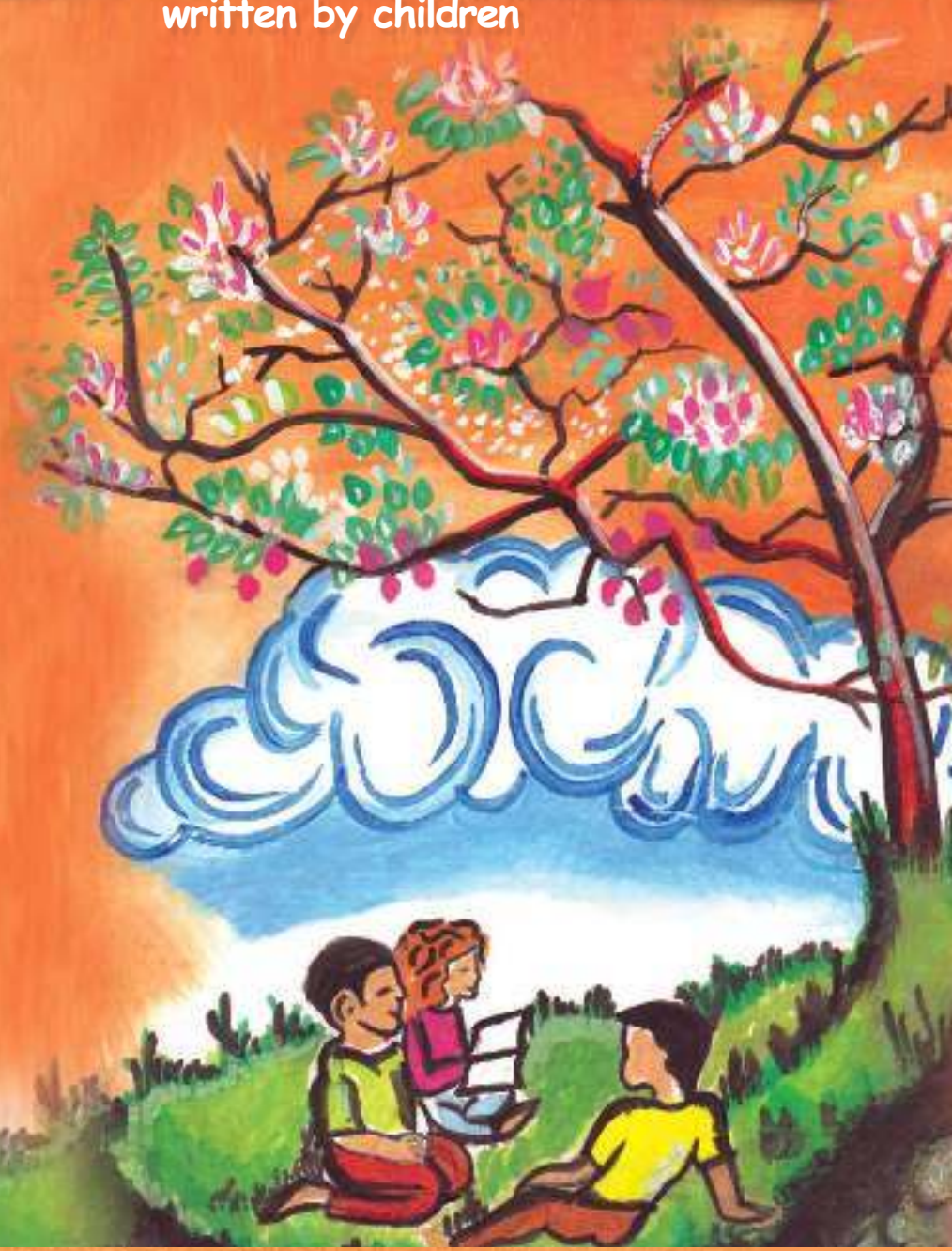


G.K. SHETTY VIVEKANANDA VIDYALAYA JUNIOR COLLEGE, AMBATTUR

A COLLECTION OF **SHORT STORIES**

written by children







presents

A Collection of Short Stories

from

G.K. Shetty Vivekananda Vidyalaya
Junior College

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To Our Teachers

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Food for Thought

H. Abhirami

It's as usual, a boring Monday morning. I was slowly arranging my books according to the time table. The class begins with English, which is taught by my class teacher. I know it will be a fun-filled hour despite being a Monday. I carefully check if my homework notebook is in my bag. Second subject is science and on Mondays it is physics. Our teacher will ask the class about Newton's thoughts on gravity. That was today's agenda. As I went through the exercise of anticipating what would happen in each of the classes today, it was the turn of the 7th subject. It's the Tamil language class.

I paused for a moment. What was the last thing which we studied on Friday? What was the teacher discussing? He was discussing about the poems written by a great Indian poet Bharati. Yes, it is Mahakavi Subramania Bharati. Our teacher was lecturing in detail about a single phrase which was one of his favorites. The famous quote on hunger which described how Bharati wanted to destroy the whole universe (not even the world!) even if one man is hungry and could not get food. I was stuck in my thoughts. Is hunger such a huge devil? Why would a poet, even in his wildest dreams, go to the extent of destroying the universe just because one person (out of the billions) is hungry and

could not find a way to get food. Food, yes it is the bare minimum need for survival. I was slowly uttering this word in my mouth “food, food, ...”.

“Yes, it is ready on the table! Go and eat,” my mom shouted, bringing me back to my senses. I smiled.

“It’s getting late, go and have your breakfast now” said my mom again.

I closed my bag and went to the dining table.

“Oh no, not again” I whispered.

Yes, it is not what I wanted for breakfast on a Monday morning – idlis (boiled rice cakes) with coconut chutney. I didn’t know that my mom was standing behind me. I am no way in a mood to get a mouthful from her for my disappointment at the sight of idlis. If you ask me what is the most difficult task in the world then my immediate response will be “swallowing couple of idlis down my throat”. Personally, this is as



Art by G. Chugilan, VIII A

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tough as climbing Mount Everest. It was not just two idlis! I slowly sat down as I counted four on my plate. It was already 7:50 AM. I took a deep breath “hmmm”.

I did not want to provoke my mom’s anger. Slowly, I began climbing Mount Everest. Somehow I managed to finish the first idli. No way was I going to complete four in a row. My mind was already thinking of options. I was dreaming of bread sandwich and dosas (thin rice pancakes). I could hear a bicycle bell ringing outside my house. Oh my saviour, my dear Sahana. Thank God!

Sahana is my classmate, my bench mate, my friend and you can call our friendship whatever you want. She resides in the next street. Every morning, we go to school on our bicycles. I was now praying that Sahana should get angry with me for being late. Then I can escape from the idlis and rush to school. But Sahana was very calm and quiet. Sahana was becoming the second enemy today.

“No worries, have your breakfast, we still have 10 minutes,” she said.

I looked at the plate again. “No Sahana, 10 minutes isn’t enough to climb the Everest” I told myself. I somehow managed another half. That’s it. I courageously stood up and washed my hands. My mom was already staring at me. She is going to direct some missiles at me. I was preparing for the ordeal.



Art by G. Chugilan, VIII A

I was preparing for the lecture. She simply asked, “Do you know how many people go without food for days together?”

Surprisingly, she didn't ask anything else. I know I can escape this morning. She will reserve all her energy for the evening when her attack will continue after I return from school. But for the time being, I need not climb the Everest!! I whistled and started off to school. I was all smiles. Sahana was a silent spectator.

As we came to the end of the street, I waved my left hand and bid goodbye to my mom who looked upset for wasting breakfast.

“Today English and Tamil classes have been swapped.” Sahana informed. “Tamil will be our first class.”

“Oh is it?” I realized that our Tamil teacher will be talking more about Bharati's poems.

I was silent as we crossed the main road and turned to the third street where our school is located. Both of us paused for a moment. We usually stop at the street corner and wait for a couple of minutes to see if anyone else from our class is joining.

As we waited under the banyan tree located at the corner of the street, we felt something was different. The place was empty. We felt something was missing under the banyan tree. We looked at each other. Both of us whispered “Raju Bhai”.

Raju Bhai, the permanent dweller under the banyan tree was missing today. Not much is known about the history of Raju Bhai. He is a lonely beggar and the banyan tree is his permanent residence. His belongings were a small aluminum plate, which was very old and about the size of two palms put together. It was curved at the edge to hold both liquids and solids. An old plastic garbage bag was his makeshift bed sheet. A cloth bag, which should have been thrown away at least 4 to 5 years ago, is where he keeps his change of clothes. Clothes? No, we have not seen him in different clothes at all. So not sure what that little 1 foot by 1 foot brown bag contains. It was dirty.

Nobody bothers to look at Raju Bhai because his appearance does not attract people. As we were looking for him, he came from behind

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the tree. He was smiling and looked very happy. He was a thin man of average height around 40 years of age. No wife or children. No friends. He was wearing a grey-coloured torn shirt with a tinge of dust and dirt. The collar was ripped off from the shirt and Raju Bhai did not seem worried by this. A brown-coloured dhoti (would have been white few years back) covered his legs. Most of his body and clothes were muddy. His bearded face and long hair looked like they have not seen oil or scissors for quite some time. Maybe years.

Raju Bhai came and sat in his permanent couch, the plastic garbage bag. He was scratching his head. There was a bin behind the tree. He took his plate, and disappeared happily behind the tree again. We turned into the street and crossed the tree to get a glimpse of what he was doing. Near the garbage bin, on the street's muddy corner, we could see a pile of cooked rice thrown all over the place. It was plain cooked rice. It must have been thrown by someone long back as it



Art by J. Sharan, VIII A

looked watery. May be last night. By the sight of it, I realised it was spoiled hours ago. The rice was frothy. Raju Bhai took a lump of it in his hand and placed in his plate. He examined it and was thoroughly satisfied. We could see him smiling. He looked up at the sky, closed his eyes and whispered something. He was smiling again. He took another lump and put it in his plate. He walked back slowly and sat in his usual place. We could see that his eyes were wide open. He was licking his lips happily like a tiger waiting to eat its prey.

In no time, he finished the entire food on his plate. He looked around, stood up and went again to the nearby bin and took some more rice carefully avoiding the portion which had mud stuck to it. He was able to manage another huge portion. This time he did not return to his seat. He sat near the bin and finished it. Again, he looked up at the sky. This time, his eyes were filled with happiness and tears. We knew he was thanking God. He went and drank some water from a



Art by J. Sharan, VIII A

nearby tap. He washed his face and went back to his seat. Some crows were fighting near the bin for the leftover rice which was already mixed with sand and dirt. The crows carefully picked those which were not muddy and ate them. The place was stinking. The smell seemed to originate from the rice.

We walked away from the scene and entered our school. Our Tamil teacher entered the class and all of us wished him. He wished us too. Taking a piece of chalk, he went to the board and wrote 'Bharati' in Tamil. I was looking outside the window and my thoughts were filled with Raju Bhai. My teacher

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saw that I was looking outside. Finding that I was just physically present in the class, he asked me to stand up.

“According to you, what is the most important line written by the great poet?” he asked.

“Even if a single man is hungry and could not get his food, the whole universe should be destroyed.”

As I answered, I thought “Mom, will you keep the idlis in the refrigerator for me?”

About the Author

H. Abhirami is studying in class 8. Her hobbies are writing, dancing and painting. She finds numbers very interesting. Being a simple and cool girl, she loves to look around and observe things happening around her. Some of the visuals make her happy while others make her sad. She believes there is something special about everyone and everything. Never forgetting to thank God for the life that she is leading, she does her best to celebrate every moment trying to learn new things.



The Hunt

Rithika Anand

*Sunshine Bells School, Ooty, TN, India
2:15 AM, Sunday, Feb 21, 2016*

I took cautious steps as the fresh dew-covered grass crunched beneath my shoes. I was wearing an all-black attire, and melting into the dark like a noiseless shadow, invisible until close inspection.

There were four figures following me in a well-plotted manner and it showed technique. All the months of experience and training have made us move and act like ninjas.

Who are we? We are the awesome girls you see and wish to be in high school. We aren't extraordinary though, just normal. But we are rebels and definitely one of a kind.

We have code names: Q-Queen, G-Genius, Power, Dark, and Fire. I am Queen. We rock the world. We have night escapades every week and not a single soul has caught us. We act like the CIA but we are just a crazy bunch of girls who love adventure.

We reached the fire escape door in the science block at the back of the school. There is a meter box just a few feet away. A thing very few people know is that on the other side of the fuse is the security access



Art by S. Abishikha, X C

box of the door. Of course, the door opens in crisis but rest of the time it is locked.

“Crack the new code G,” I said.

The school security system changes codes every Sunday. G can easily hack into the system and get them without leaving a single trace.

“Ten seconds Q” G said to me. She typed some codes and said “here weee go”. The door clicked open.

“The password this week is Buttercup!” G said.

“Seriously?” Power asked. “They got some humor, that’s for sure.”

“Yeah whatever! Let’s go, I am cold,” Dark put in.

“How bout I BURN you!” Fire joked waving her hands in a fire-like movement.

“Ha ha good joke, no laughs” Dark quoted which made us laugh even more.

“Girls, do I need to remind you that the alarm will activate if the door is open for more than five minutes?” G said with an expression that said “Silly nut heads”.

“Kk sorry! Let’s move it gals. Got an exam to study” I said and entered the school.

“And by that you mean, I gotta study and you lazy geese will dig yourselves into cushions. Great life!” Fire said following me into our school.

“We didn’t choose tough subjects, did we?” Dark wondered. Fire just shook her head.

We climbed the stairs to the fifth floor, from where we gotta walk on wall paves outside the big window of the science block and to the girl dorms which ultimately lead to our dorm window. This is the only way out, that doesn’t involve us passing the red-faced warden.

As the girls were reaching the window, I said “You girls go ahead. I am gonna take a stroll.”

“You okay Q?” G asked.

“Yeah, you go on.”

They hesitated for a moment but after a little nudge they went on. I have been extremely intuitive all my life and the things that I have predicted are pretty unbelievable. Two days ago, I had a dream that something will happen today. It may be bad and it’s probably best for me to just leave but my curiosity got the better of me. I didn’t think of this dream as significant until I felt a pull to the right. It was unmistakable and clear. I walked towards the main building briskly but with caution. Every block is connected to another. I can’t risk exposure as that will put my friends in risk too.

“This better be good,” I thought to myself.

After 4 mins 36 secs, I was walking into deserted hallways and clean classrooms. As I was about to turn, I sensed a figure moving. I immediately hid myself in the midst of the shadows. A few feet to my left were two men. One over 6 feet tall and well-built. The other a little shorter, with a medium build in a formal attire. I took my mobile and started recording.



Art by S. Abishikha, X C

“What did I do to receive such an honor!” the shorter man spoke. I realized immediately that it was our school principal. Now I was intrigued.

“It is for a favor, which I expect you to fulfill,” the big man replied.

“Of course, anything you wish sir,” the principal smiled eagerly.

It was strange that the principal sounded scared as his voice quivered. I found it difficult to see the big man’s face. His voice was very hard to place. I looked into every detail about him for any resemblance but this guy was totally unfamiliar. I remained in the shadows.

“I want you to make sure that my son gets the scholarship to Harvard.”

“But why sir? I am sure you don’t need the scholarship.”

“True, but I don’t want anyone else getting it.”

“You mean Priya Patel? Sir, she’s the topper for four consecutive years and you do realize the board exam results are not in our hands.”

“Indeed, but the scholarship interview and exam, that’s where you come in.”

“Sir I... I...”

“You will be rightfully rewarded” the big one said and left, leaving a pale-faced principal.

I dug my fist. It was the only thing that made me not gasp in horror. This is very bad, very very horribly bad. Priya Patel is Fire. She is one of my best friends for life. Going to Harvard is her dream and the scholarship is huge. She has been working so hard for it and these scumbags want to steal it away from her. Oh god! This shouldn’t happen. I sneaked away from that place and ran towards my room as quick as possible. Outside the window of my room, I stayed suspended in air, wondering how to face my friends and what do I tell them. After knowing I would be blank forever I decided to enter.

I opened the glass window and jumped inside. Power and Dark were in bed. G was checking her mails. She looked up and saw me entering. Priya, sweet little Priya, was on her chair, knee-deep in books preparing hard for her exams. Seeing her like that, when I know that her dreams are gonna be shattered, it just brought tears to my eyes.

“Baby, you okay?” G asked and continued “Foolish of me. Of course you aren’t okay!” She made me sit on the bed.

“What happened Rithika?” Priya asked.

I couldn’t answer. There were millions of problems and possibilities running in my mind at hundred miles an hour and I was sure I just can’t let this happen. I could hear Priya mumbling something but it wasn’t clear. Great! I am gonna pass out.

“Sheetal, bring some water,” Priya shouted to G.

I felt water splashed on my face. I slowly regained consciousness. Sheetal helped me to a cup of water. I felt thirsty but I couldn’t force it past my throat.

“Shit! You are bleeding,” Priya exclaimed examining my hands.

“Am I?” I asked feebly.

“Wake up, wake up!” Sheetal shouted, throwing pillows at Power and Dark.

“What do you want, you computer freak?” Dark shouted back.

“Leave me alone!” Power mumbled.

“Rithika’s bleeding. You gonna help or what?” Sheetal asked.

That woke them up. They instantly appeared in front of me. I don’t know for some reason that made me laugh. They are awesome friends who care massively about me. But I am gonna deliver them a grave news now. I couldn’t stop laughing. Soon I was hysterical.

“Did she hit her head too?” Dark questioned.

“Shriya!” Sheetal warned.

Shriya shrugged. Meghna went on towards the cupboard and came back with the first aid kit. They began patching me up.

“No, I didn’t,” I said.

“You wanna talk about what happened? Our heads are bursting!” Meg said. I browsed my phone to show them the video.

“What!!!??? You gotta be kidding me!” I shouted.

They all gave me quizzical looks. Damn, my memory card is full and the video wasn’t saved. Clumsy me! I told them everything from the start, and silence surfaced for a long time.

“I told you to clear your memory, didn’t I?” Dark and Shriya said in an attempt to crack the atmosphere but in vain.

It was too much. This is the reason I prefer studies in foreign countries. It may not be a familiar surrounding but I would rather be there than in a college where your fellow classmates have bought the seats instead of sweating like me. It demeans your studies and hard work. How many students’ dreams have been shattered because of corruption? How many deserving students have been turned down just because rich people make their way to the top? This system is polluted and as long as people sell education, this country will never rise from the rubble.

“We just can’t let this happen. We gotta stop this. Stop that fraud principal and that guy, whoever he is,” Meghna aka Power said.

“Meg dear, if we make such powerful accusations against a top school principal, we will be targeted and hunted down. This will mean nothing to his lawyer without evidence.”

“Yeah I know. I am so sorry guys. I feel so stupid about missing the video and to have let you down,” I regretted, getting angry with myself.

“What are you even talking about? You know that’s not true. Talk logically. You wouldn’t have had enough time to delete files and anyway we don’t know who the ‘guy’ is,” Sheetal said.

“Yes, that’s true. Even if we have the evidence, they will suspend the principal but it will still happen with some other principal. We gotta find the poker guy” I said.

“And somehow get our evidence,” Meghna added.

“YEAH!” all of us agreed. We noticed that Priya didn’t say a word from the beginning.

“Priya, we are not gonna let this happen, believe us!” I said.

She laughed. “You gals are great. You are my best friends but I can’t drag you into this. If it hadn’t been for Rithika, we wouldn’t have even known this is gonna happen. I would’ve been a fool thinking I don’t deserve it. Maybe it’s meant to happen, maybe it’s better if I don’t get it.”

“You are an idiot,” Shriya said. “It wasn’t supposed to happen. They are stealing away your hard work and you are gonna leave it thinking you don’t deserve it?”

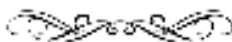
“Fine! Even if you help me, who’s gonna help the hundreds of students that get duped every year?” she asked.

“Let’s take it one at a time, okay?” Meghna advised.

“You know what? You may have thought we are just teen girls who love shopping and One Direction but we do love our friend and she’s the kindest and the most innocent loving girl whom we’ve ever met. She may have lost hope on her future but we are not gonna give up!” I said with a defiant attitude.

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Sheetal, Shriya and Meghna stood beside me. Slowly, Priya came to us with tears running down her cheeks. We gave a group hug. I know I meant every word I said. Though, I love shopping and 1D too.



30 hours later.

9:15 PM

I inserted the key and the door opened fine and smooth. Meg and I went into the surveillance room and locked the door. I sat myself before the wide array of computer screens that recorded every movement in our school's corridors.

We placed a chip in our principal's office and it turned up with nothing concrete. However we had enough evidence for petty frauds like donation and black money which we hope to use one day. So we



Art by C. Meenakshi, X C

made a duplicate of this room's key and we hoped the cameras had recorded that particular night.

Sheetal and Priya were in the dorm room communicating through mobile, and Shriya was outside the principal's room to warn us if he comes.

According to Sheetal, the head of security is really great with computers and has set up three stages to get past. The most difficult was the ones the owner has specifically hidden. You can't delete recordings till a week had passed. If our guess is correct, the deal, if recorded will be hidden by the principal. This protocol was protected and so there was no way we can get info without leaving a trace. It was a big risk especially if we don't get any info on 'X'. Then the principal will know and he will be extremely cautious, which will lead to the success of the deal and the failure of Priya's dream.

"G, start working on cracking the password," I said determined.

"Give me about 3 mins, the encryption process is going on," she said.

"Q, remember, if the principal opens the system either from school or anywhere in this world, he will know which file was taken, when it was taken and possibly find you, so please be careful and run when I say."

"Yeah G."

"Connect the computer with the mobile phone and upload the virus that I am sending. It will corrupt the security system and give us what we want."

"Got it and uploading."

The computer screen now displayed thousands of video files, all segregated through dates.

"We have no time to waste, go to encrypted files and type the password."

The hidden files opened and we were in for shock.

"Whoa, this man has more secrets than Bin Laden!" Meg said.

There were about hundred hidden files. I typed the specific date and a single video appeared. I tried to open but it needed to be downloaded first.

"It's gonna take a few minutes."

22 *The Hunt*

“Can’t you rush it?”

“Am afraid not, it’s got a safe lock with it.”

We sat there willing it to download faster. We just don’t want the bad guys to win, to buy their way into crime and when I say that, I realize what we are doing is a crime too, but it’s for a good cause and I think it’s justified. Duh! I always hate it when I have to wait.

Finally, the clock said a minute to go and Shriya called in.

“Q, abort, principal’s on his way.”

“WHAT??? NO, NO, NO!” I shouted.

“Q, get out! If he logs in he will find out. Don’t endanger yourself,” Sheetal said.

“I’ve gotta do this for Fire!” I reasoned.

“Don’t be stupid Q,” Fire said.

“Go!” I said to Meg.

“I won’t leave you. We are gonna finish this.” No arguments there.



Art by C. Meenakshi, X C

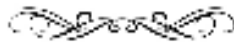
“GET OUT Q!”

“Q!” Shriya shouted. “He has switched on his computer. GET OUT!”

Ten seconds to go! Time seized for a moment. Probably somewhere in the middle of ten seconds, I heard Sheetal’s voice tear through my ears. “He has logged in. Run!”

Everything that happened after that was a blur, the alarm screeching, me running, just barely getting out before the door closed. I remember the fear that engulfed my heart, the constant drumming sound at the back of my mind.

I have no idea how, but my feet carried me. I remember Sheetal and Priya catching me before I went into darkness.



I woke up in my room to see Shriya, Sheetal and Priya staring at Meg and me.

“You are the most insane person, you know that?” Priya said. “You gave us a heart attack!”

“Arrogant @#&\$” Shriya mumbled.

And Sheetal, well, she slapped me right across my face. I don’t blame her. I scared them alright.

“Umm, what happened?” I asked.

“After your do or die escape, principal was furious when he found that the file was missing,” Sheetal said still angry.

“He turned the school upside down to catch the culprit! Or shall I say culprit Queen.”

Oh man, she really is mad. I could see Meg waking up and I wondered if she would get a slap too. She did.

“Did I get the file?” I asked.

“You don’t remember?” Shriya asked.

“Not really.”

“Yeah you did and thanks for that,” Sheetal said.

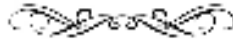
“Do I get to slap you?” I asked.

“Why don’t you try?” Sheetal mocked.

“Did we find ‘X’?”

“In a few minutes. As it was dark, we couldn’t get a clear image, we are trying light enhancement.”

“Time to catch the rich goose.”



The next morning, it was all over the news.

FAMOUS AND TOP ENTREPRENEUR CAUGHT IN
SCANDAL, SCHOOL PRINCIPAL SACKED,
ARRESTED FOR FRAUD.

X turned out to be Mr. Rohit, father of Suman, a guy at our school with whom Priya had an argument a long time ago, when he bullied a small boy. Suman felt humiliated and he wanted revenge. He got cheap by trying to ruin her dreams. But we stopped it! We defeated the bad guys after all! And we couldn’t be happier. Wherever life is gonna take us, we will remain best friends for ever. We are going to have a GREAT future.

Priya got the scholarship to Harvard. Shriya is going to Delhi for an Engineering degree. Meghna is working her way into Fashion designing. A software company hired Sheetal when she was just eighteen. She works as she studies more about ‘computers’.

Me? I got into the CIA training programme and I mean the real CIA. I believe women can do anything. We can fight as good as, even better than, men. I am gonna push my boundaries and show them. Better not to mess with me!



Art by C. Meenakshi, X C

About the author

Rithika Anand, studying in class 10, is a bookaholic and started reading from a very young age. She took to writing and has written several stories. She is currently working on her novel. She likes fiction and appreciates a funny book. She describes books as a way to escape reality and the constant stress of exams. She says that books make her confident and fluent in English. Her speech and writing have improved a great deal. She would like to be a renowned author someday and would like to put a smile on the faces of her readers.



Failure: Not the End... Just the Beginning!

C. M. Uthara

The greatest glory of living doesn't lie in never falling, but in rising every time you fall. I want to ask you something... "What do you think about failure? Do you think failure is a state at which nothing can be done? Do you think that it is the end of everything? If yes, please do change this opinion." A single failure should not stop you, instead it should start you. We need to accept that we won't always make the right decisions and that we will screw up sometimes. Understanding failure is not the opposite of success but just a part of success. If you had fallen down yesterday, just stand up today and smile at the beauty of failure. Understand that a single defeat can't be your final defeat.

When you give yourselves permission to fail, you also give yourselves permission to excel. Winston Churchill once said,

Success is not final; failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue that counts.

Keep preparing for success but if failure intrudes, don't quit. Continue preparing for success because the flavor of success is too boring without the essence of failure.

Failure is to continue, not to pause. Failure doesn't show you the red signal, only the green signal to keep moving. Failure is only a part, not the decider. Thomas Edison, before the invention of the light bulb, failed many times but never gave up. He said,

I have not failed, I have just found 10,000 ways that won't work.

Failure is the teacher of a lesson named 'life'. Rowing the boat of failure surely takes you to a destination called 'SUCCESS'.

Success comes through rapidly fixing our mistakes rather than getting things right the first time. There is always failure, there is always disappointment and there may be loss too. The thing to remember is that none of these holes are vacuum. These are just the strong steps built to reach success. Failure is not to stop; it is just an opportunity to begin again more intelligently.

Thank God for all your failures; may be not at that time but later on after some reflection. Never feel like you have failed. Think that you have not failed at the task but the task that you tried has failed. Don't feel embarrassed by your failures but learn from them and start again. It is good to celebrate success but the more important thing



Art by A. Franklin, XII D₂



Art by S. S. Asvitha, VII A

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is to learn the lessons of failure. 99 out of 100 things you did might be failures, but then do 1000 times more work to succeed.

During the initial stages of the Indian freedom struggle, people faced a lot of obstacles but due to their continuous efforts, at last, the mighty British Empire had to bow down and leave India.

Nelson Mandela also succeeded in gaining freedom for his nation despite facing a number of hurdles and failures. Finally, he became the president of his country when he was 76.

Everyone is aware that Helen Keller, at the tender age of 19 months, became deaf, dumb and blind. However, this did not stop her. She was the first differently abled person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Of course, everyone knows Jim Carey as a laugh-out-loud zany comic who brought us many comedy movies such as *The Mask*, *Dumb and Dumber* and *Ace Ventura*. He made us laugh but actually the struggles faced by him were countless. He grew up in a low income family with a father who struggled to keep jobs. He dropped out of school at the age of 15. Despite a difficult childhood and all his struggles, his strong determination made him succeed in his life.

One of the most inspirational and successful stories of our time is of J. K. Rowling. Many people know her as the woman who created *Harry Potter* but what most people don't know is that her life was not always this lovely. She also struggled tremendously. There was a time in her life when she was jobless, divorced, penniless and with a dependent child. In 1995, *Harry Potter*



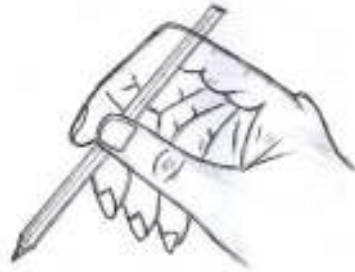
Art by N. Adhithyan, XI B₂

was rejected by 12 major publishers. Then, it was accepted and published by Bloomsbury Publishing. Today, she is the most successful female author in the United Kingdom.

Next is the legend, Stephen Hawking; one of the most famous living scientists. He suffered from a rare slow progressing form of a motor neuron disease that gradually paralysed him over the decades. In spite of this, he did not lose his faith and has contributed a lot in the field of science. In 1985, Hawking got pneumonia and was forced to undergo a tracheotomy, which completely took away his ability to speak. This happened when he was halfway through writing his book 'A Brief History of Time'. Then arose a question if he could complete the book or not. Not one to give up, Hawking completed his book using a computer program that enabled him to write three words per minute. He shows no signs of slowing down and upon reflection, he says that it has been a glorious time to be alive.

Walt Disney, Bill Gates, Sir James Dyson, Thomas Edison, Colonel Sanders, Henry Ford and many others have failed in their life and later succeeded. They all succeeded because of strong determination, perseverance, ideas and focus. They too faced failures but those failures did not stop them. If these people can overcome obstacles and failures, why can't we?

Failure does not matter but the lesson and experience gained from it matters. Failures are the pillars for success. Everyone born in this world has to face challenges. Everyone desires success but all don't succeed. Only those who strive



Art by A. Franklin, XII D₂



Art by S. S. Asvitha, VII A

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Art by R. Praveen, X B

continuously get crowned with success eventually.

Try before you quit! Sometimes, the attempt may prove to be a failure, not once or twice but several times. The only thing to do then is to still keep trying until you succeed. Failure reveals our weakness and teaches us to overcome it. Nothing great can be done without consistent and sustained efforts in the face of seemingly insurmountable difficulties.

It is not how far you fall but how high you bounce that counts. Success consists of going from failure to failure but without loss of enthusiasm. Success does not lie in the results but in the efforts. Similarly, being the best is not so important but doing the best is all that matters.

Life's real failure is when you do not realize how close you were to success when you gave up. So, don't ever have the fear of failure. Success cannot be achieved without failure, but when you are afraid to fail, you will keep failing forever. Failures are just a part of our life. If we don't fail; we don't learn. If we don't learn; we will always fail. Dr. Abdul Kalam said,

Don't read success stories, you will only get a message. Read stories of failure, you will get better ideas to move towards success.

Failure is not permanent; it is just a temporary road to reach success. If people try to avoid failure, it means they are trying to avoid success too. As said by Nelson Mandela,

Don't judge people by their success, judge people by how many times they fall and get back up again.



Art by A. Franklin, XII D₂

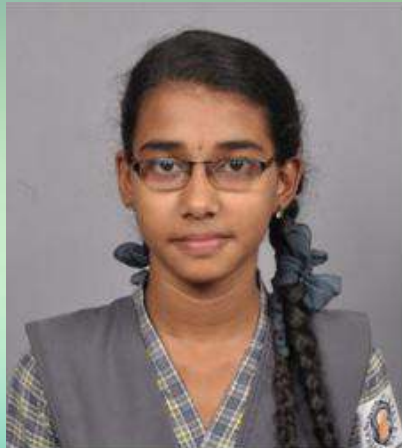
Success always seems impossible until it is achieved. Never let success enter your mind and never let failure enter your heart.

Keep calm and accept failure. The journey of life will not be interesting without the path of failure in it! So, don't stop or pause because of a single failure. Keep moving and never give up.

Success Is Always Yours!

About the Author

C. M. Uthara, studying class 12, dreams to become a very well renowned civil lawyer. She spends most of her time with a pen, paper, listening to music and her thoughts, proving her passion towards the English language! She believes that one should not lose determination despite many failures. This God-fearing girl lives by His rules and explains that being determined to succeed doesn't mean stepping on others in order to achieve the goal but just trying it again in a better and an intelligent way!



I Wish It Had Never Happened

G. Vidhyashivani

It was a bright, sunny morning at the M.H.S. Hospital, Dhaka. The chief nurse knocked the door of room no. 22 with some acetaminophen (pain relievers). A man of around 50 opened the door. The room was filled with silence and everyone's face was grief-stricken. There was a lady of about 45 years who was constantly weeping and wiping her eyes with the *pallu* of her sari. A 22-year-old girl was lying on the bed in an unconscious state. The nurse went near the girl, woke her up and gave her the tablets with a glass of water. The girl took the tablets and smiled at the nurse with a sense of gratitude as if nothing had happened to her. Again silence took over and in order to break the silence the girl cleared her throat and called her mom to sit next to her. The weeping lady came near and kissed her daughter on the forehead before breaking into tears. The girl, baffled by her mother's reaction, requested the nurse to get her a mirror. The nurse refused but since the girl insisted, the nurse went out to get one for her. The girl got hold of the mirror in one hand and looked at her face. After a few

seconds, a loud scream ripped across the room and the mirror fell to the floor and scattered into pieces.

Suddenly, a fast rewind took place in the girl's mind...

14th July, 2008

The 'Black Day' which changed her life entirely. It was just three days after she had turned 22. That day, like every other day, she woke up early, watered the plants, went for a walk with her father, came home, helped her mom with household chores and steam-ironed her little sister's uniform. She got dressed for college and waved 'bye' to her mother. After a tedious day at college, she sipped a cup of tea at Rambhai's restaurant, which she enjoyed before she caught a bus back home. Then, she suddenly got down at the second stop with an idea of buying a gift for her little sister, which she regrets now. After purchasing a cute Barbie doll, she waited for an auto rickshaw. Someone patted her on her shoulder. She turned back to see who it was. To her utter shock, it was her friend, Arjun, who was staring at her in anger. Before she could figure



Art by M. Bharath Kumar, XII A

out what was happening, he took something out of his pocket and there was a ‘SPLASH’... All she could feel now was a burning sensation in her face and neck. She fell down in shock and started screaming out of pain. She could see Arjun walking away casually as if nothing had happened. There was no one who cared to come near her or help her in that busy evening bazaar. They all looked at her as if she was an ugly creature. Although there was sympathy in the eyes of many, they cringed after looking at her face. She could feel her skin tearing off.

Then, a woman of around 50 came towards the girl. The girl could not see clearly as her vision was declining. The lady was dressed formally and holding a hand bag which made it seem like she was returning from work. She came near the girl and called two more people. With the help of these three strangers, the girl was taken to a nearby hospital. By this time, the girl had become unconscious. Doctors were summoned immediately as it was an emergency and on examining her, they declared that she has suffered third degree burns. They ordered a nurse to start giving her an intensive irrigation treatment. They called her parents using the girl’s phone and informed them about the incident. Her parents rushed to the hospital. The doctors said that it was a nitric acid attack and gave them the bad news that their daughter’s face would stay deformed throughout her life. Her parents couldn’t speak a word; they were shocked. Her little sister couldn’t control her tears knowing that her beautiful elder sister would have to live with a deformed face forever.

The girl regained consciousness after a few days. Her memory was blurred but she tried to recall the things that happened that evening. The only question that emerged in her heart was, “Why did Arjun do this to me?” She had known Arjun for the past 4 months as a friend and a classmate. Her parents were outside the room discussing something with the doctors.

She heard a knock at the door. It was the woman who brought her to the hospital on that fateful day. Yes, it was her! Both their eyes were filled with tears. The girl struggled and got off her bed with great difficulty to thank the woman. The lady asked the girl about what happened on

that day. She explained everything to the lady with a sigh of pain on her face. She asked the lady the question which she had in her mind whether she could take revenge on Arjun. "I want him to suffer as I did; I want him to feel the pain that I felt." The lady said, "Don't ever think about that. Past is Past. We can't go there and change anything but we can always start from the beginning. Be thankful to God that you have a roof over your head, you ate today, you have clothes to wear and, moreover, you are living today. Just remember one thing, not everyone who slept yesterday wake up today. So, be thankful for what you have and remember 'Karma' never leaves a culprit and never punishes a 'Saadhu'. You just have to keep calm and carry on with your life. Let 'Karma' finish him off. There is no better revenge than 'Karma' and there is no better feeling than forgiveness."

These golden words gave the girl a sense of relief and she could feel a newborn enthusiasm in her. She put up a brave face, smiled at the lady and thanked her once again. That was the last time they both met each other.

Driven by her words and recognising the need to carry on with her life, she started a school for all children who were in utter poverty but had an interest in education. These children could later contribute towards a developed society, which would be free from corruption, crime and violence against women. She named the school 'SHAKTI VIDYASHRAM'. "It's because of these words that the girl is still alive," said Ms. Laxmi who was sitting in front of hundreds of young students.

One student asked her, "How can one be a successful person?" Ms. Laxmi said, "Successful people have two things on their lips, a smile and silence. Yes, these two are powerful tools that express everything. One has to work hard in silence and let their success make noise. When you think no one loves you or no one cares about you, remember that God always loves you. When you keep working, success is yours." One of the students asked, "Ma'am, if you don't mind, can I ask whose story this really is?" Ms. Laxmi replied with a smile that hid her tears. "This is my story. I was the girl who survived from an acid attack and now,



Art by M. Bharath Kumar, XII A

I'm standing in front of you today holding this honourable Nobel Prize for promoting education.” All the children were amazed to hear this. Another young fellow asked, “What do you really think of the incident that you faced?” Ms. Laxmi smiled and said, “I wish it had never happened.”

After coming out of the conference, Ms. Laxmi was talking to some kids at the park. She noticed someone hiding near a bench. She went near and saw. It was Arjun, the same guy who had thrown acid at her many years ago. He was in a pitiable condition and hesitated to come out of hiding. Laxmi recognized him and insisted that he must speak to her. He said that he had married a girl from a good family but she was quarrelsome. One day, after an argument, his wife was so incensed that she set herself ablaze. When he tried to save her, his shirt caught fire too. He survived with 85% burns on his body, and his wife died. He

didn't know what to do as everyone had abandoned him. He was forced to live like a beggar. After hearing his story, Laxmi felt bad for him. She remembered the advice that the lady who saved her life had given her. "Let 'Karma' finish him off." Laxmi realized that there could be no better revenge than 'Karma' and no better feeling than forgiveness. She gave him a 1000 rupee note with a smile. He hung his head in shame and hesitated to take the money but when Laxmi insisted, he took the money and kept it in his pocket. He thanked her by addressing her as 'Maa'. As Laxmi turned around to leave, he called out to her again and said, "I'm sorry...On that day..." Laxmi smiled and said, "I don't want to know but I wish it had never happened."

About the Author

G. Vidhyashivani, studying in class 11, is pursuing science stream. She believes this world is a gift to us! Her leisure time is spent by reading books and listening to music. She strongly believes that a pen is mightier than a sword. Writing helps to express one's feeling in an influential manner. She likes to give life to what is there in her mind using words.



Nature's Voice

R. Amruthavarshini

I am nature, this is my voice.
In future, which will be your choice?
To gain me or to lose me.
When I was green,
I was also clean.
But nowadays the condition is poor,
Due to the invent of the plastic cover.
If you harm me,
You lose me.
I am the better one in the universe;
You can't get me again in reverse.
Don't waste paper,
Because trees suffer.
Don't be a bitter bug,
Give a tree the better hug.
Tell yourself that "the earth is mine".
And I will be your divine.



Art by S. Bhagyalakshmi, IX D

About the Author

R. Amruthavarshini, studying in class 9, wishes to become a doctor. She has many hobbies like drawing, writing poems, short stories, reading novels and solving puzzles. Her poems focus on nature, environment and related topics. She has written a poem for a Kathak Club and loves to participate in writing competitions.



The Gem of My Life

S. Abhinaya

I never liked her. Life was so horrible with my mother. I sometimes tried to end my life, but I never had the courage. Often I scolded my mother and she cried silently in the bathroom after I went to bed. I knew she was crying but I never consoled her. There were no such feelings from my heart towards my mother. She always narrated the stories of great people and their achievements. My mother wanted me to be like them. However, for me, life is all about enjoyment where my actions were like those of a devil in disguise.

In class 10, I failed in almost all subjects except English, in which I managed to pass. My mom was shocked to see my report card and my teachers too complained. I studied in a reputed school where the fees were alarming. I simply didn't understand why my mom wanted to waste so much money when she knew that I am not capable of studying. After collecting the report card, my mother said nothing. I was least bothered about how she felt. When we reached home, she hit me. I told her frankly that I don't want to be with her.

"Just leave me alone," I yelled.

She said nothing but walked out of the house. Hours passed but she didn't return and as usual I didn't bother about her. In the morning, I

saw her crying. After seeing me, she wiped her tears and said, “Have a bath and come dear! I will have your breakfast ready.” She spoke so sweetly like nothing had happened yesterday.

I still hated my mom because she is just an embarrassment for me. One day, when she went out, I read her diary. She had written “I feel so bad for hitting my son Shravan. I feel so guilty. I will burn my finger so that each time I see my burned finger, I would remember the pain I caused him.”

When my mom came home, I saw that her finger was completely burnt. I asked her the reason. She replied saying that boiling water fell on the finger. But both of us knew that was not the reason.

Years passed, and I went abroad for my higher studies. I lived happily there and I never thought of my mom.

One day, I received a phone call from a hospital. They informed that my mom met with an accident and she was admitted. Only for the sake of



Art by S. Sajitha, XII A

gratitude, as she is also responsible for my being in this good and decent position, I decided to meet her. Even now, I did not want to see her out of love. My flight landed in India early morning. I went to the hospital and saw my mother lying in the bed. I asked what I could do for her.

“I just want you to spend 2 minutes with me.” Her words truly touched my heart. After uttering those words her lips stopped moving. I knew immediately that those were her last words. At that moment, I had no words to express but my silence said it all. I saw a diary beside the bed. I remembered that it was the same diary. I opened it to read. But the words written in the diary filled me with the greatest sense of disapproval. From the diary, I came to know that I was an adopted child and my mom never married. Those words left me dumbstruck. I felt that for such a great mother and her sacrifice, I couldn't even fulfill her last wish. The gem of my life is truly my mother. That's when I realised that as a mother she won, but as a son I lost...

About the Author

S. Abhinaya, studying in class 11, is pursuing Biology–Mathematics stream. She loves experimenting with her imagination and this story is the result of one such imagination. ‘The gem of my life’ is an emotional story of a golden relationship. Abhinaya believes that all of us should admire the inner beauty of the amazing people around us and respect their value before we lose them. She enjoys reading inspirational and emotional books.



The Desire of Love

V. Vidyadarshini

It is a nice cold day in winter in Macasta, a mysterious land of magic and wonder. All the people lived happily. The few who migrated here from Naranda forest used magic in their daily lives. They were called Mandrasaras. These magic tricks were learnt from the old scriptures written by the monks of Naranda forest who controlled the five elements of the Earth through meditation. This involved a lot of patience.

These Mandrasaras helped the people of Macasta. However, this did not remain for long. The attitude of the Mandrasaras changed and it resulted in them having a feeling of superiority. They gradually gained power over Macasta. This segregated people into groups: the higher and the lower. Common people were deprived of all powers and they were treated worse than slaves. Mandrasaras had the first preference and occupied all positions of authority. Even children were not allowed to develop their skills and their talents were locked within them.

In Darkawie, a place near Macasta, a young scientist named Kendry worked very hard to submit his thesis to William, the Chief of the development department and a Mandrasa. Finally, Kendry's thesis is

selected for the progress of the country. He is very happy but at that very moment in the assembly, it is announced that William was the brain behind the thesis. Kendry gets depressed as his own creation is stolen from him.

He tells his story to Derry, his friend from college and a professional detective. Derry wants to find a solution for this problem. Finally, the only solution that Derry could come up with was to gain control of William's magical powers. They came to know that a similar situation occurred in the second century, which was tackled by Gegie, the lord of magic. He used some special powers which came from a crystal. Later, some information about this crystal surfaced, which went missing during the 17th century war between the Macastanions and the Chinese. The crystal has the ability to solve this problem.

Hence, they started their enquiries about that crystal. They came to know about a map from the Tottio institution and a letter about the history of the crystal that was written by Gegie himself to establish amity among the people and to deliver them from evil. This letter stated that during the invention of this paracrite crystal, a light from the sky split the paracrite into two portions: one with a purple shade (Jaado) and the other with the texture of a crystal prism (Iees). This light also divided their characters as wise and vigorous, which is the source of the Earth's rule. However, the problem was that *jaadosial* powers were more dominant than *ieesial* powers, so it started tempting people by its appearance. It changed their attitude and made them believe in a pseudo-imaginative reality, which took their souls from their bodies. Jaado uses this as a source for its body configuration to rule over the Earth rather than being a toy to others.

Gegie noticed the marvellous growth of Jaado and knew that something was amiss. Five months later, he came to know about its secret. He tried to control Jaado but he couldn't. He asked Iees for help to destroy Jaado, but Iees required Gegie to give his own power to Iees as after destroying Jaado, Iees will be left powerless. Iees is the white soul and Jaado is black soul. A fight between the two will leave the victor powerless as well. Gegie agrees to give his own powers to Iees.



Art by R. Shree, X B

Gegie was also aware that this may lead to his death but still decides to go ahead. His sacrifice was enormous. However, he makes Iees promise that after his death, Iees would not use his powers in any way.

At last, they decided to come together with their powers. The fight with Jaado commenced. Gegie attacked Jaado with his powers but every time Jaado came back and sucked Gegie's powers. Iees told Gegie to point an arrow on Jaado's soul which is in the neck. He points on the back of Jaado's neck and shoots but the magic does not work. He tried again and again but failed. Jaado laughed cunningly at Gegie's failed attempts. Gegie was becoming more and more anxious and tears started to fall out of his eyes. At last, a single drop of tear falls on the tip of one of the magical arrow. Gegie points this arrow at Jaado and shoots him. The arrow tears Jaado's heart into pieces and they saw Jaado writhing in pain until death. Gegie is so worn by the end of it that his life leaves him too but due to his pure soul, he comes back to life without any injuries. As time went by, Gegie became a leader and spent his entire life controlling them. After his death, Iees buried itself under a tree in the mountain to save its promise and thus, peace prevailed on earth.

When Kendry and Derry came to know about this they felt very sad. They looked at the map again, which had the markings of a 3D triangle with scratches. On top there was a cup-like structure with the sun rising. The middle had a pointed arrow and a straw on a tree. Finally, there was an arrow mark showing a flourishing rainbow, which pointed to the growing fields that lead to the crystal.

Kendry was puzzled but Derry was impressed by this. Derry thought about this for a while and came to the conclusion that the flourishing rainbow might be a clue for the crystal. When light passes through the crystal, it diverges into many colours. The triangle might be a clue about the temple where peace is prevalent in all parts. Gegie also wanted the same.

Hence, they searched the place where calm and colour existed. Finally, they found a place where the rainbow never ceased to appear. They reached the spot where Lees had buried itself but it was so difficult to identify the tree as there were several. So, they moved to the other



Art by V. Vidhyadharshini, X B

clues. The temple was next but there was no temple except the Macasta religious building.

They spent more time in search of it. It was almost six when they were sitting opposite the Macasta religious building and enjoying the sunset. Suddenly, when the sun was setting, Derry noticed that a curve inside the building was exactly pointing down at 90 degrees. To his surprise, it resembled the same picture on the map. Then it struck his mind that the things of the past do not retain their identity but flourish into a form with the changes that occurs over time. However, this was a holy place and such a powerful stone may not choose a divine place as its hiding place.

Derry took it as a challenge to solve this riddle. He imagined this place as an Egyptian pyramid containing the words of wise. He saw the bow cup on the top. He strengthened his third magical eye to go to the top and capture the image and project it in his mind. His magical vision reached the top and looked around for clues. Suddenly, he noticed an old macaw tree famous for its colourful leaves and hollow bamboo-like stem. Derry picked a stem from it and fixed it on the bow cup. To his surprise, the stem pointed to the tree on top of the mountain.

They went there on their magical carpet and reached the top. From there, the way was tricky. They couldn't identify the tree among the growing foliage and it was about 6:30 PM. The sun had set fully. He was surprised that the shadows of all except one tree was falling in the opposite direction of the sun. This tree's shadow grew towards the foothills and reached the tip of the growing sapling on the foothills. Derry and Kendry started their journey on their flying carpet and reached the top. They finally found that sapling when Derry started to dig. Kendry stops him saying that it is just a baby to Mother Earth, so don't kill it. Instead, we can dig a little away from the shoot and join its path from the roots. Therefore, they started digging at a distance. After five hours of digging, they hit a block. When they tried to discover what they had hit, they found that it was a golden box printed with a picture of slaves passing through a cave. This symbolised the sacrifice that it had made for time.

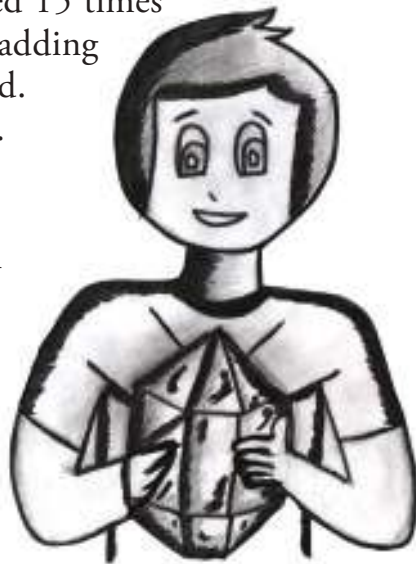
Derry read the words written in Rocol to open the box. He saw the print of the lock, which looked different from the normal key print. He looked at the map for further information. When he took the scrolled map, he realized that its ends matched the print of the golden box. He kept the map fixed on the print and it opened slowly. They saw an empty space inside.

Derry was disappointed on finding it empty. All his hard work had failed. Kendry was very concerned for his friend and didn't want his dreams to be spoilt. Kendry was heartbroken to see his friend crying. Kendry thought that if a magician could make this stone then why can't a scientist?

Kendry decided to create it again but he was sure that this time it must be an item of science. He analysed it thoroughly and noticed the impression of the crystal and some constituents of its molecular structure. He understood that this sample of mixture is made up of a depending atom, which has the ability to relate all other atoms in the world and the human body is made up of small atoms or *paramaanu*. *Paramaanu* is connected to this atom.

He takes this theory to the lab. He tried 15 times to grow the structure of this atom by adding various elements with it but he failed.

Finally, he decided to give it a last try. He noticed the structure of that atom and it struck him that each atom is designed with a glittering new born leaf. He remembered the sapling in the mountain. He went there and plucked some leaves from that plant. When he broke the stem, a golden dazzling essence came out of it. He added this essence to the atom and tried again. This time he succeeded. The atom grew rapidly. That's when



Art by D. Prathiba, X B

Kendry realized that Lees's powers had merged with the environment, which when added to its own group flourished rapidly. Derry and Kendry were delighted and ordered it to swallow the bad and lower qualities. It did what they said and finally the happiest moment came when all were given equal rights. Despite this, it must be remembered that science would always develop its own disadvantages.

Fifteen years later...

Kendry's son, Riggo, always fought with his parents. He would always see the negative side and be jealous of everyone. His only faith was in his friends who never gave up on Riggo. One day, he got into a fight with Kendry and decided to go out for a trip on the flying carpet to calm his mind. While flying around the shores of Macasta, he saw some boys playing in the sand without their slippers. On the other hand, he saw a blind child crossing the road who did not have money to buy a flying broomstick. When he saw these people, his attitude changed and he felt sorry for all his mistakes. He decided to apologize to his dad who gave him such a beautiful life. Unfortunately, his father goes for a long trip to continue his research and would not return for five months. Riggo decides to write a letter to his father to tell him that he felt guilty and thanked his dad for giving him such a good life. On reading the letter, Kendry felt happy for his son.

One day, Riggo searched the garage to find his ball. He noticed a limestone which was reverse processed. When he touched it, his bad qualities were once again encouraged and dominated over his mind. His good qualities seemed to decline. He was so attracted to the stone that he hung it on his neck as a pendant that touched his heart.

He tried to retain his good qualities but the pendant's effects continued to aggravate. Everyone started to hate him except his friends. Riggo couldn't even realise their true love for him, which made him more angry and annoyed. He thought his feelings were not understood by anyone, which created a sense of frustration among his friends and family members including his mother. He isolated himself and delved

into a deep sadness. Finally, something happened between him and his father. When he tried to do something nasty, Riggo himself got dumbstruck.

The growing fight between him and the limestone was at its end. It tempted him and projected a false attitude towards his father. At last, an anger developed in his mind for his father.

One day, he kept his hands on his chest and thanked the limestone for saving his soul and revealing the truth. At that moment, he remembered the precious thanks that he had said to his dad. The memory was overwhelming and helped him overcome the magic trap. Tears fell from his eyes onto the pendant, which broke the pendant into pieces. He returned with a pure soul to start his new life.

Riggo felt that love is the most beautiful key to solve any problem.

About the Author

V. Vidhyadharshini is studying in class 10. She is interested in drawing and the traditional dance, Bharathanatyam. Her hobbies are playing badminton and reading comics. She also has a keen interest in arts and craft, especially clay and printing works. Her ambition is to become an architect (robotics).



Invasion of the Lighthouse

V. Sredesh

It was the day before the summer holidays began. At school, all of us were eagerly waiting for the holidays. At 4 PM, the bell rang and we went home.

My friend and I were discussing how to spend time usefully during these holidays. Finally, we decided to go for a picnic. We packed the necessary things and went to so many beautiful scenic places. Then my friend asked, “Why are we visiting only such scenic places? Instead, we should try to experience an adventure, filled with suspense, thrill and fun.”

The idea sounded nice, so I agreed to this adventure.

“Which place shall we choose for our adventure?” I asked.

“The Lighthouse will be so adventurous. People in this town believe that there is a ghost living in the lighthouse for more than three decades.” I was terrified when I heard this, but my friend started walking towards the lighthouse. I had no choice, so I went behind him.

When we reached the gate of the lighthouse, a watchman stopped us from entering. He said, “If anybody enters the lighthouse, they will be sacrificed to the ghost which is living inside. So please don't enter this lighthouse.”



Art by S. Yagnesh, VIII C

My fear increased, but my friend seemed very brave. “Let’s return home and spend the rest of our holidays reading books,” I suggested. He was in deep thought and finally spoke. “Yes! I have got an idea. We shall use our rope ladder which we brought for our picnic and climb up this wall to reach the lighthouse.”

I followed my friend slowly. Often I checked to see if anyone was around us. We somehow managed to open the door of the lighthouse. My friend climbed the stairs. I was waiting below to ensure we do not get caught. More than half an hour went by, but my friend didn’t return. So I went upstairs to find him. I saw my friend was handcuffed by men who looked like terrorists from movies. The terrorists had already kidnapped more than ten people.

I ran from there to the nearest police station. I informed the police about the terrorists and the hostages in the lighthouse. The police came to the lighthouse and tried to arrest the terrorists, but they were attacked with guns and rifles. So with the help of the army, the

police arrested the terrorists. However, two persons were killed in this incident.

Our parents didn't know about this incident and they were searching for us. We finally returned home and explained everything. When this news was on the television, our neighbors, relatives, school teachers, friends and principal appreciated us. After this incident, the lighthouse became very famous and was put to use again without any fear.

About the Author

V. Sredesh, studying in class 8, loves to write stories and poems whenever he finds time. Not surprisingly, his favorite hobby is reading fiction. He believes that reading books helps increase one's vocabulary. His favorite author is R.K. Narayan. His ambition is to become a doctor.



Building Castles In The Air

U. Niraimadhi

Man is pleasure-loving. He wants a variety of things to enjoy. His intelligence has certainly enabled him to enjoy far more than any other animal. In fact, he who knows how to build castles in the air knows what the secret of perennial pleasure is. This story is developed on the basis of this proverb.

One day, an old lady was travelling in a bus to her native place to sell fruits at the local market. She sat next to the driver's seat. When the bus arrived at a new bus stand in Virudhu Nagar, a young lady with a baby in her hand got into the bus. She stood near the old lady's seat as the bus was crowded and there was no seat vacant. When the old lady noticed the young lady with a baby in her hand, she immediately got up and offered her seat to the lady. She stood in the bus until she found another seat. This shows her kindness towards others.

After reaching the local market, the lady wanted to sell her fruits. Unfortunately, nobody turned up to buy her fruits. Towards the end of the day a young man came to the shop. But he too had no money. The kind-hearted lady happily offered him fruits without revealing her poverty. The next day, the same man came and told the lady that the fruits that she gave him yesterday were not sweet enough and



Art by G. Ananya, IX B

asked her to taste it herself. The man kept doing this for a number of days.

One day, the young man gave the fruits to his wife. After tasting the fruits, the wife was surprised. The fruits were so tasty. She asked her husband why did he give one fruit to the fruit seller every day complaining that it wasn't sweet enough when they are actually so tasty. The young man patiently replied that the old lady was very poor and he knew that she did not have any food including the fruits she sold in the market. I had decided to make her eat atleast a fruit daily. His wife was more surprised by the answer he gave her. She also appreciated his affection towards the old lady and asked him to continue the good deed. Meanwhile, a vegetable vendor nearby asked the old lady why she was giving the young man fruits daily even though he kept complaining about them. The old lady happily said that the man blamed my fruits and brought one back to force me to eat at least one fruit per day. The

vegetable vendor was surprised at the love and affection of both the young man and the old lady.

Days passed on and one fine morning, the old lady's son said that he was going to see God. He took along with him some chocolates and chips that he had saved over a period of time. He went to a nearby park. In that park, he saw an old woman sitting on a bench. He went and sat next to the woman. He understood on seeing her face that she was very hungry. Slowly, he began conversing with that woman and shared his chocolates with her. She ate the chocolates and had a smile on her face. However, after a while she looked hungry again. He shared the chips with her as well. She ate the chips and the smile returned to her face. The boy went home happily. His mother asked him if he had met God. The boy replied, "Yes, I have seen God and I also ate with God." The mother was happy to hear this. As the old woman and her son were returning home, he asked her where she had been. She said that she was selling fruits at the local market where she met God every day and that God made her eat at least one fruit a day. The son was happy to hear this answer from his mother. He learned that affection can buy things that money cannot.

As the old lady's son grew up, she sent him to a nearby school. However, her son was very mischievous and did not concentrate on his studies. He did not perform well in his examinations. One day, when he returned home, he saw his mother's hands were full of red rashes. He asked his mother, "Why is your hand looking like this?" She replied saying that when she broke the hard shells of the cashew nuts to get them out, her hands developed rashes. The son, in tears, realized that his mother is working hard to make him study and that nothing can be achieved without hard work. Since that day, he excelled in his studies and scored the highest marks in the X standard. He was the school topper. His mother was very happy that all her sacrifices didn't go in vain. After completing his studies he joined the Indian army. He became a military doctor. One day, while he was on duty he heard the chanting of the Hindu verse 'Rama Nama' at the temple. His spiritual sense was rekindled and he decided to go and join in the chanting. The

Colonel had earlier warned him that if he did not perform his duties well he would have to resign. On that night, the colonel was enraged to find that the doctor wasn't at his station and instead, he was chanting slogans at the temple. However, the doctor returned to his office later that night and worked all night long. The colonel was surprised but realized that he would miss a sincere officer if he were to ask him to resign. The doctor was astonished in excitement because he got to keep his job due to Lord Rama's grace. He thanked Rama for his blessings as a true devotee.

Many years later, he retired from the army and joined a private hospital. One particularly hot day, he was walking on the road. He felt very thirsty and went to a nearby house to ask for water. An old lady in the house gave him a cup of milk to drink. He thanked that lady for her kind act and went home happily. Days passed on and that old lady had been admitted to a private hospital due to ill health. She was asked to undergo a surgery, which was very expensive and she could not afford it. Later, she received word that her surgery would indeed happen as it had already been paid for. She received a copy of the bill with a signature of the medical officer. She said to the nurse that she wanted to meet the medical officer and thank him. To her surprise, the medical officer was the man she had offered a cup of milk. She thanked him with all her heart and eyes filled with tears for saving her life.

A few days later, a beggar came to the medical officer's house. He asked him for some money. The medical officer realized that the beggar was not in need of money alone. He needed all the basic things to lead a life. So, he gave all his belongings to the beggar. The medical officer lost all his property and became a saint. He went deep into a forest to practice meditation and penance. Days passed on and he lived in the serenity of the forest. One day, while he was in meditation, he heard the cries of a pregnant woman. He decided to help her by taking her to the city and admitting her in the hospital where he used to work as a medical officer. The woman gave birth to a baby boy safely because of the timely help offered by him. As a token of love and affection, she



Art by S. Navena Kumari, VIII B

named the boy after the saint so that he would one day serve the world as the saint is doing.

A girl was once riding her bicycle. She slipped and fell down. She got hurt severely. Nobody came forward to help her. At last, a boy came forward to help her. He took her to a clinic and informed her family so that they could come as soon as possible. The timely help given by the little boy, who was named after the saint, helped the girl recover quickly.

Meanwhile, the saint in the forest grew old and became sick. He was on his deathbed and finally, his life came to an end. Nobody from his family was there to perform the last rites. However, everyone who he had helped throughout his life such as the old lady, the beggar, the pregnant lady and her son all came forward to help with his last rites so that his soul would rest in peace.

The boy who was named after the saint continued to live like him and was an example for one and all. Hopefully, in future, many more

will join hands to help people in need. Our nation will prosper when inequality is abolished and equality spreads its fragrance everywhere making lives happy.

About the Author

U. Niraimathi is studying in class 9. She loves reading books. Listening to carnatic music is one of her favorite pastimes. She also enjoys singing!



Jai Hind!





School Principal Smt. S. Usha Rani and Honorary Correspondent Sri. S. Gopalakrishnan attended the Book Launch event hosted by publisher 16Leaves. An anthology comprising a collection of stories and illustrations created by students of G.K. Shetty Vivekananda Vidyalaya Junior College, Ambattur was launched and released by special guest Sushila Ravindranath. Three individual books written by students H. Abhirami, Rithika Anand, C.M. Uthara were also launched and released by chief guests Rohini Molleti, Aysha Rau and Janaki Sabesh.

G.K. Shetty Vivekananda Vidyalaya Junior College is a unit of Vivekananda Educational Society at Ambattur, Chennai. The school functions based on the principles and values of Swami Vivekananda and the most prominent of those values is to build a better nation. Vivekananda Educational Society is affiliated to 'VidyaBharathi,' which is the largest voluntary non-government organization in the field of education.

16Leaves, an imprint of ThinkMines Media, is a publishing company that helps aspiring writers publish their creative work as beautiful books. As part of the 'Child Literature Development Program' (CLDP), 16Leaves conducts literary workshops in academic and non-academic institutions that share passion for literature. In collaboration with G.K. Shetty Vivekananda Vidyalaya, 16Leaves conducted a story writing workshop. The workshop was conducted for children from classes 6 to 12 with an aim to identify and develop 'child authors.'

The top three stories have been published as individual books and are also part of this book. This book is an anthology consisting of eight stories and one poem, which were selected from the several entries that were received.

16Leaves would like to express its deepest gratitude to G.K. Shetty Vivekananda Vidyalaya, the correspondent, the principal and the teachers for encouraging children to participate in the contest and making it a huge success! We would also like to thank the students who have taken time from their schedules to participate in the workshop. The spirit of participation is great and whether you win or not, it always urges you to try again. We sincerely hope that you enjoy reading the stories in this book.

