



## PRINCIPAL'S NOTE



**Ashish Agarwal**

In the tapestry of our existence a passionate and purposeful action captivates our collective imagination. It is a catalyst in the midst of our mundane life, which we need, to transcend the boundaries of routine and conformity.

Within the domain of Meraki, there are no limits, no rules, and no expectations. It is a sacred space where your heart and soul align, where your thoughts and actions come in harmony. Meraki, thus, is the art of living your life as a masterpiece, in which each brush stroke of creativity becomes an expression of your deepest truth.

To embrace Meraki is to surrender to the present moment with unwavering devotion. It is to release the burdens of the past, the anxieties of the future, and to be fully present in the grace of the NOW.

When you engage in any task—whether it be solving a mathematical equation, writing a poem, or performing a dance—do it with undivided attention, pouring your love, joy, and passion into every action.

Dear students, I implore you to shed the shackles of self-doubt, comparison, and external validation. Embrace your unique talents, gifts, and inclinations with an indomitable urge to explore. Trust in your creative instincts, for they are the compass guiding you on the path of self-discovery and self-expression. Do not fear failure or criticism, for they are mere blips on the path of growth. Instead, celebrate every step, every stumble, and every breakthrough as a testament to your courage and commitment to your calling.

As always, we believe in the endless possibilities of a growing child and foster a Meraki-driven environment to help you cater to your physical, emotional, and mental well-being. So, make use of the power of Meraki and let it guide you towards a future that exceeds your wildest dreams.

Wishing you an inspired and fulfilling journey of Meraki!

## Student Editorial Board



**Sanjna Nair**  
Editor-in-Chief



**Lavanya Kapoor**



**Paloma Jain**



**Prashasti Praveen**



**Sania Mirza Baig**

## Self-Help Books

# SHATTERING THE ROSE-TINTED GLASSES

We all have experienced anguish upon coming across those “picture perfect” girls on social media that seem to have their lives together with their 5 a.m. journaling smoothie bowls that scream ‘health’, water jugs twice the size of their heads, and flawless skin that helps them capitalise on the insecurities of teenagers all over the world.

This most ‘generous’ wakeup call has us staring aimlessly at the most daunting aisle of bookstores. Have you caught on yet? That’s right, we are talking about those stacks of untouched self-help books that offer promises of fixing our life, increasing our grades, ending world hunger, and much more. Let us walk you through an attempt at being “THAT girl” by indulging in the dust-covered volumes that lay on that shelf.

### Stage 1 Curiosity

Okay, so you convinced yourself to live a healthier lifestyle, but that’s just what you tell yourself. In reality, you were lovingly shoved into this intimidating aisle of self-help books by societal standards and the celebs who simply know what’s “best for you”. The surging hype surrounding these books has piqued your interest and left you wondering, “Dude, what’s the hype?”

### Stage 2 Conundrum

You take a glance over the colourful titles and largely unknown faces adorned with professional suits on the covers, trying to pick one that seems most amiable. The smug faces and the exaggerated sickly-sweet reviews by friend-authors distract you into thinking whether you need to invest in the book at all. But visions of unaccomplished dreams and an ideal life flash in your mind and lead you back into the vast mire of the life-altering books. In the midst of your dilemma, it dawns on you that it was never your decision to pick the book. After all, you don’t choose the book, the book chooses you.

### Stage 3 Commit

The purchase of the book seals your fate and now

comes the hard part – actually sitting down and reading it. You flip through the pages and see the ‘INDEX’ in bold letters; what follows puts you in a state of disarray. Chapters titled ‘Overflowing Tea’, ‘Lake of Candour’, and ‘The Saints of September’ assault your senses and bewilder your brain while the words blur to form an obscure bolus that the author seems to be trying to push down your throat.

### Stage 4 Confusion

After pouring in millennia trying to comprehend what the ‘profound’ words staining the pages might mean, the rivers of knowledge that ought to have flooded by now appeared to have dried up in their course somewhere. You think to yourself whether, through the myriad chapters that had flown by, you had acquired a valuable lesson or had it been a constant rambling disguised under the garb of pretentious and showy words that the masses simply could not fathom?

### Stage 5 Closure

Every reader expects, and rightfully so, to leave with something- an emotion or a perspective, that will nourish the experiences of life at the end of a book. In a disappointing turn of events, however, you realise that this beau idéal world of self-help books presents a utopia that is simply unattainable by an individual.

This “picture-perfect” facade can no longer hold itself up on the weak foundation of advertising prosperity just by reading a couple of books. These rose-tinted glasses that we don can no longer be used to view a world ebbing with uncertainties. The only path that remains standing then, is that we take life as it comes, with all its jagged edges and sheeny slopes. The rosy picture that influencers paint, though look pretty on the surface, should be taken with a grain of salt; after all the influencers are there to do but one thing- influence.

- Sanjna Nair (12A),  
Prashasti Praveen (12B)

## Editor's Note

It's a brave thing, to say ‘Goodbye’, be it to the people you love, to the things you're passionate about, or to a place you love and cherish, we end up committing to a farewell all for the sake of taking a stride towards the bigger, brighter future that awaits arrival. It is from here that it is derived, every ending somehow begets a beginning and of course, the quintessential doors closing and newer doors opening metaphor that makes itself omnipresent in such situations needs no mention.

A farewell compels us to contemplate, review and reminisce over the multitudinous experiences, grievances, and successes that we share with the people that surround us. For me, I have had the pleasure of working with four sensational colleagues, my members, or rather my close friends. I will celebrate, and perhaps even regret having taken their kindness for granted. I have been showered with constant support and trust by everyone

around me, thus it is only fitting that I extend my heartfelt thanks to them all. Especially you, dear readers, your participation and feedback are priceless to us, every letter on every page, every sketch etched on paper every thought transformed into sentences and syllables, it has been extremely enjoyable to see your creativity in all its glory. A big thank you for the works of art derived from the depths of your mind and the crests of your heart. I hope your creativity only continues to grow, and I ask of you the favour of never letting yourself part with that portion of your inner self that we have had the pleasure of seeing in your entries, a skill you know best and that divides you, unbeknownst to you, from the rest.

As we end the year with this issue and theme MERAKI, we hope you have found, in one way or another, through the Billabong Bulletin, destiny's beckon, and fate's plans for you. Most importantly I hope all you lovely people have found yourself and have become closer to the glowing YOU that reflects from the translucent mirror of truth.

- Sanjna Nair, Editor-in-Chief

# BHIS BIRTHDAY

The air at Billabong High Bhopal reverberated with joyful laughter and endless applause, as the celebrations of its 18th Birthday were unfolded. Former students delivered their heart-felt and emotional speeches, highlighting their love for the school, followed by a mesmerising dance-performance, captivating the audience throughout. Please take a look!



## WORLD HEALTH DAY

Have a look at how BHIS, Bhopal, carried on with its observance of the World Health Day, by raising awareness about essential life-saving techniques, in a comprehensive training-session, on CPR (Cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) and the Heimlich Maneuver.





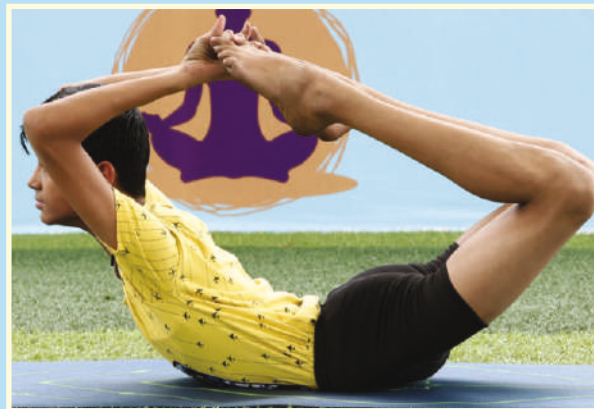
# USA TOUR

Through these lovely pictures, experience the joyful expedition of our students and esteemed mentors, when they embarked on the celestial journey to NASA and other renowned sites, across the United States.



# CISCE M.P. REGIONAL YOGA OLYMPIAD 2023

Billabong High Bhopal recently organized the 2023 CISCE Regional Yoga Olympiad. The event showcased outstanding performances by the young Yoga enthusiasts, with their various Asanas. Let's have a glimpse!





## The rise of **AUGMENTED REALITY** is taking us far from reality:

In recent years, we have witnessed a rapid rise in augmented reality (AR) technology, which combines digital elements with the real world to create immersive and interactive experiences. While AR has undoubtedly brought innovative and exciting possibilities, it is also leading us further away from reality. By blurring the boundaries between what is genuine and what is manufactured, AR jeopardises our capacity to experience reality as it is, eroding our connection to the authentic world.

Augmented reality applications, such as social media filters and virtual avatars offer users the opportunity to present themselves differently in a digital space. While this may seem harmless, it can lead to a deterioration of genuine social interactions. This can distort an individual's perception of their physical appearance and identity and lead to unrealistic beauty standards and an unhealthy obsession with portraying an idealised version of oneself.

AR provides an enticing escape from the monotony of everyday life, drawing people into a realm where they can customise their surroundings to suit their desires. However, this escape can become an addiction, detaching individuals from the present moment and genuine human interaction.

When people prioritise their virtual personas over their authentic selves, the meaningful connections and emotional depth that come from face-to-face interactions suffer. While virtual simulations may seem alluring, they cannot replicate the joy and wonder derived from genuine engagement with the world around us. The tactile, olfactory, and auditory sensations that enrich our lives are diminished when augmented reality replaces physical reality, ultimately leaving us with a hollow and unsatisfying existence. As a result, individuals may become more isolated and disconnected from their real emotions and experiences.

AR experiences often provide an escape from the real-world challenges and responsibilities we face. By immersing ourselves in virtual realms and fictional narratives, we may find temporary relief from stress and monotony. However, excessive reliance on augmented reality as an escape mechanism can lead to a dangerous cycle of avoidance. Instead of addressing real-world issues and working towards solutions, individuals may become preoccupied with the fantasies offered by AR, ultimately hindering personal growth and societal progress.

Augmented reality also raises concerns about our increasing reliance on virtual information. AR technologies often provide real-time overlays of data and digital content onto the physical world. While this can be useful in certain contexts, it can also lead to a detachment from critical thinking and independent decision-making. Relying heavily on augmented information can erode our ability to process and interpret the world around us, diminishing our capacity for genuine learning and problem-solving.

It is crucial to acknowledge that AR has the potential to distance us from reality. By examining the disconnection from the physical environment, deterioration of social interactions, escapism from real-world challenges, distortion of self-perception, and dependency on virtual information, it becomes evident that the rise of augmented reality has the capacity to lead us further away from authentic experiences and genuine human connections. It is essential to strike a balance between the virtual and physical worlds and between the benefits of augmented reality and the preservation of our connection to reality to ensure that we do not lose sight of the genuine experiences that shape us as individuals and as a society. We must ensure that augmented reality enriches our lives without overshadowing the beauty and significance of the reality we inhabit.

- Sania Mirza Baig (12B)

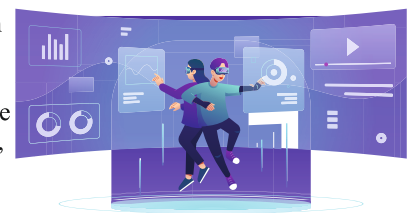


Imagine sitting in your living room having coffee with your new neighbour. You throw your head back and laugh at the graduation story of him and his wife. "And then I realised I'd forgotten to take off my mask and was wearing it with my graduation robe! You wouldn't believe how many times I've almost accidentally announced to the world that I'm Spiderman," said Peter. Yes, this was Peter Parker and his wife Gwen Stacy living in England while Gwen attended Oxford and Peter fought crime. You had used AR and given the characters the happy ending they deserved instead of the tragic one you'd rather not think about. This is how AR can enhance our reality and bring our favourite characters to life.

In this modern age of mind-boggling technological advancements, it seems like every new gadget or software aims to whisk us away from reality. However, one technology has come to challenge this notion - Augmented Reality (AR). Some argue that AR is pushing us further away from the real world, but I beg to differ. In fact, I believe AR is a delightful blend of the virtual and real, sprinkled with just the right amount of absurdity.

One of the main criticisms of AR is that it distorts our perception of reality. But hey, who needs the same old boring reality when you can have a flying unicorn soaring over your backyard? AR is all about seeing once unimaginable things, like penguins waddling down a supermarket aisle. So, while it may not be the reality we're used to, it certainly keeps us entertained and provides some much-needed comic relief.

They say AR isolates us from real human interaction, but I argue that it adds a whole new dimension to socialising. Imagine attending a party where everyone has their own AR headsets, and suddenly, instead of a boring old living room, you find yourself surrounded by a magical underwater world. You could strike up a conversation with an animated octopus! Who needs small talk when you can discuss the intricacies of an intergalactic space battle while sipping your drink?



AR allows us to explore entirely new realities without leaving the comfort of our homes. Want to climb Mount Everest but don't like the frostbite? No problem! Strap on your AR headset, and you'll be scaling the icy peaks in no time while enjoying a hot cup of cocoa. AR lets us experience things we may never get the chance to in real life, like walking on the moon. It's like having a teleportation device but with the added benefit of staying cosy in your pyjamas.

In a world that often takes itself too seriously, AR brings a much-needed touch of whimsy and fun. Rather than pushing us away from reality, AR gives us a fresh perspective on what fact can be. It allows us to laugh, marvel, and experience the extraordinary in the most unexpected ways. So, let's embrace the absurdity, strap on our headsets, and venture into the delightful realm of augmented reality, where the only limits are our imagination and the occasional glitch. After all, who needs plain old reality when you can have Peter Parker (Andrew Garfield of course, we all know he's the best one) as your next-door neighbour?

- Saarah Jose (11A)





# Conserving Our Individuality

“Life is a race,” as Virus puts it in 3 Idiots, and in this race of life, we are all running mindlessly, not knowing where we are going. We ignore all that is beautiful around us and within us in this race. We lose ourselves—everything that sets us apart and makes us who we are—while trying to fit into the standards set by society. We all feel that sudden outburst of energy or a river of joy flowing in our hearts when we do what we love. We put ourselves into something unique and limited to our abilities; my friend, that is what Meraki is. In technical terms, “meraki” is a personal and creative touch that makes the actions performed special and unique.

It turns out that we, as a species, are 99% the same. We have the same organs that work in the same way, and we need the same conditions to survive, yet we are so different. It is that 1% that makes us unique and that makes us stand out from others. There is something in psychology called the Von Restorff Isolation Effect, which is a cognitive bias that causes people to remember things better when they stand out from other things that they’re next to. We register people and events when they are different from the others. The English expression “a face in the crowd” refers to an ordinary person who goes unnoticed by everyone because they have nothing that makes them unique or noticeable. Well, research also shows that it is only human to want to belong to a group of people and not attract negative attention by doing something different. That is why we often do what others are doing, even if it is irrational. We want to have the same fashion sense our peers have, have the same friend circle,

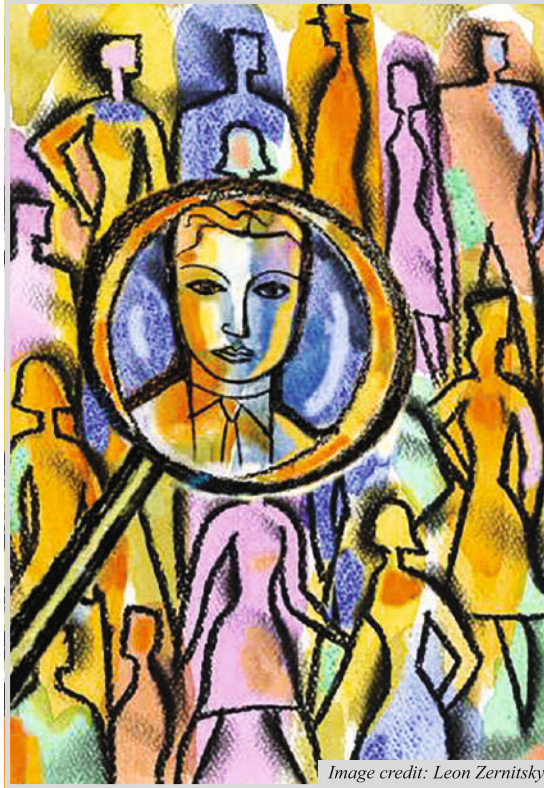


Image credit: Leon Zernitsky

and share similar interests, even if they contradict ours, just to belong.

The desire to belong is common to each of us, but let us look at it in another way. It was IPL season, and India was high on cricket fever this summer. MS Dhoni, India’s beloved cricketer, is rumoured to have played his last IPL match. If I ask you, what is something memorable about this highly

inspirational personality? We remember him for his iconic helicopter shot, his past hairstyle and even his unbelievable ability to maintain his composure in crunch situations. Why? We retain all of these because they are quite unique; special to this individual, which makes him worth remembering. Bumrah is celebrated for his spectacular bowling style. For the longest time, cricket used to be a gentlemen's game, but Mithali Raj broke that set of beliefs with her extraordinary way of playing.

Songs of Gulzar are classics, treasured by all generations. They intoxicate listeners with their metaphors. The imagery is subtle, and the wordplay is mesmerising. Each song is a confluence of uncomplicated language, unusual implications of emotions, and beautiful pictures. Lata Mangeshkar is remembered for her distinctive voice and vocal range that extended over more than three octaves; Madan Mohan for his immortal ghazals he composed for Hindi films; and Kishore Kumar cannot be forgotten for his yodelling.

The examples are endless. It is ultimately our choice if we wish to be a part of the masses or carve a path for ourselves, conserving our individuality and being who we are. We all possess that uniqueness and speciality and are just one step away from identifying and working on them. As Mandy Hale beautifully puts it, “Just be yourself; let people see the real, imperfect, flawed, quirky, weird, beautiful, and magical person that you are.”

- Kanishka Paltani (10B)

## Let the Music Speak!

Music! Everyone is deeply connected to it. For me, music is breathtaking, harmonious, calm, serene, exciting, low-key, aloof, levelheaded, and a term that cannot be described in a few words. Music lies in the universe. No doubt, that the history of music is extremely fascinating and thought-provoking.

Music first came to light in the Paleolithic Period (10,000 B.C.E).

A wide variety of Paleolithic instruments have been found in Europe and date back to the Upper Paleolithic Era. Many people believe that music arose when our ancestors created pulsating music by clapping their hands. Since then, music has become an incredible art form that no one can deny listening to, whether it is rock music or classical music. Now the question arises of who first created music, the short answer is that no one knows who invented music as there is no historical evidence of who sang the first song or whistled the first tune.

Music is all over the world. Nowadays, music has become so crucial in our life as we use music to sleep, study, concentrate, and relax. Music is not only good for entertainment but is also pretty beneficial in our lives.

### Benefits of Music :

- Music boosts our energy level



- Music alleviates stress
- Music shoots up our bliss and euphoria
- Music elevates our mood while driving
- Music can extensively help in reducing depression and anxiety problems

*“Music gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to imagination and life to everything”*

- Plato

In conclusion, Music is a great therapy to heal our mental and emotional wounds. It is a fine work of art. Music symbolizes joy, glee, celebration, and happiness.

- Shreeya Hotwani (6B)

## The Mystery of White Holes



Image credit: space.com

White holes are one of the biggest mysteries to have intrigued the minds of men after the discovery of black holes. In complete contrast to black holes, white holes have zero gravity and do not let objects in but instead throw them out. According to a theory, objects that enter the black hole get thrown out by a white hole. This reportedly happens because these two celestial bodies are connected through a wormhole, which acts as a tunnel for the object to pass through. The object sucked up by the black hole travels through the wormholes and ends up being thrown into another galaxy by a white hole, which has zero gravity. Scientists believe that white holes do not exist because they break the laws of physics, but one of those laws also states that everything exists with an equal and opposite of it, and eventually, there needs to be a hypothesis of the object after entering the black hole, which is well provided by the theory of white holes.

- Rishi Wadhvani (8F)



## IN SEARCH OF 'MERAKI'

The many things we do to live our life,  
Something we do for absolute delight.  
Meraki is something we like to do,  
Just like being an artist and painting red, yellow & blue.

Everybody can be anything they want,  
But if only they work hard will it count.  
Else half-hearted work will go in vain,  
And the satisfaction of doing it will be never seen again.

Meraki means to follow your passion,  
Something you love to do with all your devotion.

I like to paint, I like to read,  
I like to play games like football.  
But I am yet to find and explore,  
What satisfies my inner soul.

I am yet to find my Meraki,  
And soak myself for the coming years,  
For the joy of doing it.  
Have you found yours?

- Varad Dharkar (6E)



## ERUPTION OF THOUGHTS WITHIN ME

The creative thoughts inside me keep on  
bubbling throughout the day,  
It feels like a hot-air balloon inside me going  
higher and higher in the sky until it reaches space,  
And I blow air into it by expressing my thoughts on a piece of paper.

When the volcano of creativity erupts inside me,  
I create an extraordinary piece of work to cool its lava down,  
It feels like a wave of pressure that fills the body  
with an urge to express something unique with  
a pen and a piece of paper.

My work gets appreciated by everyone who reads it,  
And my head rises up with pride,  
But gathering appreciation is not my goal,  
Writing for myself is the purpose of my life.

Whether my creative work gets praised by someone or not,  
The flame of creativity would continue getting  
bigger and brighter inside me,  
And would shower all its brightness and  
warmth on the pen and page of my creative work!

- Trishit Ghoshal (7F)



## Discovering the Awesome

YOU

I know these times have been tough,  
Each night felt painfully long, so rough.  
Days weighed heavy, colored blue,  
Life seemed relentless, but hold on, it's true.

Don't shut your heart, don't close the door,  
There's still hope, it's there, and more.  
You may doubt yourself, feel not enough,  
But have faith, embrace being you, it's tough.

You, a unique human, magnificent and true,  
With a spark of awesomeness, shining through.  
Life's too short to dwell on the gloom,  
So rise, blossom, let your spirit bloom.

- Rainya Mittal (8D)



## Chronicles of Warfare

From tanks to warships, the violence pure,  
No respite from heat or cold, only the allure.  
Apprehension and fear fill the air,  
Leaders poised for battle, soldiers in despair.

Marching relentlessly, crossing the red line,  
Each claiming territory as rightfully mine.  
Royals clash in the desert's expanse,  
Swords and shields on horses, their deadly dance.

No mercy shown, just aggression untamed,  
Enemies pierced, forced back, their forts  
reclaimed.

Scriptures turn, left to right, timeless flow,  
Pages aging, torn, their stories aglow.



Meanings unravel, myriad and vast,  
No tale left alone, all interwoven, unsurpassed.  
Solving the mystery, piece by piece,  
History unfolds, its secrets release.

- Mritunjy Chowdhury (11B)

## The Power of Persistence

In a journey through the depths of your mind,  
You discover what sets you apart from all kinds.  
Passion fuels your every endeavor,  
With love, you work, engrossed and clever.  
Mahatma Gandhi, the father of our nation,  
Led us to independence with non-violent  
dedication.

Taj Mahal, a symbol of eternal love,  
Enshrined among the seven wonders, high  
above.

Edison, undeterred by a thousand failures,  
Lit up our lives with his persistent trials.  
The fragrance of roses and butterflies' flight,  
Meraki, turning the world into a heavenly sight.

- Gautam Daga (5F)



## Life is an Art

Out of all the skills in this world,  
I like to paint, sketch and craft all day.  
I may be a child now,  
But if I work hard from today,  
I may become a famous artist someday.  
Sometimes, it is hard for me,  
To think about what I should draw;  
Other times,  
I spin the yarn of my fantasy world.  
I can craft 3D superheroes and  
bring a character to life, like Pinocchio.  
I can make my characters' decisions,  
And plan their life.  
I love to do art as I can make,  
Creative things out of all my hard work.



- Hridhaan Tiwari (3E)



# “MERAKI” – THE MAGIC OF THE SOUL

In a small village, there lived a young girl named Tiya. She was a curious and creative soul, always exploring, and discovering new things. She had a natural talent for art, and she loved to draw and paint. Tiya's parents, however, had different aspirations for her. They wanted her to pursue a career in medicine, as they believed, it would provide her, with a stable future. Tiya, on the other hand, knew that her heart was in the arts, and she longed to create something beautiful. One day, while exploring the woods, Tiya stumbled upon an old man who was carving a beautiful wooden figurine. She watched him work in awe and struck up a conversation with him. The old man told Tiya about the Greek concept of Meraki and how it meant to do something with soul, creativity, and love. Tiya was fascinated by the idea of Meraki and realized that it was exactly what she had been missing in her art. She began to infuse her paintings with her soul, pouring her heart and emotions, into every stroke of the brush. Tiya's parents, however, were not pleased with her newfound love for art. They believed that it was a waste of time, and that she needed to focus on her studies. Tiya, however, was determined to pursue her passion, no matter what. She continued to create art, often spending hours on end, lost in her own world of colors and emotions. Her paintings were unlike anything, anyone in the village had

ever seen, before. They were vibrant, full of life, and conveyed emotions, that words could not express.

One day, a famous artist came across some of Tiya's paintings and was blown away by their beauty and depth. He offered to showcase her work in an exhibition, in the city, lending Tiya a grand opportunity to embark as a professional artist, into the world of colourful dreams. The exhibition was a massive success, and Tiya's paintings received critical acclaim. Her parents were finally able to see the exceptionality of her art, which made them honored of her accomplishments, as a self-made artist. It was then, that Tiya realized that “Meraki” was not just a concept; it was, rather, a way of life, itself. This, in reality, was the motive force that had propelled her to create, to express herself in ways that words could not.

From that day forward, Tiya continued to create



art with “Meraki”, infusing her work with her soul and creativity. She became a renowned painter, inspiring others to follow their passions, with perfectionism and dedication. For Tiya, “Meraki” was not just a word!

- Atharv Jhavar (9B)

## Words Unleashed: Unlocking Potential Through Meraki

Sam was a little boy; he was poor and lived in a small hut in the city. He loved reading and writing so much, that he didn't realize he had already become an ardent reader and writer in English.

His parents were completely dismayed by the idea, for they had desired for him to focus more on his studies. They believed that their child was a bright student, and was capable of holding a much more secure and honourable position in society. Thus, being focused on thorough studies, Sam couldn't take much time out to follow his passion for writing stories and poems.

Sam would walk to his school, and, every day, would see a library, which made him eager to go inside and read all the books in there. But to visit the library, he would need either of his parents, to accompany him. The reason that his father went to work at 9:00 a.m. in the morning and came back around 10:00 p.m., every day;



and his mother being busy with all the domestic chores, made it difficult for him to go to the library on a regular basis. Thus, the only days he had a chance to see the library, were Sunday.

Fortunately, the coming Sunday was promised to him for this by his father.

This made him extremely excited, and he began

counting the days and hours for the call.

On Sunday morning, they woke up early, in order to carry on with their plan. When Sam, finally, entered the library, he saw piles and piles of books on the shelf. Now, it had been his usual practice to go to the library, every Sunday, and read books. He could now, gradually, begin writing his own short stories and articles, to be a source of inspiration for many other avid readers, like him, in the future!

- Mohammad Araish (5D)

## A Dash of Meraki: From Doubt to Delicious

Fifteen-year-old Anna loved cooking. In her childhood, whenever her parents cooked something, she looked at them and she found something interesting being cooked. So, she marvelled at the idea of cooking right from her childhood days.

Anna cooked food in her free time, whilst the other children played. But she had not always been an expert cook.

When she was first allowed to enter the kitchen to cook small meals, at the age of 9, she learned how to make an omelet; but as she tasted it, she realized how much she needed to learn about the skill, in order to be considered as, at least an average cook. She tried again but failed. And then, she thought to give up and she actually did that. In 3 months' time, she had forgotten about cooking. One day, after coming from school, she was, once again missing her favorite hobby of the past. Finally, she asked her mother how she could make good

food, to which she replied that to be good at anything one should consider making use of the ‘Meraki’, which is doing something with love, soul, and creativity. The next day, after getting home from school, she thought of making an omelet, once again after so many years. For her, this was a major step, considering the fact that if she had made a successful attempt at it, she could easily cook anything else, too. Only, this time, she made up her



mind to use the skills she had learned from her mom using Meraki. After 15 minutes of cooking, the omelet was ready. She took a

knife and fork, and as she got close to having it, she became more and more nervous. She, then, cut a piece of it and took a bite, and the only expression she could hear herself say was: Fabulous! Anna was now at the top of the world!

This incident gave Anna a life lesson: success can only be achieved with persistence and creativity.

- Aarav Chhadidar (5F)



Image credit: disney.sg

James Gunn has really saved the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Marvel had been going through a slump ever since the beginning of Phase 4, but this movie really put things into perspective. It has a well-needed balance of humour and emotion. The unfortunate fact is that this was the last movie James Gunn would direct for Marvel after signing on to continue directing the Suicide Squad film series.

The movie is centered around Peter Quill's best friend, Rocket who is shot in the chest by Adam, the High Priestess' son. Adam shot him with the sole objective to capture Rocket's brain for High Evolutionary Research because of his God complex of wanting to perfect the world.

Rocket's tortured backstory is displayed alongside the Guardians defending the universe

and protecting one of their own, possibly leading to the end of the Guardians as we know them.

The movie showcased a fun and exciting space adventure that is elevated by Rocket's tragic yet heartwarming history; Mantis' constant falling on her head; Drax just being his idiotic self, Gamora breaking Peter's heart and Peter reeling from the loss of his love. After seeing their relationship blossom in the previous volumes, the change in Gamora's attitude towards Peter was heartbreaking, but in the end, they have a meaningful goodbye and finally make peace.

After being experimented on as a baby by the High Evolutionary, Rocket makes friends in an unexpected place -the prison. While trying to free his friends from the prison, his friends are killed but Rocket manages to flee on a spaceship. In the present, he is about to leave to see the sky with

his friends, but Lylla tells him that it is not his time yet, and when all hope is lost for the Guardians on the mortal plane, Rocket wakes up. When the team is finally reunited, they all take revenge along with Rocket for what the High Evolutionary did, and when the time comes for Rocket to end his pain once and for all, he gives the faceless God a second chance because he is a Guardian. During their escape, they release every single captured creature, but Peter does not make it. Adam, after having been given a second chance by Kraglin, saves Peter and brings him home.

After a long day, the Guardians say their goodbyes and have their last dance.

Everyone is saying that it was a fitting end, and I agree, but I would not say that it is the end. Rest assured, "The Legendary Star-Lord Will Return."

- Diksha Nitin Chotrani (10C)



Image credit: playstation.com



I have been playing the game  
**'UNCHARTED 4'**  
PS5 remastered edition and have excellent reviews for you. Firstly, the game has, without a doubt beautiful graphics. It has a complete Hollywood feel to it. It is like you are playing in a Hollywood movie.

Uncharted 4 opens up with Nathan Drake having retired from the treasure-hunting business and seemingly embracing an ordinary life with his now-wife Elena. He now owns a house and has a mortgage on the house. For all intents and purposes, he is just an average guy now doing normal work most of the time. But this changes when he learns that his brother Samuel is alive and well, and in need of his help his skills as a treasure hunter.

The digital performances in Uncharted 4, combined with the talented actors providing the characters voices and movements, set an amazing gameplay that I could have ever imagined.

The game has amazing backgrounds and locations that look realistic. The gameplay involves mind-twisting puzzles to solve, off-roading, mountain climbing, parkour activities, and some gunplay, but the best is underwater diving. It is made by Naughtydogs and Sony Corporation, the game has mild to moderate violence, and mild gore which can be reset in the gameplay using parental settings.

The directors are Neil Druckmann and Bruce Straley.

User Review: 8.7/10.

- Vedarth Samal (3E)

Many of us must have heard of the movie "The Karate Kid" filmed in 2010, but there was also a movie named "Karate Kid" in the 1980s the legacy of which continues in the form of a series, "Cobra Kai".

It is an epic adventure with the main character, Miguel Diaz, who gets intrigued by Karate and wants to win the "All Valley Championship", which is a tournament for the best students of karate. He learns a lot about Karate from Johnny Lawrence, one of the main characters of the original Karate Kid.

There are many others whom we meet on the way as more challenges arise. We must also realize that the series is not just a specific genre. It

is filled with humour, unstoppable action, drama, and more.

One factor that makes this show even more special are the antagonists. They constantly bring

problems and challenges along the way. Another notable factor is that the actors who were in the original movie are also in this series, nearly 30 years later. The show has five seasons as of now and plans to launch a 6th soon.

Overall, it is a great show, and I would recommend it to everyone, as it not only keeps people who like karate

entertained but also appeals to people who wish to watch an action show filled with humour.

- Uddish Sharma (8C)



Image credit: netflix.com







# CHOCOLATE TRUFFLE

## Ingredients:

- ½ cup Condensed milk , 2 tbsp Cocoa powder, and 1 tbsp butter

## Instructions:

### Step 1:

Turn on the stove at high flame with an adult's help and then add in 1 tbsp butter and ½ cup condensed milk and stir.

### Step 2:

When fixed fully, add 2 tbsp cocoa powder and stir.

### Step 3:

Once mixture becomes thick and stiff, transfer to a bowl and keep it in the refrigerator for 5 minutes to cool down.



Image credit: Samaira Chhabra

### Step 4:

Once mixture has rested in the refrigerator, roll the mixture into any shape you like but a sphere-shape is most recommended.

### Step 5:

With a sieve, sprinkle some cocoa powder on it and you're done.

Voila, enjoy your Truffle!

- Samaira Chhabra (6C)

# Mom's Magical HOT DOG

## Ingredients:

- Potatoes - 6
- Cucumber
- Tomato
- Onion
- Green Chilli
- Coriander Leaves
- Salt
- Red Chilli Powder
- Dry Mango Powder (Amchur Powder)
- Hot spices powder (Garam Masala )
- Cumin Powder
- Bread Crumbs - 7-9
- 4 slices bread
- Coriander and Mint Chutney
- Tomato Ketchup

## Instructions:

1. Take boiled and mashed potatoes in a big bowl.
2. Add green chillies, coriander leaves, salt, dry mango powder, hot spices powder, cumin powder, red chilli powder, and bread crumbs, and mix it well then make a dough-like mixture.
3. Take one slice of bread and cut it into halves.
4. Apply coriander chutney on one half of the bread and tomato ketchup on the other half of the bread.
5. Place one cucumber, onion and tomato and keep another bread on top of it (you may also add a boiled egg or cottage



Serves - 4

Image credit: Yuvaan Hotwani

cheese to make it more appetizing and scrumptious).

6. Take a portion of the potato mixture and flatten it on your palms.
7. Cover the bread with this mixture.
8. Deep fry it in hot oil and cut it into four pieces.
9. Serve hot with some ketchup or mayonnaise on the side.

Enjoy this yummy, magical hot dog with your family and friends. Do give it a try, you will definitely like it.

- Yuvaan Hotwani (3B)

# Mango Pudding

## Ingredients:

- 1-2 cup water
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 3-4 mangoes
- 2 packets gelatin
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup cold water
- 1 tsp lime juice



Image credit: Vedika Jaisinghani

## Instructions:

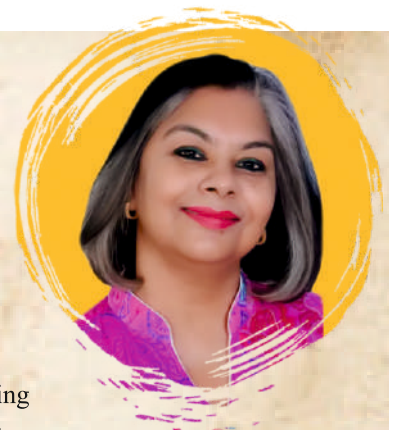
- Place 8 cups on a baking sheet and set aside.
- MANGO PUREE: Place ¾ cup water and ½ cup sugar in a small saucepan over high heat. Stir until sugar is dissolved and mixture is boiling, about 3 minutes. Remove from heat.
- Place mangoes in a blender and pour in the sugar mixture. Blend on medium-high until very smooth, about 1 minute.
- Pour through a fine mesh strainer set over a medium bowl and press the puree through with a rubber spatula. Measure 2 cups of the puree and set aside.
- MANGO PUDDING: Place 1 ¼ cups water in a small saucepan over high heat. Bring to a boil.
- Place ¾ cup sugar, the gelatin, and salt in a large mixing bowl, add the ½ cup COLD water and whisk to incorporate, about 30 seconds. Add boiling water and whisk until gelatin and sugar are dissolved, for about 1 minute.
- Add the 2 cups of mango puree, heavy cream, and lime juice. Whisk to combine. Divide evenly amongst the cups. Refrigerate for at least 2 hour or until set.
- Enjoy the new dessert with some fruits on top.

- Vedika Jaisinghani (9E)



# Tête-à-Tête with Sutapa Basu

Author, Educationist, Writing Coach, Former Director,  
Learning Solutions Eupheus Learning, India



## Excerpts from the Interview

**Q Can you tell us about your journey as a writer? When did you decide you wanted to be an author and what was your inspiration?**

I have been a voracious reader for as long as I can remember. I used to always wonder what it would feel like if I could write and have my books read by others. And that is when my dream of becoming a writer was born. As I grew up, I continued writing poems and stories. My mother tells me that when I was about eight years old, my younger brother and I would put up plays for our parents and I used to write the script. As I grew older, I continued writing but never thought about publishing my work. I was caught up in completing my education, establishing a career, and bringing up a family. All of these things took precedence over my writing. In 2014, when I was working at Encyclopaedia Britannica as the director of publishing, I had the realization that if I did not publish now, I probably would never do it. So I left my job and started thinking about publishing with a lot of doubts in my mind. As I was writing my first book, the Write India campaign which was conducted by the Times of India came along and I submitted my short story with no expectations. Winning that campaign gave a great boost to my morale and confidence. Soon after, I published my first book, Dangle, and have been writing ever since.

**Q What does your writing process look like? Do you follow a routine or a specific ritual to get into the creative mindset? How do you tackle writer's block as an author?**

I have not consciously made a writing process but one thing I do daily is that every morning I sit down at my desk and write. It can be anything, a blog or an article, or even a manuscript. This ensures that I am always connected to writing. Most of my writing requires a lot of research. So once I have decided on the theme or topic of my work, I spend at least two to three months researching. This includes reading books, watching documentaries and just making notes related to the topic. After that, I start writing. Now it so happens that in the span of those months, I spent researching, I have already created my story. I know what I will like the beginning and the end of my story to be. I usually make a structure when writing which means I summarize each chapter so that once I have all my chapter 'structures', I can work on expanding them. When I am writing a story, that story is always revolving in my mind, regardless of what I am doing. I believe that there is no set writing process for an individual rather people create their processes for what works best for them. I believe that "writer's block" is just an excuse for writers. I do not believe that such a thing exists. There are days when one is able to write prolifically and then days when even writing a sentence is a struggle. But no matter what, I never give up writing. I still try to write and on days when that is too hard, I read. I believe that reading books as a writer is essential for inspiration. As a writer, I would like that whatever I write remains with my readers even after they have finished the book.

**Q One of your notable works is "Padmavati: The Queen Tells Her Own Story." What challenges did you face while reimagining this historical character, and how did you balance historical accuracy with your creative interpretation?**

When I started doing my research on Padmavati, I came across some fascinating facts. That made me realize that she was not just a queen or a beautiful girl. She had a lot of determination and willpower that ultimately helped her make a mark in history. I read a lot of books about her for research and even went to Chittorgarh and listened to folk tales

and legends about her. Like many others, I too had a question in mind when I went to Chittorgarh- Did Padmavati exist? But after experiencing her stories and visiting her fort, I was convinced that she must have existed and was a woman who knew how to navigate her way through all the misogyny and

patriarchy that was prevalent in those days. I have written three historical novels and I am always careful that I do not mess with history. In all my books, the historical facts are exactly what they are. I am careful that I do not present biased facts. History is based on evidence. We depend on what various historians have written. When you place all the facts about a person's life in a linear pattern, there will be links missing. I use these gaps, weaving my

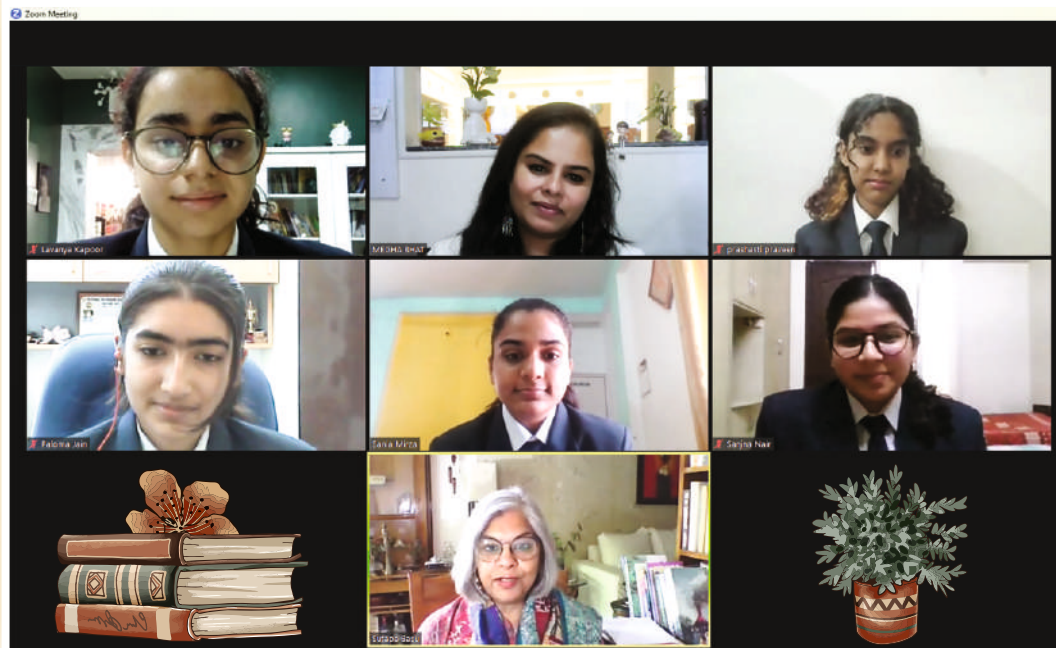
story around historical facts.

**Q Many of your novels are set in historical or mythological contexts. What draws you to these themes and why did you decide to have these characters be the subject of your novels?**

When I first started writing, I chose my stories to be in two of my favourite genres; Historical fiction and Thriller. I was drawn towards history from the beginning as I had read works of renowned authors in historical fiction and nonfiction. History is an endless collection of stories which will help us understand what is happening today. The past always casts a shadow on the present and I have tried to reflect it in my book "The Birth of My Nation". It is a way through which I tell the children of today how our nation has come to be what it is today. We will only be able to understand the issue of Kashmir by knowing the history attached to it. Only when you study history, you will be able to understand your present. History makes the past come to life for the reader. No matter what subject you are interested in, it is history that will bring you closer to it. When we read about historical figures in our textbooks, we only see them as great people but there are untold stories behind their success. When I wrote about Genghis Khan, I displayed the struggle he had gone through to become the Emperor of Mongolia. So, I aim to tell people that these characters were living human beings who had to overcome several obstacles in order to achieve the glory that they had. History is a story of cause and effect. There are reasons behind invasions and disruptions like the one caused Nader Shah who is said to be cruel but have had tough live. We can only get to know these truths when we research and dig deep into history.

**Q Can you share any details about your current or upcoming projects? What can readers expect from your future works?**

One thing I have discovered about myself as a writer is that I love writing in different genres. So, I am going to try my hand at as many genres as possible. I experimented last year by writing nonfiction which inspired me to try various styles. Every genre has guidelines and parameters, so whenever I write something different, I have to make an extra effort. By challenging myself I will be able to improve my craft. It has always been an incentive for me to become a good writer. I aspire to be as good as those writers who filled my childhood with stories. So I plan to write in as many genres as possible. In the months or years to come, you can expect all sorts of books.



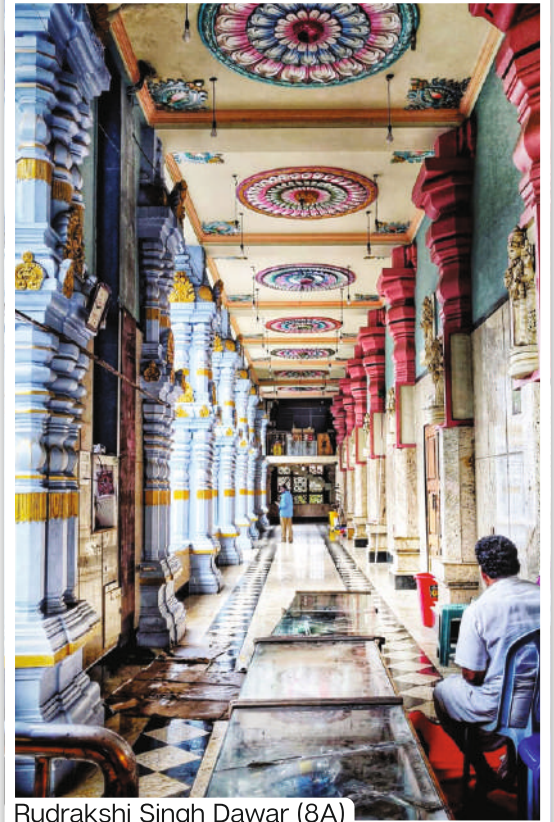


**"Only photography has been able to divide human life into a series of moments, each of them has the value of a complete existence."**

**- Eadweard Muybridge**



Nakul Singh Pramar (8F)



Rudrakshi Singh Dawar (8A)



Nachiket Chandwaskar (4B)



Devansh Kumar Sahu (12D)



Shreeya Hotwani (6B)



Samarth Maran (4G)



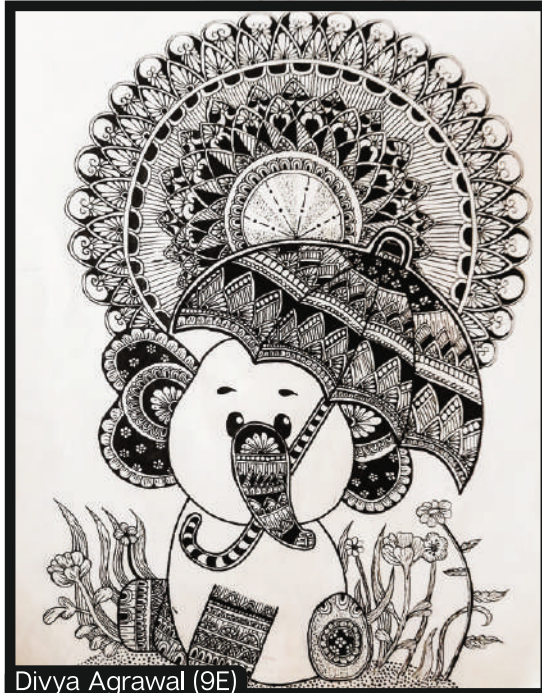
Prayaan Handel (5E)



Gautam Daga (5F)



Rudrakshi Singh Dawar (8A)



Divya Agrawal (9E)



Advita Sarathe (3E)



Vedika Jaisinghani (9E)



Jaden Ahan Dungdung (2A)