**Describe the most significant challenge you have faced and the steps you have taken to overcome this challenge. How has this challenge affected your academic achievement? (350 words)**

Staring at the paint chipping off the white walls washed out by the LED lights, I sat with my mom next to me as the sterility of the room overwhelmed me. Silence filled the room. Anxiously awaiting the doctor to say something. “Your daughter has an ovarian tumor”.

It felt as though an alternate reality came into play in a snap as I walked out of those doors.

The next few months were filled with fear and uncertainty, having to abruptly move back from my boarding school in England. Stomach cramps, heavy medication, and doctor visits seem to be the common cycle. Burdened by the pressure of having exams in 7 months time. Yet neither able exercise nor spend my Sunday afternoons baking in the kitchen. I felt as though this body of mine was soullessly degrading, a darkening sorrow slowly creeping my heart. A sorrow I had to mask behind a smile because I couldn’t stand watching people pity me.

I was adamant not to victimize myself, especially in front of my parents. Determined not to worry about them, I resorted to constant prayers and meditation as a way to cope. I imagined the trip to Bali I planned with my friends as soon as our IGCSE exams were over. Sitting on Seminyak beach with a fresh coconut, jet skiing in Nusa Dua, photoshoots by the hanging gardens in Ubud. The only thing separating me from these moments being 25 exam papers I had to sit. My trial ultimately became my fuel: daily doses of motivation injected into my veins, slowly but surely leveraging the effect of my actual medication intake. What does not kill me makes me stronger, literally.

The next few months filled with countless hours on my desk. Back to back lessons 5 days a week, hundreds of pages of past papers, waking up at 4am to get extra study time. The side of the knuckle of my middle finger bruised and bulging from writing too much. Constantly reapplying counterpain to soothe my neck pains from the countless hours on my desk. Caffeine constantly running through my bloodstream. Where most get 2 years to prepare, I had to do it in a mere 7 months. I was determined to accomplish my best. On 7th of August 2019, opening my results, receiving straight A\*’s/A’s was the moment I knew everything was worth it.