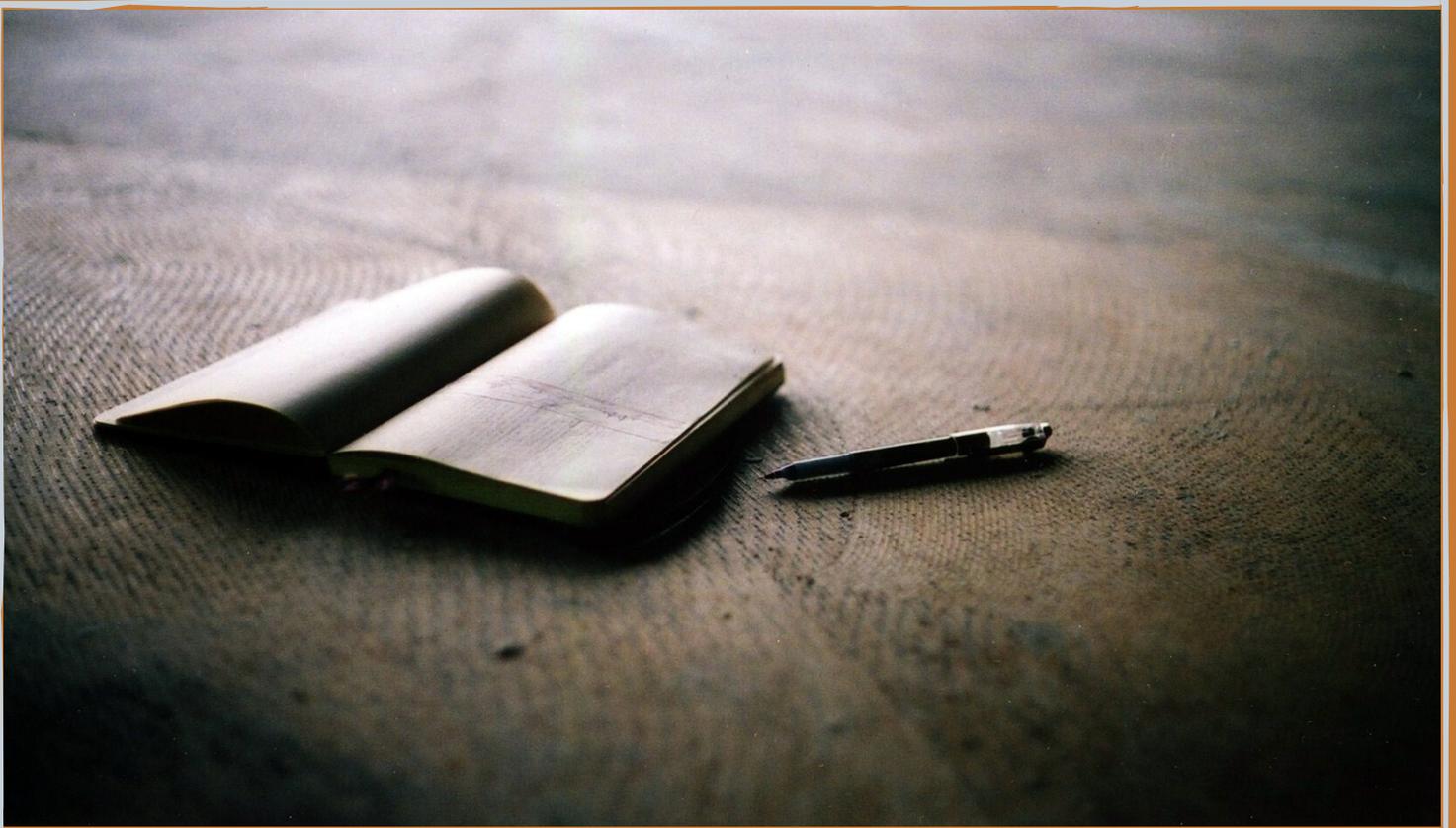


*Musings of the  
Wanderers*



# *Note from the Class Teacher*

## *Musings*

A period of reflection or thought.

Here is an anthology of words, thoughts, reflections, stories, poetry and sometimes just rambling from the class, simply to encourage, appreciate and acknowledge their work and effort over this year.

A compilation done with pride.

A token of joy for today, a keepsake for tomorrow.

*- Mayura*



# Sweet Treat

Arunika the nut bar, half nuts and half sweet  
Kavi the sour candy, looks sweet but can be sour  
Poorna the gum, will stick to you no matter what  
Bhavana the chocolate fountain, watch all the sweetness flow  
Harshini the popping candy, ready to blister your mouth  
Arthitha with the fancy wrap, perfectly presented  
Sai the lollipop, will comfort you when you pout  
Akshata the hard candy, tough to crack but sweet reward  
Samreethi the caramel treat, unique and exciting  
Sneha, the dark chocolate, always comforting  
Samritha, the candy cane, tall and outgoing  
Nakshathira the peppermint, cool and refreshing  
Yuvan the Bertie botts, totally unexpected  
Mann the licorice, is he hard or is he soft  
Shri Vardhana Vel the chilli chocolate, packed with a punch  
Krithik the wafer, never silent - crunch crunch  
Aniruth the Ferrero Rocher, tough inside and out  
Raghav the eclair, bursting with happiness  
Goutam the coconut candy, always going nuts  
Vihaan the gummy bear, fun and entertaining.  
Mayura Akka the truffle, hardcore yet sensitive and fun  
and me Shreya the ruby chocolate, different but not the weird one  
Together we pack a punch,  
the grade 8 bunch.

**-Shreya**



# Not all who wander are lost

Most people confuse the terms wander and lost. Both have different meanings. The term lost means unable to find one's way or not knowing one's whereabouts, while the term wander means to walk aimlessly or leisurely.

Some people get lost when they go to a place they don't usually know or aren't familiar with. They get scared and don't know what to do and cannot find the right path. Other people go to a place they are either familiar or unfamiliar with and feel very calm and at ease. They leave only when they want to, at any time. You might see them admiring a blade of grass and then they may decide to make their way back. People who wander usually know the way back and if they don't they just wander off to another place.

While people who get lost easily are usually very anxious, people who wander are very calm about situations. These two personalities are quite different from each other but also have one thing in common. They need to be guided by someone who has been on the right path and helped not to wander too much or get too lost.

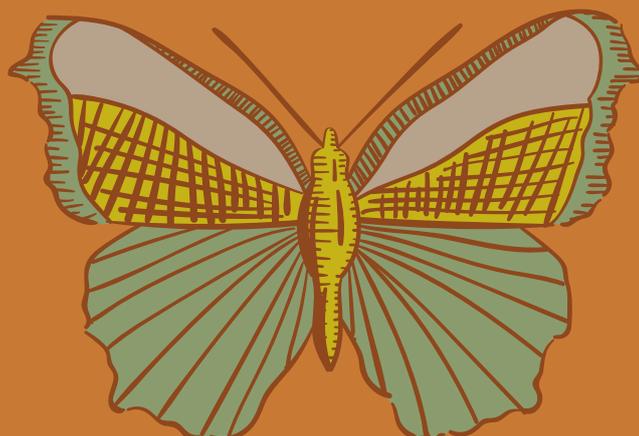
**-Sneha**

I presume that most of the general public think that if a person keeps wandering around they will probably get lost. This is not true! If he or she has an ambition in their mind and go chasing after it, they will definitely be on the right path and arrive at the right destination. This has been used in many famous books like 'Lord of the Rings'.

After a certain age he or she will want to or have an intense desire to leave a place, whether it be a hometown, a place they moved to for a job or a place that just gets old and boring. The desire to up and leave is the extension of realizing the feeling of being stuck in life. In fact, wanderers have an incredible amount of self-awareness and understanding compared to those who tend to stay in one place for too long and become comfortable.

The people who don't want to actually migrate from a place they are really close to, are not usually aware of what is happening around the world. These are the few people who get lost when they wander. But most people tend to have a desire in themselves to leave a place as they get bored. These people have no possibility of getting lost when they wander.

**-Samritha**





# Trash

Akshata

## CHAPTER 1

I'm in a conflict with myself and everything around me. This conflict constantly makes me get stuck. What makes me stuck u ask? Well if I knew that I wouldn't be cleaning trash out of high school classrooms everyday, except Sundays. I work at the movie theatre on Sundays because thank god, children don't go to school on Sunday. Which means there is no trash to be picked up on Sundays.

Today is Monday and I just returned from school. No, I don't attend school because I already did and have no intention of going back. I work at a school. Now I am lying on my couch trying to figure out if I want to sleep or walk all the way up to my fridge to find something to eat. I remember that " Maybe if you go to sleep you'll feel better tomorrow " is just the human way of saying " hey why don't you try turning it off and back on." Which usually works, so I decide to go to sleep.

## CHAPTER 2

I was the only 19 year old amongst everyone one else. He probably assumed that because I'm young I will be fast and great at my job but he is very wrong. I feel pity for every other person who applied for this job but to soon realize it was given to a 19 year old. I wish they got the job if I still got the money. But the only way I can save up to even think about going back to collage is by doing this job. Sad? I think pathetic. old. I wish they got the job if I still got the money. But the only way I can save up to even think about going back to collage is by doing this job. Sad? I think pathetic.

**CHAPTER 3**

Like every day for the past 65 days I walk into the classroom which is in the verge of dying. I feel sorry for the walls and floor. They were built to give shelter to a group of kids who learn. Not to contain a pack of possessed animals who rip everything into shreds. Sighing I sweep the class. I am highly tempted to pick up all the cakes of mud and smear it over the desks, because cakes of mud that these kids invite are almost impossible to clean. I suppress that urge and go on sweeping the class. I clean the duster, arrange the desks neatly and walk up to the trashcan. The trashcan is overflowing with crumpled paper like how coffee stalls are always overflowing with teenagers. I am not a naturally nosy person but when a certain note isn't signed off, I do not think it's nosy to read it. Occasionally I read a few things that are in the trashcan simply because they are entertaining.

**CHAPTER 4**

Today I read one of the many HILARIOUS notes it said:

why do fish swim in salty water ?  
*WHY?*  
 cuz pepper water makes them sneeze lol

I assume the person who was supposed to laugh at that joke trashed the note. I don't blame them though.

**CHAPTER 5**

In the trash there also contains notes with the latest news. It's a real life, paperback version of gossip girl.

*DUDE BOO JUST WINKED AT ME*

*OMG R U SERIOUS*

*MHM OMG I CANT BELIEVE THIS*

I have lost count of how many of these I've read. Don't take me wrong I am not against girls and boys giggling about each other (even though I find it a waste of time). It's just not something I find entertaining. It's like watching teenage romance movies one after another which starts becoming as interesting as listening to your parents talk to you about how they walked 60 miles to school. It gets very tiring. It's like you are watching a soap opera everyday.

**CHAPTER 6**

I open up some other paper to see if any is worth reading.

*jo is such a liar! He promised to give me his lunch but that donkey just left after stealing mine  
 not a surprize cos it's jo  
 ikr*

I snickered. I was always that kid stealing other people's lunch.

**CHAPTER 7**

My hand finds a large ball of paper. I successfully flatten the creases and read what's written on it. prompt: compare your class to anything and write a poem of it.

My classroom is a one way mirror.  
 Everyone is on one side, and I'm on the other.  
 Every breathe they take I can sense.  
 Every action they make I can see.  
 Yet no matter how much I'm in need for a friend they don't turn  
 No matter how hard I hit the glass between us they can't see me.  
 My class is a one way mirror and I'm on the other side

This is the best poem I have read that describes high school. Yes it's a lot about goofing around or being a rebel or studying but throughout you feel like you're all alone. If I think about it, this poem is describing my life completely. I am running away from going into any kind of environment that is similar to high school because of this exact reason. I don't go to college because of how horrible the one way mirror feels.

## CHAPTER 8

Sighing I pick up some other note

*listen to all of these songs jane:*

- *decpacito*
- *closer*
- *without me*

## CHAPTER 9

I slip the previous note into my coat pocket and go home. I have an hour before my favourite show airs, so I listen to the first song that was recommended to Jane.

Lord. This note is the end of me. I listened to the song called Decpacito, and I wouldn't hesitate to pull out my kitchen knife and stab the nearest head if this atrocious song is in any way mentioned ever again. God bless Jane. I skipped any activities I had planned and went straight into deep sleep.

## CHAPTER 10

The next day I kept thinking about the one way mirror poem. It lingered in my mind like milk stains on a white shirt. I tried distracting myself from it but it was of no use. It demanded to think about it. So I did. But that didn't help. I have more questions now that I did before I thought about it. This poem ruined all the efforts I put into postponing the decision of whether I should go back to collage or not. Now I am getting closer and closer to making the decision I haven't wanted to. Until I find a way to escape the one way mirror I don't think I will be able to do anything I want.

I am feeling adomania. It means the sense that the future is coming too quickly. I found this word underlined in a torn dictionary page and I seem to be using it quite often. Probably because the word by itself is fascinating and the meaning is even more fascinating. It is very hard to find words that both sound nice and mean something nice. Like for example the word burnish it sounds good but it doesn't mean anything fancy. But I do not think you need nice words to write a good piece. C.E Montague said that plain words are like unworked marble. A good sculptor can turn it into his most beautiful work. Similarly a good author can turn any plain word into his best sentence. Like the word dust. It is plain but when u put it in a sentence like " and then shall the dust return to the earth as it is" or " all follow this and come to dust". This makes dust sound astonishing. Leaves and rain are plain words but if u put them in a sentence like Swinburne did " with lisp of leaves and ripples of rain", you can literally hear it. Either way I think the word adomania is a great word.

**CHAPTER 11**

Today is Wednesday and after I try to clean the classroom in the best way possible, I find myself in front of the trashcan. Again. I am debating whether to simply empty all of them or sneak a peek at a few. The latter wins. Curiosity always kills the cat after all. I do hunt for words when I'm going through notes.

My hands fiddle through all the bits of paper searching for a dictionary page but instead I land on the most non-entertaining and useless notes. If I am completely honest I will admit I used to write these notes during class but now looking back I think paying attention to class was less boring than writing these

*ugh math is SO boring like ntyl I rather babysit my lil brother*

*ikr i cant even yawn its so boring*

**CHAPTER 12**

i end up with another fairly large piece of paper.

Prompt: write a letter to anyone you please asking them a question:

Dear Major Tom,

I have a question for you. Is there anyway to return back to earth? I know the answer is a no because you stepped outside your tin can. But I refuse to accept that there is no way to return to earth. Because now we have discovered new spaceships. I believe that if someone sent a spacecraft to you on time, you would be able to live with your wife.

I am startled once again. Major tom is the man in space oddity but I never imagined any kid at this age still listens to good music. I assumed everyone listened to songs like the person who recommended songs to Jane. I recall how sad the song was and how it made me feel hopeless because of the reality. The reality that nobody can escape loneliness and isolation, but what you can do is talk to someone about it ( this part isn't mentioned in space oddity ). That is the only thing that will help you move away from floating into outer space. I think the person who wrote this essay is very smart because they figured it out themselves.

My mind moves back to the poem. How do I escape the one way mirror?

**CHAPTER 13- JANE**

I walked into class with my friend. I was about to sit on my desk and open my book as I saw something on the black board.

***I pondered about it for days until I realized that if I paid more attention to physics class I probably would've gotten to the answer quicker, and probably arrived at the answer for my decision quicker too. In the day when u look through a window u can see the view on the opposite side but at night you can only see your own reflection. That is because a "one way mirror" only works when one side of it is brightly lit, and the other is dimly lit. If both sides are lit, it doesn't work properly***

**– JANITOR**

# A DREAM

Samritha

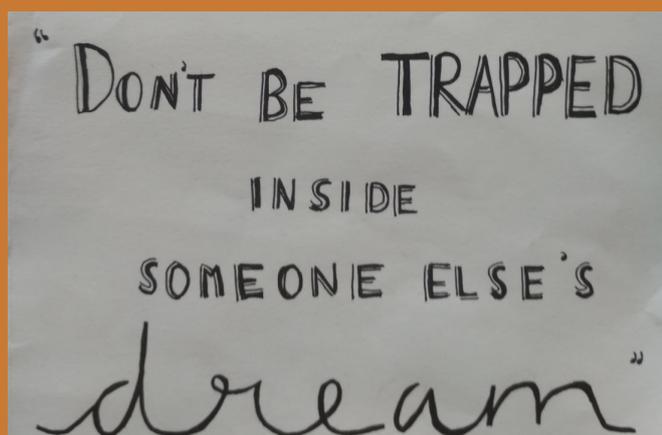
"Ding dong, ding dong!" the sound of the bell reverberated through my ears. I was alive. The dinosaur didn't gobble me up. I dashed downstairs, not wanting my mother or father to open the doors before me. It has finally come - what every time keeper ties on his or hers wrist. A watch! A watch that said on the website I ordered it in that it 'was once worn by a magician'. But I didn't believe that.

"Emily, who's that early in the morning," I heard mum sluggishly expressing her thoughts from upstairs, in the middle of her sleep."

Mum, stop talking in your dreams and disturbing the only few hours I have, to sleep," I replied, trying to sound as drowsy as I possibly could.

Add a little bit of body textAfter what seemed like a million years, tiptoeing as quietly as possible up the stairs, I reached my bedroom door. Though sweat was dripping out of my palms, I somehow managed to open the door and close it back again. I carried the brown cardboard box to my bed and let it engulf me as I sat on it. An ancient clockwork watch was lying idle inside waiting to be awoken. Without a second thought I grabbed it and tied it on my wrist enjoying the fact that I had at last become a time keeper and won't ever again miss the timings of my class schedules. It was a decision I didn't stop to think about.

While I was building castles on clouds, I landed on something with a 'plop'. Slippery. Slimy. Sticky. I looked up to find myself inhaling the breath of a humongous lizard? When did dinosaurs come alive? I questioned myself? To check if I made a visit to the castle I built up on the clouds, I pinched myself. Ouch that hurt! It was looking at me with a bulls-eye like how a predator looks at its prey.



I was doomed, death was slithering behind me creeping up on my shadow. But now I had to leave my shadow behind and run for my life, as the dinosaur started to chase me. My brain shuddered at the thought of what was happening. A real life dinosaur was chasing its prey (me) and that prey was running with its hand on its head, in case it fell off.

As all of these thoughts made a visit to my brain, suddenly out of nowhere, a group of tribal people (as they were dressed in leaves) jumped in front of the dinosaur and threw an arrow at it.

Then it dropped down as the ground was getting squashed beneath it with a huge 'thud!'. Screeching until not even a drop of moisture was left in its defeated, relentless body. While I was taken up by all these thoughts, one of the awkward people (who had snake skin all over him) turned around and said, "Hello, we are all hunters and have been surviving in this world for nearly 15 years all of us are people who were fond of watches especially those ancient magical ones so we bought it in a website that said 'it was once worn by a magician', when we got it, it said that we had one wish. So we all wished that 'the first ten people to tie the watch on their hand should be transported to a world full of dinosaurs, and the tenth person, after he or she gets transported, the wish will break'," he said this quite regretfully, as if he had wished for the wrong thing (I actually believed he did and his reaction was quite reasonable- as he should feel sorry for what he had wished for).

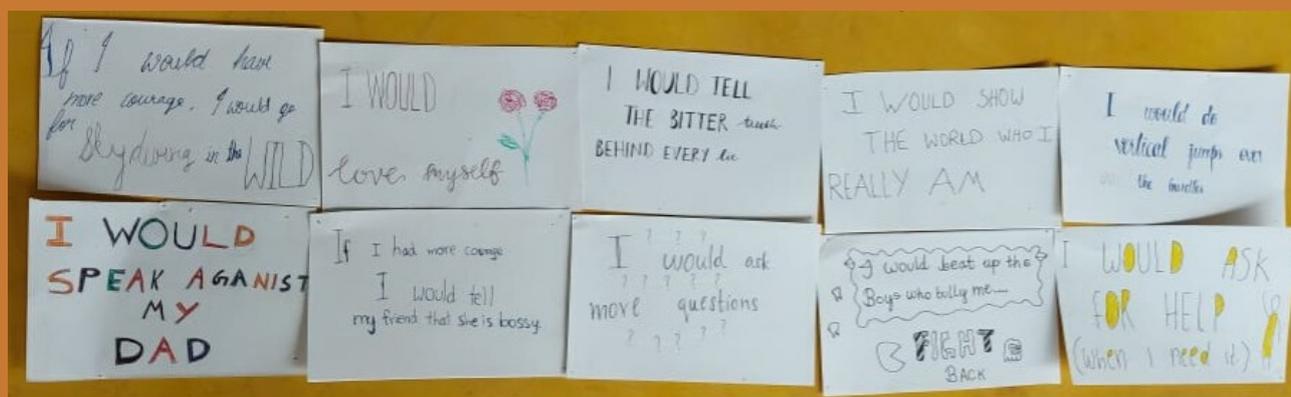
Then another person (who was indulged himself with leaves and elephant tusks all over) said, "...and that tenth person is you....!" dancing around like a malformed chimpanzee. To speak truth, I actually felt quite relieved that I would be out of this world soon. After silence had conquered the air, they all just suddenly started jumping into a bush, and to be on the safe side I also jumped with them. It turned out that after a few seconds a crash of rhinos went storming into the darkness of the trees behind me. Huh! I thought I'd be in heaven.

It had already become dark, with the cicadas ending their tiresome day, the leaves replying to the wind and I was sitting opposite a fire ignited by my new friends who were cooking rhinos for dinner on it. This day was the most adventurous day I had in all my life! Dinner was ok, as I didn't like the insect soup they gave for starters but on the other hand, the crushed bugs ice cream for dessert was my favorite. As I lay on the huge hammock made of leaves, I couldn't stop recollecting all the events that occurred this day. Firstly, I wore a magical watch (that actually existed!) ,the next second I was transported to a dinosaur world in which a dinosaur started chasing me then, a group of humans who were on the same chapter in the book as I was, rescued me, gave me dinner and shelter. I'm not sure if I'm dreaming or not. I was pondering if my parents were at the police station enquiring about my absence or if they were snoring, talking to themselves in their dreams building another castle on the cloud next to mine. Pondering whether I made the right choice to put that watch on my wrist, knowing fully well what could happen. Unable to keep my eyes open I fell asleep.

When I woke up I was in a whole new world, back in my cloud - like bed with my pajamas on, listening to my parents talking in their dreams. To my surprise, the ancient, good for nothing watch had disappeared of my wrist. Until now I have no clue how in the world I ended up having such a dream. The only thing that mattered is that I am back in my own house with my silly, old parents. Just to double check I had a look through my window for any hungry dinosaurs stomping about looking for innocent children to chase around and gobble up. There turned out to be none so I continued to finish building my castle.

## THE END

# If I had more Courage...



## It's going to be hard, we're gonna have to work at this everyday...

It's gonna be hard! We're gonna have to work at this everyday! I thought why should I? While my teacher, gave me one stare and explained carefully what my task was for the next 90 days. In my head I thought DAMN IT! Why do I have to do it? This will not improve my English, this is a WASTE OF TIME!

Write a 200 word essay, hear a 20 minute piece, read loud pages of a book for 10 minutes every day.

Spend two hours on this task for 90 days, then homework, then extra class after school, studying for exams! My decision was final, I am not going to do this at all! A mail is gonna go to my parents.

As soon as I enter my house, the first thing I hear is my mom telling me to start the 90 day challenge. I was blank, I was already tired of this 90 day task. I spoke to Mom explaining to her why I could not do it. I also tried speaking to my teacher, 'It's for your own good', she said. It's gonna be hard! I'm gonna have to do this every day! Looks like I HAVE TO DO IT!

Mann Kothari

It's going to be really hard! We're gonna have to work on this every day for the whole of Term 2. DRAMA!! Memorizing dialogues was quite hard before but now coordination is hard. Time, props, costumes, rehearsal and the final show in front of the parents ; my classmates and I have been working on this for the past two weeks and we are only 50% happy with our performance. Recycling and re-using things from around the school. 60 minutes rehearsing for one scene can be boring. The boys end up being humorous, working with classmates is the best . WE focus on enacting and improving or skills. It's never easy. Nothing worthwhile is easy to do.

Arthiha



# COCAINE

## MANN

Here I am , at the EL DORADO airport . Columbia 's biggest airport .As I walk into the main gate of the airport , the anti-narcotics guard stares at me , with the horrifying look , which made me nervous , he picked up his walkie-talkie ,it made me sweat , it made me more nervous than ever before. He, the anti narcotics guard disappeared out of my sight. Oh my! I am sure he suspected me! I am dead!!

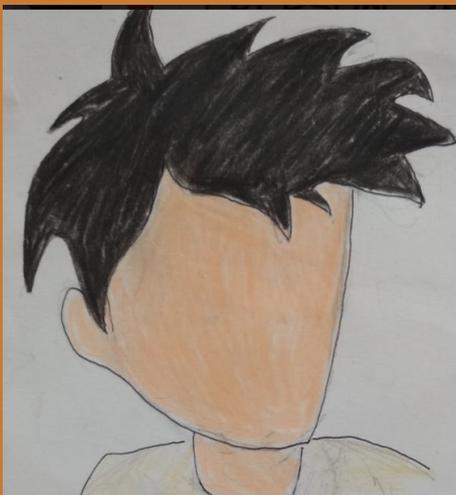
Few minutes passed, no sign of him - the anti-narcotics guard, finally I felt relieved. Then he came around the corner, the same guard, but this time he was not alone, he had bought three more along, all with terrifying stares. He picked his walkie-talkie, they walked. I turned and walked away. I knew for sure that I would be caught! \$360,000 for me and my family. But it was wrong! It is ok, I reassured myself, just this once.

I was positive, nothing would happen, they'd never find out, I have used the smartest method. The flight to Madrid would leave in 13 minutes, just then an announcement was made "the flight to Madrid has delayed due to weather conditions , we are sorry for the inconvenience " . I yelled "no!" the people around shared an unpleasant glance with me. Now I thought this was bad, no I knew this was bad, but I got no other choice, I should see my family rot and die, or I should see them heal, prosper and live. My eyes became red, I had a few tears in my eyes. I moved on. The k9 unit - the dogs that are trained for sniffing drugs, came next to me, I tried to avoid it, but then it would raise flags and the Policia will have me inspected. The Policia , spoke in the walkie-talkie , I tried to listen , "I have spotted and flagged " , sounds of the k9 dogs barking made me scared . The Policia kept his walkie-talkie, and walked towards me, he put an arm around my chest and pushed me away, he arrested the other person next to me . "THANK GOD! " I breathed.

While sending my luggage on the conveyer belt, my heart pounds so rapidly that I feel I'm having a heart attack. At last the luggage was gone, out of my sight. I sighed. Now I only have to board my flight.

There was an announcement after 12 minutes , informing and requesting the public , that a passenger flying to Madrid named Martin had to be present in the sector 085 , the Sala body scan room. My luggage had been flagged, the k9 unit had alerted the policia that my bag has something illicit substance packed inside. I didn't panic, that is was they taught me during the training.

They told me that they are going scan through my luggage to see if it was loaded with drugs . I went through the body scan. They found foreign objects in my body. From there they escorted me with dogs and took me to the reconciliation room where they would inspect my luggage.



The Policia who where in front of me told me to open my luggage. One by one, they emptied my case. They examined everything, they smelled my clothes each time. The policia gave me a terrifying look. He took out everything. Then came out a knife from the Policia's pocket , he made a cut through the bag with some difficulty. He found thick layers, it was a hint that it is loaded. They found the 'white substance'.

Now they were going to do a drug test, if the pink paper turned blue, it would be positive for cocaine. Through the process, I was soaked in sweat and my stomach churned. The paper turned blue. "Martin, you have been placed under arrest for smuggling Cocaine ". In the tricycle that I packed for my son, they found five kilos of Marijuana.

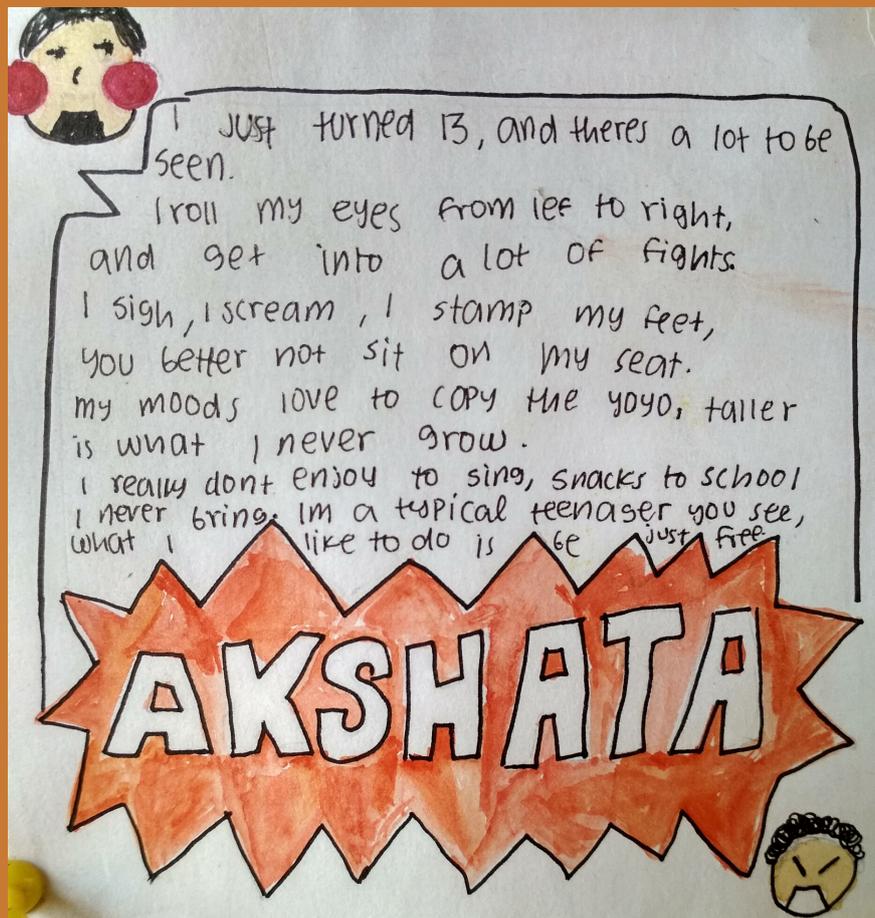
They told if I had confessed, my sentence would be shorter. I did what they told me to. I am dead, my family will die after they find this. I will live in the prison, I will mourn in the prison, I will die in the prison. "NO!" I yelled, I should not have chosen to do this. I AM A CRIMINAL!

Now it was the time to find out the weight of the drugs that I was transporting in my body. The total weight added up to 31.84 kilos. I was sent to a hospital, which was seven km far from the airport, where I would naturally expel the capsules. They read out my rights, I had a right to make a call. I made a call, I hesitated to speak to my heart broken family. I was going to prison, they said. I would be there for at least 45 years to 60 years ! Now I know that €360,000 is not worth my life.

Few days later.....

"Mr.M.Martin has died, the cause of his death was the drug-filled capsule explosion inside his body. Reason of the explosion was that Martin was suffering from hypertension, he did not inform the right authorities". This capture has been a big accomplishment for the El Dorado international airport. This is the highest amount of Cocaine and Marijuana been smuggled from Columbia to Madrid. We are proud of ourselves.

## The End



# Who Am I?

I know I am flesh and bone  
 Covered from head to toe that will wither one day  
 I know I am heart and soul  
 Inside and out whose spirit will never die  
 I am the child who will never stop believing  
 I am the dreamer who will never stop dreaming  
 I am the fighter who will never stop fighting  
 So I guess, I am just me  
 Krithik Atheesh

Who am I, I ask myself  
 That is the name of the book in the shelf  
 I want to read it but I have no time  
 I'm busy being lazy that  
 I can't even rhyme  
 Who am I, I ask myself  
 Yuvan

I'm a girl who loves school time  
 And my favourite part of it is lunch time  
 I like the school food  
 And I'm always in a good mood.  
 I like to read books  
 And I don't have a care about looks  
 Now this is what I'm like, always like a loud mic  
 You see I'm like a motorbikel could go on and on  
 if you like  
 Harshini



I am the master of my sea  
 I am myself and nobody else can be me  
 When you come to me  
 I will make you smile with gleel am the most loyal friend  
 you can get  
 If you want you can bet  
 To see if I'm in your net  
 If you were looking for a generous old stick  
 I might just be your pick  
 This is myself  
 The story of a little elf  
 That is who  
 I am Raghav

My brother says I am violent  
 And others say I'm silent  
 Fast is how I run  
 Playing is a lot of fun  
 My favourite thing is to paint  
 Eating bitter gourd makes me faint  
 Crochet bags I like to make  
 Cakes and cookies I like to bake  
 In the early morning its hard to wake  
 It is fun to swim in the lake  
 Kaviyaazhini

***I am who I am  
 Not who you think I am  
 Not who you want me to be  
 I am me***  
 -Brigette Nicole



# Addie

## Bhavana

The devastation was beyond description. There are some experiences you would like to forget but somehow just can't, like the decisions that I had to agree to without any choice .

A couple years back, when I was six, the fear of animals grew in me. I was walking past a friendly eyed, short, intelligent looking dog. I was crazy about dogs back then. I went up to him and gave him a pleasant pat on his back. 'Ruff, ruff, ruff .. ruff, ruff ',he barked abruptly. I jumped back quickly with a feeling of trepidation. He pounced on me with rage. My head banged on the street light pole behind me, I could hear the dog's heavy barking but could not see him. My vision darkened and I closed my eyes, my head went numb, I didn't feel the pain anymore.

"Don't worry Ms. Sienna , your son will be alright soon ", I heard a man's voice. I tried to open my eyes slowly, my head felt as heavy as a rock. "Addie, my son, what was going on ? What did you do? Where were you?", my mother asked me. I told her that I would tell her later. The stinky hospital's smell, the smell of the hand sanitizer, I felt those would make patients even weaker rather than making them stronger.

The incident of the dog pushing me down and me having to get four stitches on my head caused me to become zoophobic.

A few years went by and that decision, the decision that impacted my life quite heavily took place. One evening my mother came home from her office with two tickets in her hand. "What's up , mommy?", I asked. I saw a smile peep out from the corner of her lips. I was curious to know what the tickets were for. "Are we going to the new Marvel movie that got released?", I pursued. She walked towards me and sat on the couch. "Darling, listen to me carefully. I have taken this decision after a lot of thought. I am doing this for you ", she said and let out a sigh. "We, us two are visiting a new place. We are going to visit the Andaman forests". I looked at her, my eyes wide open with anxiety and fear.

"There will be animals there , wild and ferocious. I don't want to come there", I pleaded her. However, I had no other choice except for doing whatever she wanted me to do. I never wanted to see her angry. Tears flooded down my eyes, she consoled me.

In a few days, we flew to the forest. We entered the creepy, colossal resort we were going to stay in. "Mom, are you sure you want...", I started talking. "Addie, just listen to me, by the end of this week, you will fear animals no more", my mom interrupted and told me.'What's wrong with her?', I thought to myself. I wouldn't dare ask her anything like that. We went into our room. I fell on the bed and threw my sneakers here and there.

I was walking in the corridor. Suddenly, I felt like someone was walking behind me. I turned, nothing ! Strange !! I turned again, everything was completely strange. Strangers surrounded me 360°. I closed my eyes, took a deep breath and opened them again to make sure it was just a dream. However, it was not. My heart skipped many beats. In a few seconds, I was drenched in sweat. I had never felt this scared before, not even of animals. I was scared to death.

One of those big men came up to me , lifted up what looked like a clear perfume bottle and sprayed it on my face. I was dizzy and then fell asleep for hours. I woke up, but saw nothing except for darkness. "Help! Help me out ! Please! ", I screamed. My voice echoed. Suddenly, I heard footsteps, firm and loud. I tried to move my hand, but it was tied to my chair. The footsteps got louder and louder. I heard the door creak. Bright light swept into the darkness.



One of those big men came into the room. He took his seat next to mine. With his mobile phone on his ear, he seemed to be talking to someone. My mouth was shut, surprisingly. "Your son is with me, he is safe. Come to the address that I tell you", he said to the person on the phone. 'Is he talking to my mother? How did he get her number?' I asked myself. "Hmm .. Excuse me ", I started. "Yes, dear Addie, what do you need? How are you feeling here?", he asked me. I was surprised. How did he know my name? Does he know who I am?

A few minutes later, my mother rushed into the room. "Addie!", she shouted and hugged me. She turned towards the man. "You!?", she said. " Hey, Sienna ! How are you? It has been such a long time since we've met. What's up?", he asked my mother. "You took my business away from me. It was my life. I would have helped you if you had asked me. You snatched everything from me. I wish all this was just a bad dream", my mother said to him.

I wondered what was going on. I was extremely confused. "Addie", my mom whispered to me. "We've got to run, just run as fast as you can". She untied my hands and we ran continuously for what seemed like two miles. The big men chased us and we hid in a place that we found safe. "I repent taking this decision. I never expected such things to happen. Now I understand that not all the decisions I make are right. I am extremely sorry Addie, please forgive me, will you?", she asked me. I uttered not a word, I did not know what to reply or how to

From then, my mom and I shared equal responsibilities and I learnt what life taught my mom.

## Anecdotes from the sports ground

It is 3.42 pm and the score is 6-1. I know we have an extraordinary lead but I still need to score. I never settle for less. I get the ball and begin to sprint my way to the right hand side of the goal. I stop the ball. I have less than 25 feet to shoot it inside. I go for powerful lines. It is the perfect shot. It didn't have enough power to go over the cross bar but just enough power to go above the goal keeper. I run celebrating my fifth goal.

**-Aniruth**

June 3rd 2019, I wake up at 6 am, today is the first day of my new school Yellow Train. I did my morning chores and the bus arrived. I got in thinking, I will get new friends and make new memories. I went to the Arangam for breakfast and then my class teacher stood behind me. She asked " Did you meet your class boys", " no" I replied. She took me to the sports ground and introduced me to the boys. That's where my memories of this year started, on the ground. I made new friends Aniruth, Mann,Raghav, Shri and Goutam. We all played a game of football that day.

**-Kritihik**

# DECISION

Aniruth

## MAX 'HUSH' ADAMS

"Is it go time". I spoke into my earpiece. " Hold your horses. You are in a mall and you reported to see her with friends". John replied." We are terrorists, not overexcited gangsters". It was a pain to wait for the right time to kidnap a person. " John, she is coming out alone. I am going in" and as I said that, I threw my earpiece and walked to her. I was just two inches away when she turned and started jogging back towards her friends. I can't waste any more time, I sprinted and slammed her on the floor. I took out my gun and shot one of the civilians around. I screamed to the nearest person " Take out your phone and start recording this, now!". He started to record and I spoke " Hello Los Angeles police department. I am ' Hush' from the ' Red Spider' mafia and this is a message to Kevin Johnson. I have your sister here and we would like 1 billion dollars for her life. We give you 15 hours and your time starts now. Tick Tock Tick Tock".

## KEVIN JOHNSON

"Hello, hello, yes. James get over here. I need your help!" " What happened Kevin, you sound worried." " Just get over here!" I cut the call after that and waited for James

Knock, Knock. It was James, I quickly let him in and closed the door. " James, a terrorist just kidnapped Sam!. " WHAT! That's not true!". You will have to believe me". I switched on the T.V and played the news channel. " Two hours earlier a terrorist named Max 'Hush' Johnson from the " Red Spider " kidnapped Samantha, the sister of the head of police, Kevin Johnson. The terrorist demands 1 billion dollars as a ransom within 15 hours". I started to choke on my own tears. " James, can you help me get the ransom ready"."Of course, I will". I walked into my study and loaded my gun. It would be wise to have one. I loaded another for James. Just in case Just in case

" The money will be here in four hours"."Thanks, James'

## MAX 'HUSH' ADAMS

'Mmmmmphh'. This is getting out of hand."Shut your mouth you silly girl". "Mmmmmphh". "Fine". I ripped the duct tape from her mouth."Ow!". "Now shut up and sit down". She went to the corner, sat down and started to cry." Are you scared"."No, I am hungry". Really I had deal with her blabbering first and now this." Is water okay"." No"." Too bad". I gave her some water and she thanked me like this " You one undeserved of life specimen. You killed my friend!". " It isn't going to stop there, soon even your brother will die". That shut her up.

A few minutes later she started to cry even harder. " Oh my god, what is your problem". She gave an ice-cold stare and started talking " Today was my big day, I was about to start my own organization for human rights and finally I would not be known as the sister of the head of police instead I would be known as the head of " FOR HUMANS" - The Human Rights Organization". " That is sad". Her story made me think about my own story, me being the son of two famous actors who abandoned me just because I couldn't act and didn't live up to their reputation. Oh, the good times. I and started to think for a moment ' Should I let her go or kill as per the plan' I usually don't get messages from my brain but this one just made me reconsider the whole plan.

## KEVIN JOHNSON

" We are two miles away from the spot he told us about, are you ok". I was not paying any attention to anything except the bag, my gun, and James's gun. What should I do, kill the terrorist, thereby placing my sister's life in danger or just give them the money without actually knowing where my sister is.

## MAX 'HUSH' ADAMS

I really don't need to kill her or leave the money. I'm 'Hush' and I make my own choices

**KEVIN JOHNSON**

It is not up to me but if anything happens to my sister I will search for them, I will find them and I will kill them.

We reached the location

**MAX 'HUSH' ADAMS**

They have reached. Show Time

**KEVIN JOHNSON**

"There James, Sam is over there"

**MAX 'HUSH' ADAMS**

"There, my brother is over there " said Samantha

**KEVIN JOHNSON**

I can clearly see James was reaching for his gun, " James, be calm"

**THE ENCOUNTER**

Now, just six meters away from the head of police I shout out, " The money".

" First let her go"

" Okay then, drop your guns". He was smart but James didn't drop the gun instead he took it out " James, NOO!"

I took out my gun.

" BANG, BANG""

Hello, hello, officer Jadon here. I have arrived at the location of the gunshots and make out two dead bodies, I also make out two figures moving towards a police vehicle. Copy "

**What's a question that has changed the way you understand the world**

The question that has changed how I understood the world, is what happens when you grow older. I did not know that when you grow older you will die.

I know it's stupid but until I was eight, I used to think once you become 45 you start growing backwards. I'm pretty sure all the old people reading this would be saying 'I wish' . What changed for me was that I was going to die one day and not live forever.

I clearly remember that the only way to die was in accidents and bike crashes. In every single movie I had seen, someone died in an accident not 'old age'. I was so sure when I became an adult , my dad would become a baby, that I even spread it among my friends in school and they believed it. Everyone in my school believed it to be true. I even planned what cars I would buy when I grew older and what cars I would buy when I grew younger. I was a hardcore believer.

I don't remember who told me about death or maybe I figured it out my own.

**-Goutam**

The question that changed my understanding of the world happened in biology class. The class started as usual and out of nowhere some one asked, " How big is the solar system compared to our galaxy". The answer really shocked me. " It is about the size of a tea cup" my teacher replied. There was nothing on my mind other than the answer to that question.

I really started to think about myself in the whole universe, how small I was compared to the universe. I thought I could find an answer deep inside myself. I took a breath and closed my eyes and asked " Who am I in this universe" , my soul answered " you are really small compared to the universe, but think about yourself in this world. A small living creature on Earth can create big impact" That is the moment I discovered the truth. I am not the only one in this world. Respect, give kindness, give hope - My life had changed.

**-Raghav**

# When I Prevailed

Sneha

## Chapter One

"There are some experiences you would like to forget but somehow you can't."

Being a mother of a drug addict is extremely traumatic. People repeatedly tell me that it is not my fault, but it is. The society expects parents to be perfect. Literally. Do not beat your child, always have a smile, keep yourself in shape, and being divorced it seems, is not permissible.

My name is Sue Clearwater, I am currently divorced and I am 35 years old. I had a beautiful son whose was 16 years of age. I have been divorced for more than 2 years now. In the beginning, I was happy but now, I am not. My son Justin was one of those good mannered boys, not to the end of his life, though. Before the divorce, Justin was a well behaved, honest and gracious boy. He used to score very well in his tests at school.

Justin inherited his father's honey tinted eyes and his muscular build. He liked to go out and exercise regularly. He inherited my fair skin colour. He was mostly poker faced. With his broad shoulders, anyone could have mistaken him for a 18 year old. He had fairly tenor voice; he could have easily become a singer.

Justin was happy, with me and his father. He believed we were a complete family. He didn't know the reality.

## Chapter 2

"Marriage does not guarantee you will be together forever, it is only on paper. It takes love, respect, trust, understanding, friendship and faith in your relationship to make it last."

When I was 19, I decided to marry my colleague ,who was my boyfriend.We had known each other for a year then . My parents were nothing but thrilled when they came to know the news. I was too. Who wouldn't be happy about marrying into a very well educated family, who were also loaded with money. We celebrated our wedding with extravagance. Many guests were invited and a lot of tears were involved. Life was going smoothly, we had occasional fights, here and there . Sometimes our fights would last for days . There would be no noise in the house , just silence!

My husbands name was Daniel Templeton. He was tall, dark with an exceptional sense of humour .

There were many things that I despised in him, the most prominent being his excessive smoking . To be honest, I also smoke, it feels good . It's a great feeling to let warm smoke come out of you.

Life changed after Justin was born. He was an exceptional gift for both of us . I do remember him being more close to Daniel .

The fights surfaced again when Justin was 15 years old. I don't remember when I decided to take a divorce , but I knew why. With Daniel, I could not lead the life I wanted to live. I was always doing the same things everyday. It was like clockwork. I know that this decision affected both of them deeply.

There were times when Daniel had seizures and I would have to visit him and care for Justin too. I knew both of them loved me. I used to spend a great deal of time thinking about Justin's custody which was given to Daniel. I wondered if it was the right thing to have been done. I now realise that none of us would have treated Justin well. Justin would probably have died the same way.

## Chapter Three

"You are the choices that you make"

Justin went to the Hillside Prep High School. We had shifted from Indianapolis to Canada as it was one of the best schools with the best teachers. Justin scored exceptionally well. He was also very popular for his good looks and his Facebook page overflowed with friend requests, every time.

Daniel and I had different professions. I was a writer and he a bank manager. We used to return from work late at night. We never had any worries about our son for we knew that he would be in bed, fast asleep.

After the divorce, every time Justin visited me, he behaved differently. In the beginning, he was emotional, but later, he changed. His gums appeared black, I wondered why. His breath turned raspy. He had dark circles under his beautiful eyes and he was turning violent. I found he had turned rude. I remember him telling me about his new friend, who was unknown to me. I believed that friend was the bad influence.

Whenever Justin visited me, he barely spoke or ate anything. He asked only for soda.

My son passed away on November 9, 2018. He was 19. The doctors examined him and declared that he was under the influence of cocaine. He had been rubbing the drug on his gums, which had caused the blackened gums.

At the funeral, I realised that people will forever continue to talk behind my back and I will have to forever ignore them. Daniel accused me for this loss.

After much thought, I can say that taking the decision of divorce was quick. I did it in less than a week. The after effects of it, I did not anticipate. I did not understand what I had done to the people involved. I had turned a blind eye to them. I regret that decision, for my son.

Daniel died of acute depression and heart failure few months later. I did not attend his funeral, as I was reminded of his accusations on the day of my son's demise.

"The hardest decisions in life are not between good and bad or right and wrong, but between two goods or two rights."- Joe Andrew

- 1.No character names have any correlation towards any living/dead person . Any circumstance that occurs is purely coincidental
- 2.This short story does not promote smoking or any intake of drugs



## WHITE POWDER

I had the money in my pocket and the door was locked. I opened the window. I tapped my hoody pocket to make sure the money was there. I jumped out of the ground floor bedroom window leaping in the air and ended up falling flat on my face, luckily no one heard me screeching like a dying cat. I ran to the rendezvous point which was in a parking lot. The dealer had a mask and a hoody. He first asked if I had the money and to sound cool in that same deep voice I replied "you got the money". Apparently my voice wasn't as cool as his so he just went on with the deal and gave me the five fresh packets of cocaine and in turn I gave him my Christmas money of 300 dollars.

I know getting illegal drugs at the age of 16 is a punishable offence but you only live once, am I right?! I don't expect to live that long so want to make the most of life while I'm young. I don't support smoking though; I don't know why people are addicted to it so much I tried it once and it does not taste good at all. The next day I went to my friend Sam's house with a bag which was supposed to be holding a board game but instead was holding the white powder. I snuggled the cocaine inside, we headed up to Sam's room. Sam slammed the door shut as I pulled out the cocaine and to share with Sam. As we sniffed it, the feeling of absolute ecstasy hit me right after. I could see the world spinning in front of me as my tears started turning into blue glitter. My worries shattered in front of me like glass. The adrenaline shot through me as I was moved with the non-existent music. The only phrase I heard was "how much did you take". Intoxication was a release from my problems. I heard Sam's mom calling from downstairs but I was too caught up in reaching for the cocaine, I didn't notice my body shivering as my knees reached for the ground and I collapsed to the floor. I knew at that moment I had taken too much. I was palpating on the ground. I could feel the white liquid falling from my face on to the floor. The last thing I heard as I fell into the void of darkness was the door opening with a loud thud as Sam's dad dialled up 911.

The ECG beeping is what I woke up to in the hospital. My parents were beside me with their eyes focused on me, "what happened " I asked with my voice at the edge of breaking. My mom looked at me and said "Max you are going to stop, promise me you'll stop". Her words rung inside my head as I decided it was time to change.

In the end everything turned out fine, me and Sam aren't in juvenile detention and we are now better men and the scent of white powder will not cross us again.

**-Goutam**

# How to deal with Teenagers

## My Life! My Way! – A Teenager’s rant

Money- seriously, what is their problem, the adult’s problem? Why shouldn’t I have my own money? Why can’t I have it, why not? If I need to learn to be independent as I grow up, I need to have my own money. I have to have my own money to learn to be myself and take care of myself too , if not my future will get spoilt.

And food, do you think I eat junk food every day? That isn’t true. Most days I have vegetables I don’t like. I have them in school and in my home too. It is very unfair. I love to eat burgers and pizza but the answer I get is no. They say it is bad and I have to accept it. My life with food is very very unfair!

**-Aadhira**

Pressure is a major issue amongst teenagers. As adults, it is important to bail them out and never to make them more depressed. Ordering for work to be done in their free hours, restricting them from doing what they want, advising instead of listening when they want to share their troubles, all can change them from a kind to a de-spirited person.

Helping a teenager is not an easy job. Advising is not a method to help. Teens expect adults to listen. Listening relieves and heals the pain. Many adults don’t realize that teenagers don’t reply appropriately because of too much advice.

Teenagers are like fish caught in the net. They crave to get out of the net and there is only one way to escape when the net is put back in the water. After it is relieved from the net, the fish survives with hard wounds and swims around with deep fear of being caught again. Do what you can to help the child and prevent depression.

**-Nakshathira**

## Teenagers mind – A Pandora’s Jar

The teenage mind is a complex puzzle. It has its own frequency. Many parents frequently worry about not being able to relate to their kids anymore, that is because of a biological shift in the child’s mind. Teenagers want to be independent, and sometimes get frustrated. If your teen slams the door when you ask how their day was and replies ‘Nothing much’. Don’t worry, your child is normal. It means they have had an amazing or a horrible day!

When a teenager gets angry, their anger lasts for days or minutes. Some teens express their feelings openly while some bottle their emotions only letting it out when it is too much to withstand. This is dangerous for the parent may never know what true emotion their child is feeling, whether they are depressed or angry.

At this stage of adolescence, music is every teens best friend. Do not stop you child from listening to music, even when they study, some teens can’t focus without music. Some teens obsess over music bands and walk, talk , dress up and behave like their idol. They will eventually realize their own interests and pursue them with the right nurturing.

For a teenager, their secret diary is their gadget. They believe it to be their life. Often, they take pleasure in looking at other’s social media accounts, forgetting they see the same person every day. A teen’s mind is a like a Pandora’s jar. You can never know what they would say or think. Their life is trial and error, where they learn , discover themselves and grow from their mistakes .All a parent can do is be a supportive, patient companion in their journey from childhood to adulthood.

**-Sneha**



# Every Single Last One

Arunika

## CHAPTER 1

Naomi clutched her books to her chest as she waited for her friend at the bus stop. Her bag drooped like a sack of potatoes, as her alert yet weary eyes pierced every soul that passed her, but hurried away just as quickly. Why were strangers always watching her? Or maybe it was just her conscience.....She was in pieces without her friend.

"Hey, Naomi!"

Naomi nearly fell over and dropped all her books.

"Oh, h-Heather, sorry," Naomi stuttered as she scrambled to gather her books. "I was just waiting for you."

Naomi lived with her father and mother in a medium -sized house in a crowded neighborhood, made up of mostly adults and just one other kid of Naomi's age. This kid's name was Heather and she was Naomi's best friend. Both of them took the bus together and always supported each other.

Heather was a small outspoken girl who was doing her last year of college with Naomi. She had aimed to study as a software engineer, and studied hard for the acceptance exam to Harvard.

Naomi, on the other hand, wanted to start a business – a consultancy that let architects find clients. For this, she first wanted to study architecture and take the exam for it too. However, her father wanted her to take the exam for medicine and become a doctor. Naomi was devastated. She had been studying since her freshman year, wanting to prepare as much as possible for her examination.

One day, she had heard her father talking to her mother about Naomi taking the medicine exam instead of the architecture one. At the moment, she had hurled herself through the door and into the closed room and screamed at them, for they knew how hard she had worked for this. She then stormed off, and as her father started after her, her mother held him back, saying that Naomi needed 'Alone Time'. At the moment she had thought to herself, "What rubbish." But whenever she thought back, she was grateful to her mom for giving her the time she needed to cool down.

## CHAPTER 2

Naomi sat on her bed one Saturday morning, counting her allowance. She had started to secretly save up her allowance to buy books to study for the architecture exam after her parents refused to buy them for her. Instead, they piled books on medicine on her dresser and told her to study those. She only pretended to study them – instead she, hid her architecture books inside her medicine books and read them as a child would read something he's not supposed to.

Suddenly, she was startled by her mother.

"Naomi, dear!"

She called up the stairs. "Heather is here for you!" Naomi quickly stashed her money in her purse and rushed downstairs. Heather was waiting for her, dressed in a sundress and flip-flops.

"Ready to go to the mall?" She winked at Naomi.

"Yup." Naomi grinned back. "Bye, Mom!"

## CHAPTER 3

They didn't plan to go to the mall. No, they didn't. They went to the bookstore. To get books. Architecture books.

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As they walked in, the receptionist, Mia, greeted them.

"Hello, girls! Here for the usual? Oh, by the way, Naomi, a new one came in just yesterday. I saved it for you because I know that you're always checking for them architecture and design books....."She babbled on, and Naomi quickly retrieved the book from Mia's hands and slowly slunk away at Heather's feet.

Heather got lost in the realistic fiction section, while Naomi stood in line to pay for her book. As she did so, she saw something that had caught her eye.It was the flyer for the medicine exam. It read:

*Would you like to study medicine?*

*Would you like to get accepted in a top-notch college and become a brilliant and successful doctor?*

*Would you like to help your parents with their financial problems?*

*If you do, come take the medicine exam! Get above 92%, and you will be accepted at any university. You can then become a successful and famous doctor and help with your parent's financial problems!*

**JOIN TODAY!**

Naomi was stunned. Did her parents have financial problems? Was that why they had told her to take the medicine exam? And on top of that, they continued to give her an allowance! Naomi was devastated. She had also selfishly bought architecture books while her parents struggled to fund her education as well as getting Naomi books on medicine!

Naomi immediately put the book from her hands back on the shelf. Then, in a daze, walked to the bench outside and sat down. Would she continue doing what she desired? Or would she study for the medicine exam for the parents she so dearly loved?

#### **CHAPTER 4**

When Heather dropped Naomi off at her house, Naomi walked upstairs to her room and shut the door mechanically. She gathered all her books- both medicine and architecture- and dumped them onto her bed. She then began sorting them into two piles: books she wanted and books she didn't. She picked up a book on doctor's tools and placed it on a pile.

When she was done, she picked up the pile of books she didn't want and hauled it into a cardboard box she had used to hide her architecture books

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When Naomi started down the stairs, her mother came out of her bedroom. She was startled to see Naomi heading downstairs with an enormous box.

"Naomi, dear," she called out. Naomi did not stop. "Where are you going? And what's in the box?" Naomi ignored her. She reached the bottom step, and headed for the front door.

"Naomi!" Her mother raced down and caught her shoulder just as Naomi unhooked her jacket. She then spun her around and looked her in the eye. "What are you doing?" She demanded. "And where are you going?"

Naomi slowly set the box down and scowled. "Mom," She said. She took her mother's hand and led her to the living room. She sat down, and dragged her mother down with her.

"Mom," She said again. "Do you and dad have financial problems? Is that why you wanted me to become a doctor?"

Her mother grew pale and then broke down. She said yes. And that she and her father were predicted to go bankrupt in a few years, and that if she, Naomi, were to come a doctor, she could place them in a retirement home and leave them to live the rest of their life in peace and happiness.

Just as she finished, however, the door opened and the sound of heavy, muffled footsteps filled their home. The footsteps came closer until Naomi's father stood before them.

"What is going on?" He boomed. "Why is your mother crying?"

#### **CHAPTER 5**

After Naomi's father was filled in on what was happening, he put his perspective on things.

"Yes," He said gruffly. "I did what I had to do for your mother and my future."

"But that gives you no excuse to hide it from me," Naomi protested. "I should know what I'm doing and why I'm doing it."

"ENOUGH!" Naomi's father shouted. The room fell silent. "Enough," He repeated, in a softer, but still gruff, voice.

"Now that you know why we want you to become a doctor, are you going to become one, Naomi?" Her father asked.

"Well," She said. "I've already made a decision on that. However, before I tell you my decision, I must confess to something." Naomi turned to her mother. "Mom, did you see the cardboard box in my hands before you stopped me?" She inquired.

"Yes," her mother replied in a shaking voice. Naomi turned to her father.

"Dad, did you see the cardboard box when you walked through the front door?" She asked her father.

"Yes," he said curiosity peaking higher by the second.

"Well," Naomi said. "Inside are all of my architecture books. Every single last one."

"And?" Her mother quipped, afraid to even breathe. "And, I'm going to sell them."

"WHAT?!" Her mother gasped. Her father inhaled sharply.

"You mustn't! I couldn't bear it if you did! You love those books!" Her mother fretted. "I'm not done yet," Naomi reminded her. "Also, you must stop giving me an allowance and should accept the money I give you from my architecture books." She instructed.

"All right," Her father agreed.

"Great. I'll become a wonderful doctor, I assure you."

### **EPILOGUE**

Naomi opened the envelope in her bedroom. She nearly squealed in delight. Her acceptance at the University of Michigan with a scholarship would definitely surprise her parents.

Today was her parents' wedding anniversary. She would gift it to them, and hoped they would feel as happy as she did!

As soon as Naomi's father came home, Naomi rushed downstairs. She presented the envelope to them and watched impatiently as they opened it.

Her father's proud face and her mother's squeal of delight assured her that they were a happy family again.



## **The Touch**

She swam from the depths of the rocky cave to the surface of the water which glistened in the sunlight. Her arms swayed in the water like a calm dancer. Slowly but steadily she reached out of the water and wrapped her long tentacles around my cold arms sending a surge of warmth all over my body. Every now and then she gently rearranged her tight grip on my arm bring me closer and closer to the surface of the water. Under the water her hyphen shaped eyeballs glanced at me curiously. I was now so close to her that I could hear all of her three hearts thumping with a rhythm. I looked back at her and didn't notice curiosity anymore. Instead I sensed trust and familiarity. At this point her moist mantle bobbed above the water. I slowly released one of my arms from her grip. As her suckers let go of my hand, it made millions of little pop sounds. Once I released my hand I slowly placed it on her mantle. I expected it to be cold and rubbery but I could not have been more wrong. Her blood-red skin was warm and silky. I took my hand which was now all the way into the cold icy water. "Oh No, you don't", I laughed as I slowly released my hand from her grip which weakens too. When she let go she quickly used her funnel to propel her way into her dark cave.

**-Shreya**

# Veracious

## Nakshathira

It was the morning breeze that woke me with a start. I gently pushed my quilt for the day. I got ready and pulled on my clothes with haste to leave to school.

The cool wind rustled everywhere, the blue sky gave no sign of the heavy rain.

My day at school began, as strips of hard sun light fell through the window.

I gleefully smiled, feeling my heart thump hard, as my teacher entered. I briskly stood up to hear about my homework.

"Did you read my homework akka?" I eagerly and willingly asked.

"Yes" she replied.

"How was it" I more keenly asked.

"We can talk about it during the snack break" she answered.

My english class continued followed by my maths class, after which we had our snack break.

I stepped out of my class, and went to the ground, after some happy chatting I came back to the school. The room which appeared yellow was filled with chatter, loud laughter and some noise. I slowly approached my teacher. "can we talk about the homework now" I asked.

"Yes" she replied.

We moved towards a light brown table, appearing colourful because all the things on it. We soon went into a conversation.

"Copying a story and only changing the names, isn't what all of it is about" she said.

I was slightly blank with words, but was filled with guilt for the decision I made for copying the story, I was in a dilemma for the decision of telling the truth. Then the conversation carried on, but ended on me concealing the truth. Nevertheless I learned a good lesson.

The conversation ended.

A few days passed as I approached my teacher admitting my mistake for duplicating my story. My guilt led to a veracious path...

Several days passed, as I felt guilt and struggled with the story assignment.

One unexpected evening, my father approached me giving a breathtaking idea.

I hastily grabbed my fragile light brown cardboard like pen. "It was the cool breeze that woke me with a start" I began the first line of my story.

**Life is a tangled thread, it is never too late to untangle it and make it more useful..**

# School Lunch

There are a lot of things that go into a school lunch  
like the cook's numerous rings

to give it a nice crunch!

A black alley cat's fur

or that velvety touch

and a drunk man's slur

is that a bit too much?

Don't forget the pepper

and just a pinch of salt

and what about just a bit of sweetness

with sugary isomalt?



**-Arunika**

## A letter to someone you admire

Dear Michelle Obama,

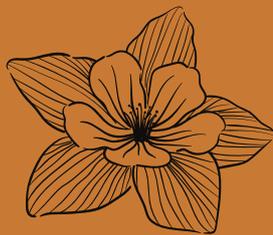
I admire you immensely. You are a role model to many women and children especially due to your simplicity and being down to earth. Your bravery and strength are what make you stand out. I wonder how someone can manage being a lawyer and an author at the same time. Your books, especially 'Becoming', is highly inspiring as you discuss in it the experiences that shaped you from your childhood to your years living in the White House in America.

I am amazed as you were the first Afro- American First lady of the United States. You focused your attention on big social issues of today like poverty, healthy living and right for education. You were considered a fashion icon for supporting American designers. You empowered young women through quality education.

However Michelle, I don't think a brilliant woman such as you should spend even a second trying to convince racists and discriminators.

I admire you for another thing, your beauty! You look extremely stunning, especially on the cover page of 'Becoming', your smile looks beautiful on you. Always stay as you are and never change

**-Bhavana**



Dear Elon Musk,

I am Goutam from India. You are someone I admire a lot. Your story is an inspiration to me. The reason I admire you is because you show the world that nothing is impossible, and you can achieve a lot if you keep trying. I want to be an entrepreneur when I grow up and you are a success story in the Hall of Fame. I am a fan of your work in Space X more than Tesla. In SpaceX, by landing a Falcon 9 space craft vertically with only 90 million dollars you have proven that brilliance doesn't come with a price tag. Apollo 11 cost 333 million dollars. That's not all, you made the first liquid fuelled rocket, dropping a payload on Mars with a car and now making a hotel in Mars.

Unbelievable! Let's not forget about Tesla. Making an electric car that can go from 0 to 600 mph in under 4 seconds, a sedan for seven people, a pick-up truck which can withstand a grenade... All I want to say is you are the best entrepreneur ever.

**-Goutam**



Dear Cristiano Ronaldo,

Before I got to know football, all I knew about you is that you were the best footballer in the world and that you had a lot of girlfriends. Sorry if you are offended by that statement but that's how I got to know you.

My brother got a PS3 and he got a FIFA11 platinum edition with his PS3. It was all new to me. My brother introduced me to you, Messi and a few other footballers. HE told me that Messi was the best player in the world and I believed him because I was a small kid. As time went by, I realised you were the better player-not just then but also now. I asked my friends and even my dad agreed you were the better player.

I never played or watched football before I was 12. After 12 I started watching more videos about football and footballers. I saw that Messi has immeasurable talent but there is one aspect which makes you the best player-determination.

You scored 34 hat tricks in 9 years, Messi reached it only after 16 years. You have won trophies for your country Messi hasn't. You are 34 but have the body of a 22 year old player. You have scored amazing free kicks, hat tricks, headers and so many amazing goals.

Thank you Cristiano, for impressing me and motivating me to not give up in anything.

**-Shri Vardhana Vel**

# Four Best Friends

Shri Vardhanavel

I wake up as always, getting ready for school and getting the same advice from my parents everyday. They keep telling me to study well so, we can move to some other place. But, I wanted to become a professional cricketer.

We lived in a small house in the local family quarters. Every time I go out, my mom kept her eye on me because, it is a rough neighbourhood. There were lot of drugs being smuggled and a few mafia gangs. We used to be very careful. I met my best friends and we went to school together there.

We were really close friends, we used to cheat in the exams, we used to play pranks - we did all of it together every time. We used to be together all the time. We were so close that sometimes it felt like, my friends Joffree, Jimmy and Jas were my brothers from other mothers. They used to call me Johnny a nick name for Johnathon.

Slowly as we grew up, we were hated by a few people, few of our teachers and our parents because we made a lot of mistakes and were up to no good. One of the biggest mistakes we made was, we drank alcohol, made a big racket and we were caught by the police.

We went to jail and that morning, our parents came to meet us with anger and disgrace Jimmy's dad was kind, calm and responsible, he came close to our cell and told us that we will no longer have the right to education.

I wanted to work harder in cricket and become a cricketer but, Jimmy's dad also told that we aren't be going to our classes because they had also received the news and the coach didn't want us anymore. We only had two options which we discussed about overnight. We either had to sell snacks in a small store or join one of the gangs and take lot of risks but, earn more money. We chose to join one of the gangs. We decided to join a gang three years later because, we would turn 16 and we would be tougher, stronger, and more intimidating.

We joined the more dominant mafia gang. Our leader's name was Felix and the other gang's leader's name was Bhushan Singh. He was very weak and he was scared all the time. He was not a good leader but, he was a good man to the innocent masses.

We were our leader's favourite four because we always had the job done on time. We robbed, smuggled drugs, murdered etc., If we ended up in jail our other gang members would come, and set us free.

I was paid the most money out of all the others in the gang. My friends wanted to quit because they didn't like the life in shadows. They did quit. We had a farewell party for them which was very odd. I thought it was because Felix liked them so much that he wanted to have a party. We were very hungover and we all slept there for the night.

The next day morning I woke up and saw Jimmy, Jeffree and Jake tied up on their knees behind a piece of wood with a curve in the middle. I didn't think twice and tried to run to untie my friends but, I fell to the ground because, I was also tied to a chair. Felix laughed and told me "You made the right decision by joining me and now you want to leave, its time I make the right decision".

They tied Jimmy to a chair and a bulky man came from behind me and started to punch Jimmy and I was screaming "Nooooo, Stop... he won't betray you, neither will the others," But, they did not listen. They tied my mouth and took turns punching Jimmy. Felix shot Jimmy on his legs and hands a few times. Then a man came with a tool bar and plucked Jimmy's nail out. They did the same to Jake but, instead of pulling his nails out, he started pulling his hair out from his head one by one. Finally, Jeffree met a similar fate.

I regretted making this decision 15 years ago. We could have lived a much longer and a more peaceful life than we had done..

friends

## What one invention would you un-invent if you could and why?

I am lethargic and don't care about spending too much time on one particular thing. I wish to un-invent time. We don't have time to be free. We do one or more things at a time and lose concentration in them. With specific times for having breakfast, lunch, dinner, homework and gadgets; we seem to set an alarm for each job and if we don't we seem to forget it.

We work as operated machines and are forgetful about things. We try to save time but there is no use for it. Un-inventing the clock and time would make us feel more like human beings.

**- Poorna**

I've got it. I would un-invent the smart phones. People are so addicted to them. Most people have them. Where ever I look, there is not one person without his/her phone. Our lives depend on them. People are just crazy about them.

In olden times, kids used to be told stories or shown things around them. But now, it is just the opposite. Not only adults but kids have been spoiled too. When people start using the phones they do not have time to spend with their families.

Well, this happens in my family too. My father and I barely get time to chat, only in the morning when he drops me to the van. When I un-invent them, people will get more time to spend with their family and I will get more time with my father.

**-Aadhira**

"Oh My God !!" Jeremy exclaimed. "It's working! It's working!" he said as he disappeared. All Jeremy saw for the next 20 minutes was a blur of blue and history. He saw structures being built, paintings being painted and people dying in the name of god. The latter will not happen if Jeremy succeeds in his mission. His mission was to destroy religion. He hated religion, it created wars, it took lives and killed his family and friends. Everybody was better off without religion.

He finally reached his destination, the stone age. It was the greatest sight he ever saw. It looked better than 2066. He wandered around to see where to plant the nuke. It would be a shame to destroy this place but no-one would suffer religion and that was what he wanted. The missile was launched and Jeremy was going to die along with the world. He had suffered enough and he didn't want to live with the guilt of destroying the world.

**-Yuvan**

The invention I would un-invent if I could would be plastic. Many people say using plastic makes life easier, but it is one of the main things slowly and cruelly killing the planet. Plastic is non-biodegradable and that's a big problem. When we dispose plastic in landfills, it can cause severe land pollution. When we burn it, it produces toxic gases.

It pollutes our water bodies too and is a great danger to the environment. The food chain collapses due to plastic. When an organism consumes plastic, it is poisoned by the toxic contents.

Many people use plastic containers to store food, as they are lightweight, re-usable and strong. When plastic containers are heated or frozen, the temperature of plastic changes and chemicals escape which mixes with the food. The grave consequence of this process is cancer. There are many more negative effects of plastic and that's why I conclude that plastic will be the invention I will un-invent.

**- Harshini**

The one thing I would like to un-invent is the mobile phone. People are prisoners of their phone that's why they are called cell phones. Humans get addicted to gadgets easily. Before the mobile phone was invented children used to play in the streets but now the streets are empty. The children prefer being inside their homes listening to music, playing video games, using social media or chatting with friends. Cell phones bring you closer to the people far away from you but take you away from the ones sitting next to you.

**-Kaviyaazhini**

# Good Cop or Bad Cop

Raghav

I was up all night cracking a case. I am a police detective, My Captain is such a dumbhead . Each and every time I take a break, he starts shouting at me for no reason. The alarm rang and I rushed out of the house with my badge and my gun.

As I open the door of the Precinct shouts of people pleading came in. Criminals were handcuffed to the bench. " New York's police department gotta have a headache ". I couldn't spot my desk but then I turned back and looked at a desk with mountains of paper. The top of the mountain a name tag said "Raymond Turney" . 'ARGH!' I said as I went through my paperwork. "busy day".

"Shuffling through paperwork makes me a crazy fool". I said as the phone rang. "Hello" I answered, "CODE", "1\$&\*777%!!", I replied. "Got a package to collect, down town , address has been texted. "At one PM", the voice said briefly as I hung up the phone. I looked at my watch and rushed to the Precinct door but the Captain stopped me. "Wh're you t'nik you going boey?" "Gotta take a break", I replied as I opened the door of my car.

I got to the address and as I pulled over to the side I see people with bags and Cuban cigars in their mouths. As I enter one of them said "Got 19 AK47's with enough ammo, give me the code cop, you have been doing this for five years". " 2000 dollars for skittles", I replied as they throw the bag right at my feet and I give them what they need . "T'nks for da muneey cop" one of the two replied as I left . I call boss " Turney, how'd the deal go", " Good boss, no shots on this one"."Good meet you by the diner", he says as he hung up.

I am waiting for him in the diner , I had ordered two lattes with extra cream which is getting colder by the minute. The bell rings as I see Alonso Quinn approaching my table . " The product Turney ", he asks as he drinks his coffee."Under the table", I reply as I sip my coffee. "Good, HR is really proud of you" he says as he leaves with the bag.

The next day the call comes in early," Get up, you are going in with Leskey, big package, godown in Bronx". I hung up the phone as I woke up to the sound of the voice. I dial the Precinct," hey its Turney , i'm calling the off today and tell Cap okay", I hung up the phone with a smile on my face. I quickly get changed and rushed out of the house with my 15mm Bereta pistol.

Leskey gets in the car and starts talking about how this is his first job. I was starting to feel bored of his chit chat and I stepped foot on the accelerator to make my point. The godown looks like something out of a hollywood movie. The men are smoking cigars with a huge crate on the floor. " Come on son, show some guts out there", I told Leskey as we enter the godown.

"Got 200 grenades with Belgian waffles", they say as a guy takes a puff from his cigar. " The code cop ", the Russian guy says as I nudge Leskey and he replies, "145%^\*&%#\$4", he says with his teeth chattering . I throw the money bag and take the "gifts " to the car.

I check out the place for any one following us. As I look at the sky I tell Leskey to get in the car. I then drive as fast as I can " what are you doing ", Leskey asks ," Look at the god damn sky ! ' I reply , two helicopters with FBI written on their underbellies are in pursuit of us " HR is screwed " I reply as I start shooting at the sky with a Belgian.

Soon after NYPD cars start tailing us. The spikes were ahead of us and I drove straight through them . The NYPD quickly jumped our car and arrested us before we had the chance to fight back. " Raymond Turney , you are under arrest for illegal weapons trading in New York, you have.....", " I know my rights because I am a cop!". My choice for an easy life had failed. I was back in the Precinct this time not at my desk.



# ET PHONES HOME

Two days. Two days since the crash. It was a dreadful mistake by the captain to choose Earth as the landing spot. Two days!

It was 27th August, 2167. We were celebrating the 15th anniversary of 'Move Humans to Mars' movement when Captain Maximlim announced that we go and explore the Grey planet Earth. It was said that pollution had taken over the Earth and there was no more oxygen or water. The captain also added that they sent some astronauts to Earth to check if everything was suitable for the landing. Being an astronaut myself, I felt I was taking a huge risk but I didn't think about it too much. Finally the captain announced the crew 'Aniruth, Wanda, Natalie, Oliver and Arnold', I couldn't stop smiling. I was part of the crew. We were called up on stage, Wanda, Natalie, Oliver, Arnold and I entered together.

The captain congratulated us and told us that the take off was tomorrow. I thanked him and went back to my quarters and slept. I woke to find Wanda knocking on my door, I quickly geared up and went to the shuttle. Oliver, Natalie and the captain were waiting for us. We got on the shuttle and took off.

We went god speed into the Earth's atmosphere. We planned everything and left nothing to imagination. We entered the Earth's atmosphere to find a good, healthy planet not a waste dump. The captain fell ill and fainted, we did not care for him. The earth was filled with water and oxygen. We were so dumbstruck, we didn't notice the shuttle crashing. That's how I landed up here! I was going to close my eyes when I saw people and light. They carried me outside and I swear I could see a sign saying 'ETs have phoned our home'.

**-Aniruth Devaraj**

"Start communicating to BL417-A, let's get this over with" Admiral Javed ordered as the approached Earth. Their intentions were to take over Earth and use it as an inter-space trading centre for planets BL000- A to BL416-Z. They had done this to several galaxies and now it was like a hobby for them (taking over and destroying planets).

Admiral went up to the big screen and waited for the connection. All of a sudden the screen flared up and showed four inhabitants of BL417-A sitting casually and watching him.

"Hello inhabitants of BL417-A, I am Admiral Javed of the Pentonic. I would like to speak to your Superior" he said as the Earthlings just looked. "This movie sucks, just change it" said one of them. "Ok, fine" said another. The screen went blank for Admiral Javed who had no idea what was going on.

"Make the connection again" he ordered and waited. The screen flared up again, this time it showed a man with yellow hair and a suit. "I have seen enough independence day movies to know tat you aliens are no good. So I am going to nuke you. Bye" said the man as he blacked out. "Incoming boogey sir" screamed one of Admiral Javed's crew. Admiral Javed did not know that that was going to be his last contact with anyone ever.

**-Yuvan**



# My Cheshire Homes Experience

## Before we went to Cheshire Homes

I thought we were just going to go to a normal old age home. I didn't even know old people with mental illness existed. I was pretty excited and wanted to see the people and the place. I had no knowledge about them.

## First impression of Cheshire Homes

I was kind of freaked out the first few minutes there. An old man with not very good eyesight came near us and screamed "Hiiiiii!". Lots of people were eagerly waiting for handshakes, but due to my fear, I did not dare to even stand next to them. A couple of minutes later, a caretaker there told us a little about them that they might actually show their happiness violently.

## After a few days of working with the people of Cheshire Homes

I am now quite comfortable with the people there. I understand that all kinds of people exist, and the earth is for "ALL" of us to live in. Selfish, cruel humans just let their parents/siblings here and got rid of them. I feel blessed after my visit there and a feeling of content struck me. The joy that is seen on their faces while we played with them was beautiful. Good intentions surround the place and I hope this continues.

The happiness that we brought on their faces in the throw ball games really touched me. I do not understand why or how these peoples' family are happy leaving them here. There was a person there whom I found very sweet, soft and caring - Mohanambal. She did not look or behave anything like a person with special needs. Only in the last 10 minutes that I spent in the Cheshire Homes did I find out that her family did not talk to her for an entire two years. I could not believe how cruel people can be. I was pretty overwhelmed and I feel grateful for what I have now and I really hope all of them get to spend time with them one day.

## Bhavana

.....

I learned two things. One, no matter what we did they enjoyed it - playing with us, interacting with us, activities we set up for them, anything. The second thing I learned was that most of the women there seemed depressed. I think that they just never learned to be happy. Even though I tried numerous times to just them be happy and joyful, their faces just never accepted it. They always talk about their past lives as if they don't talk about it, it will be gone forever.

## Arunika



# My Choice

Poorna

Thinking about it now, I don't know why at that time, I thought it was such a good idea to choose journalism as my profession, even though, my family was against it.

Since childhood, I never had an idea of becoming a journalist. That day, the day when my 12th grade results were out, journalism was the only profession on my mind. I didn't know why I was thinking about journalism, but that was my one and only preference. My parents and my sister were against it.

Both my mother and my father are doctors and so is my sister. They gave me long lectures to make sure that I don't choose journalism as my profession. My sister told me, "It's better to die rather than being a journalist."

"You'll be under stress and pressure if you are a journalist", said my dad.

I spoke about the disinterest that my family showed towards journalism, to my dear friend, Nithya. She was a great support for me, however, she chose fashion designing.

Such lectures went on for approximately two months. I was irritated to hear it over and over again for 60 days! Many times, I put on my earplugs to prevent myself listening to the lectures they gave.

Seven years ago this very day, was my first day of college. I felt lonely as I've always been with a companion since childhood and this was a new place.

Suddenly, a girl sat on a chair in front of me and introduced herself, "I'm Riva. This is my first day of college and I'm really looking forward to it. I've joined the journalism department. My father was a journalist, too," she said and stretched out her hand.

I thought she could be a good companion and shook hands with her. "I'm Deepali and I'm in the same department as you. My family was against my decision", I said.

I loved the atmosphere of the college. In six months time I mingled with all my classmates, however, I would call Riva my bestie.

Riva a cheerful, chubby girl was very talkative. She had a good sense of humour as she could make everyone in front of her laugh. Riva and I have pranked many people in our college.

I felt sad when I passed out of college. I was placed in 'The Times of India', in Delhi. I was happy to move to Delhi because, from my birth until college, I always resided in Mumbai. Riva was also placed in 'The Times of India', but she chose to write movie and book reviews. Whereas, I chose politics.

We were three in our team, Adhithi, Dev and me. It was their first day at work, too.

Dev was a tall man with dark black eyes, which I found very rare. He told us that he liked researching. He was very playful. Adhithi was short. She had a small nose and magenta lips. She was very sincere in her work. She would never talk when she was working.

We were asked to research about the opposition party leader, Rohit Singh.

The first couple of weeks were fun. We had lots of free time and I spent some time meeting Riva. Both of us introduced our team-mates to each other.

We collected newspapers and magazines that contained articles about Rohit. Dev read every detail of Rohit's on the net. Riva also gave me some notes that her father took. He was also researching about Rohit but, unfortunately, he died due to brain stroke while his work was in progress. My life now revolved around Rohit Singh.

Me and my parents didn't speak to each other. However, my sister would call me at night, once in a week. I thought I would never get to speak to my parents in the future.

As months passed we were put under so much pressure – we had to interview or research about Rohit and we were supposed to write an article each week. The TV was permanently switched on in the room where we worked. I used to come home with a headache everyday.

Then one day, Rohit arranged for a press meet. Our boss asked us to proceed there along with the other journalists. We did spend some time listening to the press meet and made our way to examine his house from outside, as there was a tight security.

"Why do we have to do all this", I muttered.

"It's our work. Respect it and don't oppose our boss's words", replied Dev with all sincerity.

"Oooh! Dev is this you?", questioned Adhithi.

As our project was nearly completion, we gathered enough evidence to show that Rohit had been a corrupt politician rather than keeping his promises of helping the poor and needy.

After three years of complete research we published the 'breaking story' on Rohit in the Times Magazine. The story was well received and I was glad about my first achievement as a journalist. We three were applauded by our colleagues.

Our boss threw a party in our office for the success of our project. Riva was pleased with my work, hence gifted me a watch.

I was on holiday for two weeks and I chose to visit Mumbai. My parents didn't speak to me but my sister did. I shared my experiences in journalism with her.

Two days later, I got a call on my mobile, from an unknown number. I hesitated to pick it up.

I said, "hello", nervously after picking up the call.

"Is this Deepali?" ,asked a familiar voice.

"Yes, I am. And you are?"

"You've made a mistake in crossing my path and I dare to kill you. Haven't you found out who I am? You should have. Rohit.."

"I am not a big sinner unlike you."

He hung up the call.

My sister was disturbed after hearing this. She kept telling me that we'll go to London. We'll live in my friend, Jenny's house.

I asked my parents to pack their things.

"Why should we, Deepali?", questioned my mother.

I was glad that she spoke to me. "Rohit is threatening me and I am really worried about you".

"Where do we go", asked my father.

"We'll go to London and live with Jenny. We are leaving day after tomorrow", said my sister.

After a while Adhithi called me and said, "I'm really scared, Rohit's threatening me".

"I too, got a call from him and I'm leaving to London in two days. Go to your hometown or to some foreign country with your family", I said.

"Okay", stammered Adhithi.

I called Dev, too, to check whether his life was in danger.

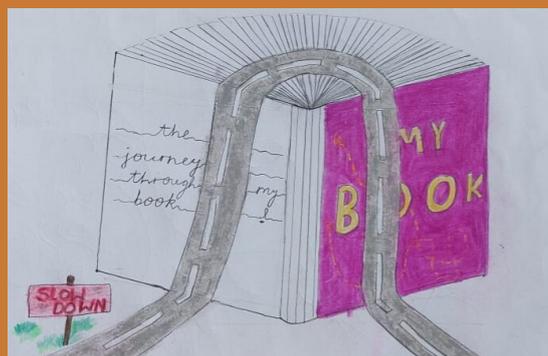
"I'm in Singapore. I got a call from him but I am perfectly alright.

Along with my parents, my sister and I boarded the flight. We were in disguise to hide from Rohit's men.

Jenny was waiting for us in the airport. Her hospitality was excellent. We lived in Jenny's house for three months. It was a pleasure living with her, she shared many stories about her college days with my sister and me.

I was very happy and so was Adhithi and Dev. The TV was turned on and the breaking news was 'Opposition Party Leader, Rohit Singh passes away due to a cardiac arrest'. The whole nation mourned but I was relieved. I returned to India with my parents, while my sister started practicing medicine.

I returned as a journalist in "The Times of India", along with Dev and Adhithi. I switched to sports from politics because my parents forced me to. Now, after experiencing the threat I understood why my parents were opposing my decision.



## ***You've reached your one millionth hit on youtube. What is it about?***

Hurrayyyyy!!! I've just reached the one millionth hit on my youtube video. I've always longed for this very moment! I can feel my dopamine level hit the peak.

My video's going viral and I'm going to be popular overnight! I am the composer, the singer and the musician of the song. The tune is the most catchy part of the song. IT is energetic, yet a little soft, a very new genre of music. My song makes you dance no matter what, or atleast makes you move your feet to the beat.

The lyrics say how homework, exams and grades do not determine a child's life; in a lively, high –spirited and peppy manner. Indeed I had a big advantage, my voice. I can hit high notes and some low notes too. My voice is also soft – being loud is not my thing!

The most important part, the name of my video is – esto note detendra – which basically means ' this won't stop you' in Spanish. I still cannot believe I got a million hits. This is incredible!

### **-Bhavana**

Today is the day! My youtube video has reached one million views! I never expected a vlog to reach a million views!! Talking about vlogs, its about my dream destination – South Korea.

I've recently been very curious, these past months about South Korea's culture and traditions. One of the main reasons is also because I love K-Pop ( Korean pop music). The other main reason is because I really addicted to Korean food. One classic almost everyone would know is Kimchi – pickled and fermented vegetables ( especially cabbage and raddish), with a wide range of seasoning . There are also other dishes like Bulgogi, bibimbap, tteokbokki and samgylopsal.

I also enjoy their sense of fashion and not to forget their festivals. Especially Chuseok, a thanksgiving day to celebrate harvest. I enjoy watching K- Dramas and don't even get me started about the cherry blossoms. South Korea is such a unique and beautiful place and Korean language is very beautiful. I don't see why anyone won't have South Korea as their dream destination.

### **-Samreethi**

Imagine, you have a Youtube channel and we upload videos and get subscribers. When we get views we get surprised; we understand that many people are watching it and liking it. I uploaded a Youtube video, I gained one million views and I was surprised!

The video was about an animated flipbook, based on air war. To make it look very interesting, I used post-it notes . I drew pictures of World war 2 warplanes and drew the background effect of my comic using literary devices such as onomatopoeia and imagery. Then I turned the camera towards the flipbook and moved the pages using my thumb to make it look as if the pictures were moving.

The video is actually about making a flipbook so if people see the video, they would also get some artistic inspiration and equally they would become more creative with their ideas of drawing comics. I hope more people watch this video for creativity and never get bored at all.

### **-Vihaan**



# Someone at Yellow Train I admire

## CHINNI AKKA

Chinni akka is one of my favourite teachers in school. I met her for the first time while I was studying in 6th grade. She began her first class with the song 'Imagine' by John Lennon. I was amazed with her voice. I wanted her to be my class teacher in grade 8.

Her open minded and free spirit helps us bring more enthusiasm for the day. It's never boring in English or History class. She gave us the opportunity to meet Paro Anand, an author. Chinni Akka is one of my role-models and has continued to inspire me until now.

**-Arthiha**

## ANITA AKKA

There is someone at Yellow Train whom I admire and I'm glad I've got the opportunity to share about them. She is Anita Akka. She was a veterinary doctor. She is a lovely person and so kind. She loves to do gardening, shopping and traveling too. She is a good artist. When our school was small she taught all the subjects but now she is the administrator of the school. She takes care of all the events of the school.

The first time I met her was when I came to the school for the summer camp. Every time I meet her, we smile or wave at each other. She is a lovely person.

**-Aadhira**

## MENAKA AKKA

She is a beautiful lady who loves her denims. Her black wavy hair sways down until her shoulders on either side of her slender neck. Her eyes gleam with a passion for acting and great ideas. No matter what occasion it is, it isn't hard to find her in a crowd of people, for she always stands out in her denim outfit. She is a talented actor who likes to write and direct her own plays. Not only is she a theatre artist, she is a hardworking mom, a pediatric dentist, and dancer and a teacher. I love the fact that unlike other people she makes all the props out of eco-friendly material and stores them to be re-used later. It makes her a real life role-model and a superhero.

**-Shreya**

## HELPER AKKAS

We often give credit to people who are in charge, who leads or operates anything. Usually no credit goes to people who come every day to clean the play and keep it looking appealing. Yellow Train is a huge building which takes a long time to clean. It needs more than 5-10 people and it is the job of helper akkas to clean and offer support every time there is a spill and scratch or anything on the floor.

Usually people just walk past them without acknowledging their presence at all. They either look away or ignore them and just expect them to clean. I have seen a boy scream and hit an akka just because she tried to help him into the van.

Helper akkas should be respected as they keep the school clean, cook the food and do many more things. They do the sweeping and dusting everyday while we complain to pick a piece of paper from the floor. We have to learn from them to not complain and be self-dependent and to do these jobs ourselves.

**-Sneha**

## COACH RAJ

There are many teachers I can choose from but someone I choose to write about is our soccer coach Raj Sir. He came to teach soccer at our school and he likes to elaborate about the sport. When I play soccer with the others, he supports me to dribble the ball against the players in the opponent team and teaches me to pass the soccer ball to my team mates. He always cares about our fitness and before soccer games begin, he makes us jog and do some fitness work outs like push-ups, squats, hand rotations etc. so we do not pull our muscles during the soccer game. We students love his soccer training. I appreciate and respect him. I do hope he continues to work with us with some further training.

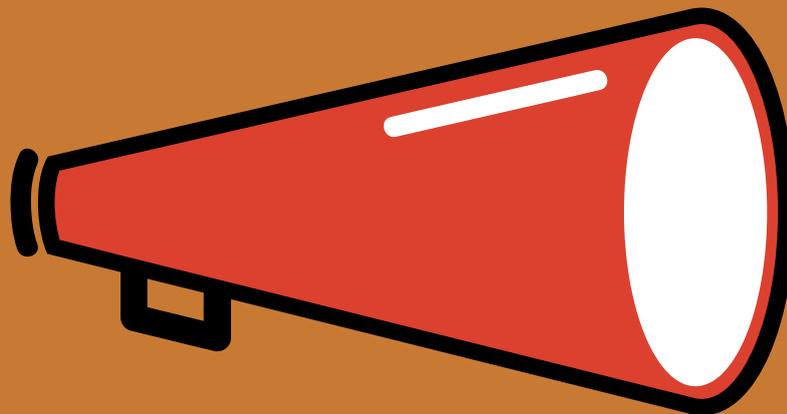
**-Vihaan**



# Twenty Theses

- At the midday meal children should be allowed to converse freely
- The food at the education centre should be edible
- The social economy will be mindful of living beings around them
- The garments worn by young people may not be criticized by onlooking witnesses
- While maintaining physical physique the person(s) in question should be allowed to control what he or she consumes
- A person (if tall enough) over the age of 12 may be allowed to drive any vehicle
- The acceptance of any drug, alcohol or poison is to be restricted from all countries, except for medical use (it is to be transported to the hospital/ clinic immediately)
- Any abnormal activity is to be reported to the authorities immediately, and action is to be taken at the point of report
- Persons with broken or fractured limbs must be excused from any activity immediately
- Young persons should be able to cook and bake delicious food as they please
- On the table, other spices and sauces will be added, besides salt and pepper
- For grand holidays and festivals, an elaborate and extravagant feast will be displayed
- Any education centre student should be allowed to bring as much stationery as he or she wants without being criticized
- Homework should be limited: the amount given should be discussed by all teachers
- Cosmetics should be banned: let natural beauty shine
- One hour of free time to work and study should be allocated to each child during school hours
- Mosquitoes should be exterminated because they are of no use to the public
- Children should not be allowed to wash and clean their plates to prevent germs from circulating in the premises
- A certain variety of book should be allotted to each child to widen the variety of books they read
- More variety of television should be broadcast to the entire world

**Arunika**



## MAYURA AKKA

A woman who gives her life to creativity, the one who wraps her arms around the soul of all who love her. Her eyes, the colour of copper, are a deep pool of restless passion. A person so dedicated, so beautiful and immensely talented. Her voice is smooth, clear, quiet, soothing and yet powerful. Her desire to always learn something new and make more out of herself is mind blowing. Always trying to keep her promises, she is sincere at work.

Goal driven, yet fun and a real bundle of joy, human, artistic and creative - my class teacher, my English teacher, I admire her to an extreme- everything she does.

**-Bhavana**

## MY CLASSMATE

I've got to know this person more than anyone else at Yellow Train and I know him, his personality, his likes, his dislikes and his family. He comes up with different hairstyles for his dark brown, rough hair. His eyebrows are scattered and his eyes are like mine but smaller and less intimidating. It is also browner than mine. He has small lips and wear braces on his teeth. His shoulders are broad and strong and his biceps are rock hard.

He is always calm, enthusiastic and considerate of his close friends. HE studies a lot, loves playing with his close friends and staying with them. A very good badminton player, he can kick the ball very well too. He hates being asked too many questions. He has been dangerous to people who make him angry. He loves food more than anything else in this world.

**-Shri Vardhanavel**

## A GIRL IN HIGHSCHOOL

There is this loud expressive girl in the middle and high school building. She can be nice but sometimes very annoying. She neither the tallest nor the shortest, she's average in height but there are some things about her appearance that are her identity.

She loves science and Math whenever she understands it, farming is okay as long as she doesn't have to move around too much. She recently started loving to read and write and write and write. I pity her English teachers who have to deal with her English loving self.

She loves to paint and sketch and colour. She loves to scream at the top of her lungs for no particular reason. She hates to sing or stand in the sun. She hates being around closed minded people because she also enjoys expressing herself and listening to different opinions.

There is this girl at school whom I neither hate nor love but she surely is a surprise.

**-Akshata**

Mayura akka is our class teacher she's sincere. Knowledgeable and friendly. I can approach her if I'm having a problem and she hears out everyone. She doesn't put too much stress on us by giving us loads of homework. She is appreciative, humble, experienced and really committed. She likes to joke around but she knows when to be serious. She will not tolerate untidiness and messy surroundings.

She is courageous and supportive and really talented. She draws and paints really well and inspires me to try new and different mediums of art and has expanded my vocabulary.

She knows how to bring the best out of others and she often interacts with everyone. She knows the capability of everyone and gives everyone lots of opportunity to express themselves. She has helped me break out my shell and step out of my comfort zone. She is the best teacher anyone can have and I'm happy to spend my time with her.

**-Samreethi**



# Racquets

Harshini

We tirelessly played badminton for more than half an hour . Suddenly, the cork flew away in the wind and landed some distance away from the road. I ran towards the cork and took it up in my hand. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw two boys of my age, crouching behind a rock , staring at me intently. I went back to my house and I forgot about them.

After that, whenever my father and I played badminton, I noticed that they came to watch us every time.

One day, my father saw them watching us and called the two boys. That was when I saw them clearly. They were both shabbily dressed in torn, oversized clothes, and it was obvious that they were very poor.

'Do you want to play?' my father asked them. And they nodded their heads shyly. My father started teaching them and they were quick learners. In no time, they became experienced in the game of badminton.

Soon, I went to fifth- grade and I had to study all the time, and I couldn't play badminton as often as before. But, the two boys didn't want to stop playing. They came to me frequently, requesting me to lend them my badminton racquets.

At first, I lent the racquets to them generously. But soon, I got tired of their act. I couldn't keep hearing them plead for the racquets, to me it felt like nagging.

One night, I went up to my mother and told her about my problem. 'They keep doing this everyday, Mummy. What if they damage my racquets? Why can't they get their own racquets?' I complained to her.

My mother was silent for some time. Then, she took my hand and said, 'Harshu, let me tell you a small story.

Once upon a time, there was an extremely poor family. There were two siblings in that poor family, a brother and his sister. They didn't have any modern facilities such as a television or a refrigerator. Their lives were very, very difficult.

Their neighbour had a television. These two children used to go to her house and she used to let them watch her television. In the beginning, she let them watch as much as they wanted, but there came a time when she started to send them home soon. She would ask them to go, giving any feeble excuse.

One day, she told the two children that she was going to sleep and sent them to their house. She locked the door and went inside, but the two siblings could hear her watching the television.

The little girl started crying bitterly and asked her brother, 'Why don't we have a television, brother'. Her brother didn't know how to answer his innocent little sister'.

By the end of the story, my mother had tears in her eyes. Out of curiosity, I asked her, ' Mummy, how do you know this story?'

With tears glistening on her eyes, she replied, ' Because I was that little girl.'

I was completely shocked. I couldn't believe it. My mother's story shook me.

My mother continued, ' Listen Harshu, the lives of poor children are extremely difficult. We can afford to get you many racquets, but what can they do? Give them the racquets, Harshu.'

It has been three years since this happened. That night, something in me changed. From the next day, I gave the two boys the racquets whenever they asked me. This incident still remains in my heart, even today.

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# Decision Making

Shreya

I can hear my heart beat increase rapidly, almost as rapidly as the noise of the hurried footsteps of cops trying to clear out the huge crowd watching. Fear fills me sending drops of sweat rolling down my whole body. My insides churn making me nauseous. My breath deepens as the cold hand of terror strangles me. I try to concentrate but all my efforts are useless. I try to focus on the bomb but panic clouds my vision. To my right I can hear the sounds of journalists swarming the authorities, thirsty for news. Their loud screams and protests fill my ears.

"LEXI! You have got to CHOOSE!!!" the loud voice of Sergeant Brent, sends almost jumping in fear. I try to reply but all I can manage is an empty sigh. Nervousness bubbles inside me sending me heads first towards the ground.

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"TRING!!! TRING!!!...TRING.....", my phone beeps silently at the corner of my ear. It is almost inaudible compared to the blaring noises from the T.V. screen but my training has enabled me to hear even the tiniest noise like a pin falling.

I push my thoughts aside and continue to play without a flinch.

"Just one more minute and I will get the title as I am about to get a Victory Royale! I smile as I at my opponents face.

"OH NO!! That is not going to happen..!", Jessie laughs her wicked witch laugh as she continues.

"We will see about that!!", I grin evilly as I reload my gun. Just as I am about to fire my phone rings. AGAIN!

"Argh!!", I grunt in disappointment and in anger throw my controller on the couch which scares the life out of Jessie. "I am sorry", I mutter as I stretch my hand towards Jessie.

"What is the matter?? I thought you were off duty today?!" Jessie asks scanning my phone.

"So did I!!", I grunt as I answer the phone. "Hey Officer Carter! Lexi here...Unfortunately I am off duty so if you need any help you contact Judy...You know that girl from the front office?", I squeal in the most friendly way possible. I walk to the mirror as I toss my hair to my right before I start to twirl it.

"Hey Le-e-x-i, I a-am re-a-lly s-s-or-r-y but d-oo y-o-u mind f-fill in f-f-o-r me??", Carter stuttered in what I sense as fear. "I w-w-i-l talk t-oo b-b-o-ss. S-so what do you say???", he asks but it sounds more like a plead.

"Hey Carter... You ok man???", I ask a little worried as I had never heard him stutter before. Besides he was known for his strength physically and mentally. His brave heart earned him the place as my mentor. I can't really guess what in the world would make Carter stutter! "Carter??", I ask waiting for my answer.

"OOH me?? o-oh I have never be-en bet-t-er!!??", he added but that only made me more concerned.

"Ok Carter, I will take your shift!!", I sigh as I end the call.

"What was that about? Jessie's confused but mostly concerned face looked at me.

"Oh that!! That was nothing!! Just got to go fill in for Carter", I sigh as I start stuffing my bag with my things.

"Oh...Okay...So I guess I will see you tomorrow??", she says as her face tenses down.

"Tomorrow it is!!!!!!", I whisper as I hug her back tightly.

"OK enough hugging Lexi!! You got to go save the world!! REMEMBER???", she laughs as she sends me home but I can still here a hint of concern in her voice.....

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I hit the brakes abruptly in front of a speeding two wheeler. "BEEEEEEEEEP", my horn whirrs along with several other angry honks nearby.

"Gosh!!! People these days!!", I sigh as I look at the traffic signal up ahead. "120 seconds...!", I puff as I ruffle through my bag and pull out my lipstick. I apply the bright pink shade that immediately stands out on my pale skin. "Nice!!", I smile and I close it with the cap and throw it into my bag and look back at the traffic signal. "Finally!!", I smile as I accelerate along the road until I arrive at my doorsteps.

I pick up my bag and shut the car door slowly behind me. I plug in my air pods and turn on my jam as I walk into my room

I take my time as I slowly rustle through my dress cupboard to find my uniform. After I find it, I put over my favourite overalls. I take out my eyeliner and slowly outline my beady blue eyes in front of the mirror. I then tie my hair into a loose knot. "Perfect!!", I squeal as I throw my bag on my shoulder and grab my car keys. "Hmm...Hmmm.Hm", I hum as I unlock my car and I hop in .I strap my seatbelt and start the engine .Along with the engine my stomach whirls. "I think I will stop at Starbucks for a bite", I smile as I drive in the opposite direction of the office.

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"DINGGGG...", the bell rings as I enter Starbucks. The smell of coffee fills the room taking me to heaven .The atmosphere is calm and refreshing that.....

"Hi...can I take your order??", Andrew's sweet voice interrupts my thoughts. "Oh! Hey Carl!! Didn't see you there. I will have the usual ", I chirp as Carl points towards my specially reserved seats .I take a seat and look back at him.

"One Nuttela filled donut along with one White Chocolate Mocha coffee coming up!!", he winks before he disappears into the kitchen.

Carl had been a staff here at Starbucks for almost all his life!!In fact he was my first friend here at Chicago.

"Lexi!!", he calls and startles me out of my thoughts. AGAIN!!!

Oh thanks a lot Carl!!!", I nod politely as I take my coffee and my box with the donut and walk out the door and wave at him.

"BYE!!", he mouths as he watches me leave.....

I unlock the car as I take out a huge sip out of my cup of coffee "mmmmmmmm..." I taste as I open the door. As I strap down the seatbelt, my heart stops just looking at the time. "Oh no!!!", I scream as throw my box of donuts to the passenger seat and shove my cup of coffee into the holder. I start the engine and race forward in the direction of the office. My tires whirl as I abruptly apply the brakes. "A red light!!!", I grunt as I vigorously tap my steering wheel. "Come on!!!", I whisper as I watch the traffic sign change from red to yellow. As soon as I spot the green light, I race through the traffic. I sigh and try to ignore the angry, blaring sounds of horns.

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"Wow wow... if it isn't Lexi!! Didn't actually think you would show up!!", a cold voice speaks sending a chill down my spine.

"Oh, Hi!! Mr. Lawson...I was jus....", I try to explain myself but am immediately interrupted.

"NOPE! No excuses! Go and call Judy who unlike somebody here came on time!!!" he barks as he points his hand towards the staff room.

"Okay Mr. Lawson..." I sigh as I bow my head apologetically and walk towards the staff room."WOW!! How could I two hours late!!! I ask myself disgusted as I walk towards Judy's desk.

"Oh, Hey Lexi!! I thought today was your day off!?" Judy asked a little confused.

"I am filling in for Carter!!",I reply as I imagine myself squeezing Carter's head. If it wasn't for Carter I would have been at Jessie's home celebrating my victory gloriously. But Carter ruined everything!!When Carter comes back to work he is going to hear it from me.

"Hey Lexi, Aren't you going to go to work??Don't want to get caught by Mr. Lawson now do we??"She sings and spoils my revenge plans on Carter.

"Oh yeah I will be leaving...Speaking about Mr. Lawson, he wanted to meet you.", I grunt before I walk to my table.

"Okie Dokie!!!!" she chirped as she skipped in the direction of Mr. Lawson's office.

"She is the only one not afraid to go in there." I sigh looking at Judy singing as she enters the room. I shudder at just the thought of being in that room. That room just gives me the creeps.

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I robotically continue to surf through the internet on defusing bomb. Since I was a kid I had always loved Jackie Chan. I mean who doesn't like a guy who does his own stunt! Especially such dangerous ones. I remember going to his movie "Police Story", as a kid and watching him defuse that bomb. He inspired me to be brave and do the right thing. Who would have thought that little Jackie Chan loving girl would actually become a bomb detonator!! Every time my dad calls me he talks about how I used to make him spend all

his money on remote control bombs which I would end up dismantling instead of defusing it....."Oh daddy!!....." I dream but am interrupted by Judy.

"Hey Lexi! Guess who has just got to defuse a bomb today??!!!" her annoying sing song voice echoes through my ears.

The question puzzles me...If I had been asked that question any other day; I would have easily answered Carter because he was the most experienced guy in that field. For a second I was going to answer Carter but as soon as this thought popped into my head I was dumbfounded. "Who is going to defuse the bomb", I ask curiously.

"You are.....since Carter is off duty Mr. Lawson thought it would be the perfect opportunity for you to show off your skills.", she adds casually.

My heart stop the second I hear my name .I feel light headed and nauseous..I try to stand up but I immediately collapse back into the chair."Meeee???", I try to ask in my confident voice but it comes out like a whimper.

"Hey! No need to panic...It is okay Lexi.Just take deep breathes .okay?" Judy tries to comfort and boost up my confidence. A minute later she walks out towards the dressing room. "Come in when you are ready. Ok??" she looks at me slightly worried.

"Mmm...Mm" I whimper and nod as I could not force out my voice.

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"Ahhh", I grunt as Judy tightly straps my waist.

"Oops!!!" , she exclaims and carefully loosens the strap."All good??", she asks as she finishes strapping me up.

"Yup. I am good", I breathe out hurriedly as I pick up my phone. I try to distract myself by looking through my photos.

Now lets see ... where should you go", Judy ask herself as she look through her mail to find the mail from Mr. Lawson.

"Ok Lexi, looks like you are going to the Navy Peer. I will go and arrange a patrol vehicle to the Navy Peer", she screams as she can't hear herself over her music.

"Ok ....", I sigh as I watch her disappear into the patrol room.'

A few minutes later Judy comes into the room with her airpods on."The patrol vehicle is ready for you ", she says as she points her finger towards the patrol vehicle parked outside

"Oh cool.", I exclaim trying to sound confident as I swing the tool bag over my shoulder as I run to the van. I open the van's door and throw myself and my bag inside. "HIT IT!!!" I command jerking the driver back to life.

"Yes Ms. Rivera", he mummurs still feeling sleepy and turns on the engine and starts to drive in the direction of the Navy Peer.

.....

"The disturbed mind could complicate the circuitry more" Carter smiled. "The theory you learn and the drills you do is to acclimatize you to the situation. However you never get so totally ready for the real thing. He continued "you would diffuse it fast certain times until you meet someone who is very disturbed. It starts getting nasty after that. It is not the red wire always. It could be something out of the box. A tiny thing that would look harmless and innocent. Apply what you have been trained and also notice that little unnecessary thing that might have a purpose"

I gasp back to life as I heard Brent was screaming, "GET YOUR HEAD IN THE GAME LEXI!!!"I gather up myself to see Sergeant Brent next to a group of teenagers trying to come closer with their cell phones trying to take picture.

I try to focus back on the job. This bomb was definitely the design of a creep.

"Delay action time bomb, Limpet mine...." I run over the structure of its design in my head as I was trying to figure out what I was dealing with. My heart skips few beats only to race faster. Sweat rolls down my neck. I can only hear my heart beat. "Thermo nuclear bomb..." I mutter as my mind was calculating the collateral damage this nasty one can cause. Nuclear fusion can be more powerful than the conventional ones.

I try to clear my head but it gets harder to breathe .Gasping for breath I look at the bomb closely. I dig in closer to face three options of wires to cut, a red one, yellow one and a white one. I wipe my sweat and I can see the crowd, the cops moving away and someone shouting "Lexi you need to move out now". I try to reanalyze the circuitry.

I close my eyes to remember and me sitting on my little pony with my fairy wand at home. Next to me was my mom stroking my hair and singing "Yellow, baby yellow, sitting on a golden pillow, eating a marshmallow! I could feel the intensity of her smile. She was whispering in my ears," You are my smart little angel. You know the answers if you know how to read them"

"Yes!!" I smile as open my eyes. Tears gush out of my eyes. "Oh My God...how did I miss this. You are a necessary piece and you have a purpose which I already see" I smile as I wipe my tears quick and used the scissors to reach out to the innocent looking yellow wire. "Here you go" were the words coming out of my mouth while I was cutting the yellow wire.

**THE END**

## *The Octopi's Way*

It slithered slowly, it seemed slippery. It was coloured red. It seemed so excited to see humans. All of a sudden, it vanished. I was confused, but then I saw the fish, swimming towards it. The fish didn't see anything, neither the octopus nor his tentacles raising. Slowly but surely, the tentacles grabbed the fish, and the fish was no more. It did this a couple more times, and then it squeezed itself into a small hole and disappeared. Two more came out at the same time, this time white -" these both are females" announced the keeper. "Waoow " exclaimed the children, looking at something else. I turned my head and saw a giant one, almost five feet (larger than most of the children) approaching. It hit the glass with a thud and started to examine all the children with its right eye "AAAAHHHHH" screamed the children and ran. "Children, Children", I tried to gather them but they ran everywhere. I looked at the keeper, expecting him to do something. "I am sorry sir, it's the Octopi's way".

**-Yuvan**



# TO KILL OR NOT TO KILL

Aadhira

Thinking about it now, I don't know why at the time I thought it was such a good idea to ....to kill him, him - my grandfather.....He was such a nice man and I had to kill him just because he knew something about me .

I shouldn't have killed him, I shouldn't have, I shouldn't have. I am a murderer. And I deserve to be in the jail not for two years but for infinite years. I, Pasapugal, a thin boy, with light brown eyes, a long nose and short curly hair was walking around a small lake. I decided to sit by the lake. Just as I sat, two people emerged from the other side of the lake, just opposite to me. I thought they were strangers and they were.

They came closer to me and looked at me. Then they walked a bit further from me and sat down in the grass. I was very innocent at that time. I was watching the reflection of the beautiful sun, clouds and the blue sky in the water. Suddenly out of somewhere a stone came and splashed on the water and the beautiful reflection was gone, faded into the water. When I looked sideways to see who threw the stone, it was them, the two unknown strangers. I frowned at them for a while.

They too frowned at me, but I didn't take my eyes away from them. Then one of them gestured with his finger and told me to come to them. I feared some big fight was going to happen (but it didn't). They were quite friendly. The name of the younger man was Nandukesh and he was around 20 years old. His skin was light brown. He was tall, was wearing jeans, a cap, a sweatshirt and a dog tag too. The older man Parthiban was about 40 years. His skin was dark brown, he was wearing a big chunky gold chain, like how rowdies wear.

I approached them nervously....."Hey kid! What's your name?" asked Parthiban. I said, "I am not a kid, I am a TEENAGER." They both looked at each other and smiled. "Ok, teen! What's your name?" they asked me. "Well I am Pasapugal, and who are you guys?" "Oh, this is me, Nandukesh and this is Parthiban, my partner," said Nandukesh.

They asked me many questions, like where I lived, what I did, who all were in my family too. I told them each and every single detail knowing very well I was not supposed to share it with strangers.

Later they told me to meet them at 7:45 pm by the lake and like a fool I agreed.

It was 7:30. I arrived by the lake, 15 minutes early so as not to disappoint them. I was waiting, waiting...Then they came. I looked at my watch and it was 7:45 pm.

Later they once again began their 'Friendly Banter', when suddenly Parthiban asked me, "Hey Pasapugal, are you interested in drug dealing or smuggling?" My face went very pale. I was stammering. And I said without thinking much, "Y-y-yes" because that would be an interesting life. If I hadn't joined them, I would have never killed my grandfather and I would have never been here, in the jail either.

Then I sensed that they were drug dealers. They explained to me in detail, what I should do on the job, what I should do if someone sees or notices me in the process of doing this job. They said, "Pasapugal, you have no choice. If you know that someone has seen you doing the job, then you should kill them." They also said, "Hey you can join this work in the next week. Meet Nandukesh at this place," and Parthiban handed me a sheet of paper, in which it was written, " \_ \_ \_ \_ place".

I was very excited. It was like an adventure yet I was nervous too. It was the day when I had to begin the job. They told me to come at 11 pm, after everyone slept in my house.

That night, I slowly crept out of my house leaving everyone asleep and went to "the place". And there, was Nandukesh standing and waving at me with one hand and holding a lantern in the other. I waved back and joined him. He saw me, looked at me for a moment and then began to stare at me. I asked, "What's the matter?" He asked me back, "Why aren't you wearing a cool sweatshirt like me, torn jeans and a dog tag? And what are you wearing?!" I said, "I am wearing a dhoti and a shirt." He said, "Fine". We both went inside and I felt very awkward when I looked around. Everyone was wearing a sweatshirt, torn jeans and a dog tag too. I was the only one who was wearing a dhoti and a shirt because I was from an Orthodox Hindu family. Suddenly I saw someone, someone very familiar. It was none other than my best friend Boopathi ! We both were staring at each other for a while and broke off with a smile. Nandukesh looked at me and asked whether I knew Boopathi and I nodded.

He told me to join him. Then Nandukesh signaled to Boopathi, that he should give me the instructions regarding what I should do. I happily joined him and we both were sealing the packets of white powder (drugs!). After my job of my first day was done, I went and met Nandukesh who was sitting outside. He gave me Rs 3750 to buy something.

He also gave me a list. The list said:

- SWEATSHIRT (3)
- TORN JEANS (3)
- DOG TAG (1)
- PAIR OF GLOVES (3)
- PAIR OF SHOES (1)
- KINFE- small and big (1 each)
- Buy all these in \_\_\_\_\_store.

I was very shocked when I saw the amount, 3750 rupees.

Every month, either Parthiban or Nandukesh would give all the workers including me a stipend of 25000 for the work we have done.

While this was going on for months and months, my grandfather noticed my attitude and behavior. He was very shocked because I used to be very obedient, but now, I was very arrogant at home and in the neighbourhood. He also noticed me going out of the house at late night, and coming in around 3 am. He saw me wearing my sweatshirt, torn jeans and my dog tag too.

One day my grandfather decided to ask me the question. He called me around 3:20 am, just when I entered the house. My heart was pumping very fast, my hair was raised and I had goose bumps all over my body. I went very pale. I hadn't even changed my clothes so I covered myself with a blanket.

My grandfather asked me, "Pugal, where have you been for so long? Why are you covered in a blanket? It's summer not winter. Remove your blanket!" I slowly dropped the blanket I was covered in. When my grandfather saw me, silence filled in the room...

He was stammering. He asked me, "W-w-what we-we-were y-y-you d-doing?" I said, "Smuggling," in a low voice. Cold breeze rushed through my body, I was terrified. He looked at my pale face, got up immediately and was headed towards my parent's bedroom. I ran towards him and stopped him. I asked him, "What the hell are you doing?!" He said, "Going to tell your parents!" I begged him, not to tell this but he said, "Sorry Pugal, it's too late," and pushed me out of his way and headed towards my parent's bedroom.

I didn't know what to do at that time. I took out my small knife from my back pocket and stabbed him, right in his throat. Blood was flowing out of his throat and soon there was blood all over the floor. The blood was in my hands, on my sweatshirt and I was crying. Just two seconds later my mother opened the door and saw me holding the knife stuck in my grandfathers' throat. She let out a scream, "Ahaaaaaaaaaa...!" that the whole neighbourhood could hear. My father came rushing from the bedroom and saw me...My mother, sat in a corner, crying, and my father was comforting her. I was with my grandfather. Five to ten minutes later, the neighbours arrived at the scene and 20 minutes later the police had arrived too.

Then the police arrested me and now I am in here, in jail. I decided to persuade him, my grandfather, but as he didn't listen I had to kill him. I am a murderer. I shouldn't have killed him, I shouldn't have, I shouldn't have. He was such a nice man. I shouldn't have killed him, I shouldn't have, I shouldn't have...



## Beware, for I am fearless and therefore powerful

Brandishing my sword, I cautiously stepped through the dim tunnel. My advisor touches me on my shoulder ' Sire, are you sure about this?' he refers to our entering the den of our enemy who terrorized the kingdom's villages and tortured men and animals alike. Amongst the people lost my father was one and tears welled up in my eyes. " There , there your highness , I know it is saddening but we must not make hasty decisions". " No" I said standing taller. " I will avenge my father tonight.

AS we weaved to the tunnel's end, I motioned to my guards to follow my lead. I darted from one end to another crouching as I did. "Who goes there" Caligula the giant asked. The last thing I remember was being picked up and flung across the cave.

Sometime later I found myself awake and hiding behind a boulder. I saw my guards tied to a pole ready for attack. Caligula's voice laughed ' See, now your king is dead. I tried to warn you with all my attacks. Beware, for I am fearless and powerful".

"You're not powerful and I'm not dead." I said as I impaled him with my sword

**-Arunika**

## Today is my favourite day

The day started with myself in a room with UV lights, the room smelt like a clinic. The sign in the corner said " Incubator Room, Silence" I looked at myself a small body, wrapped in cloth. I was in the cradle for more than an hour now. I started to cry and the nurse took me out.

I felt like a VIP, rows of people were waiting to see me, the nurse handed me over to a man with a beard wearing glasses. My crying stopped instantly as I lay in his arms. When he looked into his eyes all I could see was a really proud feeling. I felt safe when I was with him and I slept in his cozy arms for that man was my father.

My comfort was quickly interrupted because the nurse was carrying me back. I screamed so hard because I wanted to stay with him but no one understood. He is a good man and I wanted to be with him for the rest of my life I thought.

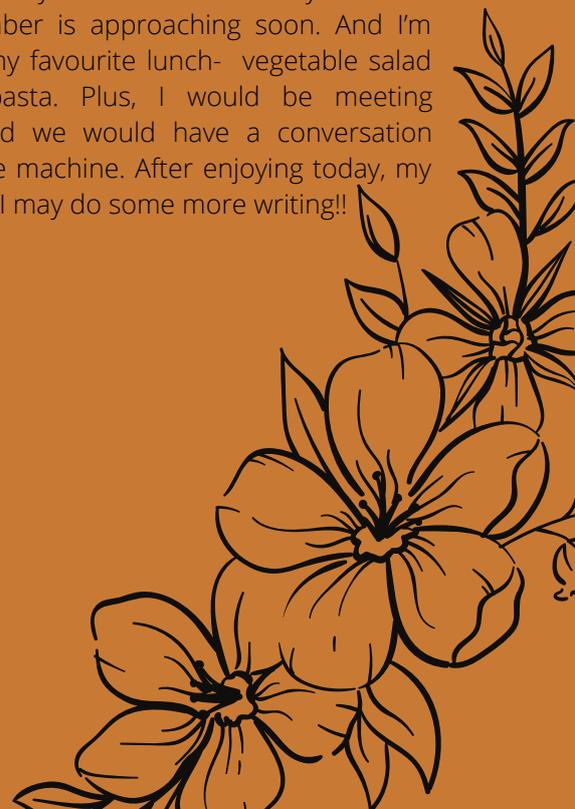
**-Raghav**

We love days in which we make memorable experiences and try to do something new. Well, I have so many favourite days .Every favourite day I always expect something good to happen. Today is 25th November and it is probably one of my favourite days. Today is my favourite day because because today I am home alone!

I like being home alone because it gives me the freedom to do whatever I feel like. Nobody is there to stop me doing anything. I have a soda can and snacks and would enjoy watching a movie or some of my most favourite videos on youtube. I will also surf the internet for articles and images to make my magazine.

This day is also my favourite because my favourite month December is approaching soon. And I'm going to eat my favourite lunch- vegetable salad and wheat pasta. Plus, I would be meeting Doraemon and we would have a conversation about the time machine. After enjoying today, my favourite day, I may do some more writing!!

**-Vihaan**



# THE STOLEN STATUE

Kaviyaazhini

I am Gregory Hans. A boy who is troublesome and disobedient. I'm an expert at lying and boasting. I am the leader of my gang.

I am tall and bold. My chestnut colour hair, keeps sticking out even if it is combed a million times. I have big eyes with blue eyeballs, a nose as sharp as a knife, and a short neck. I mostly wear a t-shirt, a black jacket, shorts that come until my knees, a red cap and white shoes ( which becomes brown whenever I go out ).

My mother often says, "Don't have a grumpy face, Greg! When people walk past you, you change their mood."

The other members of my gang are my best buddies- George, Gavin and Ginger. We call ourselves the G4.

Ginger is a chubby, short boy with blonde hair. He always hangs around with red jumpers. He has a small face with small eyes. He never ties his shoelaces because he thinks that is fashion.

Gavin is like a light bulb. He has so many interesting ideas. He is tall. He has a blunt nose and curly hair. His glasses are round with a thin black frame. Gavin argues a lot with me.

George is tall and lean. He has straight hair which is golden brown. He always wears a yellow cap with his name on it.

We G4s live next to each other and study at the same school. We are all in class 5A. We go to a school called Sunny Side which is in California. The principal of our school is Mr.Thomas.

Mr.Thomas is an Australian man who is about 34 years old. He is short-tempered, impatient and hates children. He is tall and thin. He has a round face, beady eyes and bushy eyebrows. We G4s call him as 'caterpillar brows'. Mr. Thomas is a strict and a well- disciplined person.

He likes dark blue a lot. You will find that when you take a look at our uniform. We wear a dark blue jacket, dark blue shorts, dark blue cap and dark blue shoes. Along with that we wear a white shirt, white socks and a red tie. n our way to home from school the G4s pass Mr.Thomas's house. One day as we were walking past his house, I started boasting , "You know , I am not afraid of anyone". " Not even the principal", George asked doubtfully. " Of course he is scared of him. Aren't you Greg ? ", questioned Ginger eagerly. "

I am not like you, cowards! I am brave and strong.", I exclaimed."Then why don't you try stealing something from the caterpillar brow's house ? "asked Gavin. " We dare you to do it ! ", said Ginger with a wicked laugh.

It is time for my brain to start working. Questions were running inside my head. " Should I accept the challenge or not ? Yes or no", I asked my brain. It was a hard decision. Finally I accepted the challenge " So tomorrow, sharp 4:30pm, we will meet in front of the caterpillar brow's house", George said as he entered his home.

The next day, the first person to arrive at the spot was Ginger. He was too early. He was excited as well as curious.

Since the G4s were not punctual, the sharp 4:30pm became 5:00pm.

The three boys were encouraging me to step forward. The four of us walked past the garden until we saw a small window in which I put my arm to take something. I could hear Mrs.Thomas's sing song voice in the kitchen. I stretched my arm and pulled something out. It was a golden sculpture.

Gradually, the G4s heard footsteps coming towards us. It was Mr.Thomas. We thought he was at school. " Why is he early?", asked Ginger. " How am I supposed to know?", replied Gavin. We tiptoed and escaped from Mr. Thomas's sight .

It was getting darker and darker. I didn't know what to do with the sculpture. I took it home. When I was about to keep the sculpture in the showcase, I heard a knock on the door. "Greg, can you see who's at the door?", my mother yelled from the kitchen.

It was Principal Thomas!!! I was surprised to see him. "What if he figured out that we stole his sculpture?", I asked myself. Thank god he didn't. He came to meet my mother regarding the carnival in our town. He was astonished when he saw the sculpture in my hand." Oh this looks exactly like the one at my home. Did you get this sculpture in England, Mrs.Hans?" he asked my mother. " I don't know, Mr.Thomas. My husband would have got it, " my mother responded.

Mr.Thomas and my mother started to discuss about the carnival. I used that time to replace the golden sculpture. It was a narrow escape.

The next day, I narrated the whole story to my friends.

"You dare not give these kind of dares again.", I said. The three of them giggled.



*Not all who  
Wander are Lost*



Grade 8  
2019 - 2020