always related to Elpis. “well then as you say ” He kept all the stuff aside held her hand firmly and started his story, “you know my little Elpis used to love winters and Christmas and she loved painting the cold winter views, she loved the doves and the bunnies ” as he proceeded the hospital staff started gathering around them. He continued “oh! how she loved winters and roses, there was always a rose pot in her bedroom, she loved roses so much that in these winter conditions I helped her grow her favourite

Mistletoe

rose,” The man said with a smile and then looked at the girl she was smiling and listening to him so enrapt, the emeralds in her eye made space for her pupils to widen, she loved it so much. He told her tales of his 'beloved Elpis ' and everyone was laughing and giggling at her beautiful, naughty but innocent tales, all the staff there, enjoying the stories.

He then said, “well as you know my Elpis loved the snow, there was a time when I took her to paint a beautiful frozen lake, in a small wasteland she painted it so beautifully that every chill we felt every scent we breathed was reflected in that picture” He took a deep breath and proceeded “while we were at the lake that day a white dove was sitting on a pole nearby and Elpis my beautiful girl fell in love with it, she quickly started drawing the bird but the featherweight fell as a strong wind struck it, my sinless Elpis in love with that dove jumped on the surface of the frozen la...” before he could finish the old doctor smith unfolding his skinny arms said, “ Atheros, no !” With his numb

eyes, Atheros looked at him and the rest of the people they all stood there with long faces as if their smile was taken by Oizys.

He smiled with tears in his eyes and continued “.....the frozen lake, she saved the little white dove but the ice couldn't take hold of her little body and she lost her legs and got some serious injuries and went in for a long sleep ” He stopped and started weeping “her mother was so shattered that she wept day and night, she lost all the hope, she became a wreck and did not eat for days and died with a picture of Elpis in her hands ” His voice started shaking but still he continued “after one year my girl came back to life, she got up from her long sleep ” he said this as he opened the last big box he bought for the girl “she forgot me, her mother and her dear old gram and when I called her name, all she repeated was one phrase while staring out that window ...” he said while pointing towards the window in the ward 999 “ 'I'm a mistletoe'. ” He took out this big black rectangular book and showed her the album with the tag

Mistletoe

'ELPIS', with moist eyes. Those pictures were of the poor little mistletoe who never knew her parents because she forgot about them when she woke up from her long tiring sleep and Atheros the man who was there for her was her loving dad, fighting with her, living through her pain and suffering, spending countless nights with her.

Everyone around them was weeping as she flipped through that big album so heavy but still she flipped through it, all her paintings, pictures memoirs and whatnot in that big black book, her eyes were wet and she looked through it and stared at it with her weak emerald eyes as if she recognised all of it, then the Mistletoe looked up and said “I am Elpis, dad ” the clearest words she spoke in a year, Atheros was so happy, he cried with relief and crying the tears of happiness, he took her in his arms and hugged his beloved little Elpis, oh how much he missed his little Elpis, that one hug gave him the comfort he did not get for around 2 years, Elpis hugged him more tightly with her weak hands not letting him part from her, their hearts bound in

Mistletoe

harmony and they both cried their hearts out. Doctor Smith came forward not willing to speak those words as he was so really touched by the occasion, with trembling hands he touched Atheros and said “it's time to say goodbye, she needs rest, she won't be able to handle it anymore” and he started crying as soon as he finished he started moving forward and was about to take out the plug when Atheros held his arm, and looked at him and tightly hugging his angel Elpis and ending all her suffering, aches and misery, he removed the plug of the ventilator, the effete girl in his arms took her last breath and said “dad” he cried, even more, bawled and everyone present in the room cried and shivered, the atmosphere around was filled with the weeping of everyone who ever knew her. Atheros kept his Elpis close to his heart as he took one white rose that she gave him on that very day, preserved and close to him. He went to the graveyard every day and sat in front of a beautiful tombstone stating “my beloved mistletoe, Elpis”

Vasundhara Chaudhary
Class XI B



The Atheist

Belief.

It's a very strong word.

Strong enough to create disputes in a harmonious society. Strong enough to bring together a family that was broken in fragments. Strong enough to give you the strength to live and strong enough to make you want to do the exact opposite of that.

Ved understood the importance of this word. What he didn't understand, was, why were people willing to use the meaning of such a powerful word solely for something as powerless as religion? Why were they so eager to put their belief into something that could any day be proven as a figment of some ancient artist's imagination?

His biggest question always remained the same. It was simple but enough to make him want to rethink everything he's ever known. He hears it everyday in his head;

The Atheist

“What does religion or being religious mean, anyway?”

“Isn't it just something people choose to put their faith in during their darkest times?”

As a child, his mother always told him “It's easy to believe what someone has told you. It's hard to find evidence of that happening in the first place. Never ever believe someone's words just for the sake of choosing to trust them.” But ironically she does exactly what she taught him not to do. Believes in the folklore. Believes in everything she heard about physically unidentified figures without even a trace of their existence.

Being born in an overly “religious” family comes with people talking about “religion” and “God” and “his doings” all the time. What people choose to push into graves and not talk about on the other hand, is what's the bigger truth. They don't talk about religion dividing our country. They don't talk about religion being the cause of multiple massacres over the years.

He was tired of being told to “stop embarrassing his family” whenever he spoke up

The Atheist

about the ignorance of the adults around him. Or when he'd ask for some practicality over their blind faith and superstitions. Or when he'd say he'd rather study than attend some veneration at a relative's place.

He swore on his 12th birthday to never bow down to a “superior entity” ever again in his life. He didn't pay much attention to his family's protests and indiscretions stating he was just being disrespectful. All he was being was an atheist. Not disrespectful, not ignorant, just an atheist.

He grew up with these thoughts. From the age of 12 to the present where he's 22. He lived with the same questions and reasons he thought were right. Everything changed when his mother got into a car accident. His world turned upside down. Instead of logic there were cries, instead of practicality there was hope and instead of reasons there were prayers.

He couldn't care less about his promises to his younger self or all the questions he asked himself over the years when he saw his mother

fighting death. All he cared about was her life and so he did it. He got on his knees, he bowed and he prayed to any and every entity there is to save his mother. He prayed and prayed until his knees hurt and his tears dried. He prayed when he woke and up and he prayed before he slept. He put every ounce of faith he had into a superior entity that would help him out. Help his mother out. He prayed and he hoped and he begged.

After seven excruciating days in the hospital, his mother was finally out of all the potential danger towards her life. That day all he could do was.... Believe.

He doesn't know anymore. Doesn't know if he's Atheist or Agnostic. Doesn't know if this is the start of his belief or if it was just a fleeting moment. Doesn't know if he's still in sync with that 12 year old boy he was or if he has come to terms with all the growing up he had to do to realise what the world is truly about. He knows one thing though, whatever it is, it's bigger than him. Bigger than all of us.

The Atheist

The next day as he was lying in his bed about to taken in by sleep, he heard it again.

“What does religion or being religious mean, anyway?”

“Isn't it just something people choose to put their faith in during their darkest times?” And yes, perhaps that's exactly what it is.

Saanvika Singh
Class XI F



Joy Eating Monster

Once upon a time, there was a young girl who lived all by herself in a huge castle where a hideous monster too resided. She would look out of the window and would see other kids playing with each other for as long as it was evening. She waited the life they had but the hideous monster would threaten her that it would eat up all her joy if she found even a spec of joy of her life. So she stayed quiet and thought about nothing so that no one would be hurt.

One day, as she was walking by the rivers, she found a boy drowning in the depth of the water. She decided to save him, as he was still an young boy who could bring joy to others.

The boy wanted to bring joy to her life as well as she saved his life, and from that day onwards, he followed her be it in rain or in storm.

The girl paid no need to him but one day, as he did not follow her like he used to, she decided to

Joy Eating Monster

wait for him by the river. As she was waiting, she saw the reflection of the hideous monster behind her. The monster said, “You have finally found a joy for me to feed on. I have been starving for years but all the wait was worthwhile. “It laughed in a loud & lustrous manner.

The boy ran towards her with flowers behind his back. He said, “I know you saved my life and I have brought you something special for the kindness you showed.

She turned towards him and asked, “will you still think the same if I do this?” She slowly tore the wings of the poor butterflies apart. In horror, the boy ran away and never came back. The monster and the girl hid away in the castle and lived with the darkness that filled the void like ever before.

Macy
Class IX G



Illusion Can Fade Reality...

A young traveller Jashua, wandering on the streets of a village in Japan, was very tired and hungry. When he turned around, he was shocked to see that there was no one on the road.

Suddenly, he saw a cottage, partly hidden by a banyan tree, on the other end of the road. He slowly walked towards it and knocked the door, then he saw the door was already unlocked. He slowly opened the door, it was totally dark inside, he stepped forward and the door shuts automatically.

He was not scared as he was a really brave man. He was a traveller and had to travel to many places but he never agreed to the fact that ghosts or spirits exist. Once when he was travelling to north Japan he spent three nights in a cemetery, this was the only place where thieves could not rob him and he could sleep without fear.

He looked around and saw a put out lantern.

Illusion Can Fade Reality...

He lit the lantern with the match stick he always carried for such situations. He saw the cottage was nothing more than an untidy room filled with rubbish. But he was very hungry and tired, so he decided to look around if he could get something to eat.

He started roaming and looking at things. He had never believed in any kind of paranormal activity so he had no fear. He saw some boxes and moved towards them to check if he could get something. As he picked the first box he heard a sound as if something dropped down, he turned and saw, it was a photo frame, he kept the box down and picked up the frame. It had a picture of a girl in a white sari, he smiled a little and kept it back.

He picked up the box and peeped into it, he saw two sparkling eyes. He panicked and threw the box away. He took a deep breath and slowly went towards the box, when he again peeped in, there was nothing, the box was empty.

Now the brave man, who had spent three nights in a cemetery had started to build fear. He

Illusion Can Fade Reality...

moved back and again heard a sound of something falling down. He turned and saw that it was again the photo frame, he picked it up and saw that it had red drops on it this time, he threw the frame in fear and thought that the place was haunted.

This reminded him of a dryad, from the story he heard from his friend, a dryad is a female spirit that lives on trees. He was shivering with fear and stepped back slowly. Then suddenly he saw a shadow a big shadow, of a lady, he ran towards the door and before he could open the door, he heard a sobbing sound, he turned his head and saw.....

It was a raccoon, it was hurt by a pin that had pricked in his foot. Jashua took the pin out, as soon as he was done, the raccoon ran behind a big closet. Joshua went after him and what he saw was unbelievable, he saw the raccoon and her babies. What else he saw was red paint and raccoon's sparkling eyes. He understood everything, mother raccoon was scared and threatened everybody so that they could live there peacefully.

Illusion Can Fade Reality...

If someone would see them they might hurt them. In ancient times it was believed that raccoons had the power of shape-shifting and creating illusions. Jashua took a breath of relief and went back to travel.

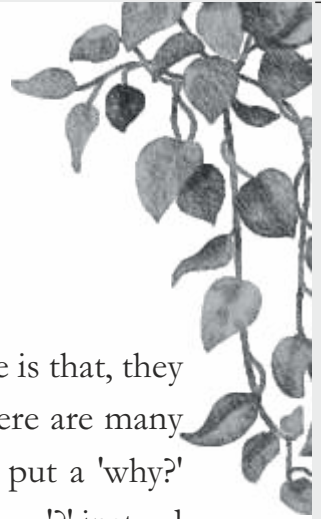
A brave man like Jashua build fear just because of the illusions.

This shows that a person's mind can ignore the reality by believing in unreal illusions. Similarly, a person may create an illusionistic image of someone by seeing the fake side or listening to comments other people make about him and ignore the real side of the person.

Thus, illusions can fade reality, don't be Jashua and let such raccoons fool you. It's in your hands to not, to let the reality fade by learning to differentiate between illusion and reality.

Oh dear heavens!

Saujas Uniyal
Class 12 G



Try Me!!!

The biggest mistake that people make is that, they think life is a “question”, because there are many things they don't know about , they put a 'why?' after every problem they face, they use a '?' instead of a '!'. But instead life is an 'ANSWER'. Life is an answer and all we need to do is identify the questions.

Every grief is a lesson, happiness is a reward and love is a medicine. People wander in search of answers to their questions which according to me is just a waste of time and energy.

Their life itself is the answer, all they need to do is, find that one exact answer they need. As kids we all have done comprehensions, the unseen passages.....that's what we have to do the answer is in front of us all we need to do is search for it.

Read your life from top to bottom and analyze it, don't leave out even a single incident, you will start getting the answers, if not in the first attempt maybe in the second keep trying till the

Try Me!!!

time you succeed.

We should never forget our mistakes, don't regret them but don't even forget them till the time you find out why that happened, till the time you learn a lesson from them, don't forget. Teenage is the phase of a person's life, in which the best thing he/she can do is to make mistakes.

The person who doesn't put his foot forward to do something new just because he's scared of making mistakes will make a lot of mistakes in his/her life ahead , at those crucial times where not the mistakes but their lessons were needed . There is no one who's perfect, making mistakes is a human tendency.

It's better to make mistake and learn from them. You can never be a loser by making mistakes, but if you'll not make mistakes and not learn from them you can never be a winner either.

'PERFECT', this seven letter word has a positive sense and there are many words which are considered negative but without them this world would have no meaning, those words are: mistakes,

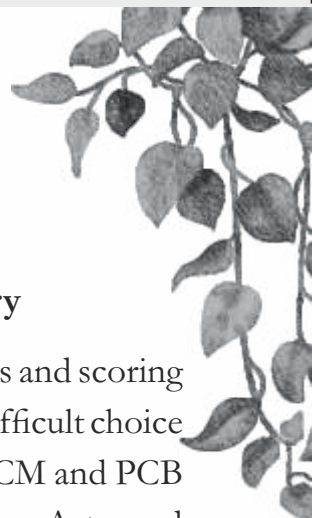
Try Me!!!

failures ,pain and grief, a person who has not gone through these can never be 'perfect'. Perfection is that path which ends at infinity but as your tried on it you start becoming better than yourself with each step. There are millions of people around you and millions of opinions, criticism and compliments but you are only one, so you should not let every single opinion affect you, you should know whom to listen to and whom not to.

So if you go through tough times then remember you are lucky, life has planned something great for you and therefore is preparing you for that, not everyone gets the chance to learn from their life, not everyone gets the chance to achieve something substantial. If you get it don't miss it.

When life test's you stop saying “why me”
And say “try me”

Samiksha Dhiman
Class XII F



PCMB - An Untold Story

After clearing the class X examinations and scoring a good 92%, Manik had to make the difficult choice between the two Science streams – PCM and PCB as taking any other stream such as Arts and Commerce was not even an option for him.

He was really confused regarding his future but finally took PCMB as his core subjects for class 11 and 12.

At first he was really happy about it because he had taken the toughest subject combination in the entire world and felt like flexing it in front of his relatives, family members, etc. But then, he slowly realized that PCMB isn't called the toughest combo just like that.

Manik who had studied only one Science book in class X having 16 chapters in all including all the PCB subjects, had never thought that he would be having separate books for each subject with each of them having more than 16 chapters each, in classes 11 & 12.

After the first UNIT TEST, most of his classmates who had taken PCMB, suddenly started changing their stream but Manik never did anything like that because he knew that he had already entered the tunnel of PCMB and the only way out of that dark tunnel was the other end of it, that is, he had to tackle all the subjects no matter what.

So that's what he did, he did not quit being a PCMB student and continued to endure it throughout his journey of class 11 and 12. Regardless of the burden of PCMB, there was one thing that Manik really loved about his subjects and that was when he introduced himself to anyone, mentioning the subjects he had taken, it was a form of pride for him.

Whosoever got to know about the subjects that he had taken used to ask him, “Hey! you have taken PCMB right, so are you one of those intelligent types?”. Then Manik used to answer them in a way that changed their perspective about PCMB, he told them that taking PCMB had nothing to do with intelligence, it's related to one's

PCMB - An Untold Story

ability to conquer his fear and a spark in their body to accept any challenge that gets thrown at them.

Manik was just an average grade student in his coaching classes which really really demotivated him and he always used to get negative thoughts whenever he used to think about his future.

He used to get scolded by the coaching as well as his school teachers, but he never lost his belief in himself. He never took all those scoldings in a negative manner, instead he used them in building up a staircase to his goals.

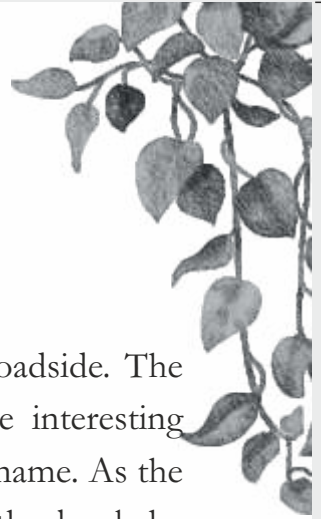
So he worked really hard to achieve what he had dreamt of to become in the future. Eventually he cleared his class 12 with decent marks and even cleared many competitive exams and got admission in his dream college.

He enjoyed his college year and even had to face some challenges, but he did all of that with a smiling face.

Now the challenges that confronted him during his college days is going to be a story for another day. Till then see yaa..

Manik Thapa
Class XII B

♦ *Reflections* ♦



The Book

A boy found a book lying by the roadside. The book was leather bound with some interesting golden patterns on it. There was no name. As the boy flipped through the pages of the book he realised that there were numerous postcards inside it.

His clock ticked and he realised that he was late. "Someone must have lost it, they'll probably come back looking for it," he threw the book back and hurried off to school. While returning he took the same route home, the book was still there. It was there for one day, two days, and three days. Now it felt like the book was almost calling for him and he was bound to pay heed.

Once the book was with him and he was well comfortable in his room he went through it, thoroughly. It was handwritten with pasted pictures but it was not written by one person. It was more like a documented conversation between two

The Book

people who knew each other too well.

The pictures were from all the beautiful and ugly places of the world and all of them had only two people in common, the two girls. As he sank deeper into the book he realised that it was them who had written it. They were truly beautiful. Something so rare today, he thought.

In the latter quarter of the book, he found an address near Mussoorie and living in Dehradun it wasn't a problem to visit them.

Sunday morning was barely setting in when he was off to the place, riding his bicycle. After two hours of continuous paddling, he found the address. It was in a countryside area and very quiet and peaceful.

He knocked the door and it was answered by a young woman.

"Can I help you?"

"Yes, he hesitated, "Does an old woman live here?"

"Why do you ask?"

"I think I have something that belongs to

her," he said, handing her the book.

"Follow me." She led him straight through a corridor and into the backyard.

"You have a visitor, Amma"

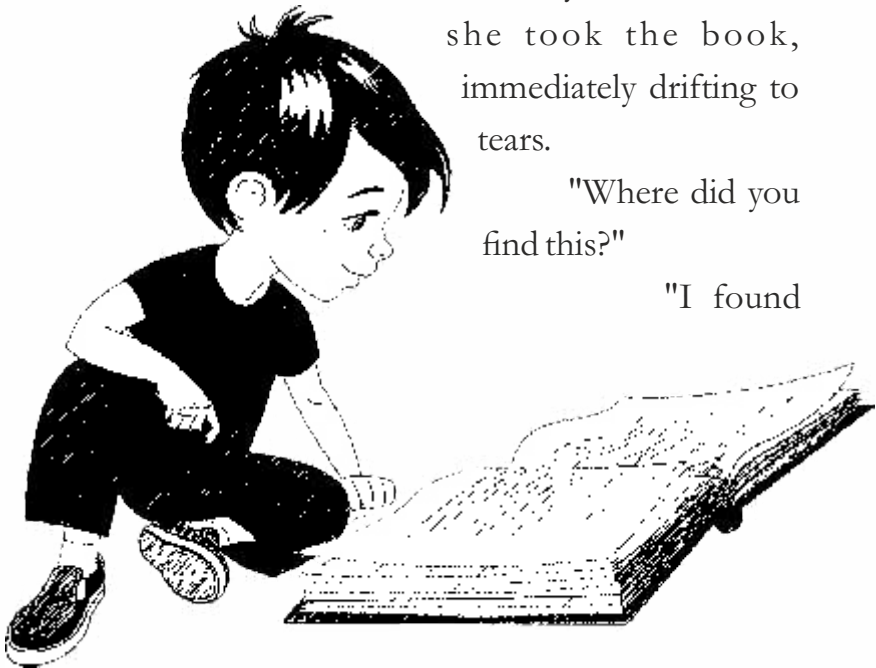
"Huh?" An old woman with milky white hair and a reserved, kind voice sat in a wheelchair there.

"Hello. I reckon this belongs to you." He handed her the book.

Her eyes widened as she took the book, immediately drifting to tears.

"Where did you find this?"

"I found



it near my house miss”

The young woman kneels next to the wheelchair and hugs the old lady.

"Don't cry Amma, she wouldn't want you to cry." After some time the old woman looked up, "How can I ever thank you enough? You returned to me the only memory I had of my best friend.”

"The other girl is your best friend?”

Yes, she was my best friend. We knew each other all our lives. We were the same age and grew old together. We had a habit, that each time we would travel we would write our experience in this book. She died last year. She had this with her at that time and it was never found after that. I thought I'd never see it again. But here it is, not as shiny but it's still got all the stories.

Khushi Bhardwaj
Class IX E

Haste Makes Waste

The pair looked very stunning and magnificent. I could visualise the dazzling white and pink colour even while closing my eyes. It was available at a discount of 85% at a throwaway price of rupees 500.

I was determined to buy that pair of shoes. Cheerfully I persuaded my mother for that deal.

However, my mother raised a concern about the quality of the shoes.

Finally, my mother submitted to my repeated requests and I ordered the shoes online.

On its delivery, I



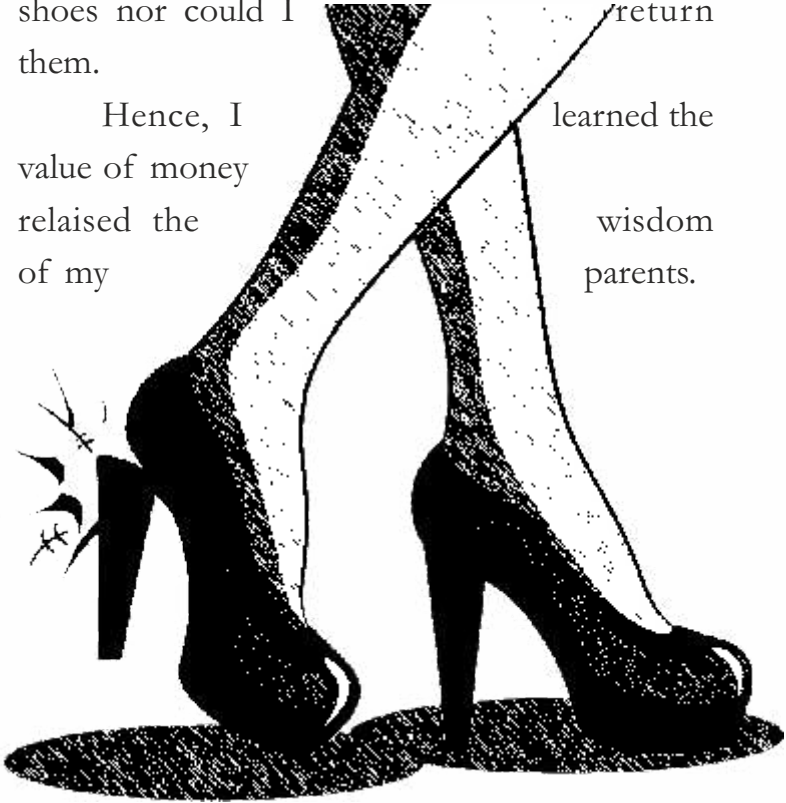
Haste Makes Waste

was on cloud nine. But this didn't last long as I felt an acute pinching sensation on my toe.

I checked the policy for the shoes and all my happiness changed into sorrow as it was a non-returnable item. Now, neither I could wear the shoes nor could I return them.

Hence, I learned the value of money, realised the wisdom of my parents.

learned the wisdom of my parents.



Tannishtha Ahuja
Class 10 E



The Neighbourhood Kid

"Bye, mom!" shouting that aloud, Daisy closed the main door and started walking towards the gate. The weather was beautiful today, the sun shining brightly, birds chirping and wind blowing ever-so-subtly, like the cherry on top.

"HIIII!" she heard a voice from behind, a loud voice to be specific, while walking "Hello Jake," Daisy greeted back, without turning around as only one person would be interested in ruining your perfectly good mood.

"So, how's my favorite being doing on this beautiful Sunday morning?" he asked "Pretty good" she replied "Oooh! And just in case you were wondering, I'm feeling fabulous and ready to rock the world," he said, in his sweet yet loud voice. Jake is Daisy's neighbor, she has known him for the past 4 years since he shifted to the neighborhood, he had always been the loud, extroverted, energetic, and mood-maker kind of person.

The neighborhood kid

Daisy never really understood how come he had so much energy in him all day long, shouldn't one person get tired or look dull at one point of time but that never seemed to be the case with Jake, she always saw him as the usual bubbly being that he was, probably that was why everyone in the neighborhood adores him.

All the kids enjoy playing with him, the elders adore his manners every time he helps them out, and since he has even got the looks he is pretty popular around girls too.

But there was a thing about him when he's not so busy with his life, his alternative was to annoy Daisy, well not exactly annoy her but she is the person who gets easily irritated. Other than that, he's a sweet boy and even if she doesn't say it to his face, Daisy very much enjoys his company.

"So, going for your regular weekly day at the library?" Jake asked, "How did you know?" Daisy immediately turned her head to face him, surprised that he knew about her spending almost the whole Sunday every week at the library, studying or

making notes, or simply reading romance novels.

"Umm, good question, well I'm pretty sure I saw you there a couple of times," he said, as he gave her his silly smile "Are you sure?" she asked, with a suspicious look on her face "A 100 percent, trust me, I'm the kind of guy you'll normally find at a library," said he, with a proud look on his face and then he patted himself on the shoulder.

"Anyway, since you are heading to the library and so am I, why not go and study together? I could use your help for my homework" Jake asked "And what do I get from it?" Daisy questioned back "Quality time with your favorite person" he replied.

"As much as I wanted to spend my time alone today, I also don't want to be the reason you get scolded tomorrow so sure, I can help you," she said and with that, the both of them walked in the direction of the nearby library.

2 hours and 30 minutes later:

"Next when you add those two you get the solution and you're done" Daisy spoke and then

The neighborhood kid

looked up to see a sleeping Jake with his head kept on the stack of his books looking back at her, making her chuckle at the situation.

God knows for how long she was talking to herself, closing Jake's books she gently lifted his head to move the books below it to pack his bag.

"Jake! Jake!" Daisy whispered while caressing his hair, to wake him up; he just squirmed a little but gave no response, moving her hand away from his hair she traced her index finger on his face while admiring his face.

It'd be a lie if Daisy didn't admit to having a crush on Jake, the guy had it all someone would possibly want in their partner, talk about looks, personality, intelligence, creativity, and whatnot.

When Daisy had first met him 4 years ago he gave her the feeling she probably never felt before, of course, she didn't start liking him then on itself but something about him spoke to her a lot.

It has been almost a year since Daisy realized her feelings towards Jake, it was the part about how he behaved with everyone that made her heart go

bonkers.

She truly loved how he treated anyone and accepted them for who they were, helping out in even the tiniest way possible, he is such an innocent soul that someone else's pain gives him pain.

"I like you, I like you more than someone should like their friend" Daisy uttered, with a silly smile on her face.

"I don't know if I'd be able to say this to your face and since I wanted to let out how I feel, this seemed the best way" taking a deep breath she continued.

"I think, you won't be able to reciprocate my feelings, but I hope we remain friends for a lifetime because as much as you annoy me and get on my nerves I want to be selfish and not let you not be a part of my life" ending her little speech, Daisy pulls the hand back from his face, when Jake raised his head and looks her straight in the eyes and utters *"I like you too"*.

Manasvi Joshi
Class XI F



Chasing The Crown

Summer 2019, July 22

The day the crown of Louis XV had been reported to be missing from the Louvre Museum, after a monthly inspection. I had read everything in the mission file and when I arrived in Paris, I was ready.

Ready to meet Robert, my assigned partner and unravel the mystery. We had seen it all. All the people who had been there, all the images that had been recorded everything. One name was common: Alexander LeBlanc, an ex-convict living in Troyes.

He visited the Louvre every day at different timings last month. So, we decided to give our buddy Alexander a nice little visit. I knocked on his door and said, “I am Julian Bernard, a federal investigator and I am here in regard to the missing crown.” He nodded and we followed him inside. The only thing he gave me was, “I could do it but I

didn't” other than that it was all nods. It was surprising how calm he was and said what he said without any hesitation.

The next day we heard about a lady in red who went around the museum at 8 p.m. every day, with some difficulties, we found Carmen. She told us that she was just trying a new fitness regimen, this was in the city of Paris, and felt like another dead-end until she told us about a black van with the Dijon license plate near the park behind the museum.

She said it felt unusual to her so she memorized its license plate just in case, we therefore followed the van “F 331 XC 21” to a rental location in Dijon and retrieved the names of three people: Paul, Jack, Jacques all in different cities: Rhone, Rochelle and Lyon respectively. No luck there too although we did go to an auction in Lyon as it was said that the main item that would be auctioned off was an old diamond.

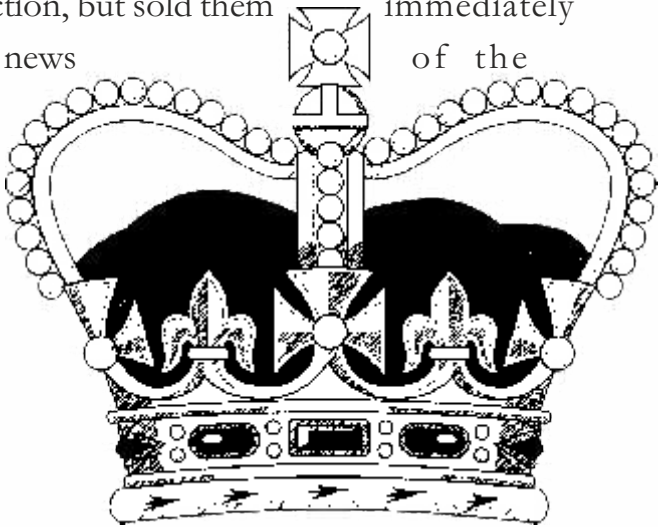
We saw very few people inside and the question that bothered me from the start “Why the

Chasing The Crown

thief only stole the crown not the Mona Lisa or any other famous artefacts in the Louvre?”.

The head of the auction admitted during the questioning that the diamonds were very similar to those in the crown of Louis XV. Needless to say, we stopped the auction, evacuated everyone went straight to Valance, the source of the diamonds, to question him.

Then we went back to my hometown, Avignon, looking for a man named Victor, Robert found him and he told us he bought them at an auction, but sold them immediately after the news of the theft spread,



as he was afraid.

The frustration grew everyday with each dead-end and after a few days of running around, Robert suggested asking Alexander how he knew he could steal the crown. After a little squeezing, Alexander explained to us how he would have done it and when we moved the podium the crown was placed on and removed the tile beneath it, there was overturned mud, just like he told us.

So, we followed and, re-enacted the rest of his plan but instead of going to his house, we were led to the side wall of the city prison.

I started digging and found nothing but a note that read,” I knew you would follow my instructions, Julian. Oh! the real Alexander LeBlanc passed away a month ago. I killed him.” An artefact worth Euro 58 160,000 was missing, an employee of the Louvre investigation team was missing and most of all Robert, who had gone to question the police attendants, was never to be found again.

Arrshia Singal
Class XII F



Rosemary Mansion

The mansion once again stood in rain , looking life less . Under the dome of love , which once was surrounded by lively roses now had nothing but the thorns left . On the wet slippery ground Edgar with tears in his eyes and a small smile holding Olivias face said “Maybe soulmates don't always end up together- “ “shh shh till death does us apart ! Remember !” She interrupted him as he spoke , took his hand in her hand and gave it a kiss , crying , he then gave a comforting smile and said “in another lifetime my love , someday the world will let us be together , till death does us apart .” The rain drops fell as tears rolled down her cheeks and suddenly a lightening struck her and she drove the dagger through his chest and fell down , because a mortal and a fallen angel can never be united .

Rosemary Mansion once again experienced love dying , like every time two lovers meet and end up dying . The mansion that was once alive , now

Rosemary Mansion

once again died as Edgar took his last breath . The creepers on the old walls dried themselves ,the tint on the Victorian era windows faded , nothing but the dust now danced in the great ball room and the cello again started to decay and untune , the murals on the great walls chipped off and the lifelike portraits of all the wealthy men and women became lifeless , the grand wooden staircase became weak and the gate was again rusted along with the rotting body .



Rosemary Mansion

Olivia crept and sat against the wall nearby and cried and screamed , with his blood all over her satin silhouette cursing her fate as there was nothing she could do because the world never wanted them together . She realised how harsh the world could be and how love is nothing but pain, she was grieving so much that she lost her mind . The Rosemary Mansion adopted her and as days went by she sat and cried at the same spot , did not eat anything , nobody came looking for her and she a live corpse decayed with Edgar's body . Her skin started peeling off , her face became bony and the brownish-red blood stained white silk was now barely hanging on her skeleton and it was soon when the house dissolved her in. The Rosemary Mansion soaked all her tears , her tired bones and her pure soul in it.

Mr Rosewood reappeared ,the old man , with the classic wooden stick which had a beautiful metallic handle and a symbol of a rose, walked against the strong winds towards the mansion and as he came near the old gate, the gates opened . He

Rosemary Mansion

came inside and went to a massive grave where it was inscribed:

'Mrs Aeris Rosemary

Wife to George Rosewood,

a delicate child to the Rosemary Mansion
and Rosemary's soul 1935-1985'

He kissed the grave stone and went inside the mansion , he walked straight to the dome of love with a shovel and some black polyethene, not surprised to see a sleeping and a grieving skeleton. He lifted them in his hands carefully and gave the pair of skeletons a burial with all the customs and said looking towards the mansion “Aeris you did it again, didn't you? When will all this stop?” And gave a sad smirk and continued “the people didn't want us , but when will you stop taking away these innocent souls , they had our story , our life but killing them will make them suffer in heaven - ” But the house rumbled before he could finish so he went away and locked the mansion . The mansion started growing again more mesmerising and beautiful than before, the cracks started filling up

Rosemary Mansion

and the roses started regrowing, bigger than ever and the fountain started sprinkling sweet water, Rosemary's grave disappeared and the skeletons he buried too disappeared, the blood stains on the ground and walls disappeared. The mansion's rusted gate was again new and golden and the sign 'Rosemary Mansion' welded itself and huge fans in the ceiling attached themselves again.

The mansion was now ready and more beautiful than before. Mr Rosewood again appeared now in his old Cadillac with a new couple to come and make a life, telling them the history and beauty of the mansion .

And obviously the couple fell in love with the Rosemary Mansion because the mansion transformed itself according to their wishes. Rosemary caught another pair of love birds who were swimming in the ocean of love but rejected by the surrounding fishes

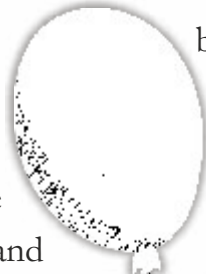
Vasundhara Chaudhary
Class XI B

Furry Little Companion

Benedict was a very cold man. This was because he had no joy in his life and with time it became worse. He started feeling empty so he started to bury himself in his work.

He became neutral towards the world. One day he saw a boy who had accidentally released his gas balloon, the boy came to him and said “sir could you please catch my balloon?” to which he just looked at the boy and moved on, without helping the boy. On his way to work he saw an old woman not being able to cross the road, again Benedict just stood there and did nothing.

In the evening when he was returning home he saw a



Furry Little Companion

black cat with green eyes, he was intrigued by the cat for an instant but then he just observed the cat and started moving away. The cat started meowing and began to follow him.

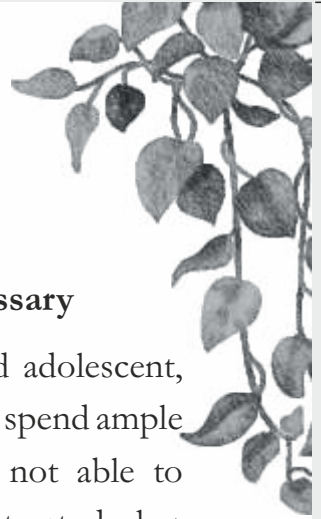
Benedict tried to get away from the cat as fast as possible but the cat was also set on its goal of following the cold looking man.

In the end when the man got tired of the cat following him to his home he kept the black cat with him. Now he had a companion, he didn't feel as lonely as he had before. He started to feel warm again, he started to feel the happiness again.

Now when he saw a girl losing her balloon he helped the girl in getting her balloon back. When he saw an old man trying to cross the road, he did not ignore, instead he helped him.

He felt happy helping others which he had never done before, he laughed as to himself at how a small furry companion had changed his life.

Shubha Swaroop
Class XII B



Necessity only when Necessary

Parents of Aaroahi, a fifteen year old adolescent, were worried as their daughter used to spend ample time on her smartphone. She was not able to concentrate and every time she tried to study, her phone buzzed and she would immediately grab her phone and spend hours on it.

One fine day, Aaroahi's dad suggested that they should go for a five day vacation to Manali. Aaroahi was overjoyed with the proposal until her dad attached a condition that they would only go if Aaroahi would hand over her phone to him. Aaroahi frowned; the thought of being parted from her phone for five days was alarming for her. But the benefits of exploring Manali outweighed the drawback of being away from her phone for a few days.

Her first day in Manali was pleasant, the wind was cold and the landscapes were breathtaking. The only thing which bothered

Necessity only when Necessary

AaroHi, was not being able to capture the beautiful sceneries in her smartphone and post it online. She would often subconsciously slip her hand in the pocket of her coat in order to take out the phone, which used to be there for as long as she could remember.

The entire day, she kept on frowning and didn't enjoy the nature she was surrounded in. Her mother noticed her deep longing for the phone. She admonished her that, rather than capturing the moment inside a mere device, she should try living in the moment.

AaroHi, being an obedient girl, followed her mother's wise advice for the days that followed. What happened afterwards was something AaroHi could never have imagined in her wildest dreams.

On the second day she started noticing and admiring the jaw dropping topography that surrounded her. If it was like any other vacation, she would have been busy on her phone instead of appreciating the natural charm. She started noticing little things.

On the third day she could smell the rain hitting the pavement and enjoyed the sound of “pitter patter” of rain along with her parents.

On the fourth day she felt the softness of the freshly fallen snow under her boots. She and her dad had an intense snow fight. She made beautiful memories with her parents, which would last a lifetime.

During the night, Aarohi habitually used to scroll through social media but this time it was different, she heard stories from her parents about their experiences and adventures. She had learnt her lesson and from that day onwards the young girl made her phone a necessity.

Prapti Rawat
Class X E



Just a Prank

Eve got a friend request on her social media in the evening while scrolling down. She accepted it without a second thought as it was not something new to her. She often got such requests, but there was something unusual about this one.

In all the other cases, she used to interact with the others but there was no such thing in this case. She received no messages nor did she bother to send one.

One day, she received a short and simple message from the same friend. It read, "Let's meet." It had an address attached to it. Eve hesitated at first, as anyone would, then she decided to go. She reached the given address to find an old amusement park, which was almost in ruins. She wondered how come she didn't even know about the place. However, it was still creepy for her. She desperately looked around trying to find anyone, but failed. With no other choice left, she decided to

Just a Prank

explore the place.

After a few hours, still finding no one, she decided to leave the place. Just as she reached near the gate, the gate closed with a loud bang, and then, she felt a cold hand on her shoulder. Eve was about to faint, when she heard a familiar voice, “Got you.” She turned back to see her best friend Helena standing there.



Anjuman Panwar
Class IX E



The Greedy Landlord

A young girl who lived with her poor father earned a living by farming. The money was just enough to sustain their living after paying their house rent. Once there was a severe drought in the village and the entire crop of the family got ruined.

Months passed and the family was not able to pay their rent on time. The young lady was very beautiful and the landlord of the house was keeping an evil eye on her. Not paying the rent for months together allowed the landlord to fulfil his greed.

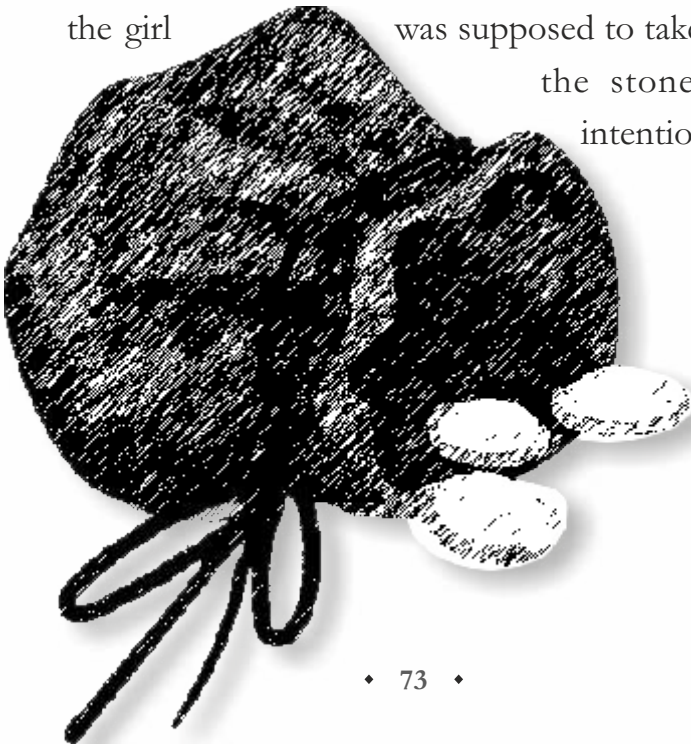
One day the landlord came to the house and spoke to the farmer that he will have to pay the entire due rent, along with the interest, to the landlord within seven days. Not being able to do so he will have to marry his daughter to the landlord. Listening to all this, the farmer was depressed as he had no money so he was left with no other option but to marry his daughter to the landlord.

The Greedy Landlord

She accepted the landlord's proposal with the condition that in front of the entire village she will be picking one stone from a bag, which will be containing one black and one white stone picked up from the village soil. If the white stone comes out she will marry the landlord and if the black stone comes out, the entire rent and the interest will be waived off by the landlord.

The landlord tried to play mischief and he readily accepted her demand. On the day when the girl

was supposed to take out the stone, he intentionally put



The Greedy Landlord

2 white stones in the bag. The girl knew the mischief and she acted very smartly, she took out one stone and without showing it to anyone she acted to fall on the ground and the moment she fell she left the stone from her hand.

Upon being asked about the colour of the stone she took out from the bag, she replied that she does not remember; but it is very easy to find out as there were only 2 stones of different colours. “Now that you have a different colour in the bag, so it's obvious that I had an opposite coloured stone in my hand” she remarked.

When the bag was opened, the greedy landlord knew that trying to act smart won't be of any help. It was proved that the stone taken out by the young girl was black, the greedy landlord not only had to waive off their rent but also lost the girl.

Mehak Arora
Class X E

A Remarkable Breakfast

It was a cold, foggy morning, and Kyle was in no mood to take his dog, Benji, out for a walk in the bitter cold. Benji himself seemed reluctant to leave his bed near the fireplace. Kyle got up and sat with Benji near the window of their house, soaking in the warm sunlight.



As Kyle
got up
and
started
heading
towards
the
kitchen to
prepare the breakfast he
suddenly heard some
strange sound coming
from outside of his front
door and quickly went to

A Remarkable Breakfast

see what it was! As he opened the door, a young, scruffy-looking man started running, with a bag he had stolen from one of his neighbours. Right behind the thief was his neighbour, Mr. Smith. He was screaming, 'catch the thief.'

Both Benji and Kyle ran after the thief, ignoring the bitter cold, while Kyle was still in his night dress and slippers. Benji tripped two newspaper boys and overturned a garbage can as he pursued the fleeing thief. When Kyle turned a corner, he saw the thief slip on the hard ice, the bag flying, and money dropping from the bag, it looked like a movie scene.

Benji leaped and caught the bag in his mouth. The thief got away, but Kyle and Benji came back happily to Mr. Smith with all his money and his bag. He thanked Kyle and Benji and as a reward, he treated them to a delicious breakfast.

Chaitanya Gupta
Class IX E



The Overestimated Idol

A glance over the truth of.....

It's not you'll always have a happy day. It's not you'll always have a day passed the way you want it to be. But, does that mean you'll always have a day full of regrets. Does that mean always you'll have to make that teddy or soft toy your cry buddy?

“My life is too hazardous to explain. It is said, “The path of life is full of struggles. Every road will oppose your advancement. Every wind will push you back. Every light will illuminate to make you blind. But amidst all of this there will be only one place that will help you endure.

“YOUR HOUSE”. But what if being in that place eats you up internally?”

Such were the thoughts of Emily, the only witness to the truth of the presumed 'sweet family'. The family of Watsons was considered to be 'the ideal family', from the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law sharing a bond stronger than the bond of

The Overestimated idol

blood; to Emily's parents clinging to each other setting examples of true love; from the 12 year old Emily being loved like she was the first and last princess of the world to the entire family laughing and celebrating their love for each other till eternity. Who knew all of this was like the oasis of the Sahara, a mirage?

Emily was optimistic, a girl with a strong personality, just like Captain Marvel of MC universe, she could, without any effort, spread love and happiness all around her, it was her god-gift; but as it is said, the person who is always at the highest of spirits is the one who is like the cloud that float o'er hills and vales, as stated by Wordsworth. She was eaten up from inside.

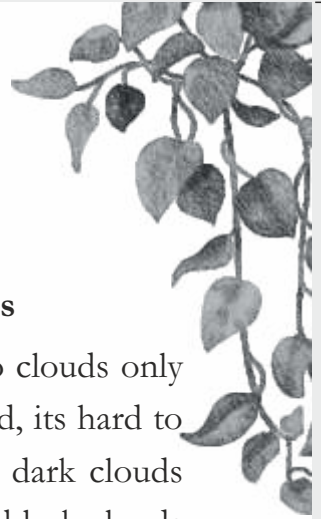
She had seen her mother crying, she had seen her parents fighting as if they would torment each other to death, she had seen the father, she loved the most, speak words which she couldn't even imagine she would ever hear, even in her worse of worst nightmares !!!

The Overestimated Idol

Obviously, seeing your parents, rather deeply in love parents as the world would presume, fight all day long is not a pleasant sight to watch. WHAT DO YOU EVEN EXPECT HER TO FEEL EXCEPT LOATH HERSELF,HER EXISTENCE,HER LIFE?

Certainly, this was not what the parents, the family or on a large scale God wanted to ' gift' Emily. It was just her Fate or destiny like my grandma would say, “The fruit of her deeds of the previous birth.” And here you, GLANCED OVER THE TRUTH OF EMILY? HER FATHER? HER PARENTS? THE FAKE ASSUMPTIONS?

Tanisha Nautiyal
Class XII B



Irony In The Happiness

The sun was bright up in the sky, no clouds only some sunrays kissing our face so hard, its hard to even open our eyes. Suddenly some dark clouds appeared in front of the sun the big black clouds which never disappeared from my life.

3rd PERIOD

I was looking out of the window and wondering, how an innocent toddler turns out to become a murderer. The human life is as beautiful as some Lilies in a purple vase. Unfortunately, my gorgeous thoughts were interrupted as I was shot with a white bullet from the hands of my teacher at a constant speed of 20MPH, **“Atlas where the hell are you looking? Get out of my class right away.”** The whole class was laughing at me, I was embarrassed, ashamed of myself, as I walked out of the class controlling my tears.

5th PERIOD

I was pissed off after what had happened

Irony In The Happiness

during the third lecture but now it was time for P.E. Our teacher divided us in such a way that we formed a rectangle, we were told to jog at least 3 rounds. I thought that would be pretty easy but after a single round I was on my knees, everyone laughed again. This time my P.E. teacher was laughing too I broke into tears and ran straight towards the washroom. I could hear them laughing even when I was that far.

THE NEXT DAY

Everyone was running away from me, not like they came to talk to me. But today was different, they were distancing themselves from me like whites distance themselves from the blacks. But during the recess something unexpected happened, my classmates threw mud on me, students from different class joined them. After the recess my uniform had changed its colour to brown. Every teacher scolded me after seeing my uniform.

After the school, my classmates were taunting me, laughing at me, some shoved me on

the ground and after few minutes I was left alone on the ground with happiness inside me.

THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE

I don't know why tears were coming out of my eyes, **“they were tears of one's happiness.”** My heart replied. This was the first time I received this much attention.

Ughhhhhhhhh

As expected my mother was shocked after seeing me so happy. She said, **“Atlas dear, you are glowing with that dirt on your face, what happened.”** I said, **“Nothing really, I just made some new friends, they found me so interesting that they spent the whole day with me.”** All the time I didn't stop smiling. She gave me a proud look and started doing her work again.

Today, I entered the school with a huge smile on my face. As I entered my class, I found myself left out again. Everyone was avoiding me like they usually did, back at the start line. I was broke. I rushed straight towards our class representative and asked

Irony In The Happiness

him with tears in my eyes, “Why is everyone ignoring me? What have I done?” He laughed the hardest he could and said, “What are you saying, no one cared about you in the first place.” I ran out of tears and my veins were filled with the feelings of anger, grief and regret. My blood was boiling. I got so furious I pushed him and hid myself in the corner.

After the school, 4-5 upper class men came to me and shared love with fists and kicks. As I walked back home, my mind had only one thing on it “revenge”.

When my mother saw me in this state, she rushed towards me and hugged me, “what happened darling, did you get into a fight.” Mothers are the smartest and the most caring creatures on the Earth.

“Nothing much mum, I fell.” I lied, and more to my knowledge she also knew I lied. She treated me with antiseptic and escorted me back to my room. I still had the feeling of revenge. It was only increasing, that's when I first time felt it, the

Irony In The Happiness

suicidal intent, it was boiling inside me. I knew if someone didn't calm me down something bad would happen. But there was no one with me. I was all alone. There was no one I could share my feelings with. Just the suicidal intent, that's all. So to release myself from the pain and suffering I rushed towards the terrace climbed the ledge, closed my eyes and in the air all I was thinking about was a broken purple vase, with lilies crushed on the ground. I guess God is never there for me because I landed directly in the society's pool, damn I am not even good at suicide hahahaha. I went back home with sadness and sorrow on my face, the feelings which I carry till date.

Vandan Seth
Class X A



Race Called Life

Once upon a time, there was a young athlete boy hungry for success for whom winning was everything and success was measured just by winning. One day, the boy was preparing himself for a race in his small village. A large crowd had gathered to witness the sporting spectacle and a wise old man, upon hearing of the little boy, had travelled far to be a witness.

The race commenced, looking like a level heat at the finishing line, but sure enough the boy called on his determination, strength and power... he took the winning. The crowd was ecstatic and cheered and waved at the boy. The wise man remained still and calm expressing no sentiment. The little boy however felt proud and important. The second race was called and two new young, fit, challengers came forward, to run with the little boy. The race was started and sure enough the little boy came through and finished first once again.

Race Called Life

The crowd was ecstatic again and cheered and waved at the boy. The wise man remained still and calm, again expressing no sentiment. The little boy, however, felt proud and important.

“Another race, another race” pleaded the little boy.

The wise old man stepped forward and presented the little boy with two new challenges, an elderly lady and a blind man. “What is this?”, quizzed the little boy. “This is no race” he exclaimed. “Race!” said the wise man. The race started and the boy was the only one to finish, the other two challengers left standing at the starting line.

The little boy was ecstatic; he raised his arms in delight. The crowd however was silent, showing no sentiment towards the little boy. “What has happened? Why don't the people join in my success?” he asked the wise old man, “race again”, replied the wise old man, “...this time finish together, all three of you, finish together” continued the wise man.

Race Called Life

The little boy thought a little, stood in the middle of the blind man and the old lady, and then took the two challengers by the hand. The race began and the little boy walked slowly, ever so slowly, to the finishing line and crossed it. The crowd was ecstatic and cheered and waved at the boy. The wise man smiled, gently

nodding his head.

The little boy felt proud and impossible.

tant. "Old

I understand
Who is the crowd

r
man

not!
cheerin



Race Called Life

g for? Which one of us three?”, asked the little boy. The wise old man looked into the little boy's eyes, placed his hands on the boy's shoulders and replied softly... “Little boy, for this race you have won much more than in any race you have ever run before, and for this race the crowd cheered not for any winner!” You see in life... in your life, what are you running for? Are you hungry for success?

Is winning the only parameter for you in your life? Who are you running against? And if you always win against everybody, soon the people will stop cheering for you. At the end of your life, if you look back... the question is: who was running next to you, in this race? If they were weaker and old, did you help them to get across the line? Did you all finish together? Because that is the best race you can ever run... so run! Run this **race called life**! But don't forget: it is not important if you win, it is important how you run this race...

Priyanshu Lodhi
Class 12-G



What if?

There was a girl named Trisha- full of life, love, empathy, kindness and aim. Growing up she always wanted to be like her grandfather. For her, his way of doing things was always special and different. Her grandfather was a police officer. When Trisha was nine, she visited the police station for the first time.

Till then she only knew the charming, heartwarming uniform on her grandfather but now she saw the other side of him, which was different and challenging. The way every officer communicated with each other, and the way every person coming had so much trust, faith and respect for the officers surprised her.

She saw how people trusted the officers to do the work given to them and from that day, her dream was to become an IPS officer. She wanted to work for the people and make a change in people's lives. She wanted to sleep satisfied in the night

What if?

knowing that she had brought changes in lives due to her power.

She grew up to study humanities in eleventh grade. Her academic and extracurricular performance was always great. But she still suffered from anxiety and depression because she had a lingering thought of what if, the goal she had selected wouldn't be achieved. Slowly, she was improving her way of looking at life and changed her outlook. She scored well in the twelfth grade but not enough to get into her dream college.

Trisha was sad but here her grandfather helped her by teaching her that colleges don't make careers, you do it yourself.



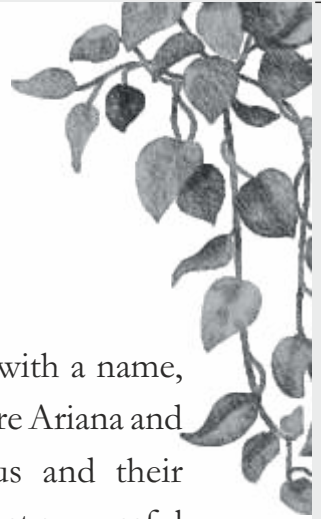
What if?

This statement changed her life and she started her college life with a fresh mind. It was as if she was reminded of her dream all together again, she was elated. After her graduation, she took a break for a year to prepare for her exam. During this time she felt a mix of emotions including stress and worry but what kept her going was one single thought. "The reason most people fail is because they're willing to give up what they want most for what they want now". And this truly worked for her. Trisha finally achieved her dream. Her thought of "what if?" Was forever gone.

As soon as we ask the question "what if?" we get paralyzed and waste time creating hypothetical situations and bring no change in reality.

What if, after reading this story, you make real changes in the way you live? What would life be like then?

Divya Pandey
Class 12 F



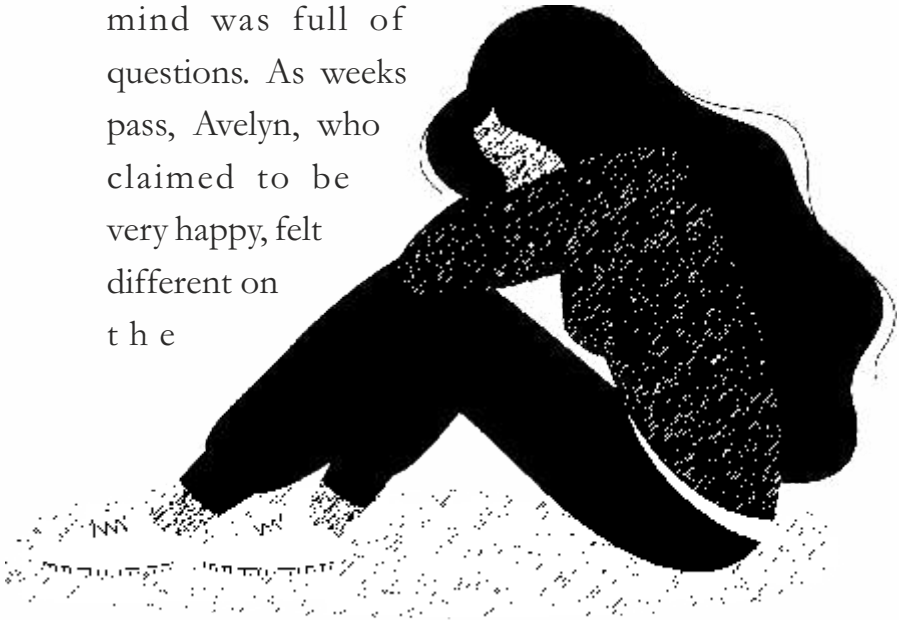
Daily and Avelyn

Once upon a time, there lived a girl with a name, Avelyn Vando. Her parent's names were Ariana and Robert. They were very prosperous and their family were the owners of the top most successful hotels in their city. Everything was given to her with the ring of a bell. There lived another girl. Her name was Daisy Charles. Her parents were Mary and John. Their family was also rich. It would be a surprise when I tell you that they were competitors. Both Avelyn and Daisy had everything they wanted. Phones, food, huge birthday parties, anything you could name, they could have.

They would often fight on whose family was the richest. They both went to the same School, same class, same goal. Their goal was to be the head girl of their school. As years pass, their goal remained the same. Daisy was very good in sports. Avelyn, however, never played sports. She was a bookworm. Books, books and more books. That

was their only difference. A new year started as the friends greeted each other with hugs. It was their senior year. The past year, they were both nominated for the head girl. Votes were out. "And the head girl for this session is....." Hearts were beating fast as sweat dripped on the students' uniform.

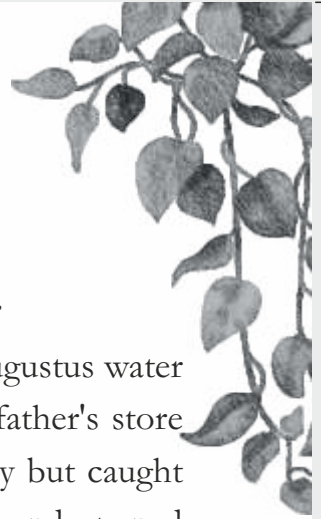
The silence was so loud. You could hear a tear fall down on Daisy's face when it was announced that Avelyn was the headgirl. Daisy's mind was full of questions. As weeks pass, Avelyn, who claimed to be very happy, felt different on the



Daily and Avelyn

inside. Her competitor was no longer a competitor but just another girl who once pushed her to be her very best by harsh words and tough competition. Her performance went low as each day passed. At last, she realized that having someone to push you out of your comfort zone, even if it was harsh on some days, was never a useless thing. Avelyn decided to help Daisy, especially in her studies. We could call their friendship a love- hate friendship as they were always, unrealizingly helping and motivating each other by speaking hurtful words and pretending to hate each other. They both improved after the day Avelyn swallowed her pride and decided to help Daisy.

Adeline Halliday
Class IX G



We All Have a Past.....

It was yet again a bring day, when Augustus water found a mysterious blue box in his father's store room. The box looked old and dusty but caught Augustus' attention. He came closer and opened the box, and finds hundreds of letters. He took one letter and opened it. It said;

21 May 2001

To,

Hazel Grace

Hi Hazel, I'm the boy you sat with during math's class today. I know it is too early but I'm in love with you. The moment you stepped in that room, I felt my heart getting squeezed and just instantly melted. I love how good you are at maths, how breath – takingly gorgeous you smile and just everything.

We All Have a Past.....

Michael Waters

He pauses; “Michael Waters” he mutters. Then realizes that this 'Hazel Grace may have been his lover' He then reads another letter, then another and another.

Augustus was invested in what he was reading. He wondered how his 40 years old father was able to show it is much of love towards someone. Michael Waters had only been a strict and protective cold- hearted man to him.

The more he reads, the more he figures out that his father was once a young mischievous teenager, who liked or rather, who loved this girl called Hazel Grace.

He then realizes that this hazel might be his mother. Augustus never had a mother figure from the moment he was born. It has always been Michael Waters and Augustus Waters. He was again, flipping through the letters and saw;

21st may, 2010

To,

Hazel Grace

Hi Hazel, it's me again, Michael. I don't know why you have to go through this... why leukemia? Why us? I'm here watching you sleep with our one month old Augustus. Please be okay. Please please please..... Please don't leave us! I love you so much, Hazel Grace, forever

-Michael Waters

Augustus could feel his father's heart getting ripped as he continues to read the letter. He soon finds out that his mother, Hazel Grace had passed away on 16th August, 2010. A tear streamed down his face. Maybe Michael was so strict and protective because he loved him and maybe sees him as a reminance of Hazel Grace.

Moral: - There is a story behind every person despite how they appear to be.

Fiona Sailo

IX- G



Lesson of Life

Ravi was a school going boy, staying in a town near Dehradun. He always used to tease everyone specially those who were weak and younger to him. His parents and teachers guided him many times to mend his ways. But, he did not change his approach. One day a new student joined his class, his name was Suresh. He was especially able as he had lost his one leg in a car accident, while climbing up the stairs in the school one day Ravi made fun of him. Suresh kept quiet and carried on.

One fine day, as usual the school got over, Ravi ran towards the cycle stand. He picked up his bicycle and rushed towards his house. Suddenly, he was hit from behind by a fast moving car. He fell down from his bicycle and sustained severe injuries in his left hand. He was crying due to pain and agony.

He was taken to a nearby hospital by one of his teachers. His father was informed of the

Lesson of Life

accident. Ravi's X-Ray confirmed that he had broken his bone in the accident. He was operated and a plaster was put on his hand for six weeks.

Now he was finding it difficult to carry out even his basic daily work. He becomes dependent on others. But, now he realized one thing that how difficult it was for people with some permanent disabilities.

Once he was discharged from the hospital and he started going to school, he first apologized to Suresh for his ill conduct and rough behavior. He becomes his fast friend thereafter. One small incident in his life changed his entire perception toward life.

MORAL OF THE STORY:-

We should not make fun of others and help needy people.

Kunal Kaushik
Class XI B



Let yourself be flawed

To the person who is going to start a new phase and make new acquaintances:

A word “commitment”

I was always told that I should start interacting more with people because if I don't I will be assumed to be arrogant but I was never told that people who are not engaged much might be fighting with their own monster as well. I was always told that women don't scream & men don't cry but I was never told that every person has a right to express one's own feelings irrespective of who they are.

I was often told that I should not be anxious at this stage (Age) but no one told me that it's okay to not be okay. It's like someone should say to you that, it's okay to be angry, sad or whatever, I'm here to listen.

I was told that I should be excellent at studies so that people praise me but they never told

Let yourself be flawed

me to be excellent in believing myself so that people think twice before trying to break me.

They never looked at what I wrote, what I drew & what I had to say but they were all ears when someone had something interesting to say about me.

Strange that all these who made me believe that life is a perfect fairy tale left me without a note & I am here all alone wondering where did I go wrong.

So, don't let them tell you who you should be & what life wants from you.

Be wise enough to choose between who wants you to grow & who doesn't.

Don't be scared to make commitments to yourself. Accept the changes that make you a better person both outside & within.

Remember

“Don't water dead plants thinking they would result into something.

Grow flowers in places where you know it's hard for them to bloom. It's then when you know

Let yourself be flawed

you have achieved the unachievable”.

You know life is small, so

“Keep every promise you make & only make promises you can keep”.

The impact of words on people is that they will forget what we say to them but it's really hard to let go how we make them feel.

Such people who still put on a smile in front of the world no matter what happen are the bravest of all.

They are just original & different. We speak without realizing the sensitivity of the situation & that's where mostly all of us go wrong.

“Remember your words can plant gardens or burn the whole forests down”.

Sometimes, it feels sinking deep down inside not knowing what to do & what not to do , Not being able to decide what should have been done & what not,

I again was that lost, broken down one. Everyone had found their spark, I was still finding my motive to set flame. I didn't know where did I stand.

Let yourself be flawed

Once my teacher told me a story which really touched me.

“It was, there was a Brahman who was passing by a pond where he saw a drenched scorpion struggling to get out of the water, upon seeing this the Brahman decided to help the scorpion & reached his hand out to pick him out of the water but as soon as he tried to get a hold of the scorpion, the scorpion stung the Brahman's hand.

After this the Brahman decided to help his scorpion again. But the cycle repeated itself. It shows that one



Let yourself be flawed

should always do good to others even if they don't reciprocate the same temperaments vary.

After all the conclusion is that all you need to know is everyone is going to hurt you.

You just got to find the ones worth suffering for.

Reality is” pain is inevitable, suffering is optional “.

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You just got to find the ones worth suffering for.

Reality is” pain is inevitable, suffering is optional “.

I want to ask something

Have you ever felt loved?

You know “never love anyone who treats you like you're ordinary.

We let anger overpower us & do what should not be done. No one told me that love is when you both know you have flaws but even that makes you more adorable.

I just can't get over my past, I guess. Most of us can't right ?

So, the idea of reincarnation contains a most comforting explanation of reality.

I hold that when a person dies the soul returns again to the earth, another mother gives birth to it and the soul takes the road again.

Let yourself be flawed

And here I'm facing the reality.

No one told me that love is when you both
are hurt & you feel that everything good has ended,
As if there is no more meaning to life.

“I keep on saying to them not to mistake
infatuation for love, unknowingly,
Majority of us do that”.

My life as I lived it had often seemed to me
like a story that has no beginning & no end.

Sakshi
Class XII F



Yak!!

Once upon a time there was a woodcutter who got lost in the woods. The trees were very tall and it was midnight. The woodcutter first decided to cut some trees and then when he was done with the cutting of the trees he felt hungry, but in the wild forest where would he find some food to eat. While searching for some food he heard the sound of a river so he rushed towards it. Then he drank water.

He was still hungry and was starving. He was also scared of the wild animals living there. So he started finding some sort of shelter. He found a cave and managed to sleep there but while he was sleeping he heard some bushes crackling. He thought that it might be a bear or so.

He grabbed his axe and slowly went towards it but found that it was a snake that was not poisonous. Next day he woke up and started searching for the path to move out. Hours passed and he survived on fruits and water day and night

Yak!!

before he saw a light far away. It was like a mansion in the middle of the forest. He was very happy and ran towards it, then he suddenly fell and hurt himself in the leg but he was still able to run.

It was completely dark and nothing was visible. Then after struggling for an hour he finally ended up getting there. There he found a very old and dirty guy as if he hadn't taken bath for years the old man asked, "what do you want?". So the woodcutter said, "I want some food and a place to live" he said you can use the bedroom upstairs.

And then he went to sleep happily. But in the night while he was sleeping he heard the man shouting. "ha, ha, ha I'll not let you go, I'll eat you ha, ha, ha" He went to see the man, scared. And saw that the old man, was digging his nose and saying to it that I'll eat you. The woodcutter was in disgust.

Moksh Parihar
Class IX G

Stranger

Ben and Dover met in school. Both of them never had the urge to become friends with each other.

Again, as if fate wanted them to be friends , they were seated together. They introduced themselves and soon got to be more comfortable with themselves. They started sitting with each other so they could help each other out. They always had the same type of humour, liked the same people and played the same sports.



Stranger

The day was looked forward to. They longed for each other, identical to brothers; they always carried out mischievous acts and always pulled jokes on other people. From stranger to best-friends, they knew every bit of each other like the back of their hands. Their friendship was mutual and pure. Their academics were rather dull but even though they were not good at it, they always tried their best by competing with each other. When they played sports, the matches they played were always so delightful to watch since they always played with respect and Ben and Dover always had each other's back leading to victory . School was not a place fit for them since teachers never seated them together because everything that happened would be troublesome.

After school, they always went to 'their spot' to watch the sunset. They would have conversations that went on for hours , hours into days which eventually led to the cycle of their friendship being 6 years long. Although, that – day came. Ben's parents were suggesting that they

Stranger

would move to another city which was 6 hours apart. Hearing the news, Ben and Dover were devastated, realizing things would never be the same. Their stories, laughs, joy and fun times would soon drift away. Ben and his family finally moved.

They still made contact with each other by sending letters; but they were getting dull. The memories were soon grey, withering never to be recollected. They agreed on calling each other and when they did, they both thanked each other for what had happened in the past years. They wished each other well on their paths.

“Goodbye” from stranger to brothers only to become strangers again. Many people will enter your life, people come and go. Just make sure you cherish your time with them and make it a happy memory.

Priyani Negi
Class IX C



The Curse of Erta

Gleaming night lights and peace lilies graced her beautiful portrait. Successfully surviving the ravages of time, this portrait, the only vivid capture of the departed soul had the most intricate and exquisite detail, a portrait every artist dreams of painting.

The perfection in that demure face, that pale tint, hint of rose and mercury, hazel eyes and soft lips, now shut tighter than ever before, Anne scarlet was so much more than just a muse.

Tonight though many wished this portrait, almost alive, to speak and spill beans on the night that changed the fate of the queen to be and the empire she was entitled to inherit. The eve of coronation, of vim and vigor, was colored red as scarlet laid lifeless in her wooden chamber, blanketed in the metaphorically blue blood.

This was not the first time that the heir or the heiress was assassinated. A long drawn history

The Curse of Erta

of abducted, murdered and lost successors of throne and political instability roots down to the curse that no one can forget.

Long time ago, when emperors and intruders were synonymous, the Iris had attacked the kingdom of Nirgis. Nirgis known for her immense beauty, fertility and prosperity was the golden apple for every ruler, expect, none had ever broken in or won over Nirgis. But the Iris would not give up, decades of war and systematic attacks exposed the territories' of Nirgis .

Wars are worse than locusts. The land of beauty soon turned into land of deprivation and decay. The only royal survivors of the Nirgis' royalty, queen and her son, seeing no ways left to win their state back, tried to elope, just in time, to come across the Ire soldiers. Fate of the son, a little boy of seven was decided in seconds and what followed was a mother's nightmare.

The grieving queen, in agony and pain cried till tears dried and she could cry no more. A strong storm arose in her and thus came out words,

The Curse of Erta

thoroughly filled with hatred and disgust. “The tears I have shed shall be the last of water droplets to kiss your earth. Every mile of blood that came out of my beloved's body shall be repaid, and I shall be the one, dead or alive, reassuring that this happens”.

The queen shut her eyes and walked to the river Erta, where she had grieved her son's demise. Nobody spotted her again. But true to her words, tragedies' did befall on the Iris, saturation reigned, murders often left suspicious. Is she still among is striving for that revenge.

Agrima Pradhan
Class XI B



The Red Mask

Working as a veterinarian was never a problem for Maddie, until tonight. The week days were always so chaotic and then having a lazy weekend was all that she wished for. But she couldn't have it. She just shifted to her new apartment which is almost 1 hour away from her workplace and the route is always deserted.

It was 1:30 already when she left the clinic. This was her first time driving so late in this area. Suddenly her car came to a halt. That's weird, she thought. She came out of her car shivering; her beige coloured cardigan was the only source of warmth she could feel. The area she was at had a lot of dilapidated buildings and was surrounded by complete darkness. She pulled out her phone from her pocket; she wanted to call for some help as she didn't know anything about the internal organs of a car. 'I guess it's an unlucky day for me. Oh, wait, unlucky night'. She cursed after finding that her

The Red Mask

phone was dead. Putting her phone back in her pocket, she started looking around in the hope of finding something useful.

She was checking every building possible. Suddenly Maddie saw a shadow inside one of the buildings' windows. But it disappeared in a blink, forcing her to think it was just a hallucination. A slip of wise man, 'curiosity killed the cat'. Maddie thought that may be there was someone in that building who could help her. With that, she opened the door of the building and stepped inside.

She flinched after hearing a door banging; she broke into a cold sweat. The moonlight was the only thing that made the place illuminate. "hello?" her voice echoed, but only silence was received. Walking further inside the long corridor, she felt someone breathing on her neck. Her breath hitched she felt a presence of someone behind her, heart beat was running a marathon. With unsteady breath, she slowly turned around; her eyes were closed. Relief washed over her, there was nobody there. Signing she continued walking; she found a

closed door with the words 'help me' engraved on it. After gathering some courage, she grabbed the knob of the door, slowly opened it and entered inside.

She took a look around the room, everything was a mess. A rotten smell hit her nose, a very awful one. But what really took her breath away was a big coffin. These were small and big skull placed neatly on it and candles that lit up as soon as she saw them. The coffin was the source of the awful smell. She walked closer to the coffin and even though her hands were shaking, she opened it. To her horror, there a body, a dead body of a girl with blood all over her upper body inside that. A folded paper placed neatly on her face.

Maddie was crying at this point. Picking up the paper, she unfolded it. "YOU DIDN'T HELP ME. NOW IT'S YOUR TURN", these words were messily written on it, red coloured. "Blo-ood", she sluttered. Her head slowly turned towards the body again. She Screamed loudly: eyes were open, looking directly at Maddie.

The Red Mask

She fell down and started crawling backwards, her face flushed with tears. The body was now in a sitting position. It's head tilted and eyes still on Maddie. She suddenly stopped after feeling something behind her. She turned her head backwards and the last thing she saw was a man wearing all black and a RED MASK.

2 DAYS LATER

“Saw let's go”, Ned told Sam, scared of the misshaped building.

“Ned ! Look I found something “. He had a paper in his hand. Sam unfolded it.

“YOU DIDN'T HELP ME. NOW IT'S YOUR TURN”

A loud screen again echoed in the building.

Stephen
Class IX G



What Remains Are Feelings

(This story is about a girl and her pet whom she lost and what remained with her were the feelings).....

A bundle of fur jumped carelessly in joy, rolling itself into the green patches of the ground the girl called him "fuzzy". "Fuzzy. Fuzzy back to room, she said!" but he did not care about anything and kept on rolling down himself .Again, the girl called 'fuzzy come, it's your meal time" he come running back from the room and settled down watching carefully his meal coming from the kitchen to him. They both shared a really undetectable love.

They both were meant for each other .But as we all know the real truth nobody can live forever and ever and there is an end to everything. one day the girl's furry little boy was not at all in the mood to play, neither to eat his favorite meal, she found something unusual in his behavior she become really worried and know that these 10 years of their

What Remains Are Feelings

relationship would soon come to an end. She tried her best to share all the little moments with her furry buddy. But after a few days he found that furry her little friend kept on sleeping till 12:00 am and she knew this was the end of their friendship. She thought of each golden moment she had spent with him remembered his cute little tail and his charming eye full of naughtiness, his cute habits and many more things.

She carried him in her arms and kissed him on his forehead.

And this was an end!

Surbhi Bhatnagar
Class XI B



The Four Bumps

An old man Ramapati lives in a village with his daughter Sushma. Sushma was a very intelligent and sharp minded girl, she like to solve riddles and read books from her childhood.

Sushma was 25 years old and Ramapati was worried about his daughter's marriage as there was not a single person in the entire village who could match the expectations of her daughter. Whenever someone came to Ramapati for the marriage proposal for his daughter, Sushma would turn them down, saying that they have to give the answers of her questions first to prove their might. But no one in the village was able to do that. Ramapati was worried and thought that his daughter would never be able to find a suitable partner.

One day he went to another village to meet his old friend Sukhi. The village was far away and he had to cross the river to reach there. It took

The Four Bumps

Ramapati a whole day to reach that village. Ramapati was overjoyed to meet his friend Sukhi, both of them reveal old memories together.

After talking for some time, Ramapati told Sukhi about his concern regarding his daughter's marriage concern, after listening to everything Sukhi said that was not a matter of concern, because he had a nephew would be a suitable match for Ramapati's daughter. He was very intelligent and was running a shop in the village.

On the next day both of them went to meet Sukhi's nephew, Shekhar, in his shop. Ramapati and Sukhi explained the whole issue to Shekhar after that Shekhar got ready to meet Sushma. Ramapati and Shekhar decided that the next day they would go to Ramapati's village to meet his daughter.

The next morning, both of them bid farewell to Sukhi and started their journey for Ramapati's village. On the way to village Shekhar told Ramapati that, “half way I will take you and half way you will take me”. After hearing this Ramapati got angry and thought that he is young and I am an

The Four Bumps

old fellow how will I take it, but he didn't say anything and controlled his anger due to which he got a bump on his head (whenever Ramapati got angry he would get a bump on his head).

After walking little far, both of them came near the river. Ramapati took off his shoes held them in his hand and crossed the river, but Shekhar didn't do so. Seeing this, Ramapati again got angry and thought that why Shekhar did not take off his shoes, but again he didn't say anything, so he got another bump on his head.

After a while they decided to take a break and they both sat down under a tree. Shekhar took out his umbrella from his bag and opened it seeing this Ramapati got angry again and thought that why had Shekhar opened his umbrella while sitting under the tree when there was no need for that. But as usual he didn't do anything and he got the third bump.

After a long journey they finally reached Ramapati's village. Ramapati told Shekhar about his house with a gesture of his hand.

The Four Bumps

As soon as they reached near Ramapati's house, Shekhar started coughing very loudly and because of that Ramapati got angry and thought that Shekhar must have seen Sushma and wanted to irritate her, but as his nature goes he got the fourth bump and did nothing.

After reaching home Ramapati offered Shekhar a chair to sit down and told him to wait. He went to another room to look for his daughter. Seeing Ramapati, Sushma inquired that what had happened on his head.

Ramapati told her the whole story and the odd behavior of Shekhar. After hearing the whole story Sushma asked Ramapati for his blessings and said that, she is ready to marry Shekhar.

Ramapati was very surprised and shocked, he said that you refused to marry so many people to marry and now what have you seen in Shekhar that you are ready to marry him.

Sushma smiled and told him that after hearing the story of their journey it was proved that Shekhar was very intelligent and just the kind of

The Four Bumps

person that she wanted.

She further explained the odd behaviour of Shekhar, first when he said “half way I will you take you and half way you will take me”, didn't mean that half way he'll carry you half way you'll carry him he intended to say that half way you will talk about something and half way I will talk about something so, that they could easily covers the way. After hearing that one of Ramapati's bump disappeared.

Second he didn't take off his shoes in the river, because you may not know about the harmful, unknown things lay at the bottom of the river, it may be shattered glasses, pointed stones etc. Ramapati understood this and the second bump got disappeared.

Sushma further explained that he started coughing loudly to indicate that someone is approaching to our house because you may not know in which condition we are, after hearing the coughing I got time to represent myself properly, that was an appropriate behaviour from Shekhar,

The Four Bumps

with this Sushma finished her explanation.

At last, there was a big smile on Ramapati's face not due to that all of the bumps on his head were gone and finally his daughter got a worthy man for herself.

Vedansh Binjola
Class IX D



The Mystery Unfolds...

It was six in the evening and a girl in her late twenties decked up in a black attire was briskly walking towards the road that led the way to not so populated area. Down the lane, amidst the dark gloomy forest, there was a shady hut. As soon as she keeps her foot on the entrance, there jumped the black cat glaring at her. The girl said, "I know that I'm late, c'mon let's eat something." She walked inside her house. There were sofas covered with sheets, the glass table which was stainless, caramel cakes and puddings kept on the dining table, a wide book shelf with books of Agatha Christie and other mystery writers.

As she moves around the house, there were lamps and dim lights. Mirror on each adjacent wall. At the back of the house there was a gazebo with a bonfire area in it. With some hanging flower pot hung on the sides its roof. Ah! Her lavish house gives major English vintage vibe, you know an

The Mystery Unfolds...

English officer living in Shimla or Darjeeling during the pre-independence era of India. Everything seems so classy. Little faint music can be heard in the periphery, probably the nightjars and nightingales are singing extensively.

She goes to upper floor, “tap-tap-tap”, her six inches black heels made sound of tapping on the stairs while she was climbing them. She enters the room; it was totally dark as compared to the rooms downstairs. But she switches on the lamp which gave out green and yellow light. God knows, why isn't there a single normal source of light such as tube light or a bulb? Anyways, getting back to her room. There were papers lying everywhere on the floor. Files scattered on the thick, wooden table and in the corner, there was another pile of files kept which were full of dust. It seems worse than an old store room.

She sat on the chair with a thump, picking up one of the files and continuously turns the pages but closes the file with an annoying expression on her face. She decides to take a bath and get back to

The Mystery Unfolds...

this fuss later. She sits on the chair again only fudge to between the files. It's almost midnight and she is looking at the soft board hung on the wall which has photographs, newspaper cuttings and pictures of crime scenes pinned by pins on it. While seeing the softboard, she takes a cup of piping hot coffee in her hand starts sipping it slowly. Suddenly, something caught in her eyes and she got the clue which she has been looking for days. She smiles a bit thinking of her victory.

But it isn't over yet. It feels like she is a scruff detective stuck in a homicide case, jumbled between the two things which are related to the case but when everything is kept in a chronological order it becomes contradictory. Being a detective or a criminologist is tough, she thought. But this was the profession she has chosen herself. Months of running around the town just to find a place which is indirectly related to the case is a cakewalk for her. The days when the air smells wet and cold, the brown table of the kitchen is where she sits, case files all around. Crime scene photos glow

The Mystery Unfolds...

bright on her laptop's screen. Phones on silent. She is thinking. Thinking deep.

To beat the criminal, first think like a criminal. She is imagining the scenarios in her head thinking that probably this must have happened according to the analogy of the case. But what is the need for her to imagine these scenarios when she can create one. Shocked? Was all she doing, a lie? Has everything top to toe, become ironical? Is the resolver and the creator of this crime, the same? Anything can happen in the world. Everything is an illusion. Something mysterious and dark in her life. Is her whole life a trap of lies and secrets?

Shreya Saini
Class XI F

Our Bright



Sania Mirza



Ansuman Panwar



Siyaa Sarkar



Vasundhara Chaudhary



Saanvika Singh



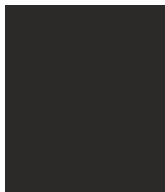
Macy



Saujas Uniyal



Samiksha Dhiman



Manik Thapa



Khushi Bhardwaj



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Arrshia Singal



Shubha Swaroop



Prapti Rawat



Anjuman Panwar



Mehak Arora



Chaitanya Gupta

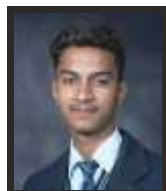


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*"A person who wrote badly did
better than a person who does not write at all."*



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