



Vol.1 Issue 1
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The De-LiT Magazine

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THE WRITERS OF DE-LIT

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**TODAY'S
SESSION
WAS FUN!**

X 120

**I'M UNDERSTANDING
LITERATURE BETTER NOW X 30**

**THE WAY YOU
INTERACT WITH YOUR
JUNIORS IS INSPIRING
X 30**

**I'VE IMPROVED MY
COMMUNICATION SKILLS X 30**

**WE LEARNT
SOMETHING
NEW TODAY!**

X 100

**I FEEL MORE
CONFIDENT
WHEN TALKING
TO PEOPLE X40**

**BEING ON THE
WRITING SIDE IS A
THRILLING
EXPERIENCE X 30**

**I CAN CONFIDENTLY SAY THAT I CAME EMPTY HANDED
AND I AM GOING WITH SOMETHING NEW**

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Epigraph

*The saddest noise, the sweetest noise,
The maddest noise that grows, -
The birds, they make it in the spring,
At night's delicious close.*

*Between the March and the April line -
That magical frontier
Beyond which summer hesitates,
Almost too heavenly near.*

*It makes us think of all the dead
That sauntered with us here,
By separation's sorcery
Made cruelly more dear.*

*It makes us think of what we had,
And what we now deplore.
We almost wish those siren throats
Would go and sing no more.*

*An ear can break a human heart
As quickly as a spear,
We wish the ear had not a heart
So dangerously near.*

Emily Dickinson

Love Letter

*I saw you this morning,
but you never see me.
I will be waiting to see you,
but it's not your cup of tea.*

*I have been loving you since childhood,
but never expressed it,
as it might seem crazy.*

*Today I am writing this with a bit of fear,
that I might become even more crazier,
if I don't express it.*

*Firstly, I can't take my eyes off you,
The way you are dressed in hues of blue,
makes jubilant my eyes blue.*

*Sometimes red like a royal princess,
green like down-to-earth.
Not only are you feast to my eyes but ears too...*

*The sound of your arrival,
the sound while you run on bridges,
the sound while you stumble on hilly terrain,
Ahh... I could hear you all day.*

*Making all people reach their goals,
unveils the beauty of your heart.
You always lend a hand to the needy
in making their livelihood.*

*You teach that waiting is worthwhile for your loved ones,
Your running speed reflects the passing of time.
The way you change tracks shows
the adaption of your personality in any situation.
And the way you turn like a snake, Omg!*

*In a bird's-eye-view, you are a brave girl
moving forward in society,
crossing the mountains of hurdles,
rivers of worries,
plains of pessimism...*

*Ohh Traun!!!
Make me your passenger,
We can travel the whole world together.*

~Yours Passenger

~Greeshma

R210026

MUSIC

Music has always been a part of me since my childhood. I started reacting to music from as early as two months of age, as told by my parents and grandma. Any music can sway a person physically. But I prefer the music that sways my thoughts and my soul.

The earliest memory that I have of music, is listening to old Bollywood songs in my mom's old Nokia 515 mobile phone when I was around 3 years old. From there I carry a connection to the voices of Sonu Nigam, KK, AR Rahman, Kumar Sanu, and Alka Yagnik among others.

I would turn to some delightful music when I am happy, to make me happier. And I would turn to sad music when I am sad, why I know not but I end up becoming more sad than I already was.

And it was never just about the music, the beat of the song, or the dance moves. I would concentrate on the lyrics of a song for as long as I can remember.

Music is a weapon. That is why some cultures prohibit and some encourage it. It plays with one's mind, it controls one's actions, and it is what makes us all feel connected. Music transcends generations, eras, and continents. Music is a hallucinogen.

And in my teens, I was introduced to Western music, pop, rock, and electronic music. I loved both the pop and the electronic music. I used to listen to all genres of music and experimented with numerous languages from Icelandic, and Norwegian to Russian. From Spanish, French, and Italian to Scottish. I was into British and American music for years by then. I also enjoyed Japanese, Korean, and Chinese music, both instrumental and lyrical. And began to call myself, a mood music listener.

Then, I saw a revival of my fascination with old Bollywood songs and a few (very few) new ones. I left all languages and genres and confined myself to these old melodies (ranging from the '60s to the early 2000s) for over a year.

Now, I mostly listen to Instrumental, non-lyrical music. My heart-beat sways and my mind swirls in the tapping of the keys of the piano and at the pull of violin strings. Although I used to listen to a few pieces of Beethoven just before my teens, I was never confined to just non-lyrical music.

Well, no words seem enough to represent human emotions now. No words seem to fill the void of my inexpressiveness as much as Violin does. Nothing seems to break my heart and tease tears out and no other music seems to excite me or make me feel lighter as Violin or Piano both do.

A collection of pink rose petals of various sizes and shades of pink, scattered across the page, appearing to fall from above.

WORDS WERE INVENTED TO EXPRESS OUR FEELINGS
AND THEY COME SO FAR WHEN NEEDED.

~Smithson

KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

A Fight for Peaceful Living



A story based on true history. The movie "Kingdom of Heaven" was released in 2005, nearly a millennium after the events occurred. The movie was released during the war and the war hasn't ended yet. Many died, many lost their loved ones, many got injured physically and mentally, and many lost their homes. A thousand years have passed and the war still goes on. No one knows when it's going to end nor does anyone know the amount of the lives lost in the process.

Many think that knowing history is nothing but a burden, studying it is a waste of time, but I wanna tell one thing to everyone out there who thinks history is useless. No, it is not, not at all useless. Everyone says learn from mistakes and do not repeat them. But the damage done in the process of learning from mistakes cannot be undone.

History lets you know the mistakes made by others so you can learn from them. History tells us the stories of great people, their achievements along with their mistakes. "A great man learns from his mistakes but a wise man learns from the mistakes of others".

I pose a couple of question to everyone reading this. Is ruling a piece of land worth more than lives slaughtered in the process of claiming it? Is fighting for religion worth more than the peaceful and happy life of countless people?

The movie "Kingdom of Heaven" talks about the story of the great land of Jerusalem going into the hands of Muslims after being in the hands of the Christians for eighty-eight years. How Balian of Ibelin surrenders Jerusalem to Saladin in return for peace of every soul and no harm to any community. The troupes of Jerusalem are outnumbered yet he uses his tactics to hold on to the huge army of Saladin and fights back to protect his people. He wanted peace in his land, which he had promised his father. He was a blacksmith before finding out that he was the son of a great and truthful knight. He then became a knight, fought for his country and returned to be a blacksmith. The Princess Sibylla of Jerusalem showed the love of a sister towards her brother, the king of Jerusalem, while he was suffering from leprosy. She loved her son a lot. After knowing that he too had been affected by leprosy, she freed him from upcoming pain by sending him off to God with her own hands.

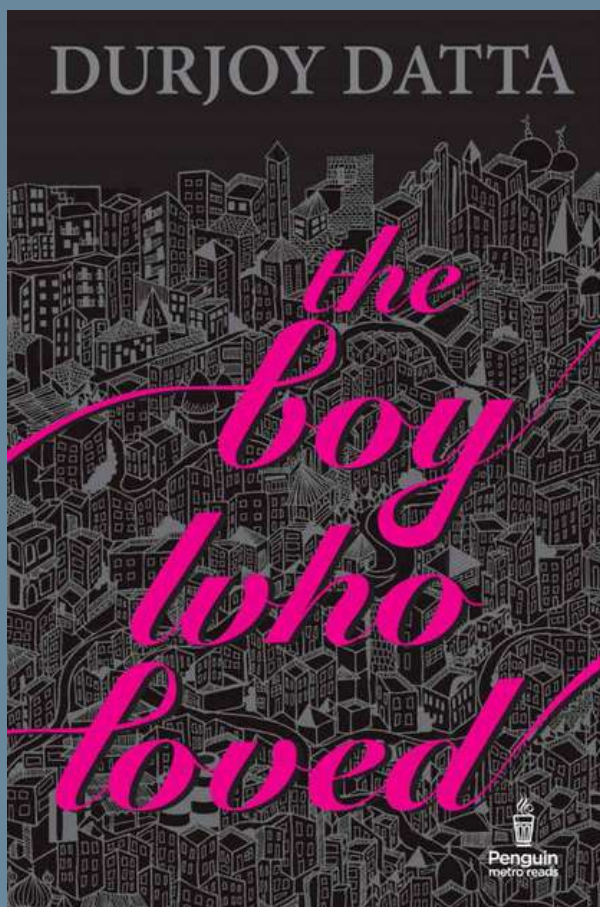
The controversial fights between communities trying to claim the land as theirs has been costing and still costing some lakhs of lives. The Land of Jerusalem, known as the "Land of Heaven" has become a battleground, "Hell on Earth" for more than a millennium. Where lives are lost in the name of protecting God or his religion. No religion nor any God says the war is good. Peace and humanity are the teachings of any religion.

Let's stop the wars and live in peace. Never forget the lessons taught by history and always stay together in harmony. End the pain and give the world the peace to live happily.

~Aritha Singam
R210085

The boy who loved is a delightful tale that sparks enthusiastic feelings within us...

The only thing you cannot plan in life is when and whom to fall in love with... The entire story revolves around Raghu Ganguly who finds himself guilty of not saving his friend Sami and thinks of committing suicide.



The story of Raghu & Brahmi takes you to a different world... Also, the problems faced by both of them... Their unconditional love... And the ending makes anyone cry!! His eyes caught the fascinating Brahmi - a girl quite like him, yet so different. No matter how hard Raghu tries not to and try to control his emotions and start finding flaws in her, he begins to care...

I liked the plot of the book and the way of developing characters just like the different shades of grey. I think any fictional lover can thoroughly enjoy reading this book. It's not just about a love story, this book has also addressed certain social evils which are hidden inside every society.

But life throws unforeseen challenges at him every second day.

Will Raghu find solace in Brahmi, a girl who is just as broken as he is?

Some of the thoughts created a brainstorm within me....

Will he be able to find hope again?

Will Raghu find solace in Brahmi, a girl who is just as broken as he is?

Durjoy Datta has just nailed it with the story of "The Boy Who Loved." And I am eagerly waiting for the next part to go through it. Finally, I have ended up with a river full of emotions and I was dumbstruck...

~ Raghavi Priya
R210649

| The Essence of True Love

FEELINGS

Love... What is love? There are different definitions of love. For some, it's simply about talking with someone; for others, it's the inability to stay away from them. Some say it is a beautiful feeling, while others view it as a mutual relationship or caring. Is *this* love?

However, let's assume if a boy sees a girl and says he's in love, and when someone asks why, he responds with "She's damn beautiful," then it's not love. Because if she was not beautiful, he would have ignored her. It's just attraction. Attraction is a temporary feeling that can be experienced by many people. So, what is love?

Love happens automatically; it's not something we consciously do. We can't love with conditions because conditions influence our thoughts. Love is like sitting with someone and not thinking about anything else. When you're with that person, you feel complete. It's like being with yourself. You can't get bored, because their presence alone makes you happy. In some cases, you may love someone who doesn't love you back, then you want that person for any cost but this can be selfish because that person is just thinking about themselves, not about the other one's feelings.

Love is not about wanting someone; it's about wanting their happiness. When they're sad, you feel sad; when they succeed, you're the happiest person. Their achievements feel like your own. In love, there are no two individuals; it's like having one soul. There's no place for selfishness, jealousy, or possessiveness. Love is selfless. It's about giving without expecting anything in return.

LOVE IS THE PUREST FEELING IN THE WORLD. IT'S SIMPLE BUT WE MAKE IT DIFFICULT, UNAWARE OF THE TRUE MEANING OF LOVE. LOVE IS BEYOND EVERYTHING...

~Praveen

R211001



SHADES OF LOVE

Love is the only feeling which makes people lose their senses and do shit and makes others do shit. It is the only emotion which is different for every person. And love can be in endless types.

For me, I have no one to love other than my parents, my sibling, my friends, my hair, my guitar, my roommate, and my dad's bike.

You might say that's a long list, and it *is*. These people are enough for me for a lifetime. Yet I search for another love. If you ask me why, trust me when I say, "I question myself the same thing every day". Maybe it's the restlessness to find someone who can know about me from eye to toe. To share my darkest thoughts and my feisty fantasies. To listen to my crazy dreams. And someone to tell their own stories. I can say that I am a good listener. I want to spend the rest of my life getting my *kanojo* to be the first face I see in the morning and be the person who I cuddle at night. And finding the right person isn't about having the same qualities and habits. It is about compatability.

It is about loving the shortcomings of one and accepting them. It is about showing care and feeding them when they are ill and not expecting the same, but it will happen when the feeling is mutual. It is about shouting and fighting with each other and making love the next moment. It is about kissing on their forehead and not everything is sexual. It is about having a life and feeling complete when they are with each other. THIS IS CALLED LOVE.

Random thought:- People say that beauty doesn't mean anything and it eventually fades out, yet the first thing you see in a person is Beauty. Next their character. If their persona doesn't match then people stop seeing each other. But, but, but, when people get closer by their persona first, they can be together. That's a long shot but it will work.

There is one kind of love which stands out from all the others. Love towards God.

It is one of the purest forms of love if you don't expect anything in return. The other side never asks you for anything for themselves. I have a question for you guys. How many of the human race do you think will go to a religious place if you get to know that there is no reincarnation, no wiping of sins, no boons given, and no increase in the state of your life? If Only wisdom and peace are offered by the god, there will be a decrease in GDP. I am not trying to say that people are only thinking selfishly, but the harsh reality is people are molded in such a way by society that they are made to wish for something when they go to a god. It doesn't mean that I am the purest devotee to ever exist, I might be the most selfish person in this group (just might be). But those guys who devote themselves to thy's self are the ones who can live happily. Staying happy isn't about staying with all the luxuries in the world. It is about staying happy with everything you have. Not a lot of people are living the same way. And, the question, "Are you happy?"

Coming back to love. There is another form of love which is too good. It is love shown by and to your pet. My favorite is a dog. Even though I am scared of them, they make me fall in love with them. Once you start loving your pet, it will no longer be a pet, it will be your kid.

Imagine. Just imagine. You, your pet, and a plant. Riding the whole country for some good kickass locations. It is my dream though. It is my love.

~Jeevan

R200783

GAME OF HORMONES

Love. What is it?

No one in this universe knows the answer. But humans never stopped the search for this question. There are many explanations and theories on the meaning of love.

So, different people have different perspectives on love and for me, *what* is it?

There are only two key components for evolution: survival and reproduction. Our brains have developed some super feel-good hormones like Dopamine and oxytocin (love hormone) to make people reproduce more offspring, which helps in evolution. For example, women fall for strong men because their genes can reproduce stronger offspring who have higher chances of survival. It's the universe that is playing with our brains to help us in our evolution. Love is a secret ingredient for evolution.

Wait, when all of the feelings are created by the brain with the help of hormones, what makes love different? It's just one of the feelings we feel.

Is this really love? I don't think it is. Love isn't just a feeling created in our heads. It is far more beyond that.

For me, Love is an invisible string that connects two souls beyond the spacetime. It doesn't exist in our three-dimensional world. But love is the only thing from higher dimensions that we can perceive.

When two souls connect by love, it's irreversible. They live for each other and one cannot survive without the other. Just like a mother and her child, a child and her pet, a human and another human, a pen and paper, trees and rain, earth and sun, you and yourself.

~Santhi Kumar

R200748

The Language of Tears

All humans, animals, and birds have emotions that they feel every day. The feelings may be of different forms. Humans smile when happy, dogs wag their tails and roll around, and monkeys play energetically when they're jovial. Many of you might be wondering why I am emphasizing happiness among other feelings. I bet you'll get clarity after reading halfway.

Just as joy touches every heart, so does sorrow embrace every soul. I once raised a pet cat named Chileey at my home. She gave birth to three kittens. But tragedy struck when one of the newborns passed away just five days later. The agony etched on her face pierced my heart. Seeking solace, she approached my mother and gently tugged at her pallu, leading her to the place where her precious little one lay lifeless. Witnessing the cat's tears, my mother's comforting words offered relief and strength in her moment of need.

Returning to our discussion of happiness, tears serve as the silent messengers of our emotions, effortlessly flowing regardless of the heights of joy or the depths of sorrow. In the intimate dance of emotions, tears act as our speaking volumes when words fail. When my mother shouts at me for some mistake I made, tears flood out from my eyes, initially sparked by frustration with my mum. As moments pass, I will continue to cry because I understand that the mistake is with me. Then I cry because I'm blaming myself for what I did. And then after a while, Mom hugs me, gives me advice, and I feel better, shedding tears of relief on her lap.

One of the most recurring sayings goes like - "Don't cry. Your tears represent your weakness". Now, imagine a scenario where someone has done something they deeply regret. Like, hurting a friend's feelings. When they tear up while apologizing, it shows that they truly feel sorry and want to make things right. Instead of being weak, those tears show how much they care and how sincere they are. So, tears in this situation are like a heartfelt apology, speaking louder

than words ever could.

When a newborn baby cries from accidentally grabbing her hair, or when she feels hungry, or when a mosquito bites on her little nose, it's *her* way of expressing discomfort and confusion about the unfamiliar sensation. Without words to communicate her feelings, tears become her natural response to express inner discomfort and seek understanding from caregivers. In this innocent moment, her tears serve as a powerful form of communication, conveying her need for comfort in a world where everything is still new and unknown to her.

Our emotional reactions are strongest when we're close to someone. When a loved one passes, we feel their loss deeply because of the memories we share. But when the same happens to someone we don't know, our sadness is not as intense because we don't have that personal connection.

Tears are our body's response to emotional pain. They help us release the heaviness in our hearts, not just when we lose someone we love, but also when we see others' suffering. Our tears remind us that we're all connected.

Tears speak more efficiently than ten thousand tongues. Different species communicate in various ways. From humans speaking different languages to animals using diverse signals. Tears, too, form a distinct language. Just as mammals express themselves differently, tears vary depending on the situation, conveying emotions such as happiness, sadness, anger, or agony. This variety of tears reflects the range of emotions felt by beings across the Earth. In moments of joy and sorrow, tears flow freely.

Those gentle salty raindrops from eyes wash away all the burdens of life's toughest moments. Let them fall upon the earth of face, cleansing the soil of sorrow and allowing the flowers of hope to bloom.

~ *Santhoshini Pranathi*
R200228

FEAR OF LOSING MYSELF

Going to class, that too - oops - with a headache, and turning up to club is a strenuous job. And, after coming to the club, I thought of getting something relaxing, but it is serious. The task given was to write about your deadliest fear.

Me, as a coward person, writing about my fears would be easy. But describing only one fear in detail was a hectic task. I had to pick one. So, my deadliest fear is death. By this, the person who is reading this would be annoyed a bit. They had informed us NOT to write about death (because they already explained it as an example).

Yes, I have a fear of death. But not mine. The fear of death of a loved one, i.e. losing people, losing your loved ones. Losing your loved ones is suffocating. The thought of losing my friends, mom, dad, sister, everyone... is like I'm left in a darkroom of misery. We put so much effort not to lose the people. Sometimes, I would be like, 'Are they even worthy of it?' I especially put a lot of effort into not losing the persons, that, in the process, I lose myself.

Yeah, I found it! My fear, my fearful fear, my fearful, fearful, fearful fear. "Losing Myself". As the thought of losing myself is input in my brain, the only output is 'Extrovert to Introvert, Childish to Mature, Artist to not-an-artist, Creative to Non-Creative, Logical to practical, and at the last, Fear of losing loved ones to Fear of losing Myself'. In the process of this, I have a fear that, will my parents lose trust in me? Being a family of four, we share every loss and gain, happiness and sorrow, and especially love. Being the second (and the youngest) child of a happy home, my parents used to trust me a lot, as I was creative and scored good marks at school. But do they still trust me? I have no answer. If, if, if they had lost trust in me, I am nothing! NOTHING!! I don't want to be nothing, especially to my parents.

~Greeshma

R210026



FEAR

The word fear translates to something that you are afraid of. Something that stops you from being what you want to be. Something that holds you back. This is what fear meant to me earlier.

But what about the fear of losing someone? It prevents you from making new connections. Just think for a moment, the person who means a lot to you, whom you feel that you have a great connection with, will no longer be the same as earlier. What if that person becomes a complete stranger to you? This thought itself is unimaginable.

Many of us have a fear of darkness, fear of ghosts, fear of animals like monkeys, snakes, etc. Maybe this kind of fear can be overcome by seeking help from others or some therapy or some sort of thing like that. Similarly, is there any way to overcome this fear of losing someone? Can a person with such a fear be able to have friends? Or, can a person with such a fear get into a relationship...?

Your answer might be NO...

But, what if I tell you, maybe there is a way that could help you if you are someone with such a fear? Yeah, this kind of fear can be overcome, through care, little changes in your thoughts, being good to yourself, having a mindset where you feel *even you* mean a lot to someone, where you feel or think that people care for you even more than you care for them and they don't want to lose you either. This kind of mindset can help you overcome such a fear.

If you come across a person with such a fear, be good to them. Spread love, your small act of kindness could make someone's day way better.

In conclusion, You should not let your fear stop you, rule you, or haunt you. You should be able to overcome your fear and achieve your goals, embrace the randomness, and enjoy life since nothing is permanent. Most importantly, find happiness and peace in no matter what you do.

~Veena Madhuri

R210218

The EVIL – The STRANGER

In the infinite universe and the cosmos of the galaxies, we think that we are the only creatures with advanced technology even though we have a high chance of the existence of other creatures on other planets. Not only the natural born planets, we also have a chance of the artificial planets. And there is one like this which has more highly advanced technology than our planet Earth, where we live.

One ordinary day, their advanced technology began behaving in an unprecedented and unsettling manner which led them to discover an asteroid that led them to the spot where a little bit of destruction seemed like it happened 3–4 days back. After fetching it to the laboratory, they discovered it was interrupting the electric signals and magnetic waves. That's the reason why they couldn't find the asteroid even after possessing such type of technology. We humans are able to find an asteroid that is a billion kilometers away, its path, and the elements it's composed of, but why couldn't find these? To find out why, they initialized the process of degrading the big stone into a small one. To some extent, they had done but thereafter no matter how much they were trying, it didn't show any changes in the size of it. Suddenly a massive spaceship appeared in front of their plane and a voice came out in such a way that it would turn one into pieces of flesh. Not caring to listen to their warnings, they tried but suddenly the spaceship causes the end of their existence. Somehow 6 members managed to escape from their attack. Meanwhile, the asteroid levitated in the air and was transported into the Amazon forests of the Earth. At that time World War II was happening on the Earth. And all this stuff came in a dream to Charlie.

To be Continued...

*~Charlie
R210015*



BOUND BY BATTLE

A Saga of Three Friends

It's a very pleasant morning with the blooming flowers and hummingbirds in the streets of Shantipura. Shantipura is a very beautiful village surrounded by mountains, and covered with greenery and small lakes. An 18-year-old boy named Krish is running in the streets of Shantipura to meet his friends and has been stopped by a group of people and told to take another road to reach his destination. They are wearing a white jacket and white track pants with a black snake symbol on their back and chest. On seeing the symbol, the boy didn't dare to question them. The road he was taking to meet his friends is now the new fight hub of the team Black Mamba. Unlike the name of the village Shantipura, the village is only popular for its crimes. In every story, in a situation like this, a hero emerges and takes down all the bad guys to establish peace in society. But unfortunately, no one is strong enough to beat the team Black Mamba and the people of Shantipura have to obey them at all costs. The Black Mamba gang has the power to establish new rules in the area. The only way to get rid of them is to challenge them for a fight. The one who wins the match gets the chance to establish rules and they can take the authority to rule the entire Shantipura. But until now, whoever challenged Black Mambas, has never won. The main reason for this is that the Black Mambas have mainly 3 divisions. The 3rd division is led by the brother of Mambas' captain Antony, the 2nd division is led by the vice-captain Shimbhu and finally, the 1st division is led by the captain, Jason himself. These three people made the Black Mambas the undisputed champion in Shantipura. While thinking all this our boy Krish has reached his friend's place. Krish, James, and Kabir are childhood friends. James went to Mumbai for his education and returned to Shantipura after a long time. They planned to enjoy the holiday together. When they were walking they saw the members of the Black Mamba attacking the people of Shantipura for not paying the commission

of their monthly income. The people of Shantipura have to pay 30 percent of their income to the Black Mambas. One who doesn't pay would be punished. The three boys watched them in silence as they were not capable of saving the innocent people. They walked away silently and they witnessed another activity that changed the fate of Shantipura. They saw James's father had been beaten up for disobeying their orders. The boys tried to stop them but they were too weak to save James's father. With that incident, James decided to defeat them in a fight and he wanted to share it with Krish and Kabir.

'James, don't think too much. It's very common here. We can't do anything,' said Kabir.

'What? Getting beaten up by someone? And it's common here? Are you out of your mind? How can someone just come and beat my father for not obeying someone's orders? Did he think he is the king of Shantipura?' asked James.

'Yes, he is. He is the king of Shantipura. No one will go against his orders. If anyone disobeys them, they have to face the consequences,' said Krish.

'What? How can he be the king? Where is the police and the government? What are they doing? How can we get rid of him?' asked James.

'He is the dictator of Shantipura. He is the king, the government, the police, and everything. If anyone wants to get rid of him, then they have to fight with the Black Mambas and win three consecutive matches. Then they will get the power to rule Shantipura,' said Krish.

'Ok. Now I get it. I am going to change the fate of Shantipura. *I* will challenge them,' said James.

'What? Are you out of your mind? You don't even stand a chance of survival against them. They are older and stronger than us,' said Kabir.

'Yeah, you are right. They are strong. But being strong doesn't mean whatever they do is correct. I am going to challenge them even if you guys are not by my side,' said James.

With these words, Krish saw his fantasy hero in James and he thought, if no one comes forward why can't we be the starting point for a big task?

'James, I am coming with you,' he said.

'What!' Exclaimed Kabir.

'But it's not the right time to challenge them. With our strength and skills, we don't even have a one percent chance of winning. Our determination to defeat them and to bring peace shouldn't go in vain. We have to become stronger, stronger, and stronger. We have to reach a level where we have the highest chance of victory,' said Krish.

'But how? Is that even possible?' asked Kabir

'Yes, it is. But it takes some time, determination, consistency, hard work, and faith... *this* is the cost. Are you ready?' asked Krish

"Yeah!" echoed James and Kabir.

To be continued...

*~El ensueño
R210418*

BLACK HOLE

Most of us (if not all) have come across the word, Black Hole, at some point in time. What is it? Many of us know that too. What leads to its formation? What happens inside it, or what happens at the moment of its formation, is a little discussed topic. Reason: either it's too scholarly, or, too dreamlike to be real, or it's just one of the many theories. So is the topic of its evaporation, or Death (if you let me be a little dramatic).

What is a Black Hole?

First things first, it's not a hole in the ground, or wall, where mice live. It's a celestial body in space, just like a star (living), a planet, or natural satellites and asteroids are. Why the name Black Hole? We'll get to that soon.

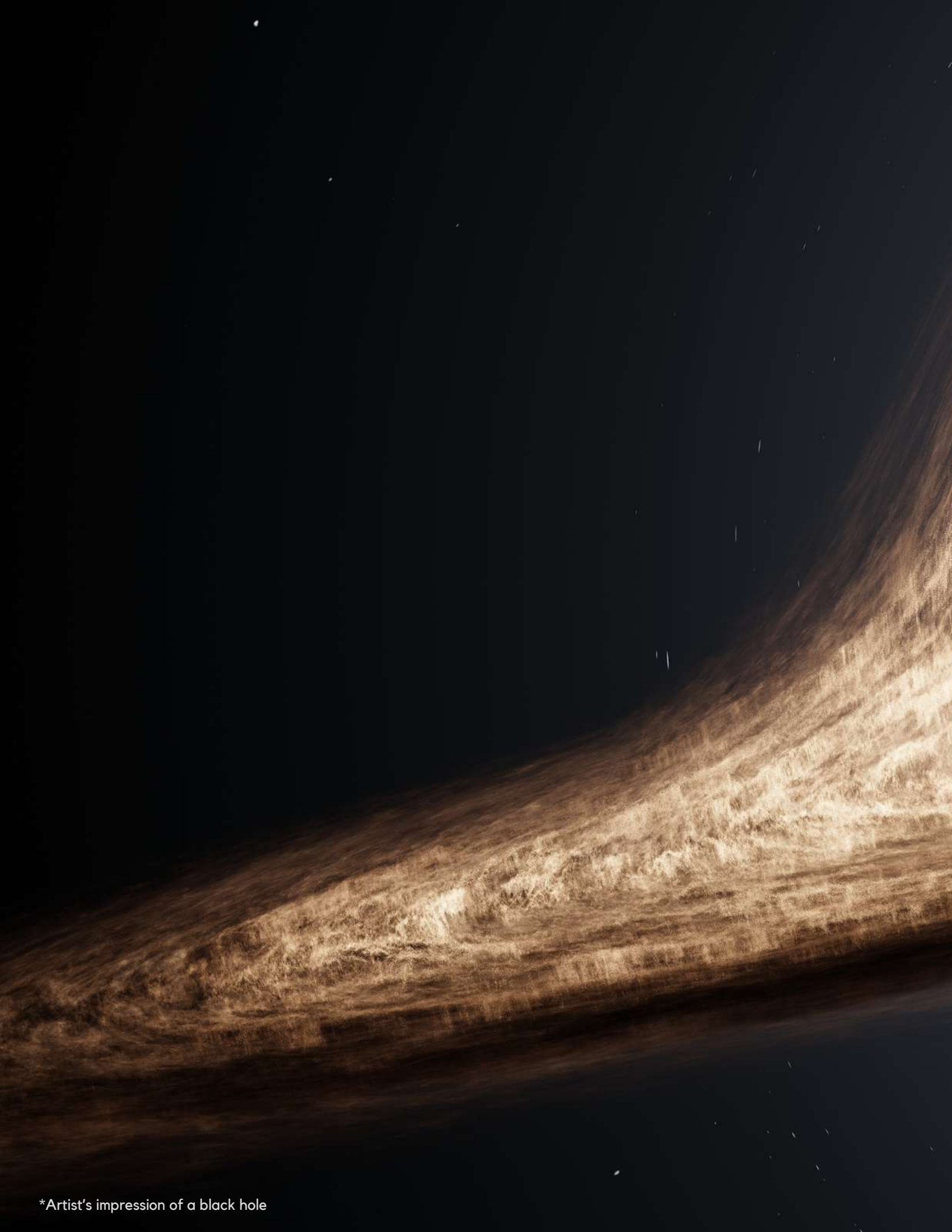
The Death of a Star

The stars form when the gases (mostly hydrogen) collide and come closer. The more the number of hydrogen atoms, the faster a star forms. The colliding hydrogen atoms, after a certain point, fuse to form helium, releasing energies in the range of a

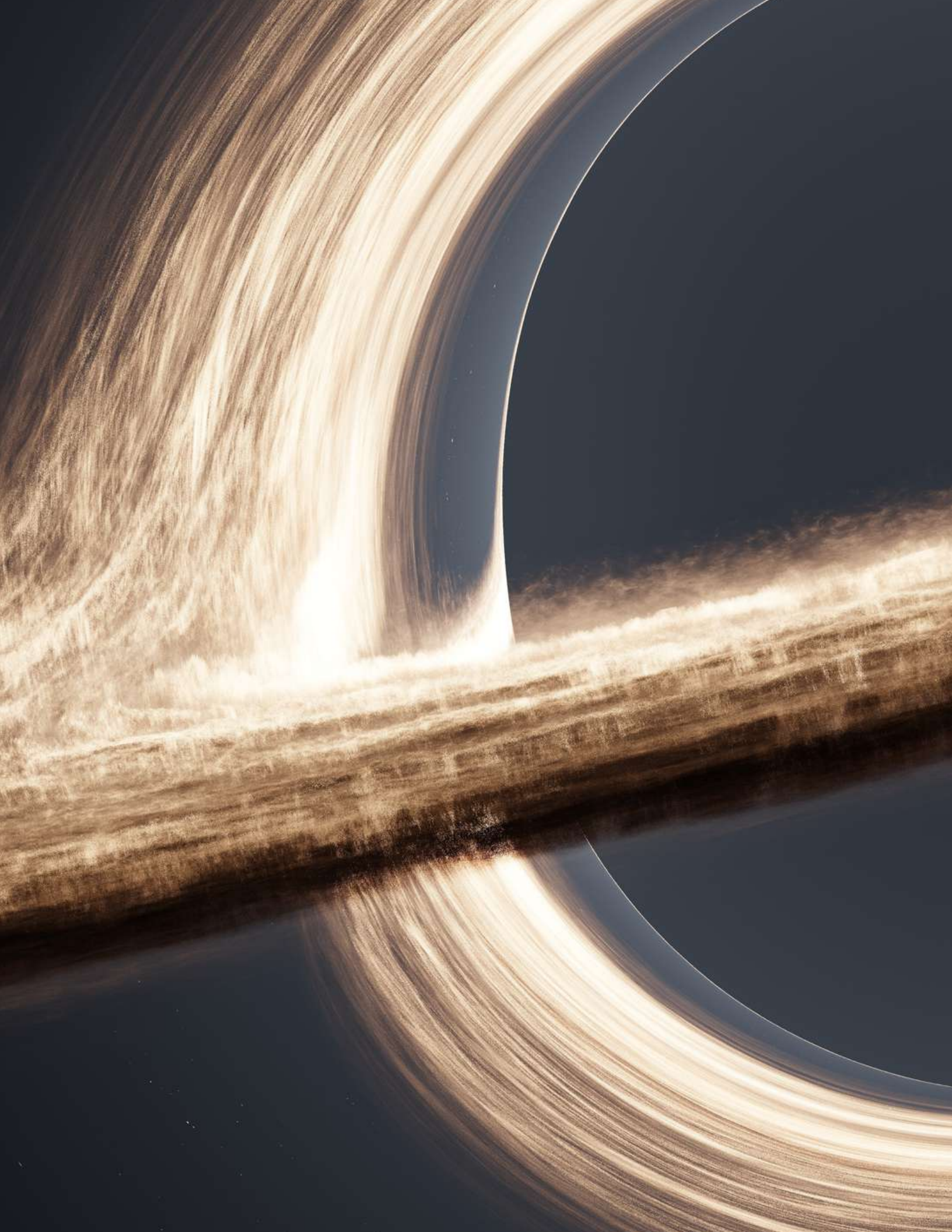


controlled hydrogen bomb. This energy, in the form of heat, is what makes the stars shine. The gravitational force of the star pulls the star inward, and the energy released from the fusion, or the thermonuclear pressure (in scientific terms), pushes it outward. Thus, the two forces balance each other.

This process goes on and the helium atoms further fuse to form another heavy element, until the core becomes of Iron. At this point, the atoms can no longer fuse to form heavier elements. Thus, there is no energy released due to fusion, dubbed as the fuel of the star, that opposes the gravitational force.



*Artist's impression of a black hole



Consequently, the star collapses on itself due to its huge gravitational pull towards the center forming — black hole? Not always.

Chandrasekhar and Oppenheimer

In 1928, Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, an Indian physicist, born in Lahore, designed a limit, for the stars with masses comparable to that of our Sun, at which they collapse to form dense stellar masses, called the White Dwarfs. But he could not predict what happens to the stars with masses more than the limit, now known as the Chandrasekhar Limit.

In the late 1930s, Robert Oppenheimer, an American physicist, with Volkoff, worked out the limit of the atomic nucleus. The stars with mass greater than the Chandrasekhar limit would form Neutron stars, with a density of hundreds of millions of tons per cubic inch. (Take some time to imagine how heavy that could be). Further, they established the Tolman-Oppenheimer-Volkoff limit, beyond which, the stars would collapse catastrophically to form a Space-Time Singularity, or in common language, a Black Hole.

What's all the fuss about it?

Well, the big problem (or thrill?) is that it is the weirdo of the group. The laws of physics break down in a Black Hole. No one, not even a physicist, knows what's going on. Anyone who knows can never tell it to others. Anything that goes, can never come back (if it comes back) in the same shape or size or any other property. It is as unsettling as it is exciting.

A black hole bends the fabric of space in such a way that (almost) a hole forms in the space. The gravitational pull of a black hole is so strong that it swallows everything that crosses its event horizon. Event Horizon is the boundary of no escape. It's the region of no return. Analogous to the Haunted House at the end of the lane. Except that, instead of being at the end, Black Holes are ubiquitous in the centers of every galaxy and can form anywhere with stars having mass greater than the TOV limit.

And the pull is so strong, that a black hole swallows everything from your smartphone or gaming console to home or spaceship to planets or stars.

"Not. Even. Light. Can. Escape. The. Gravitational. Pull. Of. A. Black. Hole."

Since time is not absolute in relativity, one experiences things differently at different distances near a black hole. Let us consider two astronauts, one of them near the event horizon of a black hole and the other one, observing from far away. As the former astronaut gets closer to the black hole, he appears to slow down and when he crosses the event horizon, his movement stops, through the perspective of the observer. As time is relativistic and therefore slower at heavier objects, a few seconds for the falling astronaut would be an eternity to the observer. The falling astronaut would see the universe around him move in fast-forward; i.e. if he can observe things before falling, which is quite impractical as the black hole would pull him inside in no time.

An Insider's View

There is no certain insider's view. Only speculations. The moment you cross the event horizon, you'll be sucked in and torn apart into atoms! Well, that depends on the size of a black hole. If a black hole is massive enough, you will be able to enter the black hole, considerably unharmed. What happens to things that fall inside? No one knows. You'll probably see all the things that fell into it. But, it will only be until you get close enough to the singularity — the point where all the mass of a black hole is concentrated. But, if the black hole is small, you will be squeezed into it and reduced to strands of atoms, which Stephen Hawking, one of the greatest physicists of our time, fondly called Sphagettification. Hawking also suggests that you might end up in another universe, through the other side of a black hole.

As singularities are highly unstable and are rarely found 'naked', i.e. without a black hole, there is an alternative kind of region at the center of black holes, a ringularity. Most of the stars in the universe are rotating stars, and hence the black hole forming from these, forms a ringularity, a ring-like singularity. A more practical solution.

Black Hole Has No Hair

Moreover, its size and shape would depend only on its mass and rate of rotation, and not on the nature of the body that had collapsed to form it. This result became known by the maxim: 'A black hole has no hair.' The 'no hair' theorem is of great practical importance, because it so greatly restricts the possible types of black holes.¹

Hawking Radiation

We now know that anything that crosses the event horizon, can never come out again (Well, not from the same end of the black hole). But what about the matter around the event horizon? Hawking theorized that just like everywhere else in the empty space, the region



around the black hole would also generate quantum vacuum fluctuations and a pair of matter-antimatter particles would 'blip' into existence. One of these particles falls inside the event horizon, whereas the other can go to infinity. This is Hawking Radiation. As this process goes on, and the black hole becomes smaller and smaller, the rate of radiation released becomes faster and faster. This causes the black hole to lose energy and thus mass, eventually evaporating to nothingness. But, this process is so slow that it would take in the range of 10^{100} years for a black hole to evaporate.

¹ A Brief History of Time, Stephen Hawking

~Anghil Karamala
R200804



The Social Butterfly

Long ago, there was a boy named Ishan, who had an insatiable curiosity and a deep desire to connect with people from all walks of life. He was so loquacious. Ishan believed that by forging the new connections, he could learn about different cultures, and perspectives and get a lot of experience.

The young boy, with his genuine smile and open heart, embarked on a journey to meet as many people as he could. He attended many social gatherings, joined clubs, and even traveled to far-off places. **He was like a social butterfly, flitting from one convo to another...**

At first, Ishan's eagerness to connect with the different people brought him joy. But as time went on, he started to feel the weight of it all.

You see, trying to connect with so many people had its downsides too. Ishan found himself struggling to maintain those connections. It was like a never-ending juggling act. But Still, Ishan's desire to connect with others remained strong. He understood the consequences of spreading himself too thin, but he couldn't deny the joy he found in meeting new people and learning from their experiences...

The young boy couldn't escape the reality that true connection requires time, effort, and emotional investment. He learned that it's not about the **quantity** of connections, but the **quality**. It's about having those deep, meaningful relationships that really matter.

He had almost forgotten the fact that the most important relationship of all –is

the one with himself. He realized that the true connection is in the one within. Feeling lost and depleted, Ishan took a step back to reevaluate his priorities. He learned that the true connection begins with oneself. From that point on, he started putting more time and effort into a few relationships, rather than trying to spread himself too thin. And you know what? It made a world of difference. He found that by investing in those special connections, he felt more fulfilled and satisfied...

It's better to be a kind of **sweet spot** instead of a **hotspot**. Like, instead of remaining available for everyone throughout the time, be available for the right ones.

What matters most is how you feel about it. If connecting with a lot of people brings you joy, fulfillment, and valuable experiences, then just go for it! Remember it's very important to be a **good listener** and a **good speaker** too!!!

See being open-minded, approachable, and a bit more expressive is not that bad, Just be true to yourself, and let your genuine intentions shine through. Ultimately, the people who truly matter will appreciate and value you for who you are.

"True connections touch the deepest parts of our souls, creating a symphony of emotions that resonate within us. They are the kind of connections that make our hearts skip a beat and bring tears of joy to our eyes. These connections are like stars in the night sky, guiding us through the darkness and reminding us of the beauty that exists in the world. They are rare and precious, and when we find them, we should hold onto them with all our might."

So, go out there, connect with others, and embrace the adventure of building connections!!!!

*In the world
of algorithms.
hashtags
and followers.
know the true importance
of human connections. . .*

*~ Raghavi Priya
R210649*

TWO WORLDS

A guy named Rian, who had a disorder of experiencing Déjà vu at least once a day, lived with his grandma in a valley near a large field of flowers, surrounded by golden hills. Rian had a lot of friends. He has a special attraction towards butterflies and vice versa. Because every time he goes out, a lot of butterflies fly to him.

One day, he and his friends think of going out and so they do. That day Rian was feeling unusual and was experiencing a lot of déjà vu, but he ignored it. Suddenly, everything around him stopped and only the butterflies were moving. They showed him a way to a place where there was a window on land with a rope to reach another world having dark night and small lightning coming from a spot. Rian was shocked for a while and when he turned back, suddenly a crone ran towards him and pushed him into that world. Then Rian became unconscious and when he woke up, a bevy of undead creatures chased him. He thought they were zombies, but they weren't. Rian was frightened and started running and suddenly a massive beast ran face to face towards him. Rian feels helpless and trapped so he stops running. Meanwhile, the beast comes to save him from those creatures and takes him to the lightning spot, which was nothing but a castle, and then the beast begins to say, "Hey little boy, this was the kingdom named EDEN where the demon named Asmodeus was the king who was a molester and killed girls abusively. Everyone in the kingdom was afraid of him and never went against him. There was only one family, that was against the king, consisting of a mother having a son and a daughter. The girl loved her brother a lot so did the boy. She loved butterflies a lot. So one day they went to the flower yard to play with butterflies where the king saw the girl and tried to abuse her then the son and mother tried to save her but couldn't. Then the mother curses the whole kingdom that all people who weren't against him along with the king become undead and live in a world no one can reach until everyone turns kind and is

ready to turn others kind, then a pure souled person can reach the swing and acquit them... However, the demon killed and buried the family. The family reincarnated and the boy was you who came to save us and save the whole world from other devils". Then Rian reaches the swing and emancipates them, then suddenly this world merges into the real world and the rusty skies turn into beautiful golden colors and they turn everyone into pure and kind souls. The name Rian itself means a pure souled king... Hope this happens in real life to save everyone from demons hidden in human souls.

~Shehanaz
R211038

Musings of A Studious Girl

It is a story of a studious girl from a middle-class family. The girl was raised with love and care by her family. She was not a princess but she was treated as one by her father. She wasn't just any other bright student, she was unique. Her intelligence grew stronger every day like fire, fueled by new knowledge. Her academic abilities were well-known both in her school and community. She was admired for her talent in education and was recognized and respected by everyone around her. Have you ever been taken aback by a stranger recognizing you? It feels surprising. But this is a common experience for her.

But everything in this world comes at a price, and so did her fame. Sometimes, on late nights when everyone was sleeping, she used to wonder if she was being good enough. She questioned whether she was doing things right, and what would happen if she failed. How would she face everyone? For some people, the concept of failing in exams is known as failing. However, for others who have always maintained the top position, anything less than that feels like a failure. This could include coming in second place or even having a tie with another student.

She often questioned herself if all the hard work she put in was worth it, leaving others' opinions. Was it worth the time and energy she invested in it? She had missed out on several opportunities in sports or other activities with her friends. It's understandable that sometimes she would wonder about the value of her academic achievements. While she received praise for her hard work and dedication, it seemed as though it was quickly forgotten. As the years passed and the demands continued to grow, she began to question whether her grades and academic accomplishments would even matter in the huge world. It's easy to feel like our efforts have no value when we consider the vastness of time and life. She felt as if she was working this hard all the time for almost nothing.

She never had a specific goal in her life. It wasn't because someone restricted her; she had always been free to do whatever she wanted. However, she was no longer interested in setting and achieving any particular goal. Instead, she started to go with the flow of time and situation. It took her a long time to realize that while she was focused on her studies, she had missed out on the joys of childhood. The age where one is supposed to make beautiful memories has already passed. When others chatted about the beautiful memories of their childhood, she realized that she had nothing to share except her academic achievements.

No one can live like a robot, but she always found happiness in simple things. While most people enjoyed watching the sunrise, she found the sunset more endearing. To her, the sunset symbolized the end of a long day, a time when all creatures, not just humans, returned home to reunite with their families and relax. Everyone likes full moon days while she likes new moon days. The beauty of millions of stars can be seen on new moon days, unlike full moon days, when the moon just reflects sunlight overpowering the natural, light-emitting stars. To her, the world is so beautiful and full of nature's creations. She always felt connected to nature. Whenever she felt down or when she was confused or indecisive, she just took a walk around in a calm place. It relaxed her mind and helped her in making better decisions.

She always preferred to study alone most of the time and never relied on others. Not only in studies but she always does all her work by herself. It is not because she is afraid to ask others. It's just that she has always studied alone and got habituated to staying alone. She doesn't know if she would change her past if she goes back but she hopes that she wouldn't focus solely on her studies and would also appreciate the beauty of life. But she still does the same because once someone enters the competitive world of studies, there is no going back, because of factors like prestige. That's the story of a studious girl from a middle-class family.

~Araritha Singam
R210085

THE DIARY OF A GHOST

This year the summer was way hotter than any other year. So me and my friends planned on a vacation to Darjeeling. We started forenoon so that we could reach there early and start enjoying our vacation.

On our way to Darjeeling, we reached a dense forest and the sun was about to set. The fog began to get thicker and thicker such that we couldn't help but stop the car aside. So we abandoned our car and ran into the forest because one of my friends (Satya) was thirsty. After walking for 2 miles into the forest, we encountered a waterfall and a beautiful bungalow. We entered the bungalow out of curiosity. It was completely contrasting inside than outside. For example, the exterior looked like a modern bungalow but the look inside the bungalow was too old and it looked like the house of a hunter. We concluded that it was not a normal bungalow because we saw a room full of human skeletons there. All our hearts became cold after that visual. We ran to the hall to escape from that bungalow. But it was no use. The doors were locked. Suddenly the lights began to blink and that's it. Everyone screamed like they were in hell and started kicking the door. Luckily, the door opened.

We headed back to our vehicle but none of us could remember the route back to the car. We decided to leave the place as soon as possible. So we split ourselves and started searching for the road. In our search, I ran into a cave full of drawings and called my friends through cell phone (luckily there was a signal in the forest). Those paintings seemed like fossils but not exactly like them. Surprisingly, we saw a map that led us to the road. But I don't know why I had a strange feeling about the cave. As we got our route back, we headed back to our car and left the nasty and horrible forest. The first after that terrible night passed. I felt a little bit of strange behavior in my friends and after the second

day, I confirmed that my friends were behaving strangely after that night. On asking Nikhil about the secret between him and Ranga, he told every secret he knew about Ranga. This confirmed my theory that my friends are not my friends anymore because Nikhil is the most trustworthy than any other, he's not the kind of person who sells out his friends' trust. That made me make the bravest decision of my life. To go back to that forest. I took all my precautions and entered the forest and after a while, I reached the bungalow.

I took the main door and searched the bungalow for some info. After searching for one and a half hours I saw a diary whose cover page shocked me more than anything before because there was my name on that coverpage. Not only my name but also everything that happened to me after visiting this forest was written in the diary. But I was stunned by one line written on the last page- "After all ! I died along with my friends". That line raised so many confusions in my mind, "Are my friends dead? Am I going to die here?" After all those thoughts in my mind, I thought my head was going to burst for sure.

After some time, I don't know why, I remembered about the cave and started running to it. The cave was so mysterious so I started observing it clearly. After observing all the encryptions on the walls of the cave I concluded that the bungalow was not haunted but was cursed. Any person who enters it will die within 4 days. In that case, I have only 1 day left. Keeping that in my mind, I started going deeper into the cave. My legs stopped moving and I don't why my eyes were filled with tears and my heart kept on raising its weight. I couldn't accept what was in front of me. I collapsed where I stood and started crying "Why...? Why...? Why it has to be them? Satya, Ranga, Dileep, Nikhil..... " My friends are in the worst possible condition. They are dead.

After crying for hours and hours, I made a decision not to die. At least not in a place like this. And I want my friends to have a proper burial. I started looking for the solution in that cave. In the end, my assumption was true. There was a solution to prevent my death, and that was by burning that diary. But it's already night and I had only a few hours left before the 4 days due. I began my walk to the bungalow. I faced many traps and successfully reached the bungalow.

When I opened the door, the bungalow gave me chills. I headed to the room where the diary was located. It's getting cooler when I'm reaching the room. Finally, I reached the room and opened the door, the visual inside the room gave me goosebumps. There's an old lady sitting in the chair and writing the diary and I felt like this situation was arranged especially for me to get killed by her. I had no choice but to surrender. The old lady asked me "Hey brat! Do you have any last wish? " and I replied, "Yes! I do. I want my friends to have a proper burial." I don't know why, but suddenly I felt so warm and got a feeling that someone was hitting me.

After a pause, I opened my eyes and started dancing and shouting "IT WAS A DREAM....!!" And the warmth I felt earlier was because I wet my bed! That's the worst nightmare I ever had.

~ Siddhartha
R210333

If I could go to the Past

If I had a chance to go to the year 2014, which was when I was 8 years old, I would like to change some things that I remember. Because I don't know how my childhood went. I don't remember all things but some of them still run in my mind.

My family is an ordinary Middle class family and I have two siblings. I missed my elder sister in my childhood. When I was eight, she was apart from us. She lives with my grandmother in another village, so I don't have many memories with her. So, I would quickly bring her back to our home and play a lot of games with her, want to build so many memories with her.

Coming to my childhood friends, I would go to them and slap their faces (just kidding). But if I found them now, I would really slap them because I don't know where they are now.

Another one is, I don't have many pics from my childhood, and the total count of the photos is less than five. If anyone shows their childhood photos and asks me to show my childhood pics I feel a bit sad, because you know the reason. I want to see how I was and my cute little face too. So, if I go back I would tell to my parents to click so many photos and store them carefully so that I can glance at them as much as I can. Seriously, I want to do it badly if it's possible.

I love dancing, that too Bharatanatyam. But I can't learn at that time due to some valid concerns. It's my dream to learn Bharatanatyam and want to perform in a dance show. Especially in temples. So if go back, I would tell to my 8 year old self, "Learn Bharatanatyam. It will change your future." And would tell the same to my parents too. But I don't think that it will happen now. Moreover, that's ok!!

Whenever I think about my childhood, it brings me a smile on my face. Because my relatives and my parents used to tell me that I made a lot of stuff which made them feel I am too crazy and naughty. Some memories are unforgettable, remaining ever and heartwarming!..

Apart from these, I want to tell my younger self, "Life is so hard, and being a girl you need to face a lot of things. Be Strong my girl. Don't trust anyone easily. Because the one whom you trust, will hurt you and harm you. But don't think you are alone. You have your mom and sister. There is no one in this world except them who can love you more than them.

"I wish someone could tell,
"Wake up! Wake up..! We are still in 2014.
It's just a dream!!!"

~Akshita K.
R210494

THE ECHOES OF MY SOUL

Where should I start from? Some stories begin with happiness and end with sadness. What's the beginning of my story? Finding goals to achieve, and integrating relations—I don't know where I've gone wrong. I couldn't hear the voice of my soul!

I think everyone wishes for happiness from God in their lives and to protect their loved ones, at least once in a lifetime. There hasn't been a time when I didn't ask, "God..! Are you there? I'm waiting here, please listen to me!" I used to curse God for denying my pleas. In a world where no one seemed to care, I questioned why God needed to help me. I realized that every single move has a major impact, and blaming myself for the problems I face only deepens the pain. True happiness comes from embracing one's authentic self; one can never achieve it by hurting oneself. Then, I realized that getting surrounded by life tasks, one needs to build the 'Self'.

Once, I thought this was a big-big world which is enough for everyone to live in, but now I know it isn't big enough for everyone to sustain in. "We live in a world where life is a beautiful lie and death is a painful truth." You need to live your entire life to understand this.

When you try to do something you must, you need to go far and work hard. Sometimes, despite all your efforts, it feels like nothing matters. Maybe that's why people sometimes contemplate ending their lives. But I've realized that we need to find a reason to live, not just a reason not to die. Live for yourself.

Ever since I learned about the real world and its challenges, I've understood the importance of growth. It's crucial not to let circumstances hinder your progress. Not everything or everyone deserves your vibe.

Many of us aren't born with a silver spoon, but we strive to ensure our children have a better life. My parents did the same for me, and I'm grateful to God if He's the reason behind blessing me with such parents. Any parent would wish his/her child to lead a better life. They won't let us face the problems that they've already faced.

Overthinking—everyone says it makes you a slave, losing consciousness. While I won't deny it completely, I've made the right choices many times. Yet, there are decisions I regret even today. You can't lead a life filled with regrets; it's essential to learn from mistakes and move forward.

"Carry your scars with no shame...!"

When I reminisce about the best times, all I see are my failures and tears. But the realization that I carry my soul with me until death has made me who I am. My soul now maintains an equilibrium between my sorrows and joys. Sometimes, you need to listen to the echoes of your soul to illuminate life's darkness.

Your story can never be complete if it's all about yourself...!

~Jaswanth Yadav K.
R210258



An Inception-Like Dream

INDIA, 2019 CE.

'It all feels like Deja Vu,' I tell my friend, seated beside me on the bus. I and a friend were traveling on our school bus. I was on the alley-seat and he, the window-seat.

'Do you know about Jinns?' he asks all of a sudden, breaking my reverie.

'What do you know about them?' I give him a counter-question.

'Well... They are made of blazing fire and smoke and ash, for a fact.'

'And?'

'That's all. I've heard of a person possessed by one yesterday. Can't get my mind off it since last night.'

'Well, there are also other things to know from the trivia. Something like their food, their homes, their bodies, and such stuff...'

'You know all that stuff?'

'I've heard things. Just like you said you did yesterday.'

'Tell me all you know about 'em!' He said, wide-eyed.

'Hmm... They have an unnatural size ability, they, or a specific part of their body, grow large on their will. They can also fit in a rat hole. they, like some living beings such as animals, prefer drinking blood. And their food is meat and bones. So be careful when you go near discarded bones or dead animals, it's not a joke that they're harmful. Who knows, which Jinn might be eating or drinking there!' I explain, pointing to a bunch of bones dumped by the street.

He swallows.

'It all feels like Deja Vu!' I tell him. My head feels heavy. 'It's a dream.' I tell myself, to alleviate my quick breaths and pounding heart, 'It's all a dream. I just need to wake up and everything will be over. I just need to make myself wake

up, and I would not have to be fearful of anything.'

I feel a little better as I close my eyes and feel the breeze coming through the window.

The noises of the bus feel indistinct and distant.

ANCIENT GREECE, 300 BCE.

I open my eyes to a huge castle barely in sight, in the dark blue night. The turrets are ablaze with yellow lights. The grey castle walls call home. The road to the castle has a lamp here and there. But the moon and the stars are the actual torches.

'Cletus must be on guard now at the Gate, don't you reckon Theo?' I ask Theodore, rubbing on my stubble.

'Must be him,' Theo agrees. He increased the speed of the cart we were traveling on.

'What happened?'

'The King's cart has been disappeared. It was here just before the bend we just passed.

We gotta move quick to catch up to them.'

'But, can you see the King's cart?'

'No. Nowhere in eyesight. Do you think they were decoyed by something?'

'That's hard to believe. His Majesty, Antiochus, was in a hurry to reach home after an utter victory.'

'He had to be. Apart from the few riders, we were only a handful of soldiers. And we scared off those *kefáliskatás*. It's a time to celebrate.'

'That, it is.' I smile.

But that smile soon vanishes as the wind becomes still. The leaves don't flutter. The air is silent.

For a while, we don't hear a word. Clouds gather in the sky. The ground trembles as the clouds rumble.

'Zeus is welcoming us home!' I scream and Theo joins me.

But I don't believe it. A lightning strikes on our left. We speed our way to the castle.

Stones fall away to the fields as we increase our pace. We enter the dark side from the moonlit side of the way. A hare crosses our path. Theo slows the cart down to lift his bow and shoot it.

'Don't halt. We can have plenty of game when we reach the Castle. We'll have enough to fill our bellies and more than that.' I touch his shoulder. He drops the bow and quickens the pace.

The storm picks up and I see a vulture coming from my west. I sweat in the storm. The road gets bumpy and the cart deviates from the path and cuts across the field. We stop by a rock. There is another cart, halted just a few paces away. We move toward it to see no one's in it.

Another lightning behind us. Another rumble to chill our spines. The lightning shows the pattern of the cart.

'The Kings cart??' Theo asks in apprehension.

I nod in suspicion. 'Look around. They must have fallen somewhere near.'

'Aye.'

We searched around to find no one there.

'What's that?' Theo asks.

'A swing.'

'I know. But, why here? I never saw that before.'

'Neither did I.'

'What—'

'Be quiet and stealth.' I step cautiously, Theo following closely behind.

'Someone's on it!'

Someone is sitting on it in white flowing robes.

'Looks like a Seer,' I tell him. Theo nods and we move closer to her. Her hands were wrinkled, her face looked as old as the land itself.

We confront her and ask, 'O ye! Seer of the temple of The Mighty Zeus, do you know where our Lord, King Antiochus is?'

'I do,' she replies with a rasp in her voice.

'Where is He? Please, do tell us.'

She doesn't give us any answer but starts mumbling. Her eyes are out of focus. We move closer still and as soon as I try to move her, she lifts her head.

Her eyes are wide open and her tooth bare and few. The crone raises her voice reciting something in a strange language. We try to move back, but it's too late. She pushes her hands forward, a lightning appears in the sky. It surges towards us. And before we know it, her bony hands push hard on our chests, the lightning strikes, and I see the dark blue sky before eternal darkness befalls us.

SOMEWHERE, SOMETIME.

'You know what, I had a couple of crazy dreams. But what piques my interest is that it was a dream inside another dream.' I tell my brother, my arm around his shoulder.

'No way! That sounds so cool!'

'Right?'

'Yeah. Totally. I wanna hear all about it.' 'I'll tell you once we reach home.'

'Sure thing.'

He and I walk through the entrance gate of our house. The clouds are fiery red, the color of blood. The gate creaks as the wind pushes it in. A huge Oak tree stands between the house and the gate. Leaves run and dance on the floor. On the pathway leading to the house stood a shady truck. We talk merrily and don't pay any heed to the truck or what might be inside the tarp. A stir near the truck makes us stand still on our trail. We look around. Nothing's in sight.

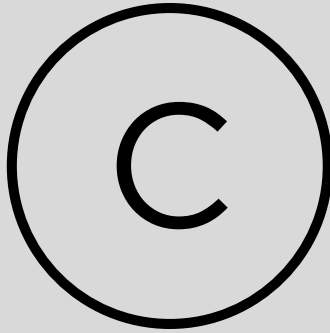
The tarp moves slightly and a heavy arm creeps out of it. Another arm. Two horns. A large head appears next, burning and black, like molten lava. Before we can react, a massive beast, tall as two men and broad as four men lunges on us. I don't know what to do. What can I do now? I must protect my brother. We have to run. We cannot overpower such a huge undead monster of hell. I seize



my brother's arm and sprint back out. The beast chases us down the street.

'We cannot outrun it at this pace.' I urge my brother to run faster. We take a diversion to the left. The beast chases us down there too. I see a metal rod with a sharp edge and clutch it and as soon as it comes behind us, I plunge it inside its chest. The beast groans loudly and takes the rod out while I force my brother to run away. He hesitates a moment before sprinting at his best speed. I run behind him, thinking of ways to hide or outrun, as defeating the beast seems no way near to reality. I feel a hand bringing me down to the ground. My chin cracks and I taste iron. I crawl away. The beast lunges forward and drags me back. I look up to find my brother nowhere in sight. I wish he was somewhere safe, I think, looking at the thundering and lightning and the rusty skies behind the fiery monster, the last thing I'll ever see.

~Aaqhil Karamala
R200804



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p. 12- Neelima P Aryan.
p. 21 - NASA Hubble
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pp. 25, 30 - Kurzgesagt.
pp. 25, 28 - 30 - Olena
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