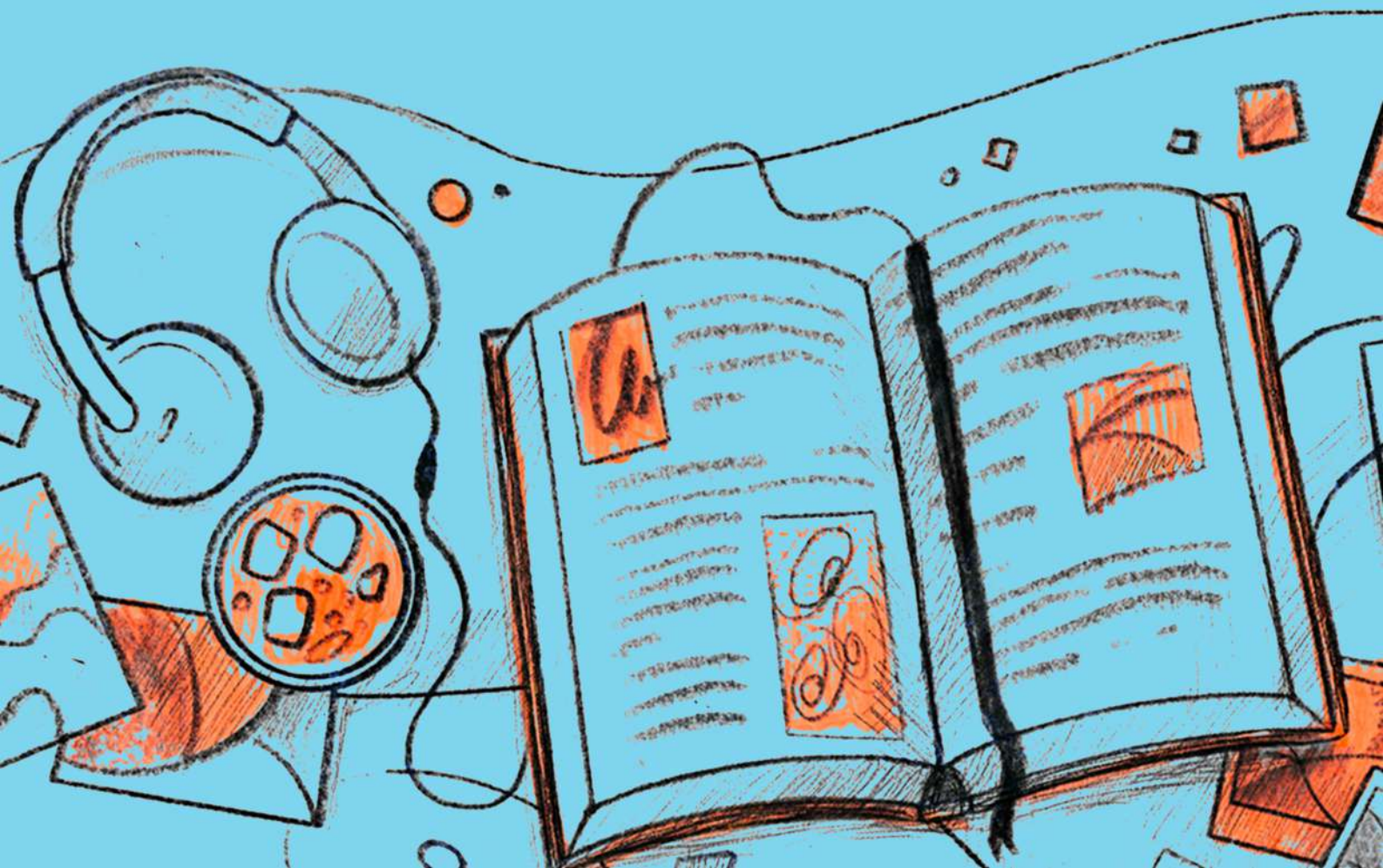


LOTUS

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ENGLISH EDITORIAL

CLASS 6



Adolescence

Adolescence is a period of change and growth, both physically and emotionally. It is a time when children start to transform into young adults, facing new challenges and experiences.

Physically, adolescents go through a rapid growth spurt, experiencing changes in their height, weight, and body shape. These changes can be overwhelming and sometimes confusing as they try to navigate their new bodies and adapt to the changes happening to them.

Emotionally, adolescence can be a rollercoaster of emotions. It is a time when children start to develop their own sense of identity, separate from their parents and family. They may feel intense emotions such as excitement, fear, anger and sadness while they try to make sense of the world around them.

During adolescence, children also start to form new relationships with their peers, developing a sense of belonging and independence. They also start to explore their own interests and passions, trying to figure out what they want to do with their lives.

Adolescence can be a challenging time as children try to navigate the complexities of growing up and becoming independent. It is important for parents and caregivers to support and guide them through this period, providing a safe and nurturing environment where they can grow and thrive.

In conclusion, adolescence is a time of change, growth, and discovery. It is a time when children start to develop their own sense of self, separate from their parents and family. It is a time when they begin to explore their own interests and passions, forming new relationships and navigating the challenges of growing up. With the right support and guidance, children can successfully navigate the turbulent waters of adolescence and emerge as confident, independent young adults.

~ Saachi Jhunjunwala (Class: 6C)



Dance: My Passion

Dance is not just a hobby for me, it is my passion. It is a form of expression that allows me to connect with my emotions in a way that words cannot. Dance has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember and I have grown to love it more and more with each passing day.

There is something truly magical about the way movement and music come together to create something beautiful. Whether I am performing on stage or simply dancing in my room, I feel a sense of freedom and joy that is unmatched by anything else. It is in those moments that I am able to be completely myself, without any fear or hesitation.

I have been trained in various styles of dance, from classical to western and each one has brought its own unique challenges and rewards. But no matter the style, the feeling of exhilaration and fulfilment that comes from dancing remains constant.

The way my body moves to the rhythm, the way my heart beats in time with the music—it is an experience like no other.

Dance has taught me discipline, perseverance and the importance of hard work. It has pushed me to my limits and shown me what I am truly capable of. It is a constant source of inspiration and motivation, driving me to improve and grow as a dancer every day.

Dance is not just something I do—it is a part of who I am. It is my passion, my love, and my greatest joy. And for that I am eternally grateful.

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Joyful Bliss

In the moments of sunshine,
In the laughter that fills the air,
In the smiles that brighten faces,
Joy is found everywhere.

It dances in the heart
And sings in the soul,
It's a feeling of contentment
That makes us feel whole.

It blooms like a flower
And spreads like wildfire,
It is a gift from above
That never tires.

So cherish each moment
And hold onto the bliss,
For in the arms of joy,
We find true happiness.

Articles Written by: Saachi Jhunjunwala

Class: 6C

Memoir on Hobbies

Pursuing hobbies is one of the most gratifying ways to unwind in the midst of our daily activities. Hobbies help us explore our creative side by building on our interests across various platforms like music, dance, art, sports, creative writing and a lot more. Similarly, my hobby of reading helped me realise my passion for writing stories and poems.

This started when I was two years old and used to look at picture books which also made me want to read the thought that went behind these attractive pictures. Gradually, as I got older, my parents began reading me stories like “The Three Bears”, “The Three Billy Goats Gruff” and so on. Till I was three and a half years old, my mother read younger levels of Lady Bird books to me but soon I began to read those by myself.

Seeing my interest in reading, my mother started bringing me books written by authors like Enid Blyton and Ruskin Bond. Soon, reading became a favourite pastime and I read any book that came my way, including those which belonged to my mother. When nobody was around, I would read aloud to myself. This helped me develop voice modulation and improve my communication skills.

Moving on to junior school, my mother introduced me to a variety of new authors such as Sudha Murthy and Katherine Rundell, to name a few. I began to explore various genres in fiction, such as mystery and thrillers. Ever since I began pursuing this hobby, my communication skills and vocabulary have seen heightened improvement.

I regularly participate in various competitions like elocution, dramatics and creative writing. Now, I realise that my starting to read at such a young age helped me nurture my language skills and also helped in finding my passion.

~ Prisha Mehra (Class: 6C)



The Power of Resilience

Scene 1: Prisha's bedroom, a brightly coloured room with lavender walls and pin striped curtains. An envious collection of stuffed toys and dolls displayed in one corner.

Prisha is lying down and crying, brooding over her dog's death. Her grandmother comes inside and hugs her. Prisha closes her eyes. Being near her grandmother was one of the biggest comforts she could have. Seeing her plight, her grandmother strikes up a conversation with Prisha.

Grandmother – Cheer up my dear! Be resilient. There are ups and downs in life. It is up to us to not let our adversities pull us down but to make the most of your ups.

Prisha – Granny, do you think the demise of my dog, an animal so close to me and my best friend would not have an effect on me? Wouldn't it take a toll on me? Would I be able to keep my composure and say 'it's all right'?

Grandmother – Be calm, my child. Sit up. Hear what I have to say. I have something similar to tell you. I remember when I was a very young girl, active and jolly, when I used to roam about and dance through the narrow lanes of Punjab. At that time, an incident took place.

Just like you shared a lovely bond with our pet dog, Lucky, I shared a similar bond with our cow, Sundari. Sundari would be an element of amusement and pastime for my six sisters and I. She had a disease known as lumpy skin disease which caused her eventual death. I was heartbroken like you are and filled with anguish and grief. However, it was in that state of mourning that a thought came to me, as I wanted to remember Sundari with a good state of mind and did not want my suffering to affect other members of the family. With this mindset my child, I brushed my grief aside. She continues to live in my memory through all the joyous moments we once shared.

Prisha – Granny, I agree. I loved Lucky immensely but now I understand that I should be happy and remember the good times we had together. I will have hope and resilience. Granny, can you share some more incidents that will inspire me to be a stronger person? I love the way you explain things.



Grandmother – Of course, darling. Listen to me carefully. I have numerous incidents to share and I learnt something from each. I hope they are helpful to you as well. While I was at school, I shared a very close bond with a girl named Aruna. We were inseparable and were like sisters. When we moved to the sixth standard, I was told that Aruna was relocating with her parents to a new city. My heart shattered as she was the only good friend I had. However, over the weeks and months I worked on making new friends and eventually life came back to normal. My mother always told us that in every adversity there is an opportunity. An opportunity to learn something new, make less mistakes and become a better and stronger human being.

Prisha – Thank you Granny, this is so insightful and something I will keep in mind. I will try to be happy in all situations.

Grandmother – That's my girl. Being happy in all situations will give you the ability to think rationally and make mature decisions.

Prisha (grinning) – But Granny, would you still want me to be strong if I lost during sports day or did not win a competition I worked hard for?

Grandmother (laughs loudly) – Yes, of course, I would still want you to be strong, hopeful and work hard for the next one. We should have the ability to take winning and losing equally in our stride.

Prisha – But Granny, didn't you tell me last week that you could learn so much from the younger generations? Hearing you now, I am not sure if there is anything I can teach you.

Grandmother – Well, I learn from you each day, through your curiosity to know things.

Scene 2:

Both Prisha and her grandmother move towards the living room, hand in hand. The room (in shades of ivory and gold) is adorned with beautiful paintings and pieces of art. Their conversation lasts long. Afternoon turns into evening and the bright sunny sky outside now has shades of orange and dark blue, when Prisha smiles. Her mother is at the door.

~ Prisha Mehra (Class: 6C)



Prize Day at School

One morning, I woke up to the soft beams of sunlight pouring through the window. Recalling that it was prize day, I got dressed in a jiffy and went on my way to school with a spring in my step. I was bubbling with excitement when the teachers led us to the podium. We were drowned in a hush of voices as we sat down on the cold floor. A melodious song with a rhythmic beat rendered by the pianist changed the atmosphere of the hall into one of tranquillity and serenity within minutes.

Suddenly, we heard the gates swing open and as we stood up in reverence to our principal, a deafening silence ensued. Once we were all seated, the ceremony commenced by a few senior teachers awarding certificates and complimentary books. As the classes three and four poured onto the stage one by one, I was bored to death and sunk into a stupor. When it was my turn to steal the limelight, I was almost asleep and my best friend had to shake me out of my world of dreams.

Filled with embarrassment, I walked backstage and appeared on the front side, forcing a smile. Preoccupied with the thought of my prizes,

I miscalculated a small step on the stage, tripped and fell. The repercussions were for all to see. I fell face down to the horrified gasps and peals of laughter amongst the bewildered and amused faces in the crowd. Quickly regaining my composure, I got up, straightened my uniform and walked sheepishly onto the stage.

I grabbed my prizes and fled the scene, not wanting to become a laughingstock anymore. In all the commotion, I didn't notice what the cursive handwriting on my certificates spelled. There was a book about space and the other wonders of the universe which I buried myself into during the break. I was over the moon and my happiness knew no bounds. My friends and I congratulated each other on winning prizes and promised to treat each other by handing out sweets and candies.

While leaving school, I was witness to a sea of contrasting faces. While some beamed from ear to ear, the faces of some were grumpy and upset, reflecting how they felt inside. I went home donning an exuberant smile and sparkling eyes with quite a lot of stories to tell my family. They sniggered and teased me when I recounted my mishap, laughing at my clumsiness. Truly, that day will always be cherished in my mind as one of the most hilarious days of dichotomies.

~Shruti Banerjee(Class: 6C)



The Kettle and the Cup

Mr. Kettle, Mr. Kettle,
Pour the tea into me,
I am sad and cold,
But I want to shout with glee!

Mrs. Cup, Mrs. Cup,
I am extremely sorry!
Why don't you come up here,
So that I can pour tea with glory?!"

Mrs. Cup comes to Mr. Kettle,
But pushes him aside,
The poor Mr. Kettle falls off the table,
Leaving some tea behind!

Suddenly someone thunders outside ,
"Who broke my kettle?"
Poor Mrs. Cup feels bad for Mr. Kettle
And falls down herself before
she starts to battle.

Mr. Kettle and Mrs. Cup
Lie there unclean,
Until someone comes up
And throws them in the garbage bin.

That is the end,
Of the two dear friends,
Take care of your cups and kettles at home,
Or my friends,
Their time will also end.

Article Written by: Aanya Kedia

Class: 6A

CLASS 7



Locked in Fear

Trapped in a room with no way out,
Your heart beating oh so loud,
Both eyes shut with fear,
As eerie voices whisper into your ear.

Screaming with terror at the top of your lungs, Feeling the
horror as it gripped and clung.
With no idea what to do next,
Jump through a trapdoor, hope for the best.

A soft landing, oh what a relief,
Staring into the darkness in disbelief.
A pair of red eyes glaring at you,
Oh so fierce, sending a shiver right through.

Heart pounding, you face the unknown.
In the darkness courage is shown.
Escaping the room, the path is clear.
With a leap, you break free from the fear.

Twilight's Terror

In the night, oh do deep,
With ghostly cries, nightmares creep.
Through the mind they prowl and roam,
In dreams, where fear makes its home.
In the darkness, a ghost floats by.
Whispers soft, where shadows lie.
With an eerie glow, as white as snow,
She chants a spell, makes terror grow.

In the despairing gloom, fear grips tight.
Nightmares tell tales, in the moonlit night. As reality blends
with dreams, mysteries stir, The answers to questions,
always a blur.

Silent Screams

In an eerie castle, mysteries creep.

In this place, evil never sleeps.

A tortured young soul, amidst the dark shadow hides , An innocent little
girl who met with a tragic demise.

In the moonlit hall, a dagger shone.

In a silent night where sadness had grown. A swift, cruel
strike took her life away,

The castle's dark secrets locked tight that day.

Now her spirit lingers,whispers in the walls. A haunting presence
in the castle's cold halls. Her laughter,once bright,now a mournful
sigh, Echoes through the darkness, a timeless lullaby.

Checkmate Chronicles

In the middle of an abandoned castle, amidst the dark shadows, lay an old chessboard, a battlefield for warriors like us.

The game begins, not with its typical seriousness, but rather with an unsettling tension that hangs in the air like a curse. I, as a Black Knight, stand as a loyal warrior draped in a cloak of darkness. I gallop into action as the Whites begin to threaten us.

Narrowly escaping death not once but twice, I hesitantly advanced forward. Mid-game, the war descends into a horrible nightmare of death, sacrifice and brutality.

Our only goal is to kill the White King. Ready to give my life to save the Black king, I attempt to annihilate anyone who dares to stand in my way.

In the midst of chaos and bloodshed, no one noticed the white bishop and the white knight stealthily advancing towards the Black King. Realising what was about to happen, silent tears cascaded down our faces.

"CHECKMATE" whispered the cold wind that swept over the dark and desolate chessboard. Just as gradually as the war had begun, it had ended just as abruptly.

Articles Written by: Myra Bansal

Class: 7D

Liberating Our Minds –

Embracing Freedom from Phone Addiction

In today's world, where mobile phones are ubiquitous, a new superpower is emerging – the ability to break free from the addictive grasp of our phones. This superpower isn't about physical strength, rather, it is about regaining our consciousness, reclaiming our time, and ultimately, freeing our minds.

Phone addiction has quietly crept into our lives and taken over us, altering our behaviour and affecting our mental health. Being addicted to our phones doesn't only lead to scrolling through social media feeds or playing games all day, it also leads to anxiety, less productivity, and a diminished capacity to interact with the world around us meaningfully.

To gain liberty from phone addiction, we need to work hard and make intentional efforts. This starts with noticing our dependence on phones like the compulsive need to check every notification every minute, the anxiety when being separated from our phones, and the urge to fill every moment with screen time.

A strategy to get back on track is establishing limits. Setting specific times when phones are off limits like at the dining table or before bedtime helps make time for real-world interactions. By consciously limiting screen time, we regain control over how we spend moments, allowing us to foster deeper connections with others and ourselves.

Another aspect of developing this superpower is nurturing mindfulness. Instead of scrolling through endless content, we can enjoy the moment. This can involve engaging in activities like yoga and meditation or just simply taking a walk without our phones. By connecting with the outside world, we can strengthen our ability to resist the allure of digital simulation.

Developing hobbies can reduce screen time significantly since we enjoy doing whatever we like. Whether it's reading books or doing any physical activity, these hobbies are meaningful alternatives to our phones.

In conclusion, embracing the superpower of freedom from phone addiction is not about reducing screen time, it's about reclaiming our autonomy, rectifying our mistakes, and nurturing our well-being in a digital world. Yes, it does require mindfulness and intentional action. However, by cultivating this superpower, we empower ourselves to live fulfilling lives, make deeper connections, enhance our creativity, and have an overall greater mental clarity. As we embark on this journey together, let us embrace the fact that the liberation from our phones will impact our life shaping a future where technology enhances, but does not enslave the human mind.

~Navika Jain (Class: 7A)





Embracing the Rain

“Rain showers my spirit and waters my soul.” The onset of the monsoon in Kolkata brings about much-needed relief from the harsh and repulsive summer heat. The raindrops are welcomed by everyone with open arms except me. I don’t like the rain.

The thunderous rain brings a sense of darkness in me. Today, I woke up to find myself gazing out the window, just to see a dark and gloomy morning. The pitter-patter of the rain knocked as an alarm on everyone’s doors. I observed every raindrop glistening like a diamond and falling in the blink of an eye. A canopy of grey clouds formed overhead. They looked like grey and white knights having a war and the raindrops seemed like bloodshed. The sky was painted in shades of melancholy. I flinched and was pleased to see the next sight – vibrant umbrellas filling in the street. Ah, now this made my grumpy mood much better. Now even the trees happily seemed to wave at me with their rustling leaves. I had this strange desire to run into the streets and feel the raindrops pouring down my face. As soon as I stepped out, a strong yet sweet petrichor tingled in my nose

. It was sweet probably because of the flowers. I gazed at my raincoat to see that it was covered with small clear raindrops. They looked like little people crowding in a town. To disturb the peace, a big splash of mud landed on my face. I was quite cross and looked up furiously to see why the big splash was caused. I discovered that a bunch of small children were playing in muddy puddles. I soon calmed down and joined them. I felt free from everything for the first time.

The rain is like an orchestra that used to play sad music to me, but today I learned that it can play happy music too, but only if you take it in your hands and enjoy the rain.

~Navika Jain (Class: 7A)



Time – Our Guide

The Greek philosopher, Aristotle believed that time was the greatest advisor one could have, whose wisdom transcends the boundary of a human's ability to think. The quote – "Wait for the wisest of all counsellors, Time." by Aristotle induces belief in the virtue of patience and in the ocean of time providing clarity, eventually, in the various obstacles in life.

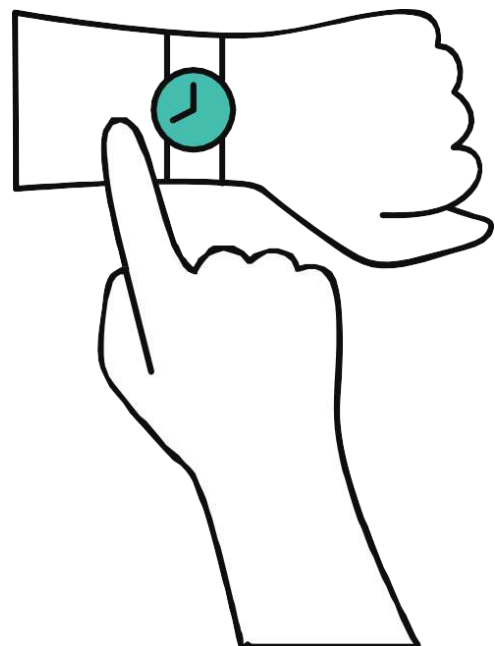
Time has quite a vantage point. It allows the reviewing of situations away from the immediacy of reactions and gushing in of emotions. We often tend to react to instances in a fraction of a second without analysing or critically thinking which blurs the right decision that we have to take. As time passes, these intense emotions subside, providing a clearer, more objective understanding of the circumstances. This distance from temperament is crucial for gaining insights that are not visible when we are vexed.

Furthermore, time gives us the liberty to heal. When we get disappointed or get swallowed by an abyss of anxiety or even depression, time allows wounds to heal. It offers a vaster view so that people can rethink their choices. The passage of time can make stress fade away and pave the way for gaining knowledge.

Time also provides a space for growth and learning. As we move forward, we learn more things and as a result, we become wiser. Decisions made over time are better than to make decisions with a clogged mind. The wisdom gained over time can lead to better outcomes.

Today, Aristotle's advice to "Wait for the wisest of all councillors, Time" serves as a reminder to have patience. It encourages us to trust the process of time, to allow it to reveal truths, heal wounds, and inculcate skills that lead the way to growth. By doing so, we get better at handling the natural flow of life and making decisions that benefit us and the growth of the world. In conclusion, Aristotle's quote is a prompt for us to embrace time as a guide that continuously helps us, especially through the hurdles in life.

~Navika Jain (Class: 7A)



The Ocean's Plea: A Cue to Environmental Action

As the rising sun painted the sky in shades of pink and yellow, I found myself at a beach, determined to make it cleaner by the end of the day. I started my journey with my gloves, a broom, and a trash bag.

Little did I know that the day would reveal a newfound ability – the ability to communicate with the sea creatures inhabiting this ecosystem, transcending the boundary of human understanding. Initially, the discovery was overwhelming.

The squawking of the seagulls soaring overhead, the clicking of the crabs, and even the crashing of the waves against the shore seemed to whisper to me. Amidst the cacophony of these voices, I listened intently, eager to comprehend the troubles and joys of the waiting animals.

First, I turned my attention to the crabs who were diligently burrowing in the sand.

Their chatter was filled with pain and tales of survival against predators, changing tides, and rising temperatures, but beneath their resilient mindset, deep in their hearts lay a plea to stop human encroachment. They ranted about their encounters with humans, and let me tell you, they were not good encounters.

The crabs were frustrated with getting stuck in fishing nets or getting crushed under careless, ruthless footsteps. They told me - “Please protect our oceans. Advocate for limited fishing practices and a protected environment where our kind can thrive.”

Next, I heard a peculiar sound. I turned around to see... nothing, but the noise didn't stop. It turned out to be the gentle voice of an endangered stingray. It was one among only a handful left of their kind. After talking a bit, I realised that stingrays weren't as vicious and threatening as they seemed. They were, in fact, really tender and compassionate, but had undergone a lot of trouble and were distressed, all because of us callous humans.

I was really surprised that it was being kind to me since I was one of them. All the problems that their species had faced made me shed a tear or two. It said - “I beg you all. Stop using so much single-use plastic. It's suffocating our oceans and killing innumerable marine animals. And second, spread the word. Tell others what you have learned today. You all don't even spare the seagulls. They die almost every day for one reason or the other when they come to clean their feathers - sometimes they ingest that brownish-blackish liquid that humans spill in the ocean or they get entangled in plastic.”

As I continued my cleanup, I found myself engaged with plenty of animals. A dolphin with a cheery nature talked about the wonders of the water and it made me sad to think we humans were destroying the wonderful tapestry of the ocean woven by God day by day. A solemn fish grieved the loss of its habitat. Each conversation was a poignant reminder that we pay the biggest debt to the ocean and seas.

I thought about their problems a little and realised that they were complex, but not impossible to solve. Overfishing, pollution, and habitat destruction were only a few of the many problems. However, through unity and unwavering dedication, solutions could be found.

With the inspiration from my newly made friends, I embarked on a mission to enact change. Through more beach clean-ups, educational campaigns, and advocating for a healthy environment,

I decided to find people who would contribute to saving the oceans. It wasn't only about picking up waste. It was about nurturing a deeper connection with nature and embracing stewardship. By instilling a sense of respect for nature, together, we could cultivate a culture of sustainability that would last for eternity.

As the sun began setting over the horizon, casting a warm-toned glow over the tranquil sea, a spark of hope seemed to rise. Though the challenges that lay ahead were daunting, through perseverance, I knew that we could have a brighter future for all the inhabitants thriving on this planet. As I walked along the shore watching the picturesque sunset, the gentle sound of the waves served as a soothing rhythm. I vowed to carry every animal's voice with me wherever I go, serving as a reminder of the need to foster positive change in the world.

~Navika Jain (Class: 7A)

The Serenity of the Seaside

Golden rays dance on the blue sea,
Waves whisper secrets wild and free.
A shining orb climbs the sky,
Kissing the horizon where dreams lie.

Footprints make stories on the sand,
Washed by tides, a fleeting hand.
Shells gleam under the morning light,
Echoes of crashing waves spreading pure delight.

Seagulls soar, they sing their song,
Nature's symphony, clear and strong.
Palms sway gently, a rhythmic tune,
In harmony with the sunlit afternoon.

Warmth embraces us, a tender touch,
Everlasting days, loved so much.
Children's laughter spread through the air,
Joy unleashed beyond compare.

As the sun dips low, painting gold,
A masterpiece, a sight to behold.
Day's farewell, a serene, calm reach,
Timeless beauty on the sea beach.

Articles Written by: Navika Jain

Class: 7A

The Heart of Home

In the kitchen's warmth, where love is found,
Homemade delights the table crowned.
With spices bold and flavours true,
Each dish is a tale, old or new.

From simmering pots, the aroma rises
Inviting all to share the pride.
With every bite, a journey starts,
Into the depths of tender hearts.

Not just a meal, but memories made,
In cosy corners, laughter played.
For in each taste, a story told,
Of hands that worked, hearts that hold.

So let us savour this humble fare,
and cherish moments, beyond compare.
For in the simple act of dining,
Lies the essence of life's defining.

Article Written by: Prina Daruka

Class: 7A

The Alternate Reality - A Breathtaking Revelation

In the heart of an ancient forest, where sunlight filtered through towering trees and moss-covered rocks and where ancient mantras were unknowingly whispered, there stood a hidden door. Its presence was known only to a few, whispered about in hushed tones among those who believed in the magic that still lingered about and somehow survived this haunted and fragile world filled with social media.

The door skillfully handcrafted from ancient oak as good as new and engraved with intricate carvings depicting deep meanings, celestial patterns, and mythical creatures, appeared masked at first glance. Yet, those who approached could feel a faint hum in the air, a firm but gentle and subtle vibration that hinted at the mysterious secret it held within. Legend has it that the door led to a realm beyond imagination, a parallel universe where time flows differently, and all was done by forces not known to the human era. Stories spoke of brave souls who had dared to cross the threshold returning mesmerised with tales of landscapes painted from a special palette, the shades of which were electrifying, of beings who communicated through enchanted music,

.and every little cell of the universe woven in a pattern beyond human imagination . Beware though, for tales also spoke of dangers lurking in the shadows of this otherworldly realm unravelling mysteries of creatures with eyes that glowed like embers and powers capable of twisting reality itself. Yet, despite the warnings and the uncertainties of the limitless danger lying in front gradually unravelling itself, the luring of the hidden door remained irresistible. For in a world bound by the dull and systematic lifestyle, the promise of adventure and discovery beckoned like a distant star in night and day, a mild and glimmering hope that magic still existed for those brave enough to seek it. As the sun dipped below the horizon, the door lay in waiting for the next brave soul to dare to step through and unravel the mysteries of the parallel universe that lay beyond.

Uthsavi Khetan(Class: 7A)





CLASS 8

17 years later...

In the heart of the stadium, where the excitement builds,

Millions of Indians, hoping for a glorious gift.

With one and all holding on to their dream,

On the pitch, comes out our blue 11-man team.

The players line up, the national anthem starts,

Each Indian across the world sings with pride and their hands on their hearts.

Soon everyone's favourite duo comes out,

Pledging to end this 17-year drought.

Six after six, they played,

With bat and ball, our cricketers dance with fate.

From Kohli's finesse to Axar's might,

They reached 176 runs, igniting the night.

From wickets fallen to runs abstain,

Our Indian bowlers showed us how expertly they trained.

The South Africans still managed to put on a resilient fight.

Our chances now did not look very bright.

As the final overs approached, agitation and tension filled the air.

Nobody dared to move an inch from their chair.

The bat struck hard. "What a monstrous shot!"

Surya leaped into the air, and the ball was caught.

The crowd erupted in cheer.

Now we knew that we were extremely near.

In the last couple of balls, when faith was a spark,

Each player shone, illuminating the dark.

The crowd brightened with a thunderous roar.

As the trophy, our world champions wore.

With our heads held high, under skies painted blue,

India's T20 world cup victory is a dream come true.

Article Written by: Arhaana Menon

Class: 8B

Finding a Home

Gripping tightly on to Alex's leash, I tiptoed down the cold and desolate street of London on Christmas Eve. It was nine o'clock, and it was drizzling. Looking around, I found most of the shops to be either closed or very dimly lit. The warm, yellow light from the bakery and a few faintly glowing street lamps were the only sources of light in the dark lane.

The sweet, hot-glazed buns stacked in a tray inside the holly-hung bakery caught my eye. I almost started drooling, dreaming of those buns and a bowl of warm potato soup. A stinging cold drop of water fell from a hole in my umbrella on my eyelashes and shook me from my fantasy. I was hungry but didn't have even a penny; forget about those twenty pence buns. My father used to work in a leather factory, and my mother used to mend shoes to buy bread. Now that they both are dead, it is only me and Alex, all alone in this cruel world.

I can't possibly recollect how many excruciating nights we have spent, cold and hungry, shivering under one blanket in a small shed. Alex is young and bold. I don't want him to go through such rough days and suffer.

That's why I am looking for a good, rich home that will take care of him and give him the love and comfort I was unable to give. As the dark midnight drew closer, I started giving up hope of ever saving Alex. Just as we were about to take a turn on the corner of the street, a raspy voice called out, "Hey, child, where are you off to with that dog at such an hour?" I slowly turn to look at a hunched figure with eyes that gleamed like pools of wisdom, gazing back at me inquisitively.

I took a step back, unsure of this stranger and he shot me back a questioning look as if he were scrutinising my probable idiosyncrasies. "Little girl, it is not safe for you to be roaming on the streets of London at this hour; there are burglars everywhere. If you wish to come with me, I can take you to my cottage, which is about twenty minutes from here," said the old man.

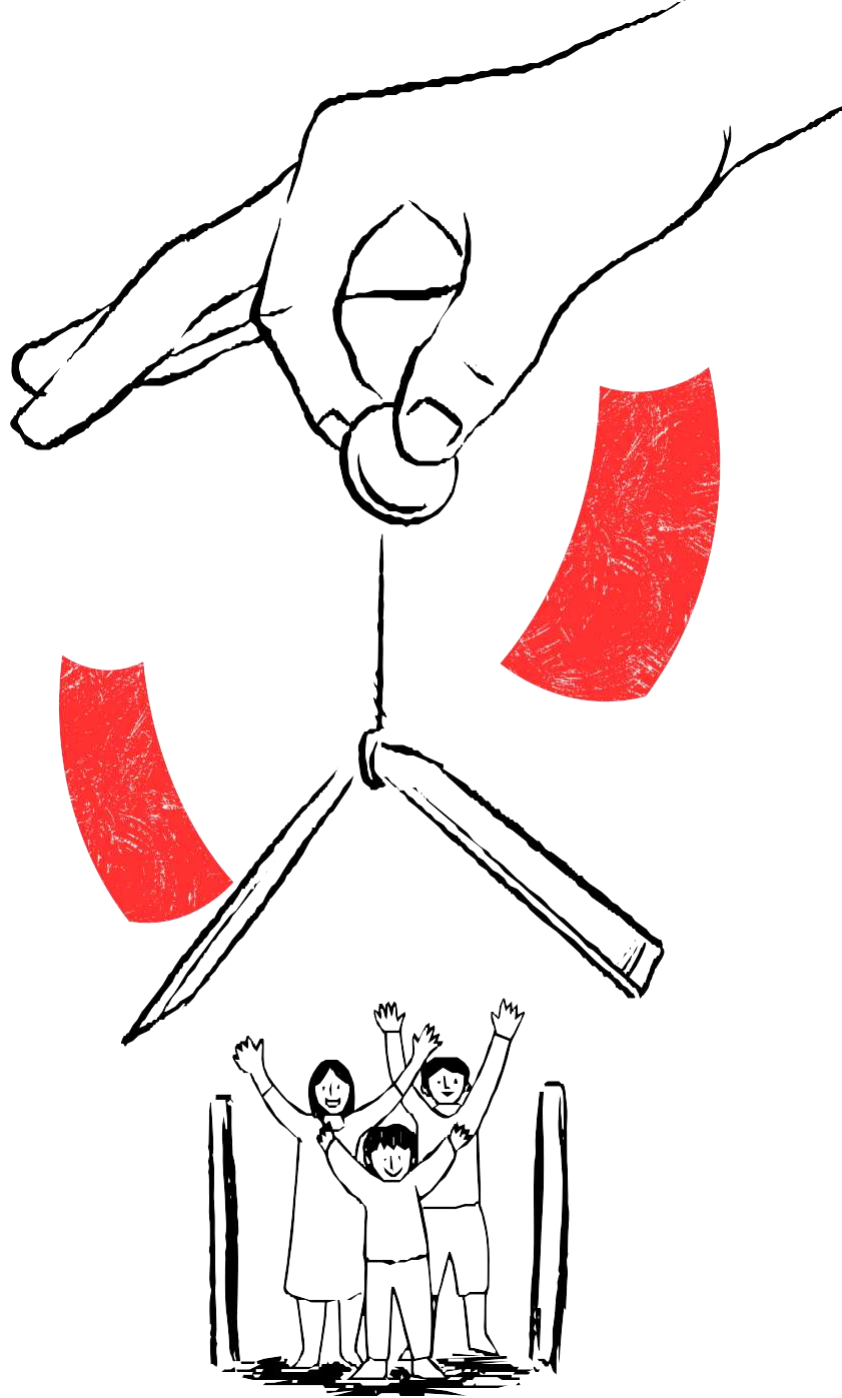
I don't know why, but a feeling of trust and excitement sparked up inside me. I nodded and obediently followed the old man, Alex, trotting beside me. We reached an almost dilapidated cottage and stopped in front of its mahogany door. It was opened by a girl, maybe a couple of years older.

than me, who was dressed in a plaid nightgown, her rusty brown hair tied loosely in a tangled mess. "We have a guest, Madeleine. Make sure she is well taken care of. Don't be scared of her companion; he is calm." He articulated each word carefully. The girl, Madeleine, was apprehensive but nevertheless was subservient and gave me warm clothes and wiped Alex dry, almost like an adept handmaid

Alex remained alert and kept growling in a low voice the whole time. I didn't give his uncanny actions too much thought and dismissed my worries. We then seated ourselves at the dining table, and I was given a big bowl of chicken broth along with baguette, lemon-flavoured cream cheese, and cranberry sauce.

Alex sat on the hearth in front of his bowl of beef in the warmth of the blazing fireplace, yet strangely he didn't touch it. "You can take shelter here as long as you want." As the old man said these words, my eyes roamed around drowsily and settled on the mysterious Madeleine, who had quietly excused herself from the dinner table and was now confabulating with someone on the telephone.

A hazy thought clouded my mind: "Had I made the right choice? Will this be our very first and the very best Christmas gift or a nightmare come true?" As these thoughts twisted my emotions, I caught a smirk appearing on the corners of the old man's lips, and a piercing chill went down my spine.



I Have a Dream

I have a dream,
A dream dreamt by many,
But fulfilled only by a few.
To become someone of importance,
To overcome all hindrances,
And shine brightly in the limelight,
And set faces alight.

My action is my microphone.
And the world is my stage,
My absurdity is my uniqueness.
I keep telling that to myself.

I don't bother about what I don't have.
But keep reminding myself what I'll do with all that I possess,
and finally become what I crave to become.
But that will be tedious as well.

Money is for fools,
I yearn for love and acceptance.
I want to prove my worth,
And all I can do for you while I breathe on this earth.

They say you are born with your destiny.
But I will always believe that I never had one.
So I will write my own.
And make the path as tough as it can be.

It doesn't bother me how hard and thorny the path is,

because at the end of the day,
I remember how lovely it will be
to picture myself standing up there.
Proud and victorious,
But humble beneath my fierce armour.

I have a dream,
A dream dreamt by many,
But fulfilled only by a few,
And I aspire to be among those few.

The Terrible Truth

Sitting by the window,
I saw you right there.
Your coat was the colour of cream.

But somewhere down here,
My mind wandered here and there.

Didn't know what to do.
Didn't know what to say,
My mind raced back and forth.

That day came back to me in a flash.
As if it were yesterday.

Those pleasant memories,
Your precious laughter,
Your muffled cries,
I kept locked up in my heart.
Until they stormed out forthright.

I slowly calmed down.
I closed my eyes,
My vision blurred.

When I opened them again,
I saw the maple tree in my garden dancing.
It was dull and bare.
Hanging on to a solitary bright golden leaf,
like a last prayer of hope and longevity.

Then a strong wind came,
And took the precious away.
Then I saw the shattered glass of my window and your picture hanging from the wall.
It was the terrible truth.
That drove me far from reality.
The abandoned cemetery was my place of solace.
From where too, you disappeared without a trace.

Crafting a Life of Kindness and Integrity

Our world is inhabited by different types of people—some are good and some are bad. However, it is indeed our own choice if we want to be a good person and make the world a better place to live or be a person who will cause harm to our society. This is a very essential choice that every human has to make. Being good is really easy; you just have to be truthful and follow your heart. Being good also means being a good citizen, being responsible towards one's own country and our fellow beings, and being passionate towards them, whether it be animals or other human beings. Everyone should be treated with love and respect. If someone is new at school, we should make that person feel comfortable and happy and help him or her be familiar with the new surroundings and people instead of dejecting that person and making them feel lonely and worthless. Another very important thing that we all must keep in mind is to avoid bullying and violence, whether it is on our fellow beings or on other countries. Fear of war takes us back to dark, unspeakable ages of oppression, where the sense of liberty, freedom, and trust is completely lost. Recently, we witnessed a war between Russia and Ukraine where millions of soldiers, innocent people, and even animals got slaughtered on both sides. In this entire episode, the major casualty was our trust in our fellow beings and the other nation. So let's stop war.

Let us be more responsible and try to make this world a better one. Like Michael Jackson once said, “If you want to make the world a better place, take a look at yourself and make a change.”

Ayushi Banerjee (Class: 8A)





CLASS 9

She Can

She can.

She can paint the skies with colours,
turn the greyest clouds to gold.

She can climb the tallest mountains,
find adventures that are untold.

She can sing with the voice of angels,
mend the broken with a song,
she can light the darkest pathways
guide the lost to where they belong.

But she cannot mend her own heart,
she cannot soothe her hidden scars,
she cannot find peace for her own soul
among the millions of stars.

She cannot find comfort
for the shadows in her mind,
she cannot escape the echoes
of the doubts that keep her in a bind.

She can give the world her magic,
share her light and dry their tears,
she can become the strength for others
planting hope in their fears.

But she cannot ease the darkness
that lingers in her own nights fall,
she cannot find peace within her shadows
even though she shines so bright for all.

Article Written by: Aanya Kedia

Class: 9A

The background is a light green color with a complex, abstract geometric pattern. The pattern consists of various shapes and colors: red, blue, and black. There are circles, triangles, squares, and rectangles. Some shapes are solid, while others are outlines. There are also clusters of small dots in red and black. The overall style is modern and minimalist.

CLASS 10

Bridging the Gap for Rural Women in India

In the heart of rural India, the vibrant colours of saris blend with the earthy tones of fields, painting a picture of a resilient and enduring community. However, behind this picturesque facade lies a pressing developmental issue that demands urgent attention: the inadequate facilities provided to women. These women, who form the backbone of rural economies and households, face a myriad of challenges that inhibit their potential and, by extension, the progress of the entire nation. Addressing the gaps in healthcare, education, sanitation, and economic opportunities for these women is not only a matter of justice but also a strategic imperative for India's development.

Imagine a rural landscape where healthcare is a distant dream for women. Picture a pregnant woman walking miles to reach the nearest healthcare facility, only to find it understaffed and ill-equipped to handle her needs. This is the grim reality for many women in rural India, where a severe shortage of medical professionals and facilities means that basic healthcare services are often inaccessible. High maternal and infant mortality rates, untreated illnesses, and a pervasive sense of vulnerability are the consequences of this healthcare deficit. Women's health, particularly reproductive health, remains grossly neglected, trapping them in a cycle of poor health and limited opportunities.

Education, the key to empowerment, remains a distant dream for many rural girls. Despite improvements in enrollment rates, the quality of education provided is often dishearteningly low. Schools lack proper infrastructure, trained teachers, and essential learning materials.

Cultural norms and economic pressures force many girls to drop out early, either to assist with household chores or to marry young.

This educational gap not only stifles their personal growth but also hampers the socio-economic development of their communities. Without quality education, these girls are denied the tools to lift themselves out of poverty and to contribute meaningfully to their society. In the quiet hours before dawn, rural women often venture into open fields to relieve themselves, a practice fraught with indignity and danger. The lack of clean and private sanitation facilities exposes women to significant health risks and safety concerns.

During menstruation, the absence of proper hygiene products and facilities forces many girls to miss school, disrupting their education and reinforcing gender inequalities. The simple act of providing access to clean toilets and sanitary products can significantly impact a woman's health, safety, and dignity, yet this basic necessity remains out of reach for many. Economic independence is another distant aspiration for many rural women, who predominantly engage in low-paying, labour-intensive agricultural work.

Without access to financial services, credit, and entrepreneurial training, their ability to improve their economic standing is severely limited. Traditional gender roles further restrict their participation in economic activities outside the home, perpetuating a cycle of dependency and poverty.

Women's economic empowerment is crucial for the prosperity of rural areas, yet they remain excluded from opportunities that could transform their lives and communities.

Beneath these surface-level issues lie deeper, lesser-known challenges that compound the struggles of rural women. Deep-rooted social stigmas and rigid gender norms often dictate women's roles and responsibilities, limiting their mobility and decision-making power. These societal expectations trap women in traditional roles, stifling their potential and keeping them from pursuing personal aspirations. The mental health of rural women is another overlooked aspect of their well-being. The constant struggle with poverty, gender-based violence, and societal pressures can lead to mental health issues like anxiety and depression. However, due to the stigma associated with mental health and the lack of accessible services, these issues remain largely unaddressed, further diminishing their quality of life.

Environmental degradation and lack of access to clean water disproportionately affect women, who are typically responsible for water collection and managing household resources. The additional burden of navigating these challenges affects their health and reduces the time available for education or economic activities. Addressing these environmental factors is crucial for improving the overall well-being of rural women.

The journey towards empowering rural women in India is fraught with challenges, but it is a journey that holds the promise of profound transformation. By addressing the inadequacies in healthcare, education, sanitation, and economic opportunities, and by tackling the underlying social stigmas and mental health issues, we can create a more equitable and prosperous society. American individuals and groups have a pivotal role to play in this endeavour.

Supporting NGOs and charities that focus on improving facilities for rural women can make a significant impact. Organisations like SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association), CARE India, and the Grameen Foundation are at the forefront of initiatives aimed at healthcare, education, and economic empowerment. Financial contributions, partnership programs, and volunteering

can bolster these efforts.

Volunteering time and expertise can create transformative changes. Healthcare professionals can offer their services and training to local workers, while educators can conduct online workshops and mentorship programs. Skill-sharing initiatives, particularly in entrepreneurship and financial literacy, can empower women to become economically independent. Raising awareness about the challenges faced by rural women in India is crucial. Advocacy can take the form of campaigns, social media initiatives, and policy lobbying to garner international support and resources. Highlighting these issues in public discourse can drive global attention and action.

Empowering rural women in India by providing them with essential facilities is not just a humanitarian imperative but a strategic necessity for the nation's progress. The multifaceted challenges they face in healthcare, education, sanitation, and economic opportunities are compounded by deep-seated social stigmas and environmental burdens. Yet, these challenges also present a unique opportunity for transformative change. By addressing these issues comprehensively, we can unlock the vast potential of rural women, enabling them to contribute significantly to their communities and the broader economy.

Article Written by: Oindri Dey
Class: 10A

The background is a vibrant purple with various abstract geometric elements. In the top-left, there's a white dotted pattern. A white circle with a thick outline is in the top-right. A yellow circle is partially visible at the top edge. In the bottom-left, there's a blue shape with a white dotted pattern and a yellow circle. A yellow square is in the bottom-right. Diagonal white lines cross the page.

CLASS 11

A War-Torn City

The boy stood facing his burning home
Where all had but fled I,
The flames lit up the concrete corpse
and illuminated the dead.

Yet brave and strong he stood
As though born to lead the wars
Courage coursing through his veins
As he stared at his scars.

The bombs whistled by,
landing with a deadly crash.
While thousands around him
were reduced to ash.

He longed to run, but could not go.
What became of his family, he did not know.
The last thing he did was tend to some wounds
And then, it was his time to go.

Born to die and died in vain.
A life of misery and one of pain.
If it sounds familiar, try to remember
Gaza, Ukraine and the thousands slain.

Terrenum

The spaceship landed in a cloud of dust. There was a whirring sound as the engines slowly powered off. This was it. The moment I had been waiting for. My years of painstaking training had finally paid off. I was an astronaut, on the newly discovered planet- Terrenum. After ruining Earth's ecosystem, the human race now needed a new place to stay. The lucky ones could make it here. The rest... would have to make it.

The thought of maybe never seeing my loved ones again dampened the flame of euphoria

glowing in my heart. We got out of the ship in heavy spacesuits. The place looked like the pictures of Earth, millions of years ago, before Nature was corrupted by man. There were lakes and ponds with algae. One animal seemed to be part rabbit and part crocodile. It seemed a bit odd, but nonetheless, mesmerising. We split up, exploring the planet. The sky was a mystical blue colour swirled with pink, purple, orange and yellow. While walking, we came across another animal.

It looked tame, nuzzling its tiger-like face in my hand. It would have been terrifying under normal circumstances...but what was normal now? We would have to come up with a new definition for that word.

Losing myself in my thoughts, I wandered- the sand like ground crunching beneath my feet, reminding me of days at the beach as a child. Back then I didn't know that I would be researching about a new planet.

All I cared about was fooling around with my friends. Unconsciously, a tear rolled down my cheek. It felt hot against my cold face. Wiping it away, I continued to note my observations. The sound of pen scratching against the paper acted like a gateway for memories of the good old school days. Soon, it was time to leave. Trudging back to the ship, we left with engines roaring in our ears.

On observing my fellow teammates, I knew that they, too, were lost in memories. Memories...of home. This would also need a new definition. As stars and planets whizzed by, I wondered about the future. Would Terrenum, too, be ruined like Earth? Would we ever learn from our mistakes?

Aishani Ghosh (Class: 11E)



The Girl in the Mirror

Every night, as I cross the room to get to the dresser, I encounter the person in the mirror. This person is not my reflection, but a completely different person. She stands there motionless with her eyes blank and vacant. She does not blink and she does not talk. She just stands on the other side of the mirror.

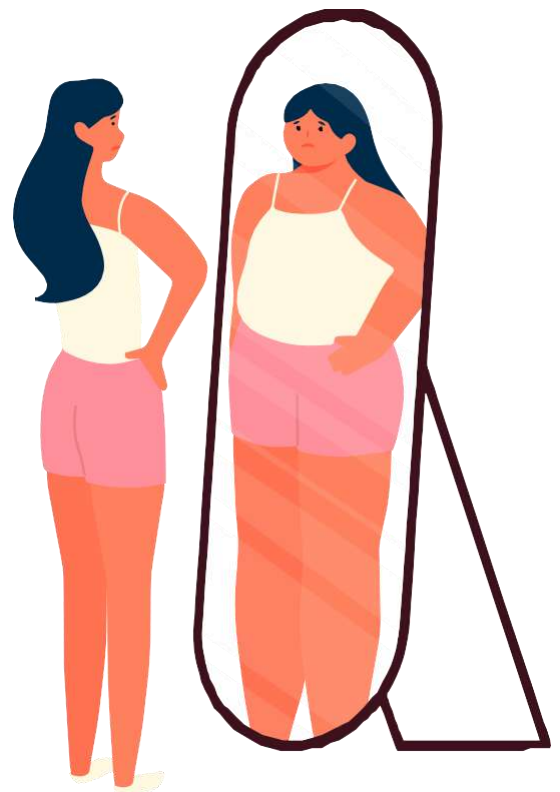
It all began about a year ago, when I was going through one of the worst periods of my life. My grades were at an all time low. I was lonely and my mind was as calm as a thunderstorm. I began to hallucinate. My doctors told me that the lack of company made my brain invent people. Gradually things improved. The people went away.

Although, the girl on the other side of my mirror did not. I saw her at night everyday, before going to bed. She just looked sad. Soon, I became used to her and even enjoyed her silent company.

When I look into her beautiful, expressionless face, I think about her life. Who she was, what her name was. I wonder about her family, her home. Did she have siblings? What were her parents like? Was she cheerful or moody? What were her interests? Did she die? How so?

Most of all, I question the circumstances which led her to stand behind this particular mirror. I wonder if she was cursed. If so, why? What did she ever do to spend an eternity on the other side- unable to speak or move? Every time I look at her, my mind floods with questions, which can never be answered. I tried asking her, only to receive a blank look in reply. We can do nothing but stare at each other in silence, every time I look in the mirror.

Aishani Ghosh (Class: 11E)



Do I Deserve This?

In the silence of night, where shadows reside,
A girl battles demons she cannot confide.
Her heart bears the scars, unseen and unspoken,
In the mirror, she sees a soul that feels broken.

Blades of despair, they whisper her name,
Promising solace, a release from the pain.
In moments of weakness, she answers their call,
Hoping the numbness will cover it all.

Her tears fall like rain on a desolate shore,
Each drop a reminder of wounds she endures.
She hides from the world, in darkness she stays,
Wondering why her path is this maze.

"Do I deserve this?" she asks the abyss,
Each cut a silent scream, a longing for bliss.
She dreams of an end, where peace might begin,
Yet battles the thought, a war from within.

The weight of existence feels heavy, unkind,
She searches for light, but it's hard to find.
Yet deep in her soul, a flicker remains,
A spark of hope amidst all the pains.

"Hold on," whispers fate, in the darkest of nights,
"For your story's not over, there's still time for lights.
You are more than the scars that mar your soft skin,
A warrior unseen, with strength deep within.

Reach out, find the hands that are waiting for you,
In a world that seems vast, there's love that is true.
For you deserve more than the shadows and screams,
You deserve to see daylight, to live out your dreams.

In the darkest of moments, when hope seems to fade,
Remember, dear heart, you are beautifully made.
Through trials and torment, through night and through day,
Your strength is unyielding, like stars that don't sway.

So breathe through the sorrow, let tomorrow come near,
Know that your worth isn't measured by fear.
You are precious, dear girl, beyond what you see,
And this world would be dimmer without you to be.

Article Written by: Maleeha Jamil
Class: 11C



CLASS 12

In the Night Time

“General Mayer reporting, can you hear me? Out.”

“Yes, yes I can General. Out.”

“I have been shot Sergeant. I don't think I'll make it. The time is 2 a.m., 00:20 hours. The enemy troops are advancing from the North. I don't want anyone to come looking for me henceforth. Lead your troop well Sergeant and make us all proud. Make sure you are always heard, clear and loud. Over and out.” And after that I lay there waiting. Waiting for my last breath. I guess after all those years you don't grimace at your own wound or bleeding, oozing cut. Who had I become? As the moon's light shined upon me, my thick skin and veins of steel scared me half to death. Well, I guess inevitably so, After a thousand wars have been lost and won, you don't think of your own peril or your foe. All I could think of was little Mary Anne. My sun, my moon, my stars and all. Oh boy! Like the wind she ran. Running around in her frilly dress on the field. My little girl- for her I'd give up my heart, my soul, my armour to shield. I thought of my wife, Of all the letters I wrote to her. I wrote when it rained, when it bored and when the sky grew angry and the clouds growled or brightly the sun shone. For sixteen years I have loved her now, with every single one of my two hundred and six bones. I lay there, with the bullets being fired. The cries getting louder and louder. I realised that the battle would be lost and won that day but I no longer cared. With the coming of dawn an epiphany dawned upon me. I used to render perspective nothing more than the technique of art rediscovered through renaissance paintings. But it was only when I was one with the mud- with the view of the murky sky, when I finally had it- perspective.

Life's too short.

That's it.

Life is too short.

So make those amends, atone for that deed, write those letters, tell them you love them, truly, madly, deeply, go bag-packing across Europe, check in on your folks.

Don't, I repeat, do not let your passion become a thing of the past. For better or for worse human beings are not creatures of the mind but their wretched, wretched heart.

With the coming of dawn an epiphany dawned upon me. And as my eyes began to shut, it's like I could finally see.

Nayanika Biswas(Class: 12B)



Happy Birthday, Ma!

Dear Ma, Happy birthday to you.

You're 40?!

It feels like yesterday when you tucked me into bed on stormy nights and laid beside me until I fell asleep just because I was scared of thunderstorms. I still remember the song you sang to help me fall asleep quickly. It's been ten years since you passed away. Papa misses you a lot. So do I. I still feel your presence on stormy nights. Your voice still puts me to sleep. Please don't ever leave my side.

I love you Ma.

Sampurna Mitra (Class: 12A)



The Siren

'To those that dare venture this sea, beware!
The dim befalls those that oft' take the
Road not travelled.' Warning bells rung like
The sound of Hell's chorus, frantic and rushed.

Yet who goes through the deep blue knowing not
Why the water thickens?
Darkness thunders yonder horizons.
'Beware', cry the gulls.
'Beware of Those that lurk beneath!'

A gift or a curse from the heavens? The moon
Wanes but a new light shines. The skies split
And ripples turn to flashes or sea-lightning.
Riding the waves o'er narwhals they watch.

She is most vain. Perched on a rock, she preens.
All roses have their thorns, do they not? For in the
Garden of Eden, it is the apple that tempts the most.
Crimson like blood she draws after the lure.

Nectar of the sea, as smooth as the shell,
Scallop'd in the waves. Moonlight spills
From her glistening skin. She coats the
Sea, everywhere and nowhere. She lies, waiting.

Pearlescent hair, luminous smoke cov'ring
The sheen disguising clandestine secrets of
Her reptilian tail. A flash and gone. Pale
Eyes, a vision... or truth? Fleeting and evanescent.

Steel effervescence o'er shining froth, fingers
To claws. Ashes of skin between the orphic scales,
Laminae webbing through gossamer. Faint touches

Vampire in the Garden

Sequestered in the greenhouse. Mosaic fracturing the uniform glass walls. Cathedral hangings of wooden crosses. Mahogany carved, ingrained with stains of the old and new. Polished to perfection. Sanded, nailed to the door with ferocious capability. Injected new diaphanous walls. Drawing the lattice shut, enveloped in clear silence.

Cavernous display. Luminescent sheen in every nook and cranny. Blossoms spring up, drowning the stone floors. Scraped floors, clean and rocky peaked grey. Colour drowns the dull. Vivid buds. Florets sprinkled over bushes of flora. Roses blossom over by the bend. Tables of trays with seeds and samples. Segregated pots in rows of distinct sects weeded out with surgical precision. Violin like strings sprouting leaves and buds. Poppies springing up with vitality. Competing for light. Blazing in the glory of survival. Peonies through the distance, blooming, numerous and rapid. Hidden seeds with manifold petals. Cardinals gathered safely in a corner. An illustrious garden. Evergreen. Never wilting. Permanence in its eternal pristine poise. Morning fades to night. Back to morning. Dew drops crystallise on the outer walls. Surrounded by the unruly world around it. Forested from the eyes of prying strangers. Coveted prize. Pearlescent walls, translucent gazes.

A figure through the glass. Solitary. Calla hooded. Death pale. High collared, lace. Thorns in the absence of frivolity. A face emerges from the shadows even in the blaze of light. Light itself? That pale white elusiveness, outshining the murky gloam lurking in the corners. Pestilence respects the bounds for all that grows, thrives. Survives. Feeding off soil, routine irrigation and the bountiful sunshine. Light that intertwines itself with the darkness until there remains none at all. Tendrils grasping onto the walls and coating the floors until the density of vines sweeps through. An entity unto itself.

Curious creature she is. Swooping, agile. Deftly cutting off weeds and excess. Trimming and polishing until it becomes the same light it was fed. Blossoms under scrutiny. Clean and proper, yet always covered. Eyes like the dials of clocks, mechanically surveying the sight before her.

As the day begins, so does her work. The padlocked doors swing open and with surefooted grace, she lifts the can. Glare from the sun? Or gleaming reflections from the smoothness down by the camellias? That violent crimson flares with the sun. Burning bright on the petal tips, riotous centre. With a swoop that smoothness is flattened. Fractured, no more still white, gleaming. Grains of sand mixing into the soil. Loose teeth, attached to the jaw. Cranial roundness broken up, crushed back to eternal rest. Drips the nectar from the can. Crimson and crimson rejoined as one. That clear silence again.

Mrinalini Ghosh (Class: 12B)

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