

# KLOUD9

INDIA'S EXCLUSIVE MAGAZINE FOR THE GEN - Z



**VOLUME 7 ISSUE 21 MARCH 2024**

**COPING WITH LONELINESS**



An illustration featuring a person in the bottom left corner, wearing a light blue shirt and dark blue pants, hugging themselves. They have a sad expression with closed eyes and red cheeks. Behind them is a large, dark blue, wavy shape that resembles a splash or a cloud. The background is white with several yellow splatters of varying sizes. The title 'Coping with Loneliness' is written in a yellow, serif font across the middle of the dark blue shape.

# Coping with Loneliness





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# EDITOR'S MUSINGS

In the dynamics of life, we learn to deal with all the curve balls that are thrown at us. Some of it seems easy because we are somewhat anticipating it, but others have a stealthy underhand way of creeping into our existence and stubbornly engulfing our peace of mind. A friend of mine casually mentioned that loneliness is the new pandemic amongst the youth and middle-aged people in the developing world. I had always assumed that the elderly were lonely and I did my best to give some time to them. But as I thought about it, it dawned on me that the youth today deal with loneliness in a way that we never knew. With social media, screen addiction, and peer pressure, the need to be seen as popular and smart has shrunk their real-world interfaces drastically and we, as adults have done very little to address this issue.

Most of you have grown up in nuclear families and extended family relationships with cousins, aunts, and grandparents are minimal, often formal, and even stilted and strained. Friends and peers at school are busy competing with us, making it difficult to forge any lasting friendships that go beyond the obvious. Perhaps, that is why most of us lose touch with our school friends later in life despite vows of friends for life.

Our loneliness stems from our lack of self-worth and a sense of isolation even in a crowd. We feel we don't belong because nobody really knows and understands us. What we don't realise is that we don't want to be ourselves, but like the others around us who we think are popular, smart, and successful.

Instead of being part of a herd, try to look within yourself to find what really makes you tick. Pick up a sketchbook and doodle, go for a hike, or ride a bicycle. Rearrange and redecorate your room or house, bake, read a book, or even watch a movie that you think you will like by yourself. You never know, maybe, the loneliness will drift away. Talk to those people who you trust once in a while. It's not a big deal to call someone to talk to them instead of texting them.

Feel and live your emotions, not emojis. As always, it is in us to lift ourselves up and look ahead with optimism and belief to take a leap of faith.



**DR MONA LISA BAL**  
Editor **KLOUD9**





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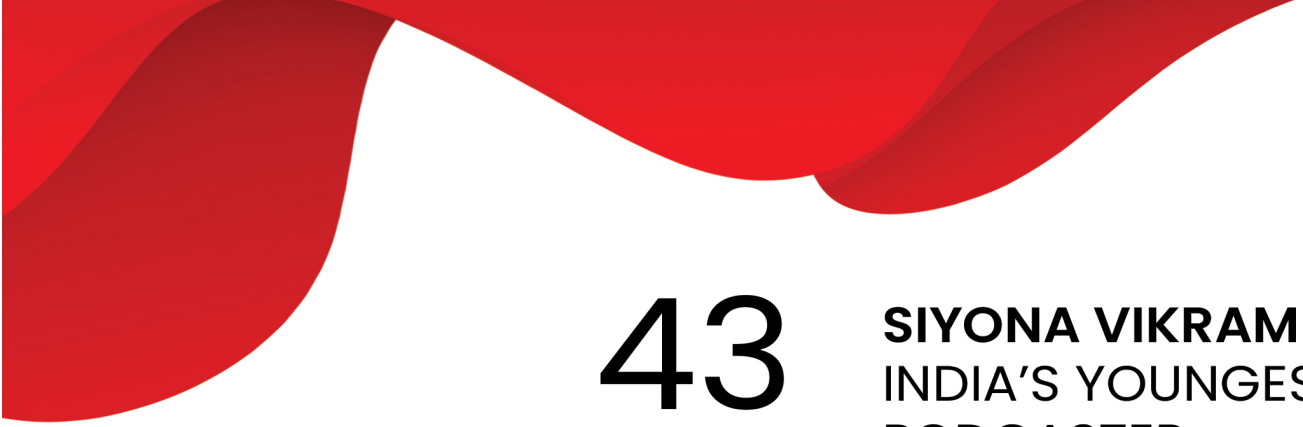
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# COVER STORY

## COPING WITH LONELINESS

- Nandita Mishra

"The best things in life happen to you when you're alone,"  
-Artist Agnes Martin

The poet, Elizabeth Bishop believed that everyone should experience at least one prolonged period of solitude in life. For in true solitude, "one's inner voices become audible [and] in consequence, one responds more clearly to other lives" (Wendell Berry). We have grown up reading the romantic poets glorifying loneliness and solitude. Wordsworth's poem, I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud, The Solitary Reaper and so many others glorify loneliness as a means to connect with the finer nuances that are lost in the humdrum of life.

Hindu philosophy espouses that the realization of the self, Atman is possible only in solitude, in distancing oneself from the pulls and tugs of the business of living. And yet, loneliness today engulfs us as a dense fog that refuses to budge with the wind. When you are lonely, you are not alone. One in five people in the world are trying to cope with loneliness. For the longest time, we believed the elderly and the old are lonely, because of their age, health, beliefs, world views and inability to cope with the changing times. For most of us, it meant making a conscious effort to spend time with the elderly, involve them with aspects of our lives, our children's lives so that they don't feel left out and unwanted.

There is a popular ad by Helpage India where a grandmother talks about samosas from Nathuram's in her heydays as the family is having samosas with tea in the evening. When she wants to have some, the son refuses telling her that she won't be able to digest it at her age. Obviously upset at being denied a bite of the samosa, the next shot is of the son giving the samosa with the tagline, "It's your turn now. Enjoy their childhood." The elderly feel lonely often, some having lost their partners, learning to adjust to life with their children and grandchildren, living with diet and mobility limitations and a sense of losing control over their lives, among other things which is never easy. Whenever I talk to my mother, I invariably ask her, what she is doing. Her one-line reply tells a story. "Nothing. I was just reading a book. What else can I do?"



I sense a feeling of unworthiness in her. After the death of my father, she feels terribly lonely. She isn't in the best of health, so she is unable to do things that she loves doing like doing up her home or cooking for the family. While reading a book is a wonderful hobby, she feels that she is no longer in control, in charge of her life. She is no longer relevant, a factor for those around her. She hates that she has to depend on others to get by her routine, even though she is financially comfortable. That is true of the elderly – the more fortunate ones like my mother in this world. For the rest, the struggle is even harder. The difficulty is that loneliness, this sense of irrelevance, isolation and alienation is percolating down rapidly to people who are much younger.

Our middle-aged parents, youngsters starting their lives, even children today are grappling with loneliness that is alarming. Some studies call loneliness the new pandemic. Only we are pushing it under the carpet and hoping it will take care of itself. We will not address it till it rears its ugly head to ensnare us in its vice like grip so much so that we will feel unworthy, isolated and unwanted. In the neutral state of aloneness, the psycho-emotional line between solitude and loneliness can be as thin as a razor's edge, and its blurring can have serious consequences. A seemingly smart successful twenty something who is thought of as sorted and capable by colleagues, meets friends for drinks and sees family for dinner every week is typically the profile of most youngsters today. They may seem to have a rich network of interpersonal connections. In reality, many youngsters feel lonelier than their widowed grandmother who only sees people when relatives visit her.





Research shows that young people are more likely to feel lonely than older adults for myriad reasons. The lockdown portion of the pandemic gave us all a taste of loneliness. It may seem an obvious outcome of a pandemic where social contact is discouraged, even made illegal, but concerns about rising levels of loneliness were common before the pandemic, and continue even today. Humans are an incredibly social species with a very developed brain and high levels of intelligence to keep track of and maintain numerous relationships. Our social interactions are a major factor in how we think, act, and see ourselves, because much of our brains is dedicated to social cognition. We are wired to fall back on our fellow human beings to deal with any crisis that we may experience. But with the changing socio-economic fabric, our direct interface with family, friends and the community has become much less than what it was.

Dependence on technology seems to contribute to loneliness among teens and young adults. People who grew up swiping screens interact with devices more often and with greater comfort than they do with people. However, it is inevitable and we need to learn to live with it and also beyond it. If older people living alone have found better ways of dealing with loneliness, it is because they no longer depend on peer approval and the need to have friends and be trendy like the youth. It is important that you find ways of spending time with yourself, without depending on social media to see you through. Self-care and self-affirmation with a few activities that you can do alone and enjoy it is a great way to start. Go for a trek, a walk, or even a cycle ride by yourself a few times a week. Pick up a hobby, do simple things at home that make you want to do it again, that make you feel worthy. Talk to people that you know have your back, and take it easy. There is no magic pill that will wipe away this malaise, yet you can take small steps forward. "Find company within yourself and you'll never spend a day alone. Find love within yourself and you'll never have a lonely day." —Connor Chalfant

# COPING WITH LONELINESS

**Name – Abhinabha Basu Mallick**

**Class – XI**

**School – Aditya Academy,  
Dum Dum**



If I call upon my opinion of coping with loneliness...

A few questions come to my mind in the beginning and the most important one of them is... What is actually loneliness??

For most people, the most straightforward answer would be something like... "No friends or social relationships, always surrounded by emptiness".

I have mixed feelings about this definition. What this definition tells us is more towards the idea of being alone.

Well... Alone and lonely are very close yet very far words. One can even say that loneliness is the precursor of being alone. In my opinion...

Loneliness is the inability to share your thoughts, emotions,

sentiments, and ideals just because you think that your idea is contradicting the idea of the masses.

Stopping oneself from sharing things will lead to the person becoming isolated and will get cut off from the social network... One may also feel lonely in a crowd full of people and one cannot be lonely even when they are alone.

The best way to cope with loneliness is just letting go of things in my opinion...

The Art of letting go is something every person should learn...

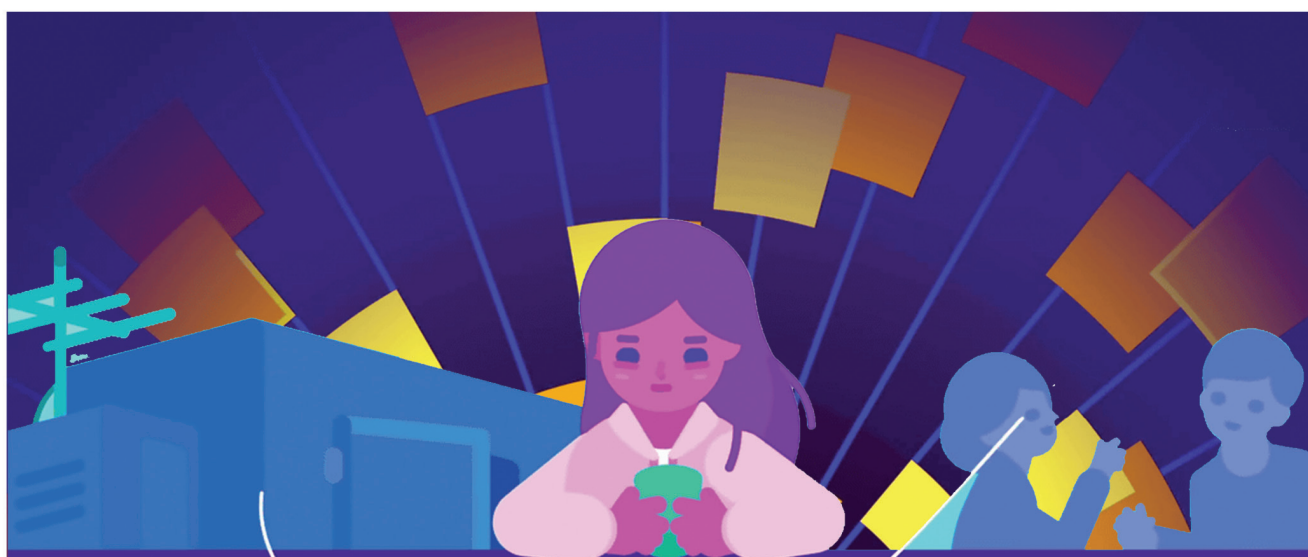
Most people think that the opposite person will think substandard of them if they say something not match the latter's ideals.

If we just let go of imagining what others will think about us and just deliver whatever we think is right will help a lot in removing our insecurities and showing our real selves to the world.

You may not have many friends if you speak from your heart but the very few who stay and listen.

They will never let you feel lonely.... You'll always be heard. I think loneliness is a choice... If a person wants to be happy, they will be happy in any situation. They will find someone or something to find their peace and satisfaction.

But if they don't want to recover from loneliness. No amount of effort can make them recover.





Now coming to the practical side of things. Nowadays numerous counsellors, and therapists can help a person with loneliness.

Even simple things like listening to music and indulging in your favourite activities will also help you cope with loneliness. These are very few of the options we have to cope with loneliness. If the willpower is strong enough. Hundreds of ways will open up for you.

After all, everything is in the mind and within you.

In the end... I just want to write a quote

"There is nothing outside of yourself. Look within. Everything you want is there. You are that."

-Rumi







**Name - DEWENDRA SINGHAL**  
**Class - XI**  
**School - DAV PUBLIC SCHOOL,**  
**UNIT 8**

Education is the remedy,  
 To be shared with all, endlessly.  
 Whoever tastes it's bittersweet,  
 Finds ultimate joy, a bliss  
 complete.

But what ailment does it cure,  
 you ask?  
 Loneliness, the daunting task,  
 To chase away solitude's dark  
 hue,  
 For loneliness is a foul brew.

No one should suffer its bitter  
 sting,  
 So let's make a pact, let's bring  
 The medicine of education  
 forth,  
 For all, from south to north.

This potion of wisdom, let it heal,  
 In poetic verse, let's make it real.  
 Education's elixir, let's imbibe,  
 Together, let's thrive and revive.

The medicine of education,  
 That we must administer to  
 everyone,  
 Those who have tasted it,  
 Have attained ultimate bliss.  
 But what is this medicine for?  
 It's to rid oneself of loneliness,  
 Yes, it's to banish loneliness,  
 Loneliness is a terrible disease,  
 That no one should be afflicted  
 with.  
 So now, let's make a vow to take  
 it,  
 This medicine of education,  
 We must administer it to  
 everyone.





# My Hero...A Villain

I always wondered why I liked the villains more and I think it might be because when they get on the floor down on their knees for her and only her. Something in me stirs.

A hero would sacrifice her to save the world showing that they are indeed pure-hearted and honest. But a villain would tear this world apart if she was hurt, That is a promise. They seem selfish, manipulative and rude to everyone around but he treats her like a queen. His and only his sitting beside him on a throne with her crown.

I think villains are misjudged & most of the time we don't get to see their stories. For if we knew, the hero may not seem so full of glory.

Monsters are made, not born and any soul tortured, confused and abused incidentally would not have time to mourn.

So next time I defend the villain of the tale, remember that they too were once broken and frail.

**Name - Srishti Yadav**

**Class - X**

**School - St. Xavier's Sr. Sec. School, Jaipur, Rajasthan**







**Name - Ahana Roy,**  
**Class - XI**  
**School - Shri Shikshayatan School**







**Name - KARTHIYAYANI CK**  
**Class - IX**  
**School: Kendriya Vidyalaya**  
**Hebbal Bangalore**

# SILENT METAMORPHOSIS



In the hushed embrace of  
 hope,  
 There she was,  
 An orchard of movements,  
 Dancing in a rhythmic trance.

Every glance gave birth to  
 elegance  
 And a ballad was sung in every  
 wink;  
 Her arms carved the air  
 While her dance became joy's  
 link.

A symphony of colours by  
 herself  
 And a flame in twilight,  
 Nothing proved to be just a  
 dream  
 For she who was an ethereal  
 sight.

She sat on her chair with  
 perennial strength,  
 And recalled the past when  
 fate claimed a trunk of  
 movement;  
 She saw the dreams dance  
 hopefully that, yet again,  
 Her spirit would twirl, and a  
 dance would transcend.



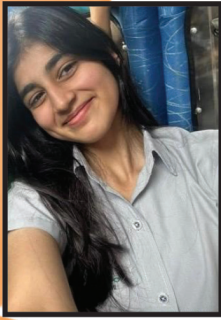
Before her giant portrait,  
Movements came alive;  
Her testament emerged as to  
How she'd still dive.

When destiny took away one  
Limb, she gifted herself  
another.  
A sculpted limb came as an  
embrace  
That made her glitter.

Once again, she stood  
When a lotus rose,  
Blooming beneath her feet,  
Making her a glittering prose.

With self-love's magic,  
This one too shall pass,  
Still a dancer, she's the  
Reflection in every looking  
glass.





**Name – Bhrithi Bhalla**

**Class – X**

**School – Lotus Valley International School**

# Coping with Loneliness: A Personal Journey

Isolation, abandonment, remoteness, seclusion, or Loneliness can be a sense of emotional state, capable of affecting every aspect of one's life. This is a sense of feeling which has been experienced universally by human beings irrespective of someone's gender, religion, caste, or race. However, it's crucial to understand that loneliness is a universal human experience it is not the same for everyone.

In the vast expanse of even my own experience with loneliness, I've come to realize that dealing with acceptance is the first step, and yet it's the hardest one to take. Admitting to myself that I am lonely almost felt like I had failed in something I didn't know I was competing for. Realizing that loneliness is a natural emotion in the depths of my despair, for the first time in a long time I started finding comfort in knowing that I wasn't alone and that no matter how much I grieved it wasn't the solution to my problems rather just a way of expressing my sorrow.





I've seen myself searching for comfort in short conversations and small exchanges because I am desperate for human connection. I often find myself comparing myself to others and pressuring myself to do better yet it always resulted in me feeling more alone than before. The sense of loneliness originates with a need for a real connection to be acknowledged, understood, and valued for who you are rather than simply just being alone. I hold onto thoughts of happier times when warmth came from loved ones' caresses and laughter echoed through the corridors, all over my darkest hours. Instead, as time passes, those memories become less and less vivid, leaving me alone in a terrible place.

I believe in the act of moving forward and letting go of someone's past actions towards you given that by holding on we are preventing ourselves from growing as a person and putting ourselves in the invisible chains of someone else's negative emotions.

Finding purpose and meaning in life can also mitigate feelings of loneliness. Aiding one's past personal relationships with those which truly matters to us. Taking part in social interaction promoting activities, including volunteering, joining groups, or engaging in local events, might present possibilities to network and establish meaningful connections. Feelings of loneliness can be reduced by even small efforts, such as striking up a conversation with a stranger or getting in touch with old friends.

In conclusion, while loneliness may seem overwhelming, it is a manageable experience with the right approach. By acknowledging emotions, fostering social connections, practicing self-care, finding purpose, and seeking support when needed, individuals can effectively cope with loneliness and cultivate a fulfilling life.

Lastly, for those whose well-being is greatly impacted by persistent feelings of loneliness, it is advised that they seek professional assistance. Support groups, therapists, or counsellors can provide guidance, encouragement, and helpful coping mechanisms specialised to specific needs.





**Name - Himika Nag**  
**Class - XI**  
**School - Aditya Academy,**  
**Dum Dum**

# Her Unspoken Solitude



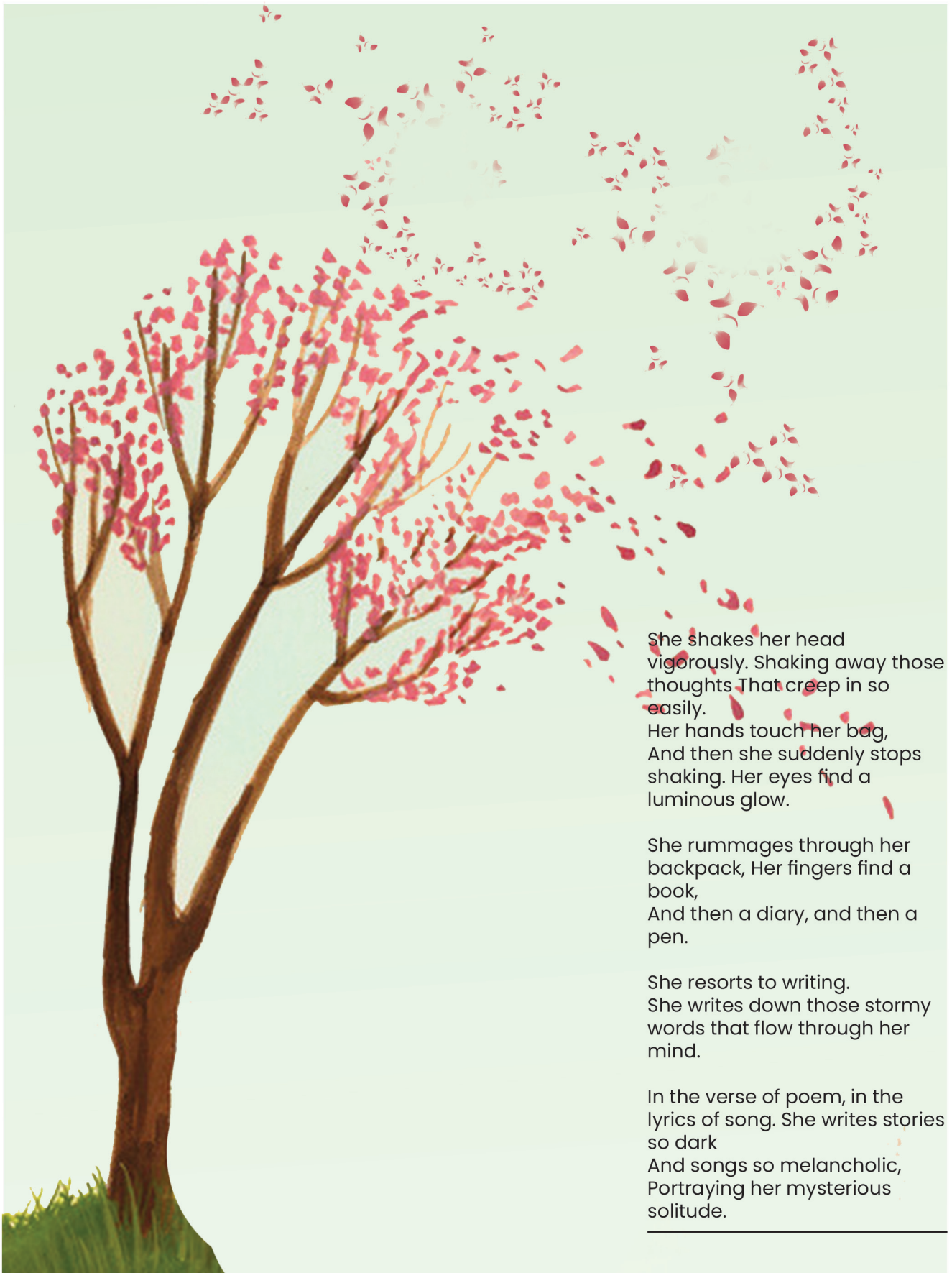
She sits under the tree,  
Thousands of thoughts but  
not of glee. In the hustle of the  
trees,  
In the softness of the breeze, In  
the ironical hues, Amongst the  
miracle views.

She sits by herself.  
Lost words but never mind.  
Only her eyes speak,  
Of untold melancholic tales.

With her hands dug into the  
mud,  
She feels something piercing  
into her heart, so deep, that it  
creates a permanent hole. And  
then in her mind.

No, she doesn't cry. She refuses  
to do so.  
But, why does a drop of tear  
fall, Down the corner of her  
eyes?





She shakes her head  
vigorously. Shaking away those  
thoughts That creep in so  
easily.  
Her hands touch her bag,  
And then she suddenly stops  
shaking. Her eyes find a  
luminous glow.

She rummages through her  
backpack, Her fingers find a  
book,  
And then a diary, and then a  
pen.

She resorts to writing.  
She writes down those stormy  
words that flow through her  
mind.

In the verse of poem, in the  
lyrics of song. She writes stories  
so dark  
And songs so melancholic,  
Portraying her mysterious  
solitude.

Name - Purba Parul

Class - XI

School - Mother's Public School,  
Unit-1, Bhubaneswar



# Reasons for Loneliness and Coping with Loneliness

In today's world, it is pretty difficult to find a friendship like Krishna and Sudama. People nowadays have tons of people whom they can call their friends but barely one or two out of them would be a real friend. It is somehow similar to the saying – water, water everywhere but not a single drop to drink, likewise– tons of friends but not a single one in need. Failed friendships, relationships, family problems etc., lead people to distance themselves from everyone around them and become lonely.

## Reasons for Loneliness:

- Got ditched by someone they never thought they would
- Got backstabbed by someone they trusted too much.
- Develop trust issues due to trust being broken.
- Family members not understanding.
- Some past tragic incident, that still haunts me.
- Unexpected death of someone very beloved.

These are the reasons people distance themselves from people around them and stop talking to almost everyone and this leads to loneliness. This sometimes leads to the person committing suicide.

## Reasons, why people are getting affected by others easily:

- People don't live for themselves, they live for others. People wear good outfits, go to exquisite destinations for vacation, eat out at five or seven-star hotels, etc. not for self-happiness rather they post these on social media for others to see, and if someone makes any hate comments, they are badly affected.
- People have a lot of expectations from others. And if those expectations aren't fulfilled then people are highly affected.



### Ways of coping with loneliness:

• Connect with yourself to find inner peace and to create a bond with your soul. Ways to connect with yourself:

- Do Yoga
- Do Meditation
- Spend some time with yourself
- Do things you want to do and find happiness in doing.
- Do activities that calm you.

• Focus on yourself.  
- Stay busy with your work and life.  
- Stay away from unnecessary gossip, parties, and people.

• Stop having expectations.  
- As said in Bhagwat Gita by Shree Bhagwan (Shree Krishna) to keep working and not to have any expectations for results.  
- Because with expectations we can never find peace and satisfaction.

• People have a lot of expectations from others. And if those expectations aren't fulfilled then people are highly affected.

• Attachment issues. People get attached to someone when they have a lot of things in common and if they share the same thoughts and ideas. So, when the person they are attached to, leaves or ghosts them, then their mental health is highly affected.

• Can't accept the truth of death. People's mental health is badly affected when they face unexpected deaths of their beloved ones.

• Can't cope with others' ideas, thoughts, and thinking. When people cannot cope with others' ideas, thoughts, and thinking clashes occur which affects them mentally and physically.

Shree Krishna himself said in the Bhagwat Gita:

A real saint man will not rely on others for his happiness, and he will not get too excited not too sad for temporary things or moments. Rather he finds inner peace and satisfaction within himself, which eventually leads to creating a bond with himself and he stays happy forever.





-If things turn out as per the expectations then we will get extremely happy and may also gain ego and distance ourselves from people who love us and then end up being all alone.

-And if things don't turn out as per the expectations and we somehow fail, the. We get depressed and distance ourselves from people around us and we might also suffer from anxiety and depression. This may also lead to suicide.

•Stop getting attached to people and things.

-Birth and death are the truths of life. Unexpected things often happen in life but we need to move on. William Wordsworth talked about this in his poem "A slumber did my spirit seal". When any of our loved one's death occurs, we can't hang on to that incident forever, we need to move on somehow as life goes on.

-The same goes for things. As said in Bhagwat Gita: "The man who gets attached to this material world will never attain liberation". John Berryman talked about this in his poem "The Ball Poem". He says that money is external and sometimes in life, we need to let go of things which we truly love and we need to move on in life.

•Make friends, socialize, and join different activity classes and clubs.

- By socializing and making new friends, our communication skills improve, we become more confident, and also when we open up to people about our problems they might come up with good solutions to our problems.

-We should join different classes and clubs, like yoga classes, painting classes, karate classes, writing clubs, reading clubs, dance classes, pottery classes, swimming classes, etc. to keep ourselves engaged in different activities to enhance our creativity and to interact with the same sort of people as us. By this we will have a broader mindset, we can come up with new ideas and we'll not feel lonely.

By doing all these, we can cope with loneliness and can find inner peace, satisfaction, and happiness. Our happiness lies within us we don't have to rely on anyone for our happiness. We can't be lonely if we don't think we are lonely. We don't need any companion, we are our own best companion.





**Name: Ritoban Chattopadhyay**  
**Class – VII**  
**School – G.D.Goenka Public School,**  
**Dakshineswar**

# How Mohan copes with loneliness

Mohan is a twelve-year-old boy. He lives in a big flat situated beside a congested bus route in the city of joy. He has just been through his annual examination for class six and is enjoying the session break. So he starts his days late in a relaxed mood. Today at 9:30 am his mom and dad left for their offices. Now Mohan is alone in this big flat. As Mohan lives in a nuclear family and has no other siblings, he has no option but to stay alone. At an early age, he did not like this loneliness but as time passed, he started loving it. He realises that it has made him more responsible and more independent. Most of all it provides him with the opportunity to learn, create, and experiment.

The first thing that he does to cope with the loneliness is to concentrate on adventurous books. Mohan's collection of adventurous books acts as the key to the outer world. He loves the adventures of Tintin, he also loves the science fiction of Jules Verne. They open a new vista to him. He travels with Captain Nimo, Tintin, and forgets his loneliness.

Recently a special inclination towards the Ramayana and the Mahabharata has grown in Mohan. Today he has read a few pages from The Mahabharata which his dad bought for him from Kolkata Bookfair. Mohan is elated to think that he is reading the stories in more detail than he read when he was only 5 or 6.

Another interesting fact is that a chessboard is always kept open beside him. The chess pieces are kept at their respective positions.

And Mohan solves the chess puzzles now and then. He then thinks of himself as Young Pragyandanda. He also plays football in the hall. Sometimes he plays the role of Messi and delivers an award-winning speech in front of their wall-sized mirror.

After lunch, the afternoon comes. Mohan's afternoons are very artsy - his room turns a creative mess as he does different arts and crafts taking help from YouTube. Today Mohan has decided to surprise his mom with his newly acquired culinary expertise. Maggi, Sandwiches, French fries, and Fruit Salad and Coffee are the food- items that he has tried his hand at.





The evening was about to settle down. While he was waiting on the balcony for his parents in the evening, the aunty of the neighbouring flat asked Mohan, "You spend such long lonely hours, don't you feel it boring?" Mohan wisely replies "No, I enjoy my loneliness and make it productive. Above all, we have come alone and will go alone, so what's the point of complaining about loneliness? Everyone has come to perform his duty." Here comes the quote of the day and Aunty was left jaw-dropped.





**Name - Akshat Kothari**  
**Class - III**  
**School - Sri Sri Academy**

## Ninja Star

I would love to form my own tribe. There would be like-minded friends. I will name it Ninja Stars. I have a list of friends whom I like to include in my tribe Arham, Shaarav, Kiyaan, Myra and Divya. Arham is friendly, caring, innovative, and funny. Shaarav is smart, confident, serious, and reads a lot. Kiyaan is known as naughty, but he is very smart, lively, and shares his plans with us. Myra is very joyful. She helps everybody who is in trouble and is a very good plan maker. Divya is my best friend. She is a very good dancer too. We all are good at sports. We would laugh, play, and share secrets with each other. We would never feel alone and lonely. We will make our bonding strong with kindness, cheer, and understanding. We would learn new things in our unique and special way. So, we all can have fun in the field. We are going to have fun meetings and creative meetings. Our logo will look something like this.



In conclusion I end my words with this .....

"I am here, with open heart,  
Ready for this new start.  
To find my tribe, to laugh and cheer,  
And make memories we'll hold dear."



**Name – Ms. Soumya Mehta**

**Class – X**

**School – Lotus Valley International School,  
Sector 126 Noida**



# LONELY YET NOT

"The sunset is gorgeous."

She glanced around at the people scattered across the beach, her gaze stalling over the two whispering and laughing beside her. Five seconds went by without any reply. Then ten! Eventually, Dia turned her head back to the sight in front of her. Except now, it had lost all of its beauty. Her friends continued talking, not even listening to her. She was used to it by now – the splitting into groups for school projects, the fake sympathetic looks sent her way, being ignored whenever she said something that didn't align with their 'views'.

But that was the reality of having friends, she supposed. Barely fitting in. Not knowing who to call when she felt like crying or jumping in joy, not knowing who she was without Mikela or Jaya beside her. But she had a guaranteed seat at the lunch table, and the hangouts were mostly nice.

Jaya beside her. But she had a guaranteed seat at the lunch table, and the hangouts were mostly nice.

"-don't you agree, Dia?"

What was the topic of conversation? Dia had completely zoned out, and now looked nervously between





between Mikela (who was staring at her as if expecting her to say no) and Jaya (who sat with her hands deep in a box of pizza).

"Um, sorry, can you repeat?"

Jaya rolled her eyes but smiled nonetheless. "I was talking about that incident. About, you know, that girl falling down the stairs at school?"

Mikela snickered softly. "It was hilarious! People talked about it for ages."

Now she remembered. Some girl in their grade had slipped (or been pushed, it was up for debate) on the stairs a couple days ago. Nothing broken, or severely injured, but some people had made fun of it.

"Well, really it wasn't her fault," Dia said softly. "And I'm sure she feels bad enough without everyone making fun of her."

Jaya shook her head. "It was her fault for falling down. And it isn't our fault it was hilarious. Dia, think reasonably."

Mikela nodded. Dia glanced between her friends. "I mean – I guess so."



She didn't agree to it, and disliked the fact that her friends couldn't bother to support someone whose only mistake was not tying her shoelaces properly. But maybe Jaya and Mikela were right. Maybe it had been hilarious to some people. Sometimes, things had to be compromised to remain friends. Everyone's opinion didn't matter, as Jaya always said.

When Dia went to school a few weeks later, she was surprised to find her friends whispering beside her locker. Usually, she always sought them out. Shrugging aside the thought that something bad had happened, she fast walked to them.

"Hi," she whispered, stuffing books inside the small metal space. "What's up?"

Mikela glanced somewhat-judgementally at the lone picture Dia had put up. "Nothing. Just wanted to talk to our friend. Anything wrong with that?"

"Uh- no! No, nothing wrong with that."

Dia was a little bit taken aback but she couldn't ignore the happiness in her chest.





It had been a long time since she talked to them (or anyone for that matter) and she was feeling a little lonely.

She hated feeling lonely, to be honest. She didn't talk much even with her family. But she needed someone to be with, and just sit and watch TV, or listen to music.

Jaya's shoulder bumped against her. "So, what's with the locker?"

"The locker?"

Mikela nodded. "Yeah, it looks so boring! I'll help you decorate it after class, okay?"

"Um, alright. But what's wrong with it?" Dia asked. She loved her locker! Sure, it had nothing put up except a quote from her favorite book (printed on lovely flower-background paper), but that was how she liked it. Plain and simple.

Mikela snorted. "What's not wrong with that thing? Sorry to say, Dia, but your taste is not fantastic. But it's cool. That's why you have us."

Maybe her locker was a bit plain, now that she thought about it. She liked it, but maybe lockers were supposed to be brighter and filled with more pictures.

"Okay, thanks, Mikela."

On the bus ride home, Dia struggled to find a seat. This was the consequence for staying back extra to decorate her previously-boring locker. It was now decked in glitter pink cut-outs and a mirror.

She supposed it looked like a proper school locker.

Finally, her gaze snagged at the empty seat beside an old man. She lifted her bag higher on her shoulder and slid in before anyone else could.

She pulled out her book; the ride back home was long and she didn't feel particularly sleepy.

As she shifted a bit in her seat, her elbow dug into the man's stomach.

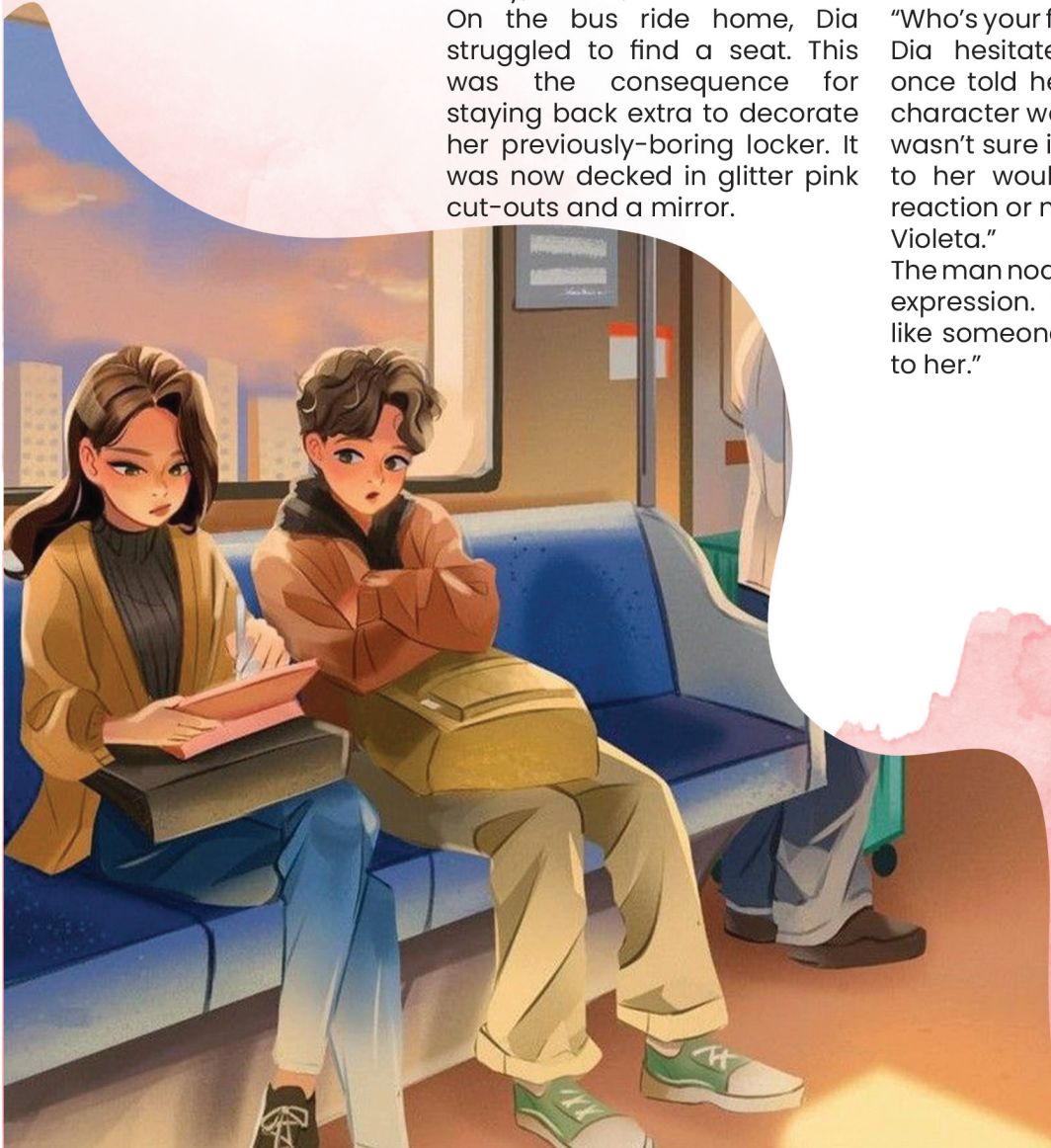
"I'm so sorry," she said.

"It's alright," the man smiled. "I love that book."

Dia glanced at the book, before smiling back. "Yes, it's one of my favourites."

"Who's your favorite character?" Dia hesitated. Someone had once told her that her favorite character was an idiot, and she wasn't sure if the nice man next to her would have the same reaction or not. "Well, I really like Violeta."

The man nodded with a satisfied expression. "Ah, yes. You look like someone who would relate to her."





Dia tilted her head, confused and a tad hurt but tried not to let it show on her face. She didn't want to insult him. "Who's your favorite, uh, sir?"

He laughed. "Sir? No, no. Call me Jack. And my favorite is Violeta, too."

Dia smiled widely, and possibly genuinely for the first time in the day. And maybe it had to do with Jack's kind eyes, but she wanted to have a deep conversation about Violeta with him. "I always thought Violeta was really brave!"

"Right? How she stood up to her family was amazing!"

Jack looked at her carefully for a second, before continuing. "Sometimes who we think are our friends and family are the reason we're unhappy. Violeta was brave, realizing that fact and deciding she was done being second for everything and everyone."

Dia's smile turned back to forced. She agreed with Jack, but a part of her also thought Violeta had been impulsive and stupid to let go of her family.

She debated whether to actually tell Jack that or to pretend to agree with him.

She loved books, and even talking about books, and it was a long ride back. "I agree, but sometimes I think she was a bit – stupid – for how she just left, you know? Her family had always been with her. And after that day, she had nowhere to go and no one to talk to. She'd be all alone."

Dia didn't say she felt she was in a situation exactly as Violeta's, but maybe Jack saw it on her face, because he softened his voice and said, "Sometimes it's when you're alone that you're truly happy and well, yourself. Having family, or friends, who force you to change yourself aren't actually people who love

you."

Dia almost felt compelled to shake her head and stubbornly say 'No! You're wrong! People do have to change themselves to fit in. Especially people like me, who don't want to be lonely!'

But she resisted, and nodded softly before turning her gaze back to her book. She didn't feel like reading anymore, but she felt like talking to the man beside her even less.

Even though she felt that Jack was a little wrong, she couldn't help but repeat his words over and over in her head at dinner. Her mother was talking about work, but Dia's mind was fixated on those words.

*Sometimes it's when you're alone that you're truly happy... having friends who force you to change yourself don't actually love you...*

Wasn't that exactly her situation? As much as she didn't like to think or talk about it, Mikela and Jaya weren't exactly 'agree to disagree' people. They were the 'our opinion is correct and if yours doesn't match we are not friends' people. And while she didn't necessarily feel all smiles around them, they



were her friends, right?

Some part of her said 'No!', that they weren't her friends. But then who was Dia without her friends? She was alone, with no one to watch sunsets or get ice-cream with.

She stood abruptly. "I'm not really hungry, sorry."

Her mother blinked. "Okay, sweetheart. Going to sleep?"

Dia nodded. She hugged her parents good night and went to her room with all intentions to sleep, but instead she pulled out the book and flipped the pages to where Violeta finally left her family.

If Violeta could leave her family, Dia could totally leave her friends, right? She liked them, yes, but with Jack's words ringing in her mind and Violeta's story being almost the same as hers, she realised that maybe, actually, they weren't her friends but people who she just wanted to be around, desperate enough to do anything to fit in.



Dia had no desire to be alone. But Violeta was a well, fictional, person whose life had turned out better just because she had left her so-called family. She found herself in the moments she was alone. Violeta's life became better because of what she did.

With the echoes of Jack's words, Violeta's story, and Jaya and Mikela's judgemental stares flying around her brain, she fell asleep. Maybe being alone wasn't that bad, after all.

The next few days at school, Dia didn't seek out Jaya and Mikela.

She read her book during lunch at the library, rediscovered her passion for drawing during free periods, and had some of the best days she ever had at school. One particular Saturday, she sat at the beach, reading another book under the sunset.

Jack's advice had been the turning point for her, letting into the light emotions that she had been feeling for years. And through that advice, she had realised that all the fear she had harboured of being alone was just an irrational fear.

In all honestly, she had discovered herself.

She'd joined clubs her friends would have made fun off just because she loved those things; her belief of never doing things alone had also changed.

It didn't matter if she was by herself, because she was content being with herself. Lonely wasn't a hated word anymore. It was just a couple of letters. She felt happy, and truly herself.

With a soft smile on her face, she looked up at the pink-tinged sky, whispering to herself, "The sunset is gorgeous."







**Name - Prayas Dash**  
**Class - X**  
**School - D.A.V. PUBLIC SCHOOL,**  
**UNIT-VIII, BHUBANESWAR**

# **COPING WITH LONELINESS**



Loneliness is a complex emotional state, distinct from the physical state of being alone. It is a feeling of disconnection or isolation, which can be experienced even when surrounded by others. This emotional state has become increasingly prevalent among teenagers in recent times. As they strive for independence and personal achievement, they often grapple with feelings of loneliness.

Despite having extensive social circles, many teenagers find themselves unable to connect meaningfully with their peers. Trust issues and inconsistent relationships often lead to a lack of close friendships. The bonds of friendship, once strong and enduring, are now fragile and transient. This has resulted in a growing disinterest in forming new friendships. Friends, who are supposed to provide solace and happiness, sometimes become sources of stress and discomfort.

For students in the crucial academic years of 10th and 11th grades, these social issues exacerbate the pressures they face from family expectations and board examinations.

This combination of factors contributes to an increasing sense of loneliness among today's youth. This loneliness extends to family interactions as well. Exhausted and overwhelmed, many students withdraw from family gatherings and activities. Even in the presence of family, they often feel profoundly lonely. While families are meant to provide support and strength, students in these age groups tend not to share their struggles with family members, choosing instead to bear their burdens in silence.

However, it is important to note that while these issues cannot be entirely prevented, families can play a crucial role in mitigating them. They can provide support by understanding and acknowledging the challenges their children face, rather than imposing strict expectations on them. In conclusion, problems are ubiquitous. However, true resilience lies in facing these problems head-on and emerging victorious, even when the odds seem insurmountable.







**Name – Himashree Acharya**  
**Class – XII**  
**School – DAV Public School, Unit 8**

# EMBRACING ME

Quiet or outgoing  
Was the dilemma I had  
Embraced!

Unaware of the real self  
That's been hidden  
Underneath for  
Years to come together ahead!

Not knowing my own charm  
I was set in beholding  
Someone else didn't bother  
To distinguish the distinguishable  
Traits!

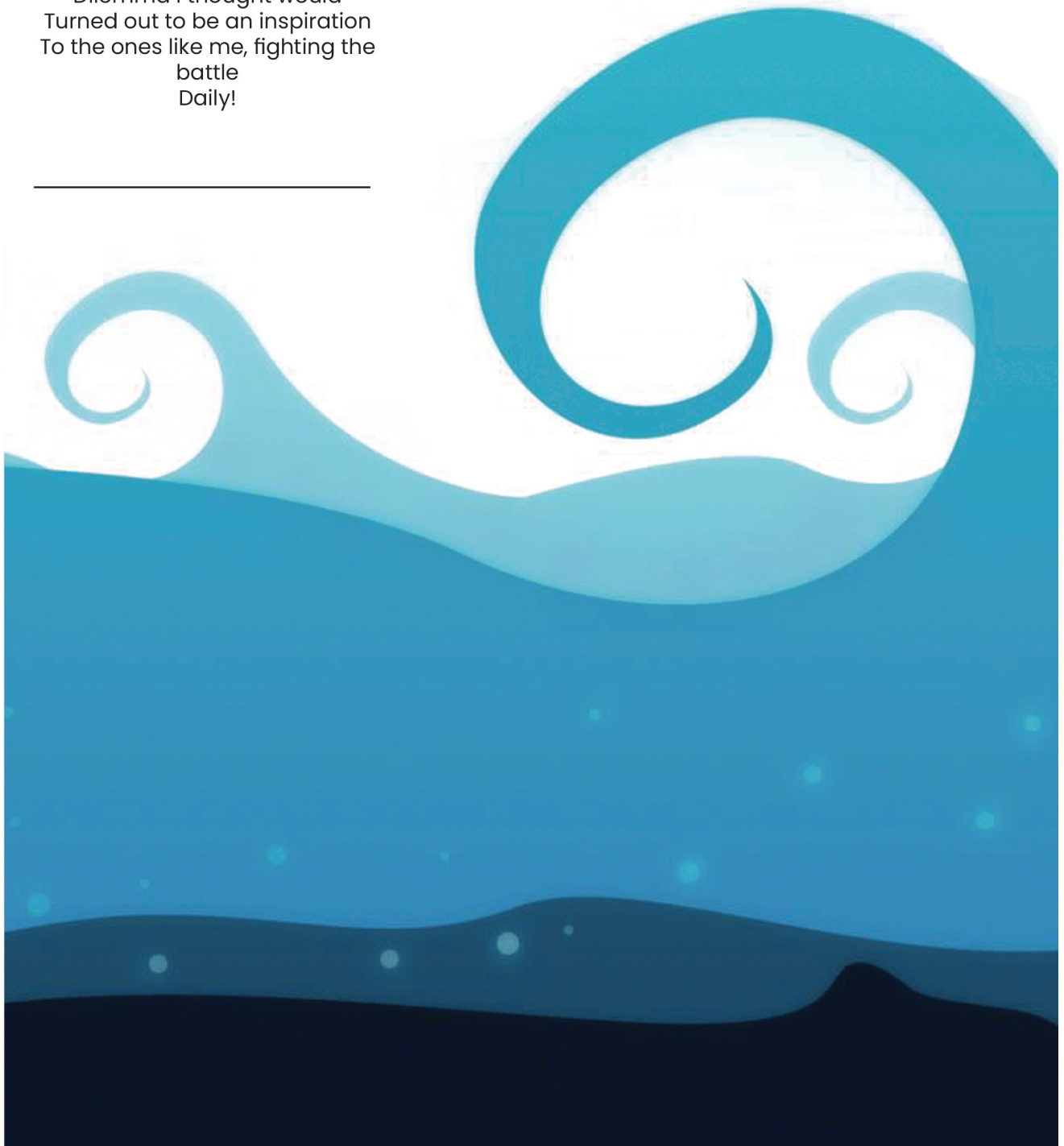
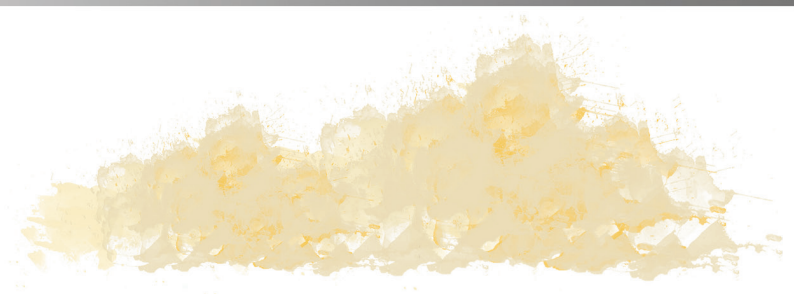


Suzee Lee

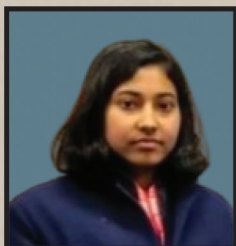
**VOLUME 7 ISSUE 21 MARCH 2024**

Always remarked that I had  
Enough of sand in my grip  
Ignorant that it has always  
Been slipping away  
Underneath!

.. All I wish to get a squeeze from  
My inner own tiny one, so that the  
Dilemma I thought would  
Turned out to be an inspiration  
To the ones like me, fighting the  
battle  
Daily!







**Name – Resam Fiza**  
**Class – XI**  
**School – Techno India Group Public**  
**School, Raiganj, West Bengal**

# A journey to the firmament

When the thickness of fear, distress, lament overburdens,  
 When truth and joy get subdued by malice and melancholy,  
 What does one find then?

A life superfluous with thorns of the anomaly.

When the pain gushes deeper and deeper,  
 And serenity gets lost in the enigma as traces,  
 It is the very moment that illumines within –  
 The sense of a frame with no more races.

To sing a song or even wish it to be sung,  
 All confinement only permits,  
 And the inner eagerness gradually perishes–  
 Before it ever comes to be amongst that exists.

So, don't behold my hand and make me fragile,  
 Let me be free to see the world with my own eyes.  
 I am reluctant for a dependence that evokes weakness,  
 Amidst the vicinity which in front of me thrives.

The catastrophe thus derails to the brim of the cliff,  
 to be hurled into the sea  
 And the ultimatum lies to be nothing  
 But a soul free of all hazards and the frame laid peacefully onto the dead's lea.



**Name - Akshainie Barman**  
**Class - VII**  
**School - Shri Shikshayatan School**



## COPING WITH LONELINESS

"It is a poverty of self; it is not the lack of company but a lack of purpose. What is it? It is the dreadful feeling of loneliness."

We often tend to confuse between being alone and being lonely. Being alone is the state of physical being of the body whereas loneliness is a state of the mind. When we say we are alone, it means that there is no one around us and we are all by ourselves physically but being lonely can be experienced even when you are in the middle of a crowd, surrounded by people, sometimes your most loved ones, or even amid absolute strangers. Even when you are with your most loved ones or your trusted aides, you may still feel lonely when you are not given any attention.

Try your mightiest best but you are treated as if you have just appeared out of the pages of "The Invisible Man". Unattended, uncared, ignored, your very existence becomes a huge question mark in this great crowd. Being alone is sometimes good but being lonely is the worst nightmare that you may live through ever.

Have you heard of Typhon? He was the largest and the

most dreadful monster in Greek mythology. Tall, with a brutish face and wings, countless snakeheads in place of hands, and a lower body made up of coiled serpents, his eyes flashed fire and fiery rocks fell from his mouth. Loneliness is like Typhon, waiting for the opportune moment to prey on our mind with its countless snakeheads as it reaches every nook and corner spreading like a weed as it plants the seeds of negativity and insecurity. The snakes make their home in our mind planting the most venomous seed of depression

which often leads to suicidal tendencies and death. The other snakes also follow suit as they sow the seeds of anger issues, anxiety, panic attacks, isolation, social inhibitions, etc. leading one to cocoon themselves.

It has been reported that 33% of the world's population is home to this loneliness monster with Brazil reportedly having the highest percentage of people experiencing loneliness. One can imagine how deadly this condition of the mind is especially in today's time and age.





So, will we allow this monster to make its home in our minds and cloud it with darkness? The answer to this lies in the belief that even the darkest of the night passes by and there is always a silver lining out there on the horizon. Just as one may suffer from the pains of loneliness, one can treat oneself and cope with this condition through self-love, which I feel is the most important medicine as it is us who know ourselves better than the rest. Let friends and loved ones ignore us. We can always fall back on two of the best friends and doctors in this world – books and music. Preachers and healers are the ones in whom we can find solace. Books and music soothe and calm the mind and divert ourselves from the thought of feeling lonely. In the most difficult of times, try reading a book or listening to your favourite soundtrack, you will experience a sense of peace like nothing. These are some of our most trusted lieutenants against the monster of loneliness and help us battle it till we overcome it.

Engross yourself, especially your mind with things that you love to do. Pick up a hobby and practice and nurture it with love and care and it will never leave your side. Give importance and love to yourself and as I had heard somewhere, "Become your own favourite". Forget about those who ignore you, for your being depressed and aloof and sad gives them strength. Instead, your smile and strength to cope with your loneliness in the toughest of times and situations will make their mind burn to ashes.

Try and find the most positive in the most negative of things and situations. Positivity again will be another trusted soldier you can rely on. Remember, there will be thorns strewn in your way but you will have to find the rose among the thorns. Even on the blackest of nights, it is the moon that shines with all its might and brightness.

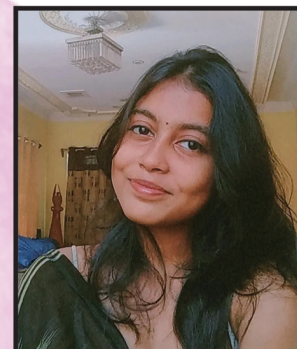
Look up to the moon and bask in its positive light as it shines with all its glory even when it is surrounded by all the black negativity.

No one in this world is worthless. We all have our goals and mission to fulfill. Why waste yourself with what people think, why let yourself suffer even if people do not care? Love yourself, become your best friend, trust, and believe in your abilities. We are all special in our way and it is with a purpose that we have been brought into this world. We should all move forward with the belief that every day will be a new day and we all have the potential to shine the brightest.





**Name - Prativa Sautya**  
**Class - XI**  
**School - Tamralipta Public School**



## A Meeting

Everybody talks about how stories begin and end in airports but I found my tribe in a railway station. I saw a girl, she seemed different than most of the girls I've ever come across. The next train was one hour late which gave me time to watch her a little more. For the first time, I noticed someone; the dress she was wearing, the gap in her teeth, her long wet black hair, and tinted cheeks. She was like an art. I got nervous as she glanced at me. I saw her walking towards me while I pretended to see the abandoned trains. We both stood there allowing the time to slowly pass. Before I could say anything she asked, "Where are you heading to?" It surprised me a bit to know girls also start a conversation. I replied,

"Nowhere."

"Strange! Then what're you doing here? Waiting for someone?"

"Maybe for you," I whispered.

"Sorry, what?"

"No, I'm not waiting for anyone. I like seeing the trains leave with crowded compartments and then the emptiness of it as it reaches the last station."

"You're quite philosophical, Mister," she replied with a smile.

"I'm Akanksha, You?"

"I'm Sameer."

"You live nearby?" she asked.

"No, I came here for a job interview."

"Congratulations Mr. Sameer."

"I didn't get it."

"It's fine, one should also be congratulated on their failures because every failure is a lesson that acts as a bridge to success. You don't understand the joy of winning if you've never lost."

"Ahh! your words are as beautiful as you." "Are you flirting?"

"No, I'm just stating facts."

"So, when are you planning to go home?" she asked.

"I... I didn't come here to go home, I came here never to return home again."

"What do you mean?"

"I have been rejected by the company saying I am not capable of getting any job."

"Why do you even have to run in this unnecessary race, Sameer? Don't take life so seriously that you miss the joy of some fleeting moments, the joy of rejections."

"Akansha, being a 26-year-old and still unemployed isn't easy; it's like a crime in this society. In this fight, no one's going to be with you but against you."

"I get it but you know when I was young and I was returning home from a 2-hour journey, I realised that my toe was bleeding but I had no other way than walking."





I knew once I reached home, I could rest and after a day or two the wound will heal and I'll forget about the pain I had while walking. In our lives, we tend to lose hope sometimes but no matter how hard the journey may seem, it will always be worth it in the end. I am a doctor. I was told by my professor that I wasn't capable of being one but here I stand with a white coat and stethoscope."

"Your parents must be so proud," I replied. "I lost both of them at a young age."

The train whistle interrupted our conversation, she went to find an empty compartment while I followed her through the crowds.

"Would you like to go for coffee someday?"

She replied smiling, "Any moment might be our last, Mister."

I felt alive for the first time in a while. Though I never saw her again, something changed in me after that certain meeting. And now I stand here doing everything I ever dreamed of,

I thank God for gifting me that moment. Without her, I wouldn't have been standing here. As I moved backward from the microphone, I heard a big round of applause and wished maybe one of them were her.



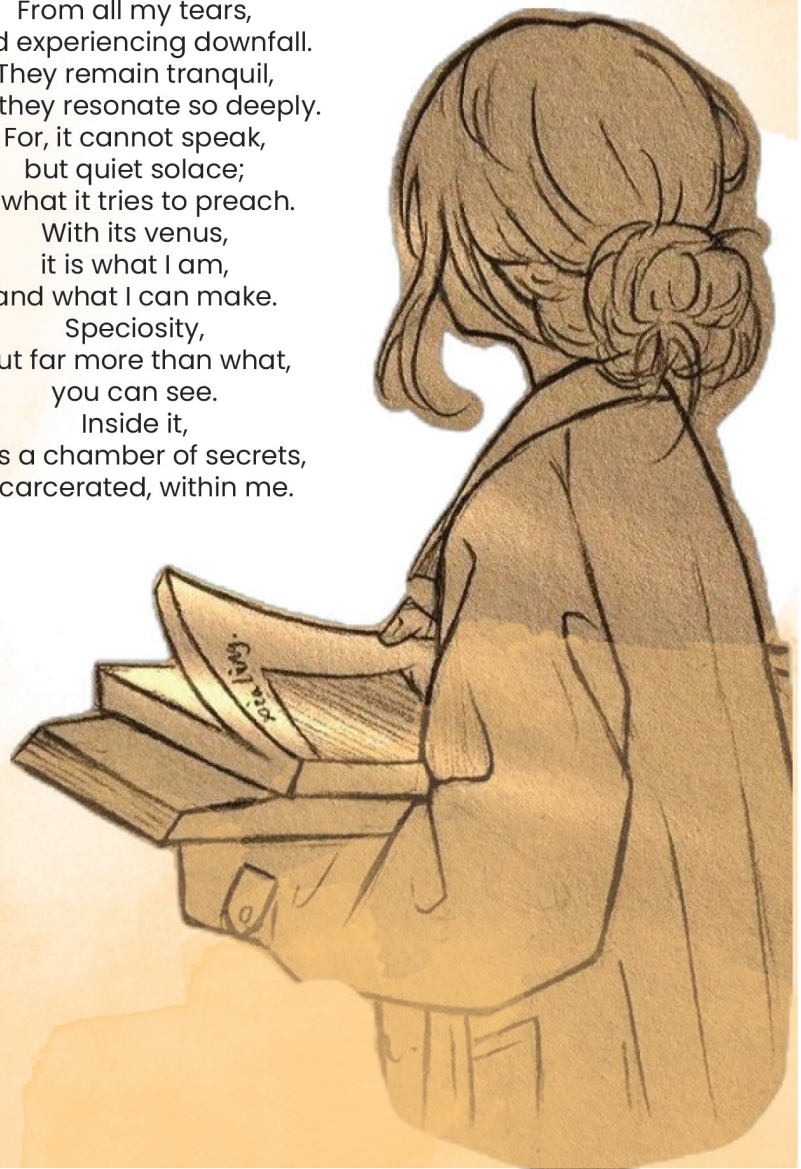




**Name - Saanvi Patra**  
**Class - XI**  
**School - DPS, Hyderabad**

# Within Me

These walls,  
They've seen it all,  
From all my tears,  
and experiencing downfall.  
They remain tranquil,  
But they resonate so deeply.  
For, it cannot speak,  
but quiet solace;  
is what it tries to preach.  
With its venus,  
it is what I am,  
and what I can make.  
Speciosity,  
but far more than what,  
you can see.  
Inside it,  
Lies a chamber of secrets,  
incarcerated, within me.







## JEENA JOHN

Principal,  
The Lexicon International School,  
Kalyani Nagar, Pune

## Principal Speaks

### 1. How do you encourage students to socialize without social media for an overall growth?

To encourage students to socialize without relying on social media, we prioritize creating meaningful connections. Children often turn to social media platforms to seek attention, validation, learning, or a sense of achievement. We address these fundamental needs by promoting activities that foster genuine engagement, collaboration, and personal development. Our goal is to encourage students to find fulfillment and growth in their interactions beyond the digital realm. We believe in striking a balance that allows students to benefit from technology while also nurturing authentic relationships and experiences.

### 2. How do you believe schools should help students in 'Coping with Loneliness' which is also our cover story for the March 2024 edition?

To address loneliness among students, schools should prioritize in developing an active lifestyle and building a sense of purpose through engaging activities and fostering inclusivity among students. Encouraging participation in extracurriculars, developing hobbies, and promoting diverse interests can provide students

with avenues for connection and fulfillment beyond the classroom. Inclusivity initiatives, such as diversity training and anti-bullying campaigns, are crucial for creating environments where every student feels valued and accepted. Service-learning projects, career exploration, and peer support programs further contribute to students' sense of purpose, offering opportunities for personal growth, community engagement, and meaningful connections with peers. By actively cultivating purpose-building activities and initiatives, schools empower students to navigate challenges such as loneliness while fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

“

**To address loneliness among students, schools should prioritize in developing an active lifestyle and building a sense of purpose through engaging activities**

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# Principal Speaks

“

***Technology is merely a tool; it's your mindset that determines whether it leads to boon or bane.***

”

**3. According to you, what is the best aspect of NEP 2020 and how will it benefit the student community?**

One key aspect NEP focuses upon is the ease of learning. Numerous steps have been undertaken to make it easy for students, whether it be the two board exams or Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education with multiple entry/exit options, whether it be the Academic Bank of Credit or the Expansion of open and distance learning to increase Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER). NEP 2020 makes it easy and convenient for the student community to pursue their educational journey irrespective of personal challenges or limitations one may come by.

**4. Given the rising shift to digital learning, do you think technology is a boon or bane for school students?**

Technology is merely a tool; it's your mindset that determines whether it leads to boon or bane. A book in the hand of a learner is enlightening, but the same book in the hand of a vandal is destructive. The same principle applies to technology. When utilized as a learning tool, harnessing its potential for educational purposes, technology can indeed be a boon for school students. However, if misused or excessively relied upon, it can quickly become a bane, leading to distractions and detracting from the learning process.

**5. What according to you should be the basic requirement for cultivating critical thinking in children?**

According to me, an enquiry-based classroom is a must for developing critical thinking skills. As educators, it is extremely important to create an environment where asking questions should become a norm. In many cultures, including India, there exists a cultural norm of respecting elders and authority figures without questioning their views or decisions.



## Principal Speaks

It is important we change that, to foster critical thinking, it's crucial to challenge this norm and instill in children the importance of questioning and seeking understanding. As educators, it's our responsibility to create a safe space where students feel empowered to ask questions, challenge assumptions, and engage in critical dialogue.

### 6. A few tips for students to increase their habit of book reading.

Just begin. Make a habit of opening a novel or two and reading a few pages. Keep exploring until you find an author, genre, or specific book that speaks to you. That's it. Once you do, the world of books will pull you into the realm of knowledge and imagination. Remember, learning should be fun, so don't force yourself to finish a book if it's not engaging or enjoyable for you. Keep exploring until you find what truly interests and captivates you. Additionally, always keep a dictionary handy; the better you understand the words, the more you'll connect with the book.

### 7. Your suggestion for students who are willing to pursue unusual professions as a career in the future.

Work hard, irrespective of what others may say. What may seem unusual today could become a market disruptor in the future, especially with the age of AI upon us. Just keep

“

***Creative thinking would help them to approach challenges with fresh perspectives, leading to novel solutions and opportunities.***

”

in mind that as long as you serve not just humanity but 'life' as a whole, you will always have a place in this world and make a positive impact, regardless of time and place.

### 8. What according to you are the must-learn life skills for every student and the reasons?

In my view, some essential life skills that every student should develop at the earliest are creative thinking, time management, and problem-solving. Creative thinking would help them to approach challenges with fresh perspectives, leading to novel solutions and opportunities. Time management is crucial for balancing academic commitments, extracurricular activities, and personal responsibilities, helping students develop a sense of discipline and efficiency that will serve them well throughout their lives.

Problem-solving equips students with the ability to identify issues, analyze them critically, and devise effective strategies to overcome obstacles, empowering them to navigate various situations successfully. These skills are indispensable for personal growth, academic success, and future professional endeavours, making them essential components of a well-rounded education. a lifelong companion in the form of stories and ideas. Fostering a habit of visiting the school library and starting with short stories is an excellent way to cultivate interest in reading.

## Principal Speaks

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***I encourage you to instill in yourself the importance of embracing lifelong learning, exploring diverse interests, and seeking opportunities for personal and intellectual growth beyond the classroom.***

**9. What is your suggestion on balancing sports and studies simultaneously for school students**

As a student, you need to remember to always manage what is limited in life whether be money, resources or 'TIME'. If you learn to effectively manage time, there's nothing you cannot achieve. Make the most of your hours at school - enquire, question and reason. Once you leave the school for the day, whatever you have learned should be a part of you. If you learn with determination there would be no need for additional hours of tuition or coaching thus creating space for countless other endeavours in life.

Schools' effective approaches to teaching should play a crucial factor in helping children balance sports and studies. It's essential to leverage effective teaching approaches that cater to individual learning needs thus ensuring effective learning and creating space for students to explore other necessary avenues such as sports and arts.

It is important to note that sports and education complement each other, one takes care of the physical development whereas the other the mind. And both physical and mental states are intertwined for a successful life.

**10. Please share some suggestions/insights for the students/readers of Kloud9 as a mentor.**

I would like to use this platform to emphasize the importance of recognizing the distinction between formal education and continuous learning. While formal education lays the groundwork for success, it's the ongoing process of learning and self-improvement that truly leads to greatness. I encourage you to instill in yourself the importance of embracing lifelong learning, exploring diverse interests, and seeking opportunities for personal and intellectual growth beyond the classroom.

”

Additionally, emphasize the value of serving others and making a positive impact in your communities. Encourage yourself to volunteer, engage in service projects, and actively contribute to causes you're passionate about. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and service, you can empower yourself to not only excel academically but also to become compassionate, well-rounded individuals who make a meaningful difference in the world.



## *Puzzle Time*

1. What's bright orange with green on top and sounds like a parrot?
2. There's a one-story house where everything is yellow. The walls are yellow. The doors are yellow. Even all the furniture is yellow. The house has yellow beds and yellow couches. What color are the stairs?
3. What word contains 26 letters, but only has three syllables?
4. What can you hear, but not see or touch, even though you control it?
5. A girl fell off a 20-foot ladder. She wasn't hurt. Why?
6. What has lots of eyes, but can't see?
7. I am often following you and copying your every move. Yet you can never touch me or catch me. What am I?
8. Grandpa went out for a walk and it started to rain. He didn't bring an umbrella or a hat. His clothes got soaked, but not a hair on his head was wet. How is this possible?
9. You are always living in me. No matter how much time goes by I am still right there with you. What am I?
10. What has hands, but can't clap?

Puzzle Credit – Reader's Digest

# INDIAN-ORIGIN RACER YUVEN SUNDARAMOORTHY



## 1. How and when did you start getting inclined towards motorsports?

It all began when I was around 9 years old during a trip to China with my dad. He took me to watch a Formula 1 race,

and from that moment on, I was hooked on the excitement of motorsports and the thrill of speed. After returning to the US, I continued my journey into racing through karting, where I learned that while speed is important, it takes

more than just going fast to become a successful racer.

## 2. Whom did you idolize while growing up?

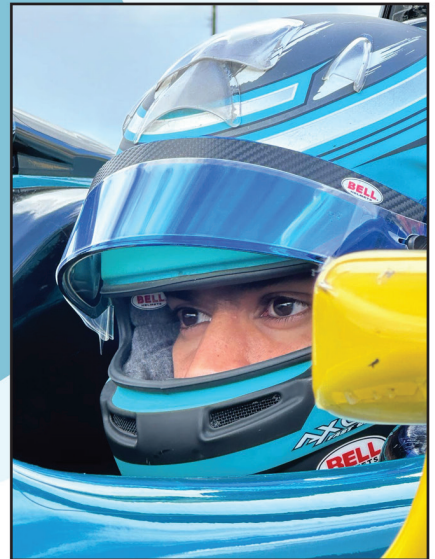
Growing up, my racing idol was Nico Rosberg. It all started during my first Formula 1 race in Shanghai when I randomly chose him as 'my guy'. When he started on the pole and won the race the following year, he became my racing idol. While I aim to carve out my own path in racing, I draw inspiration from many present-day racers as well.

## 3. How did you manage your college with such a busy schedule?

Thankfully, I've graduated now, so I don't have to deal with managing college alongside







my busy racing schedule anymore. However, when I was still in college, especially during the COVID days when everything went online, it was a bit easier to juggle both. Online classes allowed me to travel, study, and take exams from anywhere. Additionally, I made sure to communicate with my professors in advance about my racing commitments, and while some were more understanding than others, being at a large university with plenty of resources and supportive peers also helped me stay on track academically.



**You are the youngest ever winner of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway at 14 years. How do you manage to keep yourself grounded after such big achievements at this young age?**

Winning at the iconic Indianapolis Motor Speedway at the age of 14 was an electrifying experience for me. The venue's rich history added to the thrill of securing my first victory there. However, it was a bittersweet moment when the organizers didn't permit me to race the following day due to my "young age". Nevertheless, winning at such a prestigious location reinforced my confidence and belief in my abilities to compete at a high level. This triumph has served as a solid foundation for my racing career ever since, motivating me to continually strive for excellence on and off the track.

**Can you tell the kind of impact legends like Alexander Rossi and Pieter Rossi have had on you since you have partnered with them?**

Partnering with racing legends like Alexander Rossi and Pieter Rossi has had a profound impact on my journey in motorsports. Alexander, being a decade older than me, along with his father Pieter, brings a wealth of experience and wisdom to the table. Their guidance has been invaluable in helping me navigate the complexities of the racing world and avoid common pitfalls. Racing is not just about individual talent; it's also about teamwork and learning from those who have been through similar experiences. Having the Rossis by my side has not only accelerated my learning curve but has also inspired me to push myself further and strive for greatness in every aspect of my racing career.

# SIYONA VIKRAM – INDIA’S YOUNGEST PODCASTER

**AWARD WINNING CHILD PODCASTER AT ‘LITTLE MIND CHATS’ ||  
SUSTAINABILITY AWARD WINNER AND FOUNDER OF ‘LITTLE-WISE’ (WARRIORS  
INSPIRING SUSTAINABLE EARTH)**

## 1. How old were you when you started podcasting?

I was seven when I started listening to podcasts and got interested in podcasting. It was not until I was 8 years that I started officially releasing my podcasts.

## 2. Why did you start podcasting?

I started podcasting mainly because it was fun to listen back to my own voice. Later I realized there could be other children wanting to listen to their peers

talking, just like I enjoyed podcasts of other kids. While deciding on what to podcast about, I was convinced about creating a podcast that is both informative and entertaining for kids. This is why, my podcast is called ‘Little Mind Chats’ – Minds are Little, not our Thoughts!!

## 3. Are you not scared to speak into the mic?

Almost all of us as kids have you have a real one, it's super fun. As children, we have the advantage of being accepted for our mistakes. So, being

perfect wasn't necessary at all. That's why it was fun.

4. How does it feel to be interviewing such eminent people? While most of them see eminent personalities as they are, I love to see them as children before they became these great people with such fine minds. One very surprising fact is that the more eminent a person is, the more they understand children! Later I realised that the higher position a person grows to, the humbler they become



SIYONA VIKRAM



and they connect more with us as children. I can't thank all my guests enough for sharing their own childhood lessons. Like for example, when I interviewed the 39th Defence secretary of India, Dr Ajay Kumar, for Children's Day – Ep 120, he shared stories of his childhood with me. They sound fun and relatable.

**5. How does it feel to be winning the Golden Crane award in podcasting?**

I was just 9 years and about 6 months into podcasting. My mum entered my name literally on the last day and last hour of accepting nominees. We did not expect much. On the day of the ceremony, the organizers called and asked us to be part of the show. It was online due to Covid in 2020. I was pleasantly surprised when they announced my name for the 'Best Interviewer: elementary age'. It felt great to be in Podcast Magazine's February issue too! The award gave me great confidence in the work I was doing.

**6. Why did you start an environmental cause?**

Season 4 of my podcast was about 'Earth and Environment'. I used to do news for children every other week and environmental news always sounded alarming. So, I got in touch with scientists, environmentalists and children from across the world. Truth is often overlooked. Pollution is our doing, so its resolution should be our doing too. Most of the time, we see people doing nasty things due to a lack of awareness.

That's when I decided to start

a cause and raise awareness about plastic pollution and its hazards on children.

**7. What is the name of your cause?**

It's called Little-WISE. WISE stands for Warriors Inspiring Sustainable Earth. I love the name and all that I'm able to do through it.

**8. What do you do as part of this effort?**

Through Little-WISE, we raise awareness amongst children about the harmful effects of plastics, especially toys. Not just that, we have connected with close to 10 schools



and collected used plastic from children's households. Believe it or not, we have been able to collect and recycle close to 3 metric tons of plastic and got it all recycled too!! I feel super happy and proud that the Eco-warriors and Eco-commandos of my club have been able to achieve this. Thanks to the numerous Principals, teachers and parents who helped us.

**9. How many children's lives did you touch through this effort?**

We have worked with over 10,000 children out of which 1800 actively participated in our collection drives.

**10. How does it feel to have won a UNSDG award for your effort?**

It feels good to know there are organizations like ARC edtech (arcedtech.com) who are working super hard to raise awareness in children, make them more environment-conscious citizens by encouraging efforts like mine. I won a Special Mention award for UNSDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities. Certainly keeps me motivated!

**11. What are your future plans?**

I'm growing up in my grades and I am so not able to entirely concentrate on Little-WISE or my podcast. I would like to return and do so much more!

**12. What's your advice to other children like yourself?**

As per my experience, as children, we have unique challenges and a lot of contradictions between what our parents expect and what we experience with other kids around us. Don't go with the herd, be down to earth and go with your heart. Stick to these and we will certainly do more than others. The same device we spend hours together on, makes or breaks the grey matter in our growing brains. Choose what you're using it for! Lots of love to every child reading this.



**Name - Sangna Chatterjee**  
**Class - XI**  
**School - St.Teresa's secondary school**



## Movie Review

The movie **"The Sky Is Pink"** revolves around the life of Aisha Chaudhary, a heroic little girl who lost her life at the tender age of 18. Directed by Shonali Bose, the movie also sheds light on the love story of Aisha's parents, Aditi Chaudhary and Niren Chaudhary whom she lovingly addresses, as "moose" and "panda" respectively. Aisha had an elder brother whom she adored dearly, named Ishaan Chaudhary whose pet name was "giraffe" as given by Aisha. Aisha also had an elder sister named Tanya who woefully passed away at the age of seven months due to the very same disease that Aisha acquired. The characters of Aisha Chaudhary, Aditi Chaudhary, Niren Chaudhary, and Ishaan Chaudhary were played by Zaira Wasim, Priyanka Chopra, Farhan Akhtar, and Rohit Saraf respectively.

Aisha's life was anything but ordinary, it was nowhere close to being normal. Aisha was born with SCID i.e. severe combined immunodeficiency

and had to undergo a bone marrow transplant at the age of six months unfortunately, as a side effect of medical therapy, she developed pulmonary fibrosis, a grave lung disease that occurs when the lung tissues get damaged or injured. Her parents were devastated when they found out that she was diagnosed with pulmonary fibrosis at just 15. Her family members were ready to go to any extent to fill Aisha's heart with happiness. However, everything that was going on in Aisha's life, was too much for a 15-year-old girl to handle. Hospitals nearly became her second home as Aisha's condition was serious enough for the same. Aisha loved painting as well as writing and therefore, she penned down the occurrences of her daily life in her journal which was later published as a book called "My Little Epiphanies" in 2016. Aisha's creative endeavours and paintings were published in the same book, as well. The film came out in 2019 to continue Aisha's legacy.

There is yet another interesting story behind selecting the name of the movie, when Aditi was away with Aisha for her treatment, she received a phone call from her son Ishaan who had a complaint for her mother and told her the same, while stammering, that he was punished in class for painting the sky pink. Aditi then reassured him by stating that his sky could be of any colour he wanted. Aisha loved public speaking and soon became a loved speaker around the years 2012-2013 when she spoke about finding happiness and about her life that was anything, but ordinary. As shown in the film, Aisha would sometimes break down thinking that her life was nearly over but as time passed, gradually she began thinking that even though the duration of her life might be shorter than the rest of the population, her years were spent happily, surrounded by people she loved. Aisha was the epitome of the words "strength" and "determination".



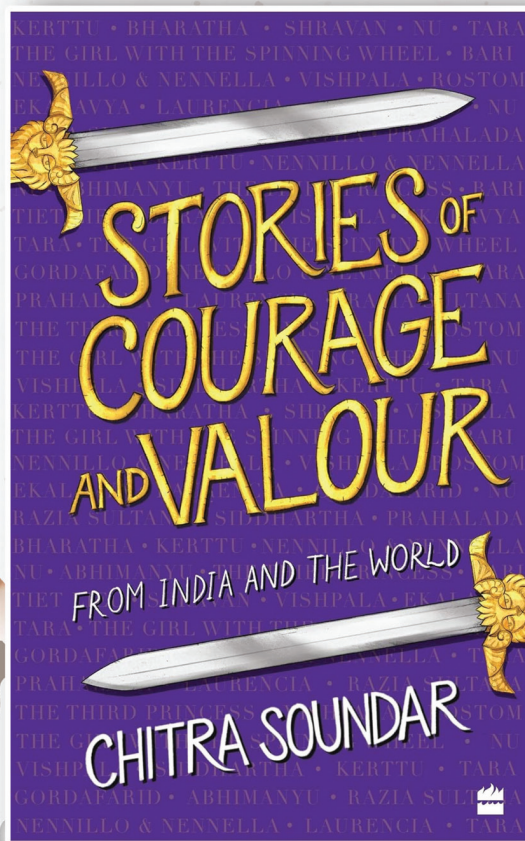
The movie brought tears to my eyes when I watched it for the first time. Aisha was quite courageous throughout her life and was strong enough to bear everything that was going on with her. Sadly, Aisha Chaudhary passed away on 24th January 2015. Her family members were heartbroken on hearing the news, her panda, moose, and giraffe were almost traumatized upon hearing that their beloved Aisha was no more.

After a few years, her mother made up her mind to keep Aisha alive in every possible form and that's when she thought about speaking with Shonali Bose who was also the director of Aisha's favourite film "Margarita with A Straw" which she, unfortunately, could not see as she passed away 3 months before the release of the film, she had watched the trailer quite sometimes as she was fascinated by the storyline of the film. Even though Aisha is not present with her family members physically, she resides within their hearts.



# *Must Read Books for Indian Students*

## 1. Stories of Courage and Valour: From India and the World by Soundar Chitra





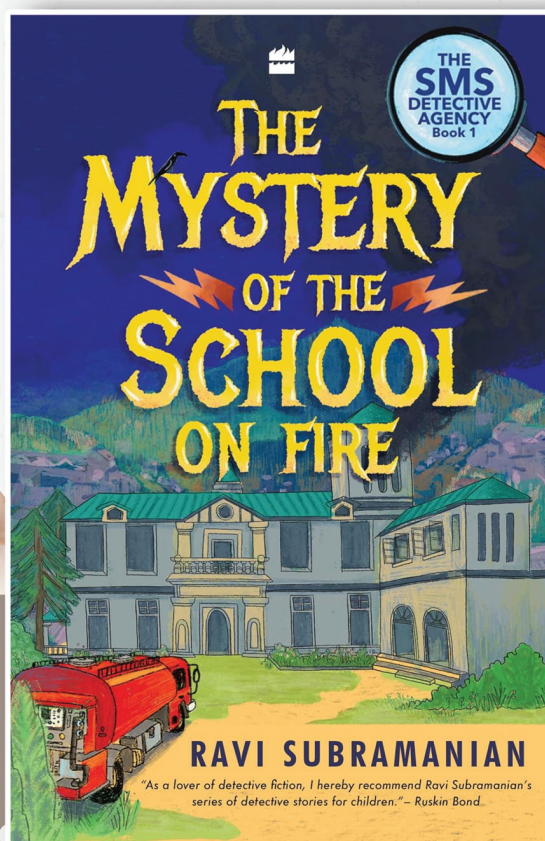
# *Must Read Books for Indian Students*

## 2. India in Space by Harper Collins



# *Must Read Books for Indian Students*

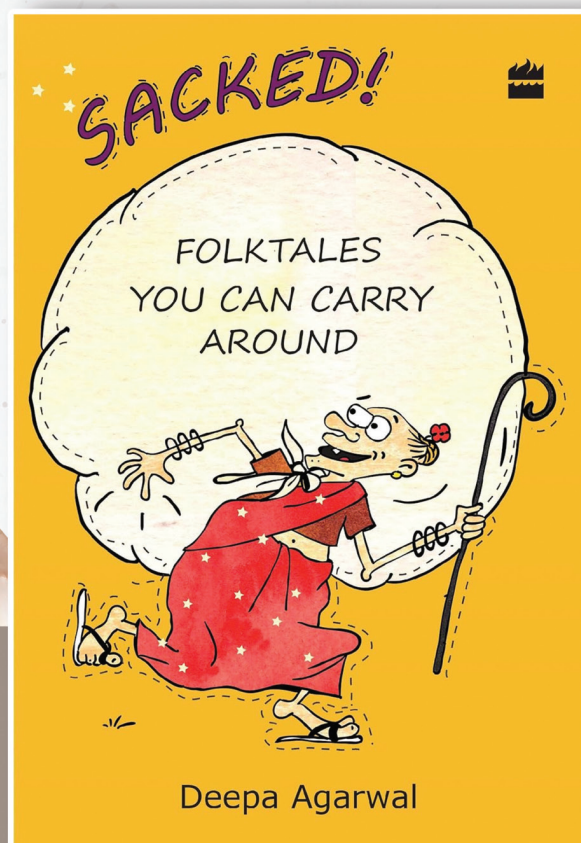
## 3. Mystery of the School on Fire by Ravi Subramanian





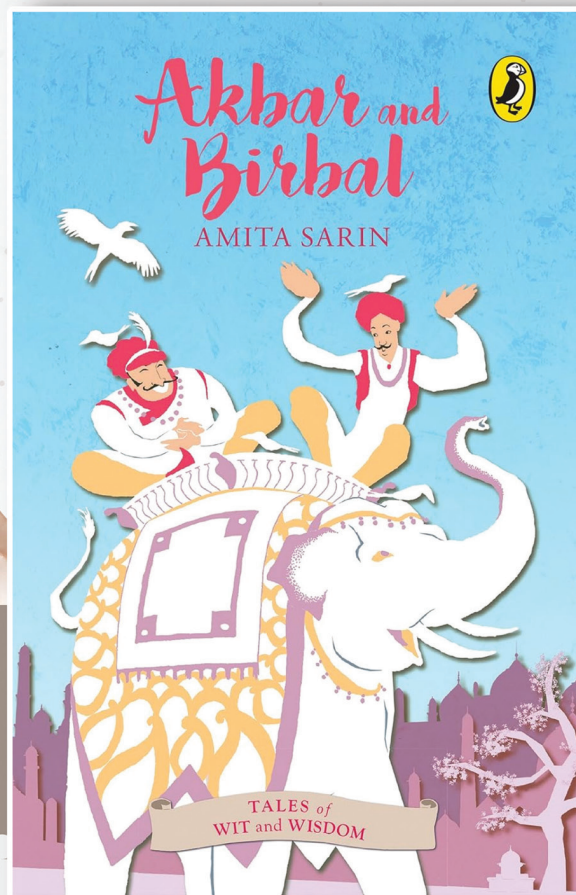
# *Must Read Books for Indian Students*

## 4. Sacked by Deepa Agarwal



# *Must Read Books for Indian Students*

## 5. Akbar and Birbal: (Tales of Wit and Wisdom) by Amita Sarin





## Answer:-

1. Answer: A carrot.
2. Answer: There aren't any stairs—it's a one-story house.
3. Answer: Alphabet.
4. Answer: Your voice.
5. Answer: She fell off the bottom step.
6. Answer: A potato.
7. Answer: A shadow.
8. Answer: Grandpa was bald.
9. Answer: The present moment.
10. Answer: A clock

Puzzle Credit – Reader's Digest

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Writings should be original and in English.

Your submissions may take the shape of a short story, opinion, photograph or just your take on any general topic of your choice. Ideally your pieces should be in the span of 600-2000 words.

All submissions should have the writer's name in full, job/workplace designations or educational qualifications and educational institution with city, e-mail ID and contact number.

If you send by e-mail, your work should be in Word Format (doc. or docx.), in blank, 12-point Times New Roman.

Pictures and photographs should be sent in jpg. format and should not be those downloaded from the Internet. Scan resolution should be 300 dpi.

The decision of the Editorial Board will be final.  
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