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PLAY REPLAY

Priyanka Bhattacharya critiques this year's Inter-House Hindi One-Act Play Competition



whale of a time.

Hyderabad started the ball rolling with their version of Sharad Joshi's celebrated political satire *Ek tha Gadha*. No one is likely to forget Abhilaksh Lalwani as the megalomaniacal *nawab* reeling off his loaded lines at a dizzying pace. (I kept praying for his precariously balanced handlebar moustache, which held up, thankfully.) He was superb, playing his role with conviction and great confidence. The other actor who deserves mention is Rahil Badhwar who played the delectable Ramkali. He 'out-*masakkali*-ed' *masakkali*, I thought, and did it with great panache. Item numbers on the school stage come and go, but this was special. Directors Rishi Sood and Aditi Joshi deserve credit for being able to do justice to this complex play, and for ensuring that its hard-hitting political message did not get lost in the laughs and general bonhomie on stage. The entries and exits were well-timed, and the riches offered by the Rose Bowl were well utilised.

Commendable also was the minimal use of props on stage, which is a measure of the confidence a director has in the content of the play to hold the audience. The audience loved every minute, and the loud laughs were as audible as the hush at the end when the human Allahdad Khan (Rishi Sood) was dragged away screaming to his execution. Another great play from the Nizams, who never fail to entertain and provoke, year after year. Who indeed, was the *gadha*? The dead animal, the TRP-driven *nawab*, or the unresisting courtiers? Do you wonder?

Tata were up next with their idealistic play-within-a-play, *Aakhir Kab*, written by our own Vidhukesh Vimal, and directed with great maturity by Amit Gupta. The strong socialistic message of the play was delivered with conviction by the lead actors, especially Jai Sharma and Amit Gupta himself. The transition between the mother play and the '*natak*' within was fluid and convincing, for the most part. Like the Hyderabad production, Tata made do with minimal props, incorporating elements from street theatre as well, to lend the play a refreshing, earthy texture. The live music (tabla and flute) as well as the choral song at the end was a brilliant accomplishment – 'Nafas Nafas, Kadam Kadam' will resonate in our ears for a long time to come. The *piece de resistance* of the play was the brilliant cameo by Karanbir Dhariwal who played

(continued on page 3)

If you missed the Inter-House One-Act Play Competition this year, then you wouldn't believe that legions of Doscocs *actually* spoke so much Hindi in the course of five-odd hours spread across two evenings. It was reassuring to hear them wrap their tongues around sonorous words like *manka* and *aashanka*. Barring the occasional slip of the tongue, (*gadha* became *ghada*) and the mispronounced consonant (*fal* instead of *phal*), things went off very well indeed. I've never encountered so much social and political comment in the course of two evenings in my entire life. All the plays were well-chosen, and well-interpreted. Boys were speaking in the idiom and language they were comfortable in—there was no need to put on an 'act', so to say. *Abbe oyes* and other such delicious endearments were mouthed with relish on stage, and for the most part, you could see the boys having a



PLAYING ONSTAGE

In the **Inter-House Hindi One-Act Play Competition 2009**, the following are the results:

- Best Actor:** Aruj Shukla
- Best Supporting Actor:** Shashank Peshawaria
- Best Director:** Aruj Shukla
- Best Producer:** Sagar Agarwal
- Best Technical Director:** Aadityaa Vicram Gupta
- Best Art and Craft Manager:** Jayavardhan Singh

The House positions are as follows:

- 1st:** Oberoi
 - 2nd:** Tata
 - 3rd:** Jaipur
 - 4th:** Hyderabad
 - 5th:** Kashmir
- Congratulations!

MATH MAGAZINE

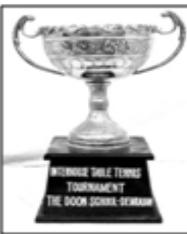
The following is the Editorial Board of the **Infinity** for the coming year:

- Editor-in-Chief:** Devashish Singal
- Chief-of-Production:** Abhishek Jain
- Associate Editors:** Arvind Sharma, Chirag Ambekar, Harshit Tiwari, Harsh Verma, Prateek Agarwal, Shrey Vardhan Swaroop, Varun Goel.
- Correspondents:** Gursehej Oberoi, Sumer Sandhu, Spandan Agarwal, Tushar Gupta, Udai Bothra, Varun Gupta, Vinayak Bansal.

We wish them a fruitful year ahead.

PING-PONG

The results of the **Inter-House Table Tennis Competition, 2009** are as follows:

	
JUNIOR CUP	SENIOR CUP
1st: Tata House 2nd: Oberoi House 3rd: Kashmir House 4th: Jaipur and Hyderabad Houses	1st: Oberoi House 2nd: Hyderabad House 3rd: Tata and Kashmir Houses 5th: Jaipur House

Melvin Michael and Shivam Pal represented Dehradun in the **Under-18 State Basketball Tournament** held at Welham Boys' School, Dehradun. The team won the finals, defeating Roorkee 62-27. Congratulations!

STAFF CRICKET

The **Mayoor School, Ajmer, Staff Cricket Team** played **The Doon School Staff Team** last Sunday. They beat the Doon team by **37 runs**. Congratulations on a well-played match!

Letter To The Editor

Punishing Matter

This letter is regarding the article *Sparing the Rod* by Sriyash Kishorepuria published on April 11, 2009 in *The Doon School Weekly*.

As an Old Boy, I, too, was bemused on hearing about the announcement that there would be no prefectorial punishments for twenty days. I do agree with the prefectorial body that some of the punishments, like lines and graphs, should be considered redundant as they do not achieve anything. Where I disagree with Sriyash is about the ineffectiveness of changes-in-break. He says that changes are "given for the smallest of infringements" and that they are implemented in an ineffective way. This itself gives the answer to the problem, which is that the prefects need to take more responsibility when they are giving out punishments and that they should make sure that the punishment is implemented in such a way that it is inconvenient.

I agree that a Dosco should learn to discipline himself by his experiences in Chandbagh. But these experiences include making mistakes and learning how to take responsibility for them. Changes-in-break are the most basic form of punishment meted out to students, given by prefects. This allows them to stem indiscipline before it gets worse. Instead of stopping them altogether, punishments need to be re-evaluated. Prefects should know what warrants a change-in-break and what needs a heart-to-heart conversation. There is a definite line between these two options. The solution is to identify the difference and not to dilute this line.

Lastly, changing clothes and running between the Houses and the Main Building all in 15-20 minutes, is definitely an inconvenience. If implemented correctly, no one would repeat the offence unless he considers it as practice for Athletics season!

Akaash Pathare ex-584 T '07

Unquotable Quotes

Don't do me your attitude.

MLJ does it well.

Shut the damning up.

Vinayak Bansal, as usual.

He tell me.

Shaurya Sinha has been informed.

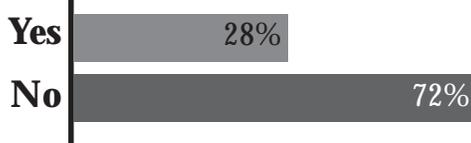
I'm short because I haven't evaporated as yet.

Siddhant Gupta, giving logical explanations.



Opinion Poll

Do you make the best use of your time?



(337 members of the School community were polled)

Next Week's Question: Do you follow the elections in the newspapers?

(contd. from page 1)

a *thekedaar* supplying people for political rallies. He floored the audience by getting under the skin of the character with astonishing ease, and I think his bit deserves a place in the Rosie Hall of Fame. Tata could have done with a bit of editing, though. The protracted court scene, with all its emotional intensity, weighed the play down somewhat. But what's a student play without a few hiccups? Tata deserve credit for staging a play that deals with a reality far removed from the Dosco world, with a conviction that is both touching, and reassuring.

Jaipur came next with the hilarious satire *Yahan Bande Saste Milte Hain* by T.P. Jhunjhunwala. As the steady stream of characters rolled onto the 'kidney', the audience wondered how Jaipur managed to produce so many stunning ladies, led by the elegant Mrs. Mehra, played to perfection by Varun Gupta. If there were an award for best make-up, the Eagles would definitely have swooped upon it! Samarth Jaiswal carried the burden of his constant presence onstage manfully, though he was occasionally shrill and over-the-top. The latter half of the play, especially the final scene, could have used some deft editing, though one must appreciate director Aashray Patel for imposing some semblance of sanity upon the mad melee of the ending. Jaipur used the 'kidney' admirably, as also the perimeter of the Rosie, though deft handling of the lights could have added another dimension to the climax. I felt the ending was somewhat forced, and took away from the general quality of the play. The Jaipur show reminded me of *Twenty Reasons Not to Do a Play* staged by Kashmir last year. Both these plays are exemplars of how cameos can be the bedrock of any performance. Well done, Jaipur! The whole School is still raving about the 'women' that you pulled out of your hat!

The second evening of the competition opened with Kashmir's youthful interpretation of another great satire, Habib Tanvir's *Charandas Chor*. Yashvardhan Jain as the canny burglar committed to truth, Anmol Joshi as the new age Guruji, and Siddhant Mittal as the uber-feminine Rani delivered memorable performances. Yet another play with minimal props, it was deftly handled by director Shubhro Ganguly, the stage hardly asleep between scene changes, clean entries and exits on cue and intelligent use of lighting. It did drag at times; some roles needed a little more conviction from the actors, and some bits (especially when the Rani appeared) were farcical, though hilarious. Yet, if any play connected spot-on with the audience, it was this one, never mind the judgement. In employing Bollywood/Hollywood kitsch as the visual language of the play, be it in the 'C' left behind as a signature, or in the wonderful collage on a softboard at the Guru's (no one missed Rasta Marley), or even the item number *qawwali*, Kashmir showed that theatre is all about being alive to the cross-currents of culture one is exposed to. Their performance far outdid the judgement. I would beg to differ from the judge who felt that the "gimmicks" in this play detracted from its serious message. To label the play's many youthful devices as "gimmicks" would be doing disservice to the play and the boys. What, one ought to ask, have we adults done to deal with these "gimmicks"? Merely develop 'parallel' cultures with minimal subscription! Not good enough! The media that the boys feed on is rife with gimmickry. It is only meet that we expect of the boys what we dole out to them. Well done, Kashmir! We too have seen *Charandas Chor* before, and no, we did not think yours was any 'less'. Yours was an honest, heartfelt attempt, and you deserve credit for being yourselves. We are not likely to forget easily the lovelorn Rani's regal farewell wave!

The last offering of the competition was Oberoi's socio-political allegory, Nandkishor Acharya's *Pagalghar*. The first thing that marked the play out as very different was its army of props. Oberoi managed to evoke the chilling reality of the madhouse very well indeed. The scene where the protagonist is forced to 'become' a horse had a surreal, nightmarish quality to it, as testified by the pin-drop silence in the audience. The intelligent employment of double roles lent the play a terrifying edge—the selfsame perpetrators of political/mental torture doubled as madmen, the subtle message being, it could happen to you! Chandrachuda Shukla as the corrupt politician was very close to the bone. Aruj Shukla as the intellectual dissident was convincing, though somewhat limited. There was some very wooden acting from some quarters, and some loud "*ha ha has*" were so forced as to sound like the patent *muhahahahaaa* of a Ramlila Ravana! It goes to the credit of director Aruj Shukla that the play never came unspooled. There were no dull moments, all lines were delivered on perfect cue, and the entire Rose Bowl was employed as stage. The chilling political message could have been lost on the predominantly young audience, but what's a One-Act Play Competition without a bit of OHTs? No one missed the dark message of the horrific ending, even though they might have missed some heavy-duty dialogues about the "*patloon mein chust rehne wala raashtra*". Good show, Oberoi. You delivered a KO punch, as usual! Kudos, too, to the music director, Sriyash Kishorepuria, for the superbly apt and well-placed piano pieces, and to the technical director, Adityaa Vicram Gupta, for some really effective lighting.

The results came and went, as usual; some points were won and lost, as usual; but what remains with us, the audience, is a sense of fulfillment that comes from having watched something worthwhile and elevating. It was a brilliant idea to have a Hindi competition this year: we saw plays and encountered situations that we are familiar with, that we can connect to. There is nothing like the salt of the earth to spice up a simple message, and that is what we had in abundance this year.



The Vimal Bhagat Trophy for the Best One-Act Play was donated by Kamal Bhagat (ex-47K'52) in 1996 in memory of his brother, Vimal Bhagat (ex-50K '51), the noted thespian and stage personality.

एक नन्ही सी आशा

यश अग्रवाल

उस दिन रविवार था। मैं अपने कुछ साथियों और अध्यापकों के साथ मदर टेरेसा के प्रेम सदन - मिशनरीज़ ऑफ चैरिटी गया था। वहाँ पहुँचना मन को एक विचित्र से अहसास से भर गया। ऐसा लगा जैसे भगवान स्वयं हमारे आसपास हो। बेहद शांतिमय और अपनेपन से भरा महौल था। लगता था जैसे हर कोई एक-दूसरे के लिए ही जी रहा है। मनुष्य के मन की सर्वश्रेष्ठ भावनाओं का पूरा विकास वहाँ दिखाई दे रहा था।

वहाँ पहुँचने पर हमारी मुलाकात वहाँ की प्रमुख सिरटर से हुई, जिन्होंने बताया कि इस आश्रम का मुख्यालय कोलकता में है। इस संस्था को मदर टेरेसा ने प्रारम्भ किया था तथा आज इस संस्था की दो सौ से भी अधिक शाखाएँ सारे भारत में हैं। यहाँ सारी दुनिया के त्यागे हुए बच्चों और वृद्धों को आश्रय मिलता है, वह भी बिना किसी जाति, वर्ग, धर्म या लिंग के भेद के।

सबसे पहले हम बच्चों से मिलने के लिए गए। मैं सत्य कहता हूँ कि बिल्कुल ऐसा लगा जैसे अपनों के बीच पहुँच गए हों। उनमें से एक बच्ची को सिरटर जंगल से लाई थी, जहाँ उस बच्ची के माता पिता ने उसे छोड़ दिया था। एक और बच्चा था, जो उन्हें सड़क के किनारे पड़ा मिला था। वह पाँच साल का था मगर उसे कोई बीमारी हो गई थी जिसकी वजह से उसका पूरा विकास नहीं हो पा रहा था तथा उसका कद सामान्य की अपेक्षा बहुत कम गति से बढ़ पा रहा था। एक अन्य बच्चा था, जिसके दाँत आधे थे। वह कोई काम नहीं कर पाता था, यहाँ तक कि वह अपने आप खा भी नहीं पाता था। हम अपने साथ कुछ बिस्कुट ले गए थे, जिन्हें हमने उन बच्चों में बाँटा और बच्चों ने बहुत चाव के साथ उन्हें खाया भी। कुछ बच्चे दृष्टिहीन भी थे, उन्हें हमने अपने हाथ से बिस्कुट खिलाए।

इतने कष्ट, इतनी कर्मियाँ, पर फिर भी कोई असंतोष नहीं था। सब प्रशन्न थे, मगन थे और जीवन को बहादुरी के साथ जीना सीख रहे थे।

वहाँ कुल मिला कर पंद्रह बच्चे रहते हैं, जिनमें से दस बच्चे उस समय प्रार्थना के लिए गए हुए थे। हमने उन बच्चों के साथ खेलने की भी कोशिश की। उनका पता नहीं पर हमें उस आधे अधूरे खेल में बहुत आनन्द आया। लगा कि अगर हम उनके लिए कुछ और नहीं भी कर पा रहे हैं तो कम से कम उनके जीवन को समझ तो पा रहे हैं, उनके होने को तो मान पा रहे हैं। मैं उन सुहावने पलों को कभी भी नहीं भूल सकता।

हम लोग वहाँ पर रह रहे बूढ़े लोगों से भी मिले। उन्हें देखकर बहुत अच्छा लगा। उनमें से कुछ तो बोल या चल भी नहीं पाते थे, पर फिर उनमें जिन्दगी साफ दिखाई देती थी। वे एक साथ भजन गाते थे, हँसते थे और मज़ाक भी करते थे। पुरानी बातों का ज़िक्र होते समय ज़रा देर के लिए उनके चेहरों पर कड़वाहट तो आ जाती थी, पर यह बहुत कम समय के लिए ही होता था।

पहले पहल जब हम वहाँ पहुँचे तो हमारे मन में उत्सुकता थी, पर जब हम वहाँ से चले तो मन में संतोष था। लग रहा था कि हम भावनाओं को ज़्यादा अच्छी तरह महसूस कर पा रही थे। लग रहा था कि दुनियाँ में अपने अलावा भी बहुत कुछ है जिसकी ज़िम्मेदारी भी हम पर है।

डॉस्को लाइफ

सबत कुमार ठाकुर

दून स्कूल में ढाई साल रहने के बाद आप कुछ और सीखें या न सीखें, पर एक चीज़ है जिसे प्रायः सभी लोग थोड़ा बहुत सीख ही जाते हैं, और वह समय का सदुपयोग। मैंने भी स्कूल में रहने के बाद कुछ यही महसूस किया है। पी. टी. और पढ़ाई तो सदा चलती रहती है, परंतु एक डॉस्को की दिनचर्या का सबसे कठिन या व्यस्त समय रेस्ट आवर से प्रारम्भ होता है। जैसे रेस्ट आवर तो बस एक बहाना बन कर रह गया है, खास

तौर से उन लोगों के लिये जो आलस्यवश किसी कार्य में हिस्सा नहीं लेना चाहते।

मेरा मानना है कि जो हम स्कूल में फीस देते हैं वो इसीलिये है ताकि हम इस स्कूल में रहकर पढ़ाई के अलावा अनेक सहजामी क्रियाओं, खेल कूद तथा अन्य कार्यों में भी हिस्सा ले सकें। बहुत से लोग यह मानते हैं कि व्यस्त रहना खाली पड़े रहने से अच्छा है। कहा भी गया है - आलस्यं मनुष्याणाम् शरीरस्थो महान् ऋषुः अर्थात् आलस्य मनुष्य के का शरीर में स्थित सबसे बड़ा शत्रु है। जर्मनी में कुछ वैज्ञानिकों ने यह सिद्ध कर दिया है कि जो लोग बेगार और मनोरंजन के साधनों से दूर होते हैं वे सामान्य पुरुष की अपेक्षा मानसिक रोगी बनने के अधिक लक्षण रखते हैं। इस खोज से प्रेरणा लेते हुए मैंने सोचा है कि व्यस्त रहना ही उचित है।

एक डॉस्को जब दोपहर को भोजन के बाद अपने आवास जाता है तो वो सबसे पहले सोचता है कि कहाँ - कहाँ जाना है और किस जगह कौनसा बहाना मारकर मेहनत से बचना है। सबसे पहले एस. टी. ए. और एस. यू. पी. डब्ल्यू. को बहानों की सूली पर चढ़ाकर खेलने के लिए मैदान पर उतर आता है। वहाँ दस-दस मिनट का हेरफेर कर वो आई. ए. वाई. पी. के घण्टे पूरे करने की फिराक में रहता है। इसी सब के बीच उसे याद आता है कि आज तो हॉकी की प्रैक्टिस और नाटक की तैयारी भी तो होनी है। किस्सा मुश्तसर यह कि इस तरह एक बालक दिन भर खपता है।

अब वो रोता-पीटता फेवर के शाप से अस्त टॉय पहुँचता है। अब उसका एक नालायक मित्र कहीं से आकर अगले दिन जमा होने वाले प्रॉजेक्ट की याद दिलाता है। अब वो लगता है लिखने के काम पर। इतने में घण्टी बजती है रात्रिभोज की। वहाँ भी - 'ये भी कोई खाना है?!! या फिर लौकी का हलवा...छी!!

जैसे तैसे अपना प्रॉजेक्ट पूरा करने के बाद उसे अपना गले हुए गढ़े वाला लुभावना बिस्तर नज़र आता है कि कोई सीनियर पकड़ कर कहता है 'सुन...तेरी लिखावट तो बड़ी सुन्दर है ज़रायेमेराभीप्रॉजेक्टलिखदे?अबभलेहीउसकी लिखावट चींटियों की पांत से भी बुरी हो। कभी कभी सदा व्यस्त रहने का विचार भी इन कारणों से डगमगाने लगता है, परंतु जब मैं अपने किसी आलसी दोस्त को देखता हूँ तो और भी बुरा महसूस करता हूँ, क्योंकि खाली बैठे जिस तरह के काम वे करते हैं उससे साफ ज़ाहिर होता है कि खाली मन शैतान का घर होता है।

बस वहीं मैं समझ जाता हूँ कि एक डॉस्को के लिये व्यस्त रहना ही सबसे अच्छा है।

मेरा अहसास

प्रांजल सिंह

सागर के तट पर रेत पर चलते हुए,
महसूस होता है कि कुछ रुकी सी है ये ज़िन्दगी,
क्या मायने है इसके?
पीछे मुड़कर देखा तो पाया कि हर आँसू बह गया है,
पद-चिन्हों को भी मिटा दिया है हवा के थपेड़ों ने।
रेत पर मेरा नाम कहाँ है?
क्या है मेरे अस्तित्व का साक्ष्य?
जवाब एक ही है - अहसास।
मेरे होने का अहसास जो वायु के थपेड़े मिटा गये मेरे निशान,
लेकर जायेंगे जगह जगह मेरी गंध।
जो अशक बह गये थे अथक जल राशि में,
लौटेंगे एक दिन मोती बनकर।
सालों बाद जब कोई थका मान्दा
इसी साहिल पर सहारा ढूँढते हुए आयेगा,
तो वो मुक्ता उसकी आशा बनेगी,
वही गंध, वही अहसास,
उसका विश्वास बनेगे।
मेरी आत्मा उसकी मार्गदर्शक बनेगी।

| Commentary | SMS: Shrt Mrdr Srvc

Narinder Kapur

Recently, while surfing the net, I came across a report written 4 yrs back in the Times of India, which reported on the continuous and increasing use of sms and short form lingo in exam papers. Common sms abbreviations such as lol were following quotes from Milton, "and" had become a simple "nd", and because had become because, because, or simply because.

What surprises me is the fact that although this was a 1-time incident reported, the ground reality is that sms and short form lingo is becoming common in students' exam, assignment and grade papers. And more appalling is the fact that students even find reasons to justify their use of the lingo. For example, Sooraj Srinivasan, a student quoted in the report mentioned above, said that, "I use short forms sometimes and marks HAVE BEEN (capitals inserted by writer) cut. But I think it should be legalised. SMS lingo comes easily to us. But teachers aren't that forward thinking".

Agreed, Mr. Srinivasan, that some teachers in the backward areas of the country might be a bit unaware when it comes to language and its proper use, due to improper exposure or a variety of reasons, and therefore, you might be forgiven for your use of sms lingo, since the teachers will not be able to correct you. But, as the report goes, you are supposed to be in the civilized and "forward-thinking" city of Bengaluru. If you, a citizen of the "forward-thinking" city, can justify the use of sms and short form abbreviations, then I am sorry to say, it's not your teachers who are not forward thinking, but you yourself. If teachers in your city are not forward thinking enough, then they shouldn't be able to correct your improper use of language and should forgive you for your "forward-thinking".

But I don't mean to, through this article, mean to chastise you for your "forward-thinkingness", Mr. Srinivasan. Rather, on the other hand, I wish to, through this article, drive home a point to the reader: maybe students are justified, in their own right, to use sms and short form lingo in their exams to cram in more words in their exam papers, but does that mean that you murder a whole language in order to gain a few marks? If you feel it is alright, please don't blame the poor teachers, simply trying to correct you, for not being "forward-thinking". I do not intend to, in this article, defend teachers' rights, but I do mean to imply a certain distress at the fact that you have even decided to murder language in order to gain these extra marks that will allow us to gain entry into a college or university of our choice.

At this point, I would like to point out a couple of things:

1) Should you, as students, aim to expand your knowledge or aim to gain these extra marks for college admissions? If you dear reader, are a student reading this right now, and if you subscribe to the "extra marks" view, then I am very sorry, but according to me, you simply have not realized the goal of being a student, which is to gain knowledge, but have only realized the importance of college in making your professional life.

2) Since, while writing this article, I have noticed that it all boils down to college and university applications and admissions, I have to stop and ponder: will college themselves accept people with transcripts which state, "and you must wonder whether Luther was right", or something to the tune of, "and we must wonder whether Luther was right or not". Now, by some chance, if they do, doesn't it seem to say that the college itself is in some area, either liberalizing its admissions process a bit too much? Or, is it simply becoming "forward thinking"?

Now, as a society, you have two options. Either you continue to allow this form of exam writing to continue and allow your youth to degenerate into written articles, exam papers, and general musings in a language like this, or you take action, in some form, because it becomes too late to stop this process. The path is laid clearly before us. It is up to us, and only us, on which you choose to take.

IN THE NAME OF TRUTH, ETC.

Abhilaksh Lalwani speaks out against doing the easier wrong

Dear God, thank you for the courage to face unpopularity for the sake of truth...

It always ends up the way you want it to, right? Wrong. It so happens that once in a while, there comes a time when things take a turn, and not for the better. It also happens that the worsening situation gets out of hand, and then all that can, or should be done, is waiting. But, as always, scientifically speaking, our participation in anything is directly proportional to its worsening state. Basically, we delve into the worst situations, first believing that we will be able to solve the problem. What we need to realize is that doing the first thing that comes to our mind, is not necessarily the right thing to do; though intuition is not always the wrong path to follow either. Either way, forgive my equivocation. Just remember that the best or most popular move is not always the right one.

...for courage to declare boldly our convictions though they make us despised...

So, I made an unpopular move. What about it? How does that change anything? Previously, there was a reasonless irritation. All I've done is give it meaning! Of course, if one fails to understand this meaning, it is in no way that person's fault: I admit that I did not take into account certain segments of society that are devoid of moral judgment or evaluation. That was a failure on my part, but, did you know that admitting failure does not make people despise you: it's supposed to trigger sympathy. But, then again, when have things gone as they are supposed to, right?

...for courage to break with evil customs and evil opinions...

I never did, and never will agree to it. There is no use in even trying to convince me that what you are or were doing, is or was correct. It may have been right, but not righteous, for righteousness is an ideal absolute, while 'right' can be relative. I did not intend to be didactic, but, taking inspiration from an article I wrote some time ago: it was needed, and not because I wanted it to be, but because it was written, fated. Do not take this, though, as a truce offering, for despite it, I still do not agree with what you did for the sake of popularity.

Thank you for giving us strong hearts that will not fear what any person can do to us or say about us...

I'd rather be socially threadbare and morally aware, than morally nowhere and socially up there. I hope you realize this, and keep your distance, for my sense of moral justice, may, very easily, overcome my sense of the implications of my actions. Again, this is not a threat: just a description of my way of functioning.

Thank You for imbuing us with the spirit of boldness that being delivered from all fear of our fellows we may be strong in Thee and very courageous.

That I am correct is not subject to dispute. That I am always correct is not true. That you are correct is always false. Another thing you need to realize. The list is growing exponentially. You need to hurry up as I have, or you will soon be left behind. This is no longer a race against time alone. There are other factors at play too. Realise them.

We honor Thee with our every utterance! Amen

Yes, I did, in fact, just pray for you. Everyone did. I hope you heard us. If you did, I hope you listened. If you did, I hope you understood. If you did, I hope you will not forget. If you do, may He be there for you, for I will not. To me you are as good as forsaken.

Filling the Gap

Shashank Peshawaria and Arjun Badal interview Larissa Normanton, a visiting teacher and gap-year student from Oundle School, England

The Doon School Weekly (DSW): Tell us something about yourself.

Larissa Normanton (LIN): I went to a boarding school

called Oundle, which is the third biggest co-ed school in England and have been in boarding since I was seven. I am about to go to Trinity College, Cambridge where I will be studying Arabic and Middle Eastern studies. I am taking a break as of now.

DSW: What are your hobbies?

LIN: I love sports, specially skiing and swimming. I enjoy dancing and do a lot of ballet. I am very interested in languages and have studied French, Spanish Arabic, Latin and, of course, English. Other than this, I love the sea. I love sailing. I am also very fond of travelling.

DSW: Where else did you spend your gap-year?

LIN: I started my gap-year by spending the summer vacation at home, by just being with friends and family. I then went to France, where I did a skiing course in the Alps. It was a lot of fun and I am now, after finishing the course, a qualified skiing instructor! I also spent two months in the old city of Jerusalem where I was staying with a Palestinian lady. I was working for a peace NGO over there, and we taught Palestinian children activities like dancing, just to distract them from all the violence. My aim was to remove violence from their minds. After The Doon School, I'll be spending some time in Mumbai and Delhi and then my gap year will end.

DSW: What made you think of spending some time from your gap-year at The Doon School?

LIN: Well, firstly, I have always loved India. Even my middle name is India: my name is Larissa India Normanton. When I was around nine years old, my family and I came here for a holiday. This country left a very good impression on me at that time. Thus, I wanted to come back here. My tutor and my father also, somehow, knew about this school. They suggested to me that this would be the right place. After that, I decided that I wanted to come here and I just wrote to Dr. Bajpai, who organised everything.

DSW: Since you have also studied at a boarding school, apart from your school being a co-educational school, what differences have you noticed

between The Doon School and your school?

LIN: Ah, PT! We never had PT. And classes started much later than they do here! Nobody there ever had to

wake up so early as they do here. Otherwise, here the boys are more polite compared to English high school boys, and it is very interesting how, here, they seem to pass on skills and knowledge to their juniors, which doesn't really happen back in England. This is also what I think makes the Dosco stand out. However, certain

similarities are also there like the house system and house spirit.

DSW: What memories will you carry back from Doon, from India?

LIN: My most memorable experience of India was of an Indian wedding which I attended in Agra. There were so many people, ceremonies, and it was all so elaborate and colourful. Everyone was in a festive mood, which now makes English weddings seem boring to me! In The Doon School, I think my work with the gymnasts was a most memorable one, and I don't think I'll ever forget this interview either!

DSW: How did you enjoy your midterms?

LIN: I went with the new Martyn House boys to the Himalayan Adventure Institute, at Kempt Falls near Mussoorie. It was enjoyable but I got ill due to the food there, which rather ruined it. Nevertheless, I enjoyed swimming in the freezing river and did the rock-climbing (before getting ill)!

DSW: How did you get into Trinity College?

LIN: So many people have asked me that question! I myself would be very interested to know! I honestly am not sure how the Trinity College administration selects students. I suppose it was a combination of my personal statement and the numerous interviews. But which part of either made them choose me I have no idea. I assume the fact that I was planning to spend time working for an NGO in the West Bank helped, since I would be speaking Arabic there (and the course I was applying for was Arabic). Apart from that, I haven't really got any answers...sorry!



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