

The Scribbler

MARCH ISSUE FEATURES

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SUGAR, SPICE, AND... MORE SPICE

Fatima Sarfaraz (IX-A)

“Gosh! Did you see her earrings? They look like carrots dipped in honey, stuck to her earlobes...” “Her daughter has been rejected by suitors twice in a row. That’s probably because her son was caught drinking last week...” “She ran away from home! Oh goodness! Look at the limits kids cross nowadays...”

More often than not, living in a stereotypical society like ours, most of us have come across some nasty, savage or “spicy” – as it is usually described – gossip. When it comes to gossiping, all, from status-conscious, “cool”, bubble-gum chewing teens to mature adults eagerly scanning celebrity gossip magazines, and even the ever-present “*rishta aunties*” scorning other people’s daughters, when their own is no Princess Leia (see, this is also gossip- to drag this poor, cool lady everywhere), are a way too common spectacle to behold. All in all, most cannot survive the day without a dose of the latest scandals and “masala.”

Gossip is defined as the act of merely talking casually about something (really? I was expecting something more... spicy), but a more familiar version would be to enhance an incident to the extent that it borders on untrue, and then undergoes widespread discussion - even though the original event does not have half the elements the spiced-up version has. Yeah, it is that thing where you burn *one* measly *samosa* when there are guests over at your place, but your mommy haunts you to death by dramatically telling your aunts, friends and the entire neighbourhood everything, making everyone remember you as the girl who burnt her mommy’s kitchen to crisps (*how appalling!*).

Gossip is generally harmless if kept to a lower extent, but unfortunately, it has ruined the concept of speaking truthfully; as all of us either hype up situations in negative ways or pass too many sarcastic comments. Some even stoop so low as to telling outright lies for the sake of small-talk. (*Haye Allah!* Sonia’s clothes are so revealing, I’m *dying* with the exposure!)

And, whether you agree or not, this “small-talk” now represents a very controversial and negative aspect of human psychology: our willingness to harm, to be judgmental about anything and everything and to negatively construct untrue versions of stories which ultimately results in outcomes ranging from playful to sarcastic, from offensive to, sometimes, blatantly scandalous. I wonder, don’t aunties have anything better to do than cooking up the latest breaking news?

“*God*, her lips though... she looks like a messed-up version of Kylie!” Girls are mostly the culprits when it comes to this social issue, since they tend to focus on reputation and the physical point-of-view of things, more. (I need to add here, being the ultimate feminist: guys gossip too, you know - but about boring things like cars and computers. But still- computers? Boring!)

A lot of the things the Ancient Greeks claimed now make perfect sense to me. At that time, you see, there was no endless cycle of gossiping insanity, no wagging tongues, spying neighbours, dramatic mothers-in-laws or mean high-school girls to render their theory of the world being flat as untrue. Because, back then, there was no gossip to make the world go round! (Psst, did you hear about Odysseus ditching his wife? Just kidding!)

AYESHA CHUNDRIGAR FOUNDATION

Jumainah Nasir (X-B)



Located on National Cement Factory Road, Mujahid Colony, Dalmia, the Ayesha Chundrigar Foundation (ACF) was founded in 2013, with a vision to lend their assistance to the otherwise forgotten, but desperately in need, souls of Karachi.

Funded by independent donors, it provides shelter and care to animals who are injured and abused, paving the way for their rehabilitation, while playing a major role in creating awareness about animal welfare. As recorded on March 5th, 2016, it housed around a hundred and seventy animals of all sorts — including two horses, five donkeys, a cow, five eagles and countless cats and dogs. Some animals stay there temporarily- when considered to be strong enough to leave, they are let out in localities where their care and affection is guaranteed. Some, on the other hand, become permanent residents, like Iris, a young white dog who could not be left on the streets due to blindness. Another dog - the three-legged Trio- who intermittently serves as the watchman at the gate, had a maggot wound on one of his hind legs which had to be amputated. Zeus and Hercules, have paralysed hind legs: initially dragging themselves by their

front legs, they now have a wheelchair each, and are pushed around gleefully by shelter visitors.

The ACF animal rescue mission also includes setting up donkey camps across the city to provide free medical treatment and food to the load carriers of the city who are treated extremely brutally. Salman, co-manager at the shelter, explains, "We train them (the owners) on how to treat their donkeys properly, and guide them on the feeding and resting processes. We give them medicine and food items for free at the end. Between eighteen and fifteen donkeys can be treated in one camp; each camp costs Rs. 20,000." Sometimes, the administration is compelled to take weak and dehydrated donkeys back to the shelter with them, where they are provided with constant care and treatment until healthy.

Furthermore, Dr Farid, the animal vet at the shelter, says that the ACF has a spay-neuter program which has been designed to help reduce the spread of rabies within the city. Moreover, the foundation has introduced the "Sponsor a Pet" programme for all those wishing to

help. Interested animal-lovers may choose a pet they would like to adopt, while it stays within the foundation's vicinity. They act as the pet's owner, pay for its monthly expenses, and even give it a name, while the shelter administration sends them the animal's monthly progress report, complete with pictures from different angles.

To raise public understanding, ACF has graciously introduced internship programmes for young minds with the aim to promote positive thinking and action. The ACF Facebook page is quick to respond to any veterinary related questions asked by animal owners, any reports regarding assaulted or lost animals, earning great appreciation from social media users.

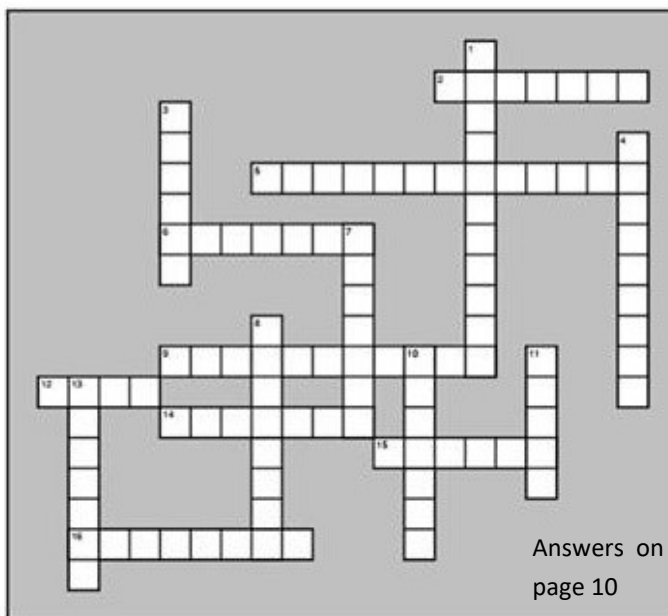
For more information, contact: 0334 5665000
ayeshachundrigarfoundation@gmail.com
 Visit: <https://www.facebook.com/ACFAnimalRescue/>

ACROSS:

2. a question
5. unimaginable
6. to examine all the parts of something in order to understand it
9. to look into a situation (often a crime, but it can also be a mystery)
12. a connection; one part of a chain
14. to notice or watch
15. to figure out something unknown by considering all its known aspects and reasoning it through
16. to consider the evidence and then decide what is true or correct (OR to end something)

DOWN:

1. curious; wants to understand things
3. related to the mind
4. a person whose job is to find or recognize the hidden information needed to solve a crime
7. to look closely at something
8. shown or made known
10. different sides or ways of looking at something
11. to make a logical guess that something is true based on the evidence, although the evidence is not clear enough to be absolutely certain
13. to look at something carefully to find problems or specific information



Answers on page 10

CROSSWORD: INVESTIGATIONS

A STUTTER

Zayeema Khan (X-D)

I lie in bed, wondering what my life has come to. Tears roll down my cheeks as I wipe

them with the hem of my sleeve. This is just one of those nights when I cry myself to sleep, unable to express my misery to anyone. My thoughts go back to the day when I first found out that I had a speech impediment. Four years ago, when I had raised my hand to answer a question, my tongue had ceased to move as it stumbled over the 'd' of 'deteriorating'. My cheeks flushed and I had quickly sat down, wanting the ground to swallow me, but oh, I wasn't that lucky. That was just the beginning of my hardship. Gradually, my stutter started becoming more and more prominent, and I wanted to bury myself. I knew the answer to every question my biology teacher asked, but raising my hand in class was, and still is, the most daunting thing that I can ever dare to do. For every school play that I acted in, I rehearsed every line over a hundred times, just to make sure that my tongue was acquainted with the words so that I wouldn't be left with a gaping mouth, struggling to speak.

An image of an eager-eyed girl flashes before my eyes- the girl who had stepped into sixth grade with mighty hopes and ambitions of being a remarkable public speaker but now, I struggle to find that girl in me. When a particular girl made fun of how I stuttered, I could not find a reply and just laughed it off. It's tiring hiding from teachers whenever they pick someone to read the lesson, or when they randomly pick someone to ask a question, but now I'm kind of a pro at it.

I've lost count of the number of times I've asked God, "Why me?" or when I thought I should just jump off a cliff because nobody would miss my presence. It's hard, hiding behind a mask, pretending that everything's okay when my thoughts are eating my brain, and I want to run and run and shout at the top of my lungs. I've questioned my past, present and future, and now I'm left questioning my

existence, asking myself, "Will I ever be able to make it?", "Can I make it?" It's excruciatingly hard at times because some days, I can go without stuttering the entire day and on others; it's hard to even finish a sentence without doing so.

Every time I stutter, it's like I can't breathe; some words just get stuck in my mouth, my tongue struggling, as my mouth soundlessly moves. It feels like a hundred hands are choking me from inside and I'm struggling not to give in. My face turns red when I see the person's facial expression changing, as they squint their eyes, trying to figure out what I'm trying to say. It hurts till the pain numbs me and I can't feel it anymore. My stutter is so much more than just a mere case of stage fright, because it has completely altered my life and not in a good way.

I feel an array of emotions every time I stutter: anger, frustration, self-pity. In short, it is not easy; having to carry this around with me but somehow, despite how impossible it seemed at first, I've learned to get along with my life. I wander off to sleep, only to wake up in the same bed, to go fight another battle, to tell myself once more. "You can do it; you've been doing it for four years now". It's the same day, just another date.

BLUE

Sahar Khan (VIII-C)

Before I met you, Blue was my favorite color. The lowest lows And the highest highs were all stained in various hues of blue.

My father told me His short tempered child "Blue is good, It keeps you calm Lets paint your room blue." So when you came into My life with your blue eyes speckled with white My unsettled, messy life straightened up under the tainted blues and I felt calm and happy and the color of happiness became you. Became blue.

Blue is no longer the color of the ocean or the color of the sky. It is the color of the bruises you left on my mind, and the color of sadness that you left me with when you held my love and let it go. Blue isn't the color of calm anymore, It's the color of storm you have left in my heart

TEACHER: NOW, EVERYONE WILL SAY
WHAT THE LAST SEMESTER
GAVE YOU.



EXTINGUISHED TOO SOON

Sarah Akber (VIII-F)

seller, less than ten years old, where young girls who have not even been touched by puberty are welcomed as maids in many households without protest.

The many, many disadvantages of child labour include susceptibility to abuse, low pay rates, hazardous working conditions and illegal work, such as drug trafficking and human trafficking. Furthermore, children are deprived not only of proper physical and nutritional nourishment, but are also completely unfamiliar to the folds of education, due to their early employment, and, ultimately minuscule educational opportunities.

If we take Pakistan only, we will see thousands of children wasting their childhoods away by working at dump sites, cutting stones, working in small factories, car workshops or as a carrier in construction sites. Parents also send their kids out to beg on the streets, and in villages, children often are utilized to work on fields. Others are made to work as domestic slaves. Why don't people get that it is not their age to work?

Our society is at fault for not taking any action against child labour. We lack empathy, not realizing their plight because we do not go through such miserable situations. A child cleaning cars also wants to live a luxurious life, go to school and

make friends like we do. But just because their families aren't financially fulfilled, they are meant to work at an age where employment should be the least of their concerns.

Being students ourselves, it is our responsibility to minimize child labour. There are several ways to do so; before buying anything from a shop, make sure that you contact the manufacturers and take information regarding the origins of their products. Let them know that you want to buy products that don't involve child labor, and avoid purchasing products which involve underage workers in the manufacturing process. Maids and domestic workers under fifteen can be taken in as students. Teaching them the basics of English, Urdu, Math and even some Computer skills will allow them to earn something beyond the wages of tedious labour.

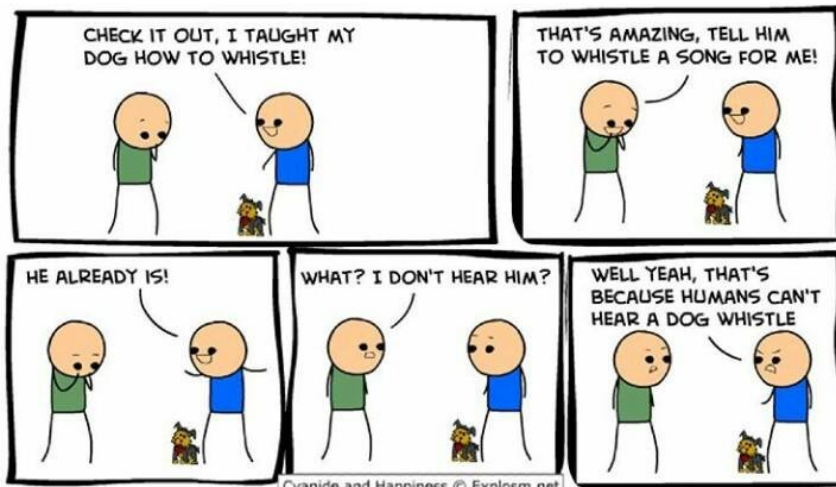
Furthermore, awareness should be spread in the society regarding this issue. Many are unaware of what classifies as child labour, and several blindly practice it as oblivious perpetrators. Media of all forms: electronic, print, social etc, should be utilized for this purpose to hinder this massively growing plague.

These are tiny ways and a few steps toward eradicating child labour, but let us remember that a journey starts with a single step and that a drop completes the ocean. Any action that can lead in reducing child labour is significant, and can lead to it ultimately being obliterated, so let's join hands and say no to child labour and yes to education!

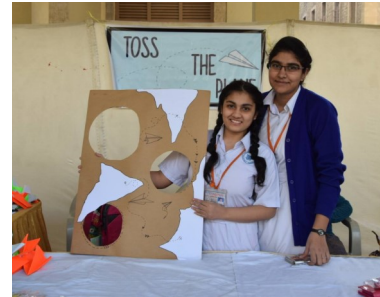
"Sandy can't see his hands in the darkness of his shack, made from palm bark and zinc, on a hillside in the Dominican Republic. But he feels them because of the pain from wounds on his left thumb, caused by the knife he uses to trim garlic plants." – Anonymous

Sandy is not the only one; there are thousands of children across the world who are in the grasp of child labour.

Child labour is defined as the employment of children in any industry or business, and is primarily exploitative. It snatches away many childhoods, filling darkness in what should have been a colourful life. This social blemish encompasses a wide range of fields; from domestic servitude, to working with tools and carrying loads in dangerous places such as coal mines. More than 200 million children are victims of child labour today, 73 million of which are below ten years old. The highest number of child labourers is found in Sub Saharan Africa, and it is also a heartbreakingly common sight in third-world countries, where on nearly every sidewalk stands a balloon-



Cyanide and Happiness © Explosm.net



The air was pregnant with laughter as students and staff enjoyed a much needed break at the School Mela organized by the senior classes.



MELA '17

On 21st January, students, teachers, and parents, gathered at the Karachi Parsi Institute, decked in blues, yellows, reds and greens. A fierce competition ensued in all scheduled events, with the Mama House eventually being crowned Cock House

SPORTS DAY 2017





Au Revoir, adieu, and adios! Batch of 2016-17, thanks for the memories, and may you have a bright future ahead!



Blue was the celebrated colour as an entire year's worth of tears, sweat, and blood, bore fruit for the Mama House



MARCH '17

In the Spotlight

Featuring
MRS. GHAZALA EJAZ!

For this issue of the Scribbler, Hafsa Irfan and Farheen Kamran of Class IX-C interviewed Mrs. Ghazala Ejaz, Urdu teacher of Classes VII and VIII of the Matric Department, and extremely popular among students and staff alike. With her sweet countenance, down-to-earth and dedicated personality, she is an inspiration to all.

What motivated you to become a teacher? What was your inspiration?

It was in college that a teacher inspired me very much and I experimentally started teaching in a local school. On finding that I actually enjoyed it, I adopted the profession and continued even after marriage. It gives me a feeling of satisfaction. I feel like I am filling the missing pieces of what I wanted or what I should have done, in my students.

How long have you worked at The Mama School? If you have worked in any other institutions, how was your experience over there?

It has been twenty years since I've been teaching here. About 6 to 8 years ago, when I had been teaching at the Mama School for approximately twelve years, I did my M.A. I was sent to teach in a government school as part of a teaching programme. It provided a great change- children there had fathers who were fruit sellers or rickshaw drivers. I taught those children and I found many of them to be very talented. However, I knew not many of them would be able to complete school, or their future might not be so bright simply because they did not have money. It is depressing that Pakistan is wasting its talent every single day. I do not know whom to accuse but the situation is really sad.

What role do you play or wish to play in your students' lives?

Along with the curriculum, I try my best to teach my students ethics. I am not a very strict teacher but I do my best to help bring about a positive change in my students' behavior and manners. In the end, I evaluate how successful I have been. I know I have been successful if 8 out of 10 of my students stop in the corridor to greet me. I believe in karma- you get what you give. If you give something to the students, if they learn anything from you, they will return the favor by giving you respect. Moreover, when students who stay in touch after leaving school, thank me for making them what they are, I know that I have been somewhat successful.

One incident in your teaching career that moved, touched or changed you.

As I said, I've been teaching in Mama School for twenty years. I have seen how eager parents are to have their daughters study in this school. Out of thousands of children, only about a hundred gain admission and all are equally intelligent and confident and everyone belongs to a good family. But in my twenty years I have seen children getting sick because of the pressure at school or at home, the problems taking a toll on them. I have studied psychology as

a subject so I can easily recognise a mentally depressed child. I have seen the grades of many bright children fall because of depression, the worst part being that most parents and teachers do not even realize what is happening. The children become moody and rude and the teacher insists that they are ill-mannered. The teachers complain to parents and thus the mental condition of the child worsens. I try my best to help such students if I ever come across them, I inform their parents, I inform other teachers but sadly, they barely ever take notice. This is due to lack of awareness. Mostly, parents do not take their daughters to psychiatrists or psychologists as it is still a taboo in our society, and the child never receives the treatment she needs.

If not a teacher, what would you have been?

A psychiatrist. Even as a teacher, I fulfill the role of a psychiatrist, a counselor and a guide and to be honest being all these things together is better.

Apart from teaching, what are you most passionate about?

Reciting and understanding the Holy Quran. You may say it is the fear of God or a hobby or simply an interest in knowing more about my religion, whatever it is I just love to open the Holy Book whenever I have time and find solutions to problems I could not solve. I like book reading too. I do not like going to many social events if left to personal preference. I perform pilgrimage to Makkah whenever possible for I love the place best.



HERE'S TO YOU

Omaima Niazi (IX-C)

Do you remember the day when your eyes flooded with tears as your parents gave you one last smile before leaving you all alone in this building- how you felt like the captive of this strange feeling that you got in your chest, how afraid you were? And why should you not have been afraid? After all it was the first day of your school – the place where you were to spend your days for the upcoming ten (or eleven) long years.

You would simply sit there, mesmerized by the variety of faces in the room as pictures of your kindergarten classrooms flashed through your mind, reflecting on how drab your surroundings were, as compared to the previous, colourful ones. You did not understand a lot of things- why the lady selling samosas in the canteen would screech at the top of her lungs for you to get in line, or why your cousins' hands were patterned with henna on Eid but yours weren't. You did not understand why the Golden Staircase was forbidden – it's a staircase, for God's sake! And you certainly did not understand the horrific epidemic, the feared plague, of minus marks, how the infected boiled in their own disgrace.

Then came everything you could gladly live without: the constant fear of getting scolded or punished by your teachers, the hatred for someone who did so much as step on your shoes. The lump in your throat when you got scolded by a senior girl- that bajiis so rude. The overriding guilt of failing, the angst on getting the second-highest marks (shush, half a mark doesn't make a difference).

The years have passed and here you are today experiencing things in a different way. You may be careless towards studies, but definitely hoping to do better in finals. You have experienced delight of being seniors, taken an active part in every school event to come your way (ooh, take a gown pic-

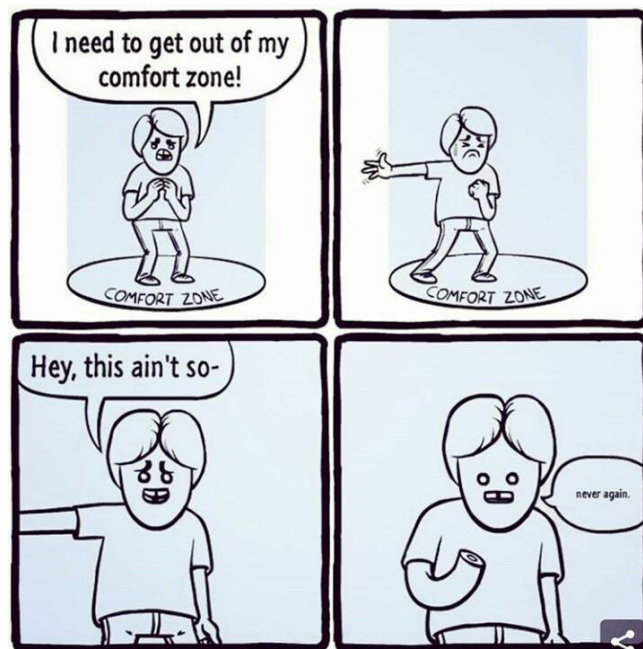
ture!). But most of all, you have realized the importance of having friends. These are the people who have loved you more than you expected, who supported you and have remained by your side since you were a first grader with thick, tightly twisted, pigtails, to the authoritative senior you are now. Endless gossips of people you never really liked, night-long conversations on WhatsApp groups (I won't do the homework if you all won't), the memory of which reminds you how dull school life would have been without these 'yaars'.

Even if you found it all incredibly burdensome, one day you may find yourself reminiscing about it. Of course, you may fake your sighs and pretend that the wings of freedom are piercing your shoulder blades, unfolding (they're hunched, of course, your bags were too heavy), however you will miss everything- your amazing teachers, your friends and of course, drumroll please, your unparalleled juniors. The last year of school life is always extraordinary and we all really hope that you enjoyed every single bit of it. So this is a toast to you- our brilliant seniors, our mentors, friends, bosses and confidants- batch of 2016-17, you will be missed! (We're good with taking over the gowns though, don't get ahead of yourselves.)

FEW MOMENTS OF GLEE

Zoya Khemane
(IX-B)

Early in the morning, standing near the shore,
A site, I had never seen before.
No one else, just nature and me,
Seeing the sun shining, through the vast sea.
Admiring the flawless nature around,
Not a single soul to be found.
The blue water seemed more beautiful than ever,
One could keep staring at it, forever.
The sky, orange and yellow,
The clouds, soft as marsh-mallows.
The lovely gust of wind, refreshed my mind,
No stress, no worries of any kind.
Looking at the beautiful creation of my Lord,
Truly strengthened my faith in God.
I stood there, enjoying those few moments of glee,
The time when I felt free.



Of Jasmines And Viridescent Banners

Hareem Khalid and
Yumna Alavi (XI-A)

Her father's once pristine white kurta was now stained an ugly crimson colour; but then again she wasn't sure if it was the dupatta of her mother's favorite three-piece-suit that sprawled upon his chest as they fell to the floor in sync at the impact of the bullets. Her mother lay just as lifeless as him, wearing the same three-piece-suit that she loved so dearly which still smelt so much like her. Her tears had dried long ago- all she wanted now was to have someone put a bullet through her chest too so she could be with her parents.

There was a loud impatient knocking on the door that brought Aiza out of her misery induced haze. She was terrified as to who could possibly want to see them in the wee hours of the morning. Her parents were dead, subjected to the cruelty inflicted upon them by those whom, despite their religious differences, they considered friends- almost family.

Mohit barged through the front door without waiting to knock a second time. His eyes were swollen and his raven mass of curls were a mess. He brought along with him the little sliver of hope Aiza didn't think was possible to feel. There were burn marks all over his kurta and a single tear left Aiza's eye as he rushed to her side.

"Aiza—we need to leave before they come after us too!" He was breathless and drenched in sweat. Seeing Aiza so defeated next to her parents, he enveloped her in his arms and held her in a warm embrace. She sobbed against his chest, repeatedly screaming "They're

gone...they're gone..." He looked down. "If they were here, they'd want you to be safe."

They could hear the mob approaching. Today, the world was at its most terrifying. Never had she perceived that love could come at such a heavy price. Being Muslim and falling in love with a Hindu boy had never before been the worst regret anyone had. The world was caving in on her.

Frantically, Mohit cried, "If we stay here any longer, my father's clan will find us, and there's no knowing what our fate would be then. I know it's insensitive of me to ask of this, but we need to leave them here if we want to live. We must leave. Now."

With one last glance at her parents, Aiza packed a duffle with some valuables, making sure to take with her a family photograph as a reminder of the better days. They quietly crept out of the backdoor and into the dark alleyway, embracing the cold eerie night.

It was unpleasantly silent as they trekked past the dirt road to meet the rest of the migrating crowd. The thought of the future was unsettling, but they knew they had to stick together to make it out alive. Pausing for a moment to catch their breath, relief washed over them on seeing the emigrants but was disrupted almost immediately by the flashes of red and yellow that blazed through the sky from the other end of the hill. Mohit broke into a run, dragging Aiza along, clutching her hand desperately.

The slightest of screams escaped her lips, and Mohit felt Aiza's weight fall to the ground, where she

lay cursing in agony, clutching her bleeding foot. The plastic chappal she had hurriedly slipped on when exiting the house, propped unturned against a jagged stone protruding from the earth. Swearing under his breath, without wasting a moment, Mohit scooped her into his arms, dashing wildly forward. The crowd was just a few lost breaths away. Suddenly, he felt his hair being yanked backward and Aiza screamed. Mohit knew that grip was Ranjeet's. Only his father could have a hand so strong. He was saying something, voice triumphant, but Mohit barely made out the words as he kicked him in the shins, broke free, and delivered Aiza onto a donkey cart, whose driver swerved to blend deeper into the throng. It was the last look they exchanged which held more eloquence than all of Ghalib and Faiz that Aiza had ever quoted to him from atop the almond tree in her backyard while he would stand below. Mohit's eyes were soft. They were telling her to run. They were telling her that he loved her. And that he'd never abandon her. That he'd come get her. Aiza's betrayed hopelessness and confusion as Mohit let himself fall back into the hands of Ranjeet's men, whatever his father saying, only background noise to his son.

Adjusting her statement green sari, Aiza tucked in a few Jasmines in her loose bun and made her way into the Quaid's mausoleum. It was the 14th of August, the celebration of Pakistan's 6th Independence Day. Walking towards the group of students distributing miniature flags, she smiled to herself as a young doe eyed girl handed her one as well. Suddenly, she felt someone trying to make their way past her to the front of the crowd, jabbing their elbow in her shoulder as they did so. The stranger muttered an apology as he shifted to the right. Their eyes met and Aiza gasped. Strong build, short beard, hazel eyes. Mohit. Her Mohit. He stumbled in shock, visibly taken aback. There were still too many unanswered questions between them but somewhere deep in their hearts, they knew this was Fate's way of saying they were right. She was still as beautiful as ever. He had a chipped front tooth and Aiza noticed he now wore a skull cap. The past may have hurt, but the present pointed to a future which had previously seemed the stuff of dreams.



"Umar...". Umar was perched on a jet-black, rexine sofa in the drawing room, his arms clasped around a sheet drawn towards his chest. His eyes were swollen and tears ran down his cheeks. Every now and then, he would withdraw his gaze from the ground and look up at the picture on the folio and cry even harder. A pace apart, his Uncle Matthews - a lean man with bushy chocolate-brown hair streaked with grey - was seated with his legs opened wide, frowning from underneath the pale light, looking at his nephew with beseeching eyes, concern evident in his creased face.

"Umar...", he said again, this time with a more pressing tone, "Your mother, it would break her heart to see her son crying like that over her picture. See, how happy she is in the photo...". His expression was agonized, his eyes struggling to withhold the tears on the death anniversary of his only sister. But no, he told himself, not today, not in front of him.

"But...", Umar began as he raised his head to meet his Uncle's angst-ridden gaze, his eyes puffy, and pained, and his voice rough and heavy due to the continuous weeping, "Don't you think it is unjust how God has snatched away both my Mom and Dad? What did I do to deserve this? Even the teachers cast sympathy-stricken looks in my direction when all the kids bring their moms on Mother's Day! You know, I sometimes blame her for leaving me behind like that...didn't she think for at least a single moment of the insanely brutal life she was abandoning me to deal with?"

Pursing his lips, Matthews brought Umar close, his eyes unable to hold back the tears anymore, and hugged him tightly. Umar also hugged back. He had taken a shine to his uncle over the years; his uncle, who had been like a father to him, never giving him the brush-off, always taking out the time to hear about his daily problems and classroom -tales even though he would be rushed off his feet, having been snowed under by office work. Even after his parents' untimely demise, his uncle, who had his heart in the right place, had been extremely compassionate to him and life had moved on like clockwork.

A few minutes later, Umar headed back to his room after bidding his uncle good-night. As he slipped the

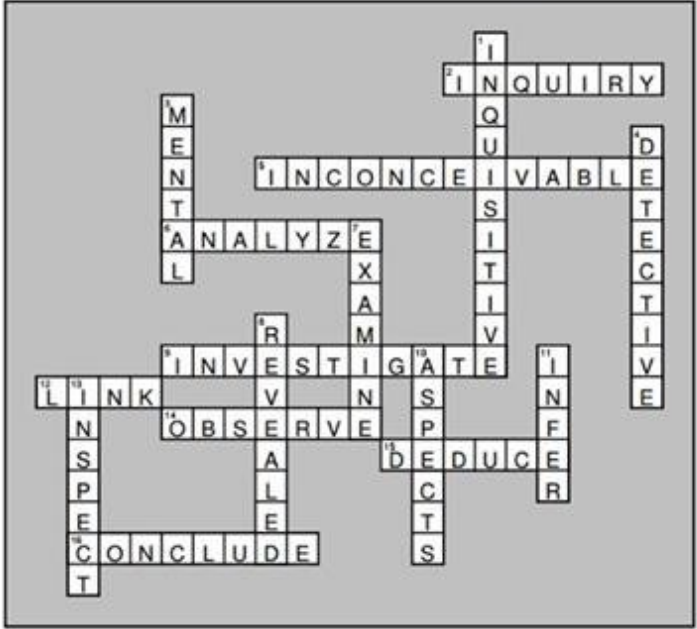
picture back in his drawer, his eyes fell upon his mother's death certificate lying inanimate at the bottom. As if in a trance, he took it out and examined it under the yellow light of the night bulb.

Shock. An amalgamation of raw shock, eye-freezing surprise and body-immobilizing fear, in the form of the most atrocious form of reality gaped at him, pulling the cover off years of lies. He had always known that his mother had died due to brain cancer, but the fact that it had not been natural and in fact the work of a most malicious actor who had been pretending all these years to be a saint, lying the whole time- he did not know it felt as if someone had just snapped the only wire that had kept him hanging on to this miserable life. The very fact that he had sold him down the river was absurd. His senses were paralyzed and dead to the world, his mind, too numb to absorb the baleful words that were staring deep into his eyes, piercing them:

Cause of death: Brain Cancer, Euthanasia

Euthanasia supported by: Matthews Arnold

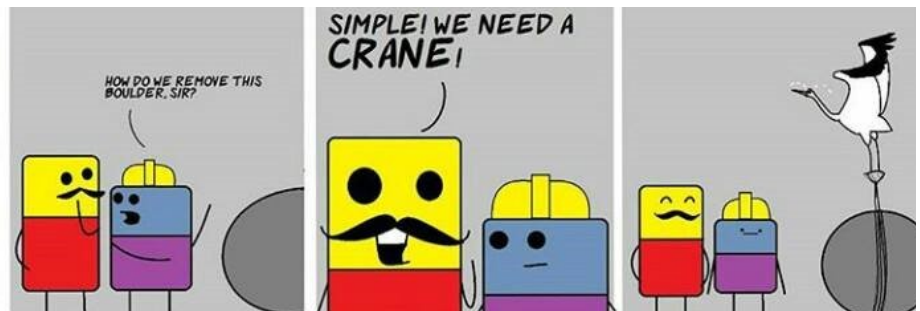
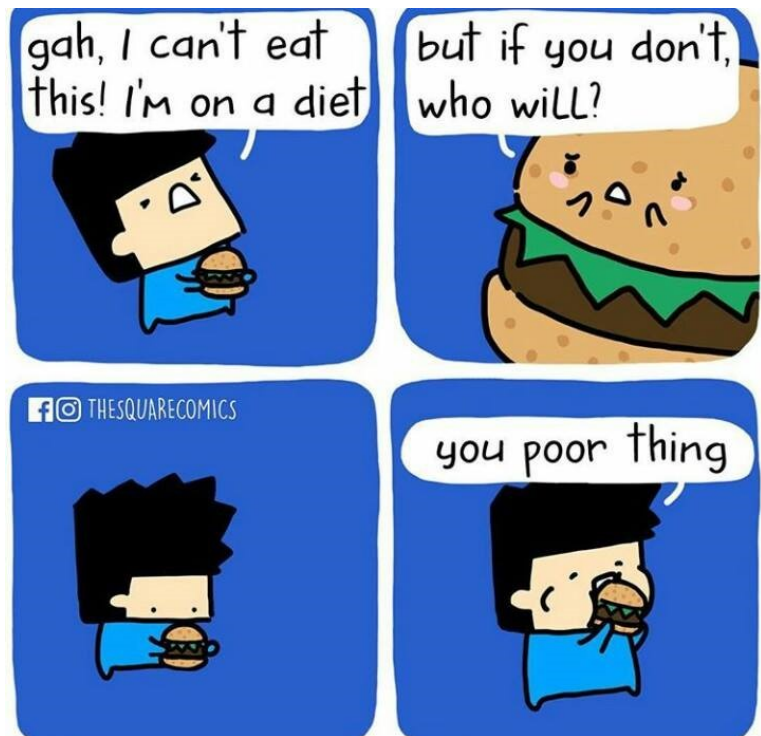
ANSWERS TO THE CROSSWORD



A POEM

Fayza Salman (X-B)

The bombs grew louder and so
did the cries for help.
The bread in the kitchen grew
scarcer and so did the water
from the taps.
And then a night came when
boats replaced home,
For a journey was set to
A journey for survival.
But the waves proved unfaithful
one horrid night;
Living breathing souls choked
on helplessness.
Some were laid to rest on the
sea shore,
While some were laid to rest on
the sea bed.
Out of those that lay merciless-
ly on the sand was a four year
old boy;
Face-down, eyes closed, bodi-
ly sadly still.
It was not the sea that let him
down, it was the land.



A MESSAGE TO SCRIBBLER'S FIRST EDITORIAL TEAM

It started off for us as an externally-run affair. All we did was ask you when the issue will come out, how much we had to pay, or the maximum amount of satire we could fill into the piece we were about to submit before it started bordering on annoying. All we could do was admire the Scribbler from afar, read it, and only wonder what went on behind the curtains, how it was all brought together. Little did we know it was just a slightly more intellectual take on the wildest, strangest, most exhilarating roller coaster ever. We saw the struggle to get everyone to vote on what articles to include, to make the proofreaders as alert as soldiers on duty, waiting for orders. We saw crises worthy of verdicts from the World Bank- from the **"Convince people to buy it"-s** to the **"How about we lower the cost"-s**, and above all, we saw your dedication. We saw all that you had invested into this project in every instruction you gave us, every step of the way. We saw your hard work in the glossy pages of every issue, in the black letters- Helvlight, size 12- the frustration in every laptop breakdown and every article that had not been yet proofread, and here we are today. Come to think of it, there is a perfect explanation of why we call everything included in the Scribbler "pieces" – because the whole affair is like a jigsaw puzzle we piece together with all the blood, sweat and tears (read: tears, tears and tears) involved, the arguments on what font to use and on the colour schemes. In the end, all we can do is salute you, your determination and your passion, and say a massive thank you for this gift you are leaving us with- here's to the first editorial team of the Scribbler, and to more to come.

