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The Golden Quill

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Kailash Mansarovar

My Inner and Outer Journey

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Category : Freelance authors

More Than a Pilgrimage



Travelling places always adds to our wisdom and strength- both physical and mental but a pilgrimage has an add-on advantage of getting connected to our inner eternal source of joy, ever bubbling out from our persona till the end of our lives. Mountain pilgrimages are far more rewarding than the plains since uncertainties during travel are more and faith in the Divine gets etched in the mind, leaving lasting impressions. The tougher the trek, the deeper the seed of blissful joy and gratitude planted in our hearts. The miracles do happen every moment in our lives and the Divine providence proves every moment but we tend to get oblivious to them, busying ourselves in urgent and important activities. During pilgrimage especially to an area where oxygen level is low and one feels the pressure of the atmosphere taxing on our body, the outer journey becomes more of inner transformation. That is the reason perhaps, in our pilgrimage group to Mount Kailash- Shiva's abode, there were five people who had trekked on the holy trail many times, one retired government official had been to Kailash Mansarovar 16 times and this sexagenarian was again ready to travel again with his shoes on. When I asked him what made him go every year, he said, "You go yourself and realize. You will never feel like coming back.". Honestly, it is intoxicating.

THE CALL OF KAILASH

After a five year long hiatus Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage resumed in the last year, 2025. It was suspended during COVID and every following year, efforts were made at the government level but it took five years for us Indians to be allowed to visit our holy sanctum sanctorum-Kailash Mansarovar. The last date of application announced by the Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam was 13th June. I had applied four days before the deadline and I received the status “waiting” from Nathu La pass, Sikkim route. Seeing the obscurity and the boundation of medical clearance, I made up my mind to go via the Nepal route through a private agency.



When the first batch of pilgrims left for pilgrimage via Lipulekh pass, Pithoragarh route organised by KMVN, I received a phone call from the Ministry of External Affairs that I could be given a chance for the pilgrimage in the 9 th batch if I gave consent via Nathu La route. My mentors guided me to opt for the Nepal route instead since it was less expensive and less time consuming. The thirteen day trip via Nepal seemed to me more alluring than the 21 day Sikkim route trip but as destiny had it, even our Nepal route trip got extended to 19 days due to natural exigencies. Each day was strenuous, painstaking but rewarding, turning my faith in the Divine into conviction.



Departure

DELHI → KATHMANDU

A batch of seventeen pilgrims started from Indira Gandhi International Airport Delhi with hailings to the Lord Shiva on 7th July. After a nearly one and a half hour flight, we were welcomed at Tribhuvan international airport of Kathmandu, Nepal. The Amogh travel group welcomed us with Rudraksh rosaries and we stayed in Le Himalaya hotel in Lazimpath. It is a tradition that before starting a pilgrimage, blessings from Pashupatinath temple of Nepal are sought and we did the same. Spirits were high until we got the disheartening news on the second day eve.

The first hurdle

Second day morning it was drizzling. We took blessings from Lord Pashupatinath and came back to do travel shopping for hiking stuff like sticks, shoes, rain covers and money exchange.

By the time we reached back in the hotel in the evening, we were called in the hotel conference room for a meeting. It came as a bombshell on us when we were told that Kyirong bridge was washed away in flash flood due to incessant rains so our pilgrimage could not go on. High in the middle part of the Himalayas, just across the border from Nepal into China, lies this small village Kyirong, one of the border crossing points in China. We were told that a meeting in Beijing is on by the government officials but it is definite that it will take two to three years to make a bridge so some alternative route will have to be chosen. We thanked God that we were not stuck halfway otherwise we were to come back to Nepal. Those who had started their journey, had to return halfway.



It was decided that for three days, another small pilgrimage of Muktinath, the world's highest Vishnu temple, can be undertaken until the routes became clear. This shrine is dedicated to Lord Vishnu and without Lord Vishnu's consent how could we go to Lord Shiva's abode, said one of our co-traveller. The new journey, the new pilgrimage was enchanting with a lot of fresh water falls enroute and finally 300 stairs climbing to Muktinath.

Midway Muktinath



The 108 bull-faced spouts surrounding the temple of Lord Vishnu which cascade with holy waters originating from the Kali Gandaki river are the main attraction of Muktinath. Bathing under these 108 stream jets with ice cold waters as well as in the adjacent sacred pond is believed to wash away all earthly sins and cycle the soul toward liberation. The nearby Gandaki river is the exclusive source of the sacred Saligram stones (fossilized ammonite stones) which are worshipped by Vaishnavas as a direct, non-anthropomorphic representation of Lord Vishnu.

I rushed to collect a few stones from the river bed stopping our jumbo jeep for a few minutes. The journey along Gandaki river was thrilling but my mind was still stuck at Kailash. The landscape was characterized by dramatic trans-Himalayan vast desert like vales and mounts, deep gorges, as if carefully carved by some sculptor, and striking views of the Tibetan plateau to the north. My heart pined for Kailash.

I rushed to collect a few stones from the river bed stopping our jumbo jeep for a few minutes. The journey along Gandaki



A ray of hope

After returning from Muktinath, during our night halt in Pokhara we came to know that one batch of pilgrims has been allowed to enter into China through Kodari border. A ray of hope had arisen and we ensued our bus journey to Kathmandu. On the fifth day we started for Kodari border from Kathmandu and halted at night at Tatopani. Next day after getting clearance from the immigration centre, we finally entered China Tibet territory. Throughout the journey, landslides had occurred and continuously JCB machines were clearing the debris from the road and China men were working on mending roads. Bridges were under construction. And intermittent showers of rain marked our hill journey. The Chinese bus had décor like our Indian trucks with colourful frills hanging from the bus ceiling. After nearly 14 hours of driving we reached a place called Saga, at night. Our spirits were down, everyone had dizziness and I even had a bout of vomit as soon as the bus stopped. Reaching the hotel room, my body's oxygen level was checked which had come down from 97 to 75.



The second test

“You cannot go as your oxygen level has dipped to 65”, said Astrologer Dhananjey Dubey who had done Kailash yatra five times earlier. When I shared my problem with four other female pilgrims at the next day’s breakfast table, they even expressed the same difficulty. Thankfully, seven hours’ rest made us up again and we could eat food in a Tibetan restaurant consisting of vegetable soup, rice and cooked potatoes. Next morning on the seventh day, we started for Mansarovar lake. Since we had to opt for the alternate route of Kodari border, our travel agent had clearly told us that the permit for cooks had not come then so food was to be managed at local restaurants. The local food was mainly non vegetarian. In the name of vegetarianism was fried rice which did not pass through the gut because of low atmospheric pressure and oxygen level. A nauseating feeling prevailed all through the journey though roads were broad and plateaus and vast stretches of open space greeted us.

The first glimpse

It was like a dream came true. Around noon when we reached Mansarovar lake, the bright sun greeted us and its rays touched Mount Kailash located across the lake, miles away. The first darshan of Kailash rejuvenated us and everyone sat with rosary in hand doing japa (mental chanting). “We are so fortunate to have our first glimpse of Kailashpati,” exclaimed every member of our group. Though bathing is not allowed in the Mansarovar lake yet we had a splash and filled bottles with the holy water from Mansarovar. The blue waters soothed the mind, body and soul. To my surprise, the water was not cold. It was just perfect to freshen us up. We also filled bottles of the holy water from this highest fresh water lake of the world created by Lord Brahma. The beauty of the lake which stretched for miles and miles was breathtaking. All those visions we had listened to from our ancestors came alive. Here was the holiest of the holiest lakes, where Devtas come to take holy dip, right in front of us. I wanted to spend more time, but our caravan moved on since Kailash mount was still to be reached. It is believed that no one has ever trekked Mount Kailash, whosoever tried either went mad or unconscious. One needs to be absolutely free of body consciousness and residing in Atman, to scale Mount Kailash which we people from the materialistic world cannot attain. According to a Tibetan legend, Milarepa climbed Mount Kailash and he practised meditation and austerities in a cave near the mountain. A fair is held every twelve years in his memory.



Circumambulation of Kailash



We started for Darchen in our bus from Mansarovar. Darchen is a Chinese town from where the south face of Mount Kailash is seen. Our cooks had joined us by now. After spending the night at Darchen, in the morning when I came out from my room leaving my other two roommates sleeping, to my surprise, the sun and clear sky greeted us. A person from another travel company staying in the same hotel, pointed to me to look far. In that clear sky, we had a fully covered snowy view of Mount Kailash. What a sight to behold. We clicked some pictures. We started for Yam Dwar after breakfast. Every start of the journey was with a chorus, “Om Namah Parvati Pataye har Har Mahadev”. An hour’s journey led us to Yam Dwar from where the Parikrama or circumambulation begins. It is said that one leaves behind the Sanchit karmas (clears karmic account) and one is free from all bondages when we cross this Yama Dwar. Even the bondage of cleanliness goes away since one cannot have a wash for three days during Parikrama or change clothes. It is so cold and the body is so tired that no energy is left for any such body cleansing. I was told that porter and pony should be booked for all three days though it is for the second day that one needs while crossing Dolma pass, the toughest trek. Total trekking of three days 52 kms with the biggest challenge of lowest oxygen level at Dolma pass. It seemed unending arrays of stones, and cliffs when we crossed this mountain pass. Dolma Pass is a high mountain pass at 18,514 feet located on the outer Kailash Kora (Parikrama). It is the highest point of the trek. The horse takes us up but one has to descend on one’s own as it is risky to ride the horse. With Lord Shiva’s grace, after a long 8 hours trek I reached Derapurk with our co-pilgrims from where Kailash mount is clearly visible from the North side. Clear skies added to our fortune of having good darshan from our place of stay.

Connected at Spirit level

I realized that we all were connected at the spirit level. My pony owner was a Tibetan whose help I needed for the second day. He could not understand my language, only with gestures we talked. From Yam Dwar where we were allotted the horses, I was tasked to pick a hand written slip. The name of the porter which I picked was chosen for my journey by our guide Lawang. I still cannot spell that pony owner's name and I clicked one photo with him as the only identity of my porter and that helped me in searching for him wherever I needed him. Most of our friends had ridden the pony and five of our batch mates were walking the path.

Since everyone's walking speed and stamina was different, I was walking alone with a stick in hand, keeping an eye on the pony. So many mountains rose on our sides one after the other but Kailash's face was not seen all the time during the circumambulation. It seems almost unbelievable how the water falls make their way from those stony hard rocky mountains, seemingly invincible. I stepped on and on with a pony moving alongside a water stream with little velvety green grassy mounds overgrown on the sides of the stream.

Near death experience

A point reached after 5 hours of trekking when I felt the sudden gush of a cold breeze. It was as if the air would take away my breath. My mouth was constantly drying and I started feeling exhausted at every step. It was a plain stretch of land, no climbing, but the cold breeze was making me breathless. I wondered how the Chinese and Tibetan people coming from the opposite direction were walking with ease. Chinese people do this kora (circumambulation) from the opposite side. I realized that they were wearing face masks. I searched for a mask in my pocket but due to over-stuffing with torch, nuts, camphor and other little necessities, my hands could not reach the mask. I made a gesture to the pony chap, if he had a mask. He denied. God listened to me in that moment of despair. I looked up in exasperation and I saw the peak of Mount Kailash. I was overwhelmed with tears that this was the first glimpse of the Kailash during circumambulation. Even if my prana left the body at this moment, I was satisfied. As I gazed down, there was a face mask lying near my feet. Immediately I lifted this life saving piece and I felt warm. Now there was no breeze troubling me. I gathered strength to tread on with fresh energy and tears in my eyes. Faith turned into conviction that He never lets us down when we trust Him alone.



Dolma Pass trek

On the second day of circumambulation, enroute, is turquoise green coloured Gauri kund for which the porters ask for 100 Yuans to fill the bottle from the holy water body. Every step I felt was impossible to take but the power of japa 'Om Namah Shivay' pulled me through. On a glacier lake when I was about to slip, a man behind me held me from my upper arm and I was saved. Innumerable times there were instances, when it seemed I would faint but the sound 'Om Namah Shivay' raised me up. The pony porter did not let me sleep on the way although I tried to lean against a stone to have a rest. He cautioned, "If you stop you will never be able to make it." The second night was spent in Zuzulpuk and the third day trek was much easier and shorter by just three hours.



With a sense of gratitude, satisfaction and ecstasy surrounding me, we completed our never ending soulful journey of Kailash Mansarovar and returned to Saga and then to Kathmandu the next day. AT night we were given Yatra completion certificates by the travel agent. We were to take a return flight to New Delhi next morning around 10 am so the proposed leaving time from the hotel was 8 am. Three of us decided to hire a cab and rush to Pashupatinath temple in the morning at 530 am to pay our obeisances and express gratitude. Everyone warned us since it was Shivaratri and a huge gathering was expected. But where there is will there is way. Lord Shiva welcomed us with open hands since there was no queue and we kept on moving freely in the temple premises and had darshan from all the four side gates. We also joined devotional chanting by a group and offered samagri in the yagna kund where mantra recitations and offerings were going on. On time we returned to join our group heading towards the airport.

The flight left for Delhi resounding the mantra “Om Namah Parvati Pataye Har Har Mahadev!”



ॐ

पापा

ॐ

शैली बंसल
4th A



रग रग में मेरे तुम पापा,
धड़कन में बस तुम हो। जब
तक यह जीवन है पापा, मेरे
नायक तुम हो। उंगली
पकड़कर निर्भय चलना, मन
की सारी बातें कहना। जीवन
है खुशहाल हमारा, निर्माता
बस तुम हो। रग रग में मेरे तुम
पापा, धड़कन में बस तुम हो।



आपके रहते डर न चिंता,
चिंतक मेरे तुम हो। ईश्वर को न
देखा पापा, मेरे रक्षक तुम हो।
बिना मोल हर वस्तु हमारी,
मन चाही हर खुशी हमारी।
किन पुण्यों से मिले हो पापा,
कितने अच्छे तुम हो। रग रग
में मेरे तुम पापा, धड़कन में
बस तुम हो।



आपसे है कितनी उम्मीदें, जो
मन चाहे वही खरीदें।
आपका स्नेहिल नेह प्यार
सब, याद मुझे नित प्रति है।
समझदार ना होना चाहूँ, जब
तक बैठे तुम हो। रग रग में
मेरे तुम पापा, धड़कन में बस
तुम हो।



अब मैं थोड़ा लगी समझने,
धर्म निभाने हैं मुझे अपने।
जीवन भर यू ही रहना पापा,
मेरे अभी बहुत हैं सपने। जन्म
जन्म तक उऋण नहीं मैं,
उपकारों से पापा। मेरे जीवन
की खुशियों के निर्माता हैं
पापा। रग रग में मेरे तुम पापा,
धड़कन में बस तुम हो।



LIFE: AN ON-GOING ILLUSION

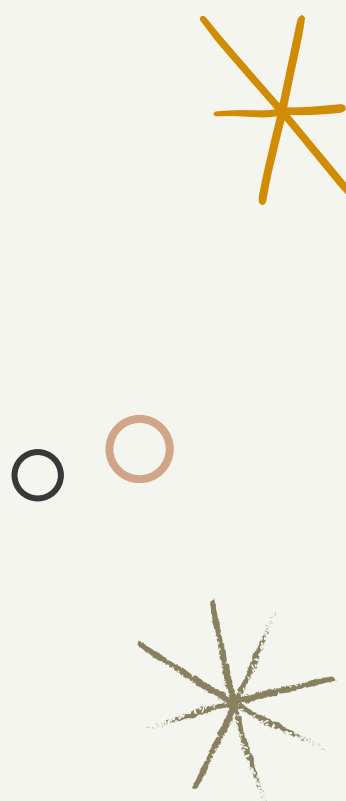
Arghya mondal

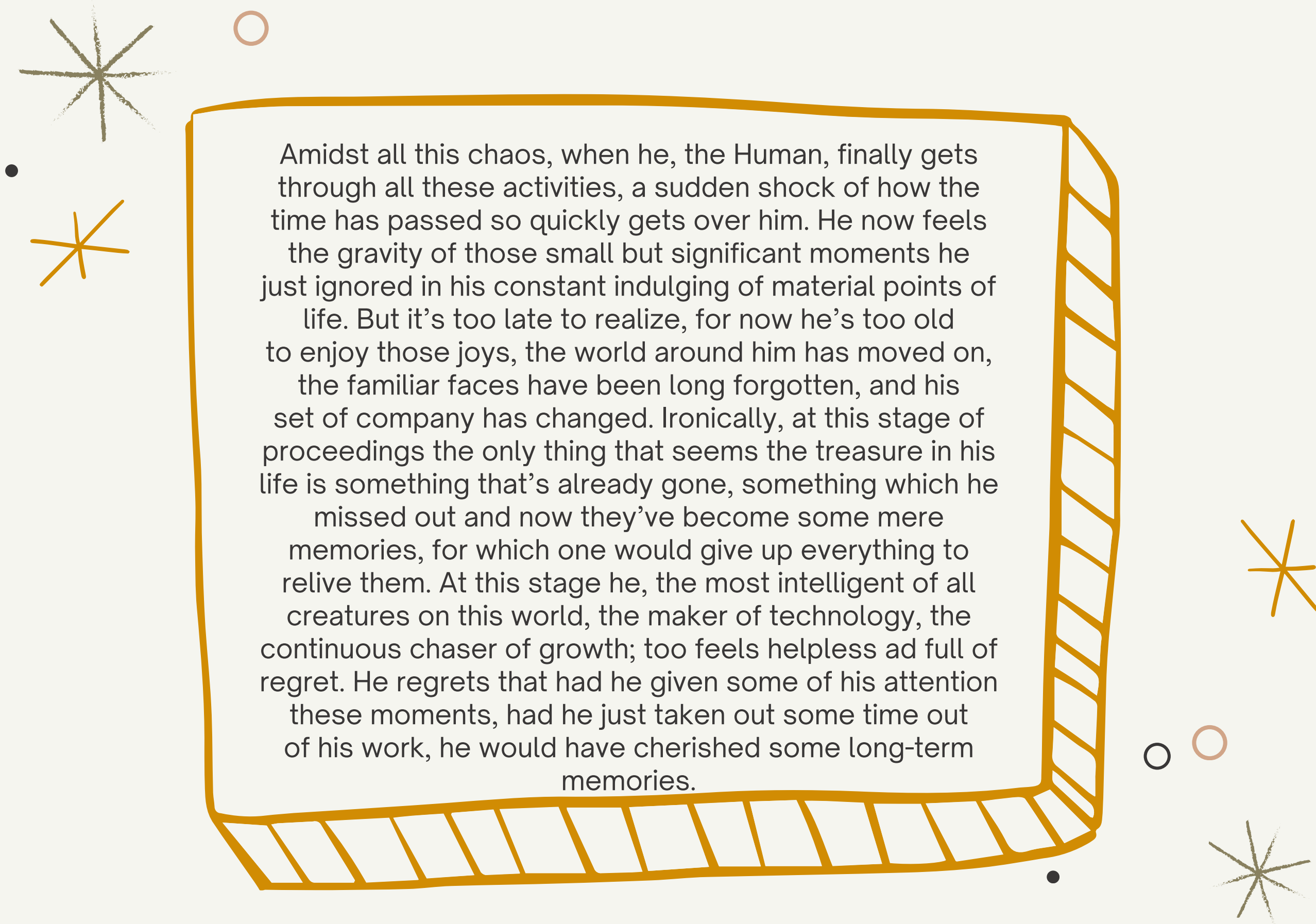


Human, the topmost among the world's species,
considered the most capable and intelligent on the earth,
has

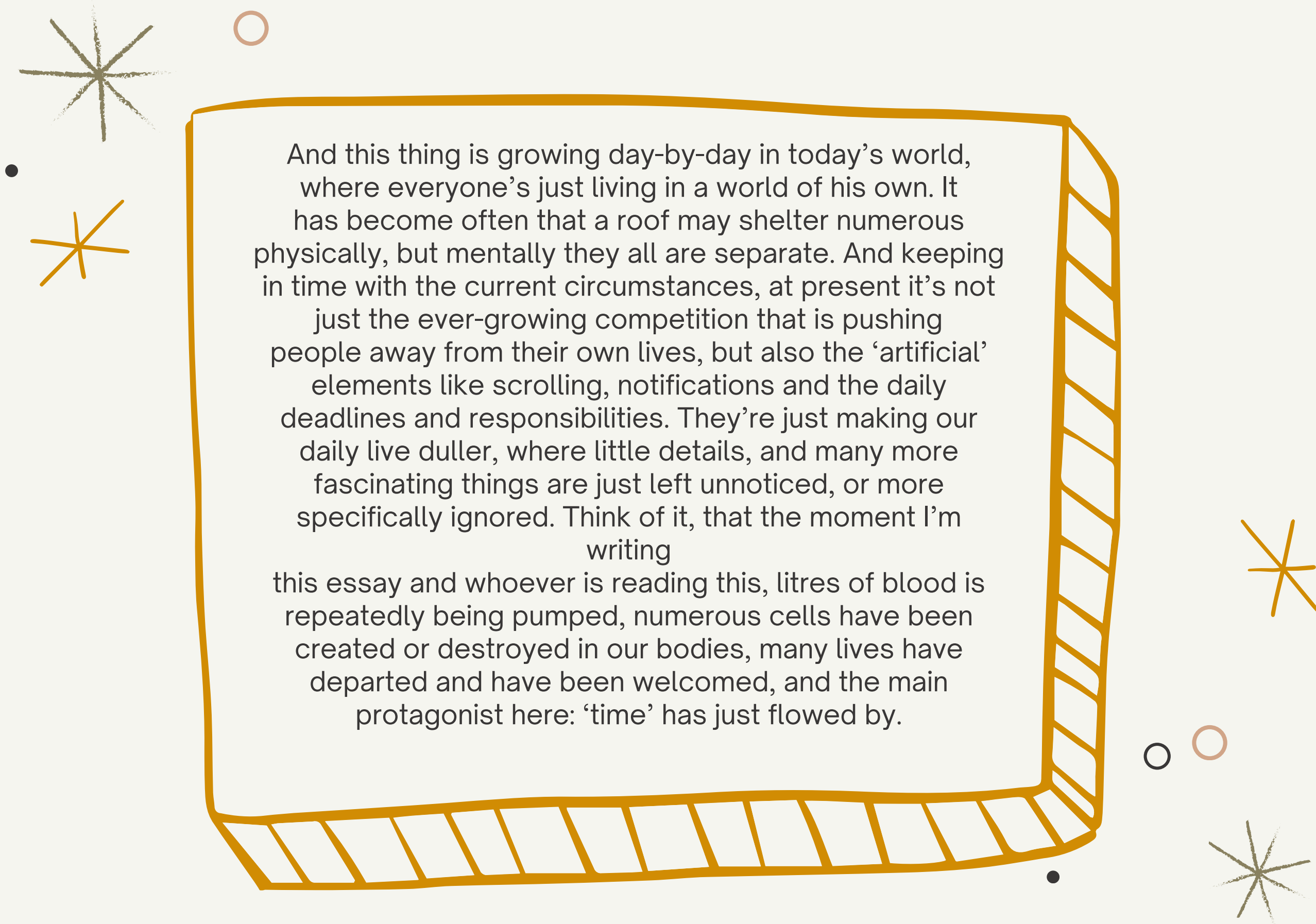
shaped this world and his surroundings according to his
necessities and caused it look like the way it is today.
All these efforts and innovations have led to the modern-
day world, where everything is going a never-ending
development, with the people trying their best to be
ahead of their time. The current state of affairs has
reached

that all of us striving to squeeze out every second of our
time; every drop of our lives to get into this constant
race for upliftment. Be it a student, working personnel or
an entrepreneur, every one of these toils hard for
getting better grades, better lifestyle or better profits.
Even who has reached the highest-highs of his life, is
most surely at his very moment rocking his brains to get
even higher. And this unending quest goes on and on.

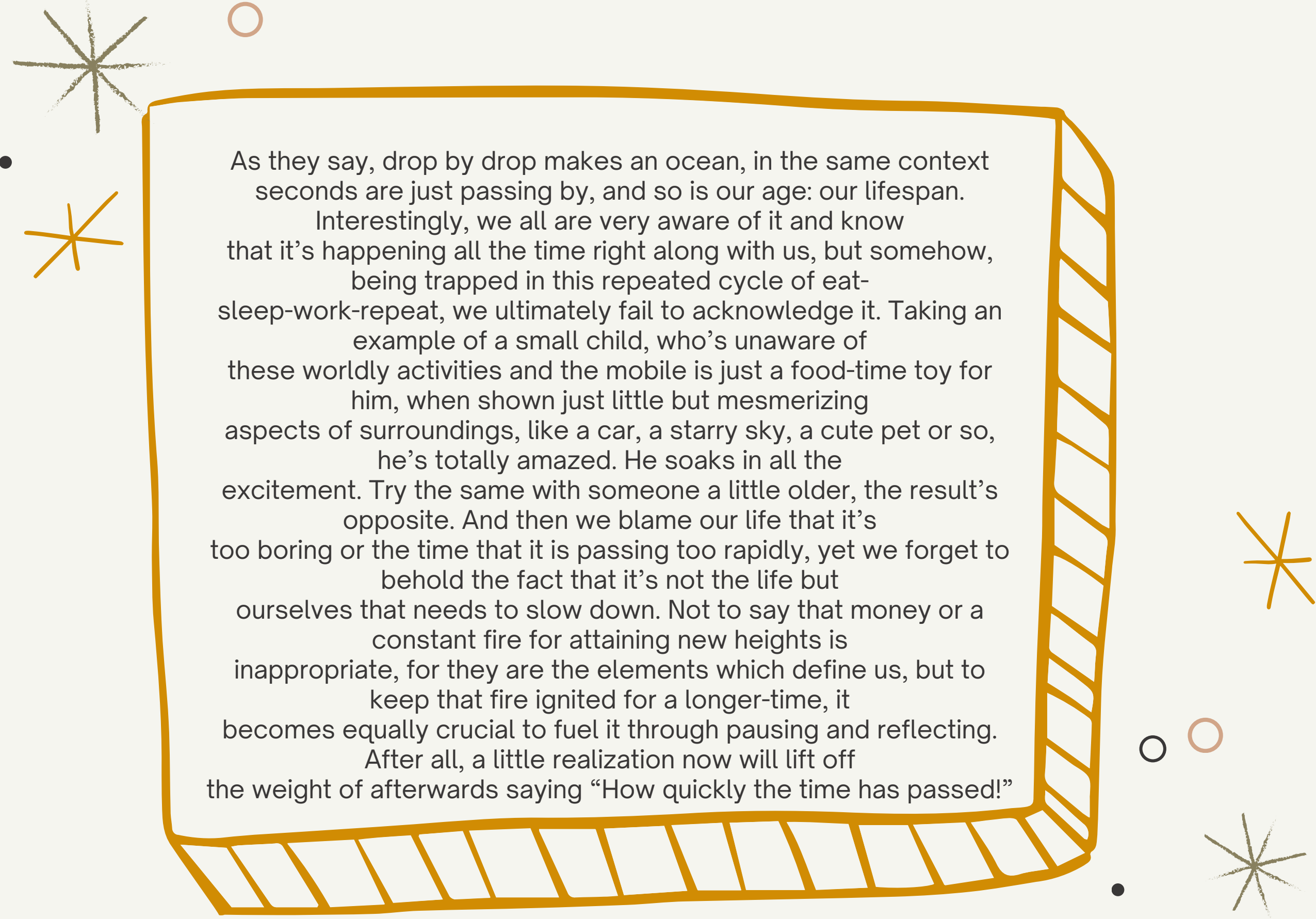




Amidst all this chaos, when he, the Human, finally gets through all these activities, a sudden shock of how the time has passed so quickly gets over him. He now feels the gravity of those small but significant moments he just ignored in his constant indulging of material points of life. But it's too late to realize, for now he's too old to enjoy those joys, the world around him has moved on, the familiar faces have been long forgotten, and his set of company has changed. Ironically, at this stage of proceedings the only thing that seems the treasure in his life is something that's already gone, something which he missed out and now they've become some mere memories, for which one would give up everything to relive them. At this stage he, the most intelligent of all creatures on this world, the maker of technology, the continuous chaser of growth; too feels helpless and full of regret. He regrets that had he given some of his attention these moments, had he just taken out some time out of his work, he would have cherished some long-term memories.



And this thing is growing day-by-day in today's world, where everyone's just living in a world of his own. It has become often that a roof may shelter numerous physically, but mentally they all are separate. And keeping in time with the current circumstances, at present it's not just the ever-growing competition that is pushing people away from their own lives, but also the 'artificial' elements like scrolling, notifications and the daily deadlines and responsibilities. They're just making our daily live duller, where little details, and many more fascinating things are just left unnoticed, or more specifically ignored. Think of it, that the moment I'm writing this essay and whoever is reading this, litres of blood is repeatedly being pumped, numerous cells have been created or destroyed in our bodies, many lives have departed and have been welcomed, and the main protagonist here: 'time' has just flowed by.



As they say, drop by drop makes an ocean, in the same context seconds are just passing by, and so is our age: our lifespan. Interestingly, we all are very aware of it and know that it's happening all the time right along with us, but somehow, being trapped in this repeated cycle of eat-sleep-work-repeat, we ultimately fail to acknowledge it. Taking an example of a small child, who's unaware of these worldly activities and the mobile is just a food-time toy for him, when shown just little but mesmerizing aspects of surroundings, like a car, a starry sky, a cute pet or so, he's totally amazed. He soaks in all the excitement. Try the same with someone a little older, the result's opposite. And then we blame our life that it's too boring or the time that it is passing too rapidly, yet we forget to behold the fact that it's not the life but ourselves that needs to slow down. Not to say that money or a constant fire for attaining new heights is inappropriate, for they are the elements which define us, but to keep that fire ignited for a longer-time, it becomes equally crucial to fuel it through pausing and reflecting. After all, a little realization now will lift off the weight of afterwards saying "How quickly the time has passed!"



The Reclining Giant of Prayagraj



The sun was beginning to dip below the horizon, painting the sky over the Yamuna River in shades of deep amber and crimson.

Freshly rejuvenated by his morning dip and a long day of navigating the city, Nitin made his way toward the historic Allahabad Fort.

Nestled right near its massive stone ramparts lay his next destination: the legendary ****Bade Hanuman Ji Temple****.

As he approached, the air grew thick with the fragrance of burning camphor, crushed marigolds, and roasting besan laddoos.

Nitin had visited many temples before, but as he stepped through the entrance of this subterranean shrine, he realized this place was entirely unique.

Instead of walking up to a towering idol, Nitin found himself walking down a flight of stone steps into a pit.

There, resting grandly on the ground, was the massive, 20-foot idol of Lord Hanuman.

It was the famous ***Lethal Hanuman***—the only temple in the world where the deity is worshipped in a reclining, blissful posture.

Nitin squeezed into the crowded enclosure, joining a sea of devotees chanting the ***Hanuman Chalisa*** in a low, rhythmic hum that vibrated right through the stone floor.

He stood at the edge of the barricade, completely awestruck by the sight.





The idol was heavily adorned with bright orange vermilion (*sindoor*), silver foil that caught the flickering light of massive brass lamps, and a colossal garland of fresh marigolds.

An old priest, noticing Nitin's wide-eyed expression, beckoned him closer to the front.

"Look closely, beta," the priest said over the din of ringing bells.

"This is where the Ganga herself comes every monsoon. She enters the temple, touches the feet of Hanuman ji, and only then recedes. It is the annual bath of the Lord."

Nitin looked down at the massive feet of the idol, trying to picture the mighty river sweeping through these very steps.

It gave the entire chamber an undeniable aura of raw, ancient power.

The priest took a generous amount of the holy orange *sindoor* from the deity's shoulder and pressed it firmly onto Nitin's forehead, right between his eyebrows.

He then handed Nitin a leaf bowl filled with boondi laddoos and a few tulsi leaves.

"May Bajrangbali give you the strength to overcome all your obstacles," the priest blessed him, giving him a firm, reassuring pat on the back.

Nitin bowed his head, closing his eyes for a quiet moment amidst the chaos.

He prayed for peace, for his pending legal struggles to resolve, and for the strength to keep pushing forward.





Interestingly, as he stood there in the cool, subterranean air, the residual throbbing in his forehead from the day's heat finally began to dissolve.

Walking out of the temple into the cooling evening air, Nitin felt a profound sense of grounding. He looked at his reflection in the polished brass bell at the exit—the bright orange tilak stark against his forehead. He had bargained with boatmen, battled headaches in movie theaters, and chased lawyers through courts, but standing before the peaceful, reclining giant of Prayagraj had brought his chaotic journey to a perfectly still, beautiful close.



आज़ादी

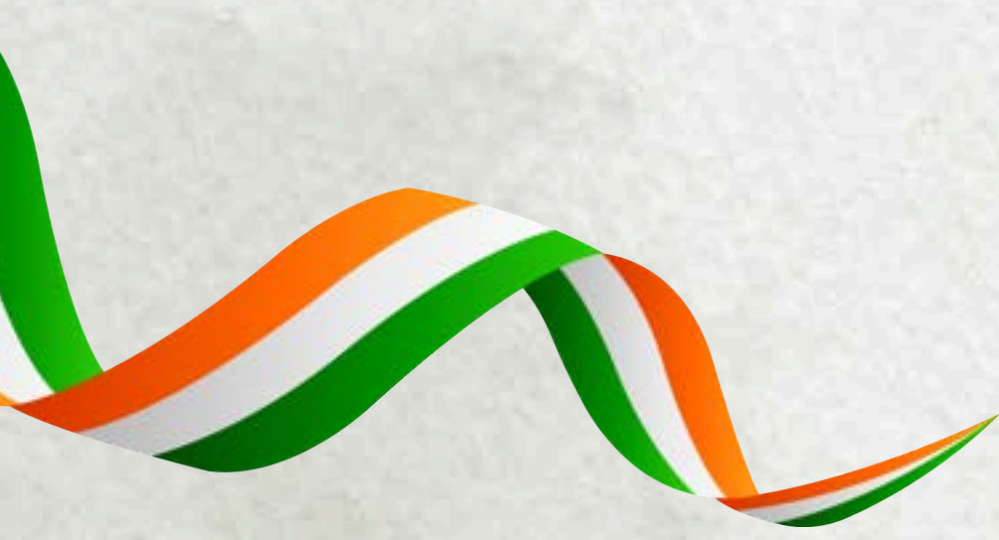
Mrs. Sandhya Pal

Category: Parent





आजादी ये हमारी,
हम को है जहाँ से प्यारी॥
जिसके लिए हुए थे बलिदान वीर कितने ।
मारा किसी ने दुश्मन,
किसी ने जान वारी ॥१॥





हम को है जहाँ से प्यारी॥
आजाद और भगत ने,
बंदूक थी उठाई।
छाती पे चढ़ सुभाष ने,
भारत की बाजी मारी ॥ २ ॥





आजादी ये हमारी,
हम को है जहाँ से प्यारी॥





The Golden Box

By: Arshiya Pathak
X-L
2016/0535





In the cold morning, as the sun glistened through the window, Rusty was already out with his toes between nature's green carpet and the breeze cutting through his cheeks. He had no idea how to ride the rollercoaster of life, yet he was carefree running through the long golden grass.

Rusty was 11-year-old at the time and lived in a small cottage in Nainital with his grandfather and his parents. He wasn't much aware of his surroundings, and as the birds called out, Rusty didn't notice them because his mind was already somewhere else as usual.

It was 2 p.m., and he was looking for some snacks as his grandfather was still having his meal. As curious as ever, he searched every nook and corner just for an after-meal snack. Tired, he came back to his grandfather and sat beside him, bored and exhausted





As his grandfather was almost ready to leave for work, he locked the door and began staring at the ceiling, listening to the ticking of the clock, the chirping of birds, the rustling of leaves, and the sound of different vehicles passing by near his house.



He stood up in a hurry and headed to the basement, hoping to find something to do in this scorching and boring summer break. He was searching through the items when a box suddenly fell to the ground. It was not just any ordinary box, but rather a brown box about the door of his hand. It had a beautiful gold lining and a golden lock on it. Since it was old, the box didn't seem to be in very good condition, but it could still grab anyone's attention.

Rusty was startled and stared at the box before making his way towards it. He gently picked it up and began examining it. A million thoughts rushed through his mind. He thought it might contain treasure or maybe some kind of secret.





He went to his bedroom and cleaned the box a little. He imagined himself as a detective straight out of fiction like Agatha Christie. Oddly, he was very excited and confused at the same time. He felt butterflies in his stomach. He tried to remember if he had ever seen a key that looked similar to the box in design or pattern, but he wasn't able to recall one.

He spent the next three hours trying to open the box. He even created a whole chart with red-coloured threads that looked like an unsolved mystery case. His concentration broke when the doorbell rang, and his grandfather came home.

Rusty rushed to his grandfather and tried to say everything at once.





"Uhm, hey, I just found a box in the basement. I think it's quite valuable. Could you please have a look at it? I've been trying to open it for like two hours or something. Please help."

His grandfather exclaimed, "Calm down, Rusty! I just came home. Yes, I would love to have a look at it."

To his grandfather's surprise, Rusty placed the box in front of him before he had even finished speaking. His grandfather looked at him with awe and shock and said, "Oh, you are quite fast, aren't you? Okay."

His grandfather examined the box carefully.

"Oh, the good old days. I remember having this box when I was as little as you. I loved to store my chocolates and candies in it," said his grandfather with a laugh as Rusty listened carefully.





Rusty thought for a moment and said, "So that means that there was no key... no mystery"

"No..." his grandfather replied, confused.

"All that for nothing," said Rusty as his eyes sparkled with tears which he tried to hold back.

Without saying a single word, he walked outside and sat quietly as the wind blew through his hair, but little did he know that life had many more surprises waiting to unfold.





What The Dark Remembers

Name of Author: H I TESTH
Class & Section: 10th
Name of School: NEW ST
THOMAS ACADEMY

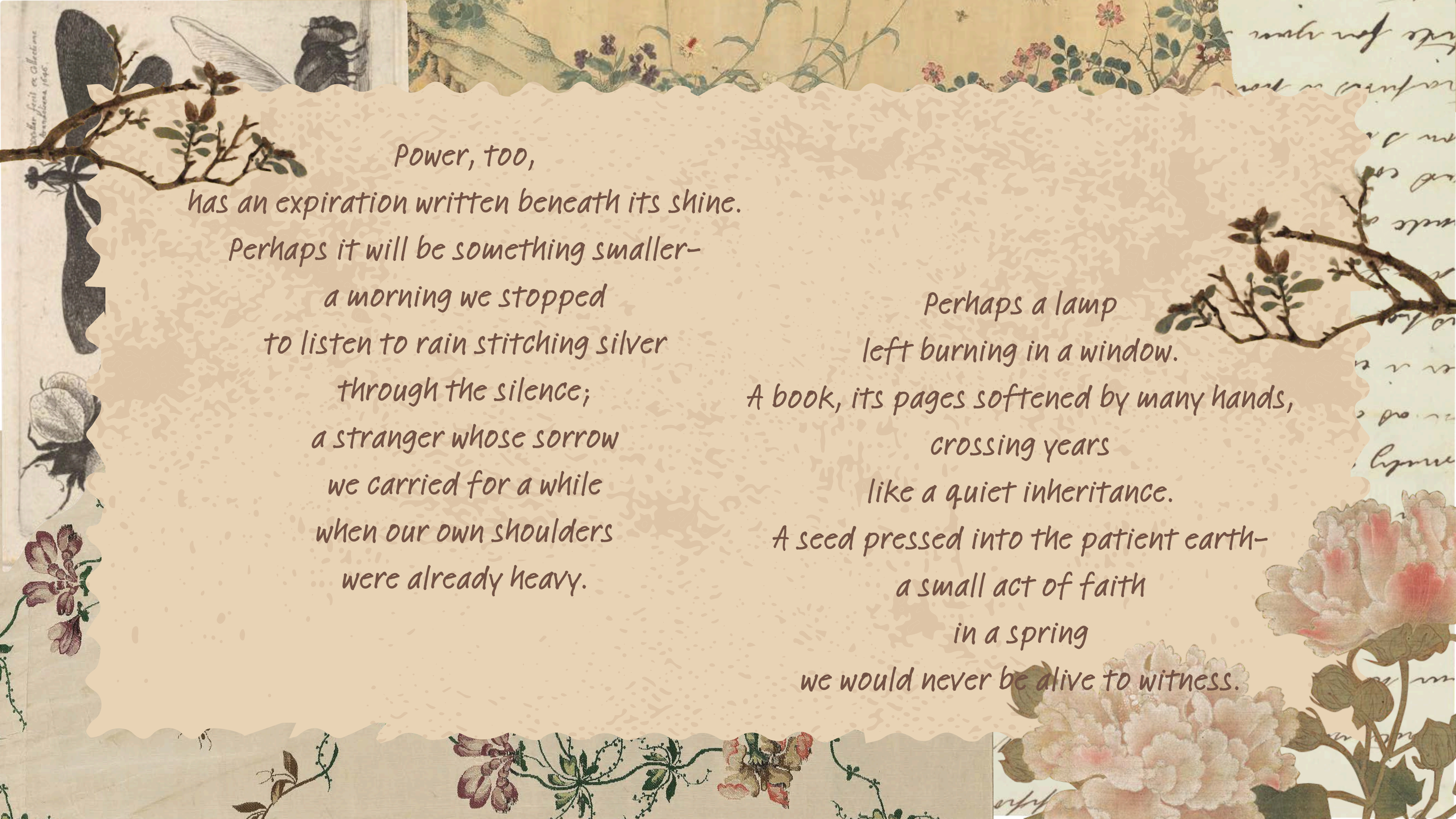


Walter Scott's Collection
Auricularia, 1646

One day,
when our hurried footsteps have loosened
their grip on the earth,
when the clocks go still
and even our names grow faint beneath the
dust—
what, then,
will remain to say
we were here?

Not the towers that climbed toward heaven:
stone remembers the weight of weather,
not the hands that raised it.
Not gold, sealed in the dark—
what can a metal heart know
of a human laugh?
Not crowns.

They glitter only while someone kneels.



Power, too,
has an expiration written beneath its shine.
Perhaps it will be something smaller—
a morning we stopped
to listen to rain stitching silver
through the silence;
a stranger whose sorrow
we carried for a while
when our own shoulders
were already heavy.

Perhaps a lamp
left burning in a window.
A book, its pages softened by many hands,
crossing years
like a quiet inheritance.
A seed pressed into the patient earth—
a small act of faith
in a spring
we would never be alive to witness.

For perhaps a life
is not the noise it makes
while it is passing.
Perhaps it is the echo
that refuses to die.
We are guests
of a borrowed hour,
brief handwriting
on the enormous page of time.

And every word we speak,
every kindness we withhold,
every hand we choose to lift or leave-
falls outward.
Like a stone into water,
our smallest acts
travel farther than our eyes can follow.

Walter Scott's Collection
Amsterdam, 1646





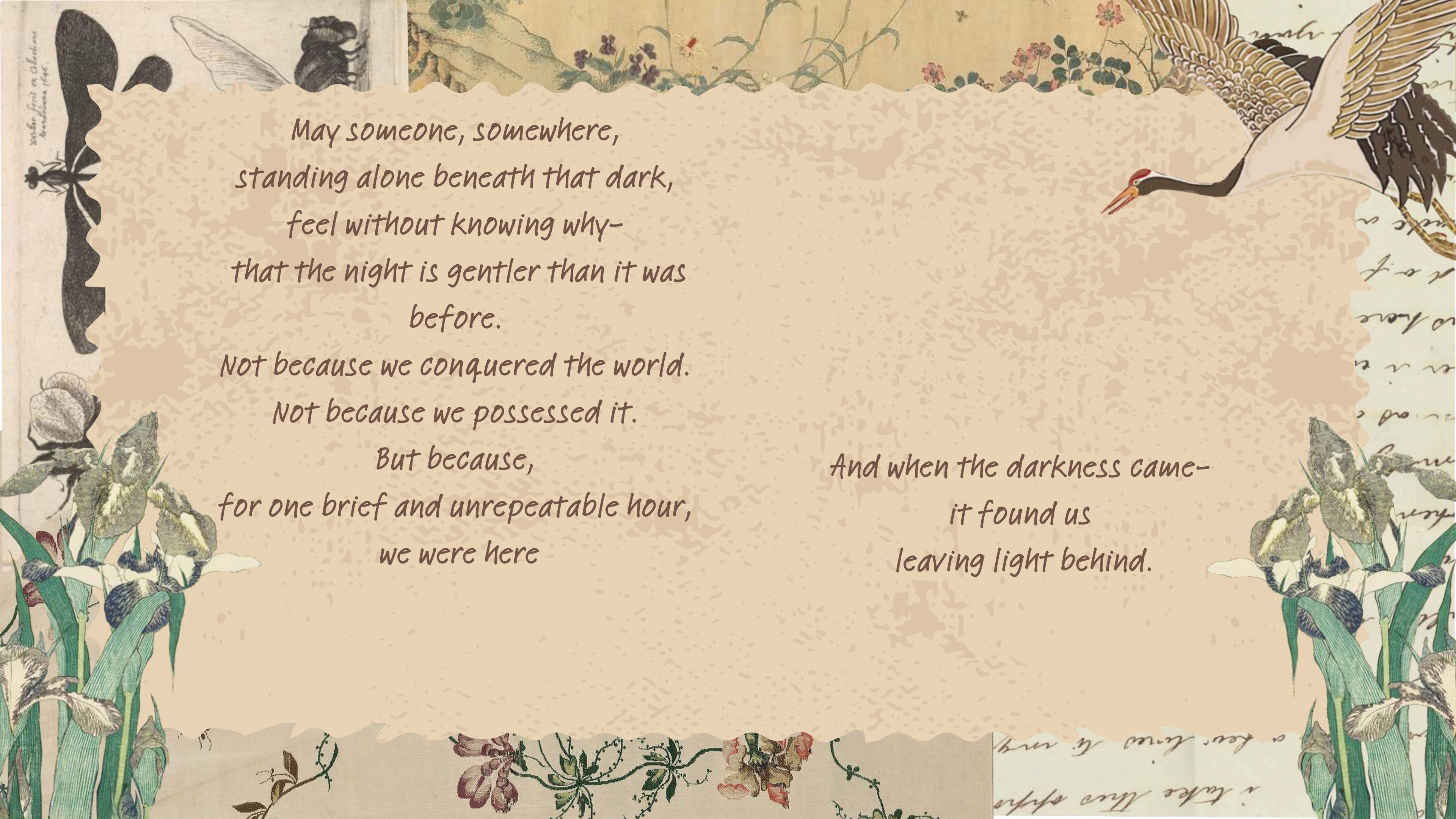
We will never know
how many shores
our ripples touch.

So let us build no monument
that must stand taller than another.

Let us leave something better:
courage where fear once rooted,
truth where silence learned to sleep,
and a path toward the light
for feet that have not yet arrived.

Let our legacy be
not a name carved into stone,
but a warmth passed from hand to hand—
so quietly
that no one remembers who began it.
And when the final evening
draws its violet veil across the world,
when the last gold of day
slips beneath the horizon,



The background of the page is a collage of vintage illustrations. At the top left, a large dragonfly is shown in profile. To its right, a beetle is depicted on a leaf. The top center features a row of small, colorful flowers. On the right side, a large, detailed illustration of a crane or heron is shown in flight. The bottom left corner has a cluster of irises. The bottom center shows a row of small, pinkish-red flowers. The bottom right corner features another cluster of irises. The entire page is framed by a light beige, textured border with a scalloped edge.

May someone, somewhere,
standing alone beneath that dark,
feel without knowing why-
that the night is gentler than it was
before.

Not because we conquered the world.
Not because we possessed it.

But because,
for one brief and unrepeatable hour,
we were here

And when the darkness came-
it found us
leaving light behind.

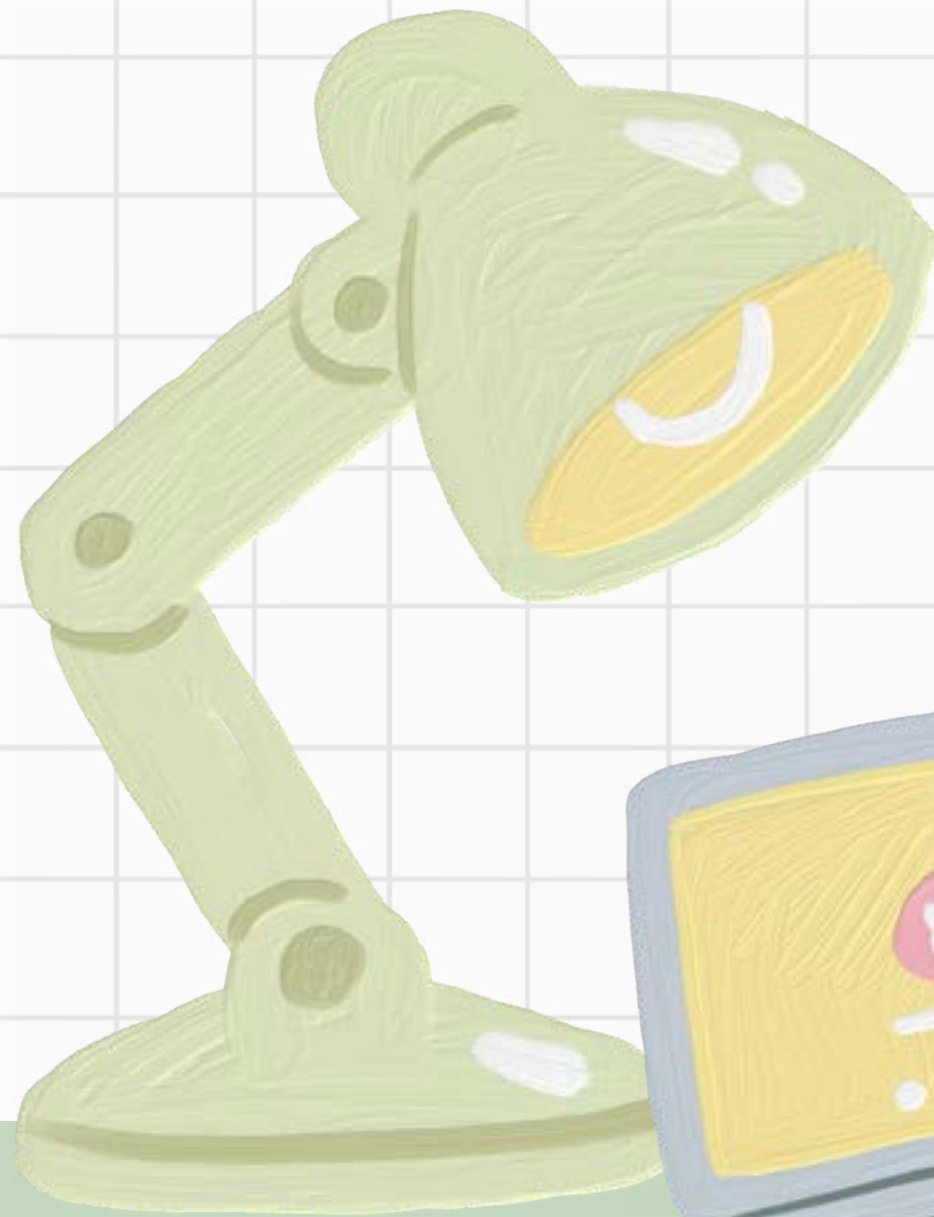
THIRTEEN TO NINETEEN.....

Name of Author:

Aditya Kumar

Category: Student

Class & Section: 10th





I wake up with dreams in my eyes,
But school give me work that fells so high.
Books on my table, homework in my head,
So many thoughts follow me to bed

"Study more,get better marks" they say,
"Your future depends on what you do today "
But no one asks,"Are you tired inside?"
So I simple outside and hide want I feel inside.



Friend laugh with me and call me their Friend,
But Some disappear when I need them to stand.
Some are only Friends when they need something from me.
And slowly I learn that not every Friend is real to see

My parents have dream for me.
They want me to succeed and happy to see.
I know they love me, u know they care,
But sometimes their exploration feel hard to bear.





Marks become number that decide my worth,
Exam felt like the biggest thing on Earth.
One bad result can make me afraid,
"Will I succeed? will the future be okay?"

I look at my future and feel a little scared,
So many choices, and I feel unprepared.
I want ot built things, I want to do great,
But sometimes I worry that I might be too late.





I want to become successful one day,
And make my own dreams come true Someday.
I want to make my parents proud of me,
And become the person i want to be.

But I'm still young, learning everyday
I don't know everything, and that's okay.
I'm allowed to fail, I'm allowed to fall
I can learn from mistakes, big or small





So when you see a teenager sitting alone,
Don't think they have no problem of their own
Behind a quite face, there may be a fight,
Between dreams, pressure, and doing what's right.

Maybe we don't need someone saying "Try more"
Maybe sometimes we need someone to ask "Are you okay?"
Because Behind every student trying to succeed,
There is a young heart that sometimes need to breath





One day these hard years will pass away,
And I'll look back at every difficult day.
The stress, the failures, the tears and the pain,
Will teach me to stand up and try again.

I may not know where my life will go,
But I'll keep moving, even when life feels slow.
Success doesn't mean never falling down
It mean getting back up when you hit the ground.



So let me study, let me dream, let me grow
Let me find my own path as I go.
I'm not just my marks, my fears or, my ters
I'm a teenager building my future through these years





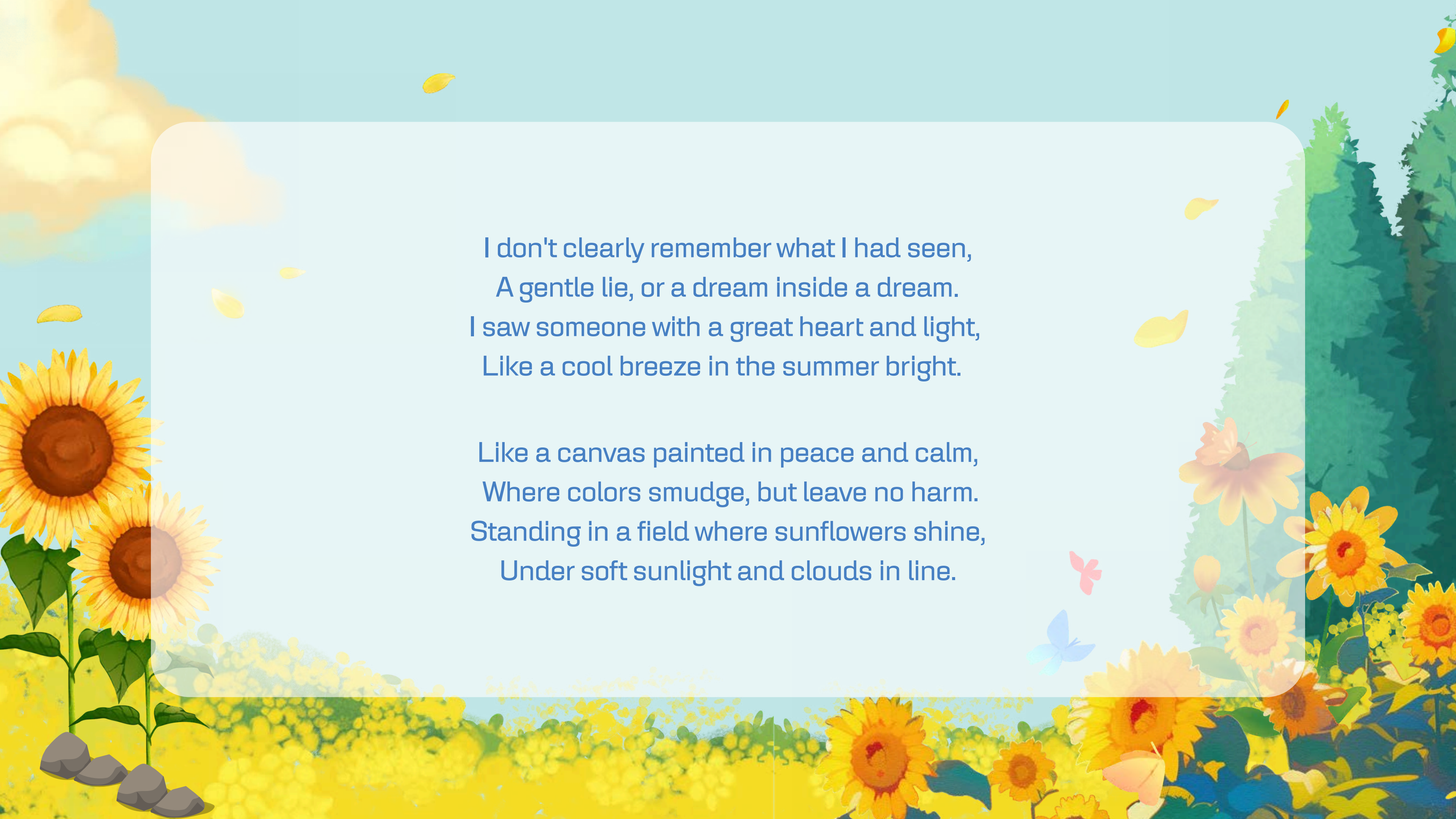
IN THE SUNFLOWER FIELD

NEW ST THOMAS ACADEMY

BY akshat

Category: Student

Class & Section: 10th



I don't clearly remember what I had seen,
A gentle lie, or a dream inside a dream.
I saw someone with a great heart and light,
Like a cool breeze in the summer bright.

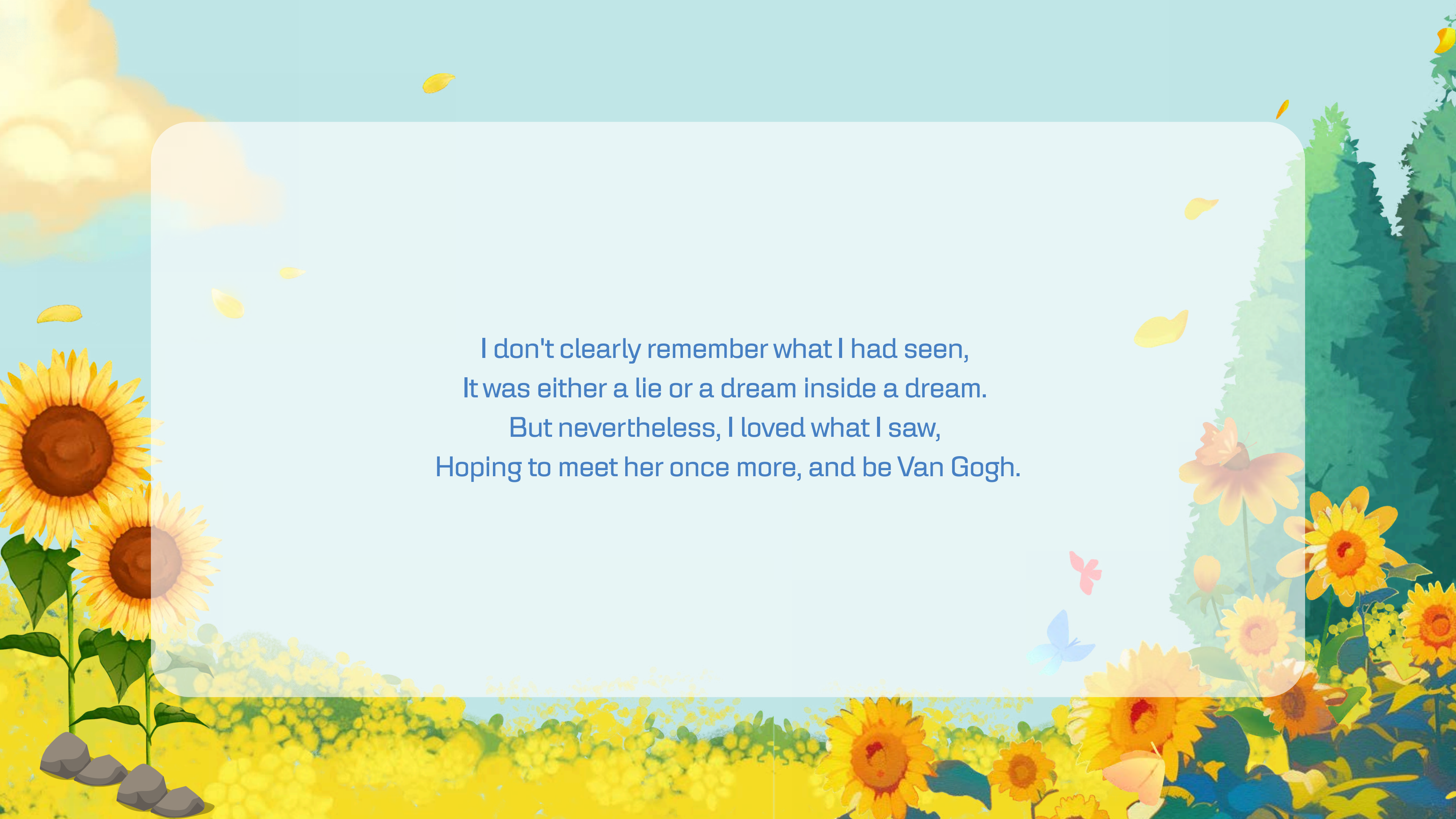
Like a canvas painted in peace and calm,
Where colors smudge, but leave no harm.
Standing in a field where sunflowers shine,
Under soft sunlight and clouds in line.



As Van Gogh once said, "The sunflower is mine,
Yet amongst the field, she was the true design-
More beautiful than any sunflower I ever saw,
For she was the sunflower, and I, Van Gogh.

But dreams never last, time moves too fast,
I stand in the present, while she stays in the past.

Was it a vision, or was I insane?
Will I ever get the chance to see her again?



I don't clearly remember what I had seen,
It was either a lie or a dream inside a dream.
But nevertheless, I loved what I saw,
Hoping to meet her once more, and be Van Gogh.

“प्रेम या प्रेम”

MAHAK RAWAT

कविता: प्रेम या प्रेम (हिंदी)

Category- Student

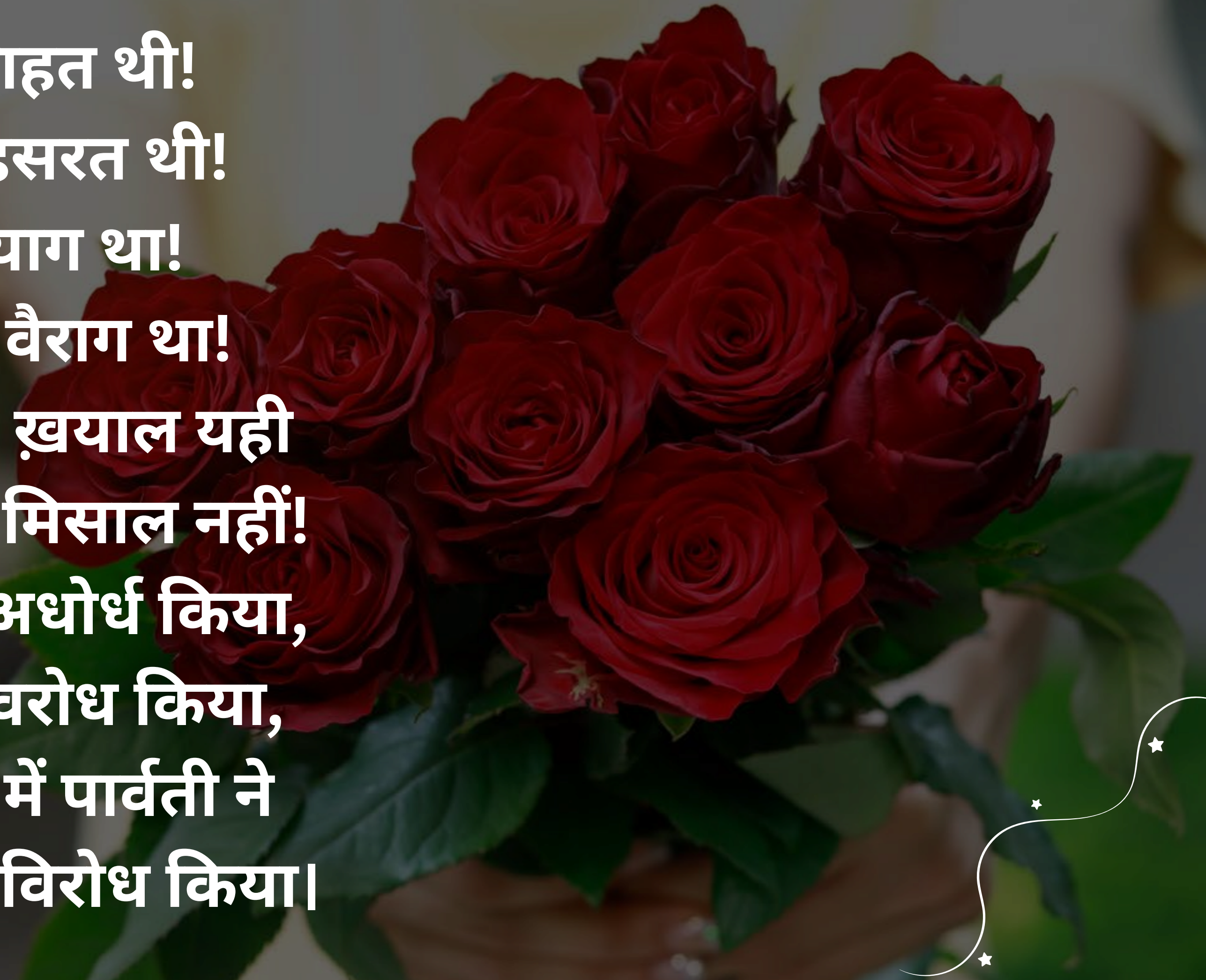
Class- IX C

BML MUNJAL GREEN MEADOWS SCHOOL

ANNEKI HETTAMPUR, BLOCK BAHADRABAD,
HARIDWAR,

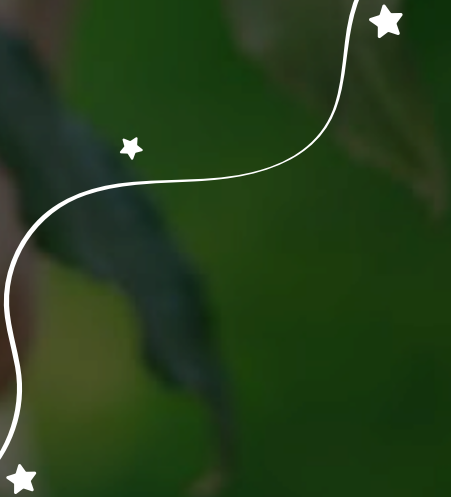


पाने की चाहत थी!
मिलने की हसरत थी!
तप था! त्याग था!
प्रतीक्षा थी! वैराग था!
फिर भी मन में खयाल यही
क्यों यही कथा मिसाल नहीं!
निज सुख को अधोर्ध किया,
अशिव का अवरोध किया,
शिव की चाह में पार्वती ने
समस्त जग का विरोध किया।



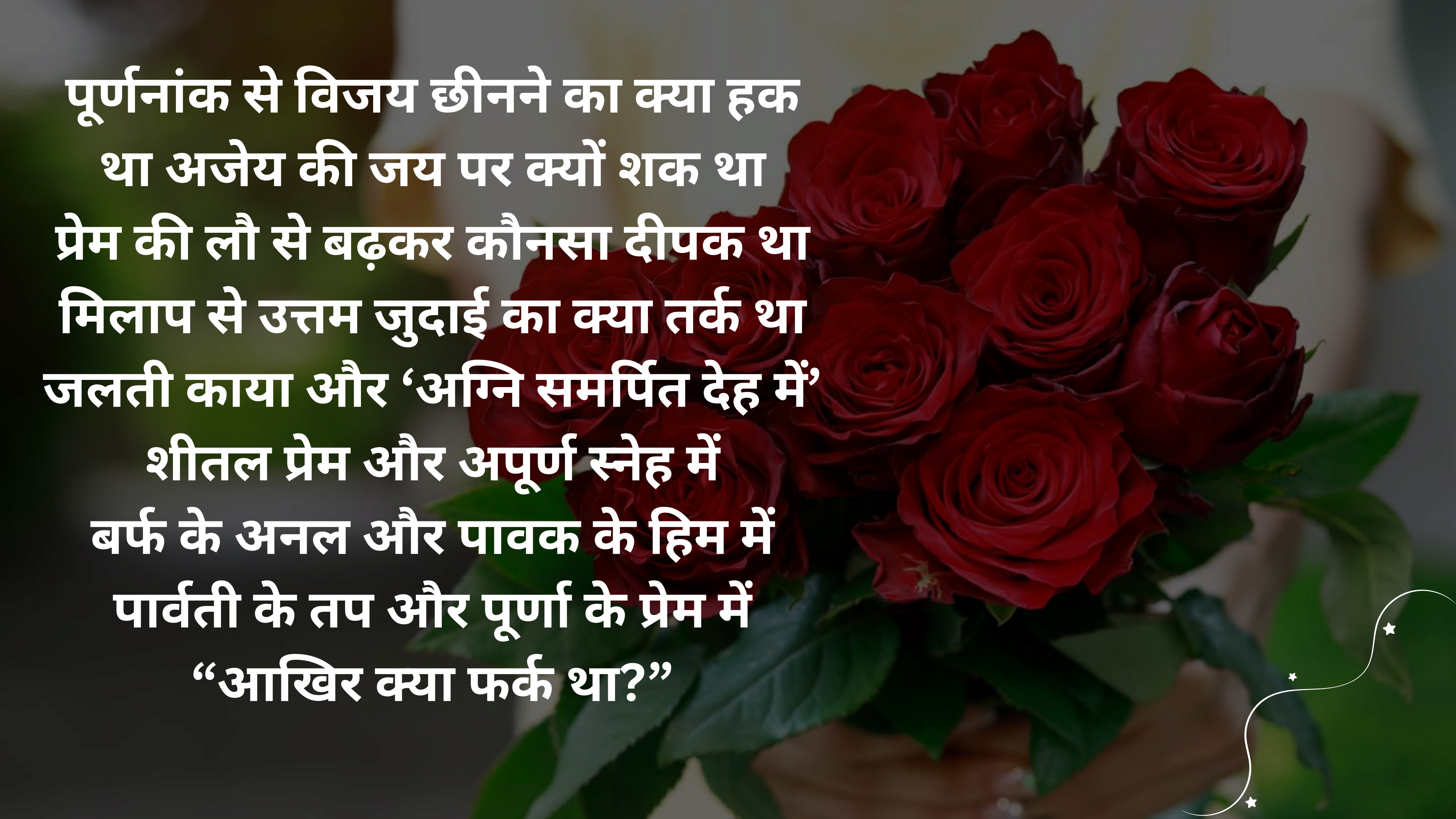
108 जन्म लिए केवल शिव को पाने हेतु
3000 वर्ष तप किया शिव के हृदय में
आने हेतु

जाने फिर भी क्यों हर्ष नहीं
क्यों यही कथा आदर्श नहीं?
क्यों प्रेम प्रतीक वो मुरलीधर
जिसने राधा को छोड़ा था?
कैसा प्रेमी था वो अच्युत
जिसने स्वयं का जोड़ा तोड़ा था?

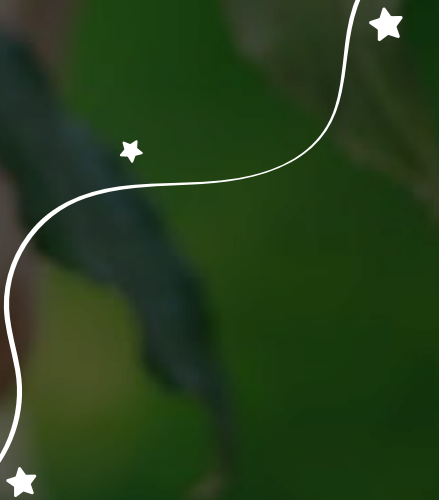


प्रत्यन ना किया पाने का
ना जताया दुख दूर जाने का
प्रेम सखी को जब छोड़ा होगा
तो वो भी खून के आँसू रोया होगा...
पर चुप था खून का घूँट पीकर!
क्या पाया उसने ऐसे जीकर?
और ऐसा भी क्या कमाल है
जो एक अधूरा किस्सा मिसाल है!
कैसी अबूझी अबोध त्राशा है
एक अपूर्ण कथा 'प्रेम-परिभाषा' है!

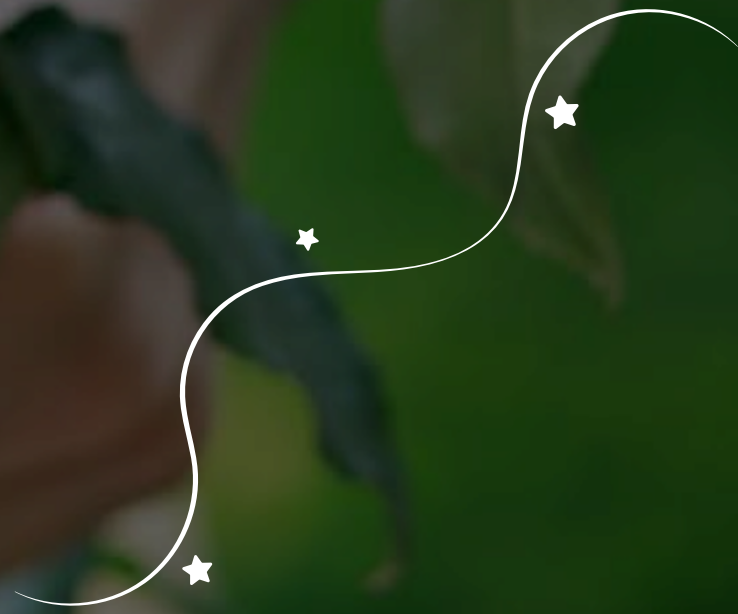


A bouquet of red roses in a wooden basket. The roses are deep red with green leaves. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

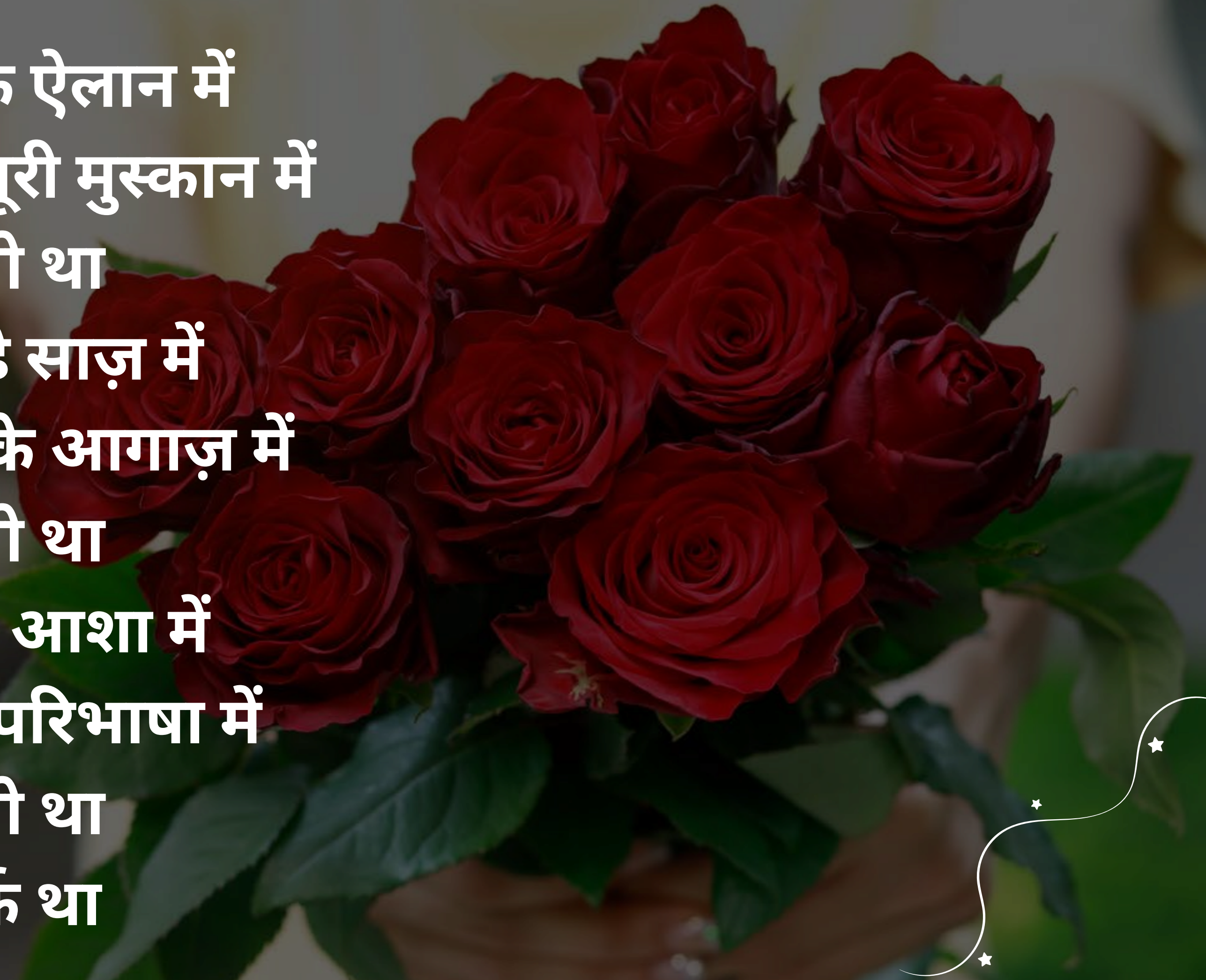
पूर्णनांक से विजय छीनने का क्या हक
था अजेय की जय पर क्यों शक था
प्रेम की लौ से बढ़कर कौनसा दीपक था
मिलाप से उत्तम जुदाई का क्या तर्क था
जलती काया और 'अग्नि समर्पित देह में'
शीतल प्रेम और अपूर्ण स्नेह में
बर्फ के अनल और पावक के हिम में
पार्वती के तप और पूर्णा के प्रेम में
“आखिर क्या फर्क था?”



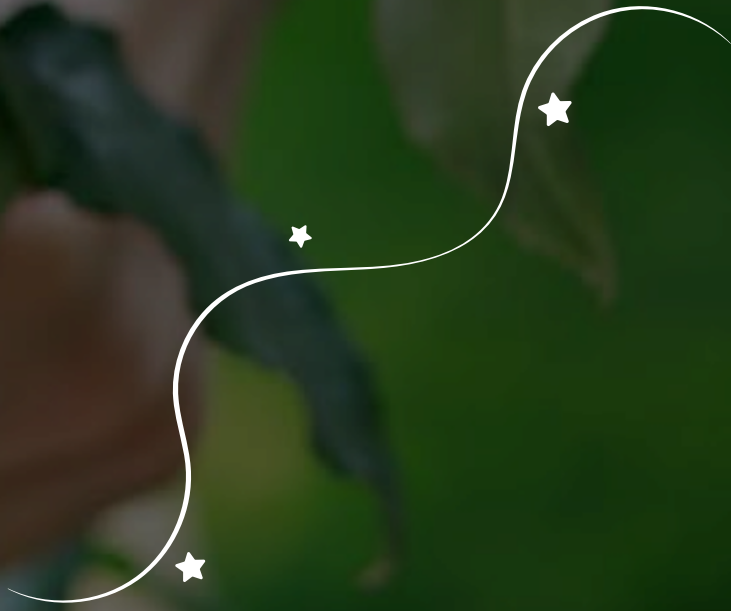
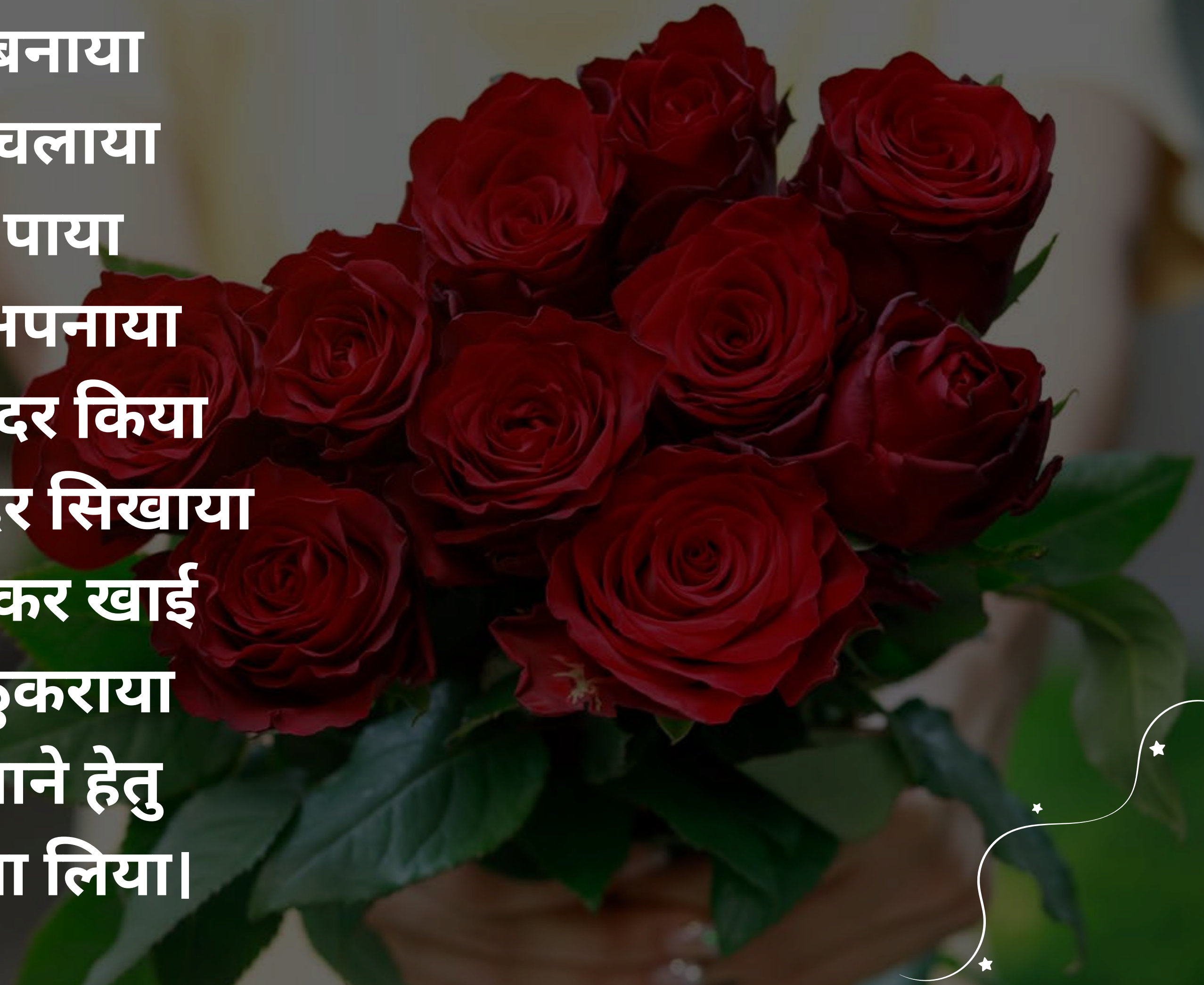
जो भी हो फर्क तो था
किसी की चाहत में रोने में
और किसी की धुन में खोने में
फर्क तो था किसी में खोक
समाने में और किसी में
स्वयं को पाने में फर्क
तो था मरण किसी की
चाहत में और जीवन किसी
की आदत में फर्क तो था

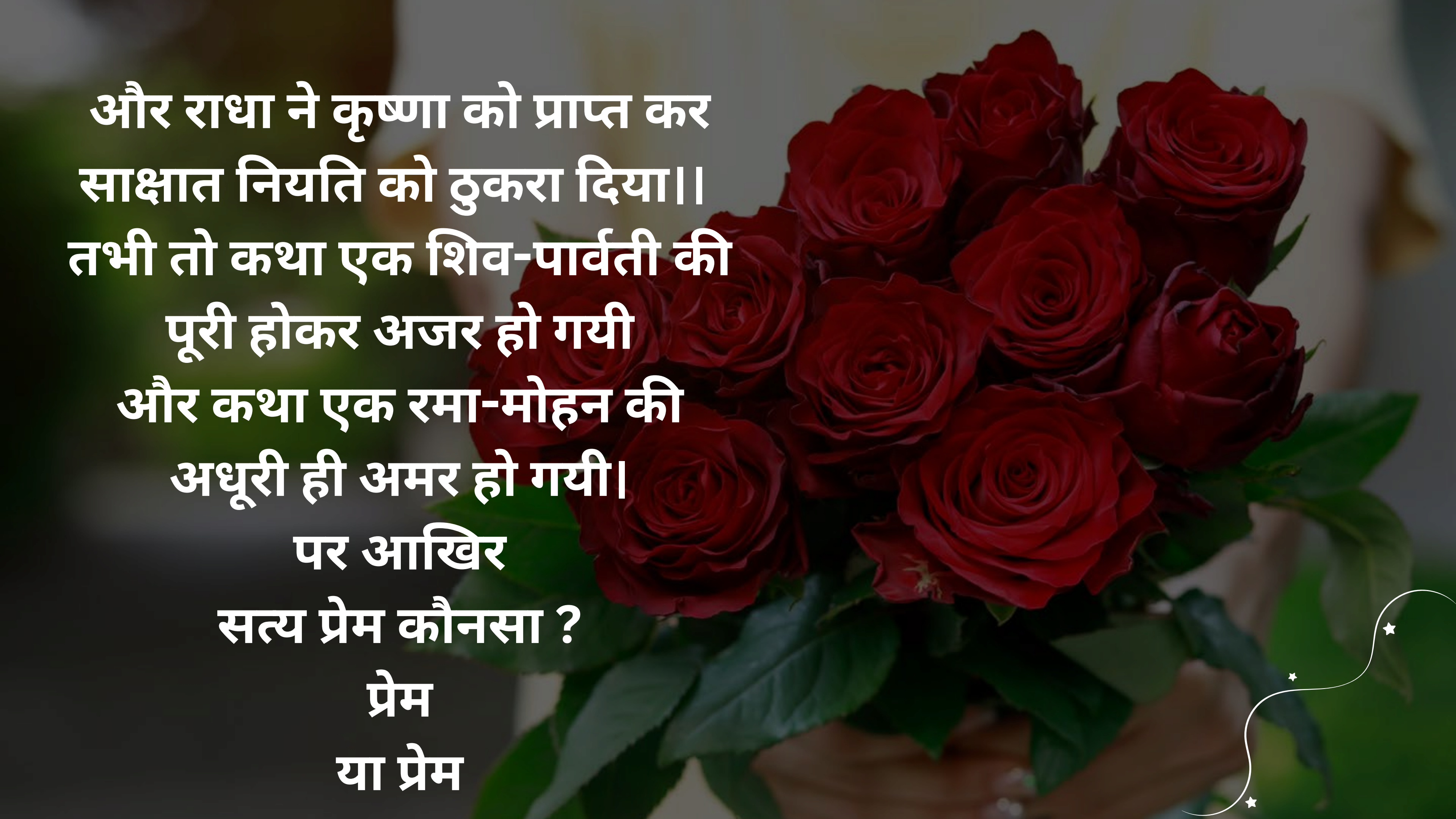


हर्ष किसी के ऐलान में
और संतुष्टि अधूरी मुस्कान में
फर्क तो था
मोह से छेड़े साज़ में
और अनंतता के आगाज़ में
फर्क तो था
मोह बंधित आशा में
और प्रेम की परिभाषा में
फर्क तो था
....फर्क था



एक ने सृष्टि को बनाया
दूसरे ने सृष्टि को चलाया
एक ने सृष्टि को पाया
दूसरे ने सृष्टि को अपनाया
एक ने सृष्टि का आदर किया
दूसरे ने सृष्टि को आदर सिखाया
एक ने सृष्टि की ठोकर खाई
दूसरे ने सृष्टि को ठुकराया
उमा ने शिव को पाने हेतु
समस्त जग को मना लिया।



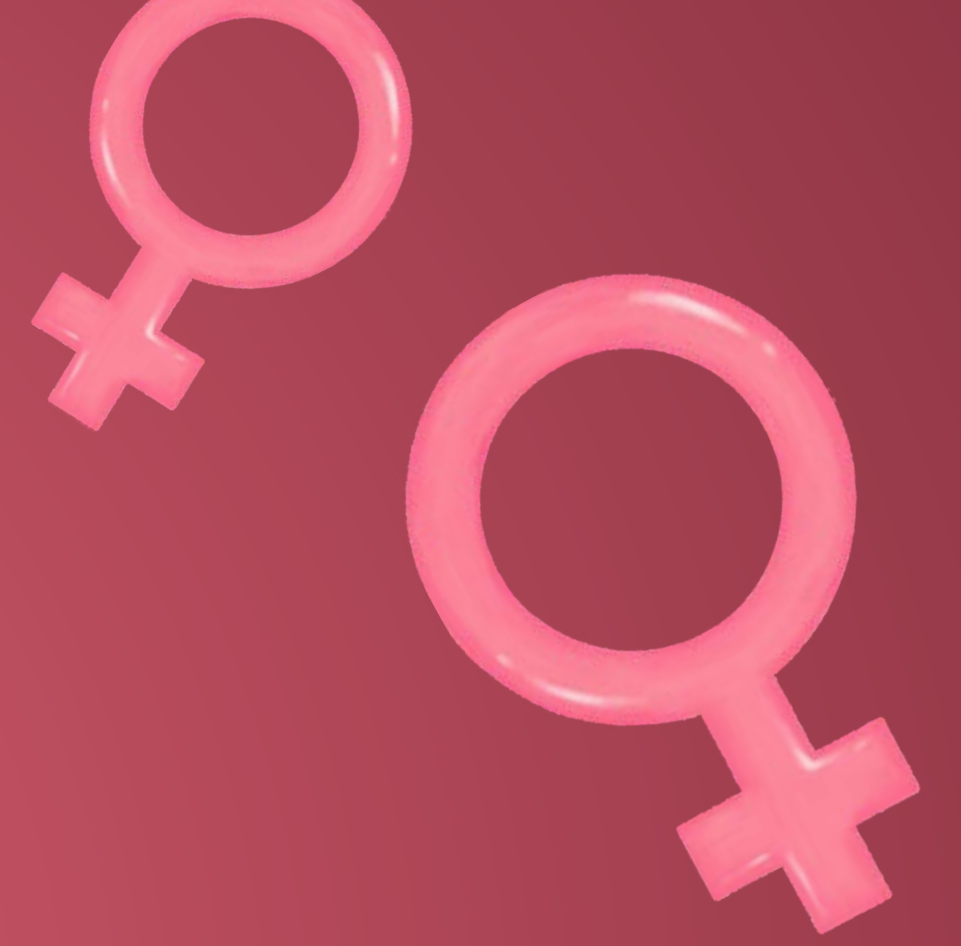


और राधा ने कृष्णा को प्राप्त कर
साक्षात् नियति को हुकरा दिया॥
तभी तो कथा एक शिव-पार्वती की
पूरी होकर अजर हो गयी
और कथा एक रमा-मोहन की
अधूरी ही अमर हो गयी।
पर आखिर
सत्य प्रेम कौनसा ?
प्रेम
या प्रेम

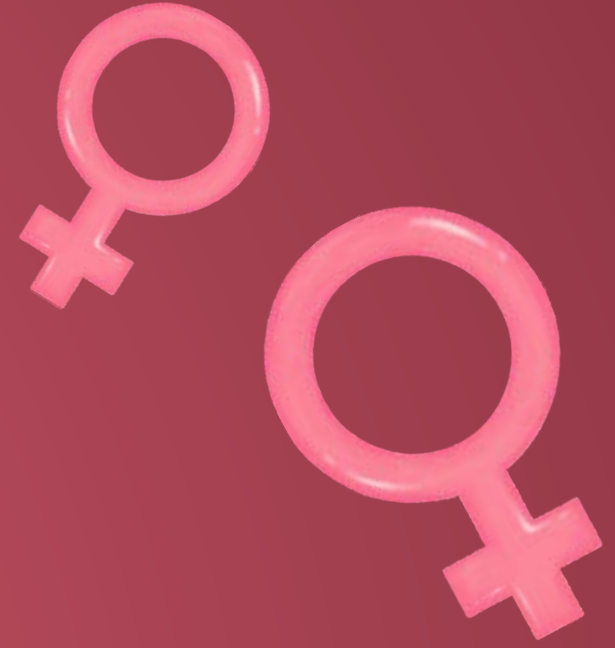
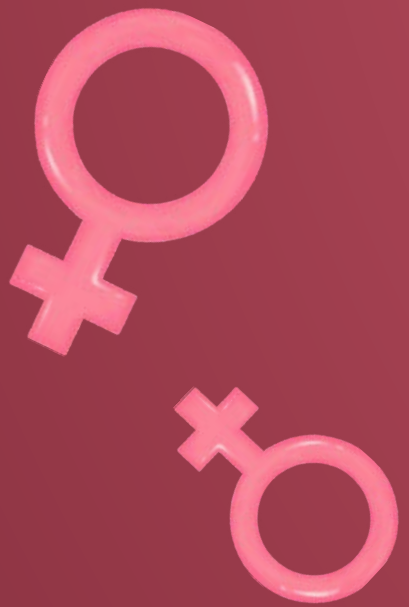


तुम रानी हो

SHREYASHI AGRAHARI
कविता: तुम रानी हो (हिंदी)
Category- Student



तुम अबला नहीं रानी हो।
ईश्वर द्वारा लिखी गई
एक सुंदर कहानी हो,
तुम अबला नहीं रानी हो।
तुम तन से सुंदर , मन से सुंदर ,
सुंदर तुम्हारा चितवन है,
छल ना दिखता तुम्हें संसार में,
क्योंकि निश्चल तुम्हारा निज मन है।
तुम माँ, बहन, बहू , बेटी,
दादी और नानी हो,
तुम अबला नहीं रानी हो।
अबला जो कह जाए तुम्हें,
तुम उसको शक्ति दिखा देना।
चरित्रहीनता का पाठ पढ़ाए तुम्हें,
तुम मर्यादा सिखा देना।
तुम बेगम मुमताज महल नहीं जो महल में घुट
कर मर जाओ, तुम हो वो झाँसी की मणिकर्णिका ,
दुश्मनों का संहार करके दिखलाओ ।



समर्थ है तुममें अन्याय का बीज समाज से उखाड़ो,
कोयल की खनकती आवाज काम
न दे तो शेरनी जैसी दहाड़ो।
तुम सती हो तो काली भी हो,
तुम शांत हो मतवाली भी हो।
तुम चंद्रमा जैसी शीतल हो,
तो सूर्य की अग्नि भी तुममें बसी।
तुम कृष्ण की हो राधा,
तो तुम ही शिव की पार्वती।
तुम ममता की प्रतिमा हो और
वीरता की निशानी हो,
तुम अबला नहीं रानी हो।



कलम की आत्मकथा

Ms HONEY SHARMA

कविता: कलम की आत्मकथा (हिंदी)

Category- Teacher



क-कागज पर ल-लिखे म-मेरे अनुभव ही मेरी पहचान का आधार है।
जीवन के चंद रुसवाईयों का बोझ ही इस कलम का एकमात्र आधार है॥

हाथ में पकड़ते ही विचार कौंधने लगते हैं।
मन -मस्तिष्क में उठ रहे सवाल कुछ स्पष्ट होने लगते हैं॥

कलम की परिभाषा से हर कोई अनजान ना था।
कलम की ताकत ही तो हम सब का अभिमान ही था॥

माना कि इसी कलम के सहारे देश का संविधान रच डाला था।
कई ऋषि मुनियों के अमूल्य विचारों को इसी के सहारे ग्रंथों में रच डाला था॥

कलम की ताकत से हर काम सिद्ध हो जाते हैं।
कुछ सपने बन जाते हैं, कुछ बहकर भावों में कहीं खो जाते हैं॥



हर रचनाकार की पहचान उस की कलम का सहारा है।
इसी कलम के सहारे ही कई रचनाओं को उन्होंने रच डाला है॥

विनाश की स्थिति में क्रांति का जोश यह भर देती है।
कलम में ही वह ताकत है, जो बेरंग में भी रंग कर देती है॥

बाहरी रूप रंग को देखकर कमजोर इसे समझा जाने लगा।
पर लिखने की ताकत को इसके कोई ना पहचान सका॥

कलम के इस स्वरूप को अनजान ना समझ बैठना ए मानव!
कलम है यह, कलम की इस ताकत पर इतना अभिमान न कर बैठना ए मानव!

हर संघर्ष की कहानी इसी के सहारे चलती है
अक्षरों को गढ़ कर हर जीवन की सुनाती जब यह आप- बीती है॥



पुरातन से लेकर आधुनिकता की दौड़ तक कई रूप हैं इसके बदले।
जीवन की हर सच्चाई में अभी भी है कई झमेले॥

कलम और चंद पन्नों की कहानी को कोई ना समझ सका है, आज तक।
यह कलम है, इस कलम के दौर से कोई न बच सका है, आज तक॥

इसी कलम के सहारे देश की युवा पीढ़ी का पूरा होता है सपना।
राजनीतिक पार्टियों के दस्तावेजों पर हस्ताक्षर करके ही, बनता है कोई अपना॥

कलम की इस कहानी को बढ़ा चढ़ा कर नहीं है कहना।
यह कलम है साहब, जो हर लेखक और रचनाकार का है, अमूल्य गहना॥



अविस्मरणीय , अकथनीय अकल्पनीय भावों की विचारधारा को जो आगे बढ़ाता है।
कलम ही ऐसा माध्यम है जो सपनों को साकार बनाता है॥

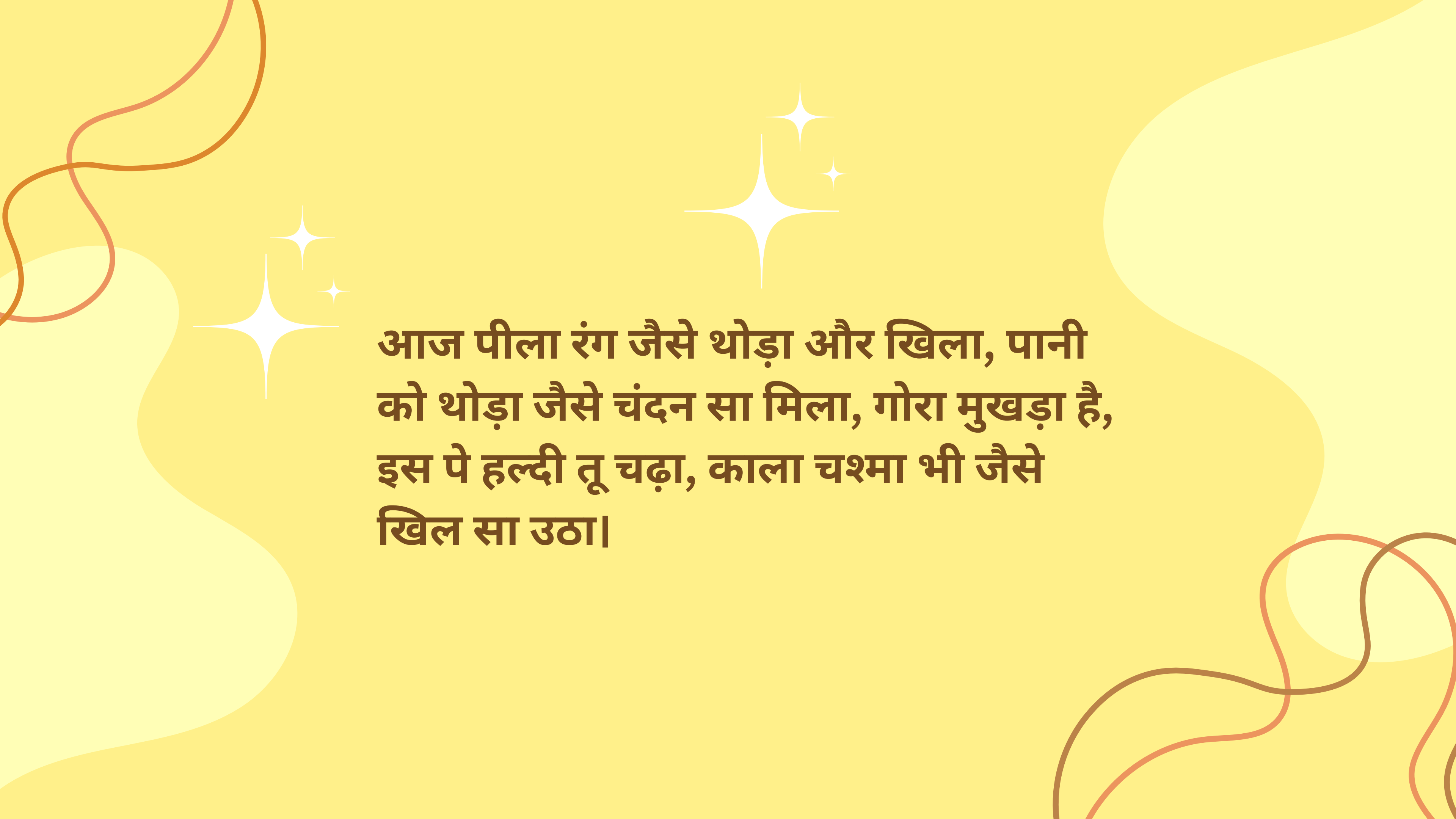
हजारों युवाओं की रोजी-रोटी का सहारा है यह कलम।
आसमान में चमकता हुआ सितारा है यह कलम॥

हां, मैं कलम की धनी हूं ।
ना चाहते हुए भी अपने नाम से मैं हनी हूं॥
मेरी पहचान भी इस कलम के सहारे ही जीवंत है॥



पीताम्बरी साँगा

NAME- DR.NAMITA AGRAWAL
CATEGORY - PARENT



आज पीला रंग जैसे थोड़ा और खिला, पानी
को थोड़ा जैसे चंदन सा मिला, गोरा मुखड़ा है,
इस पे हल्दी तू चढ़ा, काला चश्मा भी जैसे
खिल सा उठा।

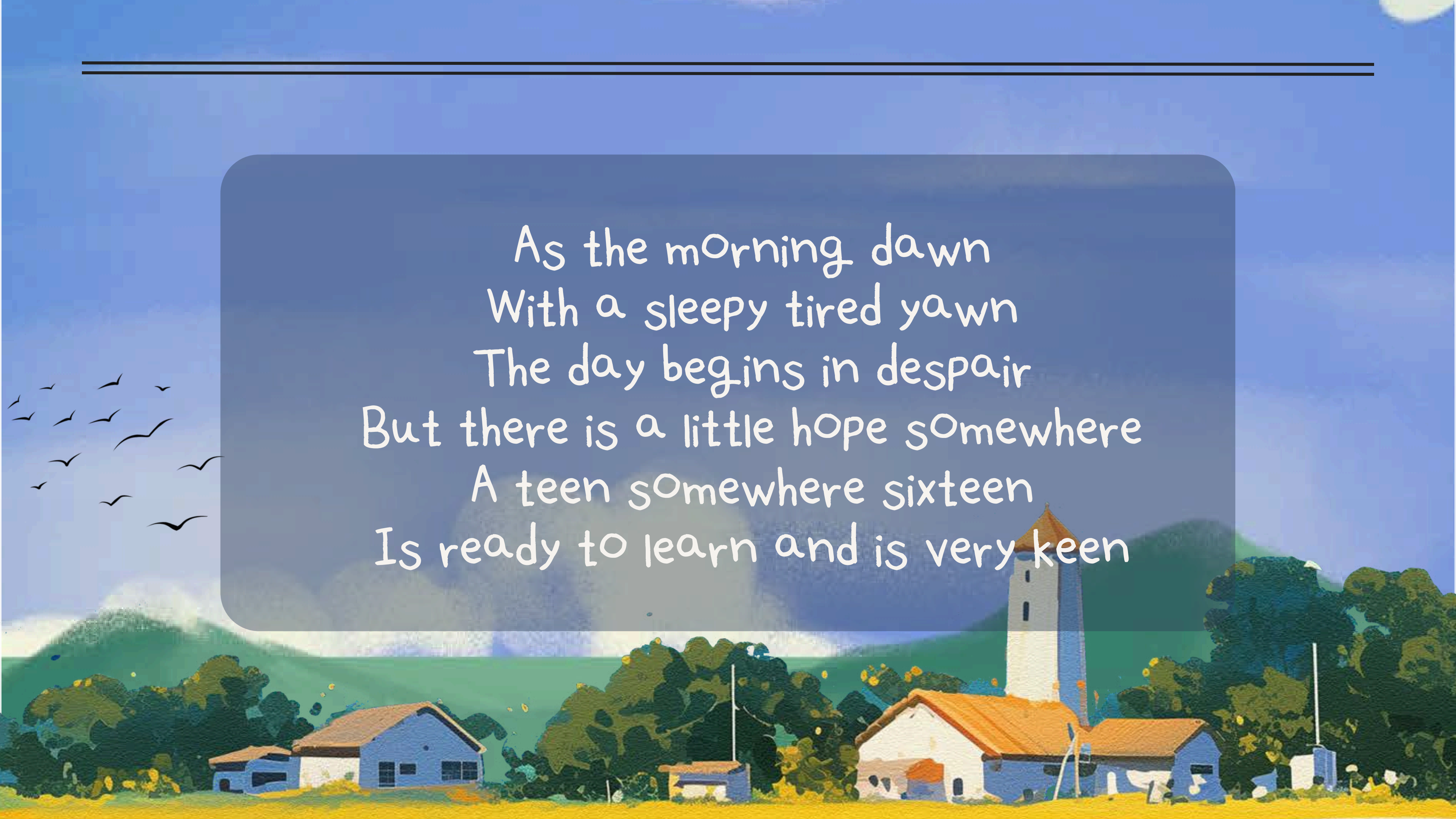
सरसों के तेल में हल्दी चढ़ाकर, हल्दी की हथेलियों को
कुशा से सजाकर, सबको बुलाओ जी, हल्दी तुम लगाओ
जी; बुआ, मौसी, फूफी, ताई भाभी जी भी आओ जी।
पीला रंग उसपे गेंदा फूल तू सजा... गोरा मुखड़ा है इसके
हल्दी तू चढ़ा। आज पीला रंग जैसे थोड़ा....
बन्ना बन्नी देखो सिया राम जैसे खेल रहे, नजर न लगे इन
पे हल्दी हम लगा रहे, साथ सतरंगी सबका यूँ गीत हम गा
रहे, ताली भी बजा रहे; कमर भी हिला रहे। हल्दी, चंदन
बस न दही दूध भी ले आ... सरसों के तेल से अंग-अंग
खिला। आज पीला रंग जैसे थोड़ा....

नजर भी उतारो जी, प्यार भी चढ़ाओ जी, जीवन
इनका खुश रहे, यह गीत तुम गाओ जी, समृद्धि भी,
शुद्धता भी, हल्दी संग लाओ जी, अंग-अंग निखारो
जी, रूप भी सवारों जी | अनोखी जोड़ी जच रही, ये
रस्म तू निभा प्यार का मिलन जैसे पीताम्बरी सजा।
आज पीला रंग जैसे थोड़ा और खिला, पानी को थोड़ा
जैसे चंदन सा मिला, गोरा मुखड़ा है, इस पे हल्दी तू
चढ़ा, काला चश्मा भी जैसे खिल सा उठा।

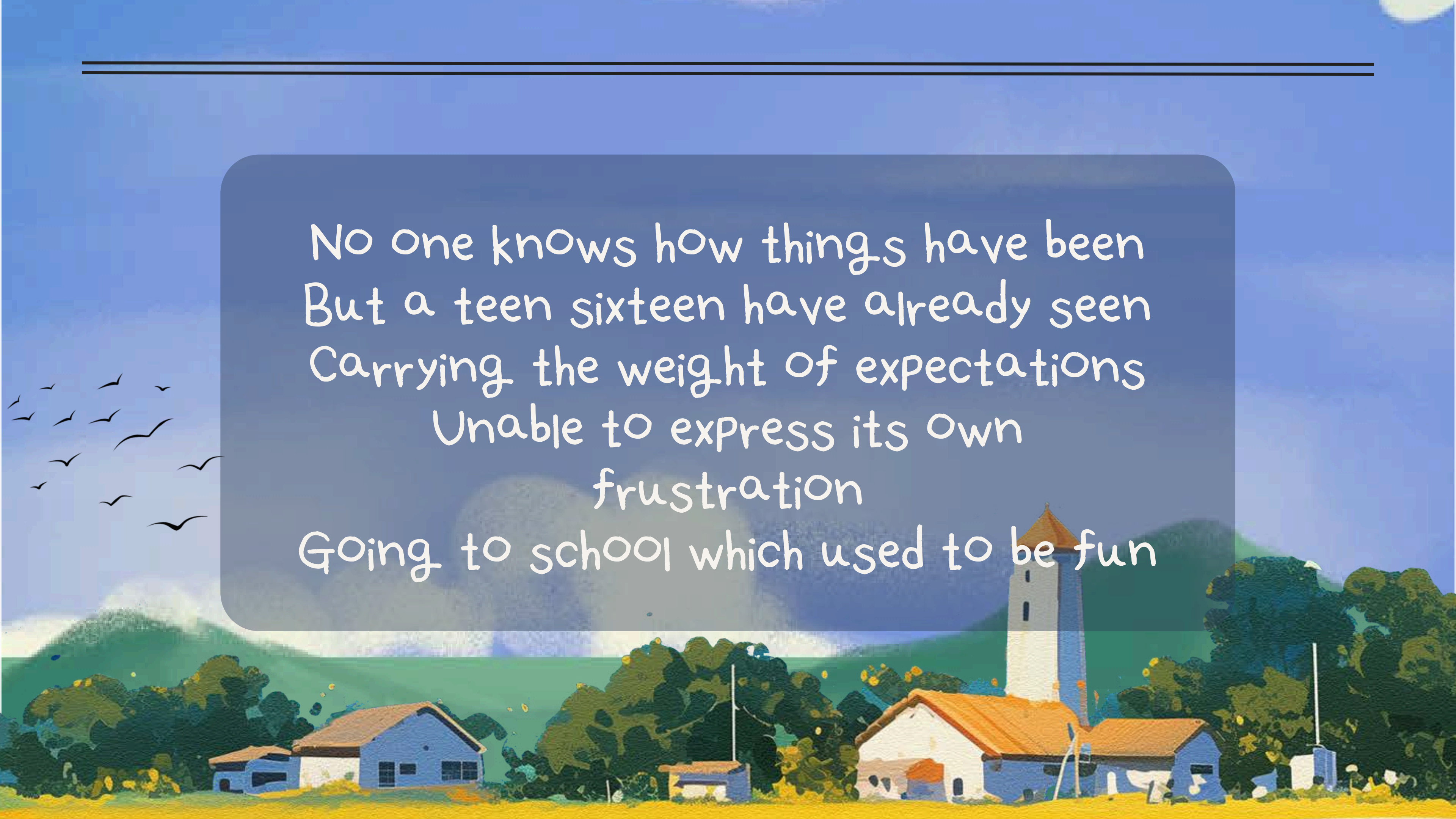


SIXTEEN. AND ALREADY TIRED!!

Pragya Thakur Negi
IX-H
Sheffield School Roorkee



As the morning dawn
With a sleepy tired yawn
The day begins in despair
But there is a little hope somewhere
A teen somewhere sixteen
Is ready to learn and is very keen



No one knows how things have been
But a teen sixteen have already seen
Carrying the weight of expectations
Unable to express its own
frustration
Going to school which used to be fun

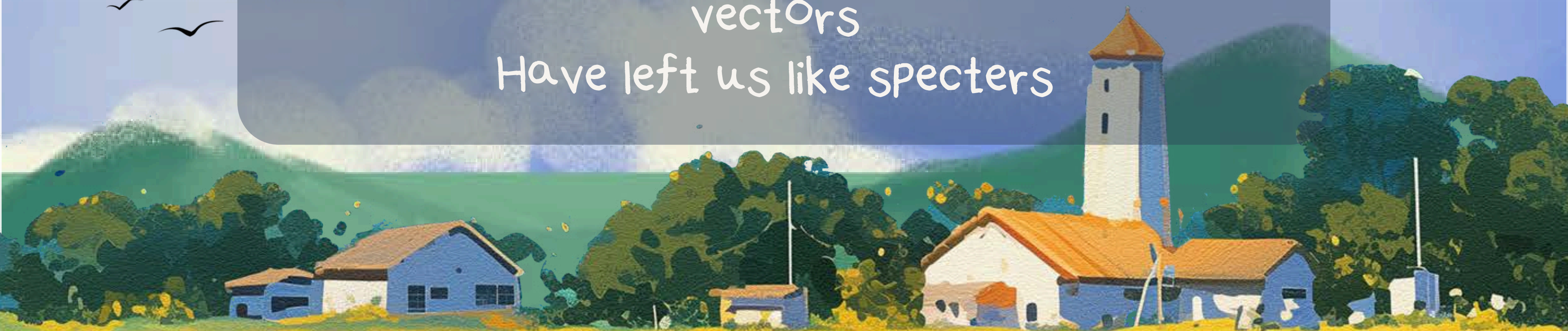
But soon turning into a ground of rat
run

No more giggles and no more fun

Only scribble and only run

Hour long lectures learning and revising
vectors

Have left us like specters



School gets over
Sudden though of competitive exams
hover
Come back to home have lunch alone
With sudden realization that are you
actually that grown?
Just pick the phone



And see the tone
How you'll be mocked but don't be
shocked
Come to your zone
And suffer alone
A sudden though will blow your mind



Why are you suffering from all this grind
Who used to be friends are turning their
back

I think it was only my lack
Not all of them are always same
Some people come over and change the
game



Time is passing by
And I really don't know why
I prefer to cry
When I know that I can't try
The child within barely exists



Burden of expectations Is the one
who resist

The teen within always insists
That there is still leftovers on the list
Always heard that something is better
than nothing



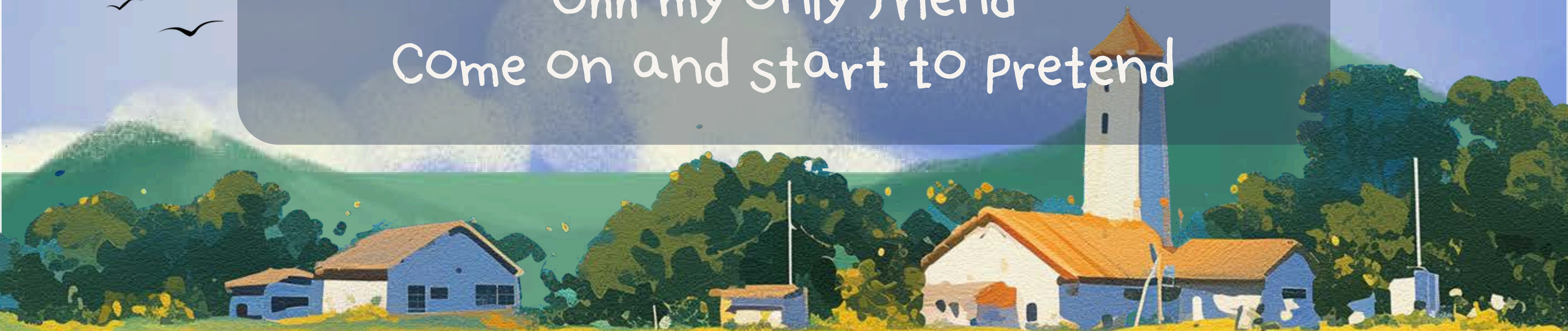
Never knew that something costs
everything

Ring ring ring

The phone sing

Ohh my only friend

Come on and start to pretend



Hi I'm alright but why'r you so quiet
She starts to confide
And it sounds like rollercoaster ride
Between these tides
My own emotions somewhere hide



Put the phone down
Before the Parents frown
Ohh its already six!!
Give emotions a quick fix
Coz you have to learn new tricks



In just a few clicks
Have dinner with discussion
Where parents present asserption
Which sometimes feels like coercion
But a teen sixteen with exertion



Without a thought began immersion
The day began with despair and
ends with despise
This is the feeling which always
suffice
A thought in the head

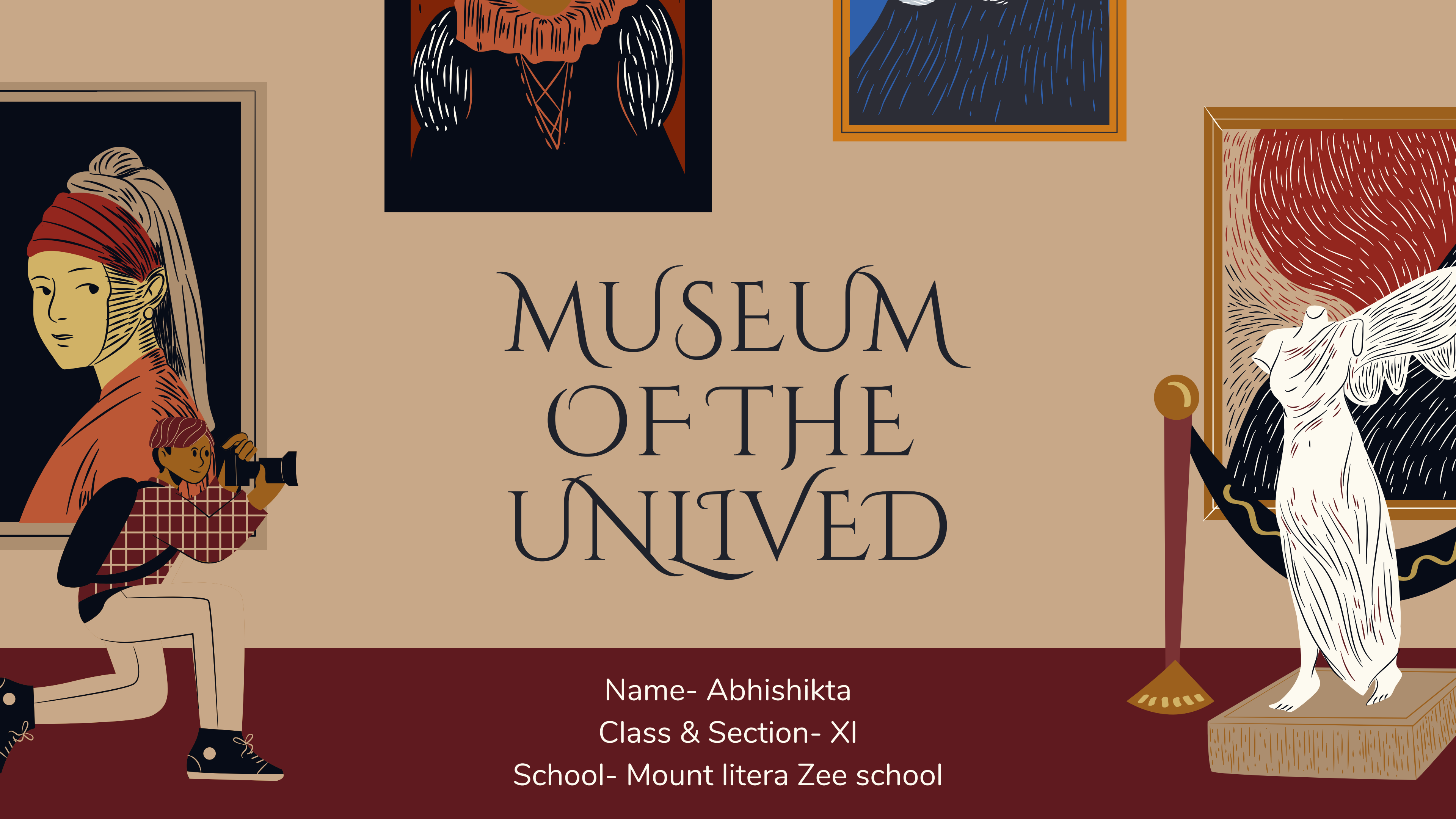


Even when you are at the bed
With tears you overshed
When you were at the bed
Is the unsaid task you
always do



In order to succeed
And make parents proud
too
The very last thought will
I'll be able to do ??





MUSEUM OF THE UNLIVED

Name- Abhishikta
Class & Section- XI
School- Mount litera Zee school

Somewhere between what happened and what could happen,
there was a museum of
unlived!

At eighteen, Sophie had already begun living life backward. She
had forgotten what it was
to look forward.

She lay restlessly on the floor of her room, staring at the ceiling
as though it might answer
the questions that had been circling her mind for weeks. Around
her were fragments of a life that
no longer felt like hers: a crumpled examination result, her
ballroom shoes with their ribbons still
tied, and a photograph of her parents smiling at her.
She had failed an important examination. At the dance
competition she had practised for so
long, she had frozen when it mattered most. And then, before
she had even learned how to make
peace with those failures, an accident had taken her parents
away.

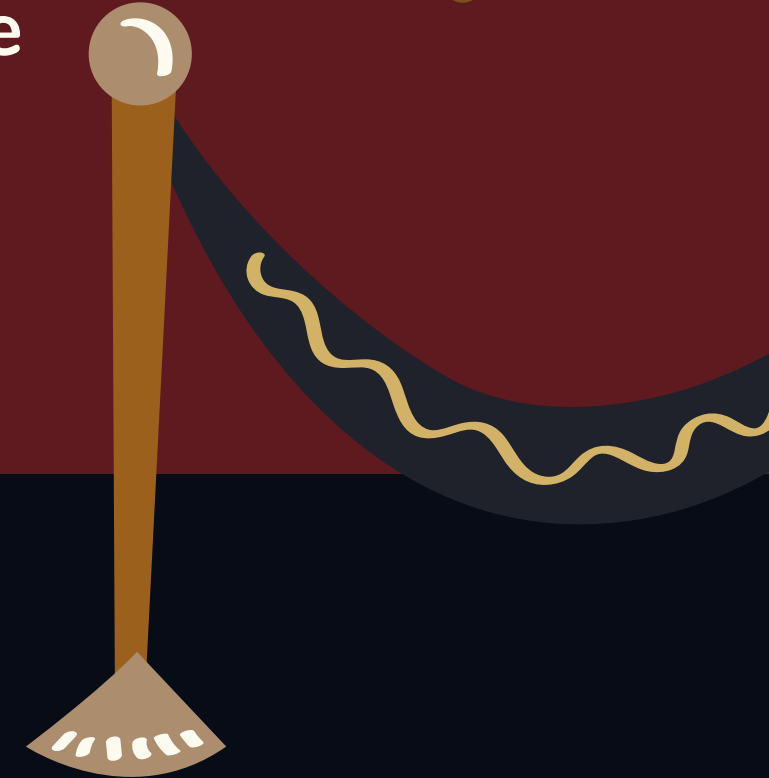




The house had become unbearably quiet after that. Their favourite chair remained where it had always been. Her mother's cup still sat on a shelf. Her father's old watch still rested beside the books he used to read. Nothing had moved, yet everything had changed.

Now every memory had become a question.
What if I had studied harder?
What if I had danced better?
What if I had been there?

What if I had done something differently?
The questions never changed the past. They only made the present harder to bear.
Sophie felt as if the whole world had continued moving while she had been left behind.
Friends went to college, made plans, laughed about ordinary things.
The world had the audacity to continue.



She didn't know how to continue with it.
Then the sky outside her window exploded.
Fireworks.

Sophie sat upright.
There was no festival. No celebration. No reason for fireworks to
be bursting over her quiet
neighbourhood. Yet one after another, strange colours unfolded
across the night. One looked like
a dancer turning beneath a spotlight. Another looked like a
doorway suspended in the sky.

Sophie stepped closer to the window.

The fireworks made no sound.

The final burst spread across the sky and remained there,
motionless, like a painting that
refused to fade.

Then the whole room filled with white light.

And everything disappeared.

When Sophie opened her eyes, she was lying on cold marble.
She pushed herself up slowly.





In front of her stood an enormous building whose black doors
reached almost to the roof.

Above them, carved in silver letters, were four words:
THE MUSEUM OF UNLIVED!

Sophie stared.

She had never heard of such a place.

Yet something inside her whispered that the museum had been
waiting for her.

The doors opened.

Inside stood a tall man in a dark coat. His face was calm, almost
impossibly calm.

“You’re late,” he said.

“Late for what?”

“For the things you keep trying to return to.”

Sophie frowned. “Who are you?”

“The curator.”

“What is this place?”

He looked down the endless corridor.



“Some museums preserve what happened,” he said. “This one preserves what didn’t.”

Before Sophie could ask another question, he began walking.
She followed.

The first gallery was breathtaking.

A woman danced beneath golden lights before an enormous audience. Every movement was graceful. Every turn ended in thunderous applause.

Farther along, an old man sat at a dinner table beside a young woman. They laughed

together as though time had never separated them.

A young artist stood inside a magnificent gallery surrounded by paintings.

Someone sat in a university lecture hall, wearing the clothes of the profession they had always dreamed of.

Another person stood at an airport, smiling at a destination they had apparently waited years to visit.

Sophie watched them all.





They seemed to have everything.
For the first time in months, something other than sadness stirred
inside her.
Jealousy.

Why did they get another chance?
Why did these strangers get to live the lives they wanted while hers
had fallen apart?

She looked at the dancer.
“I wish I had her life.”

The curator did not answer.
Sophie walked deeper into the museum.
There were more rooms.

A boy stood on a football field beneath stadium lights, holding a
trophy he had once dreamed of winning.

A woman sat at a piano, playing the music she had abandoned when
life became too demanding.

A man stood outside a train station, finally boarding the train he had
once been too afraid to take.



A young couple were sitting together at a café, having the conversation that one of them had never found the courage to begin.

Each scene seemed to whisper the same impossible promise:
Here, the missed moment did not have to remain missed.
For a little while, Sophie wanted to believe the museum was a miracle.

Soon, however, she began noticing things that didn't make sense.
The dancer performed the same sequence again.

And again.

The old man never left the dinner table.

The artist never completed another painting.

The university student never graduated.

The traveller never seemed to board the plane.

The boy on the football field never walked away with the trophy.

Everything was beautiful.

But nothing moved forward.

There were no ordinary mornings after the extraordinary ones. No mistakes.

No consequences. No next chapters.





Only the perfect moment, repeating itself.
Sophie turned to the curator.

“Why don't they leave?”

“Did you see any of them arrive?”

“No.”

“Did you see any of them leave?”

“No.”

The curator smiled faintly.

“Then perhaps you are looking at the wrong thing.”

Sophie stared at the exhibits again.

Slowly, the truth began to take shape.

These people weren't living their best lives.

They were living the lives they had never lived.

The dancer had never become the dancer she dreamed of being.

The old man had lost the person sitting beside him.

The artist had abandoned art.

The student had missed the opportunity.

The traveller had never taken the journey.



The couple were living a conversation that had remained unsaid
in the real world.

The museum did not give people their lost lives back.
It gave them a place where they could pretend those lives had
happened.

Sophie felt her jealousy dissolve into something heavier.

She had mistaken someone's regret for happiness.

Every beautiful room contained a wound.

Every perfect moment had a missing ending.

She began noticing the visitors who had been there for a long
time. Some returned to the same exhibits again and again. They
stared at their unlived lives with the devotion of people praying
to something that could never answer.

The doors were not locked.

No guard stood in their way.

Still, they stayed.

Sophie asked the curator, "Why?"

He looked at her.





“The past can become a beautiful prison.”
“But they can leave.”
“Of course.”

“Then why don't they?”

He looked toward the corridor behind them.

“The museum has never locked a door.”

Sophie waited.

“The difficult part,” he said quietly, “has always been convincing someone to open one.”

That truth followed Sophie as she wandered farther.

Then she found a corridor she had never seen before.

It was quieter than the others.

No music.

No applause.

No visitors.

Only a line of doors.

Each door carried a name.

Sophie walked past them.



Daniel.
Amelia.
Thomas.
Then she stopped.
On the final door was a single word.
SOPHIE.

Her hand trembled as she touched the handle.
The door opened.
Music filled the room.
Her music.
Her parents were there.
Alive.

Her mother was laughing. Her father was calling her name. And
beyond them, beneath
bright ballroom lights, Sophie herself was dancing.
Beautifully.
Confidently.

The audience was applauding.
On a table lay an examination paper.
A passing score.





Sophie stared.
For a moment, the museum disappeared.
She laughed.
Then she cried.
She wanted to run to her parents.
She wanted to stay.
“This is what should have happened,” she whispered.
Behind her, the curator appeared.

“Is it?”

Sophie turned.
“What do you mean?”
He looked at the scene.
“Does it have a tomorrow?”

She looked back.
The music stopped.
Then began again.
The same laugh.
The same dance.
The same applause.



Again.
And again.
Sophie watched her mother smile.
Her mother never grew older.
Her father never changed.
The dance never reached its ending.
The examination result never changed.
The life was perfect because it was frozen.
Sophie understood.
This was not a second chance.
It was a beautiful imitation of one.
She looked at the curator.
“Did you make these lives?”
“No.”
“Then who did?”
“Those who could not bear to let their unlived lives disappear.”
Sophie swallowed.
“Can they change anything?”
The curator shook his head.





“Then why do they stay?”
“Because sometimes a beautiful illusion is easier to love than an uncertain reality.”

Sophie looked at her parents again.

“What happens if I stay?”

The curator answered quietly.

“You will have everything you wished for.”

He paused.

“Except tomorrow.”

Sophie wanted to stay.

How could anyone willingly walk away from the people they had lost?

But then she remembered the old man at the dinner table.

The dancer repeating the same performance.

The people who had spent years staring at lives that never became theirs.

They had come to the museum to complete their pasts.

And somewhere along the way, they had stopped creating futures.

Sophie turned toward the door.

“I want to leave.”

The museum seemed to hear her.



The lights flickered.
Her parents suddenly looked toward her.
“Sophie!”
She froze.
“Please stay.”
Her mother reached toward her.
Her father called her name.
Then the dancer on the stage stopped performing.
She turned.
It was Sophie.
Another Sophie.
The version who had won.
The version who had succeeded.
The version who had become everything she had once dreamed of.
“Sophie, please,” she said.
“You don't have to lose any of this.”
The walls began filling with examination papers.
Her failures.
Her mistakes.
Her dance score.





Photographs.
Memories.

Every regret she had carried into the museum appeared at once.

The corridor stretched.
An exit appeared at the far end.
Sophie ran.

The door moved farther away.
She ran harder.

Another exit appeared.
She reached for it.
It vanished.

Her parents called louder.
The dancer screamed her name.

The examination papers flew through the air like frightened birds.

Sophie stumbled and fell.

She was crying now, overwhelmed by everything she had wanted
and everything she had lost.

The museum had become horrifying.
The beautiful rooms now looked like cages.
The perfect smiles looked frozen.



The applause sounded empty.
And then Sophie understood the final trick.
The museum was not holding her.
Her regret was.
Every time she looked back, she gave it another reason to keep her.
If she turned around, she would stay.
If she took one step backward, she might spend forever inside the
life she wished had happened.
So Sophie closed her eyes.
She thought of her parents.
She let herself miss them. She thought of the exam.
She let herself regret it.
She thought of the dance competition.
She let herself remember the failure.
But she refused to let any of those things become the rest of her
life.
She stood.
The voices screamed.
She ran.





“Sophie!”
She did not turn.
“Please stay!”
She kept running.
The corridor stretched again.
She kept running.
The exit appeared.
This time, she did not question whether it was real.
She ran toward it.

And just before she reached the door, the entire museum fell silent.

Sophie stepped through.

She opened her eyes.

A white ceiling stared back at her.

A faint beeping filled the room.

She tried to move, but her body felt impossibly weak.

A hospital.

A woman rushed toward her.

It was her neighbour.

“You're awake.”

Sophie stared at her.



“What happened?”

The neighbour's face softened with relief.

“We hadn't seen you come out of your house for a long time.

We became worried.

Nobody answered the door, so we broke in to check if everything was all right.”

She paused.

“You were lying on the floor.

You had a very high fever.

We brought you here.”

Sophie listened silently.

The museum.

The curator.

The wings.

The people.

Her parents.

The door.

Had it all been a dream?

Perhaps.





Or perhaps it had been something more.
A reality that never existed, yet somehow existed for her.
She looked toward the hospital window.
Her parents were still gone.
Her examination result had not changed.
Her dance competition had not been rewritten.
Nothing magical had repaired her life.
But something inside her had changed.
She finally understood that she didn't have to erase the past to move
beyond it.

She didn't have to stop missing her parents.
She didn't have to pretend the failures didn't hurt.
She didn't have to become the perfect version of herself she had
once imagined.

She only had to keep going.
Sophie made herself a promise.
She would dance again.
She would try again.
She would fail again if she had to.



She would love people even knowing that love could someday
become loss.

She would make memories instead of endlessly rebuilding old ones.

She would stop asking the past to give her a future.

Outside the window, morning slowly unfolded.

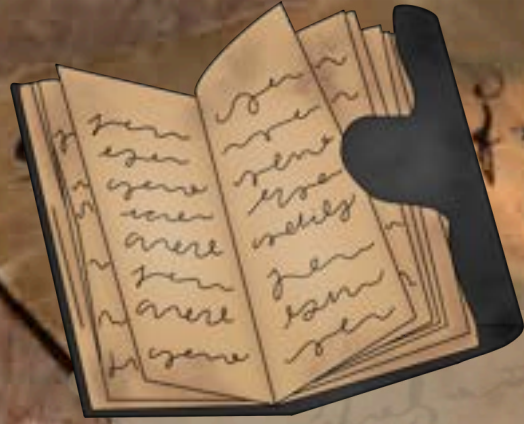
For a moment, Sophie thought she saw a tiny burst of colour
disappear among the clouds.

She smiled.

Then she looked forward.

Behind her was everything that never was; ahead of her was
everything that still could be.





मनुष्य की गति क्या है?

MOHAN CHANDRA
Category- Teacher





गति बढ़ती जाती है प्रतिदिन, पर मन क्यों ठहर नहीं पाता है?
हाथों में सारी दुनिया है, फिर मन इतना तनहा क्यों हो जाता है?
उँगली छूते ही जग मिलता, पल में वहाँ संदेश पहुँचता है,
ज्ञान का सागर सम्मुख है, फिर ज्ञान कहाँ बन पाता है?
सुबह-सुबह स्क्रीन जगाती, रात स्क्रीन पर सो जाती है,
नोटिफिकेशन की बारिश में, मन की आवाज़ दब जाती है।
सूचना की आँधी तेज़ हुई, विचार कहीं खो जाते हैं,
उत्तर मिलते पल भर में, पर प्रश्न कहाँ रह जाते हैं?





छोटी-छोटी चलती तस्वीरें, क्षण में मन को बाँध रहीं,
लंबे सपने, गहरे चिंतन, धीरे-से छोटे हो जाते हैं।
हर बात का उत्तर तैयार यहाँ, हर राह दिखाई देती है,
पर अपने भीतर झाँकने की, फुर्सत किसको मिलती पाती है?
हजारों मित्र ऑनलाइन हैं, लाखों चेहरे साथ खड़े,
फिर भी मन के सूने आँगन, क्यों हैं इतने आज पड़े?
पास बैठा इंसान मगर, दूर कहीं खो जाता है,
चेहरे आमने-सामने हों, मन स्क्रीन में सो जाता है।





हँसी अब कैमरे की खातिर, आँसू छिपते पर्दों में,
जीवन कम, प्रदर्शन अधिक है, इन चमकीले पर्दों में।
'लाइक' मिले तो खुशी हमारी, 'कमेंट' मिले तो मान हुआ,
अपने मन का मूल्य भूल, दूसरों से सम्मान हुआ।
दूसरों के सुंदर जीवन से, अपना जीवन तौल रहे,
अपनी खुशियाँ छोड़-छाड़कर, नकली खुशियाँ खोज रहे।
मशीनें अब कहानी लिखतीं, चित्र बनातीं, गीत सुनातीं,
मानव-बुद्धि के सब कामों को, क्षण भर में कर जातीं है।





पर क्या मशीनें दर्द समझतीं? क्या आँसू का मोल जानतीं हैं?
क्या माँ की ममता, प्रेम, समर्पण, त्याग की भाषा पहचानतीं हैं?
तकनीक हमारी शक्ति बने, वह हमारा स्वामी न हो,
मानव अपने ही निर्माणों में, खुद इतना गुमनामी न हो।
कंक्रीटों के जंगल में हम, मिट्टी से रिश्ता भूल गए,
नदियाँ, पर्वत, पेड़, हवाएँ, सबसे अपनापन भूल गए।
धरती केवल साधन समझी, जल को केवल वस्तु किया,
प्रकृति के इस मौन हृदय को, हमने कितना क्षत-विक्षत किया!





| आकाश छुआ विज्ञान ने, पर भीतर हमारे अँधियारा है,
संसाधन सब पास हमारे, फिर क्यों मन बेचारा है?
शिक्षा ने कौशल तो बाँटे, पर संवेदना कम होती गई,
बुद्धि आगे दौड़ती रही, मानवता पीछे होती गई।
अब लौटो थोड़ा अपने भीतर, अपने मन से बात करो,
कुछ पल स्क्रीन से दूर हटो, जीवन से फिर मुलाकात करो।
मौन में बैठो, स्वयं को सुनो, अपने प्रश्नों को पहचानो,
भीड़ भरे इस शोर में थोड़ा, अपना अंतरमन भी जानो।





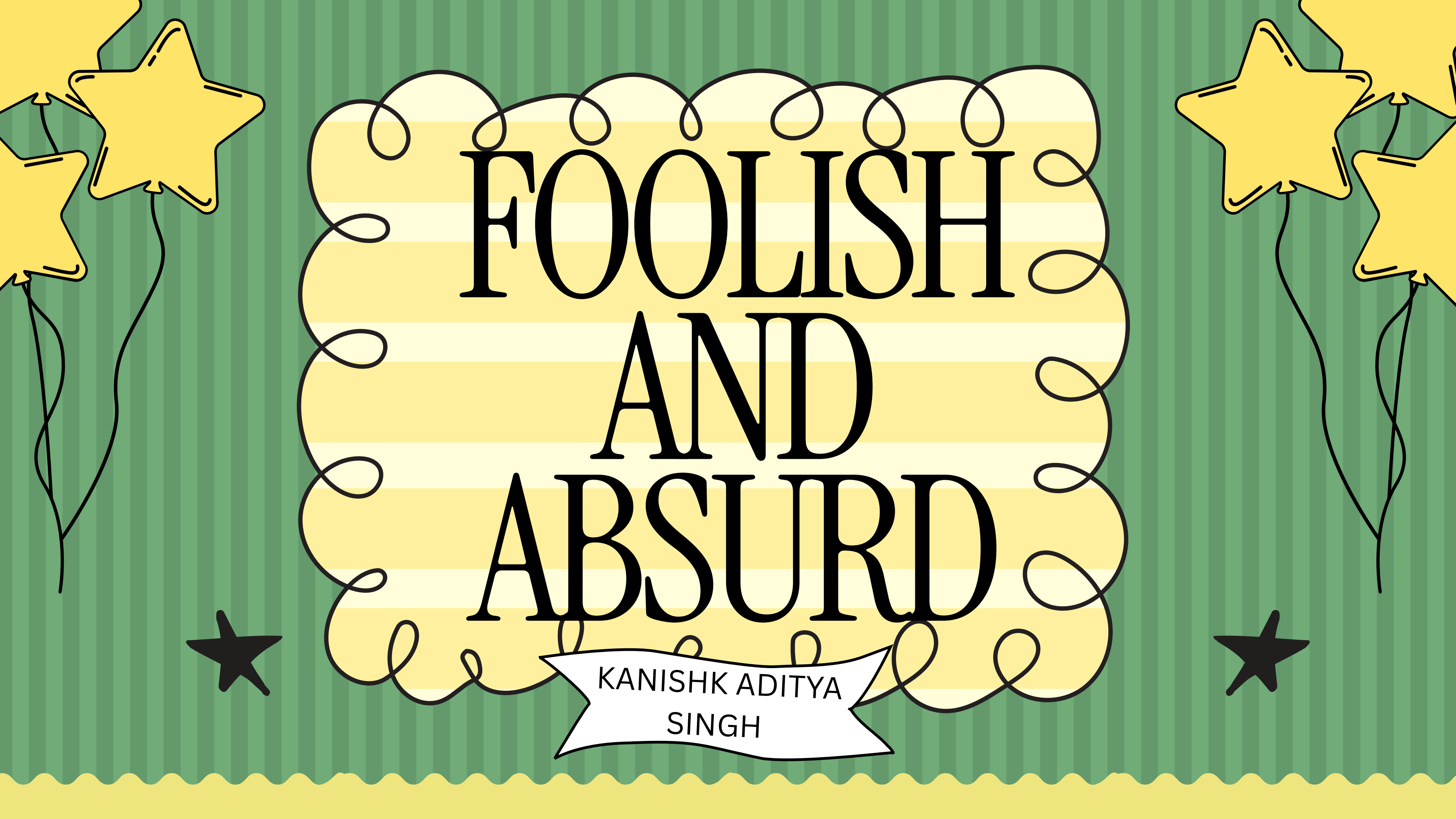
घर में फिर से संवाद जगे, आँखों में आँखें डाली जाएँ,
सुख में हँसें, दुःख में साथ रहें, रिश्तों की डोर सँभाली जाए।
चलो कभी उस पेड़ के नीचे, जहाँ हवा कुछ कहती है,
चलो नदी के पास जहाँ अब भी, धरती साँसें लेती है।
विज्ञान रहे, तकनीक रहे, लेकिन मानवता साथ रहे,
हाथों में हो नई रोशनी, हृदयों में विश्वास रहे।
सभ्यता ऊँची इमारत से, केवल ऊँची नहीं होती,
मनुष्य बड़ा हो जाए तभी, धरती सचमुच बड़ी होती।





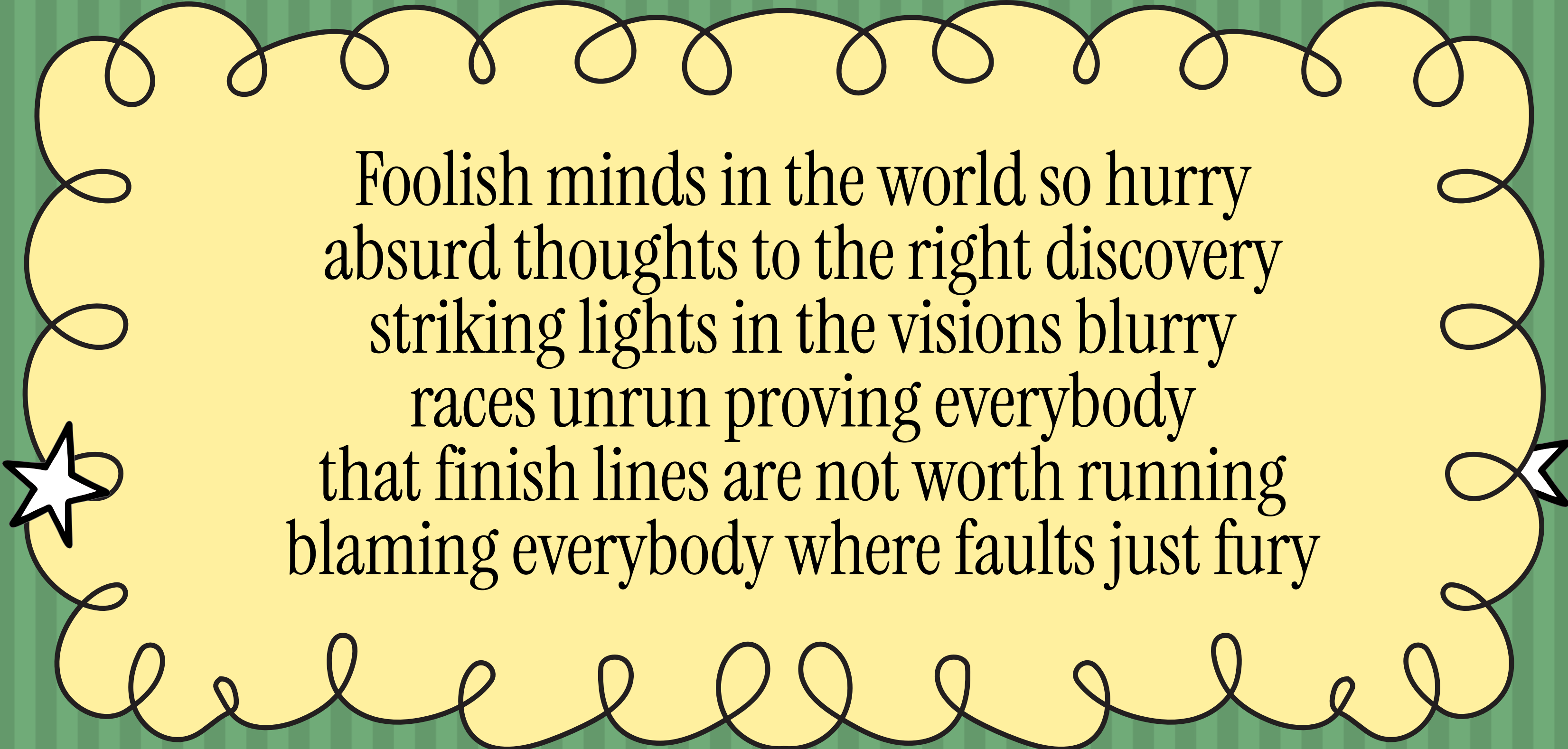
हमने बहुत कुछ पा लिया, पर क्या स्वयं को पाया है?
दुनिया को जीत लिया हमने, पर मन को कहाँ जिताया है?
आओ फिर से मनुष्य बनें, संवेदना को स्वर दें हम,
गति के इस अंधे उत्सव में, थोड़ा-सा ठहरें हम।
स्क्रीन की चमक से दृष्टि हटाकर, आँखों में आँखें डालें हम,
मशीनों से आगे बढ़कर, फिर इंसान को संभालें हम।
क्योंकि जीवन केवल गति नहीं, जीवन केवल जीत नहीं,
जीवन है चेतना की गहराई, प्रेम, करुणा और प्रीति सही।
विज्ञान के ऊँचे शिखरों को छू लें, पर अपनी जड़ों का ज्ञान रहे।
मशीनों की इस भागती दुनिया में, हर सीने में बसा ईमान रहे।
तकनीक रहे हाथों में हमारी, पर दिल में सबके इंसान रहे,
इतनी-सी बस प्रार्थना है, दुनिया रहे... और मनुष्य भी महान रहे।



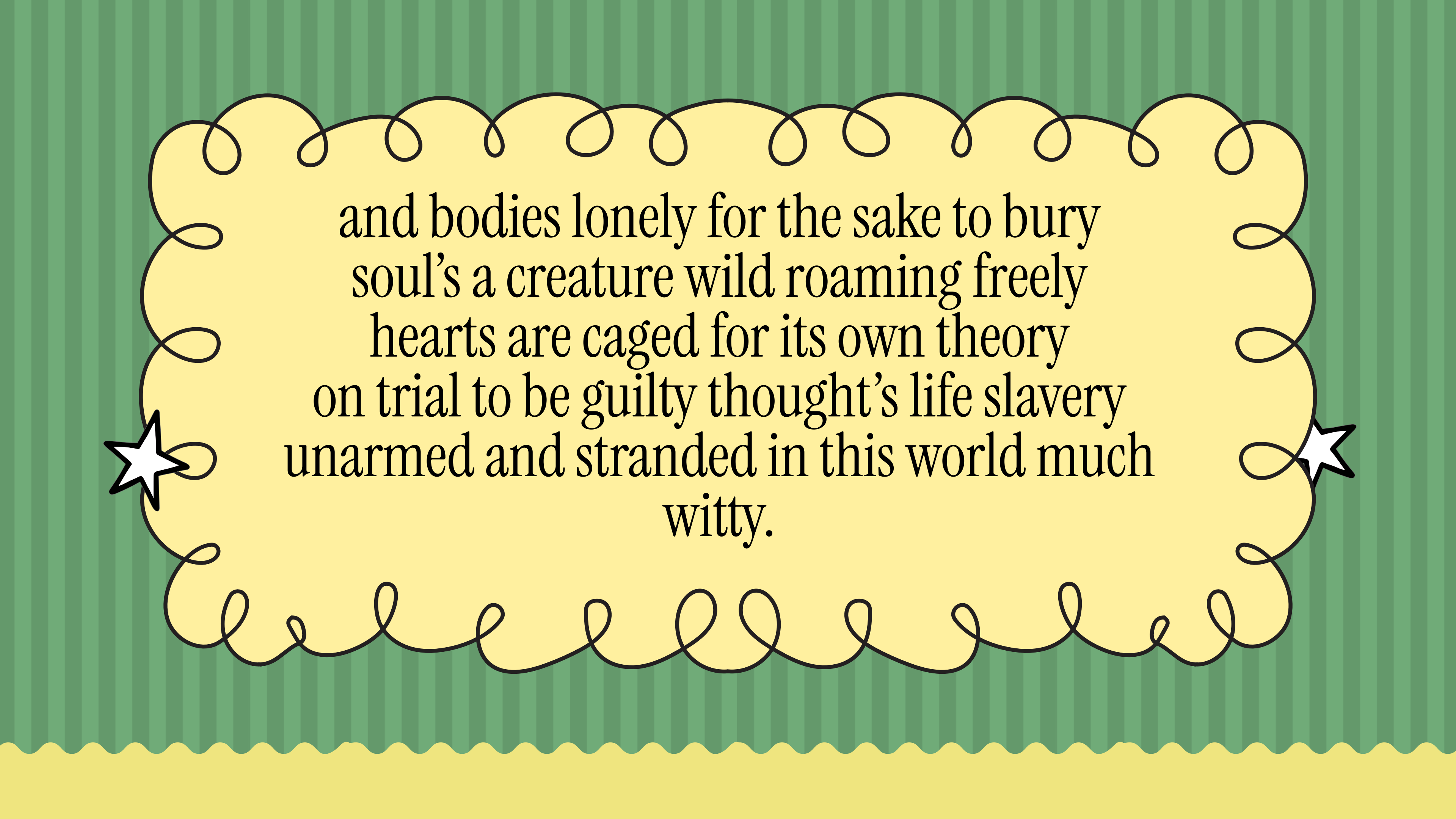


FOOLISH AND ABSURD

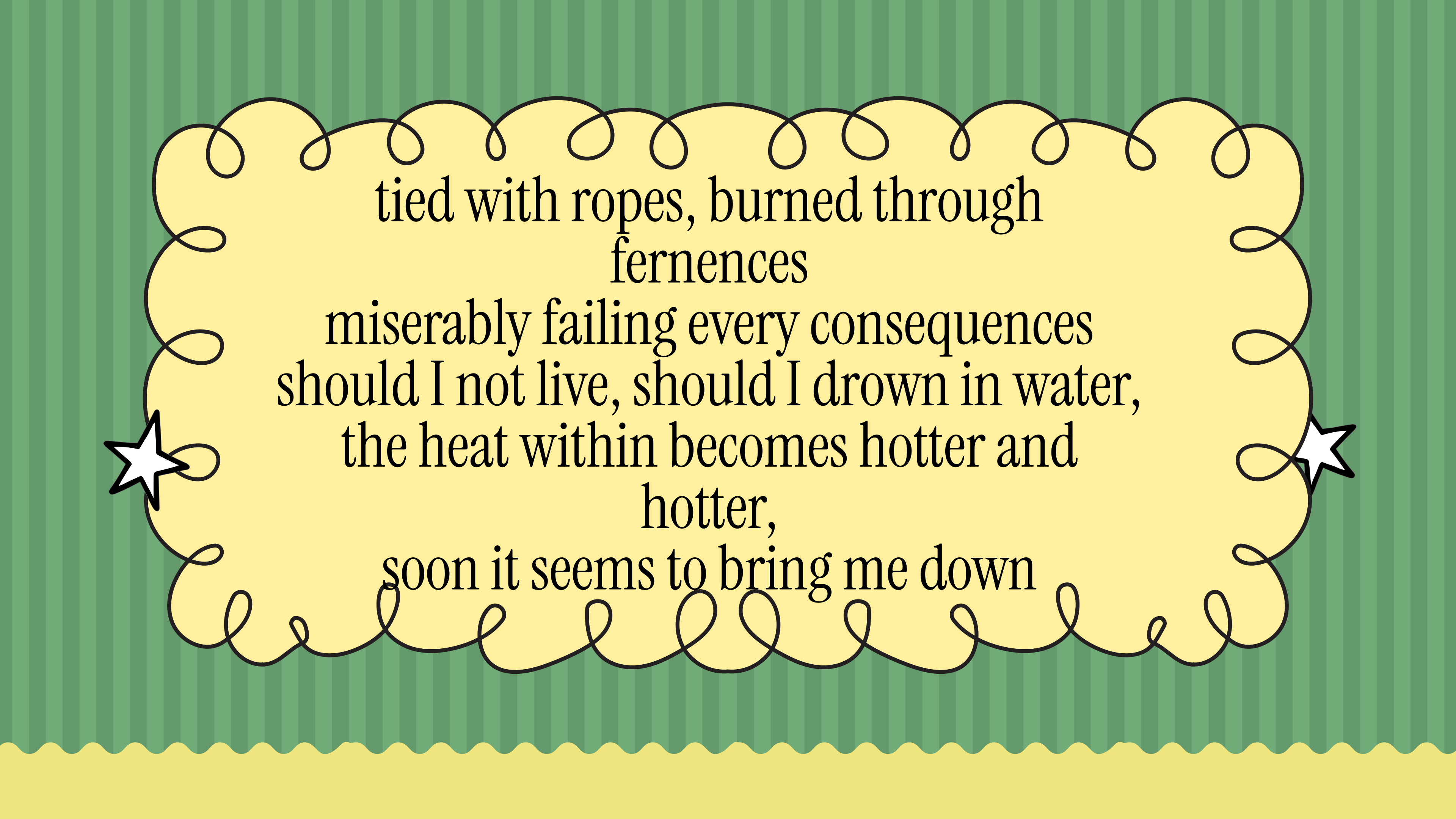
KANISHK ADITYA
SINGH



Foolish minds in the world so hurry
absurd thoughts to the right discovery
striking lights in the visions blurry
races unrun proving everybody
that finish lines are not worth running
blaming everybody where faults just fury

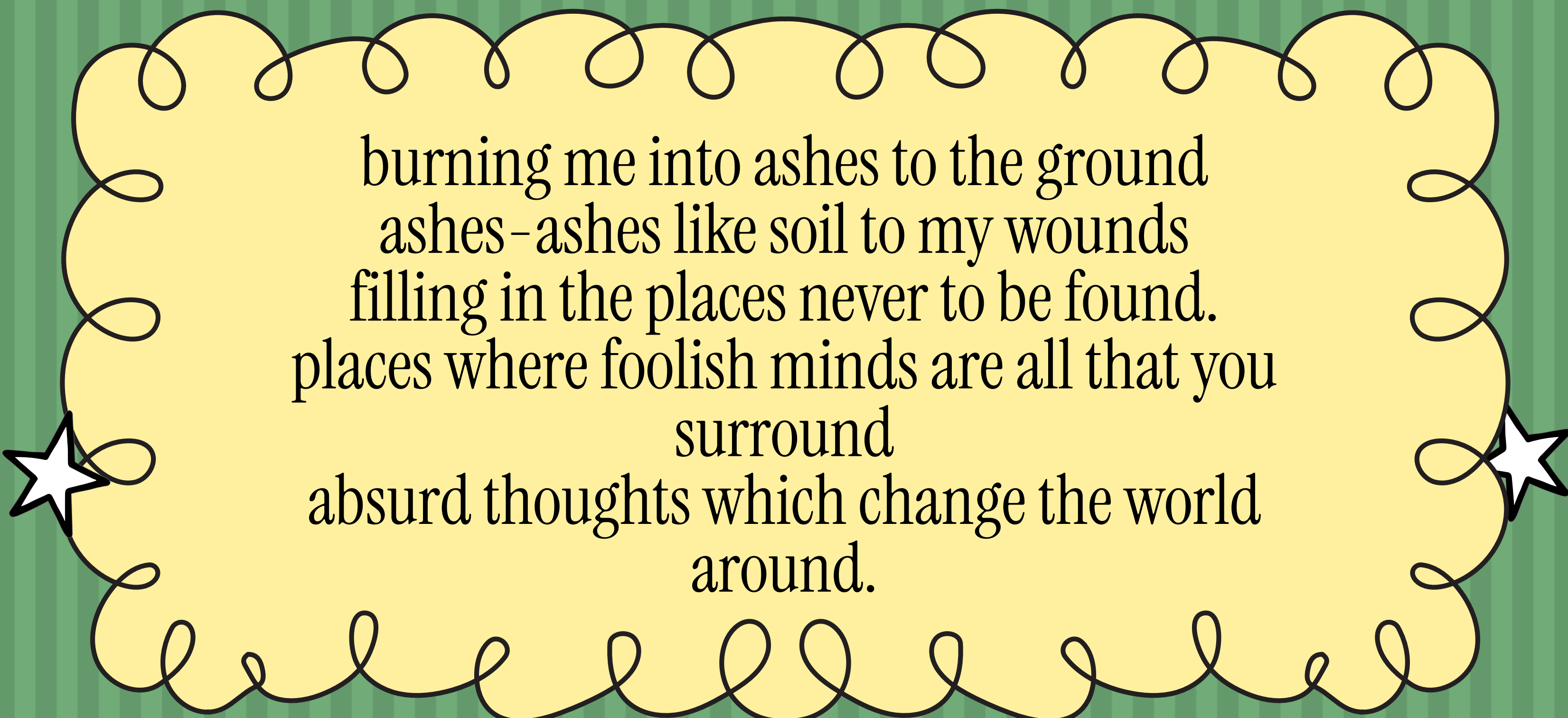


and bodies lonely for the sake to bury
soul's a creature wild roaming freely
hearts are caged for its own theory
on trial to be guilty thought's life slavery
unarmed and stranded in this world much
witty.



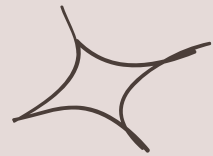
tied with ropes, burned through
fences

miserably failing every consequences
should I not live, should I drown in water,
the heat within becomes hotter and
hotter,
soon it seems to bring me down

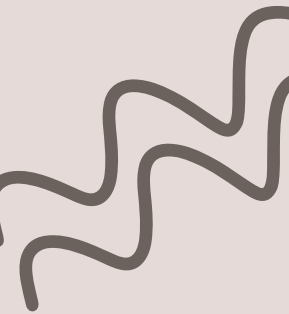


burning me into ashes to the ground
ashes-ashes like soil to my wounds
filling in the places never to be found.
places where foolish minds are all that you
surround
absurd thoughts which change the world
around.

The Power of Reading Books



BY: Name-Mohammad
Ibrahim Ahmad
Class- VI-G
Roll No.-17



Books are one of the most valuable possessions we could have in our lives. They teach us new things, develop our creativity and help us understand our surroundings. Reading books is not just a source of knowledge but also a good habit that encourages us to become more knowledgeable and developed individuals over time.



Books all teach us different things. Storybooks develop our creativity, science books tell us how various things happen in nature, and biographies show us how influential individuals lived their lives. Reading books also develops our vocabulary and makes us better speakers and writers. It increases our focus and allows creative thinking to develop.

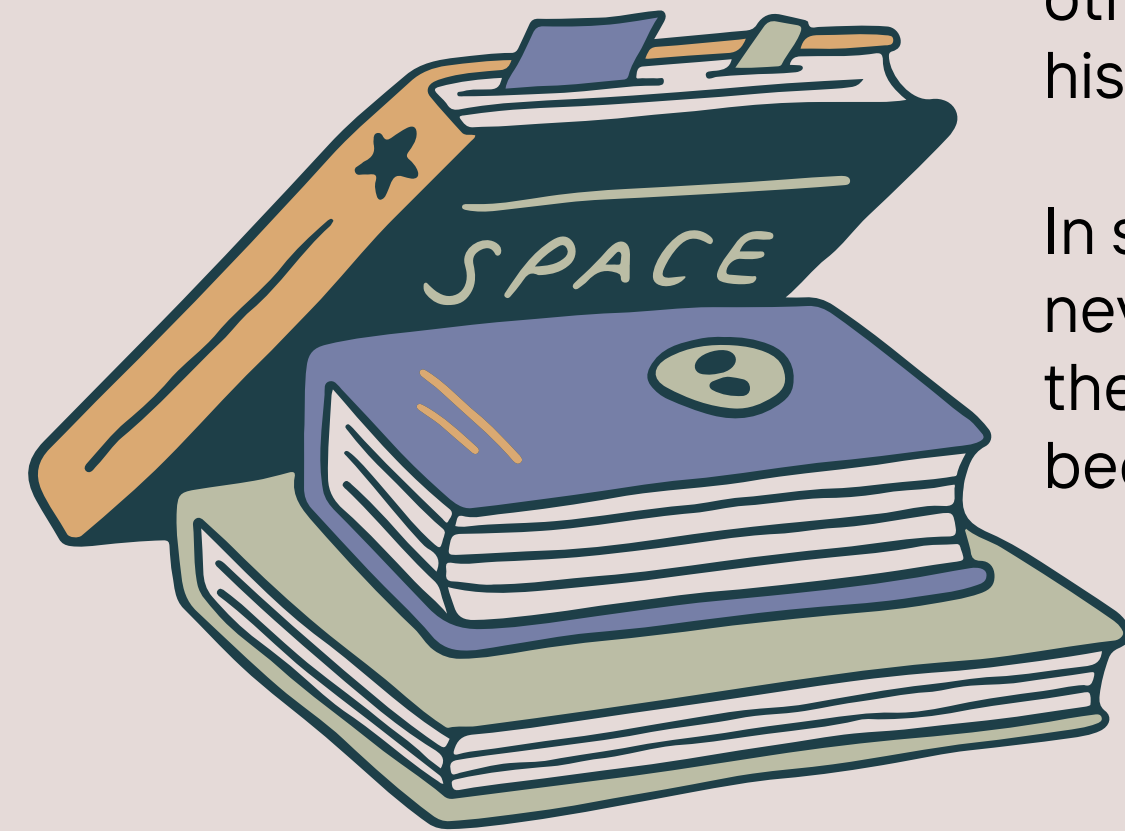
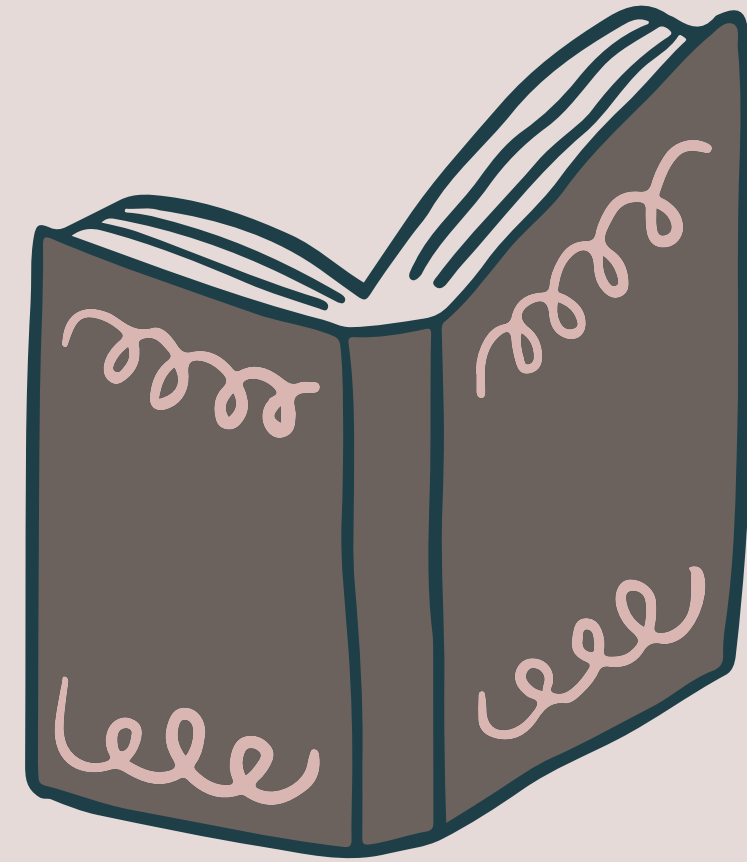


These days, many children are on mobile phones and watching many videos. Technology has its benefits, but reading helps us attain a new level of understanding and teaches us to be patient. Even 20 minutes each day of reading can help us significantly over the years.

I love reading books because it feels like an adventure each time I open a new book.

Sometimes I embark on a journey through fictional worlds, while other times I am learning new information about an era, a place in history, nature or even space.

In summary, books are our true friends, guiding us, inspiring us and never asking for anything in return. I feel that if we learn to cultivate the habit of reading from a young age, we can become confident, informed, and responsible individuals one day.



A Woman's Life Crushed Between Relationships.

By ASMA ALI TYAGI



This is a story of a 20-year-old girl whose name was Mayra.

Mayra was born into a Muslim family.

Mayra completed her education up to 12th grade while staying at her father's house.

She wanted to study further,

but her family members did not allow her to study.

Then one day,

a marriage proposal came for Mayra.

The proposal was for a boy named Sameer.

That boy did not want to get married.

The boy's father was the principal of a government school.

He was a very sensible person.

He had noticed that his son Sameer was getting involved in wrong things.

So he thought that he should get him married,
so that he would become responsible and improve.

You Sameer's father went to Mayra's house with the marriage proposal and Mayra's family agreed.

Sameer's father lied and said,

"My son is an engineer."

Whereas at that time Sameer was only 24 years old and he was still studying.

He was an irresponsible boy.

In this way, Sameer's father lied and got Sameer married to Mayra.

But Sameer did not improve because he did not even want to get married.

A few days after the marriage,

Mayra asked her father-in-law for permission to continue her further studies.

She expressed her desire.

Her father-in-law agreed and thought,

"My son is so useless. If she studies and gets educated,

I will get her a job. She will take care of things."

Mayra continued her further studies.

She also completed her B.Ed.

Her father-in-law wanted to get her a job, but Sameer and his mother did not let her. Sameer had completed his Engineering, but he did not do any work.

He just got the degree and kept it.

In Sameer's family there were three brothers in total, one sister-in-law, and his parents. Sameer had two elder sisters. They were already married, but they did not go to their in-laws' houses.

They lived with their children at their parents' home.

Sameer's elder sister-in-law was a government school teacher.

After Sameer's marriage, she started living with her husband and children in another city.

Sameer and Sameer's mother were very bad.

They used to torture Mayra a lot.

They made Mayra do all the household work alone, and they didn't even give her proper food to eat.

Sameer also used to torture Mayra a lot.

He would beat her for no reason and abuse her.

Two years after Mayra and Sameer's marriage, they had a daughter.

Sameer did not love his daughter at all.

When the daughter was one year old, one day Mayra was sitting on the roof.

Sameer came there and started a fight.

Sameer even wanted to throw the daughter off the roof, but Sameer's younger brother came and took the child downstairs.

The child was saved, but Sameer started beating Mayra.

There was a stick lying nearby.

Sameer picked up the stick and cracked Mayra's head open.

No one from Sameer's family did anything.

Sameer's elder brother took Mayra to the hospital and got her treated.

Sameer, Sameer's mother, and sisters did not even let Mayra talk to her family or meet them.

He said, "You will neither talk to anyone nor meet anyone."

Mayra was a very innocent girl.

She did not want her relationship to break or for her parents' honor to be hurt.

That's why she remained silent.

She didn't tell anyone anything.

She silently endured all the torture.

Days passed.

Mayra had another daughter.

Seven years of her marriage had passed.

Mayra just kept thinking that one day everything would be fine.

She only prayed to Allah that everything would be alright.

Then two years later, Mayra became pregnant again.

Even when Mayra was pregnant, no one took care of her.

This time it went too far.

Even while Mayra was pregnant, her mother-in-law made her do all the work and made her lift heavy things.

She didn't even give her food. Then Mayra gave birth to a son.

Your Even then, no one took care of her.

They didn't even give her food and water.

Mayra herself did all the work for her two daughters and for herself.

No one else in the family did anything for them.

Mayra's mother-in-law even hid all the kitchen groceries.

She only left the flour.

Mayra and her daughters didn't get any vegetables for a whole month.

She survived by eating only salt with roti and drinking water.

Sameer also didn't care.

He used to stay out and wouldn't come home.

And even if he did come, he had nothing to do with Mayra or the daughters.

If Mayra said anything, he would beat her and abuse her.

Ten years of the marriage had passed.

After 10 years, Mayra for the first time told her parents about her sad story.

She told them about everything she had endured.

Then Mayra's family and her brothers talked to Sameer and Mayra's in-laws.

Then Sameer and Mayra's in-laws said that they wouldn't mistreat her like this in the future,
but they did not improve.

Mayra did not want her children's lives to be ruined,
that's why she kept enduring it.

But Sameer did not improve.
He would still beat Mayra and abuse her.

After Sameer's mother passed away,
Mayra had some peace for some time.

But even then Sameer continued to mistreat Mayra and the children.
Once he even threw Mayra and all the children out of the house in the middle of the night.

Time passed.

Now Mayra had four children-three daughters and one son.
Mayra's father-in-law also passed away.

The children grew up.

Now only Mayra,

Sameer, and their four children lived together.
Everyone else had separated. The children went to school.

Although the children studied in a very good school, their lives were still strange because everything in their lives happened according to Sameer's wishes.

Sometimes when the children asked for something, Sameer would do a lot for them, and sometimes he would behave very strangely.

Sameer had no shortage of money or wealth.

If there was any shortage, it was only of goop behavior.

Sometimes he behaved very well, sometimes very badly.

And he never kept Mayra happy.

By now, almost 20 years of their marriage had passed, but Mayra was never happy.

This story is just a very small part of her life.

In reality, she has endured a lot of torture.

To write the whole story in detail would take almost years.

Mayra's life is just going on.

Sometimes everything is good, sometimes very strange.

At the end of this story, I just want to say that Mayra was a very innocent girl.

She should have raised her voice for herself, which she was never able to do.



THE FADING SILKS

BY UDANTIKA SINGH





**The fading silks for whom we cry
The growing silks for whom we die
The warming silks for whom we lie**



**The waving silks whom we desire
The more we try to keep
The more it will try to sweep**



**The shining silks whom we adore
The dying silks whom we tore**



The blooming silks whom we ignore

The changing silks who will weep

Once we try to leave

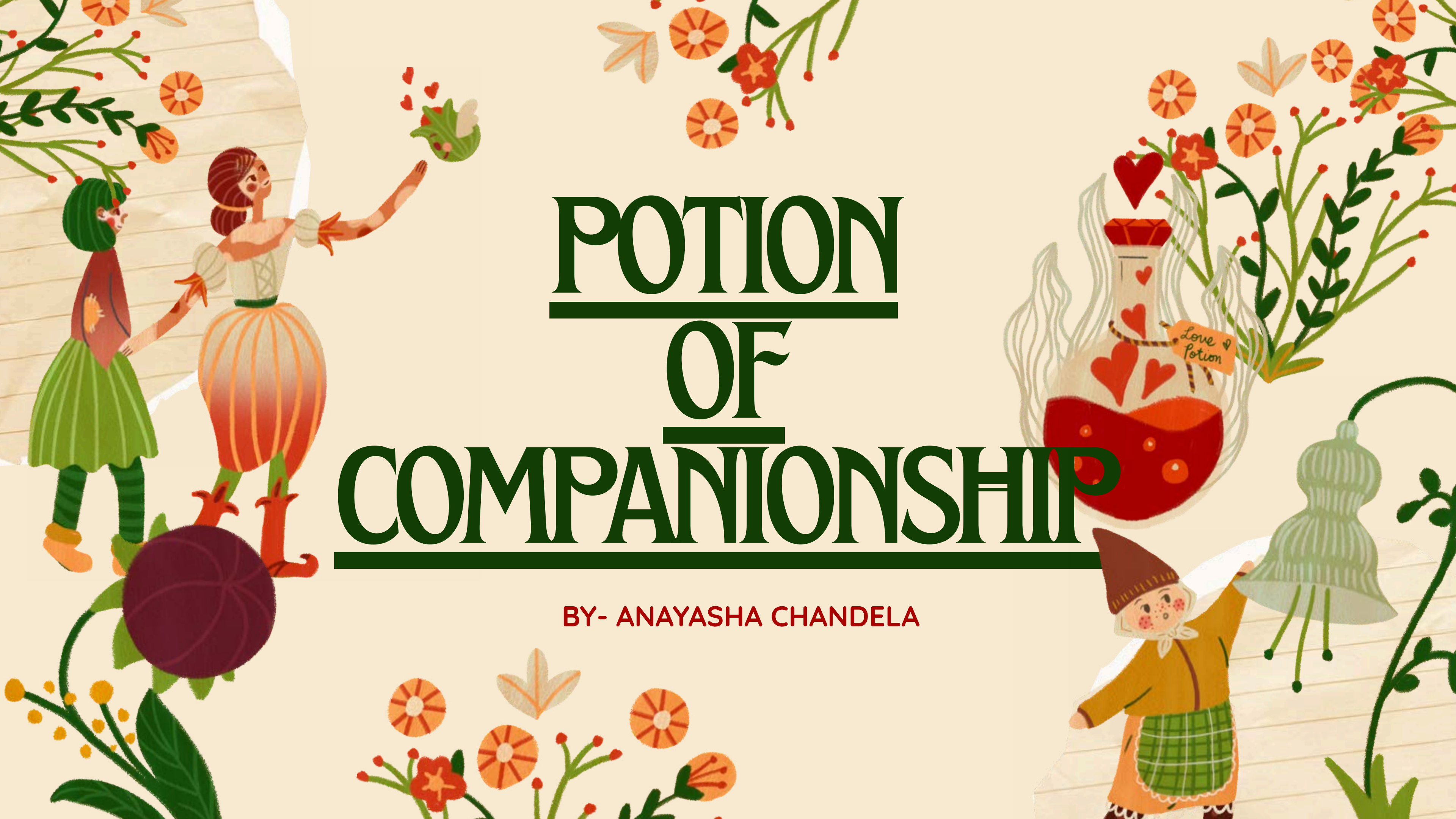
Won't care if we lie to reap

The wandering you whom I love

You shall leave if I don't

The only you whom I seek.





POTION OF COMPANIONSHIP

BY- ANAYASHA CHANDELA



IN THE DEEP DARK WOOD IN A WOODEN
HOUSE THERE LIVED A KIND WITCH. HER
NAME WAS RASHA. SHE LOVED WILD
THINGS, MAKING POTIONS ETC. BUT SHE
WAS LONELY. SHE DECIDED TO MAKE
POTION.

A POTION OF INFINITE COMPANIONSHIP.

SHE TOSSED A PINCH OF A RAINBOW DUST, A
WHISKER FROM A BREEZE AND A HANDFUL OF
ORANGE PEELS AND SHE WHISPERED MAGIC
WORDS
(ABRA CA DI ABRA KA DA ABRA KA HOO).
CONCOTION STARTED BOILING.



A LITTLE CUTE CAT APPEARED AND STARTED LICKING HER FACE, IT WAS BLACK AND WAS FLUFFY. TO WITCH'S SURPRISE SHE COULD TALK.

THE WITCH STIRRED FASTER THAN A SPLASH HIT THE FLOOR AND IT INSTANTLY SOLIDIFIED INTO MINIATURE ELEPHANT WITH WINGS MADE OF SILK IT TRUMPETED SOFTLY AND BEGAN TO DUST THE WITCH'S CLOSET WITH ITS TRUNK. RASHA FELT SO HAPPY THAT SHE ADDED SOME FUR TO THE POTION AND STIRRED IT AGAIN.

POTION TURNED INTO A BUBBLING SEA GREEN LIQUID. THE FIRST BUBBLE DIDN'T BURST, IT FLOATED INTO THE AIR AND TURNED INTO A TINY, GLOWING LEMUR. IT LANDED ON HER SHOULDER AND IMMEDIATELY STARTED BRAIDING HER HAIR.





“WELL THAT’S NEW,” THE WITCH WHISPERED AND SMILED.

SHE WAS VERY HAPPY TO SEE ALL THE SPECIAL ANIMALS IN HER HOME. BUT SHE WANTED MORE.

BY SUNSET, SHE HAD SQUIRRELS THAT GLOWED LIKE LANTERNS, A TORTOISE WITH A TINY GARDEN GROWING ON ITS SHELL AND A FOX THAT SPOKE ONLY IN RIDDLES ABOUT THE MOON, AND A TRAIL OF NEON ORANGE DUCKLINGS THAT BARKED LIKE PUPPIES.

RASHA SAT IN A ROCKING CHAIR, PICKED UP HER BOOK, AND REALISED THE SILENCE WAS GONE.



THE POTION WAS EMPTY, BUT FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE HOUSE FELT COMPLETELY FULL. NOW SHE WAS NOT ALONE, BUT AS AN ELEPHANT-BUTTERFLY TUCKED INTO HER RAFTER, SHE THOUGHT A LITTLE BIT OF CHAOS WAS MUCH BETTER THAN A QUIET HOUSE.

THE NEXT MORNING, RASHA DECIDED TO BAKE SOME LAVENDER SCONES. USUALLY, THIS WAS A QUIET, SOLITARY TASK, BUT WITH THE MINIATURE WINGED ELEPHANT AND THE TRAIL OF BARKING DUCKLINGS, THE KITCHEN WAS ANYTHING BUT STILL.

"ALRIGHT EVERYONE," RASHA LAUGHED, DODGING A NEON-ORANGE DUCKLING THAT WAS NIPPING AT HER SHOELACES. "IF YOU WANT TO STAY, YOU HAVE TO BE HELPFUL." THE ELEPHANT-BUTTERFLY TOOK HER LITERALLY.

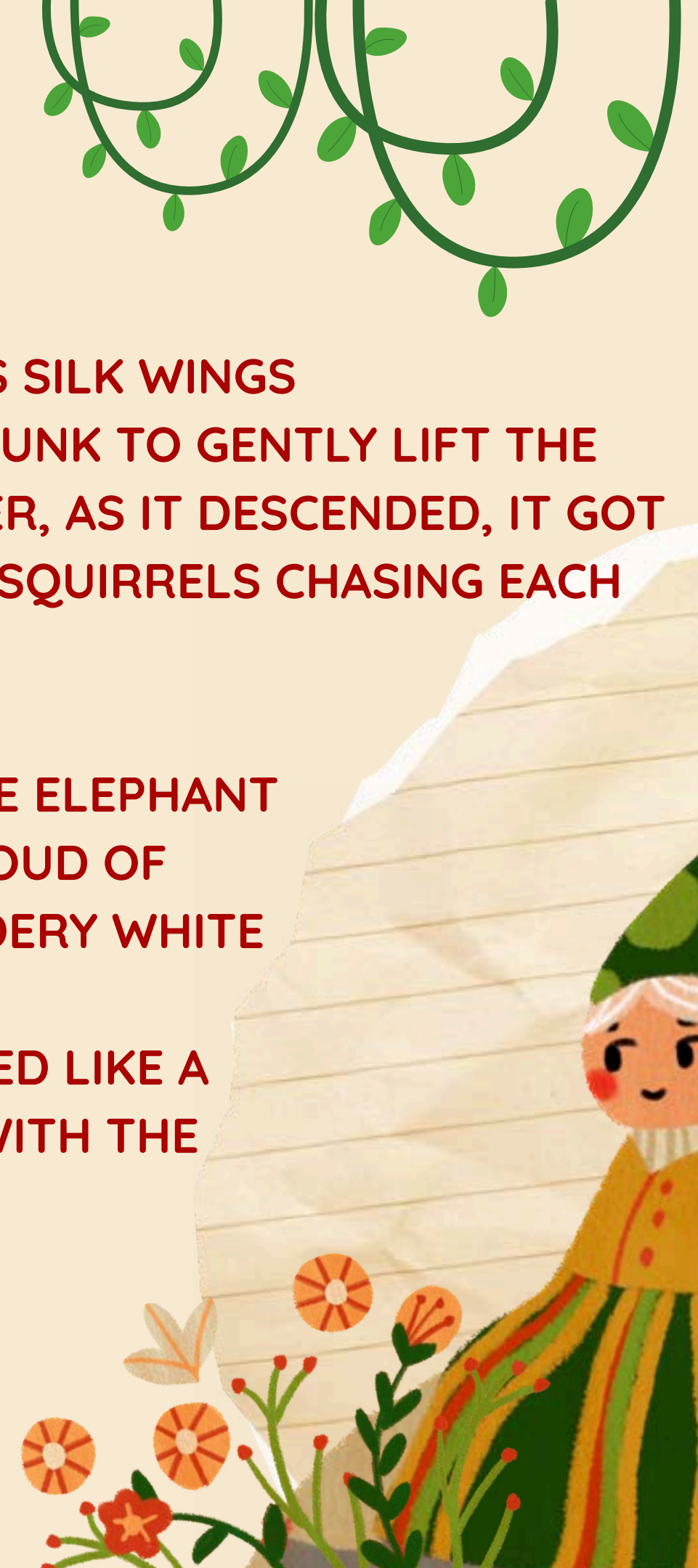




IT FLEW TO THE TOP SHELF, ITS SILK WINGS SHIMMERING, AND USED ITS TRUNK TO GENTLY LIFT THE HEAVY JAR OF FLOUR. HOWEVER, AS IT DESCENDED, IT GOT DISTRACTED BY THE GLOWING SQUIRRELS CHASING EACH OTHER ACROSS THE RAFTERS.

WITH THE STARTLED TOOT, THE ELEPHANT FLAPPED TOO HARD, AND A CLOUD OF FLOUR EXPLODED LIKE A POWDERY WHITE FIREWORK.

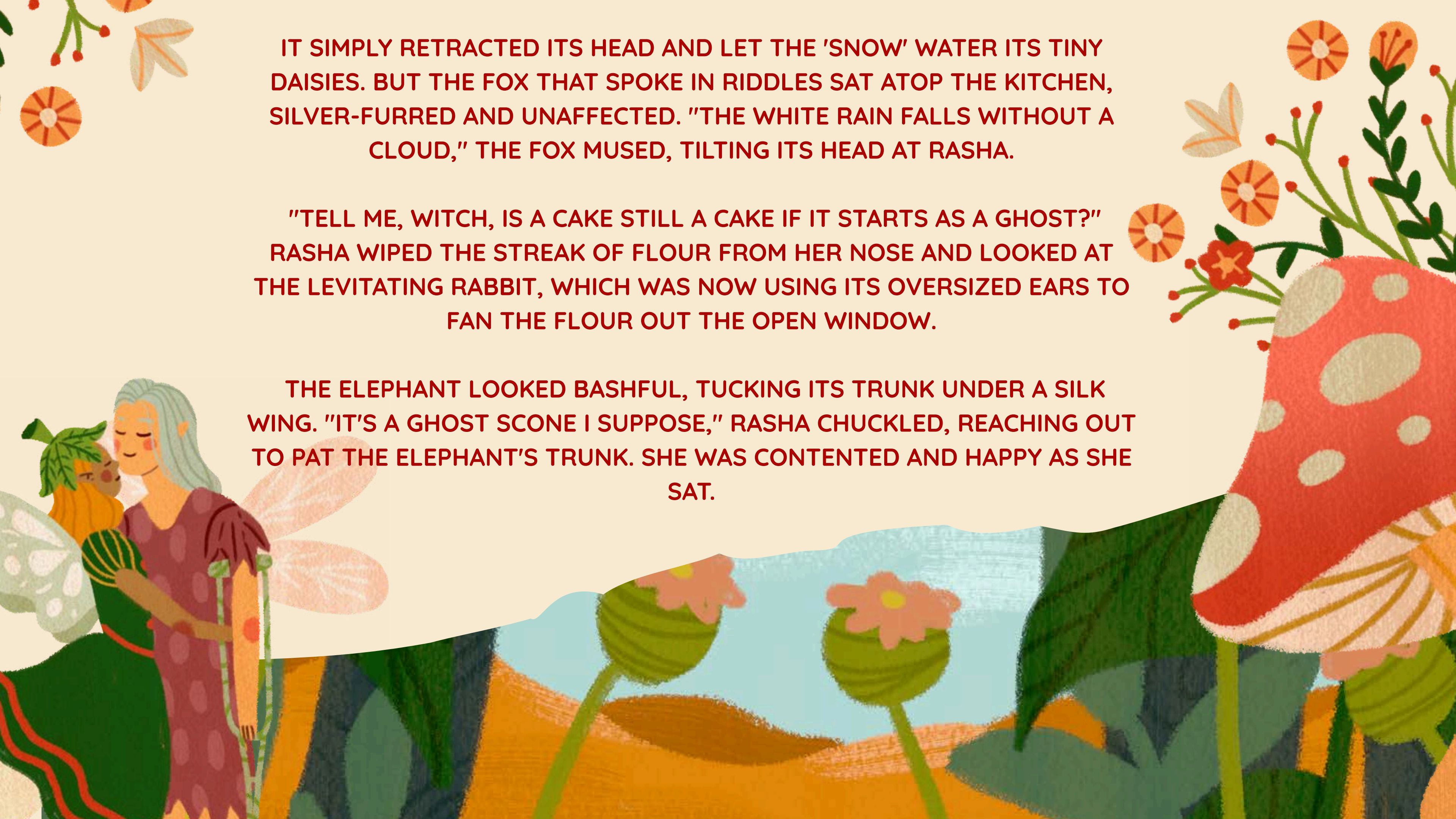
SUDDENLY THE KITCHEN LOOKED LIKE A SNOW GLOBE. THE TORTOISE WITH THE GARDEN SHELL DIDN'T MIND IT.



IT SIMPLY RETRACTED ITS HEAD AND LET THE 'SNOW' WATER ITS TINY DAISIES. BUT THE FOX THAT SPOKE IN RIDDLES SAT ATOP THE KITCHEN, SILVER-FURRED AND UNAFFECTED. "THE WHITE RAIN FALLS WITHOUT A CLOUD," THE FOX MUSED, TILTING ITS HEAD AT RASHA.

"TELL ME, WITCH, IS A CAKE STILL A CAKE IF IT STARTS AS A GHOST?" RASHA WIPE THE STREAK OF FLOUR FROM HER NOSE AND LOOKED AT THE LEVITATING RABBIT, WHICH WAS NOW USING ITS OVERSIZED EARS TO FAN THE FLOUR OUT THE OPEN WINDOW.

THE ELEPHANT LOOKED BASHFUL, TUCKING ITS TRUNK UNDER A SILK WING. "IT'S A GHOST SCONE I SUPPOSE," RASHA CHUCKLED, REACHING OUT TO PAT THE ELEPHANT'S TRUNK. SHE WAS CONTENTED AND HAPPY AS SHE SAT.



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SEVENTEEN





*I don't wanna forget my sixteen
the moment I turn seventeen,
I don't wanna lose what it taught me
what hardships I fought with,
what people I met—
what people I left.*





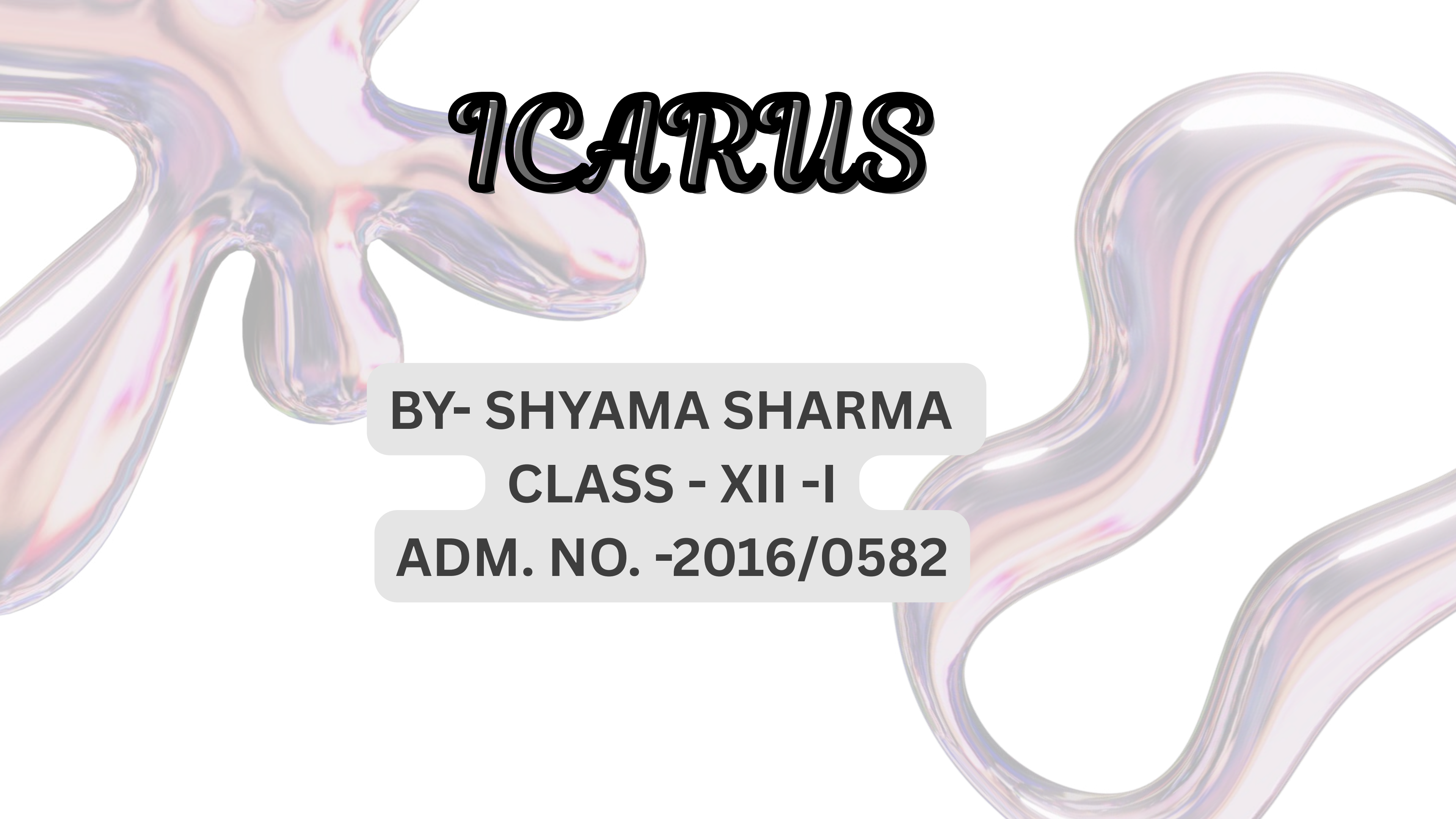
*The seventeen I become,
should be from the sixteen I came through
and remember as they go—
buzzing in my head blue.
Soft and smooth like nothing to pretend
O' the places, how can I forget*





*the sunset we watched together,
or the gloomy shy weather.*
*I won't forget what my sixteen the day I turn seventeen.
Seventeen would maybe all light and shining stars—
but sixteen made me come so far.
I would never forget my Sixteenth hour.*



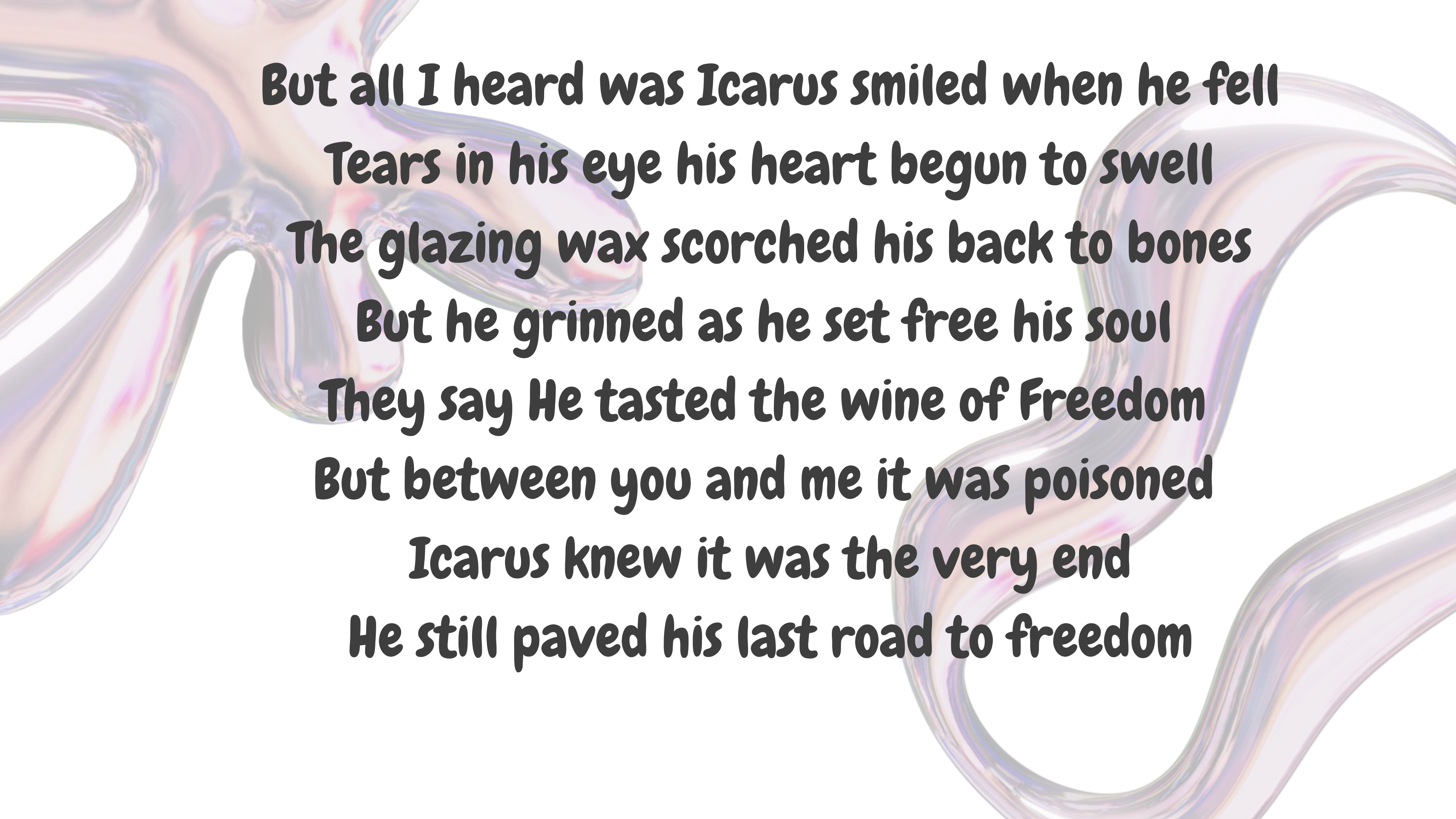


ICARUS

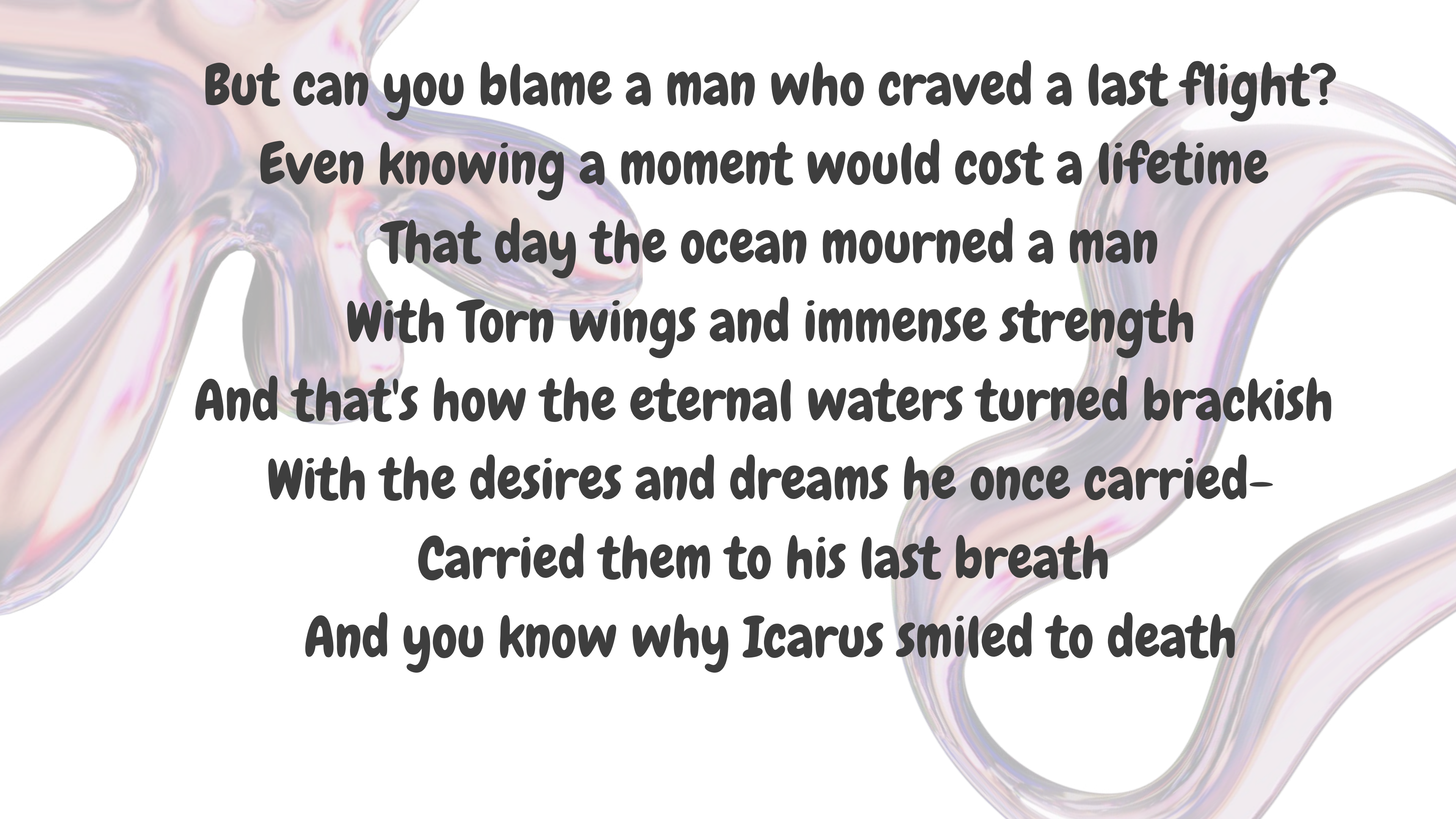
BY- SHYAMA SHARMA

CLASS - XII -I

ADM. NO. -2016/0582



**But all I heard was Icarus smiled when he fell
Tears in his eye his heart begun to swell
The glazing wax scorched his back to bones
But he grinned as he set free his soul
They say He tasted the wine of Freedom
But between you and me it was poisoned
Icarus knew it was the very end
He still paved his last road to freedom**



**But can you blame a man who craved a last flight?
Even knowing a moment would cost a lifetime
That day the ocean mourned a man
With Torn wings and immense strength
And that's how the eternal waters turned brackish
With the desires and dreams he once carried—
Carried them to his last breath
And you know why Icarus smiled to death**

जिंदगी

Name of Author – Arpita Semwal Category
(Student / Teacher) – Student Class &
Section (for Students)- IX – B Name of
School – Sheffield School Roorkee Contact
Number -8859255233 Email Address –
admin@sheffieldroorkee.com Title of the
Literary Work – Jindagi Language of
Submission- Hindi



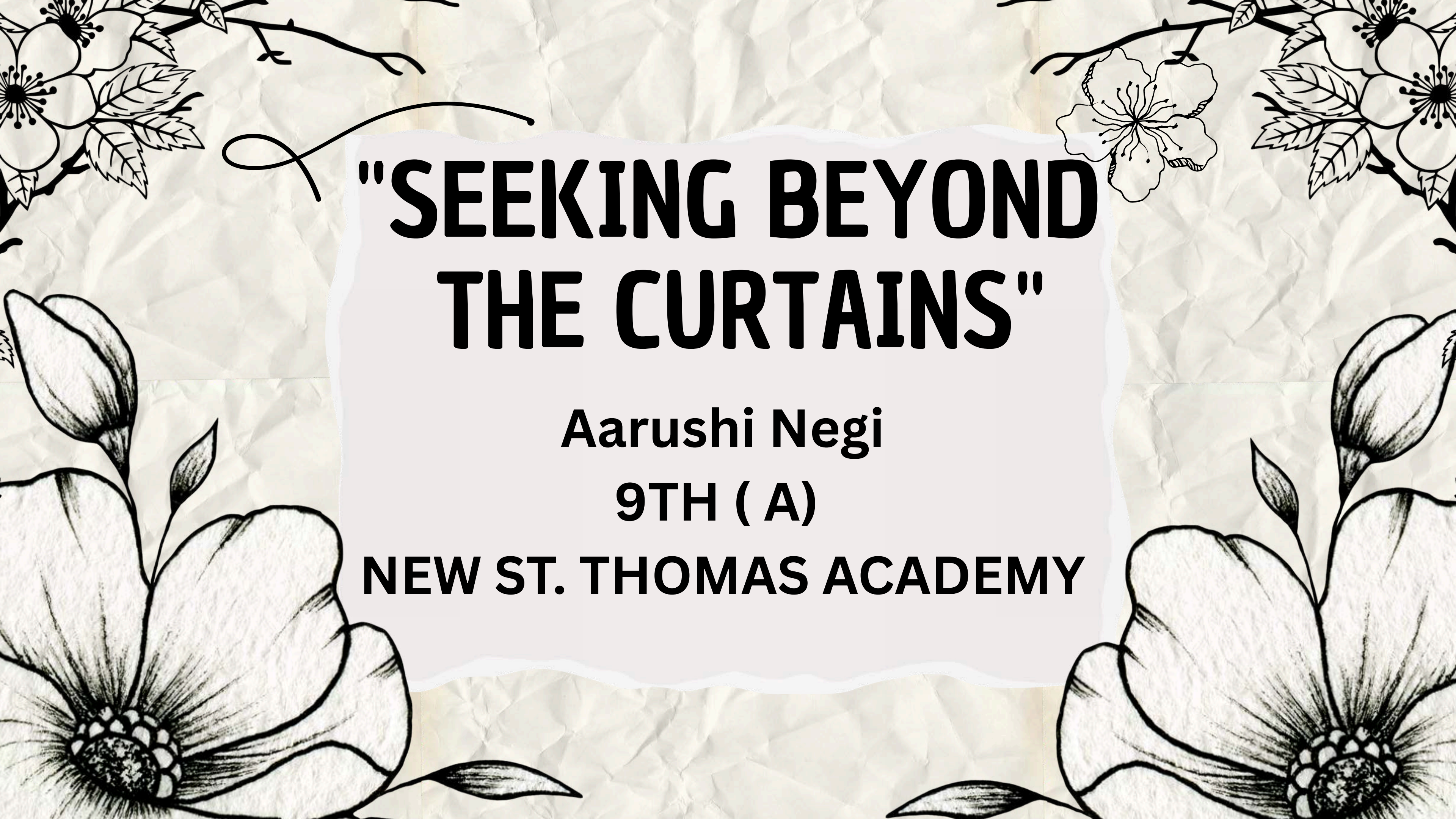
कुछ अधूरी ख्वाहिशों का सिलसिला है ज़िंदगी,
शायद इन्हीं अधूरी दास्तानों को जीते रहने का नाम है ज़िंदगी।

हर चीज़ का पूरा हो जाना ज़रूरी नहीं,
कुछ ख्वाहिशें बस साथ चलती रहना ही शायद काफी है।

कभी रास्ते आसान लगते हैं,
कभी एक कदम भी भारी लगता है



फिर भी इन उतार-चढ़ाव के पड़ावों से धीरे-धीरे गुजरना है
ज़िंदगी। न हर सवाल का जवाब चाहिए,
न हर मोड़ पर कोई मंज़िल बस थोड़ा ठहरकर,
थोड़ा सहकर और जो बचा है
उसे महसूस करते हुए आगे बढ़ते रहने का नाम है ज़िंदगी।

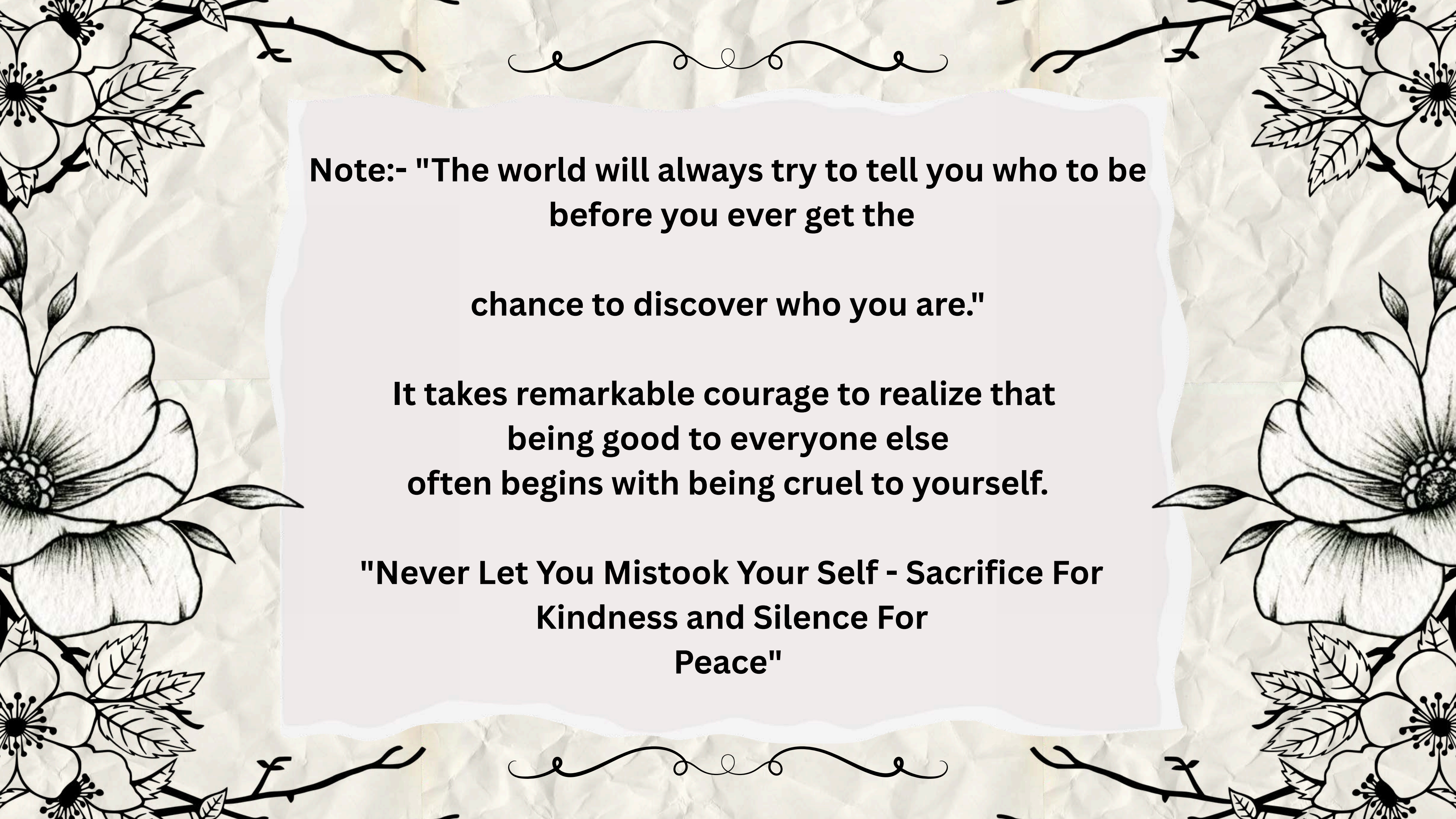
The background features a light beige crumpled paper texture. A central white rectangular area with a torn-edge effect contains the text. The corners are decorated with black line-art illustrations of flowers and leaves. In the top left and right, there are small, five-petaled flowers with many stamens. In the bottom left and right, there are larger, five-petaled flowers with prominent centers and buds.

"SEEKING BEYOND THE CURTAINS"

Aarushi Negi

9TH (A)

NEW ST. THOMAS ACADEMY

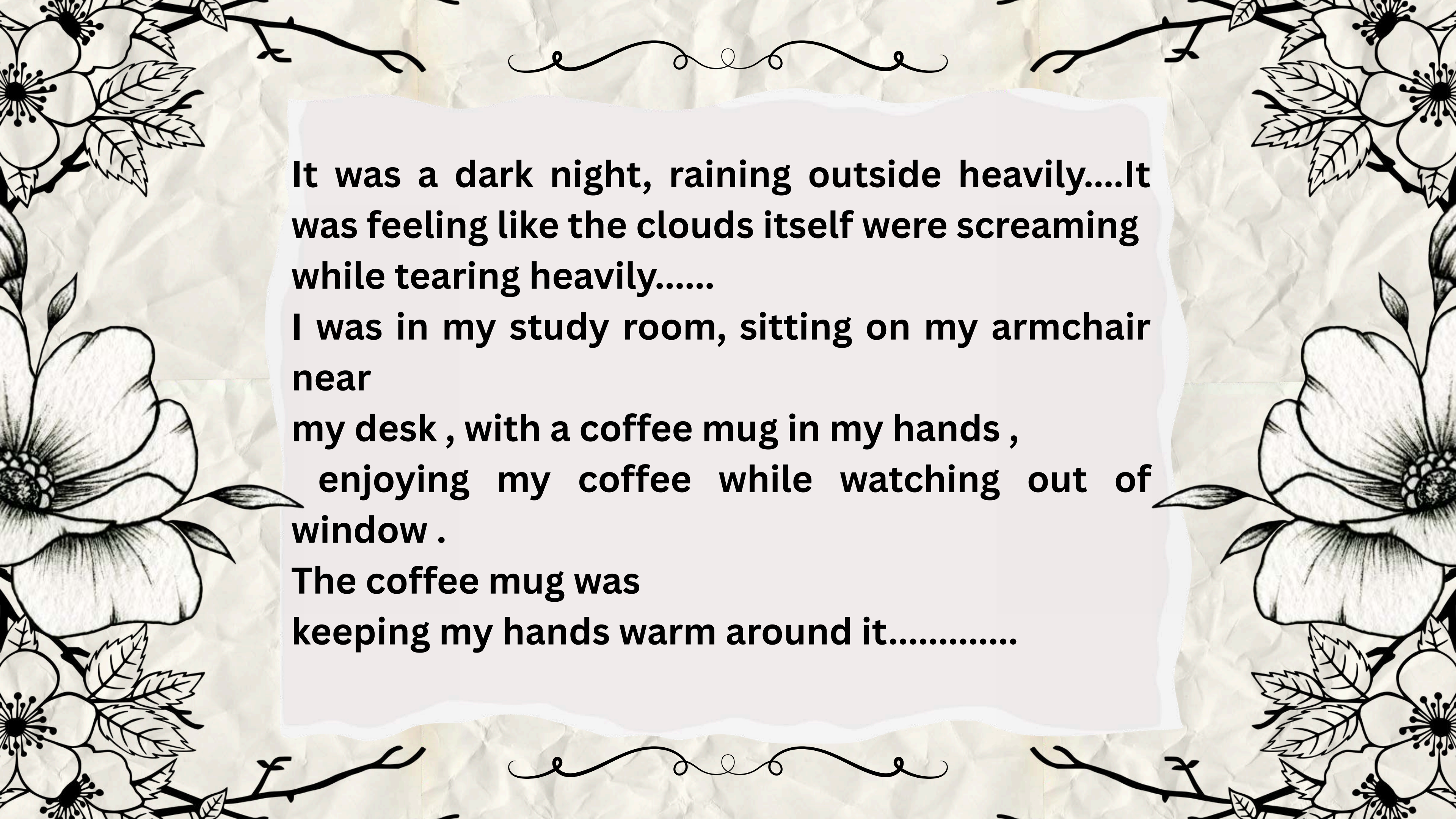


**Note:- "The world will always try to tell you who to be
before you ever get the**

chance to discover who you are."

**It takes remarkable courage to realize that
being good to everyone else
often begins with being cruel to yourself.**

**"Never Let You Mistook Your Self - Sacrifice For
Kindness and Silence For
Peace"**

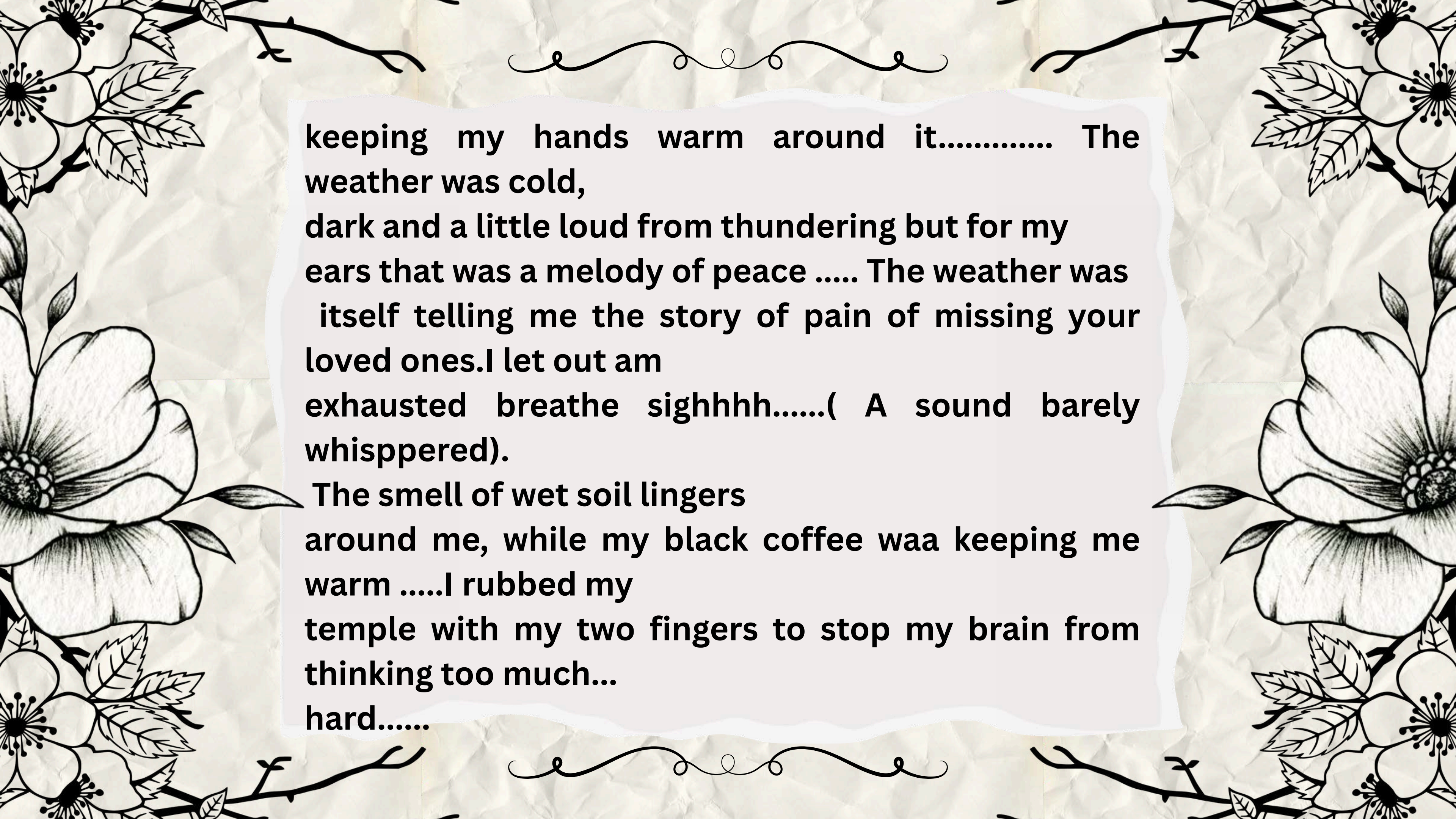


It was a dark night, raining outside heavily...It was feeling like the clouds itself were screaming while tearing heavily.....

I was in my study room, sitting on my armchair near

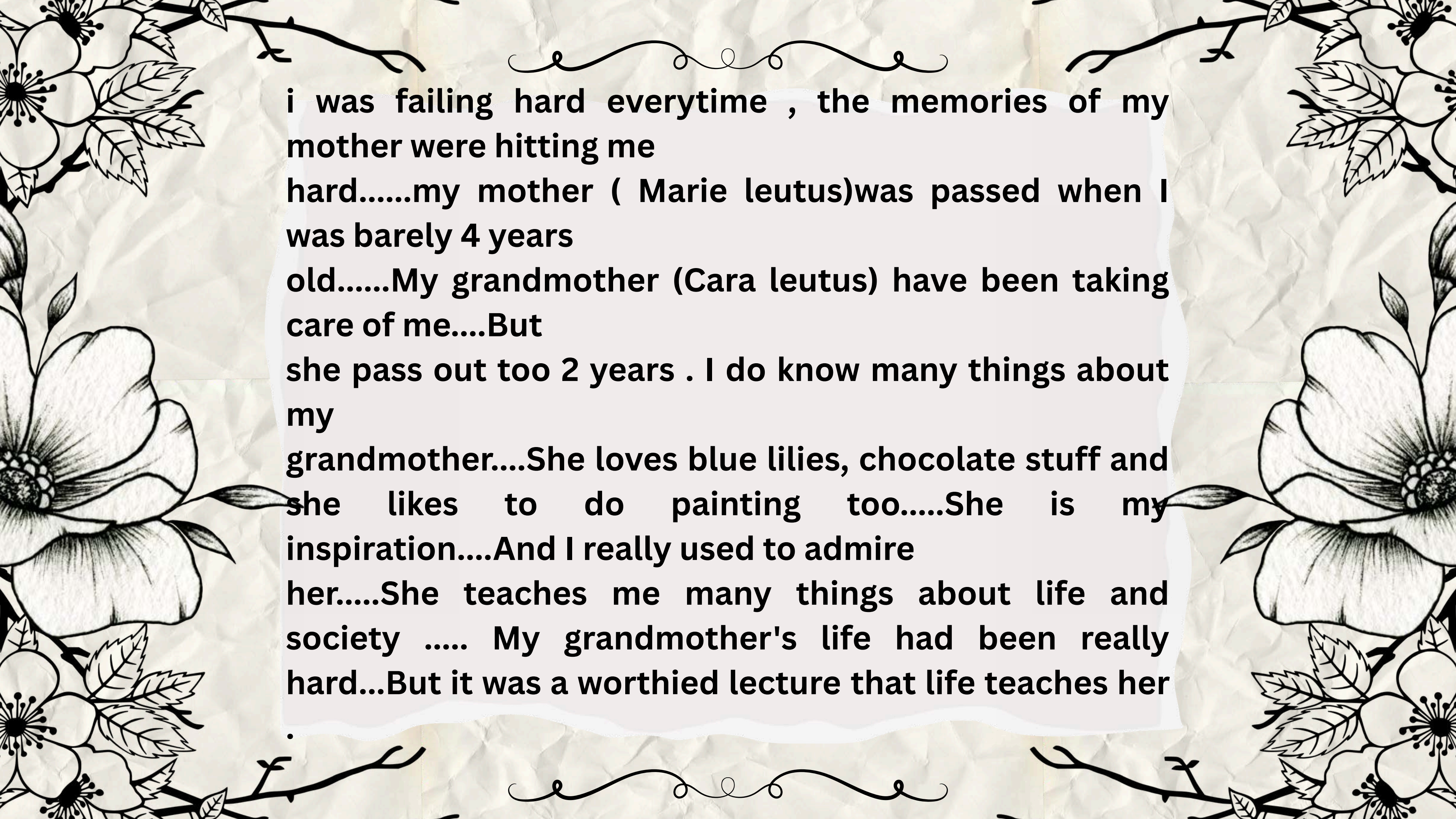
**my desk , with a coffee mug in my hands ,
enjoying my coffee while watching out of window .**

**The coffee mug was
keeping my hands warm around it.....**

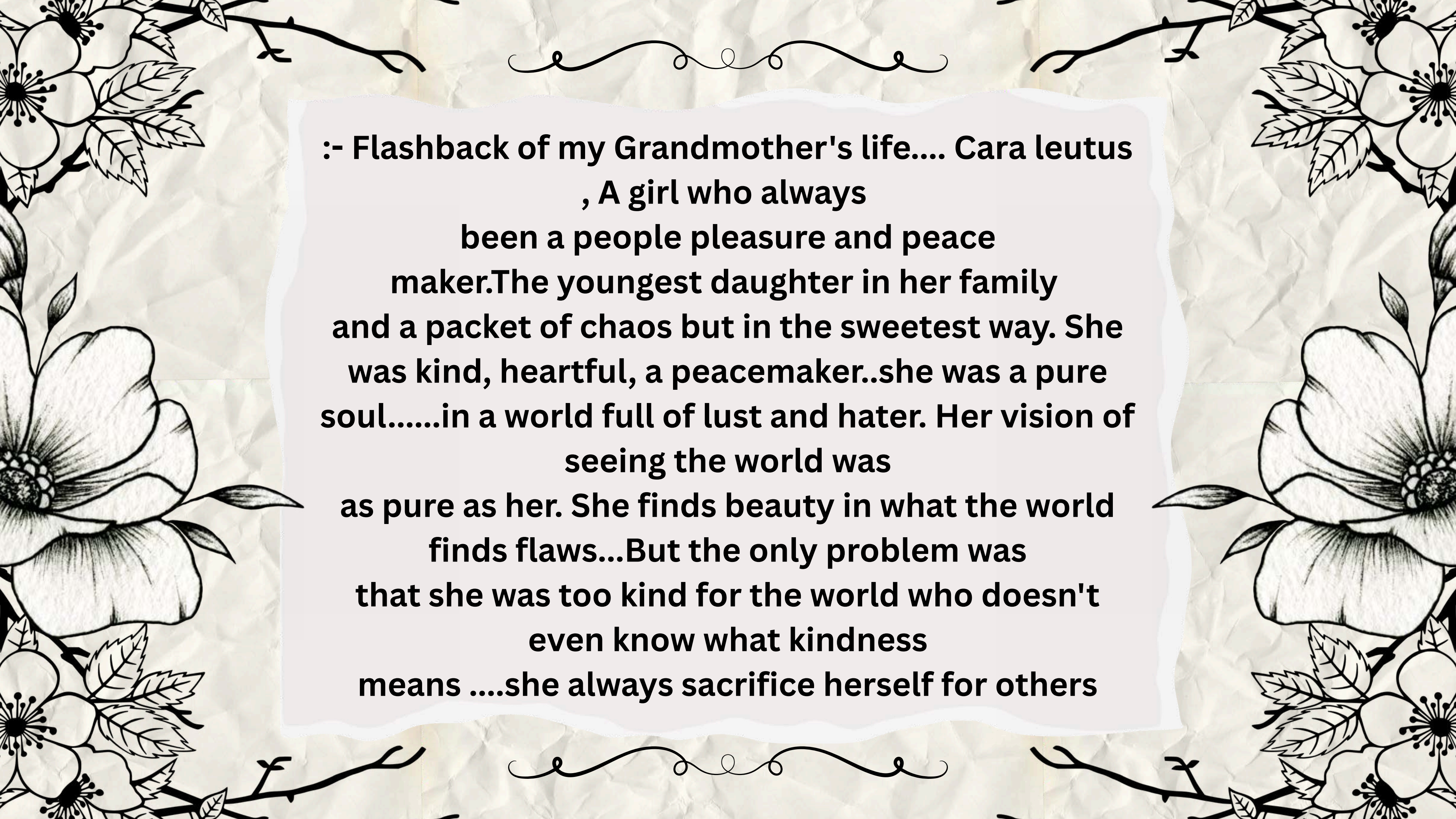


keeping my hands warm around it..... The weather was cold, dark and a little loud from thundering but for my ears that was a melody of peace The weather was itself telling me the story of pain of missing your loved ones. I let out an exhausted breathe sighhhh.....(A sound barely whispered).

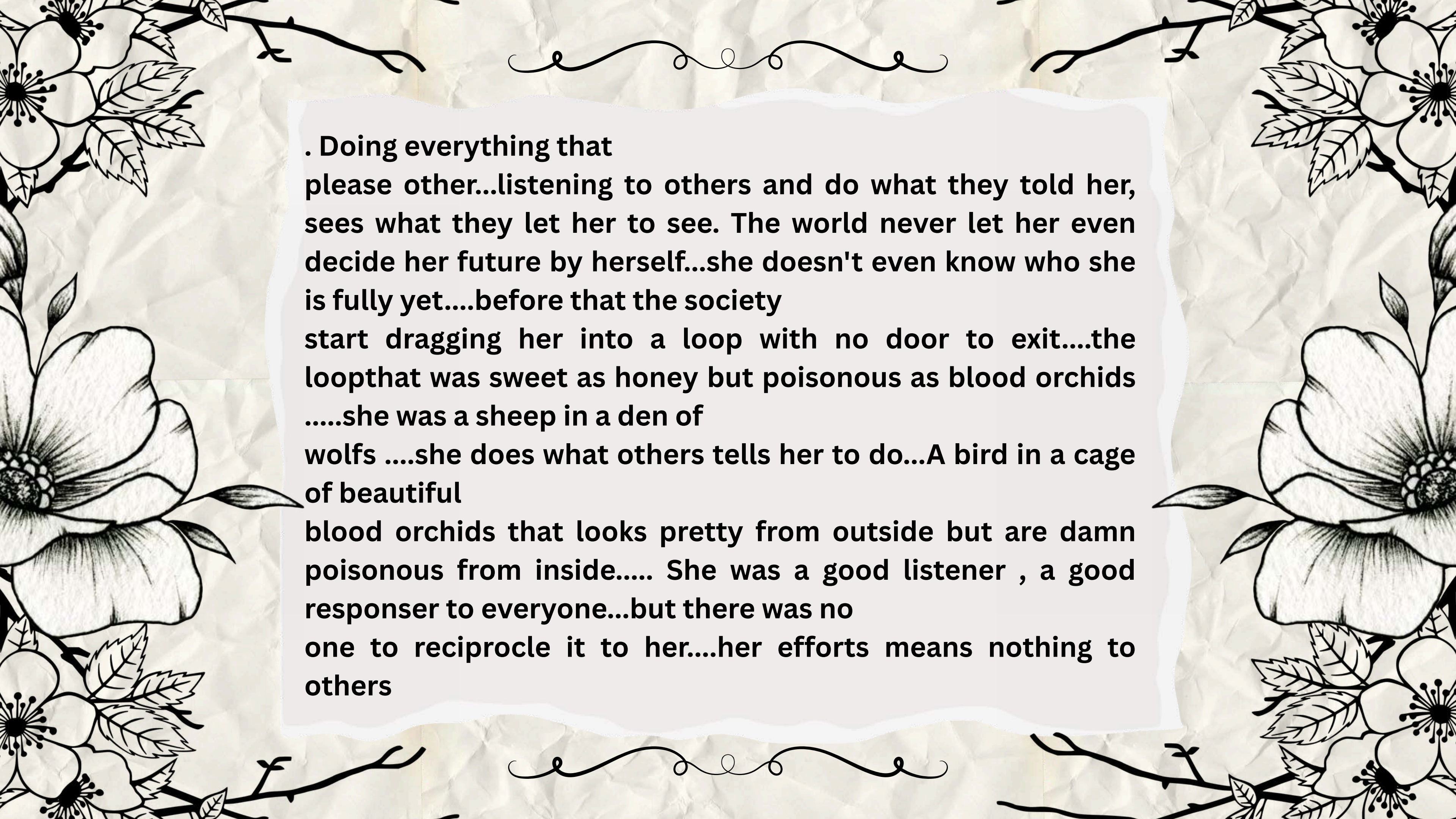
The smell of wet soil lingers around me, while my black coffee was keeping me warm I rubbed my temple with my two fingers to stop my brain from thinking too much... hard.....



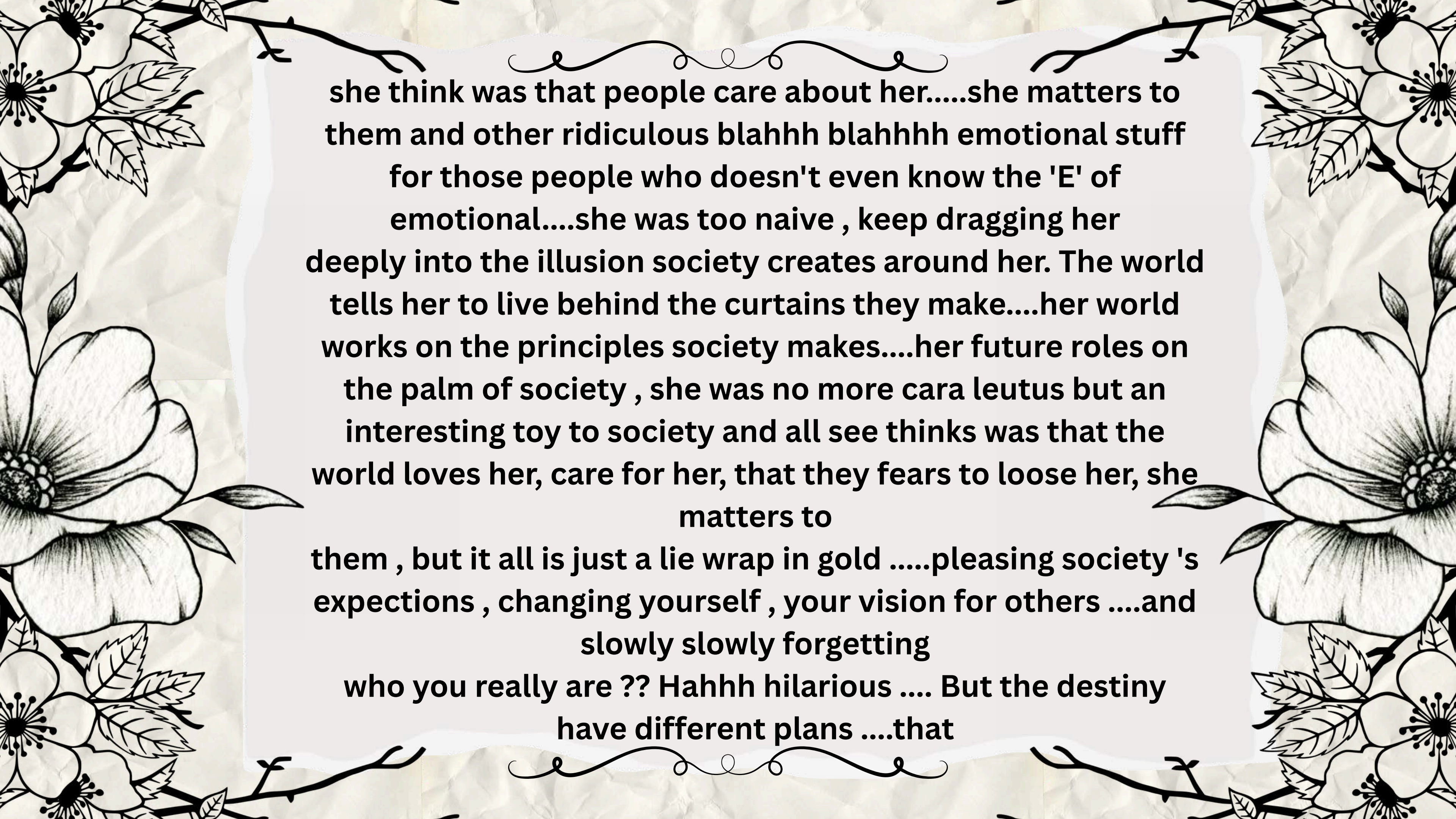
i was failing hard everytime , the memories of my mother were hitting me hard.....my mother (Marie leutus)was passed when I was barely 4 years old.....My grandmother (Cara leutus) have been taking care of me....But she pass out too 2 years . I do know many things about my grandmother...She loves blue lilies, chocolate stuff and she likes to do painting too.....She is my inspiration....And I really used to admire her....She teaches me many things about life and society My grandmother's life had been really hard...But it was a worthied lecture that life teaches her



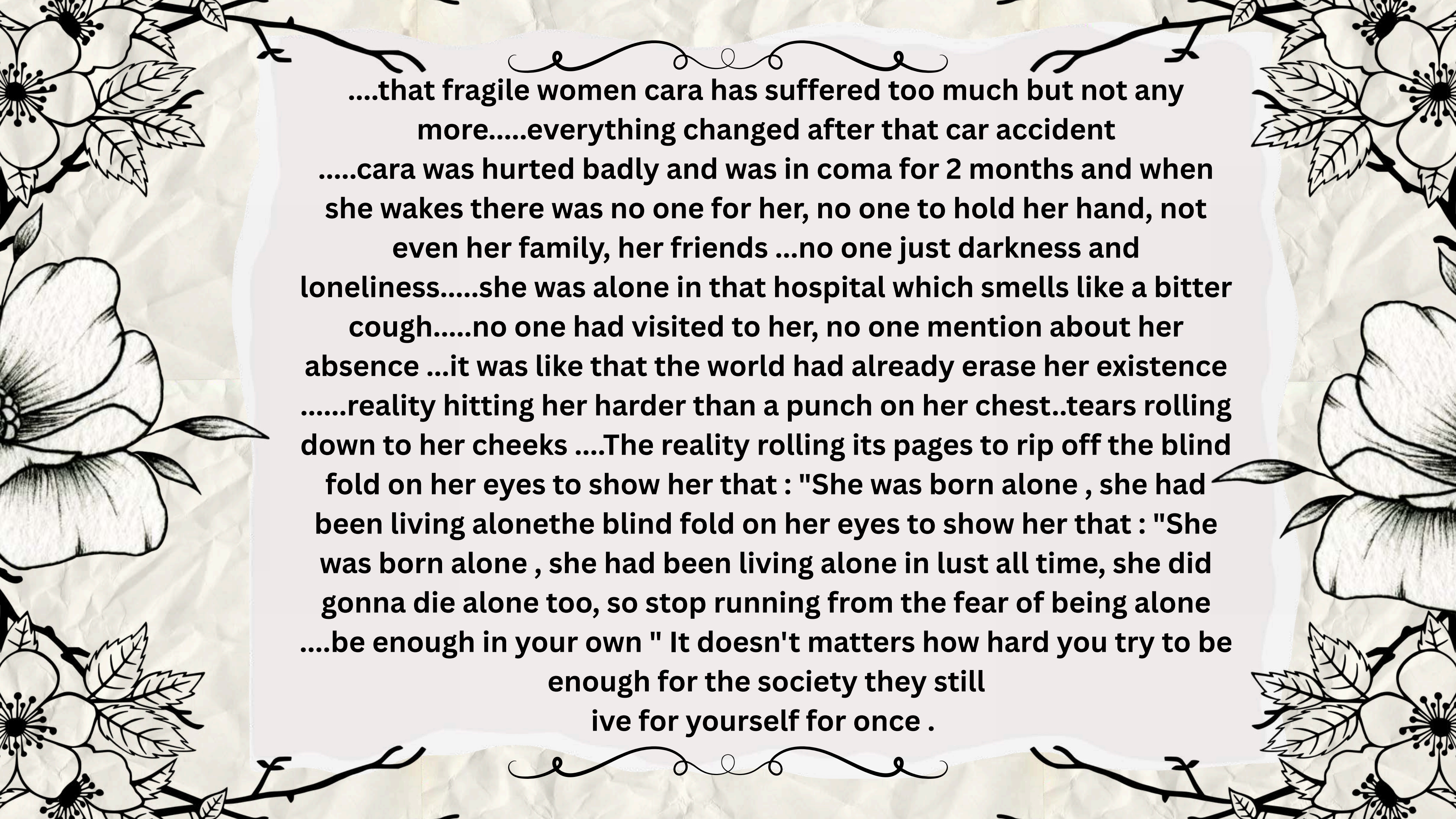
**:- Flashback of my Grandmother's life.... Cara leutus
 , A girl who always
 been a people pleasure and peace
 maker.The youngest daughter in her family
 and a packet of chaos but in the sweetest way. She
 was kind, heartfelt, a peacemaker..she was a pure
 soul.....in a world full of lust and hater. Her vision of
 seeing the world was
 as pure as her. She finds beauty in what the world
 finds flaws...But the only problem was
 that she was too kind for the world who doesn't
 even know what kindness
 meansshe always sacrifice herself for others**



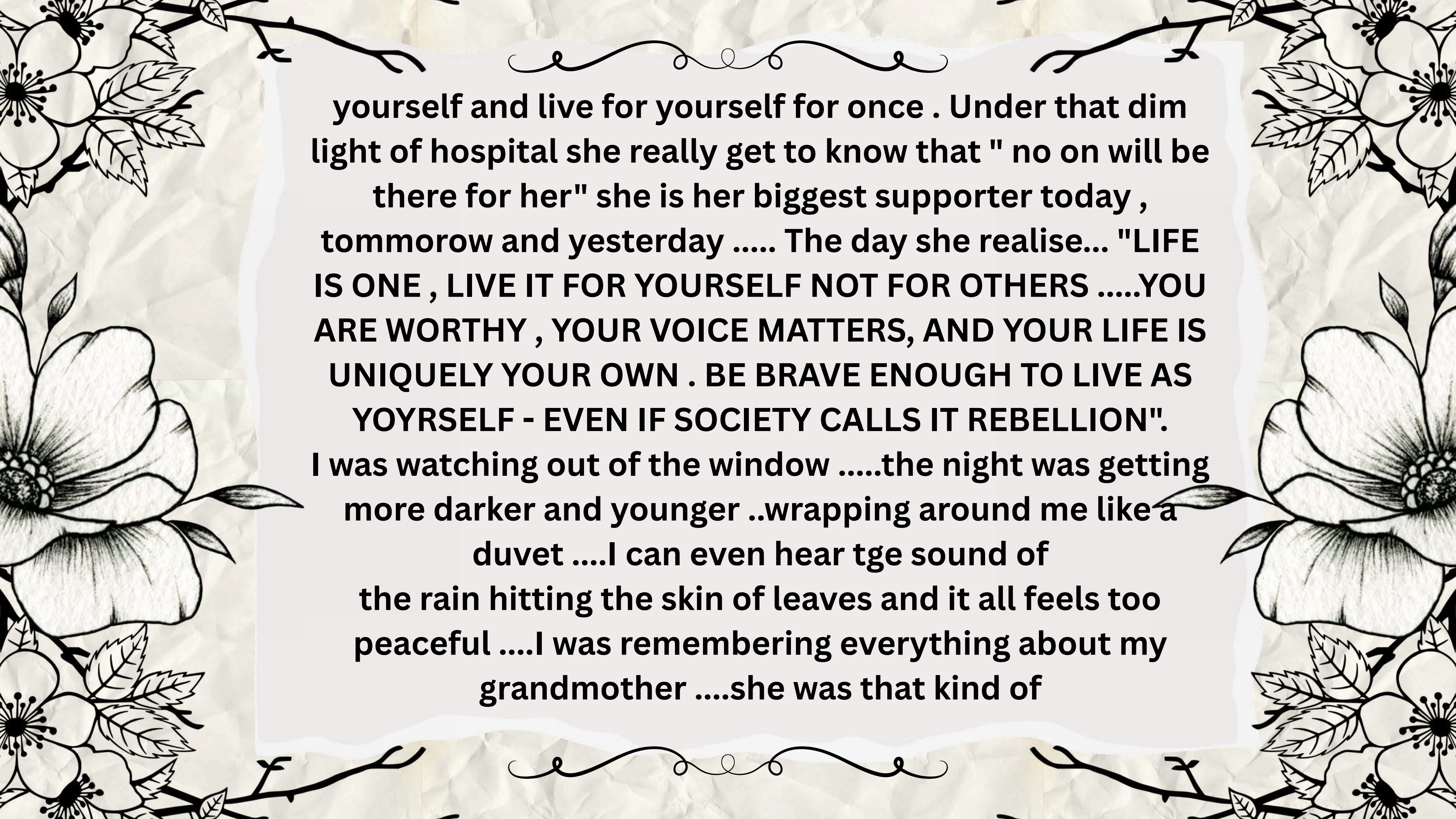
**. Doing everything that
please other...listening to others and do what they told her,
sees what they let her to see. The world never let her even
decide her future by herself...she doesn't even know who she
is fully yet....before that the society
start dragging her into a loop with no door to exit...the
loop that was sweet as honey but poisonous as blood orchids
.....she was a sheep in a den of
wolvesshe does what others tells her to do...A bird in a cage
of beautiful
blood orchids that looks pretty from outside but are damn
poisonous from inside..... She was a good listener , a good
responser to everyone...but there was no
one to reciprocate it to her...her efforts means nothing to
others**



she think was that people care about her....she matters to them and other ridiculous blahhh blahhhh emotional stuff for those people who doesn't even know the 'E' of emotional....she was too naive , keep dragging her deeply into the illusion society creates around her. The world tells her to live behind the curtains they make....her world works on the principles society makes....her future roles on the palm of society , she was no more cara leutus but an interesting toy to society and all see thinks was that the world loves her, care for her, that they fears to loose her, she matters to them , but it all is just a lie wrap in goldpleasing society 's expectations , changing yourself , your vision for othersand slowly slowly forgetting who you really are ?? Hahhh hilarious But the destiny have different plansthat

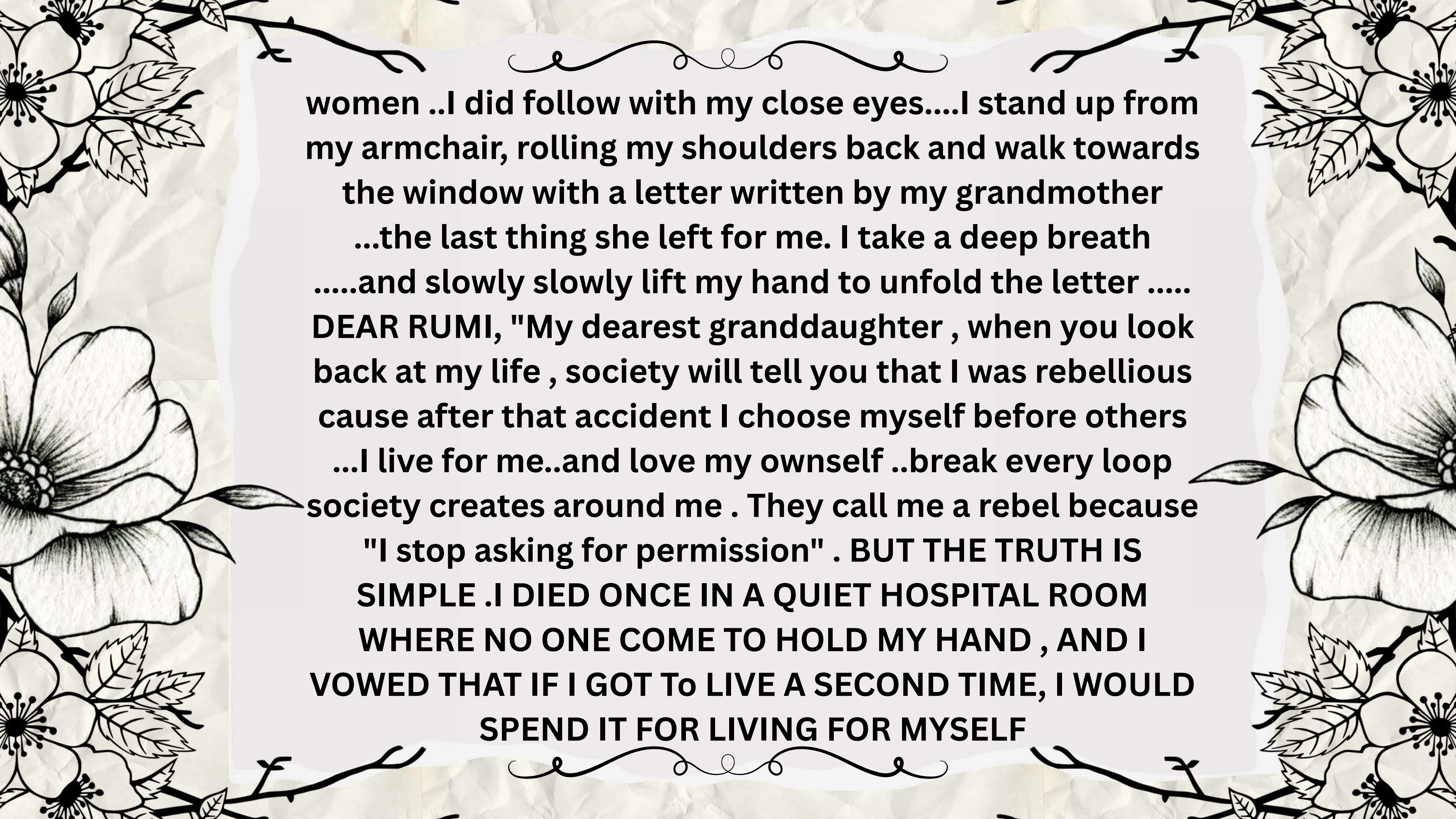


**....that fragile women cara has suffered too much but not any more.....everything changed after that car accident
....cara was hurted badly and was in coma for 2 months and when she wakes there was no one for her, no one to hold her hand, not even her family, her friends ...no one just darkness and loneliness....she was alone in that hospital which smells like a bitter cough.....no one had visited to her, no one mention about her absence ...it was like that the world had already erase her existencereality hitting her harder than a punch on her chest..tears rolling down to her cheeksThe reality rolling its pages to rip off the blind fold on her eyes to show her that : "She was born alone , she had been living alonethe blind fold on her eyes to show her that : "She was born alone , she had been living alone in lust all time, she did gonna die alone too, so stop running from the fear of being alonebe enough in your own " It doesn't matters how hard you try to be enough for the society they still
ive for yourself for once .**



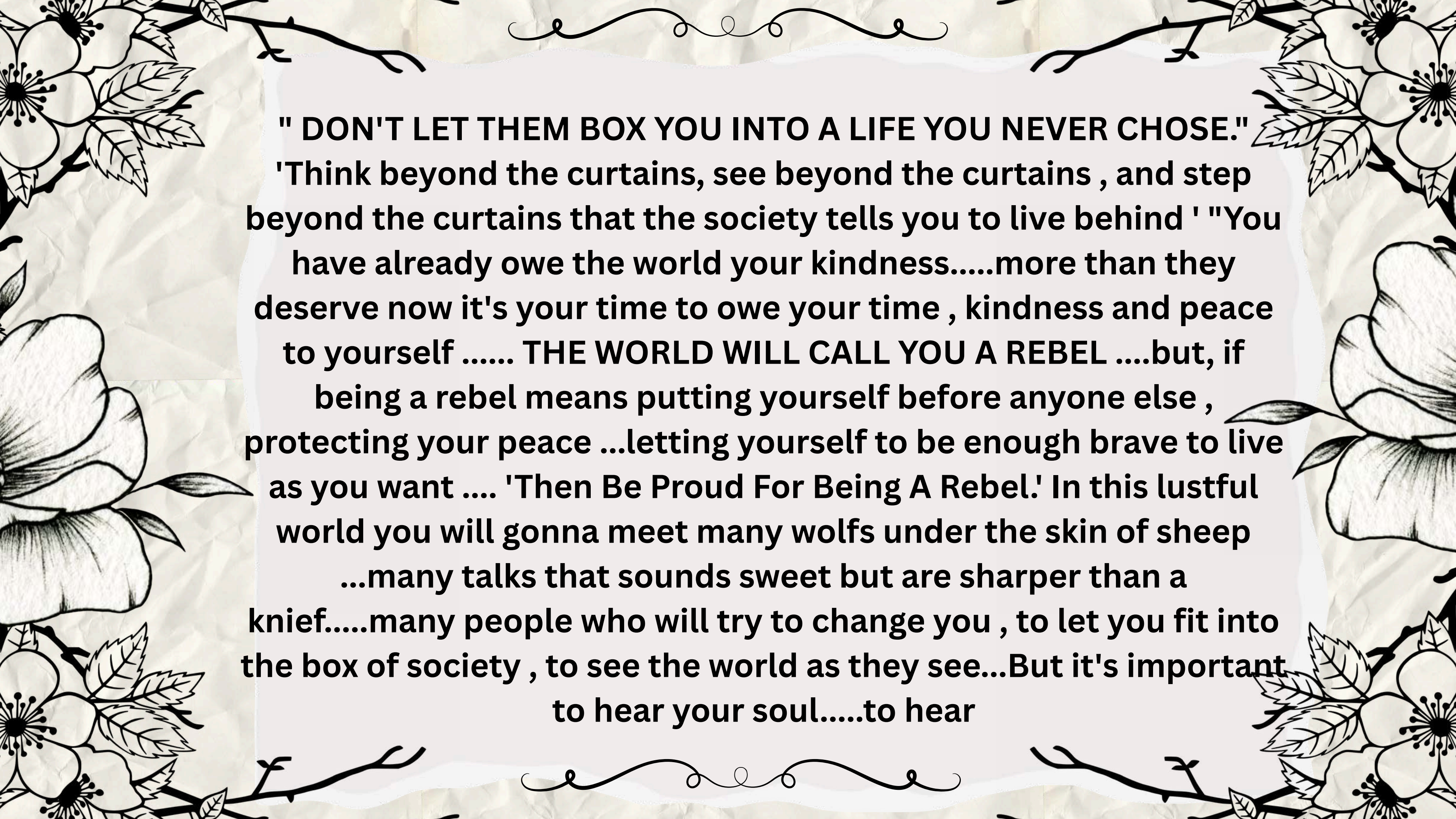
yourself and live for yourself for once . Under that dim light of hospital she really get to know that " no one will be there for her" she is her biggest supporter today , tomorrow and yesterday The day she realise... "LIFE IS ONE , LIVE IT FOR YOURSELF NOT FOR OTHERSYOU ARE WORTHY , YOUR VOICE MATTERS, AND YOUR LIFE IS UNIQUELY YOUR OWN . BE BRAVE ENOUGH TO LIVE AS YOURSELF - EVEN IF SOCIETY CALLS IT REBELLION".

I was watching out of the windowthe night was getting more darker and younger ..wrapping around me like a duvetI can even hear the sound of the rain hitting the skin of leaves and it all feels too peacefulI was remembering everything about my grandmothershe was that kind of

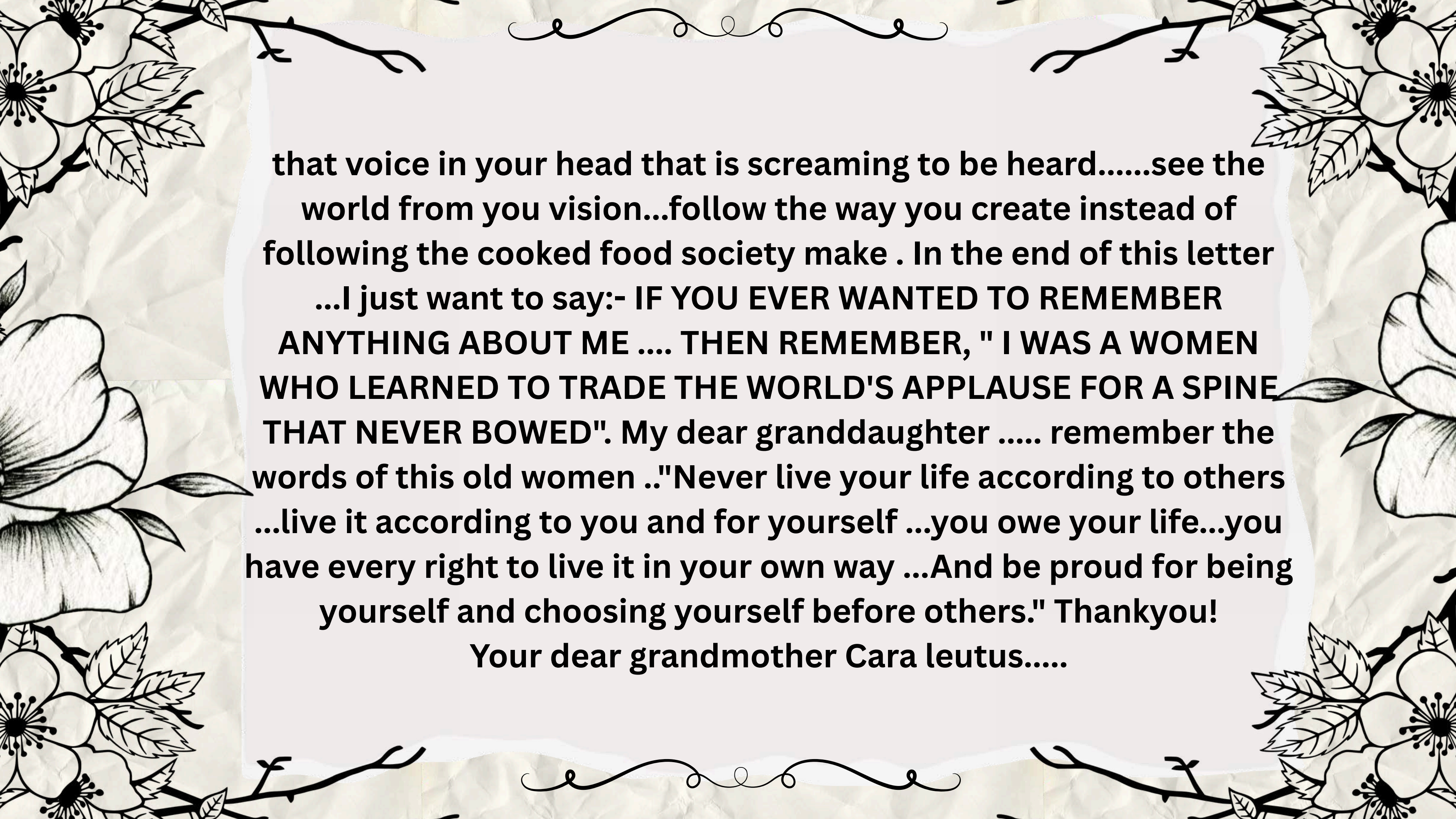


women ..I did follow with my close eyes....I stand up from my armchair, rolling my shoulders back and walk towards the window with a letter written by my grandmother

...the last thing she left for me. I take a deep breath
.....and slowly slowly lift my hand to unfold the letter
**DEAR RUMI, "My dearest granddaughter , when you look back at my life , society will tell you that I was rebellious cause after that accident I choose myself before others
...I live for me..and love my ownself ..break every loop society creates around me . They call me a rebel because
"I stop asking for permission" . BUT THE TRUTH IS SIMPLE .I DIED ONCE IN A QUIET HOSPITAL ROOM WHERE NO ONE COME TO HOLD MY HAND , AND I VOWED THAT IF I GOT To LIVE A SECOND TIME, I WOULD SPEND IT FOR LIVING FOR MYSELF**

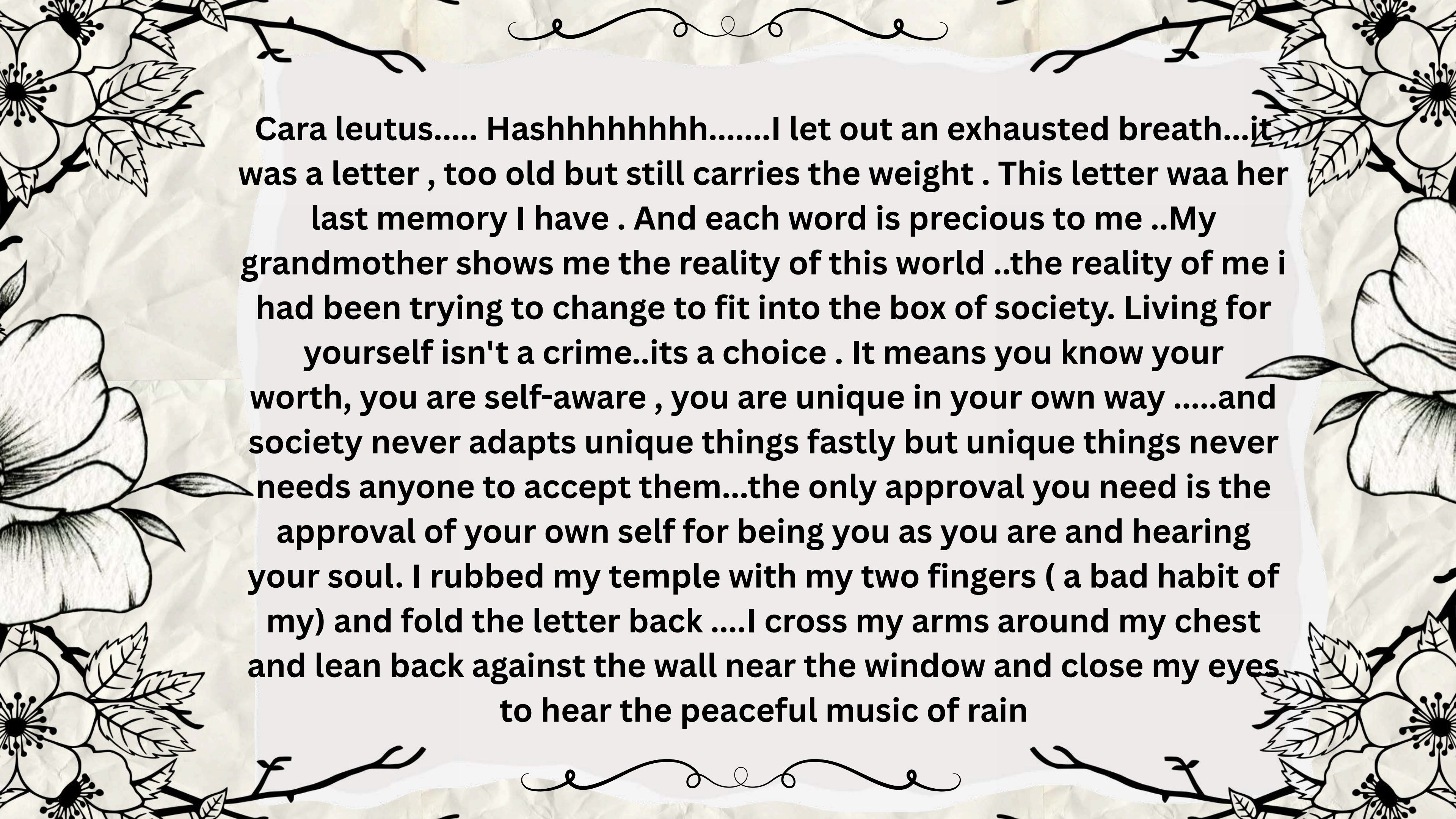


" DON'T LET THEM BOX YOU INTO A LIFE YOU NEVER CHOSE."
'Think beyond the curtains, see beyond the curtains , and step beyond the curtains that the society tells you to live behind ' "You have already owe the world your kindness.....more than they deserve now it's your time to owe your time , kindness and peace to yourself THE WORLD WILL CALL YOU A REBELbut, if being a rebel means putting yourself before anyone else , protecting your peace ...letting yourself to be enough brave to live as you want 'Then Be Proud For Being A Rebel.' In this lustful world you will gonna meet many wolfs under the skin of sheep ...many talks that sounds sweet but are sharper than a knief.....many people who will try to change you , to let you fit into the box of society , to see the world as they see...But it's important to hear your soul.....to hear

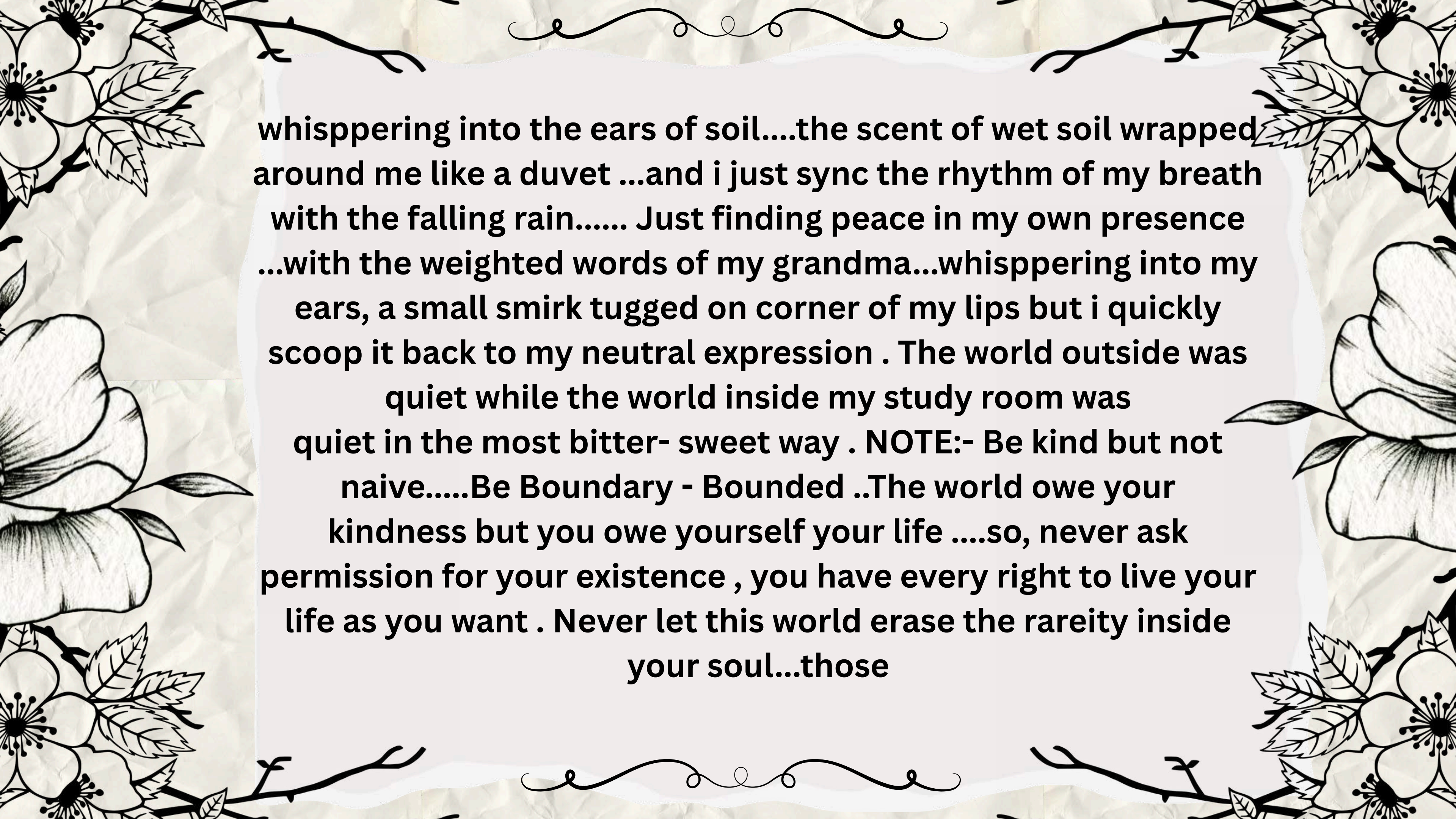


that voice in your head that is screaming to be heard.....see the world from you vision...follow the way you create instead of following the cooked food society make . In the end of this letter ...I just want to say:- IF YOU EVER WANTED TO REMEMBER ANYTHING ABOUT ME THEN REMEMBER, " I WAS A WOMEN WHO LEARNED TO TRADE THE WORLD'S APPLAUSE FOR A SPINE THAT NEVER BOWED". My dear granddaughter remember the words of this old women .."Never live your life according to others ...live it according to you and for yourself ...you owe your life...you have every right to live it in your own way ...And be proud for being yourself and choosing yourself before others." Thankyou!

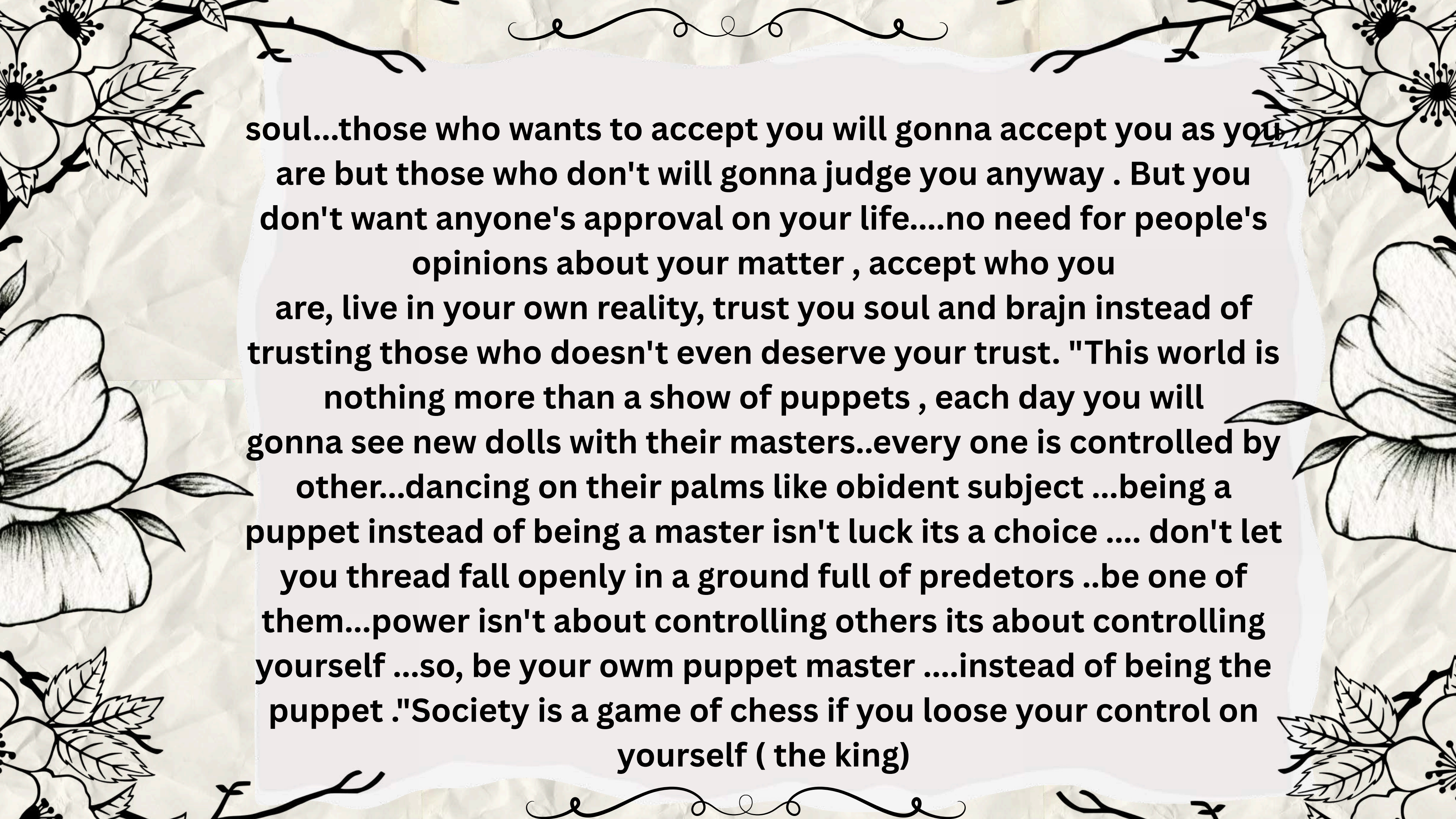
Your dear grandmother Cara leutus.....



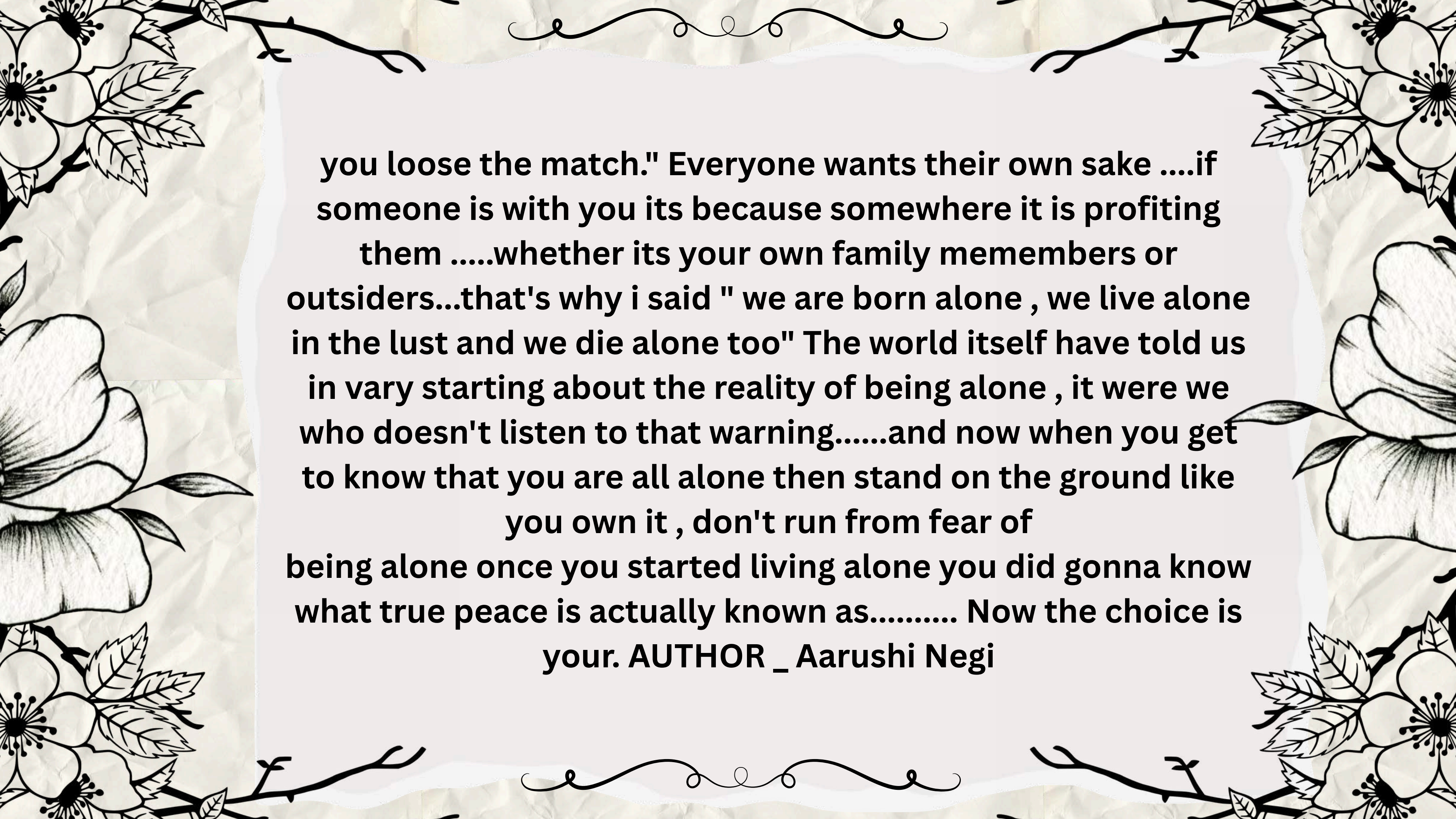
Cara leutus..... Hashhhhhhhh.....I let out an exhausted breath...it was a letter , too old but still carries the weight . This letter waa her last memory I have . And each word is precious to me ..My grandmother shows me the reality of this world ..the reality of me i had been trying to change to fit into the box of society. Living for yourself isn't a crime..its a choice . It means you know your worth, you are self-aware , you are unique in your own wayand society never adapts unique things fastly but unique things never needs anyone to accept them...the only approval you need is the approval of your own self for being you as you are and hearing your soul. I rubbed my temple with my two fingers (a bad habit of my) and fold the letter backI cross my arms around my chest and lean back against the wall near the window and close my eyes to hear the peaceful music of rain



whisppering into the ears of soil....the scent of wet soil wrapped around me like a duvet ...and i just sync the rhythm of my breath with the falling rain..... Just finding peace in my own presence ...with the weighted words of my grandma...whisppering into my ears, a small smirk tugged on corner of my lips but i quickly scoop it back to my neutral expression . The world outside was quiet while the world inside my study room was quiet in the most bitter- sweet way . NOTE:- Be kind but not naive.....Be Boundary - Bounded ..The world owe your kindness but you owe yourself your lifeso, never ask permission for your existence , you have every right to live your life as you want . Never let this world erase the rareity inside your soul...those



soul...those who wants to accept you will gonna accept you as you are but those who don't will gonna judge you anyway . But you don't want anyone's approval on your life....no need for people's opinions about your matter , accept who you are, live in your own reality, trust you soul and brajn instead of trusting those who doesn't even deserve your trust. "This world is nothing more than a show of puppets , each day you will gonna see new dolls with their masters..every one is controlled by other...dancing on their palms like obident subject ...being a puppet instead of being a master isn't luck its a choice don't let you thread fall openly in a ground full of predetors ..be one of them...power isn't about controlling others its about controlling yourself ...so, be your owm puppet masterinstead of being the puppet ."Society is a game of chess if you loose your control on yourself (the king)



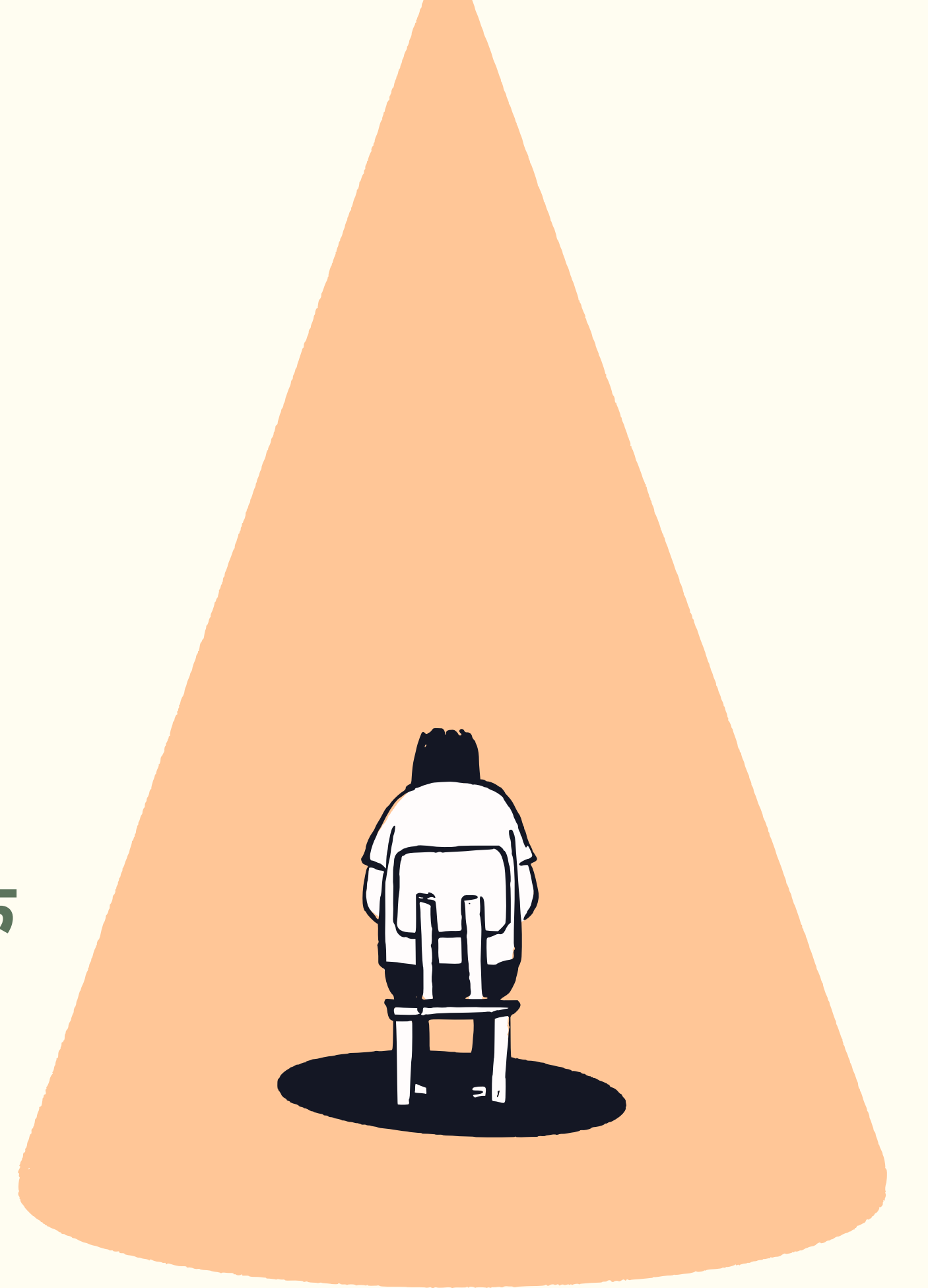
you loose the match." Everyone wants their own sakeif someone is with you its because somewhere it is profiting themwhether its your own family memembers or outsiders...that's why i said " we are born alone , we live alone in the lust and we die alone too" The world itself have told us in vary starting about the reality of being alone , it were we who doesn't listen to that warning.....and now when you get to know that you are all alone then stand on the ground like you own it , don't run from fear of being alone once you started living alone you did gonna know what true peace is actually known as..... Now the choice is your. AUTHOR _Aarushi Negi

मनस्तत्त्वस्य विवेचनम्

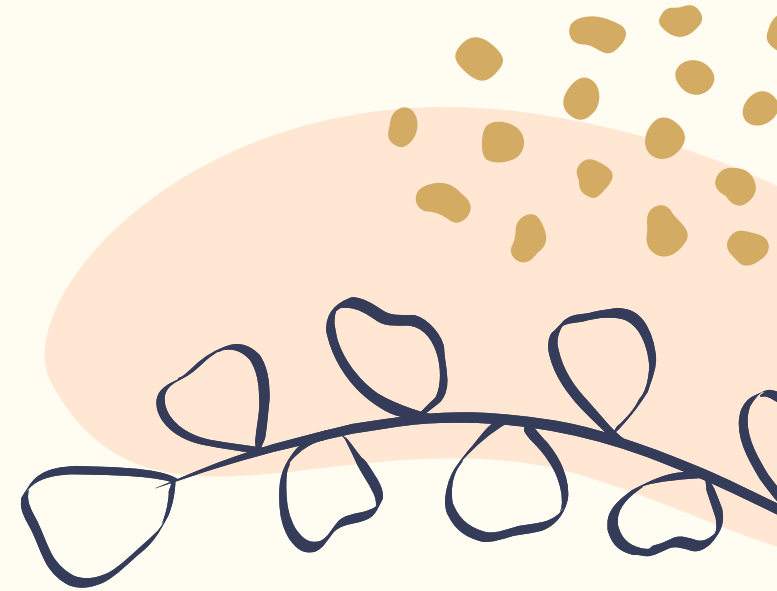
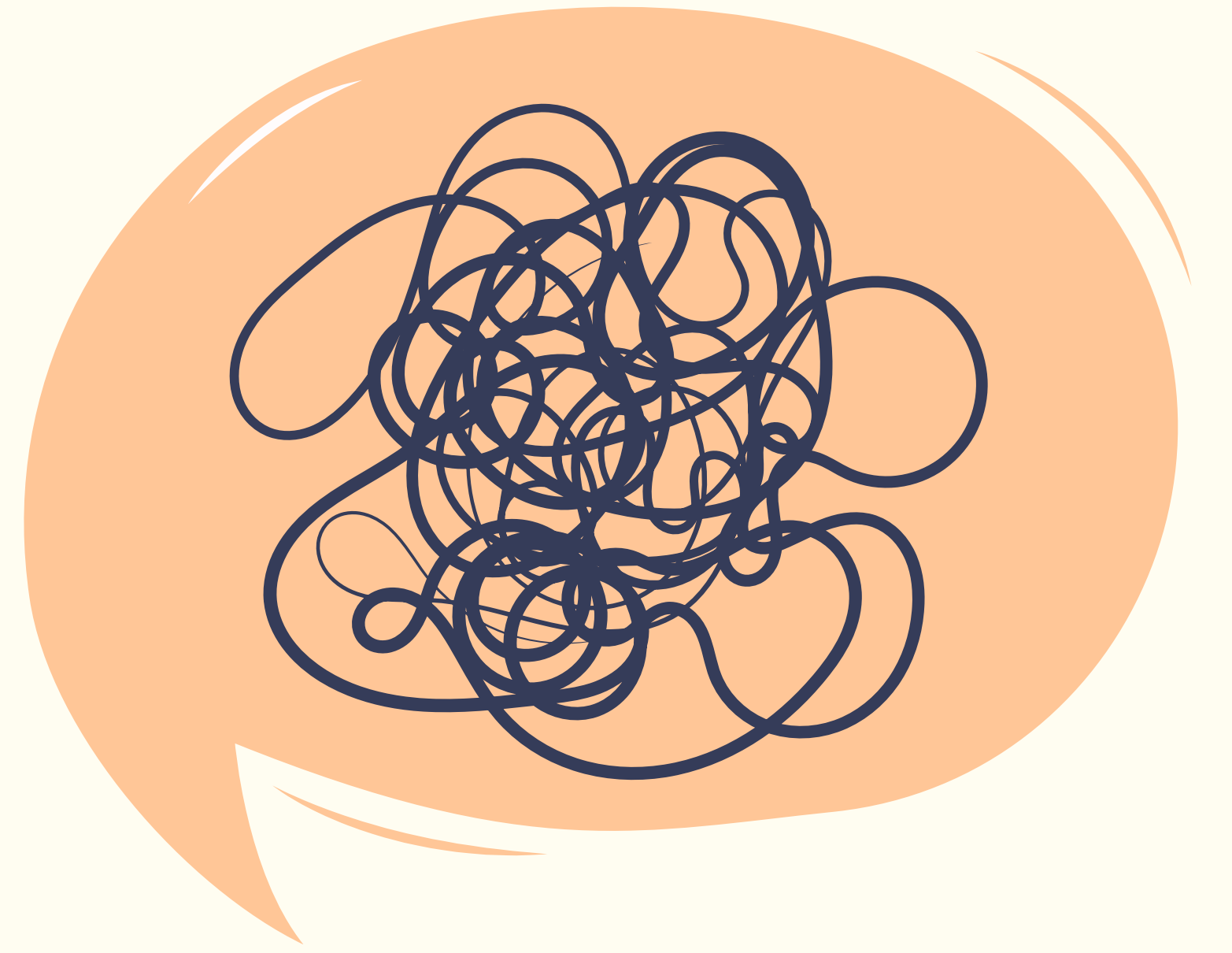
Dr. Shalini Thakral
PARENT



अखिलेऽस्मिन् विश्वे यदारभ्य मानवस्य अस्तित्वं
सज्जातं तदारभ्य तस्य क्रियाकलापानां मूलं मन
एव मन्यते। सर्वासां बाह्यचेष्टानाम् उत्पादिका
शक्तिः मन एव वर्तते। मानवस्य
जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्तितुरीयावस्थानां मूलमपि मनः
वर्तते। ब्राह्मजगतः अन्तः जगतः सेतुरपि मानवस्य
मनः विद्यते। मानवस्य सुखं दुःखं पापं पुण्यं
शुभाशुभं क्षतिः बुद्धिः बन्धनं मोक्षश्चापि मनोमूलकं
कथ्यन्ते । वस्तुतः पुरुषस्य कर्तृत्वं भोक्तृत्वं सुखं
दुःखं धर्मः अधर्मादयः एते चित्तस्यैव धर्माः सन्ति।



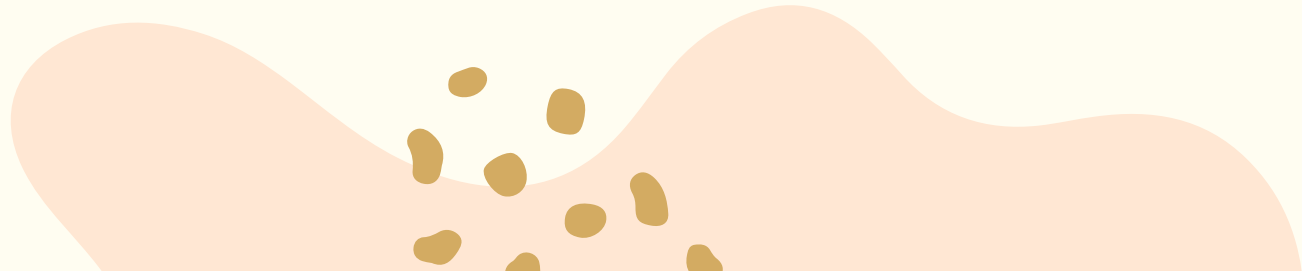
मानवजीवने मनसः विशिष्टं स्थानं वर्तते यतोहि
आत्मनः कारणं मनः विद्यते। मनसा आत्मा
धर्माधर्मकार्येषु प्रवृत्तः जायते। मन एव मनुष्यस्य
अन्तःस्थसाधनमस्ति येन तत् चिन्तयति अवगच्छति
तर्कयति इच्छति सङ्कल्पयति विविधानां वस्तूनां च
अनुभवं प्राप्नोति । एतान् बौद्धिकानुभवानतिरिच्य
मनुष्यः मक्रोधमोहलोभईर्ष्याद्वेषादीनां
संवेगानामपि अनुभवं करोति। मनसः स्तरद्वयमस्ति
चेतनम् अचेतनञ्च। यदा मानसिकक्रियाः जायन्ते
मनुष्ये चैतन्यं विद्यते चेतनाः प्रति जागरूको
जायते। तदा अस्य स्तरस्य मनसः चेतनमनः
इत्युच्यते। यासां क्रियाणां समये मनः
अनवधानपूर्वकं तिष्ठति तदा तस्य मनसः अचेतनं
मनः अवचेतनं मनो वा उच्यते।



मनश्शब्दार्थविचारः

मननात् मन उच्यते मन्यते बुध्यते इति मनः अर्थात् येन ज्ञानं प्राप्यते तत् 'मनः' वर्तते मन्धातोः असुन्प्रत्यये कृते मनश्शब्दः निष्पद्यते । निरुक्तकारेण आचार्ययास्केन निजग्रन्थे मनश्शब्दस्य व्युत्पत्तिः 'मनु अवबोधने' इत्यनेन कृताऽस्ति। यस्यार्थः भवति- अवबोधनं चिन्तनं मननमादय । मनसः अनेके पर्यायवाचिशब्दाः प्राचीनवाङ्मये वर्णितास्सन्ति। यस्य मनस् चेतस्चित्तम् हृदयम् आकातिः मेधा धृतिः मतिः मनीषा काम श्रद्धा प्रज्ञानं संज्ञानञ्चेत् दयः शब्दाः मनसे प्रयुज्यन्ते। एतेषां शब्दानां स्वतन्त्रा अर्था अपि सन्ति ।

वैदिकवाङ्मयानुसारमेव अमरकोषेऽपि मनसः पर्यायाः
विद्यन्ते। यथा - चित्तं चेतस हृदयं स्वान्तः हृदः मानस्
मनश्च तथा चरकसंहितायाम्-अतीन्द्रियः मनः सत्त्वं चेतस्
इत्यादीनि पदानि उल्लिखितानि सन्ति । एतान्
शब्दानतिरिच्य मनस् अन्तः-करणम् उभयेन्द्रियम्
इन्द्रियतीतञ्चेत्यादयः पर्याया अपि समुपलभ्यन्ते। एते
सर्वेऽपि पर्यायवाचिशब्दाः स्वस्व पृथक् पृथक् विशिष्टार्थान्
प्रकटयन्ति। एतादृशानि पदानि यानि एकार्थकानि मन्यन्ते
तानि वस्तुतः भिन्नभिन्नप्रकृत्यानुसारं प्रयुक्तानि भवितव्यानि
पृथक्पृथक् स्वतन्त्रपदानि वर्तन्ते। यद्यपि तेषु पदेषु
अर्थसादृश्यं प्रतीयते।



A Letter of Unsaid Words



BY: Name- Ananya

Class- XI A

BML MUNJAL GREEN

MEDOWS SCHOOL

PAN AMERICAN AIR

NOUMEA, NEW

ES

IF

ELES CAL.

PACIFIC SERVICE
from 19
AIR MAIL

10

ANGEL



*I tried to write this down a dozen times
before,*

*Sitting on the carpet by the quiet bedroom
door.*

*I tested out the phrases, tried to make them
sound alright,
Practiced speaking softly to the shadows in the
night.*

*I built up all these speeches, lined them up
inside my head,
Careful with the words I thought were better
left unsaid.*

*But every time I saw you, all the courage fell
away,*

*And I ended up just keeping every thought at
bay.*



*There's a strange and heavy feeling in the
things we leave behind,
Like pages from a journal that are folded and
unsigned.*

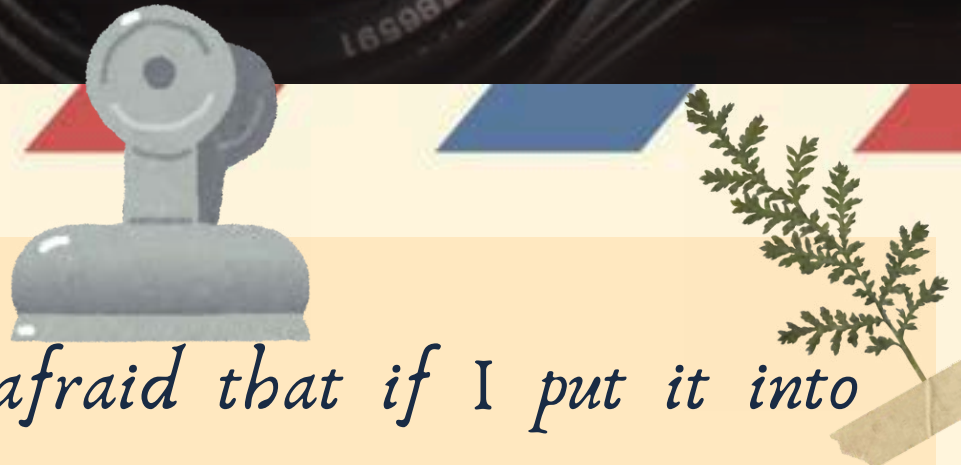
*I wanted to tell you how you fix a ruined day,
Without even trying, without knowing what to
say.*

*Just the way you anchor things when everything
goes wrong,*

*Or how you make a quiet room feel like where I
belong.*

*I never said a thank you for the times you held
me up,*

*Or how you poured your patience out into a
broken cup.*



I guess I was afraid that if I put it into words,

It might sound kinda small, or maybe silly and absurd.

Or maybe I was worried that if once the truth was out,

It would leave me feeling exposed, tangled up in doubt.

Some things feel a little safer kept beneath the surface light,

Tucked away like paper scraps and hidden out of sight.

So I'm leaving this right here, inside the space between us two,

A letter full of everything I never said to you.



You might not ever read these lines or know how deep it goes,

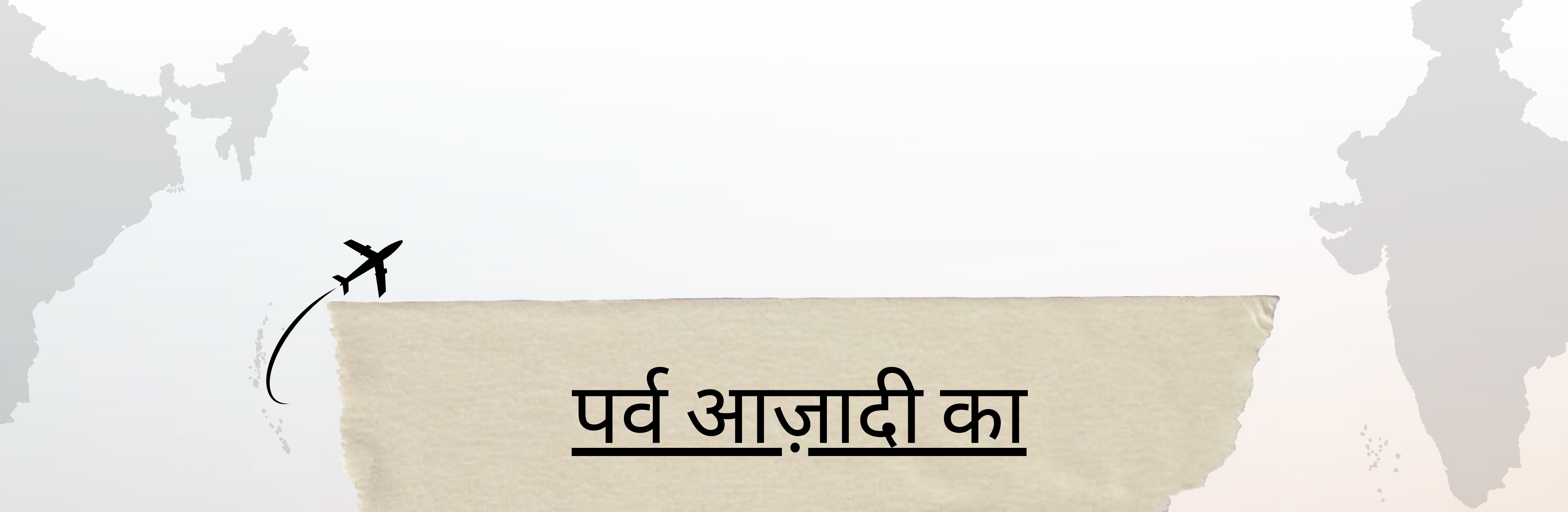
How much you really changed my world... nobody really knows.

But if you ever feel a sudden warmth when you're alone,

Like someone's thinking of you in a way you've always known.

Just know it's me, across the quiet distance and the air,

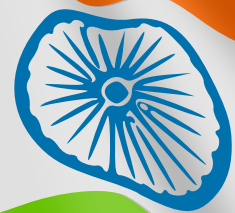
Finally saying what I meant, and sending it out there.



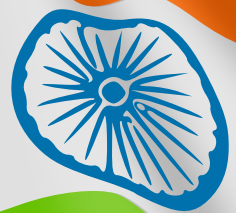
पर्व आज़ादी का



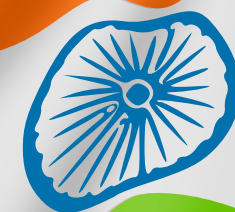
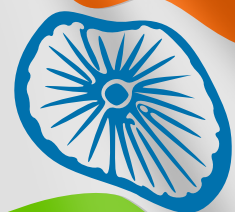
आज पर्व है आज़ादी का, मैं हर गुलामी से
आज़ाद हूँ,
पर प्रश्न करती हूँ खुद से क्या अब मैं पूर्णतः
आबाद हूँ,
खेल गए जो जान की बाज़ी, देश स्वतंत्र कराने
को
चल पड़ी आज रक्त में लिए मैं वही आदर्शवाद हूँ।
जो मेरे देश को बाटे, उस हर साज़िश के लिए
फौलाद हूँ,
आतुर हो आगे आने को देख कर दूजे की
विपदा,
बन जाये श्रवण कुमार दूजे का ऐसा आधुनिक
अपवाद हूँ
आज पर्व है आज़ादी का, मैं हर गुलामी से
आज़ाद हूँ



व्यंसेवक बन मैं आंतरिक समस्या के लिए
जल्लाद हूँ
गर घिर आए कभी मातृ-भूमि पे बाहरी षड्यंत्र
के बादल,
जो उनको नाको चने चबवा दे मैं वो लोहे का
स्वाद हूँ
आज पर्व है आज़ादी का, मैं हर गुलामी से
आज़ाद हूँ।
वृद्धि हो प्रबल भारत निर्मित ऐसी प्रगति की
प्रह्लाद हूँ,
चरितार्थ हो पूरे विश्व में, भारत की सजग
पहचान,
बस इसी सोच में हर प्रहर मैं आजकल बर्बाद हूँ
आज पर्व है आज़ादी का, मैं हर गुलामी से
आज़ाद हूँ,



हो आरोग्य अलंकृत, आयुर्वेद, योग ध्यान का
प्रसाद हूँ,
प्रगति का स्वागत करने, हो निर्मल सर्वत्र अंदर
वा बाहर,
स्वच्छता फैलाने का यथा संभव नित्य प्रयासरत
आगाज़ हूँ आज पर्व है आज़ादी का, मैं हर
गुलामी से आज़ाद हूँ।
शोषित, दरिद्र, वृद्ध, नारी के उचित मान की
फरियाद हूँ
धर्मनिरपेक्ष लोकतंत्र का करूँ मैं नत मस्तक
संविधान,
संकीर्ण मनोवृत्ति तज, न्याय व उदारता की मैं
मुराद हूँ
आज पर्व है आज़ादी का, मैं हर गुलामी से
आज़ाद हूँ।

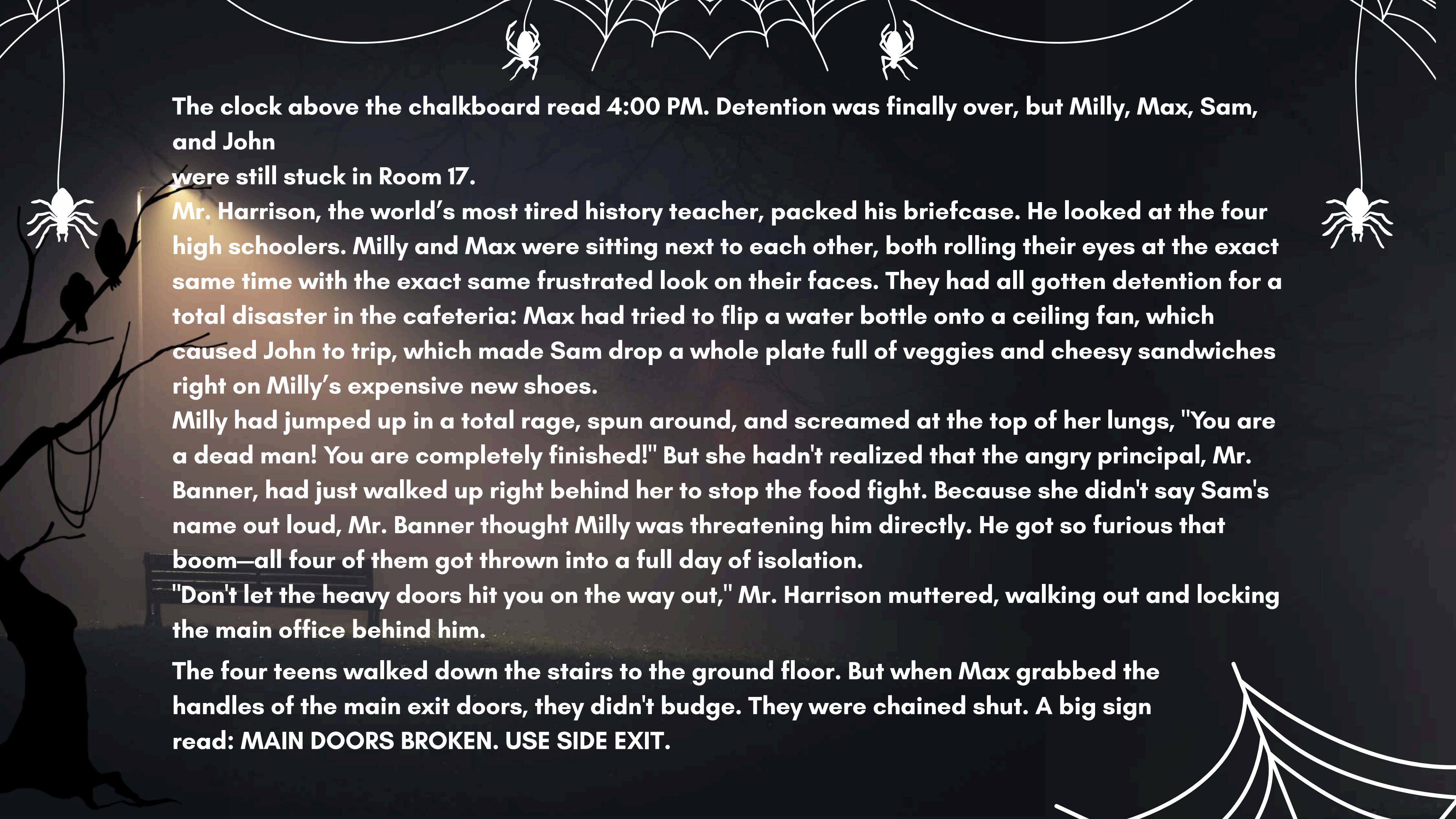


प्रचलित हो हिन्दी जगत में ऐसी
अभिलाषी औलाद हूँ,
लेखन, विचार-विमर्ष व अभिव्यक्ति
की भाषा हो हिन्दी,
परस्पर सर्वप्रिय मातृ-भाषा हिन्दी में
ही संवाद हूँ,
आज पर्व है आज़ादी का, मैं हर
गुलामी से आज़ाद हूँ।





The Vault



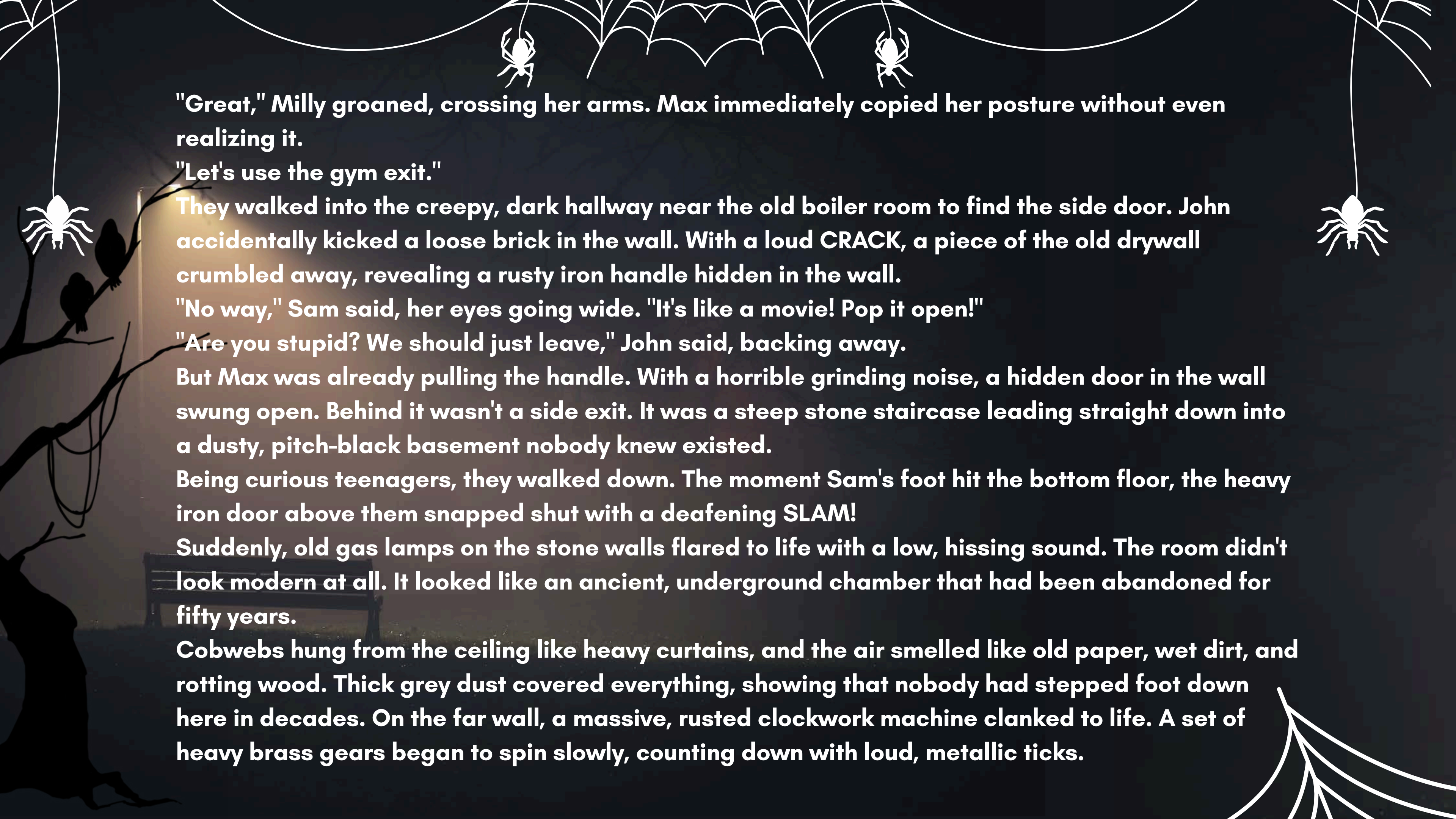
The clock above the chalkboard read 4:00 PM. Detention was finally over, but Milly, Max, Sam, and John were still stuck in Room 17.

Mr. Harrison, the world's most tired history teacher, packed his briefcase. He looked at the four high schoolers. Milly and Max were sitting next to each other, both rolling their eyes at the exact same time with the exact same frustrated look on their faces. They had all gotten detention for a total disaster in the cafeteria: Max had tried to flip a water bottle onto a ceiling fan, which caused John to trip, which made Sam drop a whole plate full of veggies and cheesy sandwiches right on Milly's expensive new shoes.

Milly had jumped up in a total rage, spun around, and screamed at the top of her lungs, "You are a dead man! You are completely finished!" But she hadn't realized that the angry principal, Mr. Banner, had just walked up right behind her to stop the food fight. Because she didn't say Sam's name out loud, Mr. Banner thought Milly was threatening him directly. He got so furious that boom—all four of them got thrown into a full day of isolation.

"Don't let the heavy doors hit you on the way out," Mr. Harrison muttered, walking out and locking the main office behind him.

The four teens walked down the stairs to the ground floor. But when Max grabbed the handles of the main exit doors, they didn't budge. They were chained shut. A big sign read: MAIN DOORS BROKEN. USE SIDE EXIT.

The background is a dark, atmospheric illustration. At the top, several white spider webs are strung across the frame, with two spiders hanging from them. On the left side, a black silhouette of a tree branch with two birds perched on it is visible. In the center-left, a glowing yellow light source, possibly a lamp, illuminates a dark wooden bench. On the right side, another white spider is hanging from a web. The overall mood is creepy and mysterious.

"Great," Milly groaned, crossing her arms. Max immediately copied her posture without even realizing it.

"Let's use the gym exit."

They walked into the creepy, dark hallway near the old boiler room to find the side door. John accidentally kicked a loose brick in the wall. With a loud CRACK, a piece of the old drywall crumbled away, revealing a rusty iron handle hidden in the wall.

"No way," Sam said, her eyes going wide. "It's like a movie! Pop it open!"

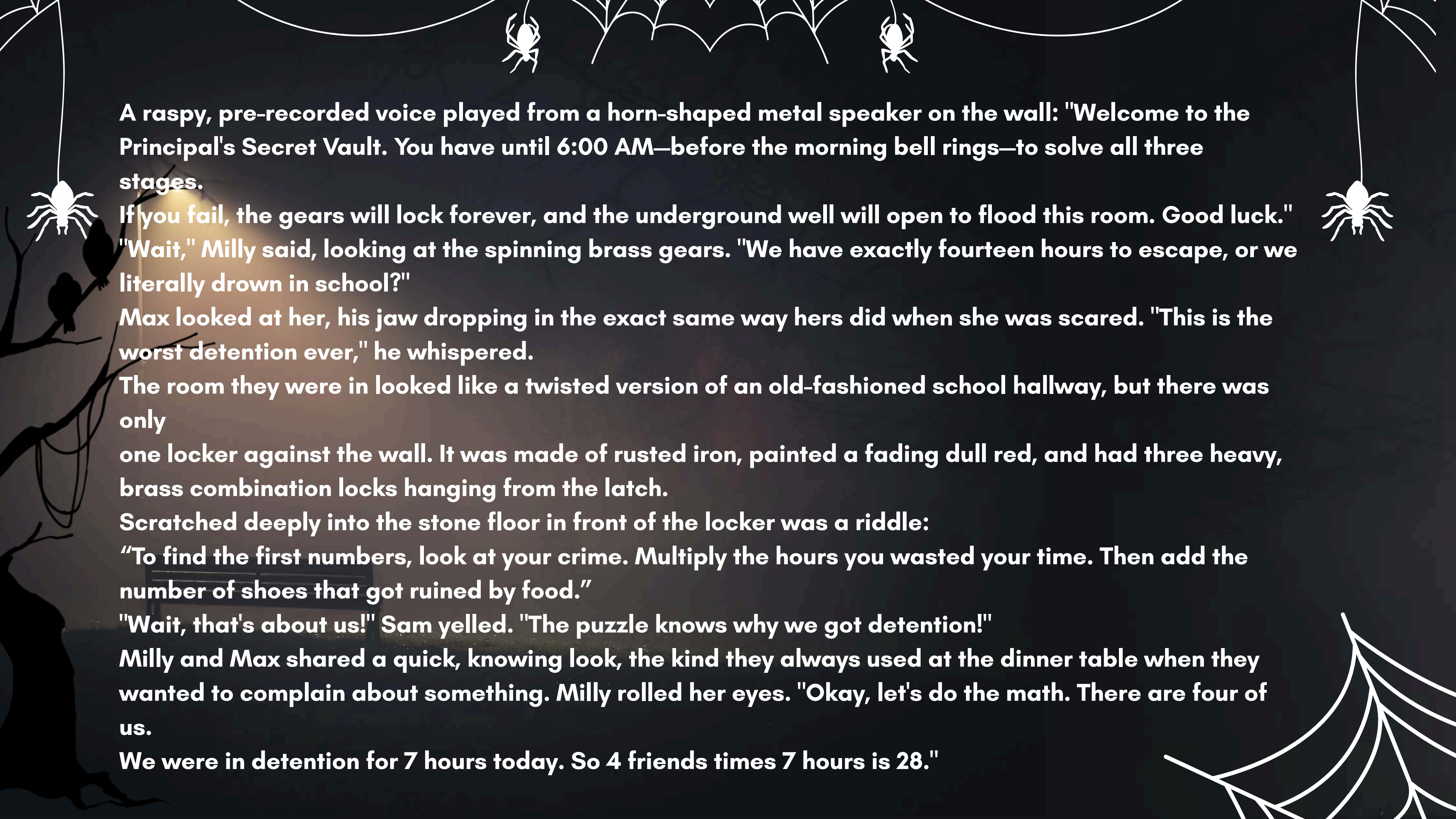
"Are you stupid? We should just leave," John said, backing away.

But Max was already pulling the handle. With a horrible grinding noise, a hidden door in the wall swung open. Behind it wasn't a side exit. It was a steep stone staircase leading straight down into a dusty, pitch-black basement nobody knew existed.

Being curious teenagers, they walked down. The moment Sam's foot hit the bottom floor, the heavy iron door above them snapped shut with a deafening SLAM!

Suddenly, old gas lamps on the stone walls flared to life with a low, hissing sound. The room didn't look modern at all. It looked like an ancient, underground chamber that had been abandoned for fifty years.

Cobwebs hung from the ceiling like heavy curtains, and the air smelled like old paper, wet dirt, and rotting wood. Thick grey dust covered everything, showing that nobody had stepped foot down here in decades. On the far wall, a massive, rusted clockwork machine clanked to life. A set of heavy brass gears began to spin slowly, counting down with loud, metallic ticks.



A raspy, pre-recorded voice played from a horn-shaped metal speaker on the wall: "Welcome to the Principal's Secret Vault. You have until 6:00 AM—before the morning bell rings—to solve all three stages.

If you fail, the gears will lock forever, and the underground well will open to flood this room. Good luck."

"Wait," Milly said, looking at the spinning brass gears. "We have exactly fourteen hours to escape, or we literally drown in school?"

Max looked at her, his jaw dropping in the exact same way hers did when she was scared. "This is the worst detention ever," he whispered.

The room they were in looked like a twisted version of an old-fashioned school hallway, but there was only

one locker against the wall. It was made of rusted iron, painted a fading dull red, and had three heavy, brass combination locks hanging from the latch.

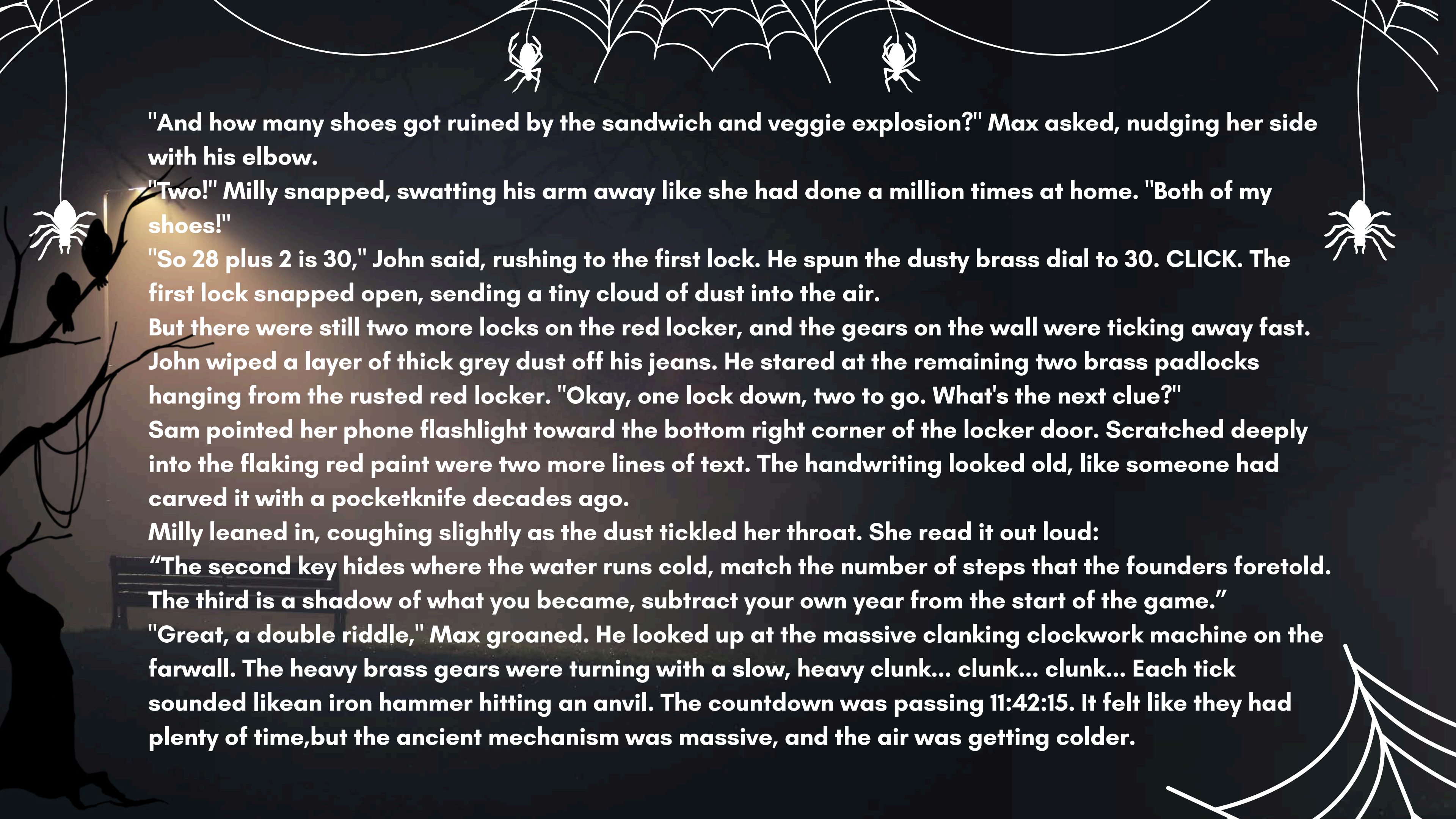
Scratched deeply into the stone floor in front of the locker was a riddle:

"To find the first numbers, look at your crime. Multiply the hours you wasted your time. Then add the number of shoes that got ruined by food."

"Wait, that's about us!" Sam yelled. "The puzzle knows why we got detention!"

Milly and Max shared a quick, knowing look, the kind they always used at the dinner table when they wanted to complain about something. Milly rolled her eyes. "Okay, let's do the math. There are four of us.

We were in detention for 7 hours today. So 4 friends times 7 hours is 28."



"And how many shoes got ruined by the sandwich and veggie explosion?" Max asked, nudging her side with his elbow.

"Two!" Milly snapped, swatting his arm away like she had done a million times at home. "Both of my shoes!"

"So 28 plus 2 is 30," John said, rushing to the first lock. He spun the dusty brass dial to 30. CLICK. The first lock snapped open, sending a tiny cloud of dust into the air.

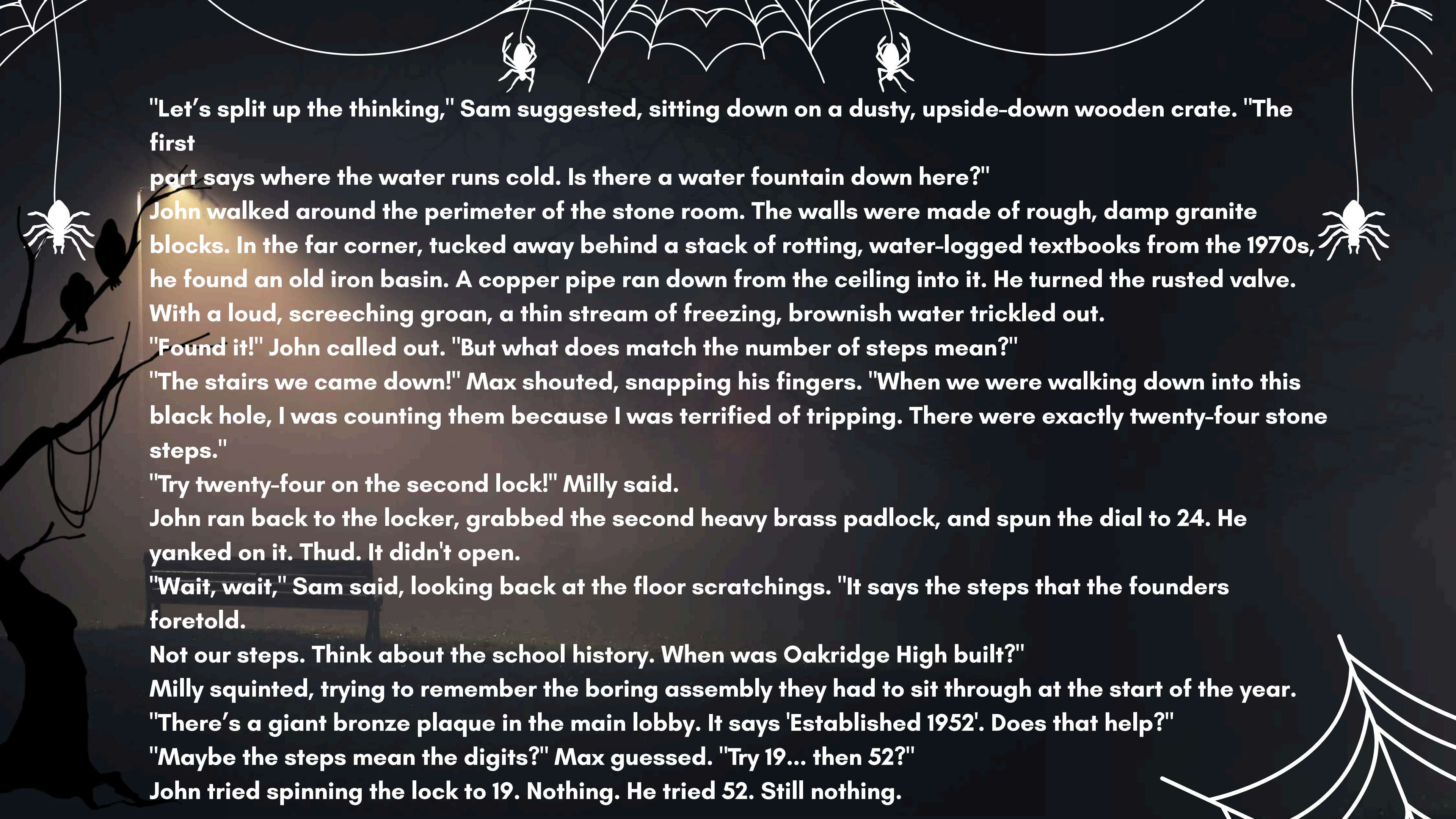
But there were still two more locks on the red locker, and the gears on the wall were ticking away fast. John wiped a layer of thick grey dust off his jeans. He stared at the remaining two brass padlocks hanging from the rusted red locker. "Okay, one lock down, two to go. What's the next clue?"

Sam pointed her phone flashlight toward the bottom right corner of the locker door. Scratched deeply into the flaking red paint were two more lines of text. The handwriting looked old, like someone had carved it with a pocketknife decades ago.

Milly leaned in, coughing slightly as the dust tickled her throat. She read it out loud:

"The second key hides where the water runs cold, match the number of steps that the founders foretold. The third is a shadow of what you became, subtract your own year from the start of the game."

"Great, a double riddle," Max groaned. He looked up at the massive clanking clockwork machine on the far wall. The heavy brass gears were turning with a slow, heavy clunk... clunk... clunk... Each tick sounded like an iron hammer hitting an anvil. The countdown was passing 11:42:15. It felt like they had plenty of time, but the ancient mechanism was massive, and the air was getting colder.

The background is a dark, moody illustration of a stone room. Cobwebs are draped across the top and right sides, with several spiders hanging from them. On the left, a gnarled tree branch extends into the frame, with two small birds perched on it. The overall tone is mysterious and slightly spooky.

"Let's split up the thinking," Sam suggested, sitting down on a dusty, upside-down wooden crate. "The first

part says where the water runs cold. Is there a water fountain down here?"

John walked around the perimeter of the stone room. The walls were made of rough, damp granite blocks. In the far corner, tucked away behind a stack of rotting, water-logged textbooks from the 1970s, he found an old iron basin. A copper pipe ran down from the ceiling into it. He turned the rusted valve. With a loud, screeching groan, a thin stream of freezing, brownish water trickled out.

"Found it!" John called out. "But what does match the number of steps mean?"

"The stairs we came down!" Max shouted, snapping his fingers. "When we were walking down into this black hole, I was counting them because I was terrified of tripping. There were exactly twenty-four stone steps."

"Try twenty-four on the second lock!" Milly said.

John ran back to the locker, grabbed the second heavy brass padlock, and spun the dial to 24. He yanked on it. Thud. It didn't open.

"Wait, wait," Sam said, looking back at the floor scratchings. "It says the steps that the founders foretold.

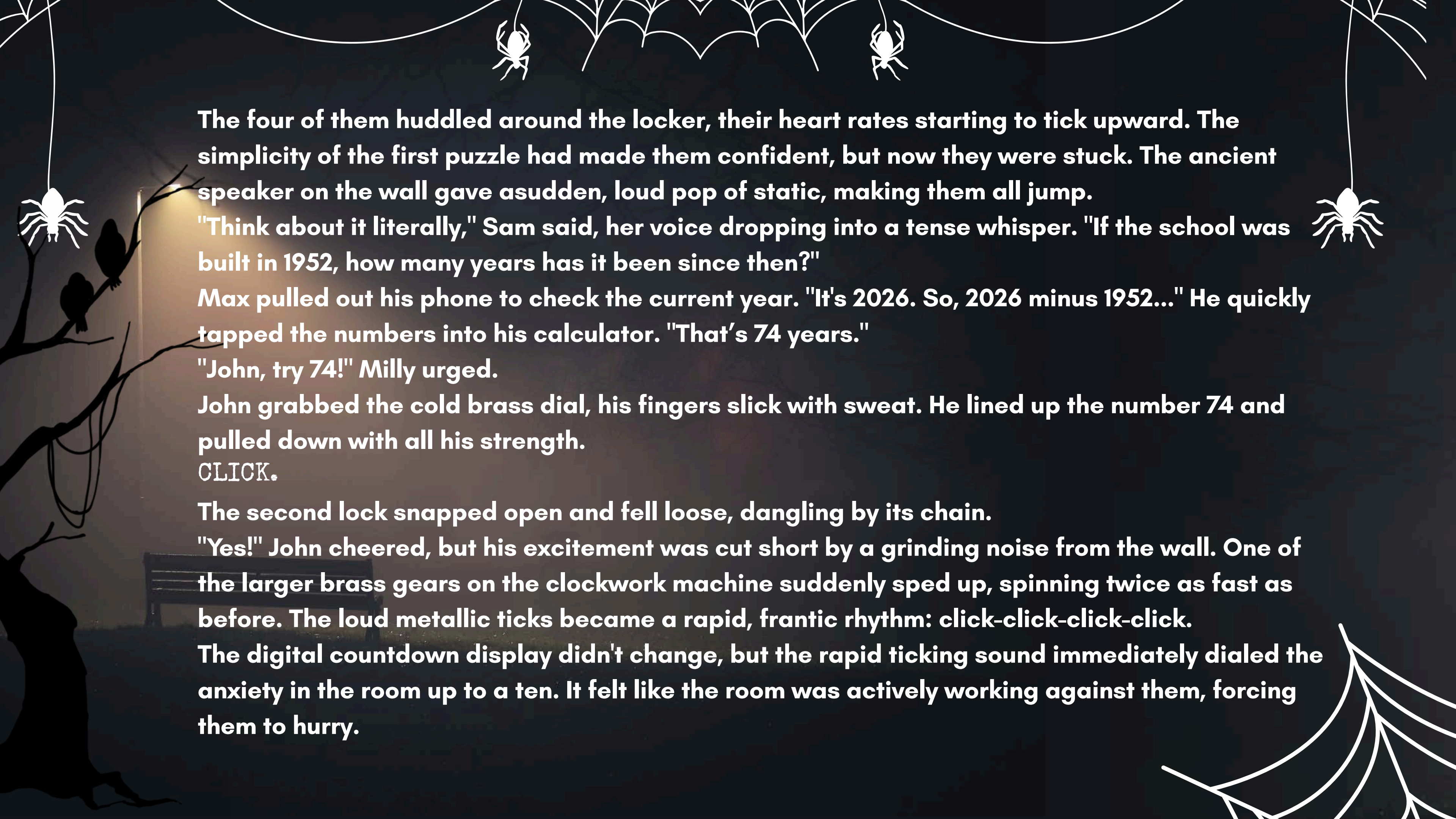
Not our steps. Think about the school history. When was Oakridge High built?"

Milly squinted, trying to remember the boring assembly they had to sit through at the start of the year.

"There's a giant bronze plaque in the main lobby. It says 'Established 1952'. Does that help?"

"Maybe the steps mean the digits?" Max guessed. "Try 19... then 52?"

John tried spinning the lock to 19. Nothing. He tried 52. Still nothing.



The four of them huddled around the locker, their heart rates starting to tick upward. The simplicity of the first puzzle had made them confident, but now they were stuck. The ancient speaker on the wall gave a sudden, loud pop of static, making them all jump.

"Think about it literally," Sam said, her voice dropping into a tense whisper. "If the school was built in 1952, how many years has it been since then?"

Max pulled out his phone to check the current year. "It's 2026. So, 2026 minus 1952..." He quickly tapped the numbers into his calculator. "That's 74 years."

"John, try 74!" Milly urged.

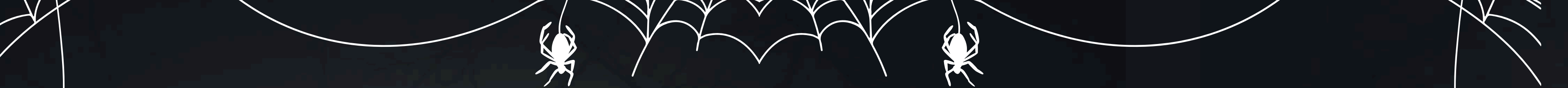
John grabbed the cold brass dial, his fingers slick with sweat. He lined up the number 74 and pulled down with all his strength.

CLICK.

The second lock snapped open and fell loose, dangling by its chain.

"Yes!" John cheered, but his excitement was cut short by a grinding noise from the wall. One of the larger brass gears on the clockwork machine suddenly sped up, spinning twice as fast as before. The loud metallic ticks became a rapid, frantic rhythm: click-click-click-click.

The digital countdown display didn't change, but the rapid ticking sound immediately dialed the anxiety in the room up to a ten. It felt like the room was actively working against them, forcing them to hurry.



"Okay, the third lock," Max said, his eyes darting between the fast-moving gears and the final padlock.

"The riddle says: The third is a shadow of what you became, subtract your own year from the start of the game."

"What does 'what you became' mean?" Sam asked, pacing back and forth across the dusty floor. "We're students? We're detainees? We're failures?"

"Look at the clockwork machine," Milly said, pointing a shaking finger at the rusted iron casing of the mechanism. Engraved into the metal plate right above the gears was a specific date: OCTOBER 12, 1964. Beneath it, a line of text read: The Day the Game Began.

"That's the start of the game!" John yelled. "1964!"

"Okay, so we subtract our own year from 1964," Max said, his pen hovering over a dusty piece of scrap paper he found on the floor. "But what is our year? The year we were born? The year we graduate?"

"We are sophomores," Milly said, her voice rising in panic as the rapid ticking of the gears seemed to grow louder, filling the stone chamber. "Our graduation year is 2028."

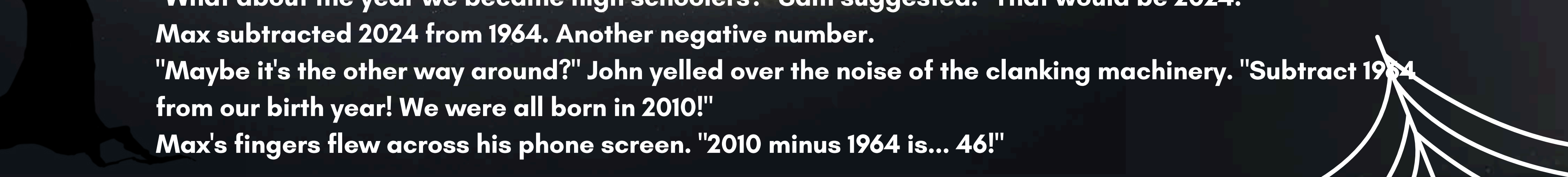
"Let's try graduation year first," Max said. "1964 minus 2028 is a negative number. That doesn't make sense for a lock combination."

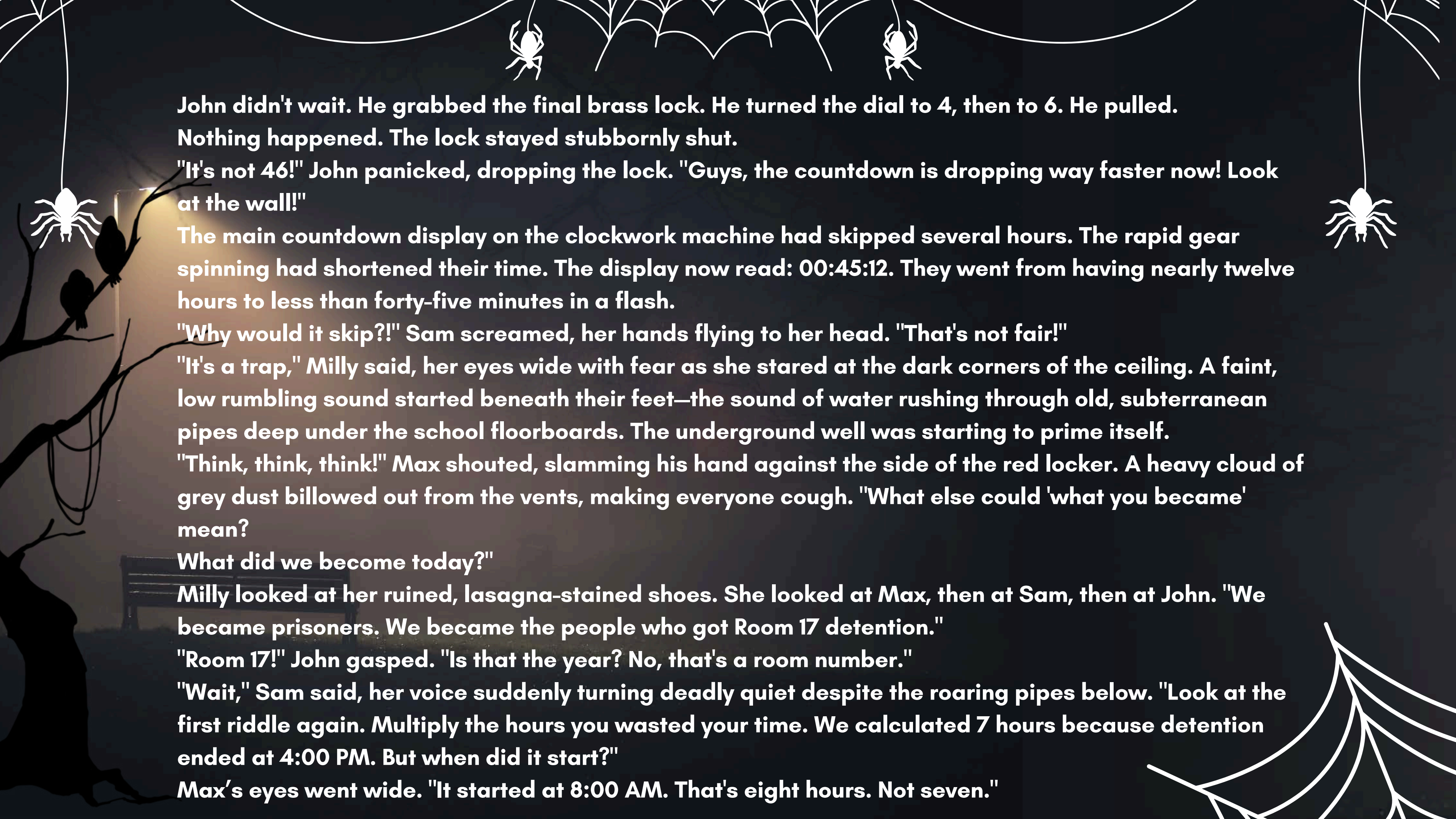
"What about the year we became high schoolers?" Sam suggested. "That would be 2024!"

Max subtracted 2024 from 1964. Another negative number.

"Maybe it's the other way around?" John yelled over the noise of the clanking machinery. "Subtract 1964 from our birth year! We were all born in 2010!"

Max's fingers flew across his phone screen. "2010 minus 1964 is... 46!"





John didn't wait. He grabbed the final brass lock. He turned the dial to 4, then to 6. He pulled. Nothing happened. The lock stayed stubbornly shut.

"It's not 46!" John panicked, dropping the lock. "Guys, the countdown is dropping way faster now! Look at the wall!"

The main countdown display on the clockwork machine had skipped several hours. The rapid gear spinning had shortened their time. The display now read: 00:45:12. They went from having nearly twelve hours to less than forty-five minutes in a flash.

"Why would it skip?!" Sam screamed, her hands flying to her head. "That's not fair!"

"It's a trap," Milly said, her eyes wide with fear as she stared at the dark corners of the ceiling. A faint, low rumbling sound started beneath their feet—the sound of water rushing through old, subterranean pipes deep under the school floorboards. The underground well was starting to prime itself.

"Think, think, think!" Max shouted, slamming his hand against the side of the red locker. A heavy cloud of grey dust billowed out from the vents, making everyone cough. "What else could 'what you became' mean?

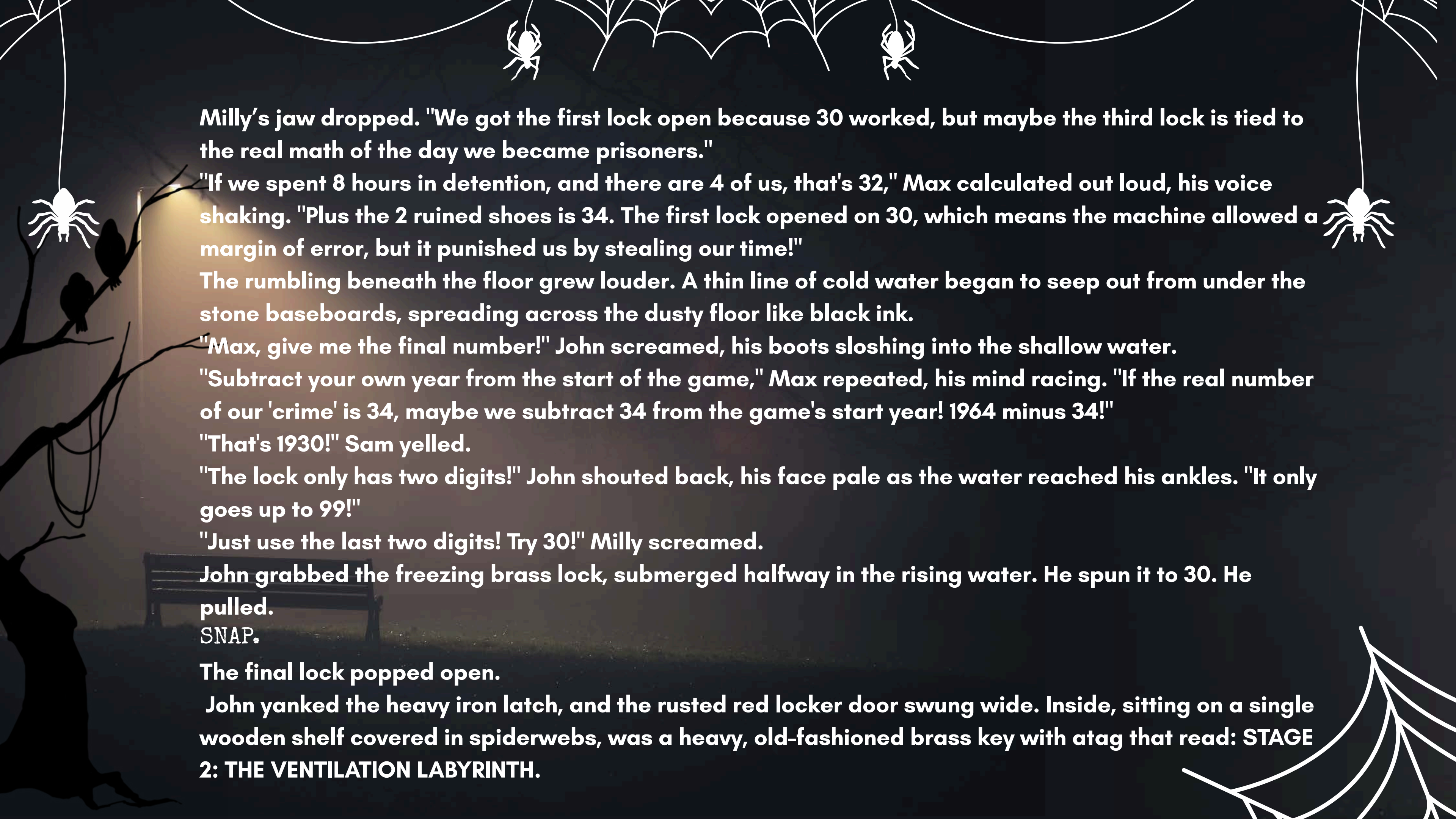
What did we become today?"

Milly looked at her ruined, lasagna-stained shoes. She looked at Max, then at Sam, then at John. "We became prisoners. We became the people who got Room 17 detention."

"Room 17!" John gasped. "Is that the year? No, that's a room number."

"Wait," Sam said, her voice suddenly turning deadly quiet despite the roaring pipes below. "Look at the first riddle again. Multiply the hours you wasted your time. We calculated 7 hours because detention ended at 4:00 PM. But when did it start?"

Max's eyes went wide. "It started at 8:00 AM. That's eight hours. Not seven."



Milly's jaw dropped. "We got the first lock open because 30 worked, but maybe the third lock is tied to the real math of the day we became prisoners."

"If we spent 8 hours in detention, and there are 4 of us, that's 32," Max calculated out loud, his voice shaking. "Plus the 2 ruined shoes is 34. The first lock opened on 30, which means the machine allowed a margin of error, but it punished us by stealing our time!"

The rumbling beneath the floor grew louder. A thin line of cold water began to seep out from under the stone baseboards, spreading across the dusty floor like black ink.

"Max, give me the final number!" John screamed, his boots sloshing into the shallow water.

"Subtract your own year from the start of the game," Max repeated, his mind racing. "If the real number of our 'crime' is 34, maybe we subtract 34 from the game's start year! 1964 minus 34!"

"That's 1930!" Sam yelled.

"The lock only has two digits!" John shouted back, his face pale as the water reached his ankles. "It only goes up to 99!"

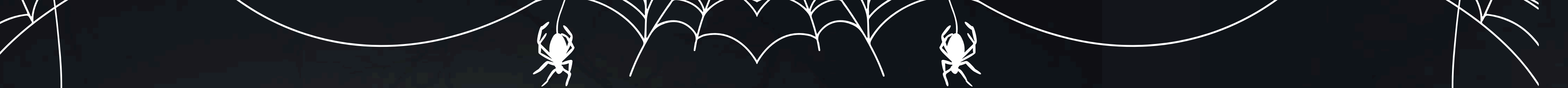
"Just use the last two digits! Try 30!" Milly screamed.

John grabbed the freezing brass lock, submerged halfway in the rising water. He spun it to 30. He pulled.

SNAP.

The final lock popped open.

John yanked the heavy iron latch, and the rusted red locker door swung wide. Inside, sitting on a single wooden shelf covered in spiderwebs, was a heavy, old-fashioned brass key with a tag that read: **STAGE 2: THE VENTILATION LABYRINTH.**



At the exact same moment, a hidden iron grate in the floor slid open with a heavy mechanical groan, draining the water back into the depths. The frantic ticking of the gears slowed down, returning to a steady, heavy pace.

The countdown on the wall now read: 00:15:00.

Fifteen minutes left until the morning bell rings, and they hadn't even started the second stage.

With the brass key in Max's hand, the four friends rushed toward the back of the chamber. The key fit perfectly into a small iron door hidden behind a massive, rusted ventilation pipe.

When Max turned the key, the door clicked open, revealing a tight, square metal tunnel that went straight

into the dark. It was just wide enough for one person to crawl through at a time. The air inside smelled like ancient dust and cold copper.

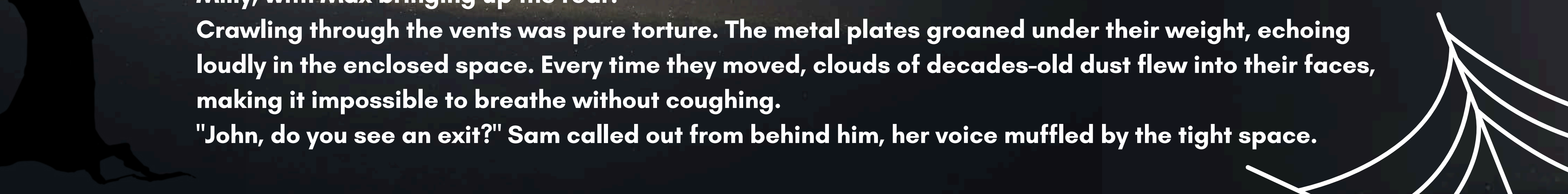
"I am not going in there," Milly said, backing away.

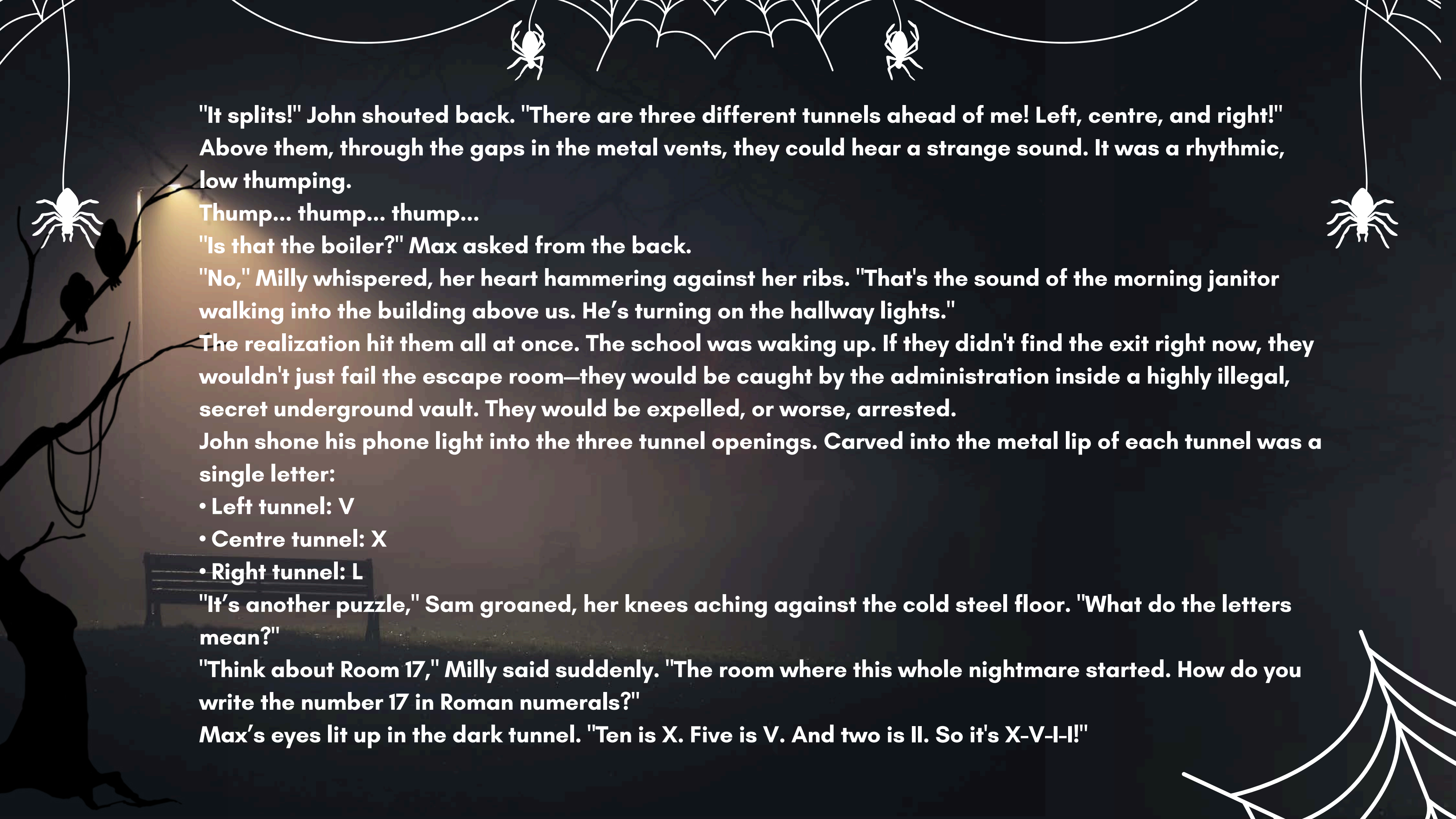
"We don't have a choice," John said, pointing back at the clockwork machine. The countdown was ticking down past 00:12:34. "If we are still down here when that clock hits zero, the morning bell rings, the school locks up, and we're trapped forever."

John went first, sliding on his stomach into the dark metal chute. Sam followed right behind him, then Milly, with Max bringing up the rear.

Crawling through the vents was pure torture. The metal plates groaned under their weight, echoing loudly in the enclosed space. Every time they moved, clouds of decades-old dust flew into their faces, making it impossible to breathe without coughing.

"John, do you see an exit?" Sam called out from behind him, her voice muffled by the tight space.





"It splits!" John shouted back. "There are three different tunnels ahead of me! Left, centre, and right!"
Above them, through the gaps in the metal vents, they could hear a strange sound. It was a rhythmic, low thumping.

Thump... thump... thump...

"Is that the boiler?" Max asked from the back.

"No," Milly whispered, her heart hammering against her ribs. "That's the sound of the morning janitor walking into the building above us. He's turning on the hallway lights."

The realization hit them all at once. The school was waking up. If they didn't find the exit right now, they wouldn't just fail the escape room—they would be caught by the administration inside a highly illegal, secret underground vault. They would be expelled, or worse, arrested.

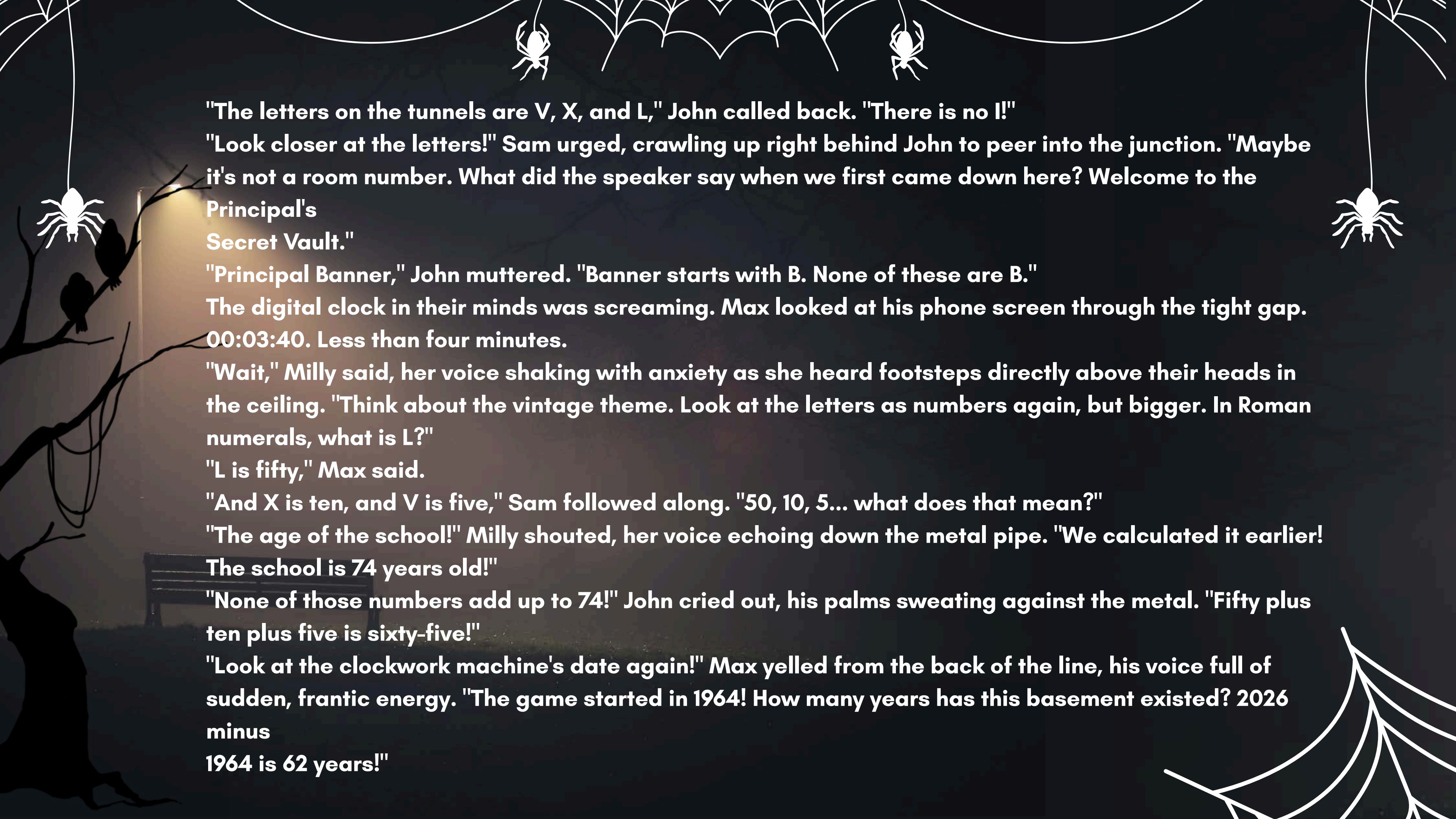
John shone his phone light into the three tunnel openings. Carved into the metal lip of each tunnel was a single letter:

- Left tunnel: V**
- Centre tunnel: X**
- Right tunnel: L**

"It's another puzzle," Sam groaned, her knees aching against the cold steel floor. "What do the letters mean?"

"Think about Room 17," Milly said suddenly. "The room where this whole nightmare started. How do you write the number 17 in Roman numerals?"

Max's eyes lit up in the dark tunnel. "Ten is X. Five is V. And two is II. So it's X-V-I-I!"



"The letters on the tunnels are V, X, and L," John called back. "There is no I!"

"Look closer at the letters!" Sam urged, crawling up right behind John to peer into the junction. "Maybe it's not a room number. What did the speaker say when we first came down here? Welcome to the Principal's Secret Vault."

"Principal Banner," John muttered. "Banner starts with B. None of these are B."

The digital clock in their minds was screaming. Max looked at his phone screen through the tight gap. 00:03:40. Less than four minutes.

"Wait," Milly said, her voice shaking with anxiety as she heard footsteps directly above their heads in the ceiling. "Think about the vintage theme. Look at the letters as numbers again, but bigger. In Roman numerals, what is L?"

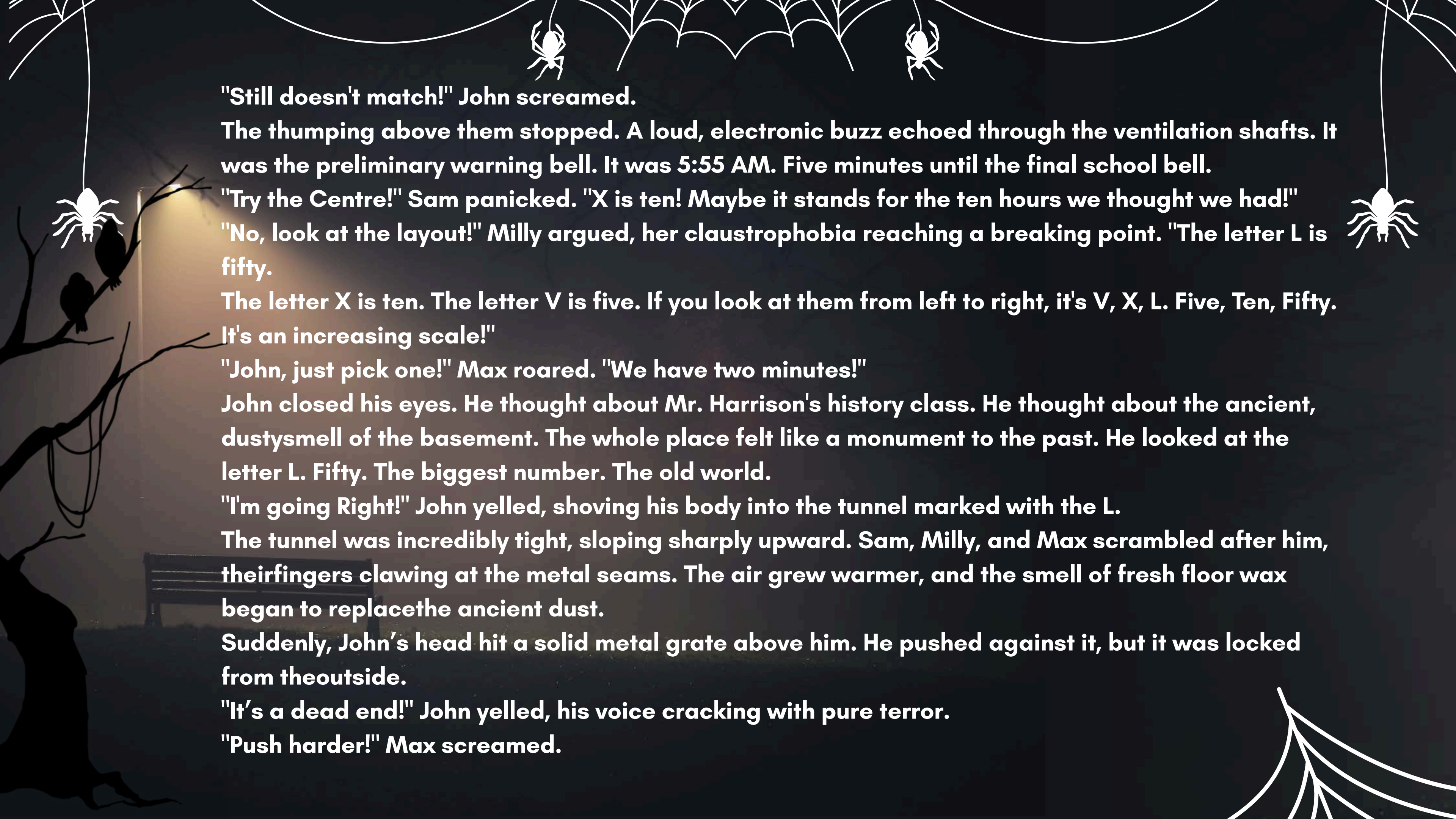
"L is fifty," Max said.

"And X is ten, and V is five," Sam followed along. "50, 10, 5... what does that mean?"

"The age of the school!" Milly shouted, her voice echoing down the metal pipe. "We calculated it earlier! The school is 74 years old!"

"None of those numbers add up to 74!" John cried out, his palms sweating against the metal. "Fifty plus ten plus five is sixty-five!"

"Look at the clockwork machine's date again!" Max yelled from the back of the line, his voice full of sudden, frantic energy. "The game started in 1964! How many years has this basement existed? 2026 minus 1964 is 62 years!"



"Still doesn't match!" John screamed.

The thumping above them stopped. A loud, electronic buzz echoed through the ventilation shafts. It was the preliminary warning bell. It was 5:55 AM. Five minutes until the final school bell.

"Try the Centre!" Sam panicked. "X is ten! Maybe it stands for the ten hours we thought we had!"

"No, look at the layout!" Milly argued, her claustrophobia reaching a breaking point. "The letter L is fifty."

The letter X is ten. The letter V is five. If you look at them from left to right, it's V, X, L. Five, Ten, Fifty. It's an increasing scale!"

"John, just pick one!" Max roared. "We have two minutes!"

John closed his eyes. He thought about Mr. Harrison's history class. He thought about the ancient, dusty smell of the basement. The whole place felt like a monument to the past. He looked at the letter L. Fifty. The biggest number. The old world.

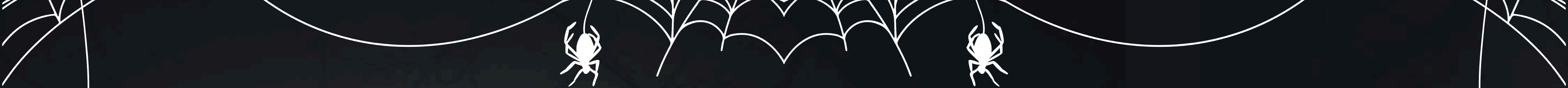
"I'm going Right!" John yelled, shoving his body into the tunnel marked with the L.

The tunnel was incredibly tight, sloping sharply upward. Sam, Milly, and Max scrambled after him, their fingers clawing at the metal seams. The air grew warmer, and the smell of fresh floor wax began to replace the ancient dust.

Suddenly, John's head hit a solid metal grate above him. He pushed against it, but it was locked from the outside.

"It's a dead end!" John yelled, his voice cracking with pure terror.

"Push harder!" Max screamed.



Through the slits in the grate, they could see the bright, fluorescent lights of the modern high school hallway. They were looking right up at the floor of the main corridor, just outside the principal's office. The digital countdown in the basement below reached its final ten seconds. They could hear the distant, heavy CLUNCK of the massive brass gears preparing to lock down the well forever.

00:00:05...

00:00:04...

00:00:03...

"All together! Push!" Sam screamed.

John and Sam slammed their shoulders against the metal grate at the exact same time. With a loud SNAP,

the old padlock holding the grate shut broke away. The metal door flew open, clattering onto the linoleum floor of the hallway.

John scrambled out of the floor vent, instantly followed by Sam, Milly, and Max. They tumbled onto the shiny, clean school floor in a messy pile of dust, cobwebs, and sweat.

BZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ!

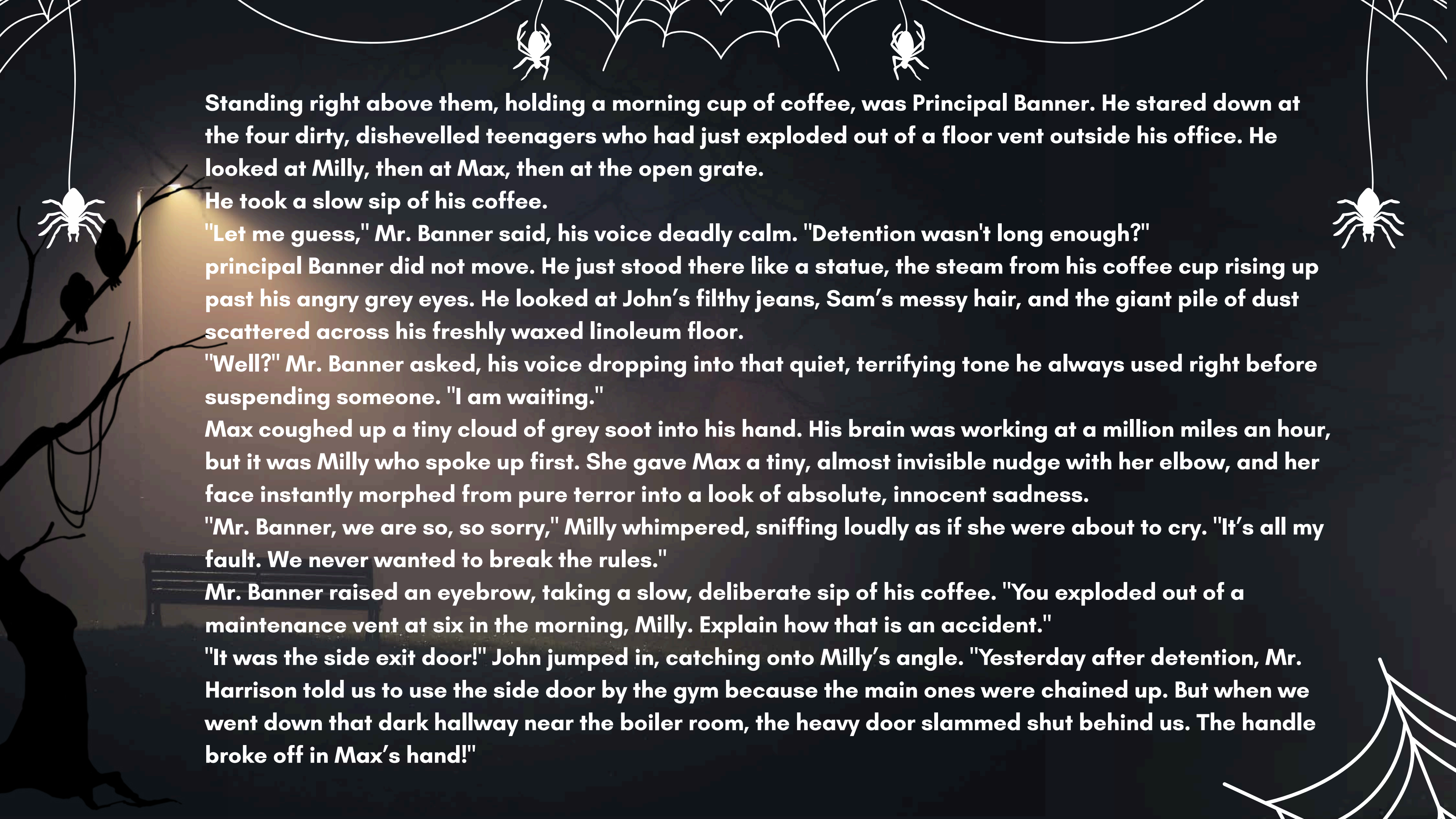
The 6:00 AM morning bell blasted through the school loudspeakers, echoing down the hallways.

At the exact same moment, from the dark hole in the floor they had just escaped, a loud, heavy SLAM echoed from deep below. The secret iron door in the basement had locked itself shut, completely sealing the vault away once again.

The four friends lay on the floor, gasping for breath, their faces covered in grey soot.

Footsteps squeaked on the fresh wax. They looked up.





Standing right above them, holding a morning cup of coffee, was Principal Banner. He stared down at the four dirty, dishevelled teenagers who had just exploded out of a floor vent outside his office. He looked at Milly, then at Max, then at the open grate.

He took a slow sip of his coffee.

"Let me guess," Mr. Banner said, his voice deadly calm. "Detention wasn't long enough?" principal Banner did not move. He just stood there like a statue, the steam from his coffee cup rising up past his angry grey eyes. He looked at John's filthy jeans, Sam's messy hair, and the giant pile of dust scattered across his freshly waxed linoleum floor.

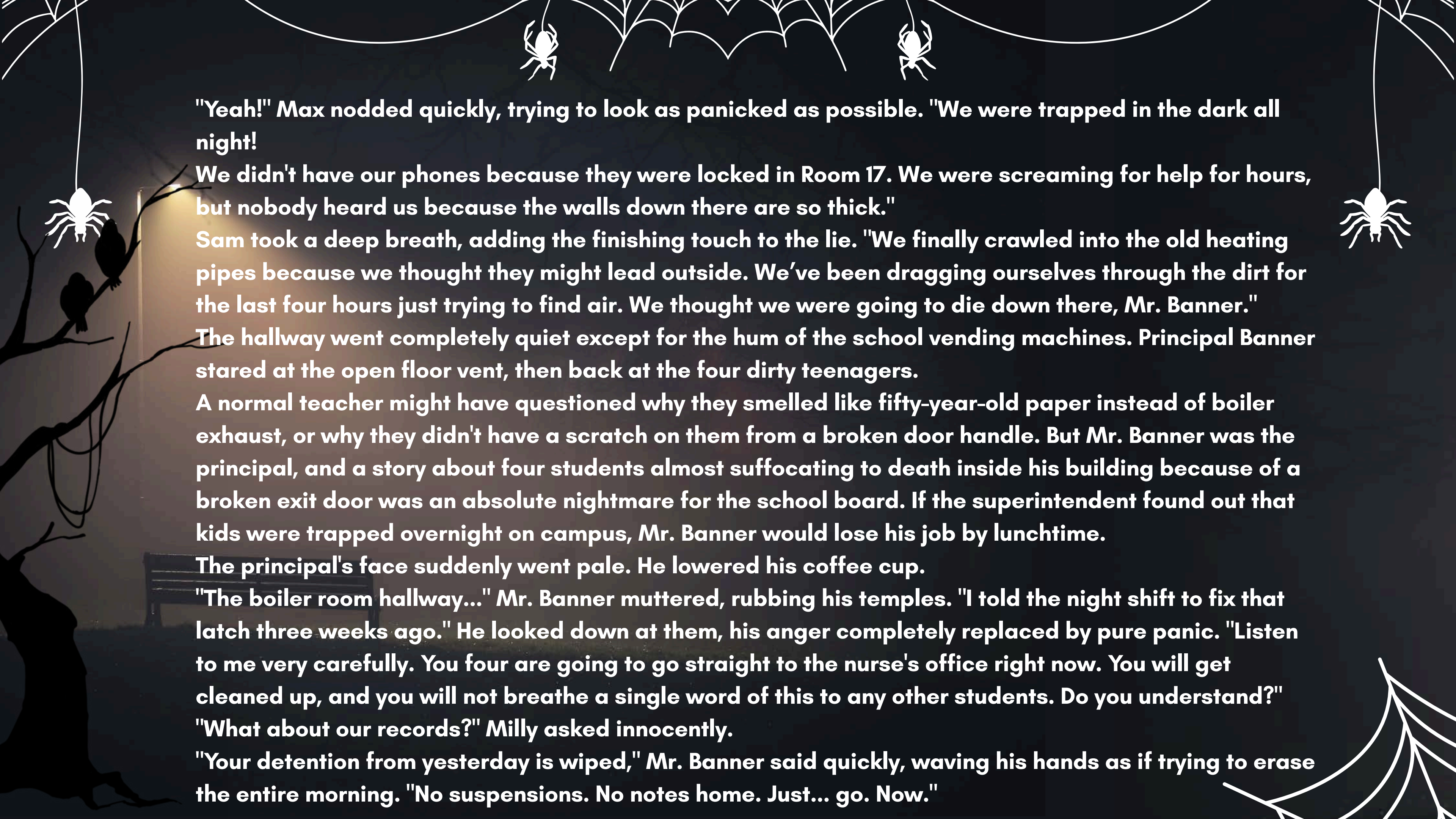
"Well?" Mr. Banner asked, his voice dropping into that quiet, terrifying tone he always used right before suspending someone. "I am waiting."

Max coughed up a tiny cloud of grey soot into his hand. His brain was working at a million miles an hour, but it was Milly who spoke up first. She gave Max a tiny, almost invisible nudge with her elbow, and her face instantly morphed from pure terror into a look of absolute, innocent sadness.

"Mr. Banner, we are so, so sorry," Milly whimpered, sniffing loudly as if she were about to cry. "It's all my fault. We never wanted to break the rules."

Mr. Banner raised an eyebrow, taking a slow, deliberate sip of his coffee. "You exploded out of a maintenance vent at six in the morning, Milly. Explain how that is an accident."

"It was the side exit door!" John jumped in, catching onto Milly's angle. "Yesterday after detention, Mr. Harrison told us to use the side door by the gym because the main ones were chained up. But when we went down that dark hallway near the boiler room, the heavy door slammed shut behind us. The handle broke off in Max's hand!"



"Yeah!" Max nodded quickly, trying to look as panicked as possible. "We were trapped in the dark all night!"

We didn't have our phones because they were locked in Room 17. We were screaming for help for hours, but nobody heard us because the walls down there are so thick."

Sam took a deep breath, adding the finishing touch to the lie. "We finally crawled into the old heating pipes because we thought they might lead outside. We've been dragging ourselves through the dirt for the last four hours just trying to find air. We thought we were going to die down there, Mr. Banner."

The hallway went completely quiet except for the hum of the school vending machines. Principal Banner stared at the open floor vent, then back at the four dirty teenagers.

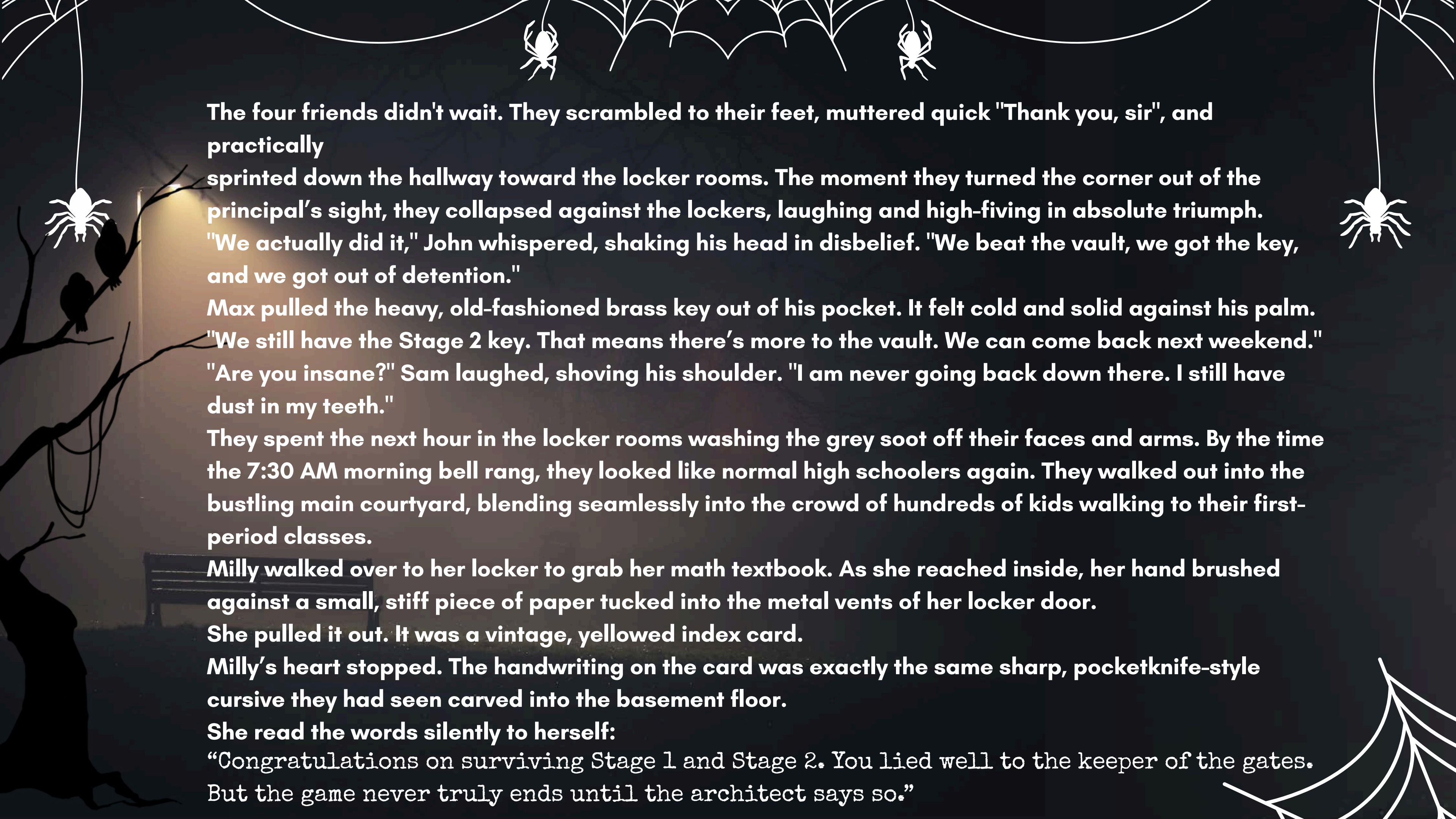
A normal teacher might have questioned why they smelled like fifty-year-old paper instead of boiler exhaust, or why they didn't have a scratch on them from a broken door handle. But Mr. Banner was the principal, and a story about four students almost suffocating to death inside his building because of a broken exit door was an absolute nightmare for the school board. If the superintendent found out that kids were trapped overnight on campus, Mr. Banner would lose his job by lunchtime.

The principal's face suddenly went pale. He lowered his coffee cup.

"The boiler room hallway..." Mr. Banner muttered, rubbing his temples. "I told the night shift to fix that latch three weeks ago." He looked down at them, his anger completely replaced by pure panic. "Listen to me very carefully. You four are going to go straight to the nurse's office right now. You will get cleaned up, and you will not breathe a single word of this to any other students. Do you understand?"

"What about our records?" Milly asked innocently.

"Your detention from yesterday is wiped," Mr. Banner said quickly, waving his hands as if trying to erase the entire morning. "No suspensions. No notes home. Just... go. Now."



The four friends didn't wait. They scrambled to their feet, muttered quick "Thank you, sir", and practically

sprinted down the hallway toward the locker rooms. The moment they turned the corner out of the principal's sight, they collapsed against the lockers, laughing and high-fiving in absolute triumph.

"We actually did it," John whispered, shaking his head in disbelief. "We beat the vault, we got the key, and we got out of detention."

Max pulled the heavy, old-fashioned brass key out of his pocket. It felt cold and solid against his palm.

"We still have the Stage 2 key. That means there's more to the vault. We can come back next weekend."

"Are you insane?" Sam laughed, shoving his shoulder. "I am never going back down there. I still have dust in my teeth."

They spent the next hour in the locker rooms washing the grey soot off their faces and arms. By the time the 7:30 AM morning bell rang, they looked like normal high schoolers again. They walked out into the bustling main courtyard, blending seamlessly into the crowd of hundreds of kids walking to their first-period classes.

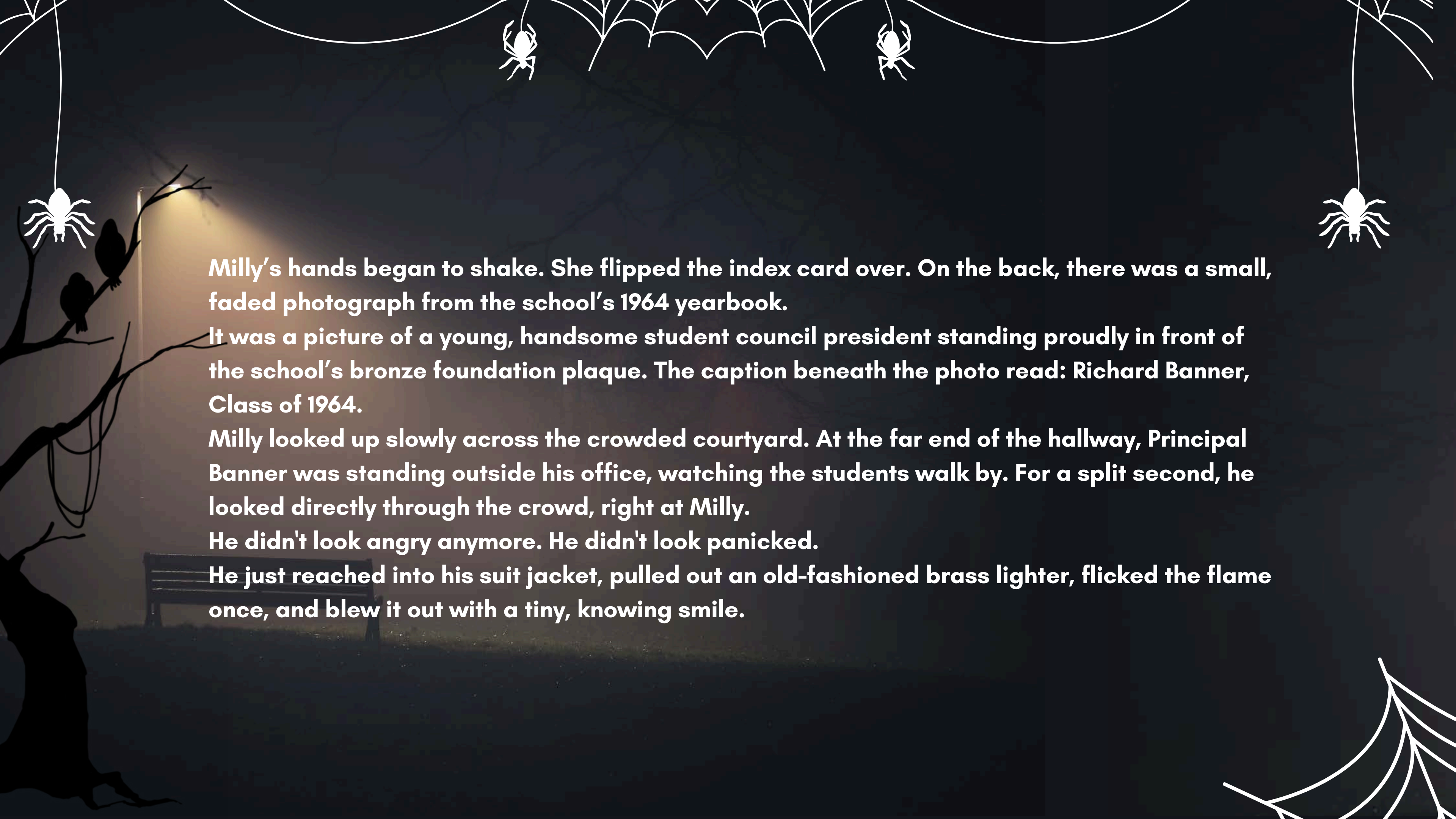
Milly walked over to her locker to grab her math textbook. As she reached inside, her hand brushed against a small, stiff piece of paper tucked into the metal vents of her locker door.

She pulled it out. It was a vintage, yellowed index card.

Milly's heart stopped. The handwriting on the card was exactly the same sharp, pocketknife-style cursive they had seen carved into the basement floor.

She read the words silently to herself:

"Congratulations on surviving Stage 1 and Stage 2. You lied well to the keeper of the gates. But the game never truly ends until the architect says so."



Milly's hands began to shake. She flipped the index card over. On the back, there was a small, faded photograph from the school's 1964 yearbook.

It was a picture of a young, handsome student council president standing proudly in front of the school's bronze foundation plaque. The caption beneath the photo read: Richard Banner, Class of 1964.

Milly looked up slowly across the crowded courtyard. At the far end of the hallway, Principal Banner was standing outside his office, watching the students walk by. For a split second, he looked directly through the crowd, right at Milly.

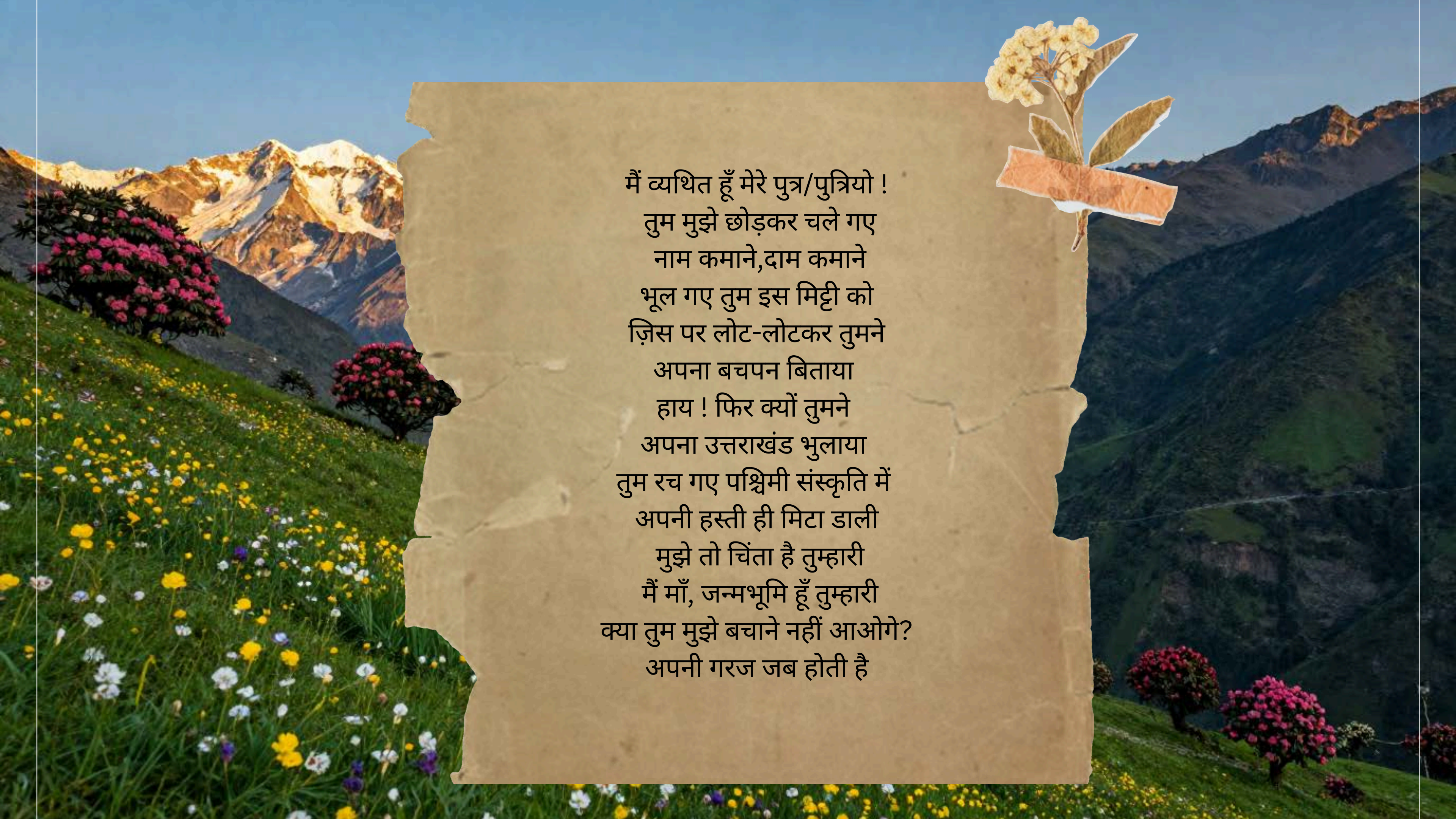
He didn't look angry anymore. He didn't look panicked.

He just reached into his suit jacket, pulled out an old-fashioned brass lighter, flicked the flame once, and blew it out with a tiny, knowing smile.

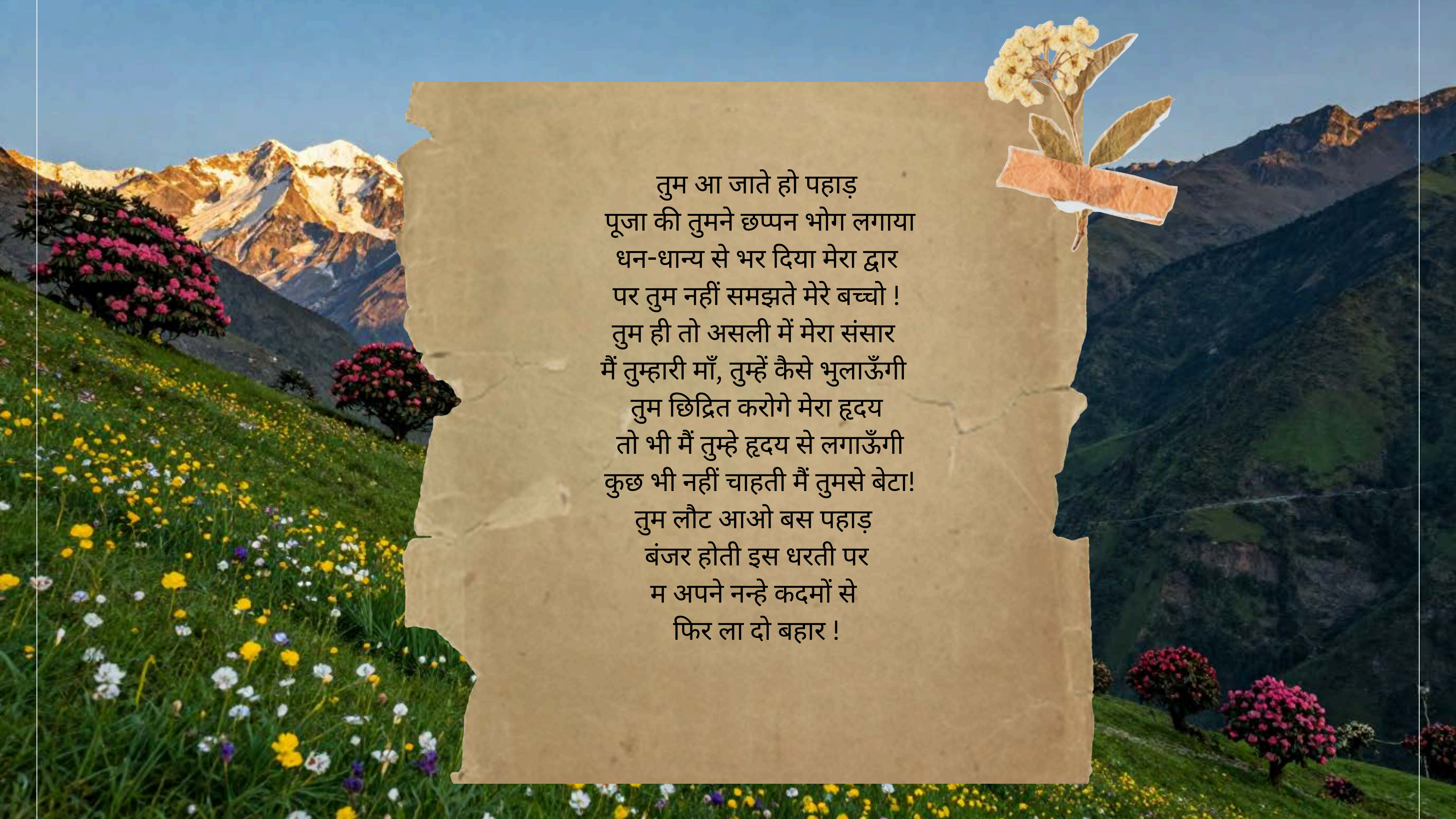


देवभूमि की व्यथा

रश्मि राना नेगी



मैं व्यथित हूँ मेरे पुत्र/पुत्रियो !
तुम मुझे छोड़कर चले गए
नाम कमाने, दाम कमाने
भूल गए तुम इस मिट्टी को
जिस पर लोट-लोटकर तुमने
अपना बचपन बिताया
हाय ! फिर क्यों तुमने
अपना उत्तराखंड भुलाया
तुम रच गए पश्चिमी संस्कृति में
अपनी हस्ती ही मिटा डाली
मुझे तो चिंता है तुम्हारी
मैं माँ, जन्मभूमि हूँ तुम्हारी
क्या तुम मुझे बचाने नहीं आओगे?
अपनी गरज जब होती है



तुम आ जाते हो पहाड़
पूजा की तुमने छप्पन भोग लगाया
धन-धान्य से भर दिया मेरा द्वार
पर तुम नहीं समझते मेरे बच्चो !
तुम ही तो असली में मेरा संसार
मैं तुम्हारी माँ, तुम्हें कैसे भुलाऊँगी
तुम छिट्रित करोगे मेरा हृदय
तो भी मैं तुम्हे हृदय से लगाऊँगी
कुछ भी नहीं चाहती मैं तुमसे बेटा!
तुम लौट आओ बस पहाड़
बंजर होती इस धरती पर
म अपने नन्हे कदमों से
फिर ला दो बहार !



ECHOES OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

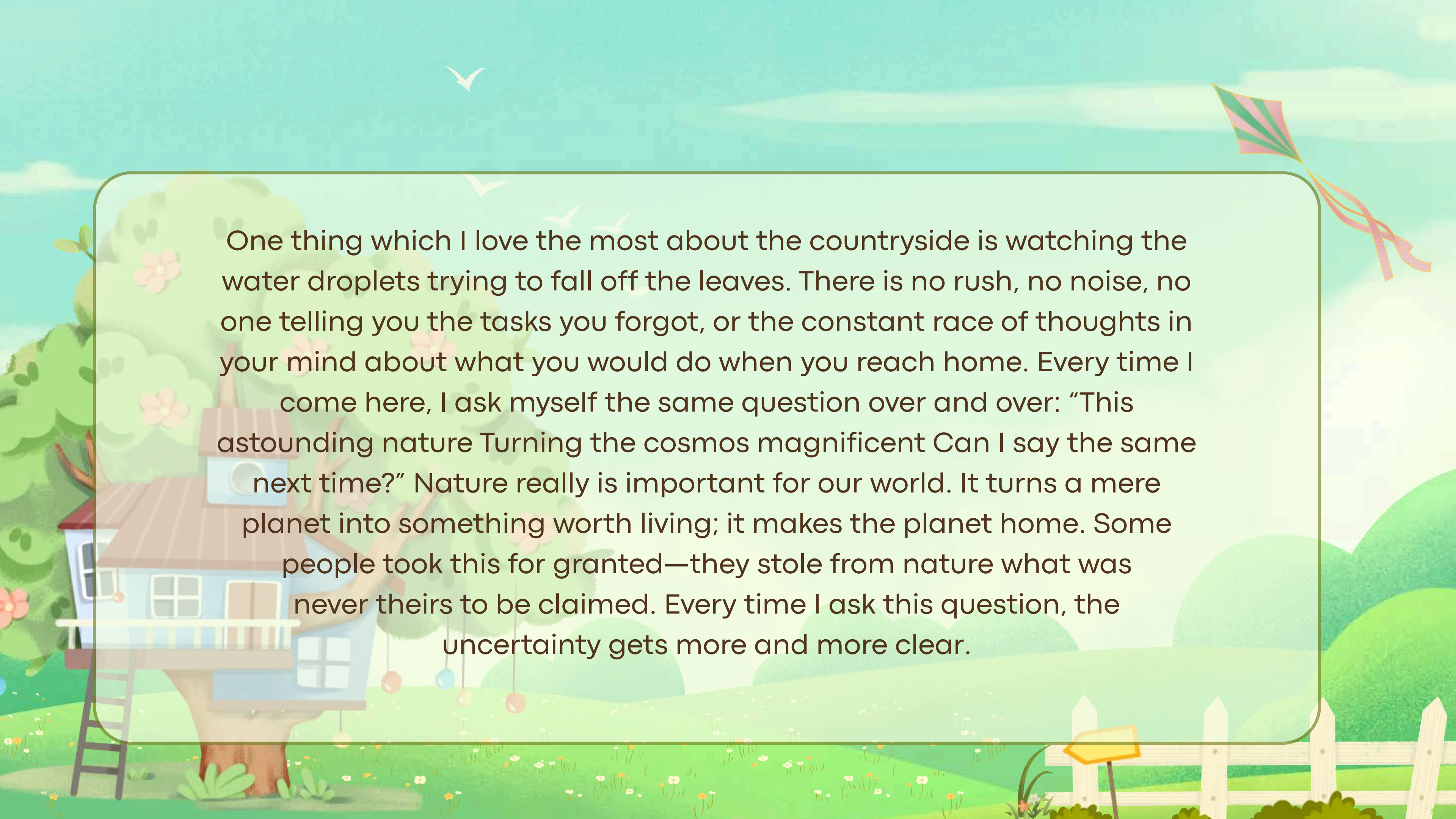
Priyamvada Sharma



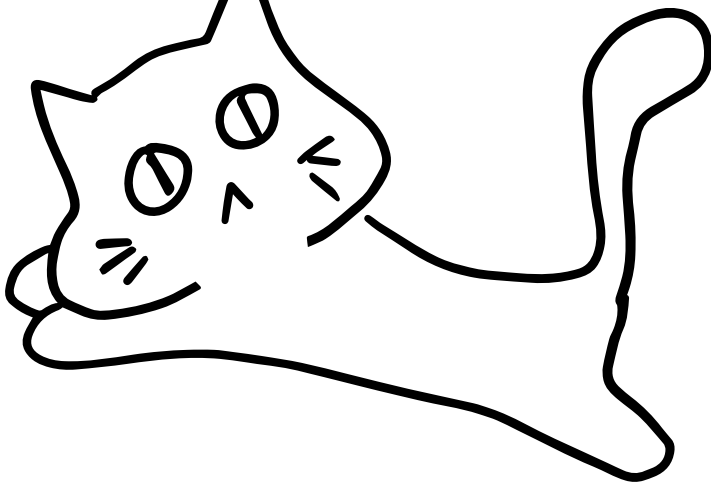
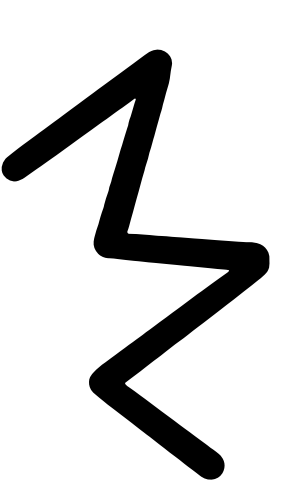
When I went out for a walk, I could feel the gentle, cold winter breeze accompanied by the warmth of the dull and drowsy sun setting down in the west. The amalgam of pink and purple made the sky more lively, while partially covering the night prince. It was just a brief description of what I see every other day, but these days a few people have also started to perceive nature's beauty, which made me happy, as people should cherish nature and enjoy every second of it.



it. The following day, while strolling around, I saw a teenager practising guitar. He missed the lyrics, and the chords weren't played in synchronisation, but day by day he started to play without missing a beat. It wasn't perfect, but it was played methodically, with the concentration of a child given a puzzle to solve. If you paid attention to his playing, you yourself could see the love for his passion from the depth of his heart. I sighed out of contentment because watching those laughing and grinning faces brought back those nostalgic memories where I used to play the same hide-and-seek game with my friends.

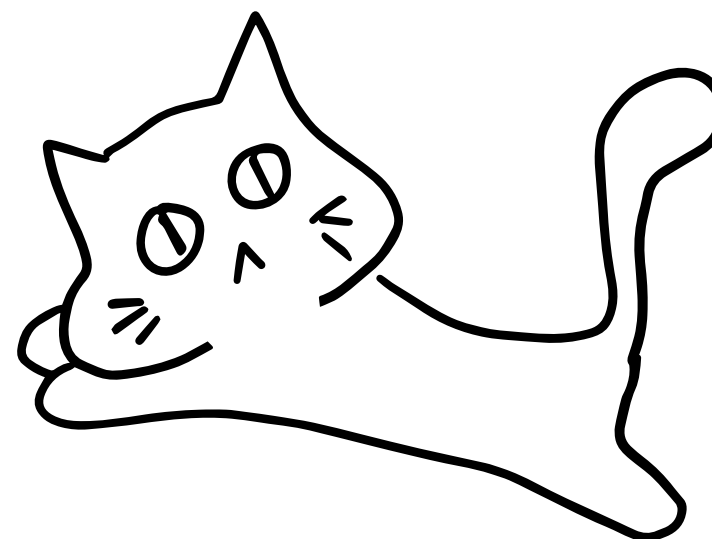
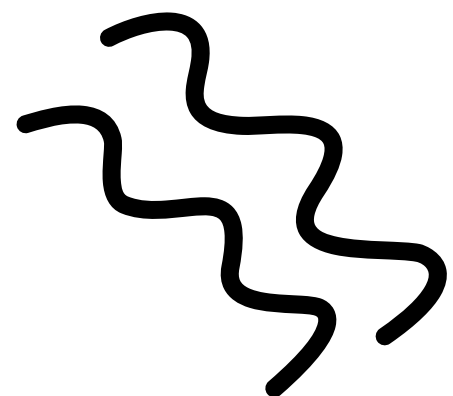


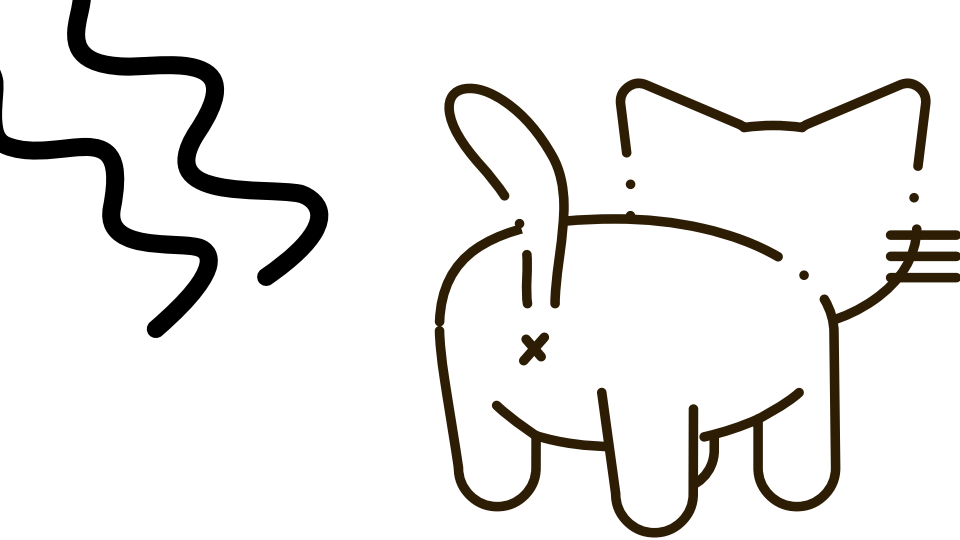
One thing which I love the most about the countryside is watching the water droplets trying to fall off the leaves. There is no rush, no noise, no one telling you the tasks you forgot, or the constant race of thoughts in your mind about what you would do when you reach home. Every time I come here, I ask myself the same question over and over: "This astounding nature Turning the cosmos magnificent Can I say the same next time?" Nature really is important for our world. It turns a mere planet into something worth living; it makes the planet home. Some people took this for granted—they stole from nature what was never theirs to be claimed. Every time I ask this question, the uncertainty gets more and more clear.



The Fat Cat

Name-Atharv Tewari
Category-Student





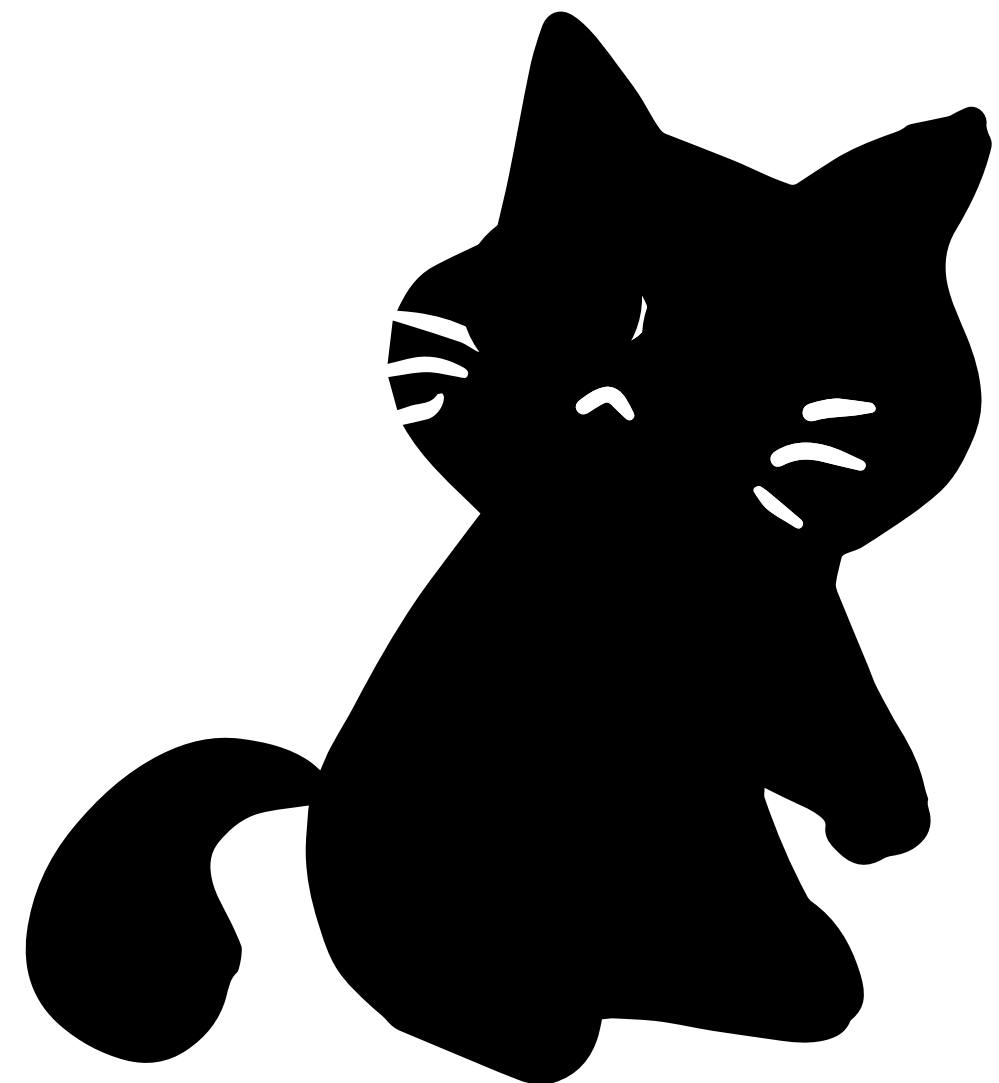
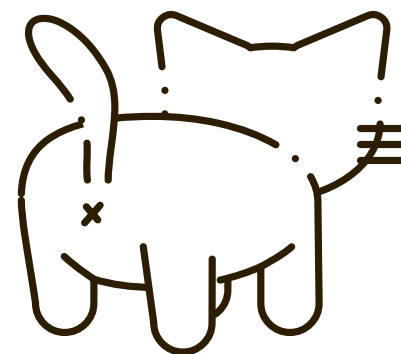
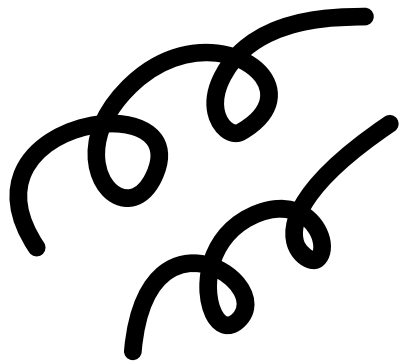
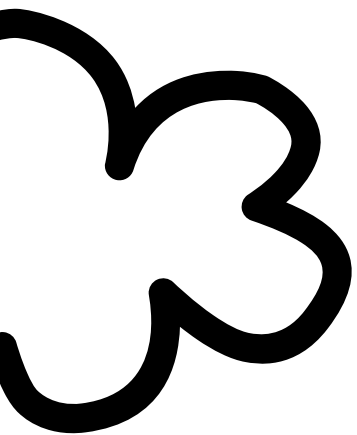
**A fat cat sat,
On a little mat.**

**A rat ran by,
The cat said, "Hi!"**

**The rat got a cap,
Then had a nap.**

**The cat had fun,
Out in the sun.**

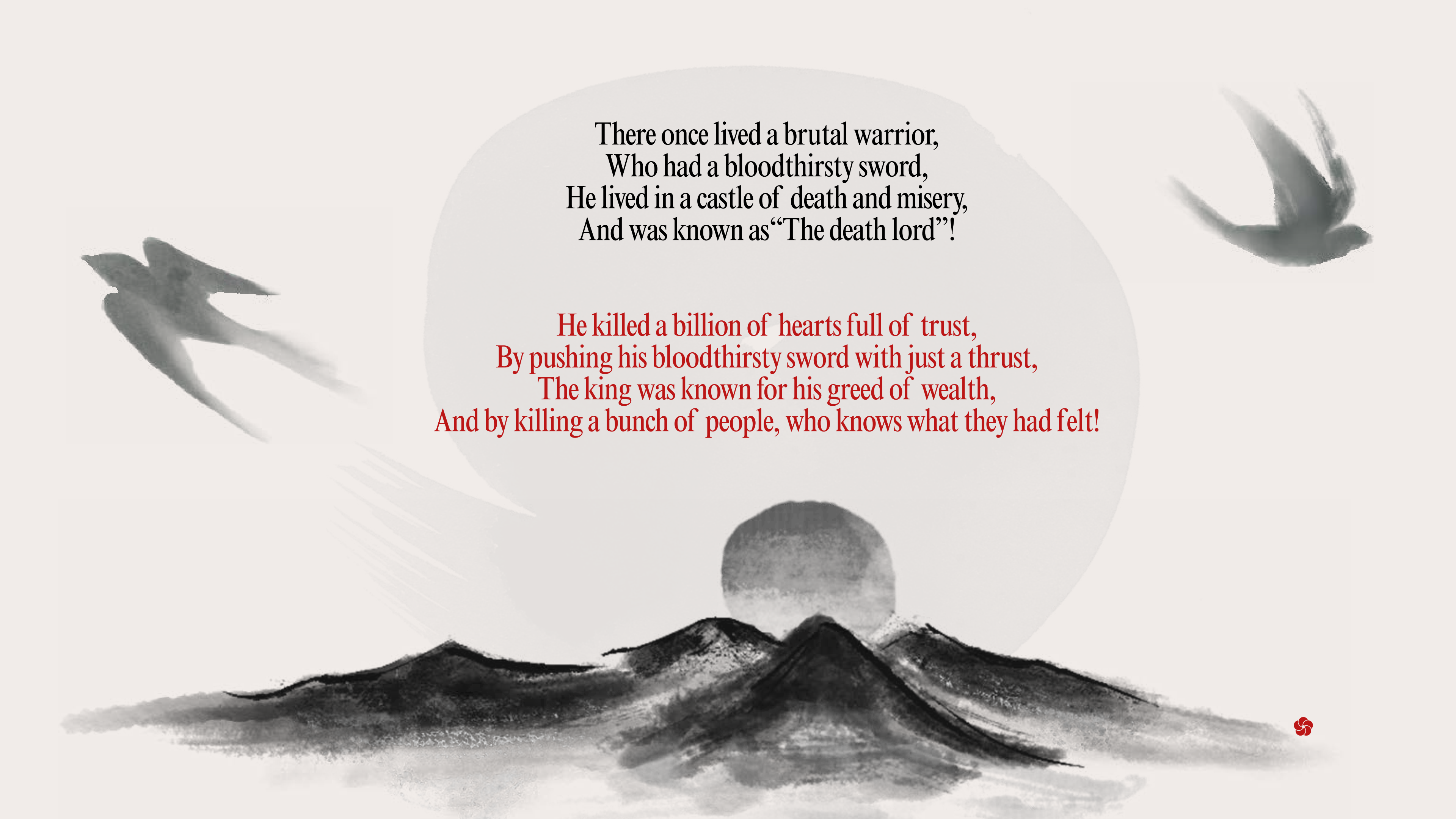
**They hop, they run,
Playing is so much fun!**



A Bloodthirsty Sword



KAVYA PAI,
VIII F,
ADMISSION
NO:2025/0106

The background is a traditional East Asian ink wash painting. It features a large, pale, circular moon in the upper center. Below the moon, there are dark, jagged mountain peaks. Two birds are depicted in flight: one on the left, facing right, and one on the right, facing left. The overall style is minimalist and atmospheric, with a focus on natural elements.

There once lived a brutal warrior,
Who had a bloodthirsty sword,
He lived in a castle of death and misery,
And was known as “The death lord”!

He killed a billion of hearts full of trust,
By pushing his bloodthirsty sword with just a thrust,
The king was known for his greed of wealth,
And by killing a bunch of people, who knows what they had felt!



Each time he killed a noble man,
The rest of his kingdom ran,
They knew he wasn't meant to be,
The ruler of the Mughal dynasty.

Let me tell you another thing or two,
About the king of the Mughal dynasty who ruled,
He killed his brother and father just for the throne,

And now he was all alone.
I think you know who I'm talking about,
Then why is there such a doubt,
Tis' him who killed with a bloodthirsty sword,
Aurangzeb, the ruler of the Mughal dynasty "The
death lord"!



A mother's dream for her child

~MANNAT





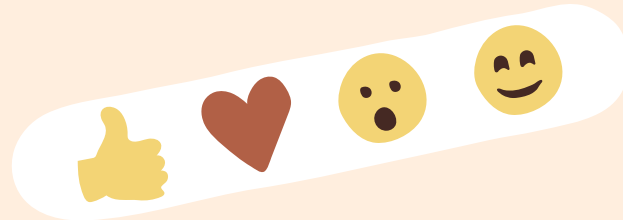
The day my daughter, Mannat, came into my life, everything changed. My world became brighter, my responsibilities became greater, and my heart became fuller. Every smile on her face gives me happiness, and every tear in her eyes makes me restless. Being a mother is the greatest blessing of my life, and every day I pray that God gives me the wisdom and strength to guide her in the right direction.

Like every mother, I have many dreams for my daughter. I do not dream of making her the richest person in the world. I do not dream of seeing her win every competition. My biggest dream is to see her become a good human being.

I believe that education is not only about books, marks and examinations. True education teaches us how to live with kindness, courage and responsibility. I want my daughter to learn that helping others is never a weakness, speaking the truth is always a strength, and treating everyone with respect is the sign of a truly educated person.

A mother is the first teacher, the first friend and the strongest support in a child's life. From the moment she holds her child for the first time, her heart begins to dream.

Mannat's Adorable Habits & Playful Nature



Mannat is the heart of our home, keeping every corner lively and full of joy. She is wonderfully talkative, endlessly playful, and full of sweet chatter that instantly brightens anyone's day. Without her cheerful energy and playful mischief, the house feels far too quiet!

Her First Day of School

While many children feel nervous on their first day of school, Mannat was completely different! When she got admitted to her new school, she was overflowing with excitement. Seeing her so happy, eager to meet new friends, and excited to explore her new surroundings filled our hearts with immense pride and joy. Her confident and cheerful spirit is truly her greatest strength.

Motherhood is not merely a role; it is a profound transformation. From the minute a child enters the world, a mother's heart begins to dream infinite dreams. For me, those dreams are not built on material possessions or societal status. Like every mother, I carry countless hopes for Mannat, but my ultimate ambition is simple yet deep: I want her to grow into a compassionate, confident, and genuinely good human being.

Names carry weight, but sometimes a name feels like a prophecy fulfilled. "Mannat" means a heartfelt prayer, a divine wish granted by the cosmos. When we named her Mannat, we wanted her to always remember that she was not an accident of nature, but an answer to our deepest spiritual desires.

Her presence in our family is a daily reminder that life's most precious gifts cannot be bought with money. She was the missing piece of our family puzzle. When she laughs, the house resonates with a warmth that money cannot purchase. Her name reminds us every day to treat her not just as our child, but as a sacred responsibility entrusted to us by the Almighty.

The Morning Sunshine: She wakes up not with grumpiness, but with an immediate desire to talk and play. The morning begins with her energetic greetings.

The Creative Storyteller: Mannat can take two random toys—a plastic dinosaur and a small doll—and create an elaborate hour-long adventure drama where they become best friends.

The Helper around the House: She loves pretending to be an adult. Whether it is helping fold tiny towels, dusting low tables, or “helping” in the kitchen, her enthusiasm turns mundane household chores into moments of laughter.

The Unconditional Lover of Animals and Nature: Whenever we step outside, her curiosity shines. She stops to observe butterflies, talk to stray puppies, or touch fallen leaves with pure wonder in her eyes.

Her innocent mischief brings an unmatched sweetness to our everyday routine. Whether she is hiding behind curtains thinking she is completely invisible or negotiating for “just five more minutes” of bedtime, her presence is a living reminder to stay grounded in the present moment.

As Mannat journeys from childhood into young adulthood and beyond, life will present her with both breathtaking triumphs and painful challenges. While I cannot walk every step of her path for her, I want to leave her with a compass of timeless values that can guide her whenever she feels lost.





I want Mannat to know that making mistakes is a natural part of being human. I never want her to be paralyzed by the fear of failure. If she falls, I will teach her to pick herself up, dust off her clothes, analyze what went wrong, and try again with renewed determination. Success achieved without struggle often breeds arrogance, but strength forged through overcoming failure builds true wisdom.

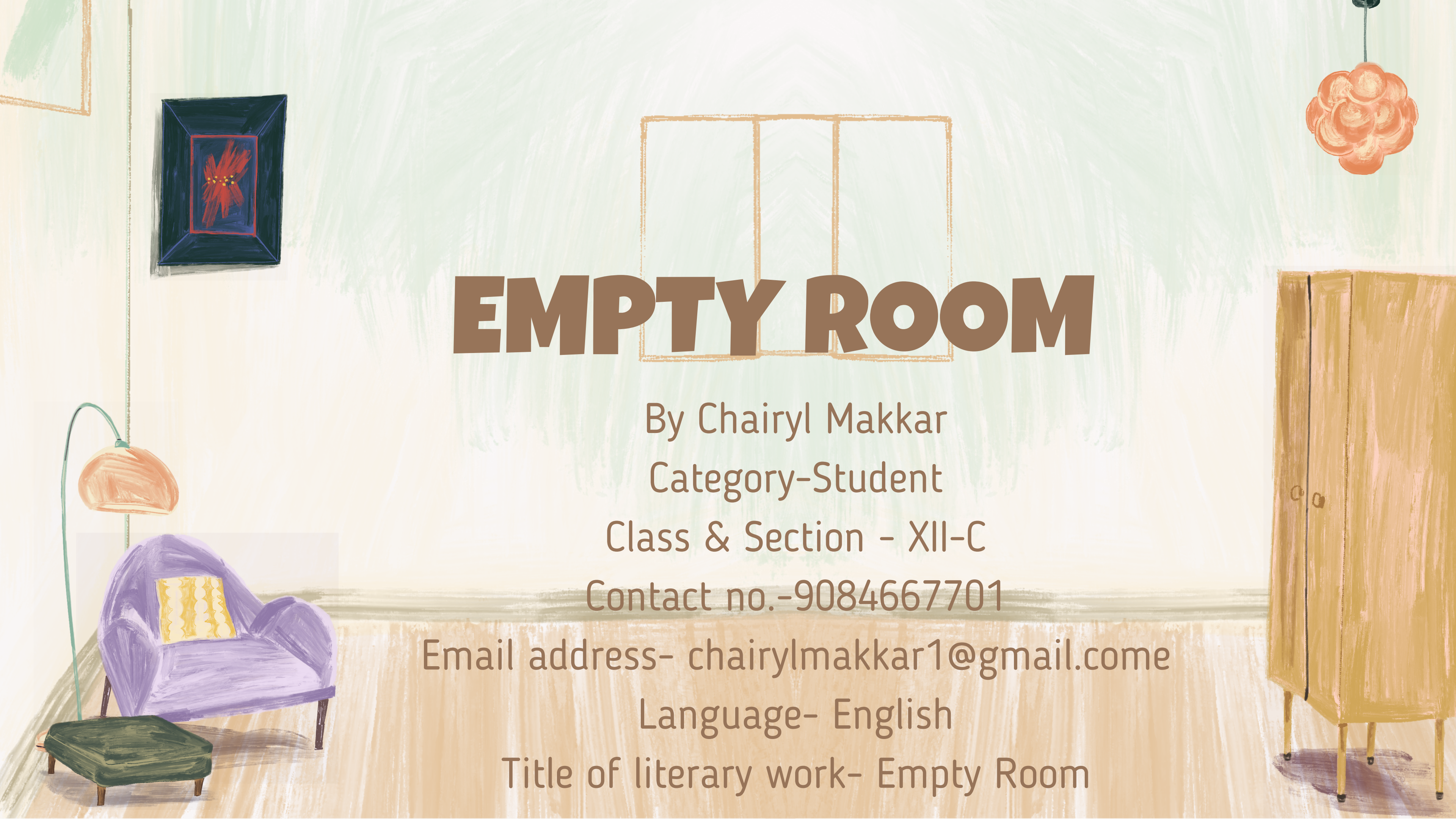
Courage does not mean the absence of fear; it means taking action despite fear. I want my daughter to develop a strong voice. If she witnesses injustice, unkindness, or bullying, I want her to have the courage to speak up—for herself and for those who cannot speak for themselves.

In a hyper-connected digital world filled with comparison, social media standards, and superficial expectations, it is easy to lose one's inner tranquility. I pray Mannat learns the art of protecting her mental health. She must know that her self-worth is not measured by likes, approval from strangers, or societal benchmarks.

A child is like a young tree; while the school provides the climate and friends act as the surrounding forest, the family serves as the soil and roots. Mannat's growth is nurtured not just by me, but by the collective warmth, love, and values of our entire family structure.

We strive to make our home an emotional sanctuary for Mannat.

A home should not be an arena of constant tension, high pressure, or harsh judgment. It must be a haven of warmth, open communication, shared laughter, and emotional stability.



EMPTY ROOM

By Chairyl Makkar

Category-Student

Class & Section - XII-C

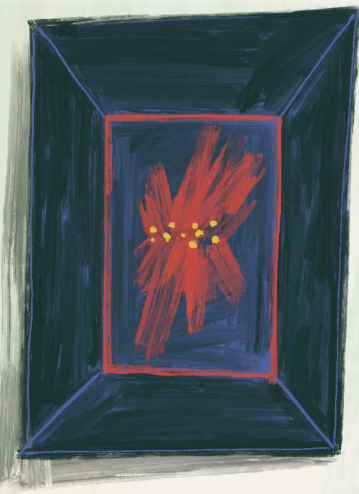
Contact no.-9084667701

Email address- chairylmakkar1@gmail.com

Language- English

Title of literary work- Empty Room

**WANNA DANCE IN THE RAIN TODAY?
I CALL OUT TO THE EMPTY ROOM,
WHERE NOT SO LONG AGO YOU LAY,
GAZING AT THE BLANK WALLS,
DREAMING OF WHAT COULD'VE BEEN,
EVERY DAY.**





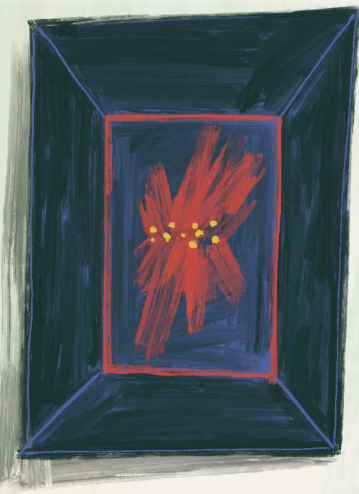
**I LONG FOR A "YES."
HONESTLY, I'D EVEN SETTLE FOR A "NO."
OR AT LEAST,
"I WISH I COULD, BUT I'M TOO TIRED, CHIDIYA."
BUT I CAN'T HEAR THE VOICE THAT ONCE ECHOED
THROUGH THIS ROOM,
THIS WISTFUL UTOPIA.**



**THE DOOR STANDS HALF AJAR.
I LEAN CLOSER,
MY EAR SEARCHING THE SILENCE.I WAIT.
NOT EVEN A WHISPER
THE WIND BRINGS.
NOT EVEN A WHISPER
THE WIND BRINGS.**



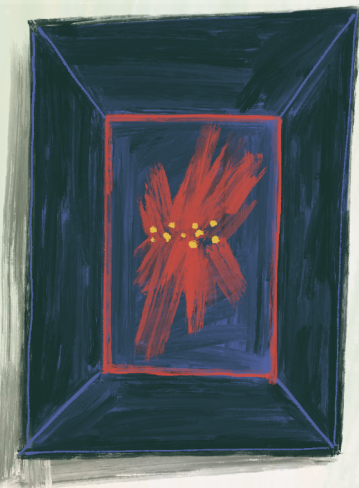
**THE GUITAR STILL RESTS IN THE CORNER.
OUR LITTLE NOOK BY THE WINDOW WAITS,
CUSHIONS SHAPED IN OUR SILHOUETTES,
AS IF WE NEVER LEFT.
THE WALLS KNOW OUR SONGS.
NOW THEY WAIT,
WITH ME.**



**TWO MINUTES.
TWO HOURS.
TWO DAYS.
TWO MONTHS.
I'M STILL WAITING,
STILL HOPING
TO SEE YOU AGAIN.
I'M STILL WAITING,
STILL HOPING
TO SEE YOU AGAIN.**



**I'D BAKE YOU A CAKE,
MAKE A CARD,BUY A GIFT,
OR DO ALL THAT YOU'D SAY.
REMEMBERING ALL THE BIRTHDAYS
WE CELEBRATED TOGETHER,
I'D PICK UP THE GUITAR FROM THE CORNER
AND PLAY ALL DAY LONG,**



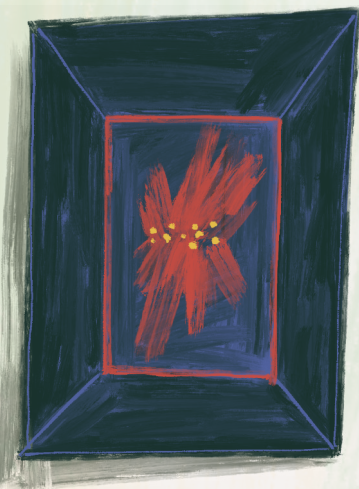
**SINGING ALOUD THE SONGS
WE SANG TOGETHER.
THE WALLS RETURN MY SONG,
BUT NEVER YOUR HARMONY.
SILENCE KNOWS YOUR PART.
YOUR VOICE , NOW A MEMORY.
I CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER...**



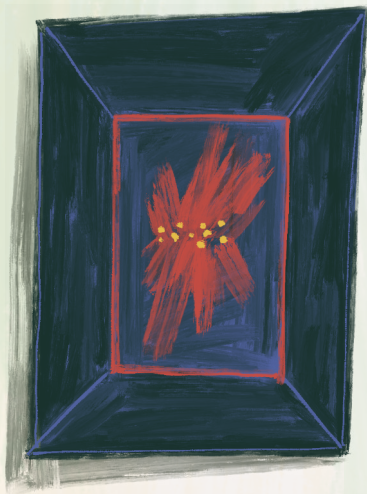
**CAN YOU SEE ME?
CAN YOU HEAR THIS TUNE?
CAN YOU FEEL THE PAIN?
ARE YOU...
ARE YOU FINALLY OKAY?
I STARE OUT THE WINDOW AT THE RAIN,
LONGING,**



**WAITING FOR YOU
TO GRAB MY HAND
AND DRAG ME OUT OF THIS EMPTY ROOM
FOR ONE LAST DANCE
TO THE BEAT OF THE RAINDROPS.
THE RAIN STARTS...
STARTS AGAIN.
TIME PASSES.**



**SEASONS CHANGE.
THE CURTAINS ARE DIFFERENT.
THE WALLS ARE PAINTED ANEW.
THE DOOR ISN'T WELCOMING,
AND THE WINDOW FEELS SMALLER TOO.
EVERYTHING IS NEW,
BUT NOTHING CHANGES
IN THIS ROOM.**



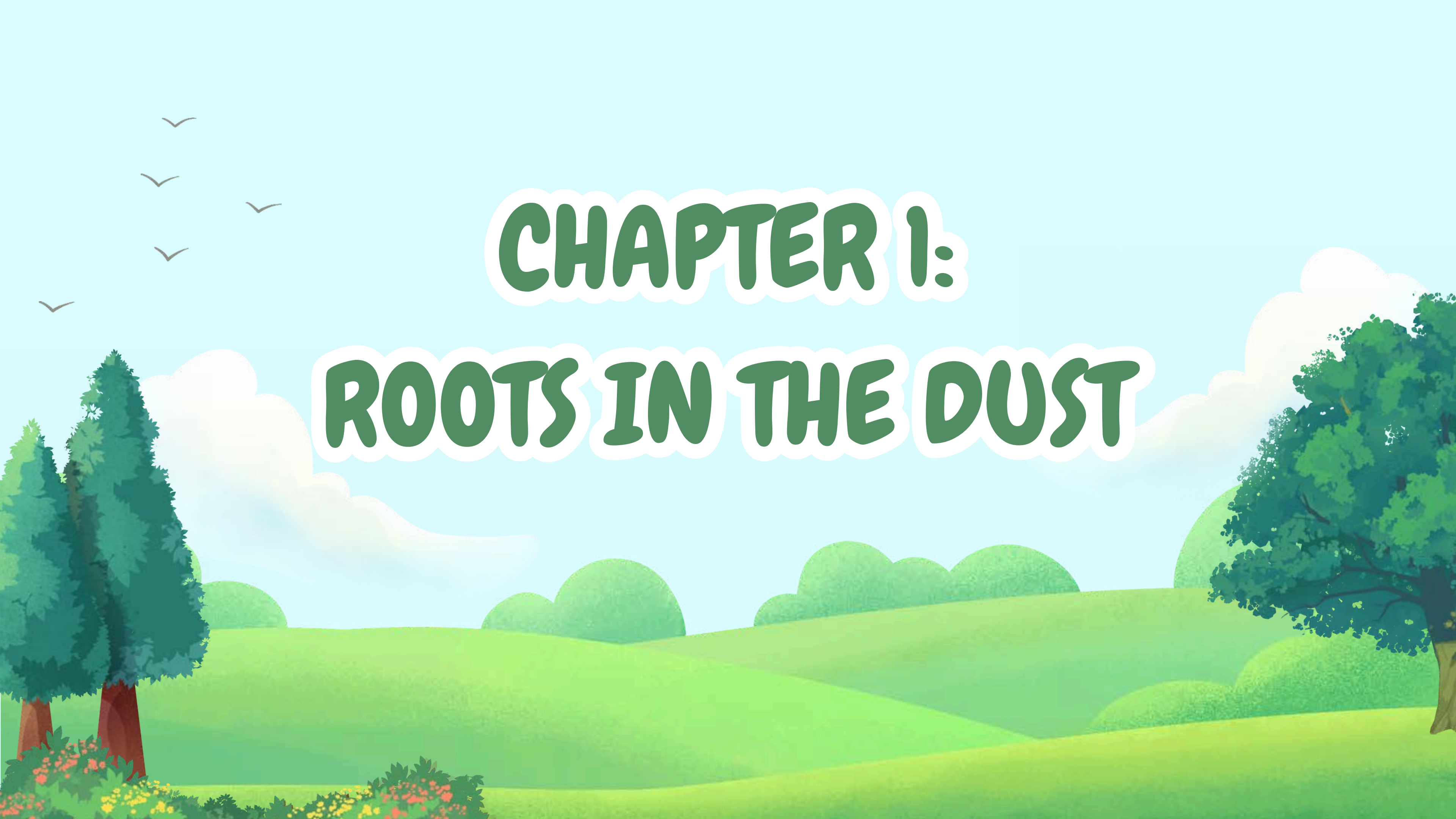
**I GUESS...
IT'S MISSING
YOU.**



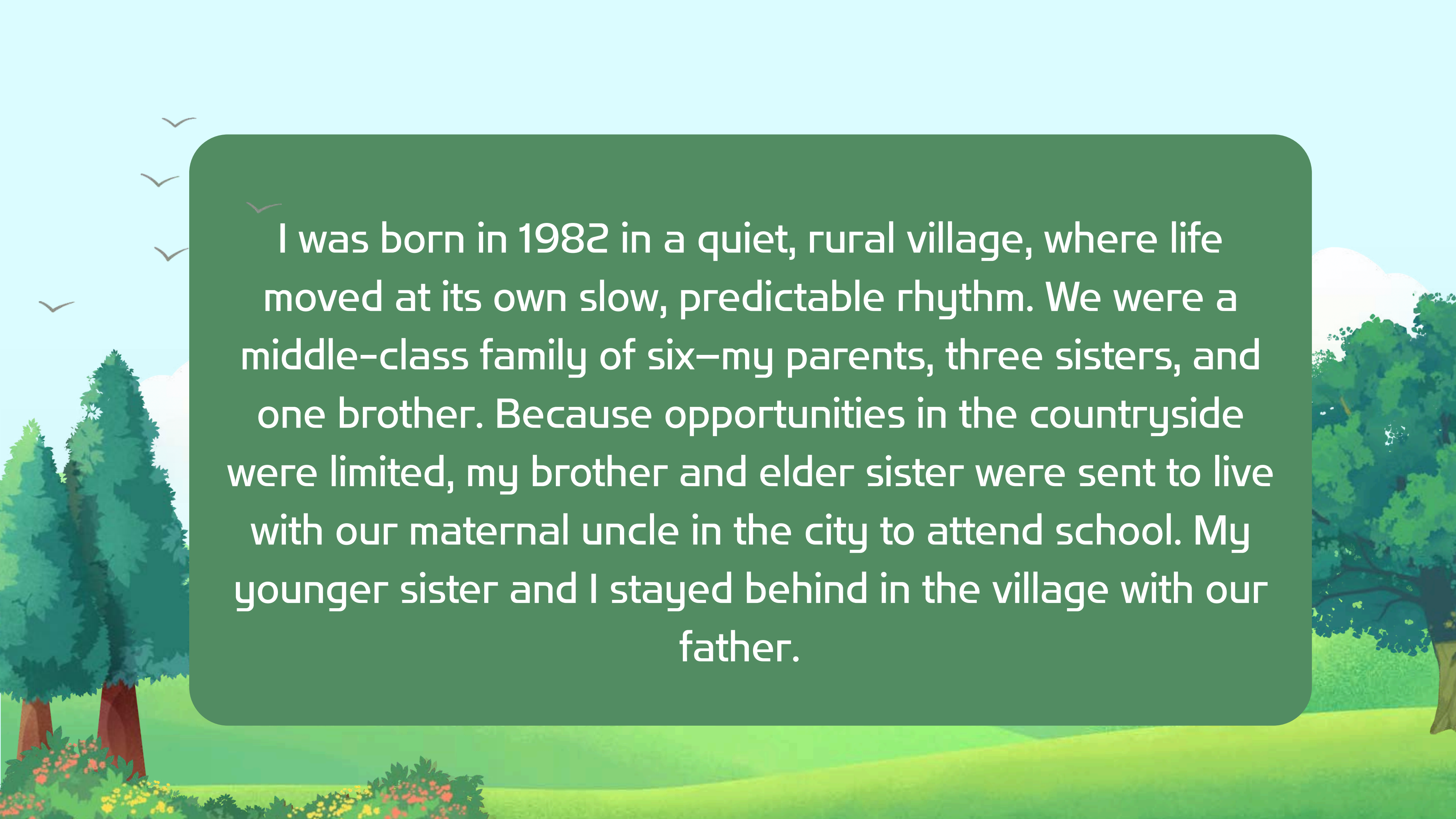
THE ART OF FINDING A WAY THROUGH LIFE

Beena Sharma

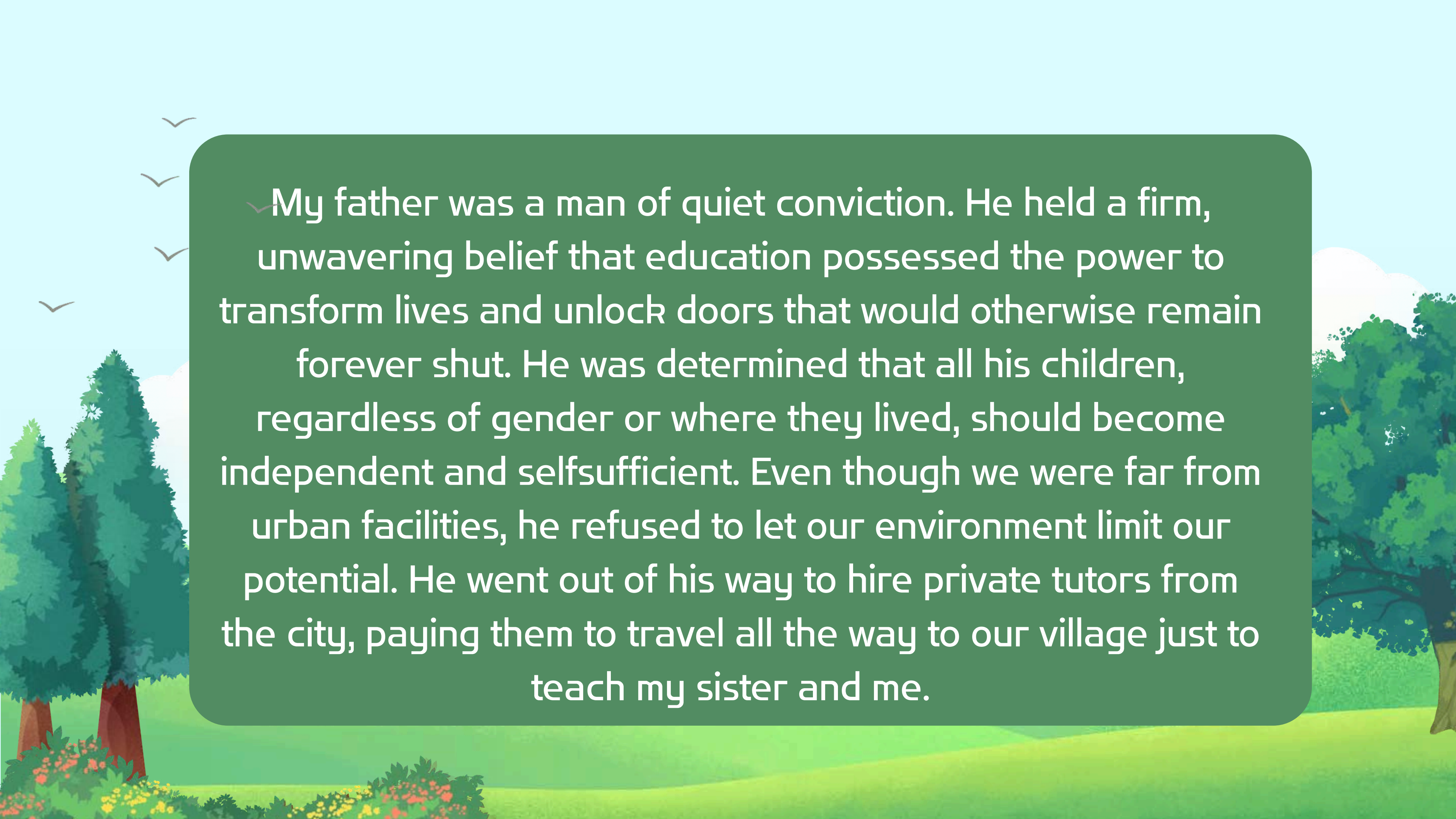




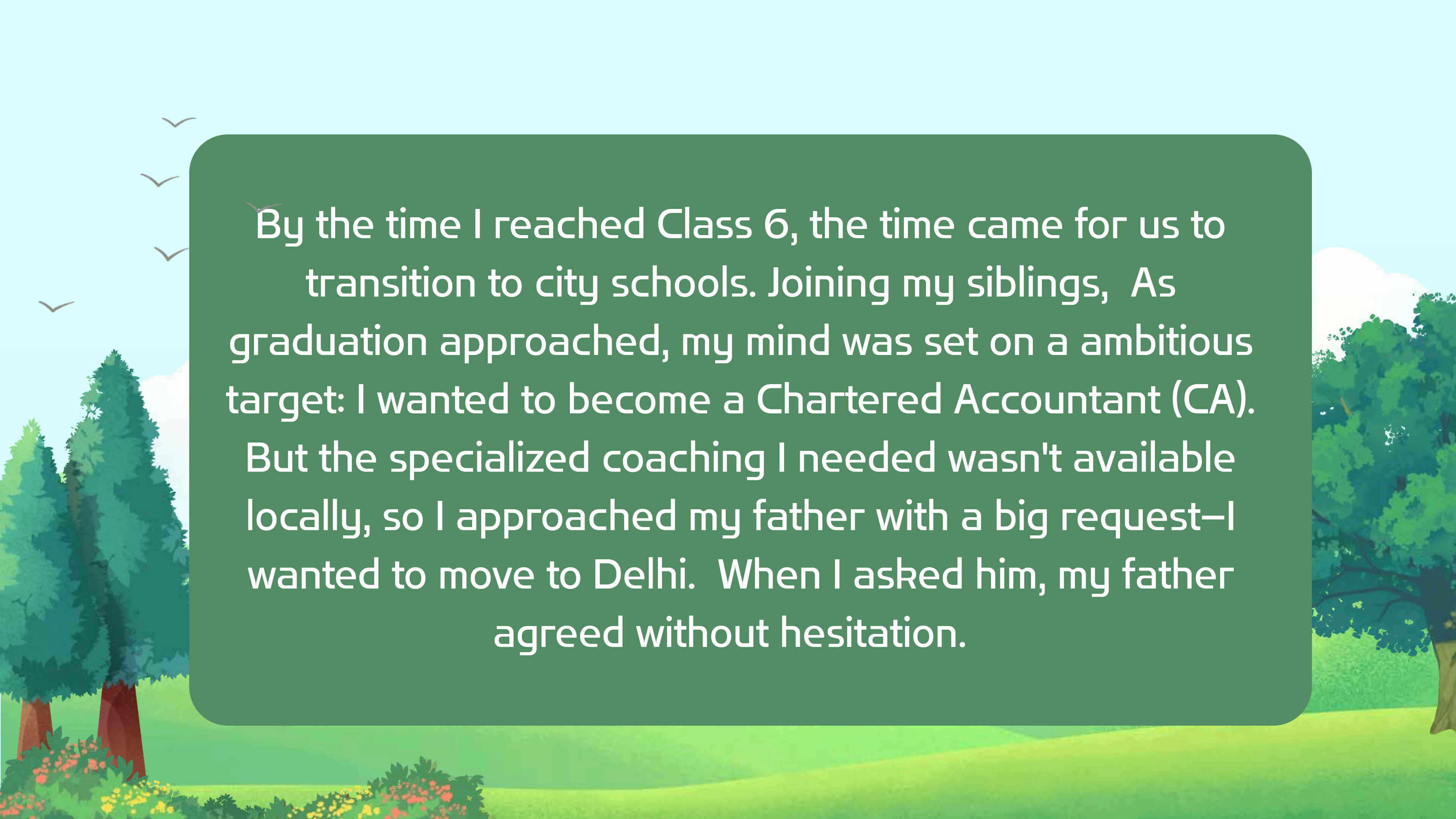
CHAPTER 1: ROOTS IN THE DUST



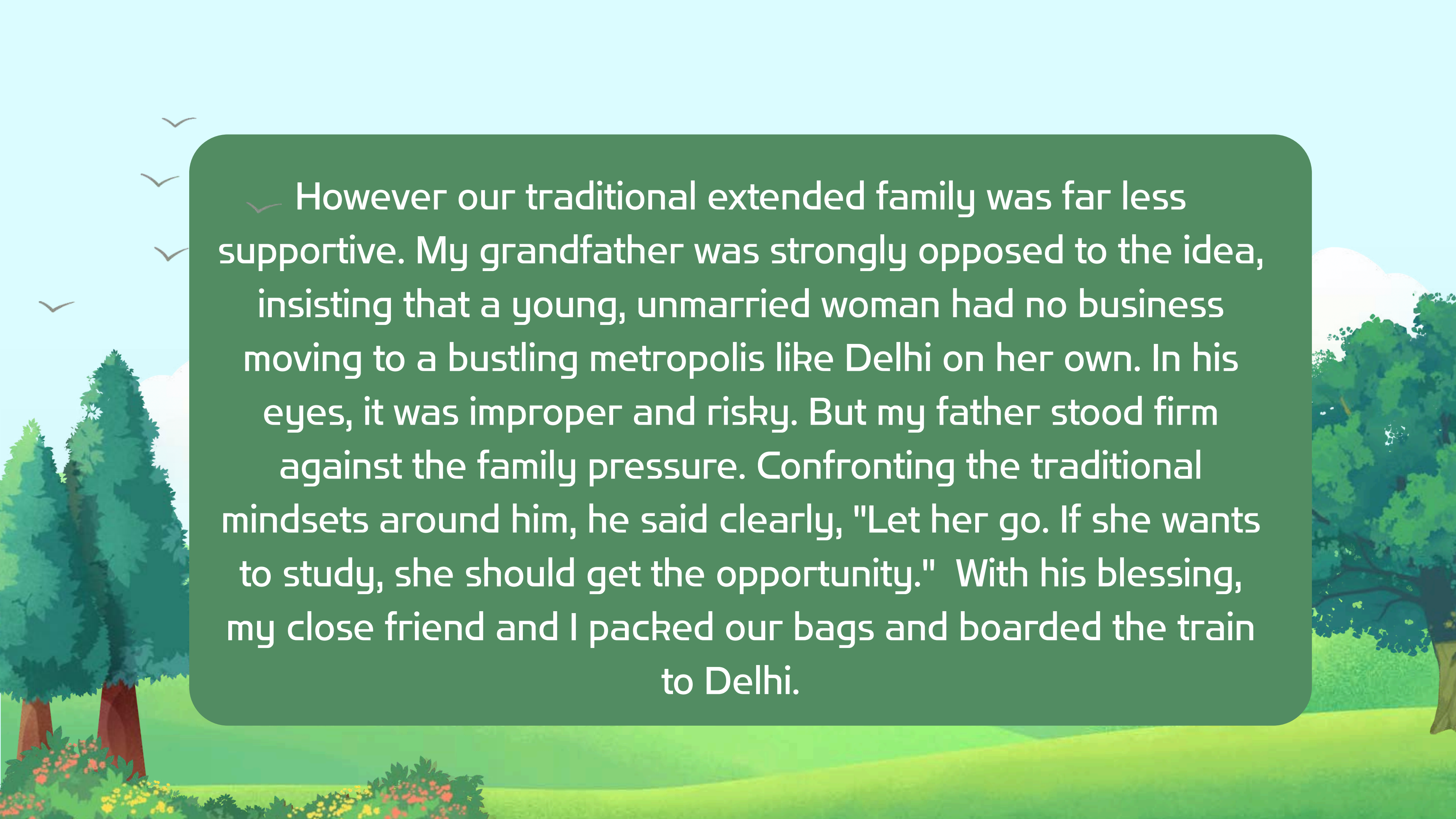
I was born in 1982 in a quiet, rural village, where life moved at its own slow, predictable rhythm. We were a middle-class family of six—my parents, three sisters, and one brother. Because opportunities in the countryside were limited, my brother and elder sister were sent to live with our maternal uncle in the city to attend school. My younger sister and I stayed behind in the village with our father.

The background of the slide is a colorful illustration of a landscape. It features rolling green hills, several trees (some tall and thin, others more rounded), and a few birds flying in the sky. The overall style is bright and cheerful.

✓ My father was a man of quiet conviction. He held a firm, unwavering belief that education possessed the power to transform lives and unlock doors that would otherwise remain forever shut. He was determined that all his children, regardless of gender or where they lived, should become independent and selfsufficient. Even though we were far from urban facilities, he refused to let our environment limit our potential. He went out of his way to hire private tutors from the city, paying them to travel all the way to our village just to teach my sister and me.

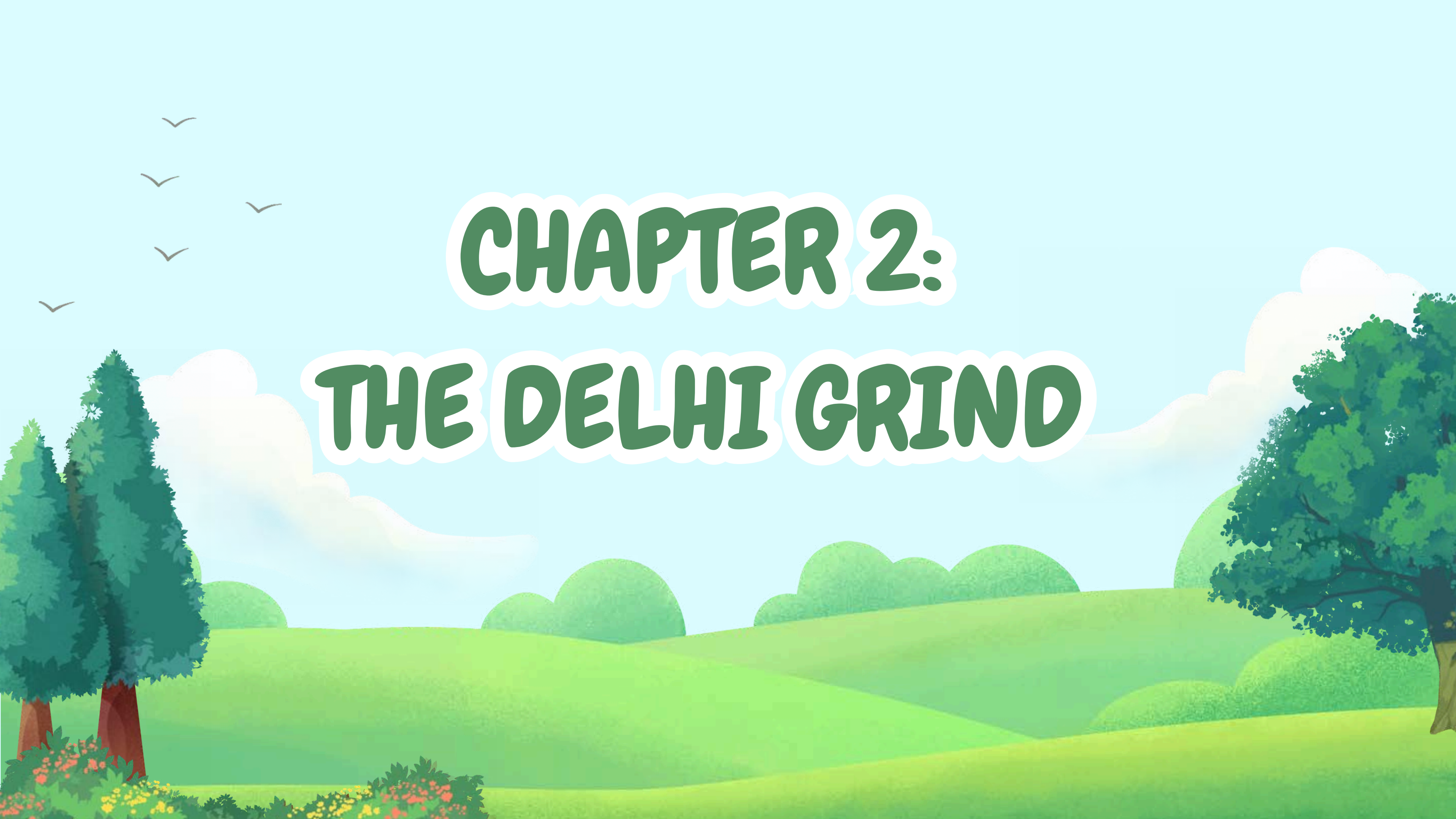


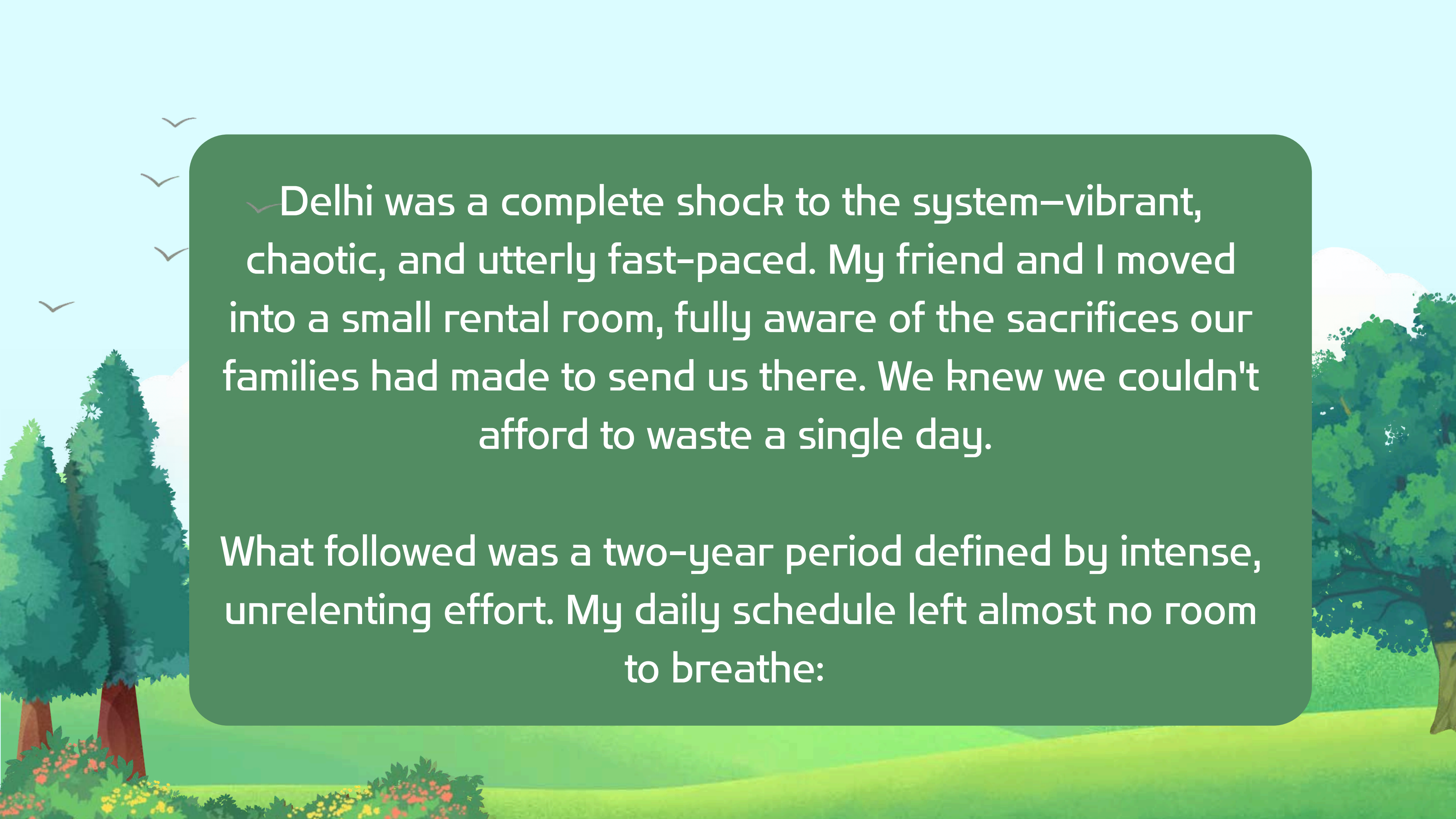
By the time I reached Class 6, the time came for us to transition to city schools. Joining my siblings, As graduation approached, my mind was set on a ambitious target: I wanted to become a Chartered Accountant (CA). But the specialized coaching I needed wasn't available locally, so I approached my father with a big request—I wanted to move to Delhi. When I asked him, my father agreed without hesitation.



✓ However our traditional extended family was far less supportive. My grandfather was strongly opposed to the idea, insisting that a young, unmarried woman had no business moving to a bustling metropolis like Delhi on her own. In his eyes, it was improper and risky. But my father stood firm against the family pressure. Confronting the traditional mindsets around him, he said clearly, "Let her go. If she wants to study, she should get the opportunity." With his blessing, my close friend and I packed our bags and boarded the train to Delhi.

CHAPTER 2: THE DELHI GRIND





✓ Delhi was a complete shock to the system—vibrant, chaotic, and utterly fast-paced. My friend and I moved into a small rental room, fully aware of the sacrifices our families had made to send us there. We knew we couldn't afford to waste a single day.

What followed was a two-year period defined by intense, unrelenting effort. My daily schedule left almost no room to breathe:



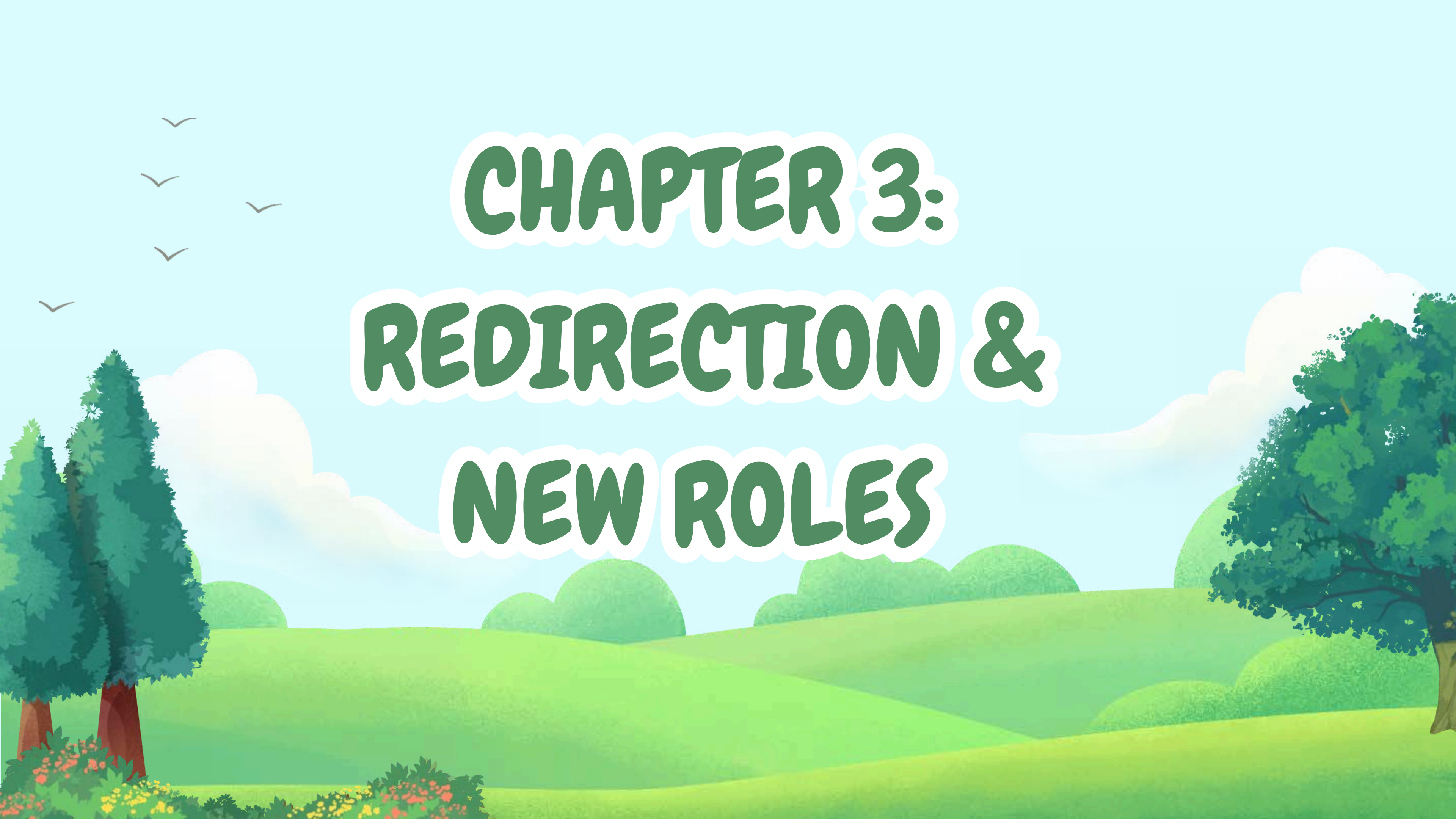
*6:00 AM – 9:00 AM: Morning coaching classes

* 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM: Practical articleship training at a
accounting firm

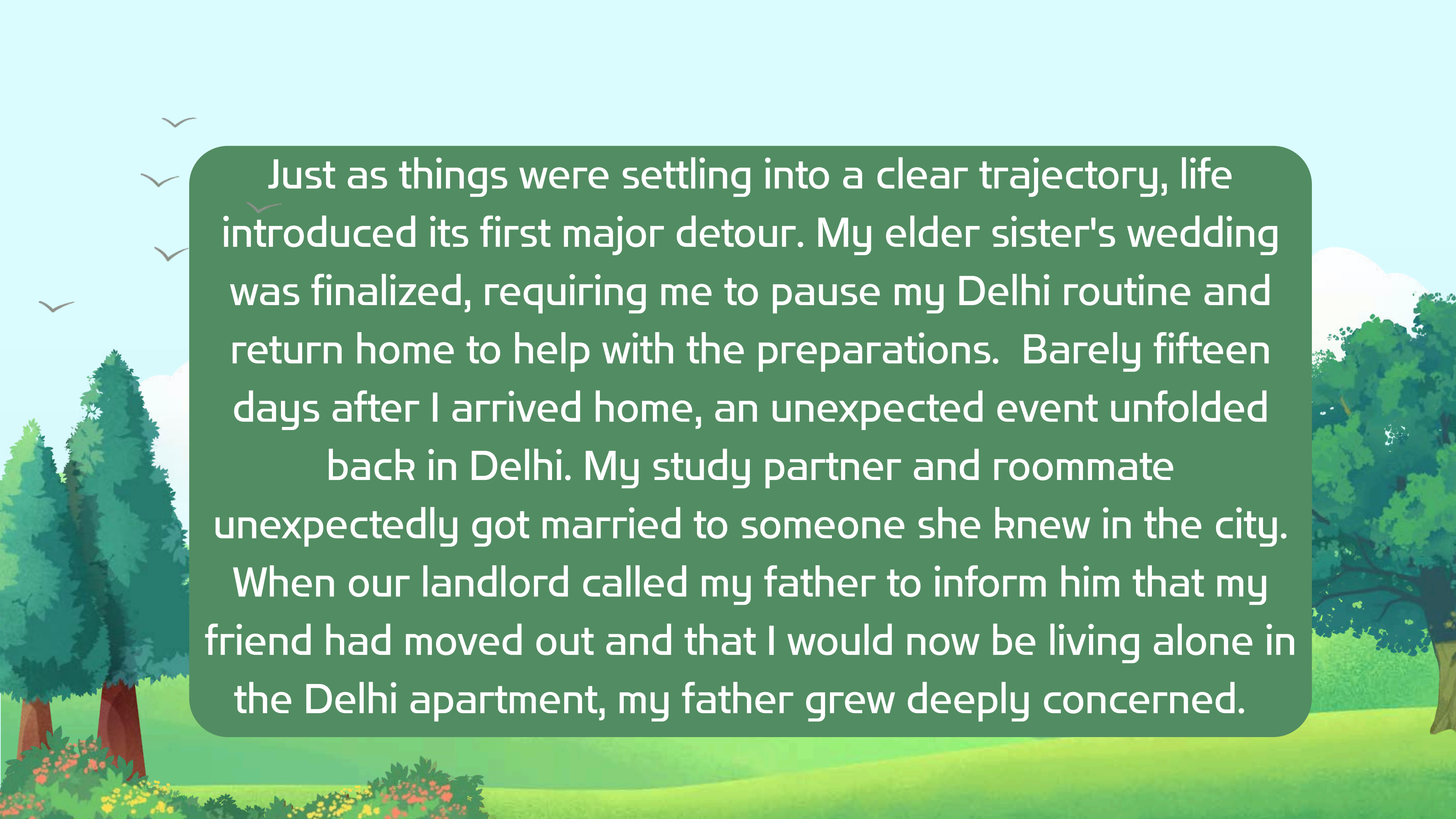
* 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM: Evening coaching classes

*When 10:00 PM finally rolled around, my workday was far from over. I would walk back to my room, prepare a basic meal from scratch, wash up, and then open my textbooks to study deep into the night. Sleep was a luxury I simply couldn't prioritize. During one particularly intense preparation period before exams, the pressure was so high that I went an entire week without proper sleep, surviving on sheer willpower and hot tea.

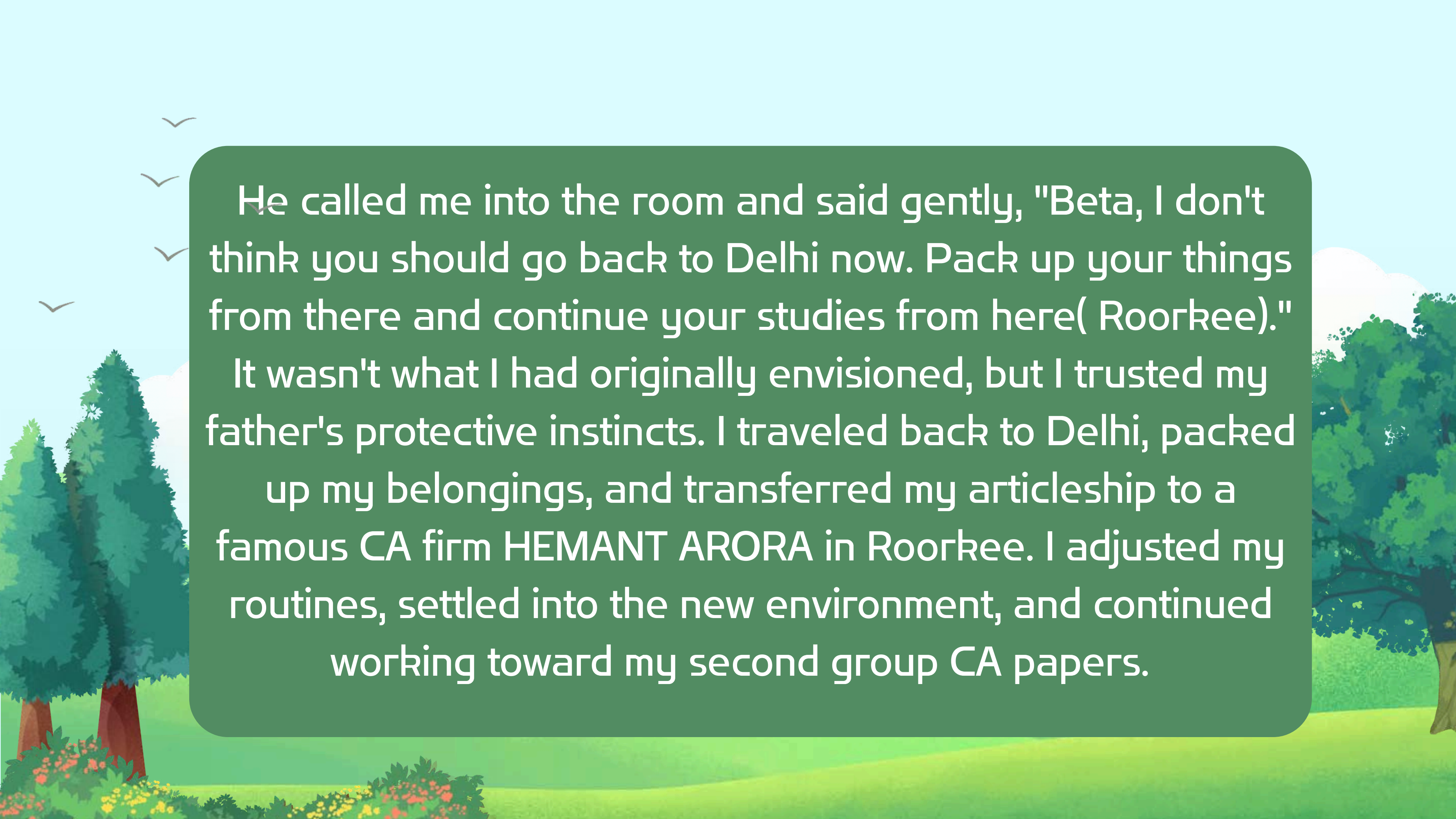
*We pushed ourselves to the absolute limit, driven by the desire to prove that our fathers' faith in us was justified. When the exam results were announced, our sacrifices felt completely validated—both my friend and I successfully cleared our first CA group. It felt like the hard part was over, and the path to our professional dreams was wide open.



CHAPTER 3: REDIRECTION & NEW ROLES

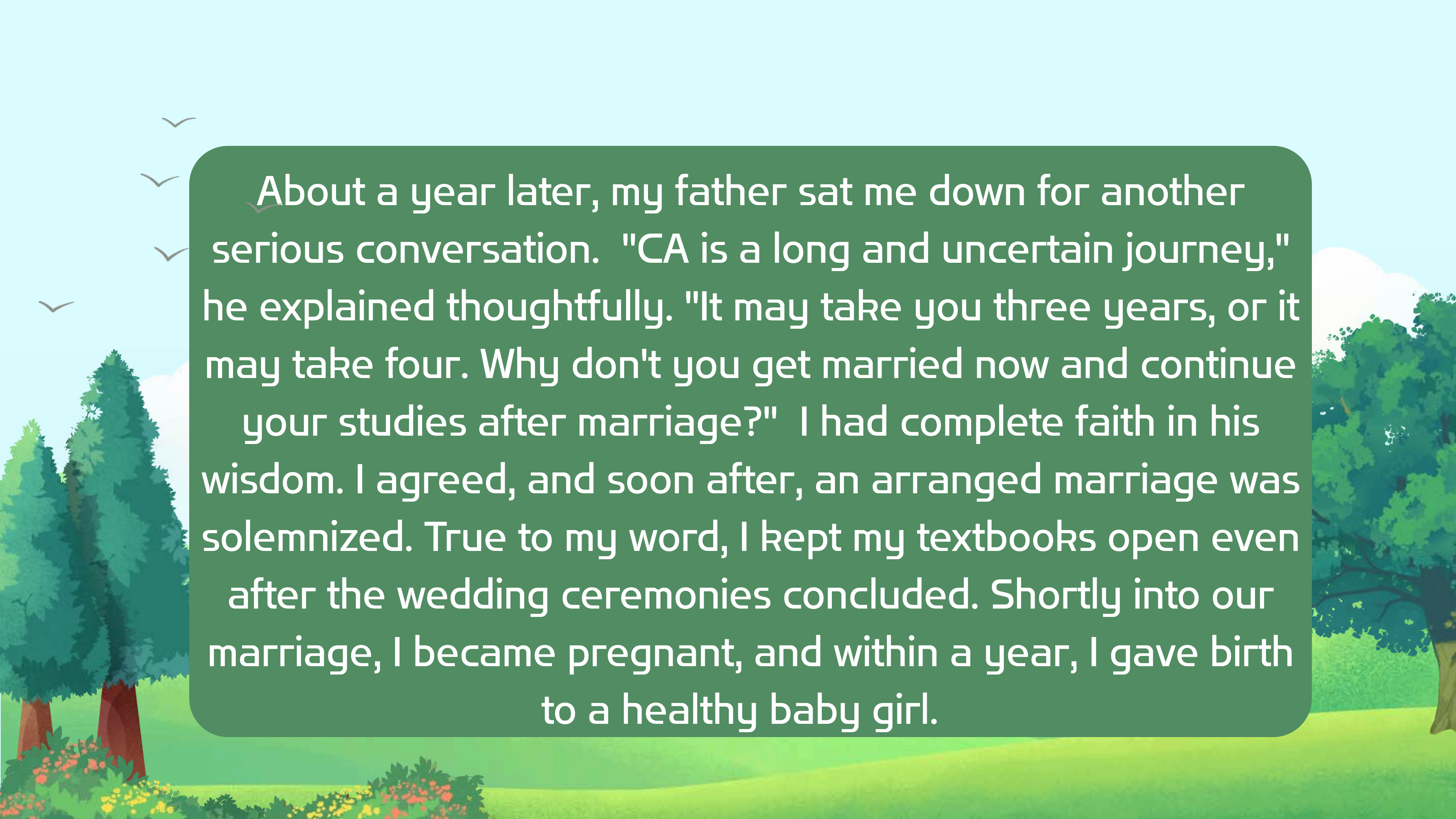
The background of the image is a stylized illustration of a landscape. It features rolling green hills, several trees (some tall and thin, some shorter and bushier), and a few birds flying in the sky. The overall color palette is bright and cheerful, with greens, blues, and yellows. The text is overlaid on a dark green rectangular background with rounded corners.

Just as things were settling into a clear trajectory, life introduced its first major detour. My elder sister's wedding was finalized, requiring me to pause my Delhi routine and return home to help with the preparations. Barely fifteen days after I arrived home, an unexpected event unfolded back in Delhi. My study partner and roommate unexpectedly got married to someone she knew in the city. When our landlord called my father to inform him that my friend had moved out and that I would now be living alone in the Delhi apartment, my father grew deeply concerned.



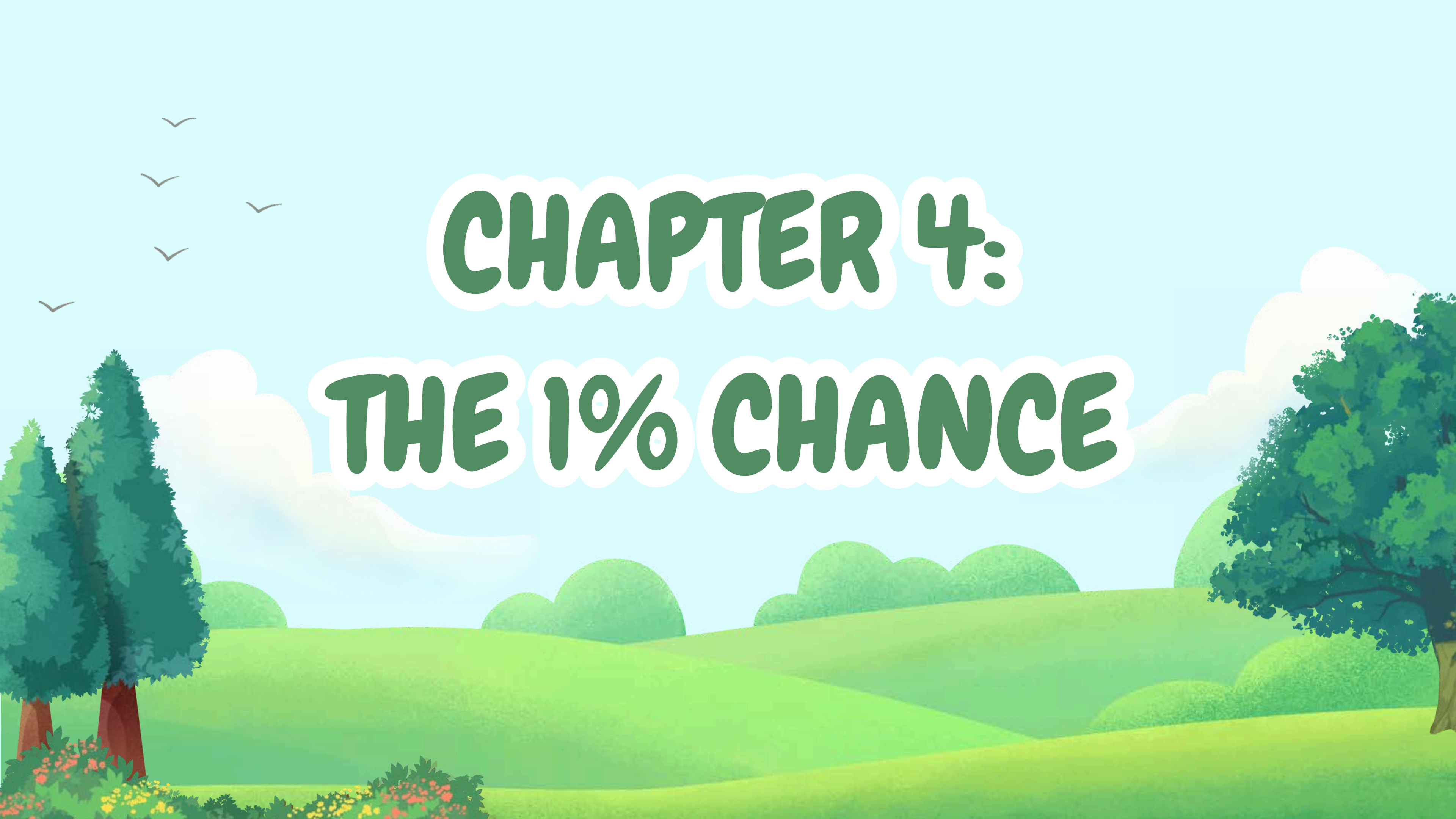
He called me into the room and said gently, "Beta, I don't think you should go back to Delhi now. Pack up your things from there and continue your studies from here(Roorkee)."

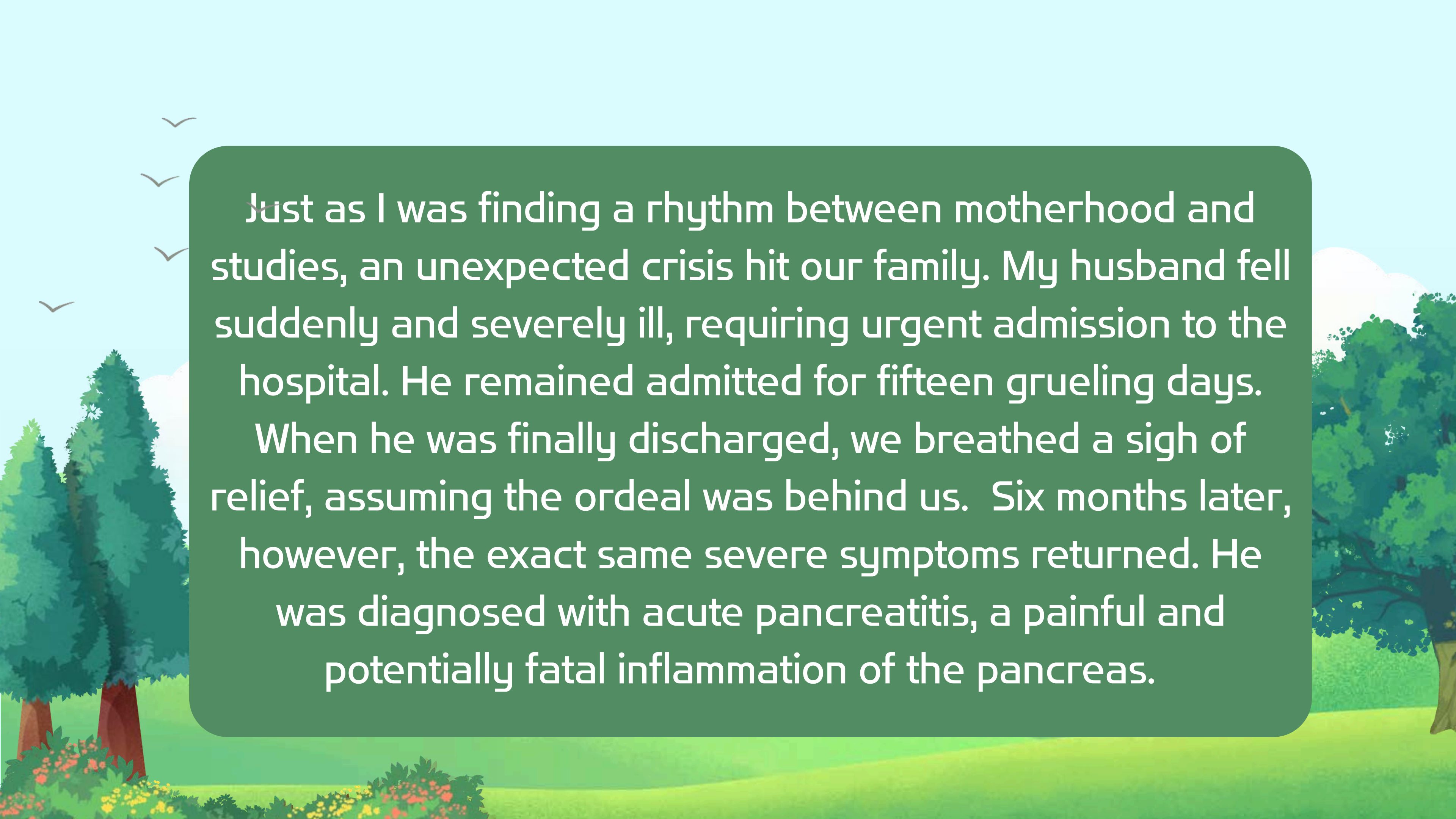
It wasn't what I had originally envisioned, but I trusted my father's protective instincts. I traveled back to Delhi, packed up my belongings, and transferred my articleship to a famous CA firm HEMANT ARORA in Roorkee. I adjusted my routines, settled into the new environment, and continued working toward my second group CA papers.

The background of the image is a vibrant, stylized illustration of a landscape. It features rolling green hills under a clear blue sky. On the left, there are several tall, dark green coniferous trees with reddish-brown trunks. On the right, there is a large, leafy deciduous tree. In the foreground, there are patches of yellow and orange flowers. Several small, dark birds are flying in the sky. A large, dark green rounded rectangle is centered on the image, containing white text.

About a year later, my father sat me down for another serious conversation. "CA is a long and uncertain journey," he explained thoughtfully. "It may take you three years, or it may take four. Why don't you get married now and continue your studies after marriage?" I had complete faith in his wisdom. I agreed, and soon after, an arranged marriage was solemnized. True to my word, I kept my textbooks open even after the wedding ceremonies concluded. Shortly into our marriage, I became pregnant, and within a year, I gave birth to a healthy baby girl.

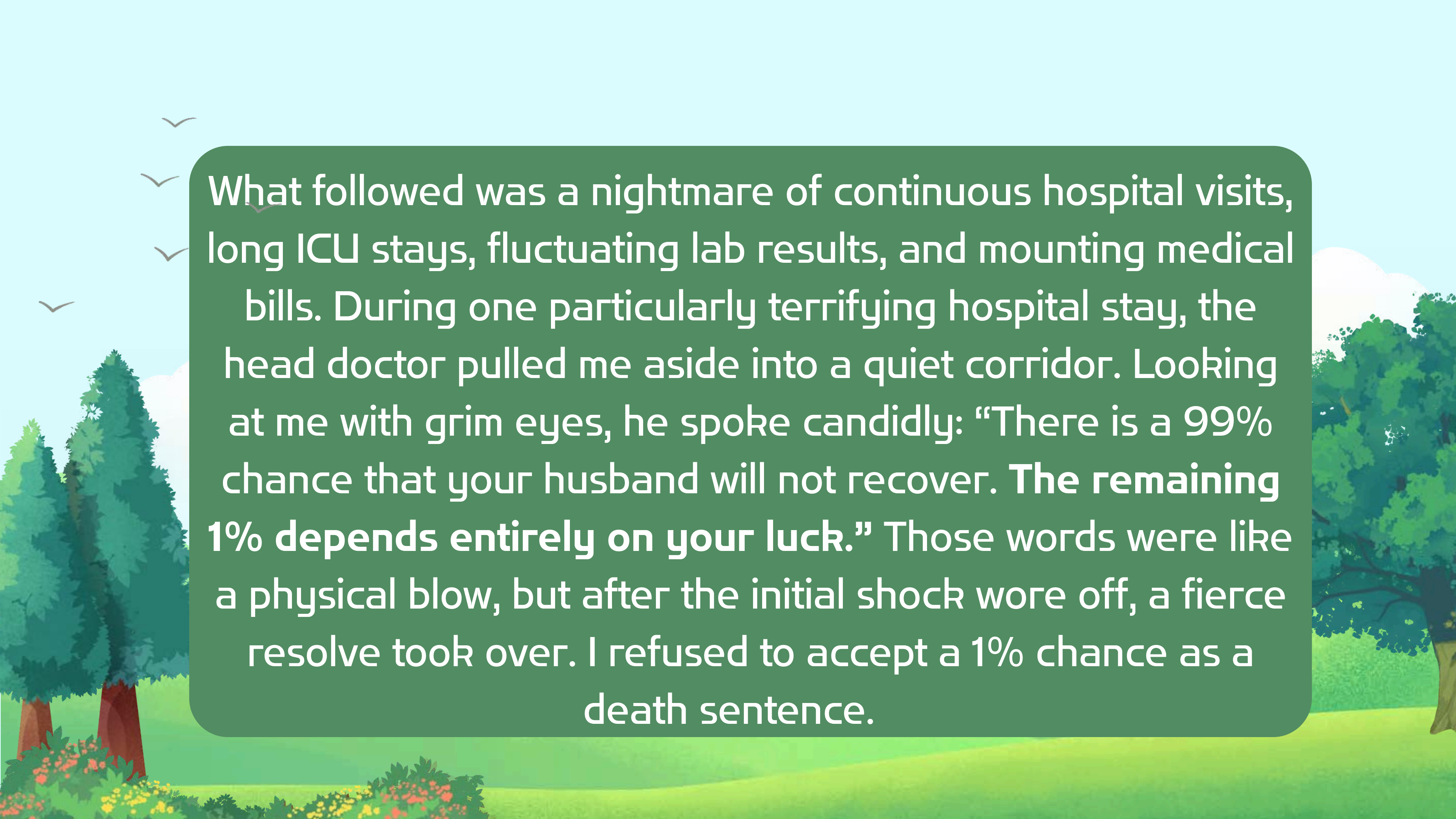
CHAPTER 4: THE 1% CHANCE



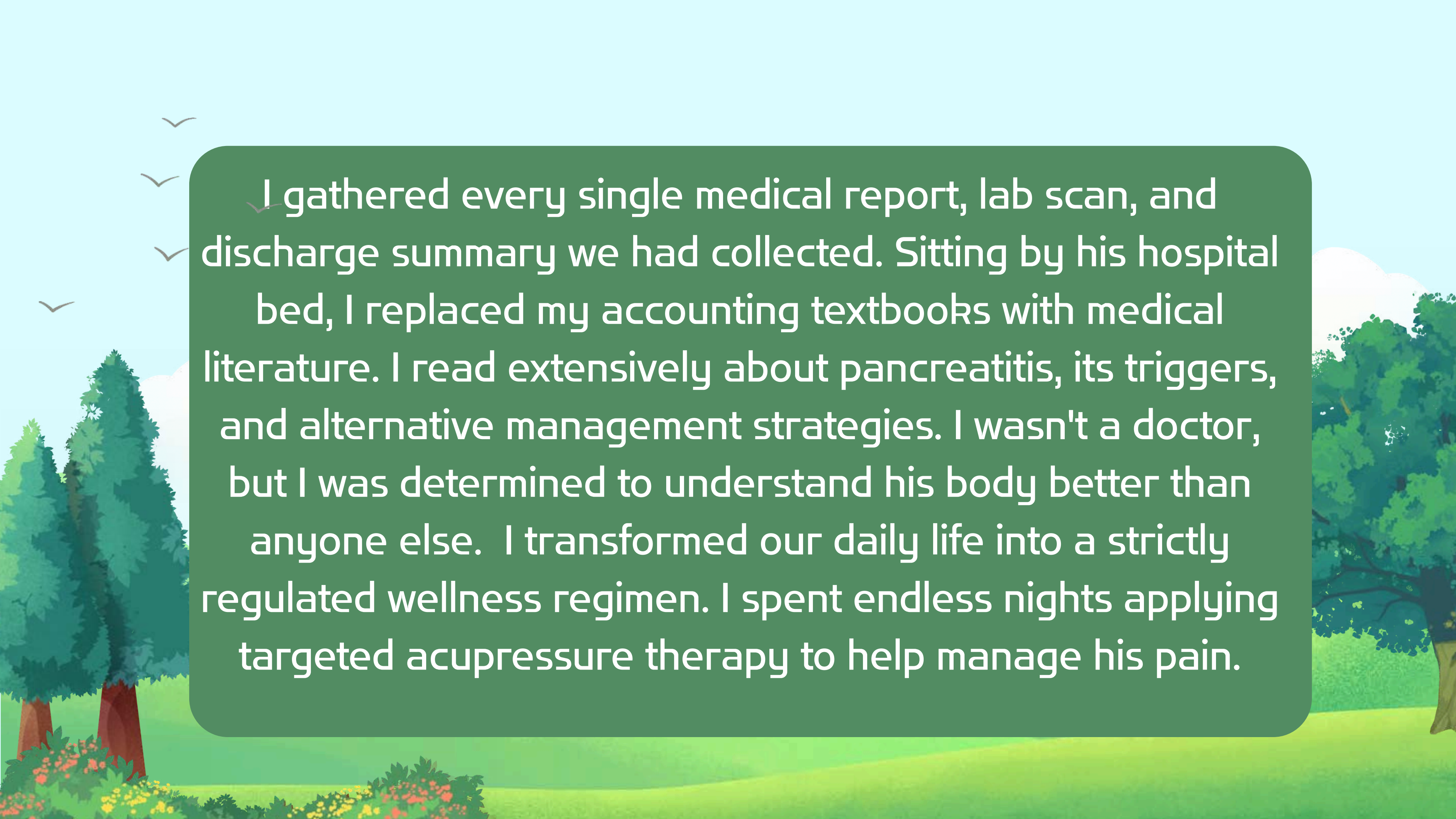


Just as I was finding a rhythm between motherhood and studies, an unexpected crisis hit our family. My husband fell suddenly and severely ill, requiring urgent admission to the hospital. He remained admitted for fifteen grueling days.

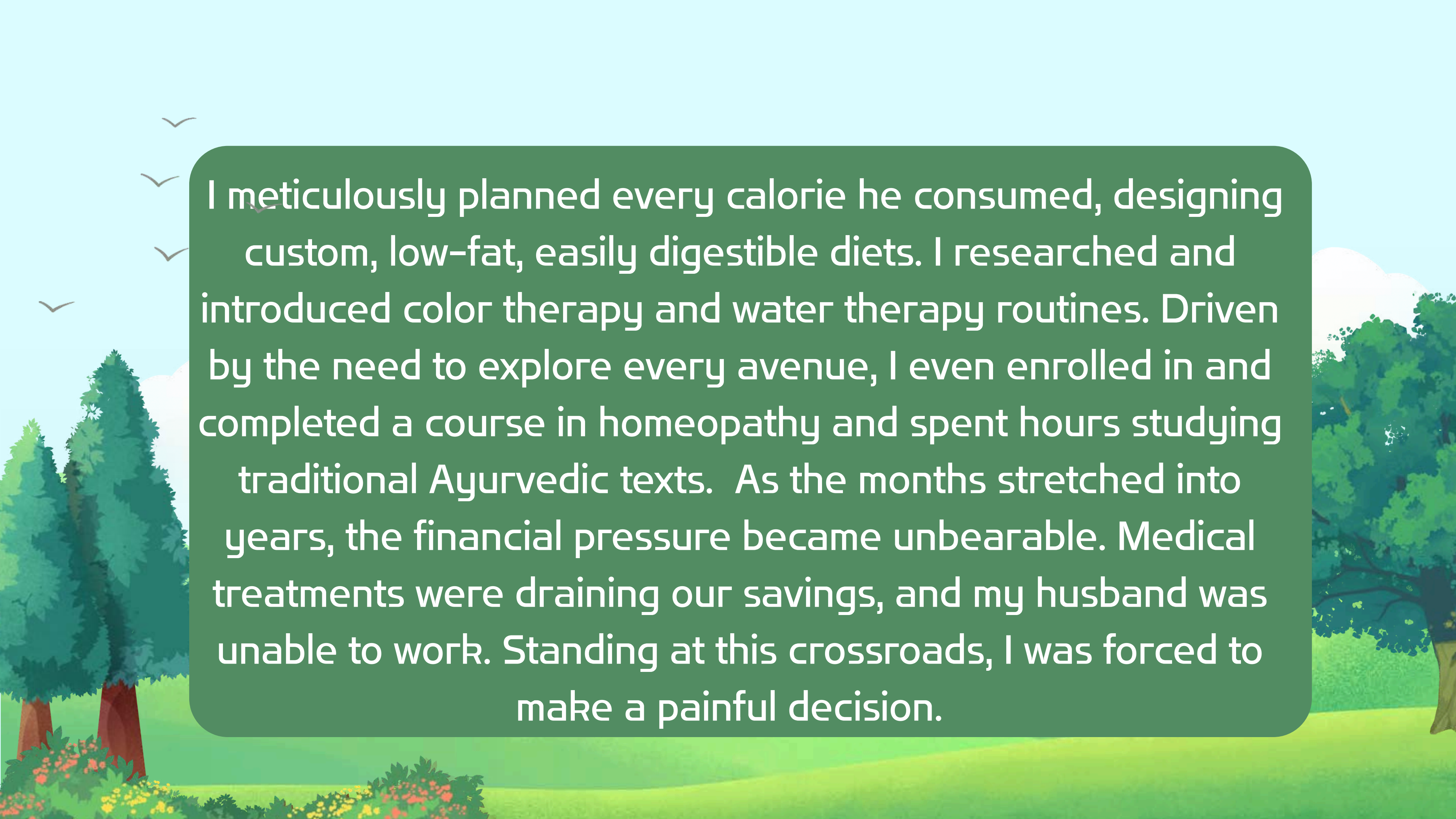
When he was finally discharged, we breathed a sigh of relief, assuming the ordeal was behind us. Six months later, however, the exact same severe symptoms returned. He was diagnosed with acute pancreatitis, a painful and potentially fatal inflammation of the pancreas.



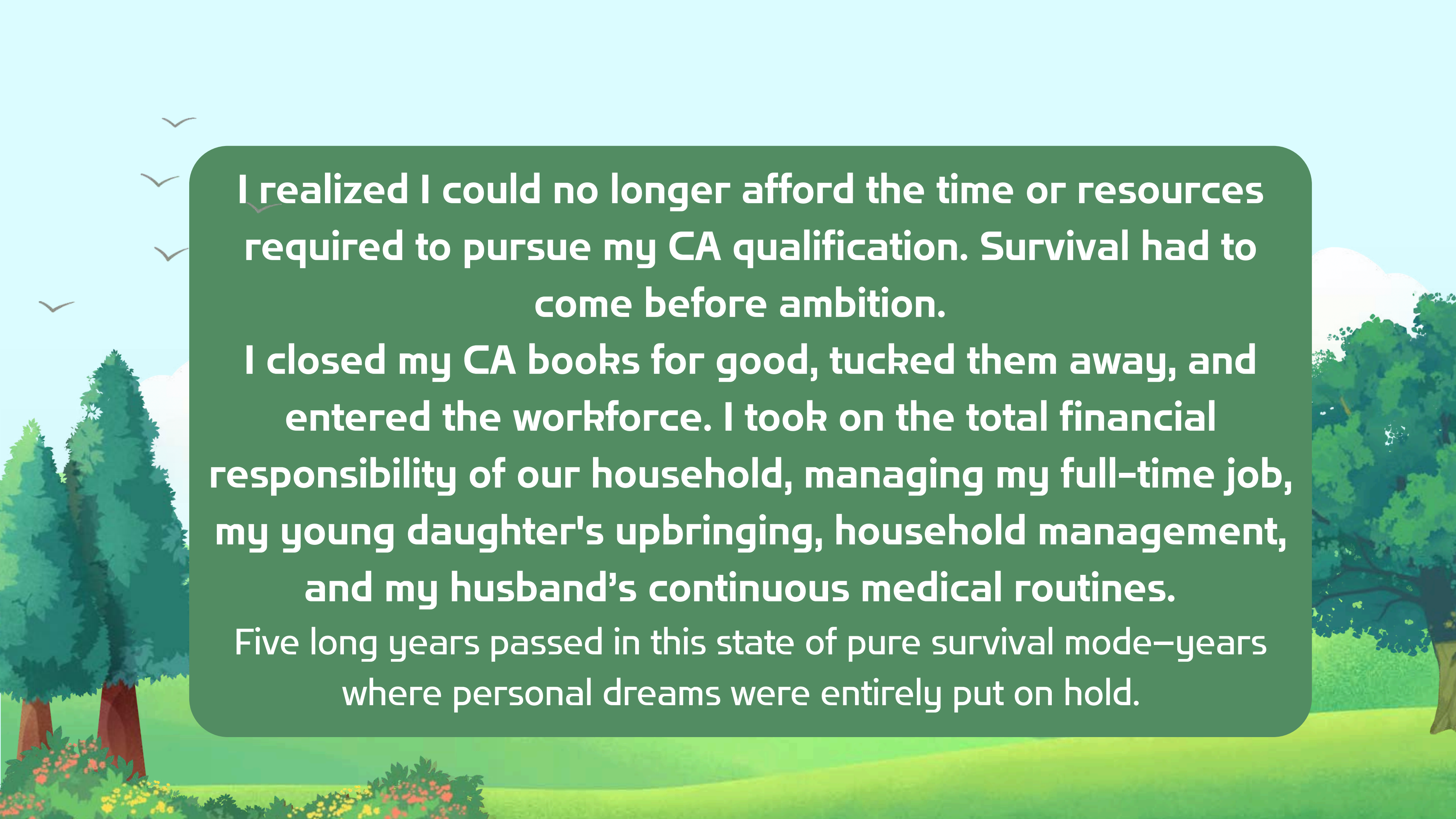
What followed was a nightmare of continuous hospital visits, long ICU stays, fluctuating lab results, and mounting medical bills. During one particularly terrifying hospital stay, the head doctor pulled me aside into a quiet corridor. Looking at me with grim eyes, he spoke candidly: “There is a 99% chance that your husband will not recover. **The remaining 1% depends entirely on your luck.**” Those words were like a physical blow, but after the initial shock wore off, a fierce resolve took over. I refused to accept a 1% chance as a death sentence.

The background of the slide is a vibrant, stylized illustration of a landscape. It features rolling green hills in the foreground and middle ground. On the left side, there are several tall, dark green coniferous trees with reddish-brown trunks. On the right side, there is a large, leafy deciduous tree. The sky is a clear, light blue, and several small, dark birds are depicted in flight. A large, dark green rounded rectangle is centered on the slide, containing white text. The text is a single paragraph describing a person's experience with a medical condition and their subsequent actions.

I gathered every single medical report, lab scan, and discharge summary we had collected. Sitting by his hospital bed, I replaced my accounting textbooks with medical literature. I read extensively about pancreatitis, its triggers, and alternative management strategies. I wasn't a doctor, but I was determined to understand his body better than anyone else. I transformed our daily life into a strictly regulated wellness regimen. I spent endless nights applying targeted acupressure therapy to help manage his pain.

The background of the image is a vibrant, stylized illustration of a natural landscape. It features rolling green hills in the foreground and middle ground. On the left side, there are several tall, dark green coniferous trees with reddish-brown trunks. To the right, there is a large, leafy deciduous tree. The sky is a clear, light blue, and several small, dark birds are depicted in flight. A soft, white cloud is visible on the right side of the sky. The overall scene is bright and cheerful, with a focus on nature.

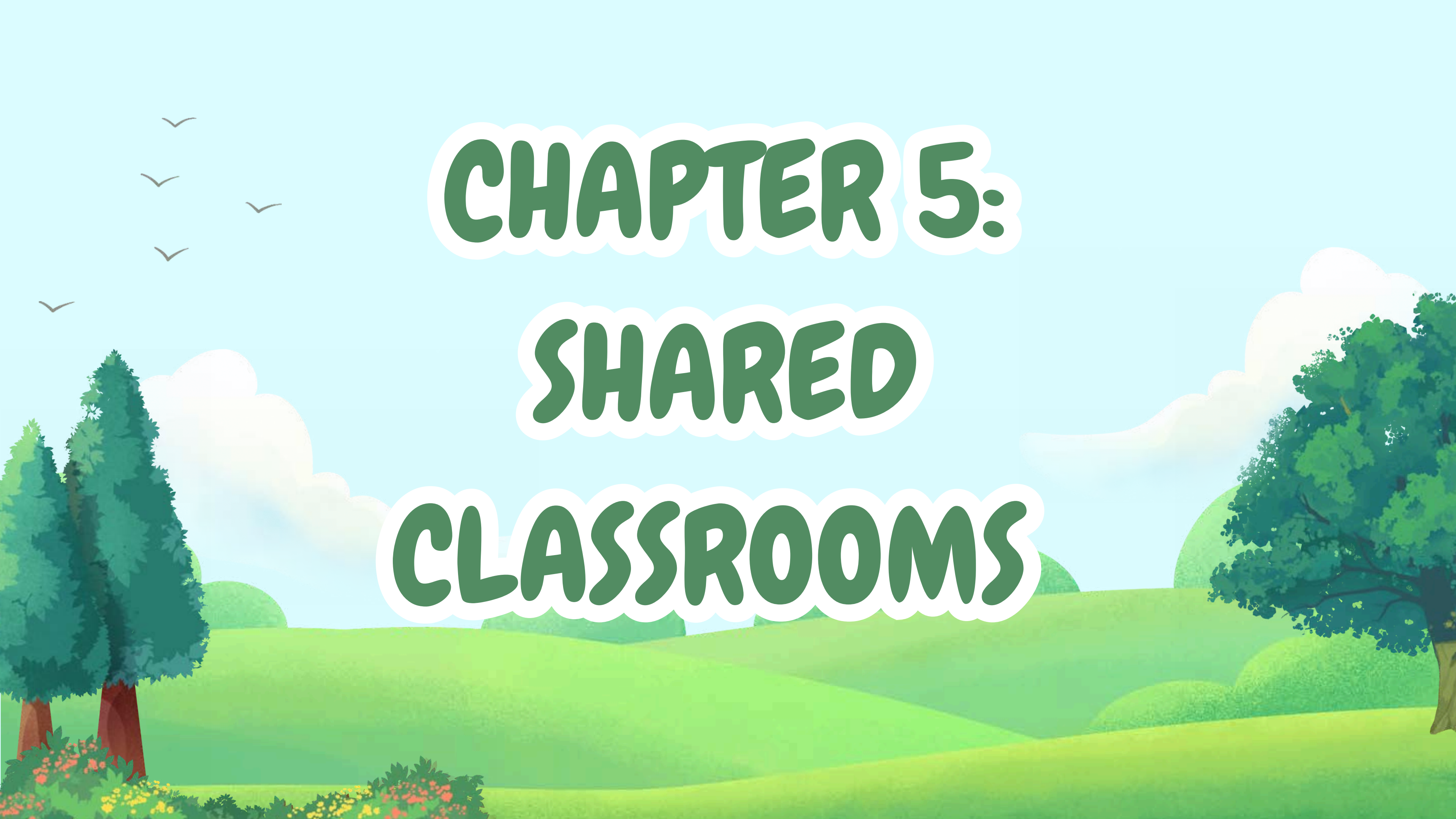
I meticulously planned every calorie he consumed, designing custom, low-fat, easily digestible diets. I researched and introduced color therapy and water therapy routines. Driven by the need to explore every avenue, I even enrolled in and completed a course in homeopathy and spent hours studying traditional Ayurvedic texts. As the months stretched into years, the financial pressure became unbearable. Medical treatments were draining our savings, and my husband was unable to work. Standing at this crossroads, I was forced to make a painful decision.



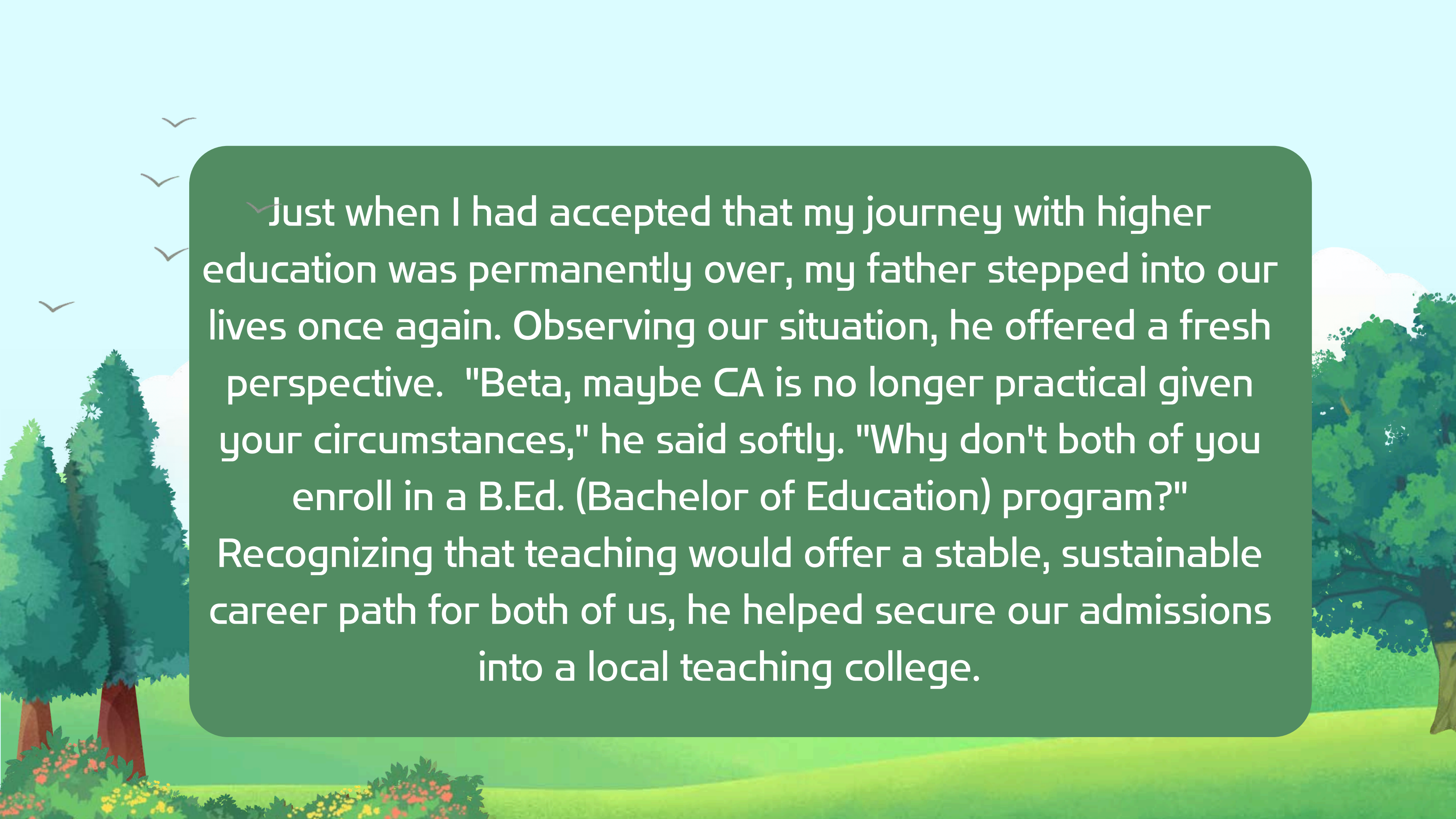
I realized I could no longer afford the time or resources required to pursue my CA qualification. Survival had to come before ambition.

I closed my CA books for good, tucked them away, and entered the workforce. I took on the total financial responsibility of our household, managing my full-time job, my young daughter's upbringing, household management, and my husband's continuous medical routines.

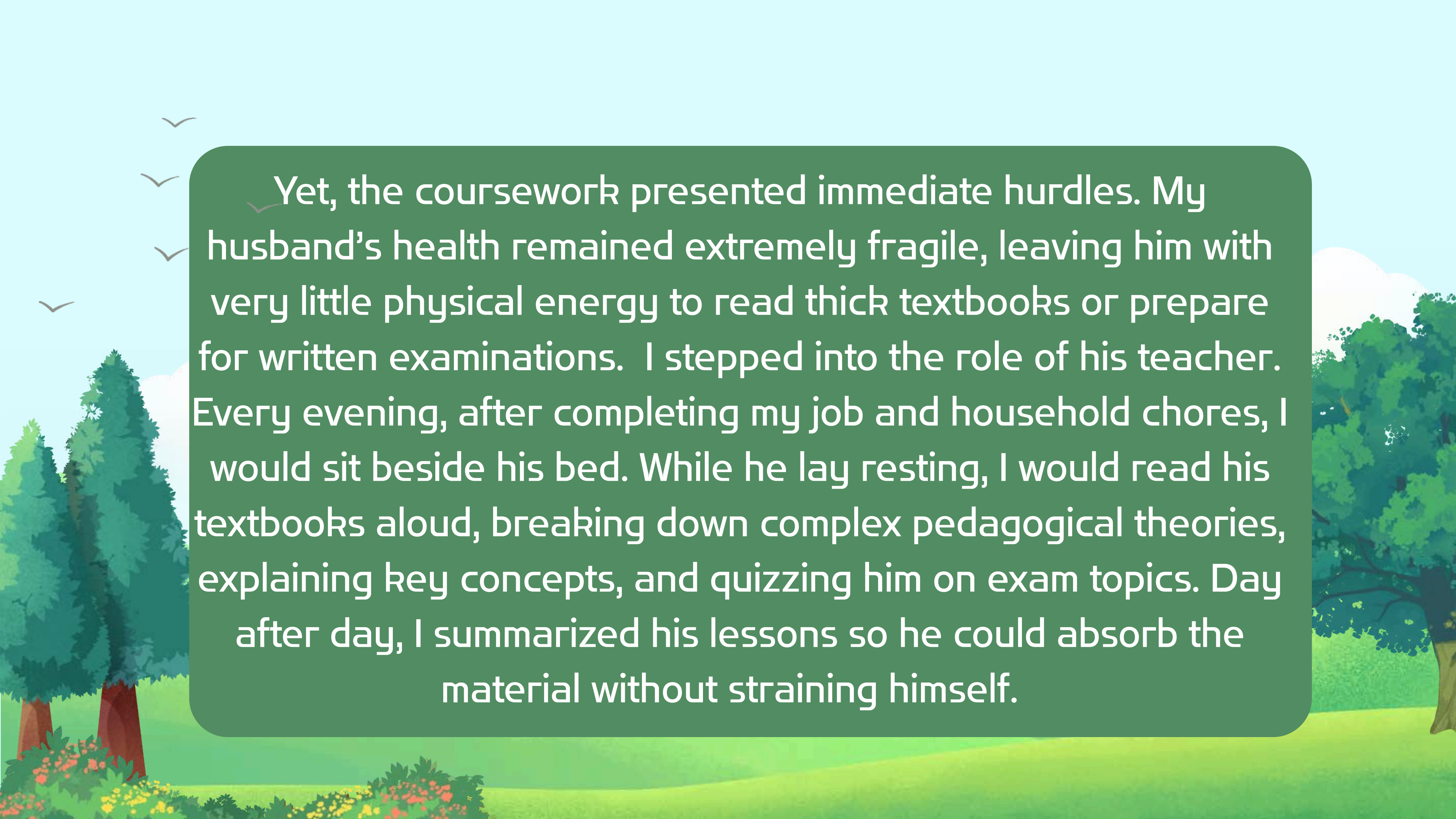
Five long years passed in this state of pure survival mode—years where personal dreams were entirely put on hold.



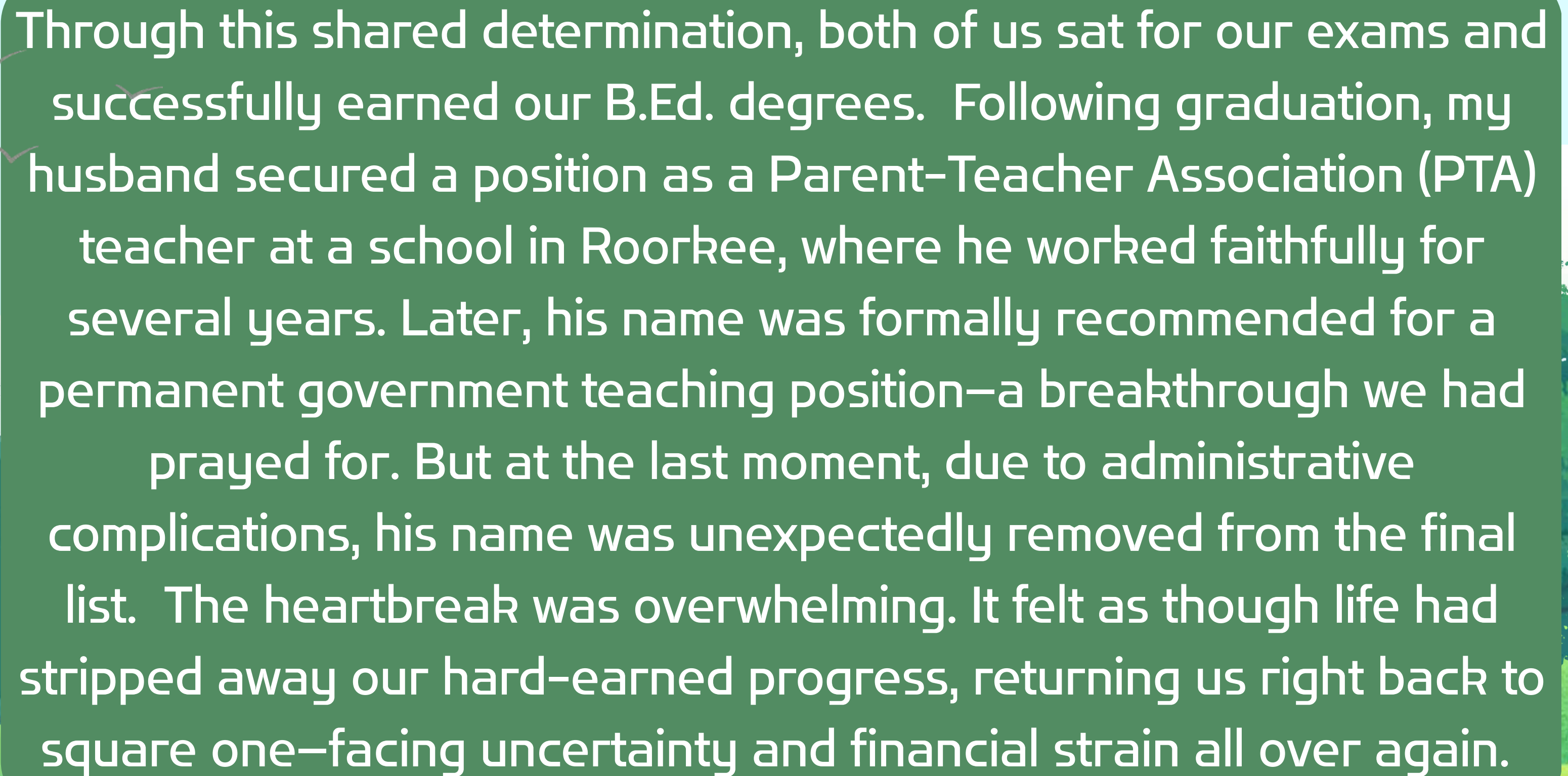
CHAPTER 5: SHARED CLASSROOMS



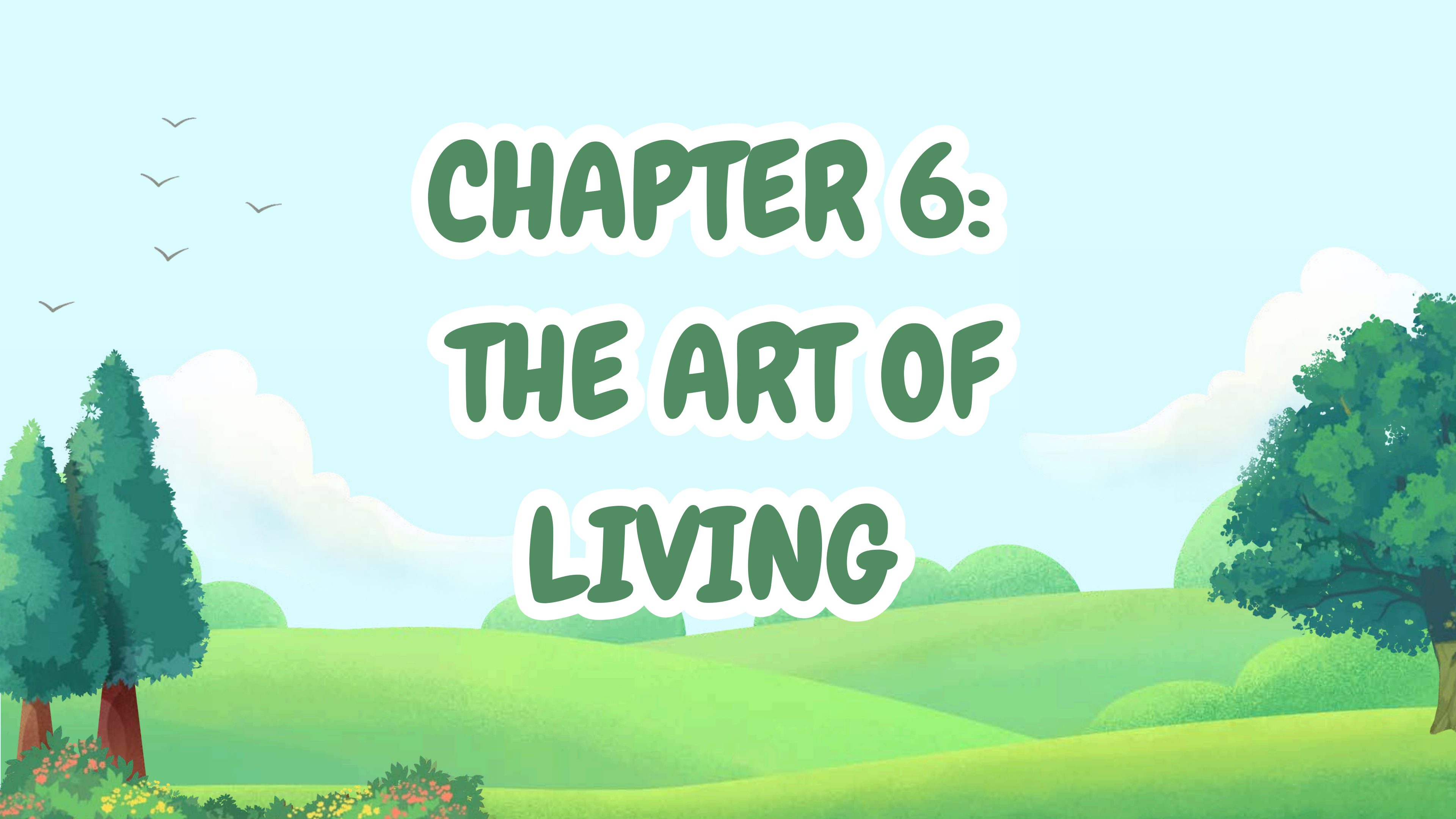
Just when I had accepted that my journey with higher education was permanently over, my father stepped into our lives once again. Observing our situation, he offered a fresh perspective. "Beta, maybe CA is no longer practical given your circumstances," he said softly. "Why don't both of you enroll in a B.Ed. (Bachelor of Education) program?" Recognizing that teaching would offer a stable, sustainable career path for both of us, he helped secure our admissions into a local teaching college.

The background of the slide is a soft, stylized illustration of a landscape. It features rolling green hills under a light blue sky. On the left, there are two tall, dark green coniferous trees with reddish-brown trunks. In the foreground, there are patches of yellow and orange flowers. On the right, a large, leafy green tree is partially visible. Several small, dark birds are scattered across the sky, some in flight. The text is presented in a white, sans-serif font within a dark green rounded rectangle.

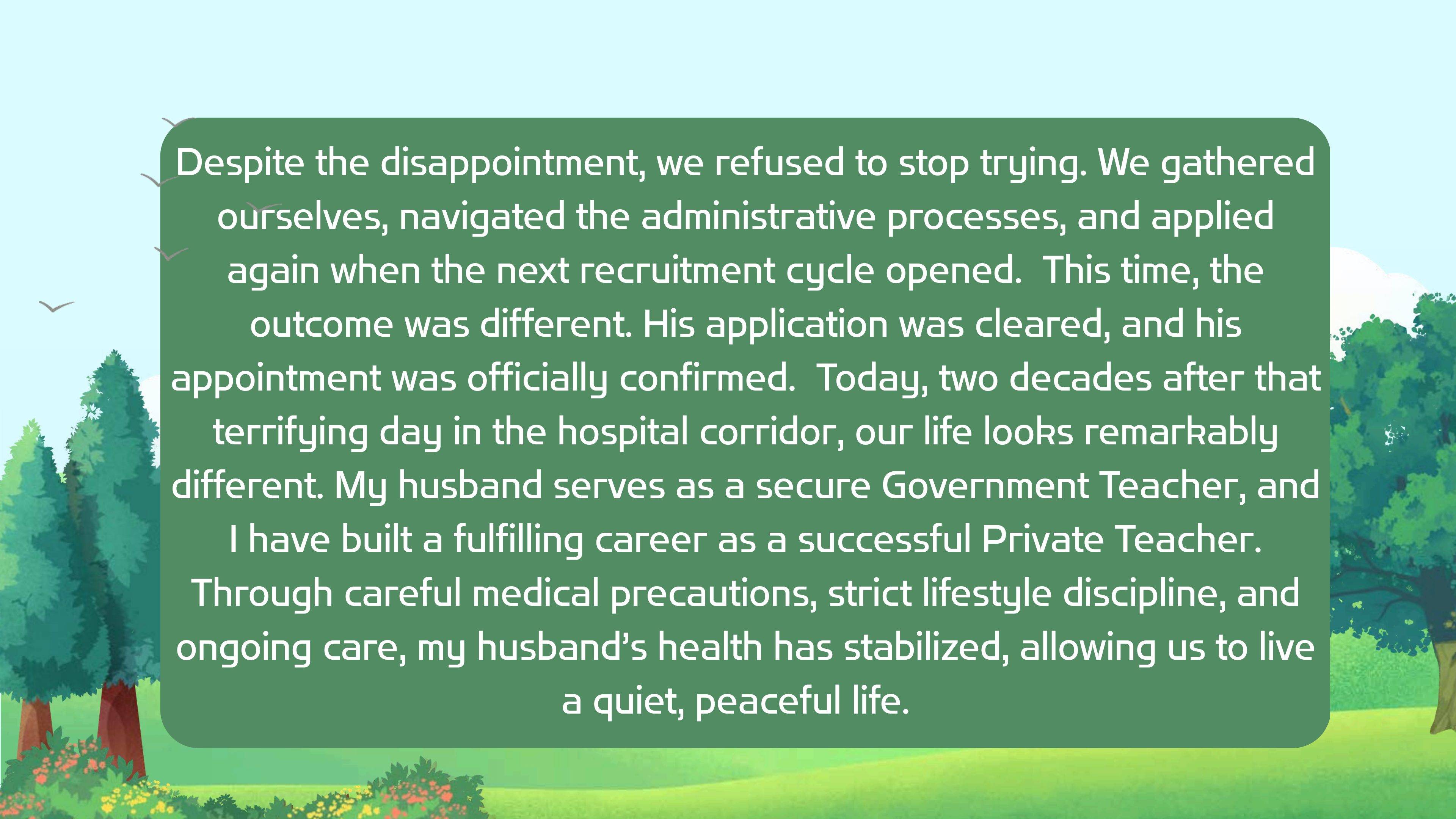
Yet, the coursework presented immediate hurdles. My husband's health remained extremely fragile, leaving him with very little physical energy to read thick textbooks or prepare for written examinations. I stepped into the role of his teacher. Every evening, after completing my job and household chores, I would sit beside his bed. While he lay resting, I would read his textbooks aloud, breaking down complex pedagogical theories, explaining key concepts, and quizzing him on exam topics. Day after day, I summarized his lessons so he could absorb the material without straining himself.



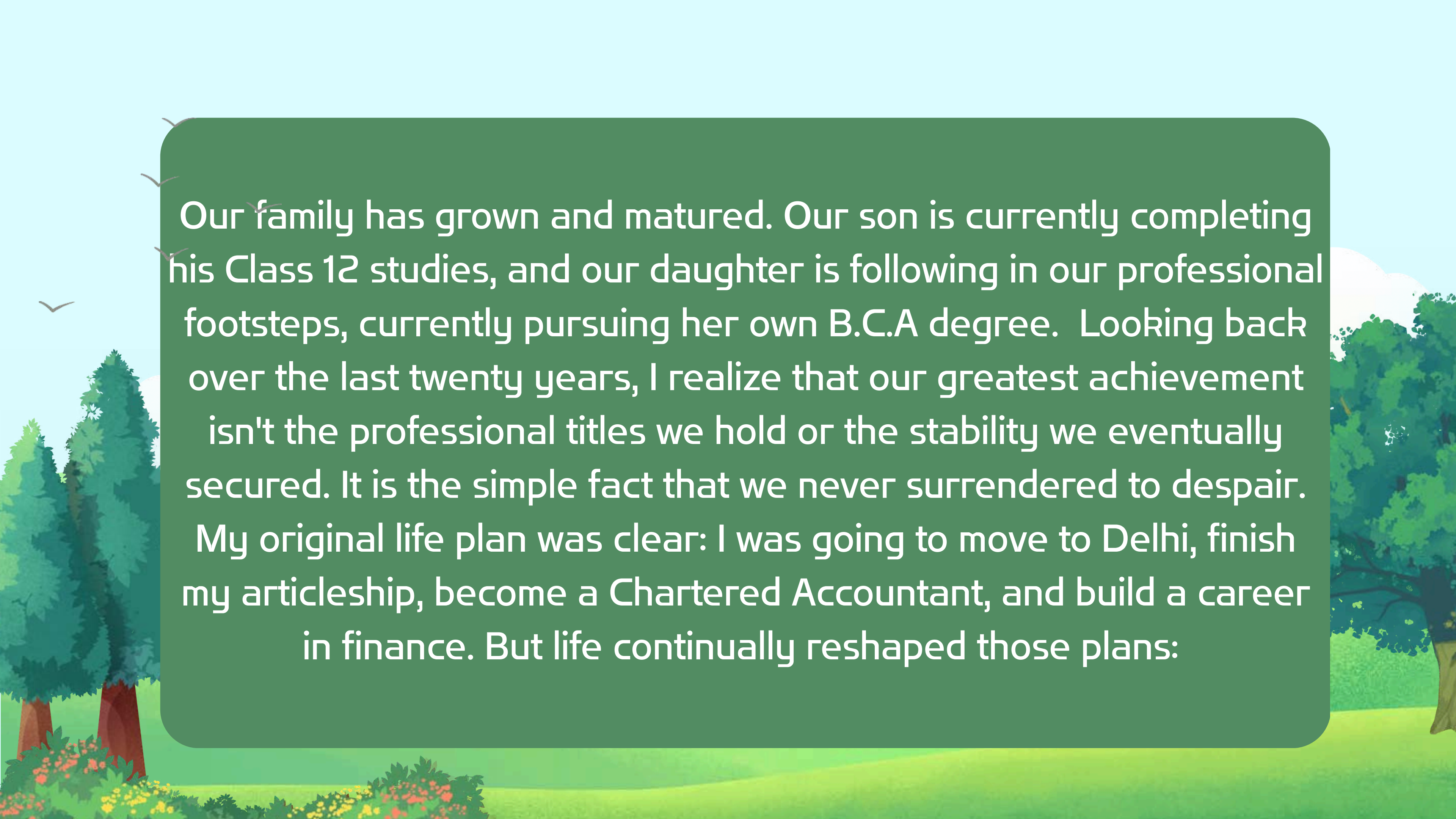
Through this shared determination, both of us sat for our exams and successfully earned our B.Ed. degrees. Following graduation, my husband secured a position as a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) teacher at a school in Roorkee, where he worked faithfully for several years. Later, his name was formally recommended for a permanent government teaching position—a breakthrough we had prayed for. But at the last moment, due to administrative complications, his name was unexpectedly removed from the final list. The heartbreak was overwhelming. It felt as though life had stripped away our hard-earned progress, returning us right back to square one—facing uncertainty and financial strain all over again.



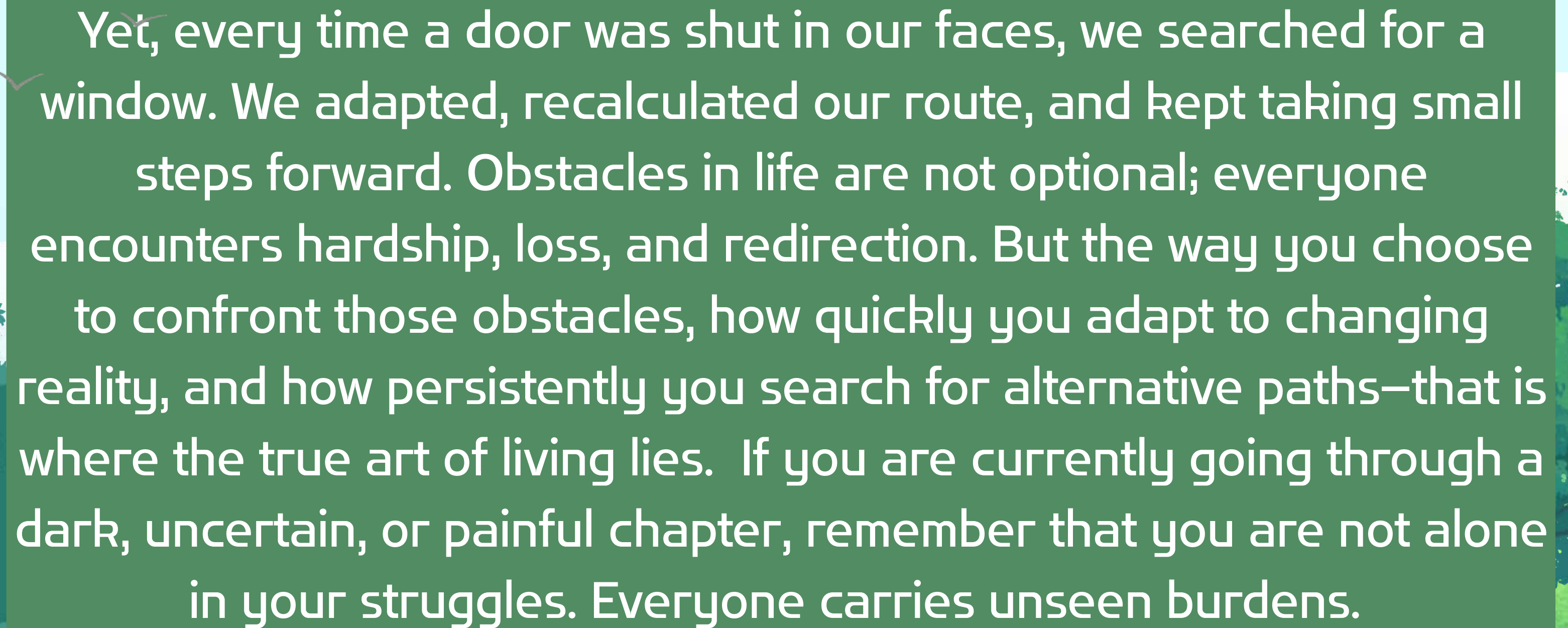
CHAPTER 6: THE ART OF LIVING

The background of the image is a stylized illustration of a landscape. It features rolling green hills, several trees (some with red trunks and green foliage, others with solid green foliage), and a clear blue sky with a single bird flying in the upper left. The text is presented in a dark green rounded rectangle with a white border, which is centered on the image.

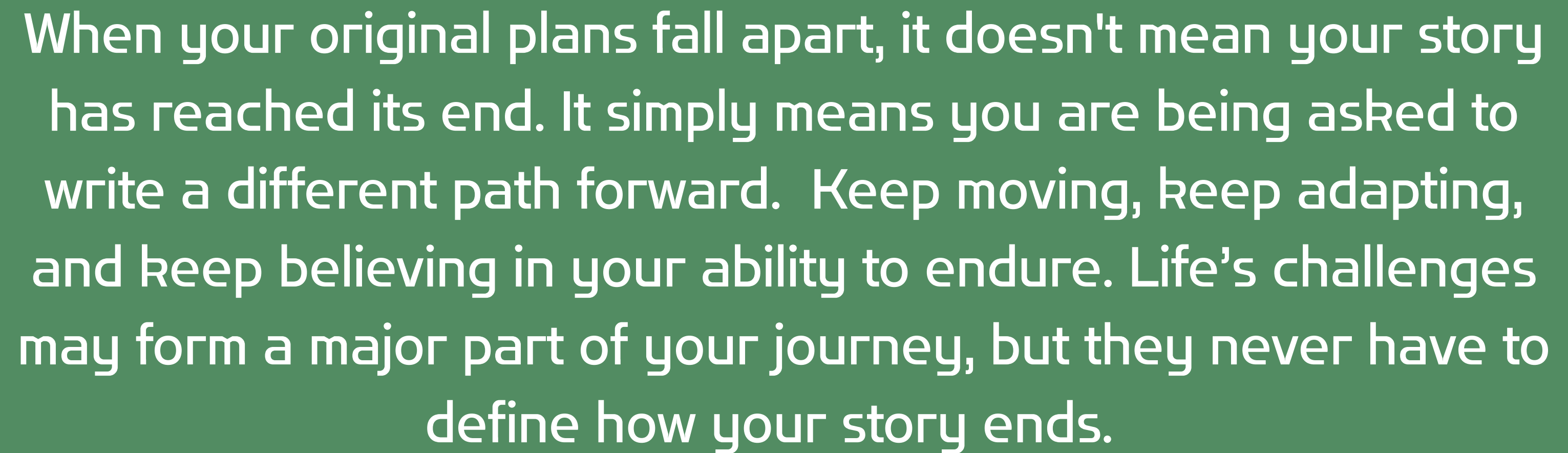
Despite the disappointment, we refused to stop trying. We gathered ourselves, navigated the administrative processes, and applied again when the next recruitment cycle opened. This time, the outcome was different. His application was cleared, and his appointment was officially confirmed. Today, two decades after that terrifying day in the hospital corridor, our life looks remarkably different. My husband serves as a secure Government Teacher, and I have built a fulfilling career as a successful Private Teacher. Through careful medical precautions, strict lifestyle discipline, and ongoing care, my husband's health has stabilized, allowing us to live a quiet, peaceful life.



Our family has grown and matured. Our son is currently completing his Class 12 studies, and our daughter is following in our professional footsteps, currently pursuing her own B.C.A degree. Looking back over the last twenty years, I realize that our greatest achievement isn't the professional titles we hold or the stability we eventually secured. It is the simple fact that we never surrendered to despair. My original life plan was clear: I was going to move to Delhi, finish my articleship, become a Chartered Accountant, and build a career in finance. But life continually reshaped those plans:



Yet, every time a door was shut in our faces, we searched for a window. We adapted, recalculated our route, and kept taking small steps forward. Obstacles in life are not optional; everyone encounters hardship, loss, and redirection. But the way you choose to confront those obstacles, how quickly you adapt to changing reality, and how persistently you search for alternative paths—that is where the true art of living lies. If you are currently going through a dark, uncertain, or painful chapter, remember that you are not alone in your struggles. Everyone carries unseen burdens.



When your original plans fall apart, it doesn't mean your story has reached its end. It simply means you are being asked to write a different path forward. Keep moving, keep adapting, and keep believing in your ability to endure. Life's challenges may form a major part of your journey, but they never have to define how your story ends.



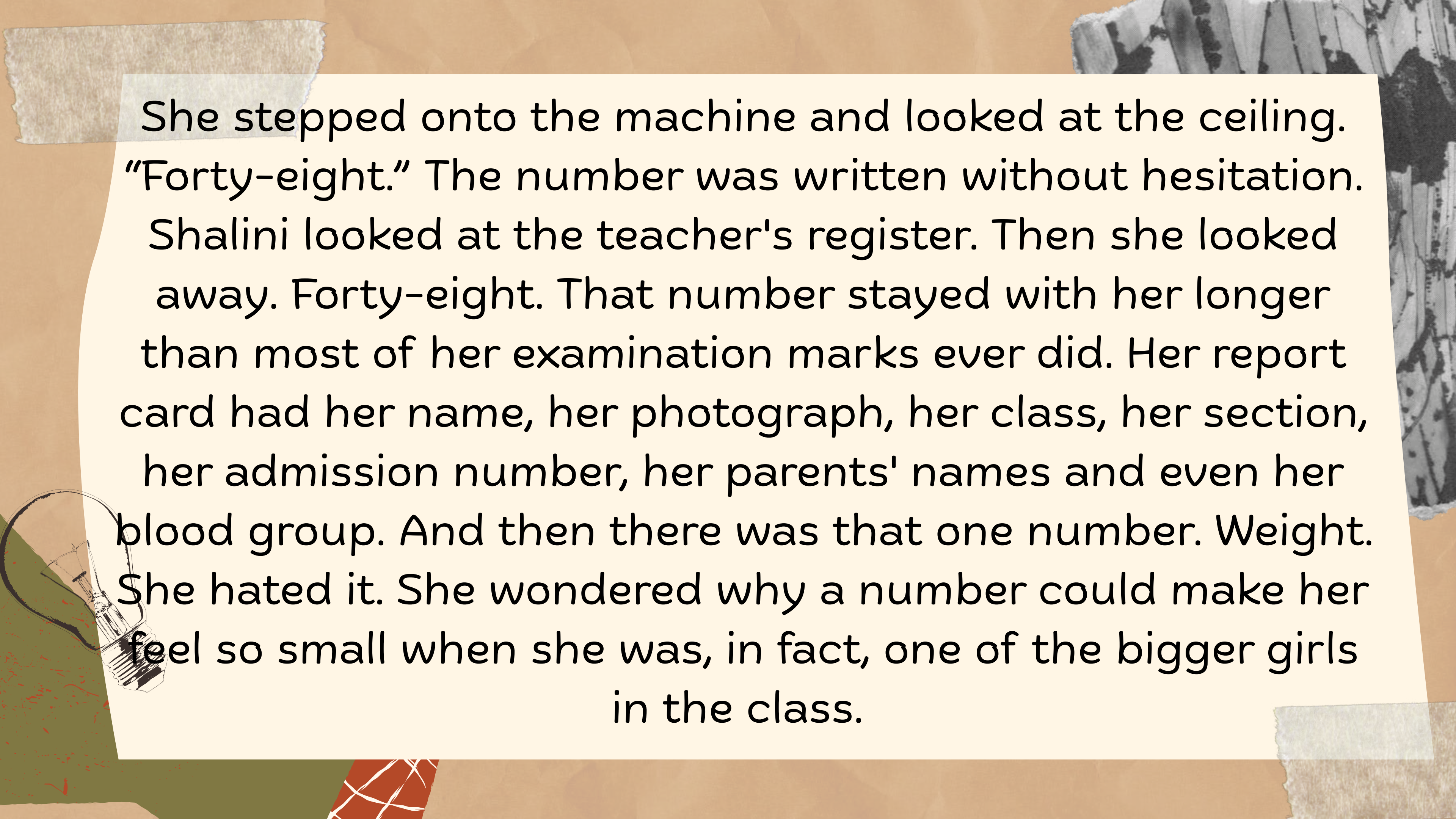
THE REPORT CARD THEY NEVER STOPPED WRITING

by Pankhuri

I strongly believe that
the moment you decide
better at your chosen
men, you'll become more
more to learn. My jo
own education fail

Shalini hated one particular day of the school year. It was not the day of the mathematics examination. It was not the day when the report cards were distributed. It was the day when the physical education teacher made them stand in a line for the annual health check-up. She knew exactly what was coming. One by one, the girls stepped onto the weighing machine. "Thirty-two." "Thirty-five." "Forty." The numbers were written down. Then came Shalini's turn.





She stepped onto the machine and looked at the ceiling. "Forty-eight." The number was written without hesitation. Shalini looked at the teacher's register. Then she looked away. Forty-eight. That number stayed with her longer than most of her examination marks ever did. Her report card had her name, her photograph, her class, her section, her admission number, her parents' names and even her blood group. And then there was that one number. Weight. She hated it. She wondered why a number could make her feel so small when she was, in fact, one of the bigger girls in the class.

Every year, the number changed. Thirty-eight. Forty-two. Forty-six. Forty-eight. Fifty-one. The numbers grew. So did Shalini. But somehow, she felt that she was being measured rather than growing. She was a chubby child. She liked food. She liked birthday cakes, samosas after school, mangoes in summer and the chicken rolls her mother brought home on Sundays. She liked herself too. At least, she did before somebody began measuring her. "Have you gained weight?" "You should exercise." "You should eat less." "Look at her. She is so thin."



Nobody ever asked the thin girl to explain her happiness. Nobody ever asked the chubby girl whether she was happy. They simply looked at the number. And Shalini slowly learnt that numbers could be cruel. Her report card had another thing she disliked. Handwriting: Needs Improvement. Shalini would stare at those words. She never understood why handwriting was treated as though it were a measure of intelligence. Her handwriting was untidy. Sometimes her letters leaned in different directions.



Sometimes they looked as though they were in a hurry to reach the end of the page. But she had questions. She had imagination. She could remember stories. She could understand people. She could make her friends laugh. None of those things had a column. So they did not get a grade. Shalini sometimes wondered what would happen if report cards carried every little thing about a person. What would be written under kindness? Under courage? Under imagination? Under the ability to forgive?



Under the number of times a child made someone feel less lonely? There was no column for any of these. There was only one section that Shalini understood very well.

Academic Performance. Shalini was an average student.

Not the topper. Not the student whose name was announced at every assembly. Not the one whose parents were called to the stage with flowers and photographs.

She had received A's. She had received B's. She had received B+'s.



She had also received marks that made her parents say, "You could have done better." And perhaps she could have. But she was never sure what "better" meant. Was 92 better than 87? Was 87 better than 76? Was 76 better than 64? And if one child scored 98 and another scored 58, did that make one child's future brighter and the other's darker? Shalini did not know. She only knew that every time the report card arrived, she first looked at the marks and then at her parents' faces. Sometimes the marks were not disappointing.



But the faces were. That was when she began to understand something. A report card did not merely record how she had performed. It recorded how other people felt about her performance. And perhaps that was why she feared it. Years passed. School ended. The uniform disappeared from her cupboard. The report cards were placed inside an old file. Shalini thought she had finally escaped them. She hadn't. Life simply changed the format. At twenty-four, Shalini got her first job. She received a performance review.



Her manager wrote: Communication: 7/10. Leadership: 6/10. Time Management: 8/10. She stared at the numbers. For a moment, she was twelve again. She smiled. Life had given her another report card. This time, there was no mention of her weight. But she was still being measured. A few years later, she got married. And suddenly, there were new subjects. Good wife? Good daughter-in-law? Good daughter? Good sister-in-law? Nobody gave her an actual report card. They didn't need to. The marks were communicated through comments.



"You should wake up earlier." "You don't cook like her."
"You should call your mother-in-law more often." "You are too independent." "You should adjust." "Why don't you visit more?" "Why are you working so much?" "Why aren't you working?" It was fascinating. At school, at least Shalini knew when the examination was. In adulthood, the examination never ended. There was always somebody checking her answers. She became a mother. And the report card became thicker. Is she feeding the child properly? Is she spending enough time with him?



Is she working too much? Is she working too little? Is she strict enough? Is she too strict? Does her child score well? The questions kept coming. And Shalini began to wonder: Who had appointed everyone as an examiner? Who had given them the authority to decide whether she was passing or failing? Then one evening, her daughter came home from school. She threw her school bag on the sofa and sat quietly. Shalini knew that look. "What happened?" Her daughter took out her report card. "I got 71."



She looked terrified. Shalini sat beside her. "Is that all?" The girl nodded. "And my teacher wrote that my handwriting is poor." Shalini looked at the page. The handwriting was, indeed, messy. She smiled. "Do you know something?" "What?" "Some of the most important people in the world have terrible handwriting." Her daughter looked at her. "Like who?" "Doctors." The girl laughed. Shalini laughed too. Then she held her daughter's hand.



"Your handwriting can improve," she said. "Your marks can improve. You can learn anything you want to learn. But don't ever believe that a number written on a piece of paper can tell you who you are." Her daughter looked at her report card again. Shalini looked at it too. And suddenly, she remembered her own. Her name. Her photograph. Her parents' names. Her blood group. Her weight. Her handwriting. Her marks. All those years ago, that little piece of paper had tried to tell her who she was.



But it had missed so much. It had never recorded that Shalini was the girl who stayed back after class to help her friend finish her notebook. It had never recorded the number of times she shared her lunch. It had never recorded her fear of disappointing her parents. It had never recorded the afternoons she cried quietly because she thought she wasn't good enough. It had never recorded how hard she tried. It had never recorded that she was kind. It had never recorded that she was funny. It had never recorded that she was scared.



It had never recorded that she was brave. It had simply recorded what could be measured. And perhaps that is the problem with report cards. They are very good at measuring what can be counted. They are terrible at measuring what matters. A child's report card measures marks. An adult's report card measures salary. A woman's report card measures beauty, marriage, motherhood, cooking, career and patience. A man's report card measures success, money, status and responsibility.



A parent's report card is written by the achievements of their children. A child's report card is sometimes written by the expectations of their parents. And somewhere between all these report cards, we forget to ask the simplest question: Are you happy? There is no column for mental peace. No grade for sleeping without anxiety. No percentage for having people around whom you can be completely yourself. No marks for leaving a toxic relationship. No certificate for surviving a difficult year. No trophy for getting out of bed on a day when everything felt heavy.



No grade for being a good human being. And perhaps that is why so many people who look successful on paper are exhausted in real life. They have excellent report cards. And terrible lives. They have promotions but no peace. Money but no time. Followers but no one to call at midnight. Perfect photographs but imperfect relationships. They have passed every examination society gave them. And yet, somewhere inside, they are still waiting for themselves to say,



"You are enough." Shalini looked at her daughter. "Do you want to know what your real report card should say?" Her daughter smiled. "What?" Shalini thought for a moment. Then she said, "You tried." She paused. "You were kind." Another pause. "You learnt." Then she smiled. "You made mistakes and came back." Her daughter laughed. "That's not a report card." "No," Shalini said. "It is a life card." That night, after her daughter went to sleep, Shalini opened the old file in which she had kept her school documents. Her old report card was still there.



The photograph was faded. The paper had turned yellow. The handwriting remark was still there. So was the weight. She ran her fingers over the number. For the first time, it did not frighten her. It was just a number. Forty-eight. Then she took a pen. On the back of the report card, she wrote: Name: Shalini Class: Life Section: Still Learning Admission Number: Born Attendance: Present, despite everything Handwriting: Imperfect Marks: Sometimes excellent, sometimes ordinary Failures: Many Lessons: More



Kindness: Still improving Courage: Under construction
Mental Peace: Priceless Self-respect: Non-negotiable And
finally, under Final Result, she wrote: Passed – because I
kept going. She looked at the words for a long time. Then
she smiled. For the first time in her life, Shalini had written
her own report card. And this time, nobody else was
holding the red pen.



THE JOURNEY THAT CHOSE ME

BY PALAK KARNWAL





**As kids, we dream without limits. Doctor,
teacher, engineer, athlete, artist,
entrepreneur. We picture life as a straight
line from our dreams to our destination.**



all lines of the
or eye). Notice
adows which in
from the object to
object as in last one



Life almost never works that way.

It hands us opportunities we didn't see coming, challenges we never asked for, and responsibilities that quietly reshape who we are. Looking back, most of us realize our biggest lessons didn't come from comfort. They came from the moments that pushed us past what we thought we could handle.



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**Every experience teaches you something.
School gives you knowledge, but it also
teaches discipline, teamwork, patience, and
the confidence to keep going after failure.
Those lessons outlast the formulas and
dates we've long forgotten. They become
the foundation everything else is built on.**





A lot of us spend years chasing one goal,
only to find our real strengths were
somewhere else all along. At first that feels
like life pulling you away from your dream.
But over time, you see it was pulling you
toward your purpose.

That was my story.



all lines of the
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As a B.Tech graduate, I assumed I'd build a career in IT. That was the plan. Life had other ideas. One opportunity after another pulled me into marketing, communication, events, and eventually digital marketing. What felt unfamiliar at first slowly became something I genuinely loved. I found skills I didn't know I had: connecting with people, telling stories, building brands, creating experiences. I don't call it a career change anymore. I call it finding what I was meant to do.





**Does that mean my
engineering degree was a
waste? Not even close.**



all lines of the
or eye). Notice
adows which in

from the object to
object as in last one



It taught me to think logically, solve problems, adapt quickly, and keep learning long after graduation. Education doesn't always decide what job you end up in, but it gives you the tools to recognize an opportunity when it shows up. Maybe the real gift of education isn't the profession it points you toward, but the confidence to take a different path.



all lines of the
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object as in last one



Maybe that's what growing up really is: not clinging to the life you planned, but finding the courage to build the one unfolding in front of you. Everyone has a version of this story. A dream that changed shape. A challenge that turned into a turning point. A path you never expected to walk, that ended up making you who you are. So before you ask where life is taking you, look back at how far you've already come.





Sometimes we don't choose our journey. It chooses us.

Now I'm curious: what's your story? Did life take you where you planned, or did it show you a path you never imagined?



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LONELY TOGETHER

by Mansi Saini

Introduction Loneliness is not always about being alone in a room. Sometimes, it is about sitting in a crowd, surrounded by family and friends, laughing with everyone, and still feeling empty inside. A person can be talking to many people and yet feel that there is no one with whom they can share what is really going on in their heart. This strange situation is what I understand as “Lonely Together.” It is the feeling of being physically close to people but emotionally far away from them.

We live in a world where communication has become easier than ever. We have smartphones, social media, instant messaging and video calls. We can talk to someone living thousands of kilometres away within seconds. We can know what our friends are doing even when they are not with us. We can share photographs, thoughts and moments with hundreds of people. But even after having all these ways of staying connected, many people still feel lonely. This is one of the biggest contradictions of modern life. We are more connected digitally, but sometimes less connected emotionally.

We can see someone's photograph without knowing their feelings. We can read someone's status without knowing what is happening in their mind. We can talk every day and still not have one meaningful conversation. Teenagers especially experience this silent struggle. Their lives may look colourful from the outside, but behind that colourful wallpaper there can be cracks that nobody notices. A teenager may be smiling while carrying stress, laughing while feeling sad, or spending time with friends while secretly feeling left out. The most difficult part is that emotional loneliness is not always visible.

Sometimes, the person who looks completely normal may be fighting the biggest battle inside. The Hidden Side of Teenage Life Teenage years are often called the most beautiful years of life. They are full of new experiences, friendships, dreams and discoveries. But they are also years of confusion and change.

Teenagers are trying to understand who they are while the world is already asking them what they want to become. They are expected to study well, score good marks, choose the right career, make friends, behave properly and build a successful future.

At the same time, they are trying to understand their emotions. Friendships become important. Opinions of others start affecting them. They become more aware of how they look and how others see them. Some experience love for the first time. Some face rejection or misunderstandings. Some feel pressure to fit into a group, while others are afraid of being left out. All these emotions can become heavy when there is nobody with whom they can share them honestly. A teenager may come home after a difficult day and simply say, “Nothing happened.”

” They may sit quietly in their room, put on their headphones and scroll through their phone. Their family may think they are just tired. Their friends may think they are busy. Nobody may realise that they are actually feeling lonely. This is why loneliness among teenagers should not be dismissed as “just a phase.” Teenage emotions may be confusing, but they are real. What may look like a small problem to an adult can feel very important to a young person who is experiencing it for the first time.

Teenage Toxins Teenage life today has some invisible toxins that previous generations did not experience in quite the same way.

Social media, constant comparison, peer pressure and the need for online validation have become part of everyday life.

Social media itself is not bad. It can help us learn, communicate, discover new ideas and stay connected with people. The problem begins when we start comparing our real life with the carefully selected lives we see online.

A teenager opens social media and sees someone travelling, someone celebrating with friends, someone getting excellent marks, someone looking confident, someone receiving thousands of likes and someone apparently living a wonderful life. Then the mind begins to compare. Why is my life not like that? Why do I not have so many friends? Why does nobody notice me? Why does everyone else seem happier? The problem is that social media usually shows only a small part of someone's life. We see the photograph but not what happened before it.

We see the smile but not the sadness behind it. We see the achievement but not the failures that came before it. We see the celebration but not the difficult days. Still, we compare our complete life with someone else's selected moments. That comparison can slowly create dissatisfaction and loneliness. Technology itself is not necessarily the enemy; the problem is how it affects our thoughts, relationships and emotions.

The Race for Likes and Validation One of the strangest things about social media is that numbers can begin to affect our emotions. We upload a photograph and wait. How many people liked it? Who commented? Who viewed the story? Why did that person not react? A simple number can suddenly make us feel important or ignored. But a number on a screen cannot measure our value. Someone may have thousands of followers and still feel that nobody really knows them. Someone may have only a few close friends and still feel deeply loved and understood.

There is a difference between attention and connection. Attention means people notice us. Connection means someone understands us. A person can receive hundreds of likes without receiving a single message asking, “Are you really okay?” This is why online popularity cannot replace genuine relationships. A photograph may receive hundreds of reactions, but none of those reactions can replace a real conversation with someone who knows us beyond our profile. We should never allow likes, followers or views to become a measurement of our self-worth.

When Friendship Becomes Competition Friendship is supposed to be a place where we can be ourselves. But sometimes, even friendships become a competition. Teenagers may compare who is more popular, who has better marks, who has more friends, who looks better, who gets invited to more places or who has more followers. Instead of simply enjoying each other's company, they may start thinking about who is doing better. Slowly, comparison can replace comfort. A real friendship should not require us to perform.

We should not have to pretend to be happier, smarter or more confident than we actually are. We should be able to say, “I am having a bad day,” without worrying that someone will make fun of us. A true friend is not only someone who laughs with us when everything is going well. A true friend is someone who notices when our smile changes. Sometimes, the best friendship is not the one with the most photographs or the most messages. It is the one where we can sit together in silence and still feel comfortable.

The Age of Love, Stress and Anxiety Teenage years are also the age when many young people experience love and strong emotions for the first time. Love can be beautiful. It can make a person feel special, understood and important. But strong feelings can also create strong expectations. A simple message may suddenly become important. A delayed reply may lead to overthinking. A small misunderstanding may become a huge question in our minds.

Do they really care? Did I do something wrong? Why did they change? Am I important to them? Sometimes we do not even ask these questions aloud. We keep them inside our minds and create our own explanations. The problem is not love itself. The problem begins when we start depending completely on another person's attention to decide our own worth. A healthy relationship should allow two people to care about each other while still being themselves.

We should be able to love someone without losing our identity. Love should bring understanding, not constant fear. Because even when we are with someone we care about, we can still feel lonely if we do not feel understood. The Pressure to Be Enough

One of the biggest struggles of teenage life is the feeling that we are never enough. Not good enough. Not successful enough. Not popular enough. Not intelligent enough. Not interesting enough. This pressure can come from social media, friends, family, school or even from our own expectations.

Sometimes nobody directly tells us that we are not enough. We simply start believing it because we keep comparing ourselves with others. A student may look at someone else's marks and feel unsuccessful. Another may see someone's lifestyle and feel insecure. Someone else may see a group of friends and wonder why they do not have the same social life. The problem with comparison is that there will always be someone ahead of us in something. If we make our self-worth dependent on being better than someone else, we will never feel satisfied. We need to understand that our value is not decided by comparison.

We are not required to be the best at everything to deserve respect, friendship and love. Emotional Loneliness in Family

Family is usually considered the safest place in our lives, but emotional loneliness can sometimes exist even inside a loving family. Imagine a family sitting together at dinner. Everyone is physically present, but everyone is looking at a screen. Someone is watching videos, someone is replying to messages and someone is thinking about work or school. They are together, but nobody is really talking.

A teenager may spend hours at home with their parents and still feel that they cannot talk about their problems. Sometimes parents ask about marks, homework, exams and career plans, but forget to ask a simple question: “How are you feeling?” Of course, parents care about their children. Most of them want their children to be successful and happy. But sometimes love is expressed through advice and protection when what a teenager needs at that moment is simply understanding. A teenager may say, “I am scared about my exams.” The response may be, “Then study harder.” But perhaps what the teenager really needs to hear first is, “I understand that you are stressed.

Let's talk about it." There is a difference between solving a problem and understanding the person who is facing it. The Generation Gap There can also be a communication gap between parents and teenagers. Parents may think, "I am giving my child everything. Why are they still unhappy?" Teenagers may think, "My parents will never understand me." Both sides may love each other deeply, but they may not know how to communicate their feelings.

Sometimes teenagers are afraid that if they share something, they will be judged or compared. Sometimes parents may feel that teenagers are overreacting. But emotional experiences are different for every generation. A problem that seems small to an adult may feel very serious to a teenager who is experiencing it for the first time. Instead of immediately saying, "This is nothing," we can say, "Tell me why this is important to you." That small change in communication can make a huge difference.

Loneliness Among Friends The same kind of loneliness can happen among friends. A group of friends may laugh together, take photographs and make plans, while one person quietly feels invisible. They may still smile, participate and appear happy. But inside, they may feel that nobody really notices them. This is why photographs cannot tell the complete story. A photograph captures a moment, not the emotions behind that moment. Someone can look happy in a group picture and still go home feeling alone.

We need to become more observant. If a friend who usually talks a lot suddenly becomes quiet, we can ask if something is wrong. If someone is often sitting alone, we can include them. If someone shares something personal, we can respect their trust instead of turning it into gossip. Sometimes we do not need perfect words. Sometimes we just need to show someone that we noticed.

The Silent Signs of Loneliness does not always look like crying or sadness. Sometimes it appears in quiet ways. A person may start overthinking everything. They may feel emotionally tired after spending time with people. They may lose interest in activities they once enjoyed. They may spend more and more time online because the digital world gives them an escape from their real emotions.

Some people become very quiet. Others become extremely talkative. Some laugh more than usual. Some avoid people completely. There is no single way loneliness looks. That is why we should be careful before judging someone by their behaviour. We never know what another person is carrying inside. A person who says “I am fine” may actually be struggling to explain what they feel. Why Do We Hide Our Feelings?

If loneliness is so common, why do people find it difficult to talk about it? One reason is fear of judgment. People may worry that others will laugh at them, misunderstand them or call them dramatic. Teenagers may fear that their private feelings will become gossip among friends. There is also a pressure to appear strong. We are often taught how to deal with exams, careers and competition, but not always taught how to talk about emotions. A person may know how to solve a difficult mathematical problem but not know how to say, “I am emotionally exhausted.”

We need to change this. Talking about feelings should not be considered weakness. Asking for support does not make a person weak. Being honest about emotions is actually a form of courage. Being Alone and Being Lonely There is an important difference between being alone and being lonely. Being alone can sometimes be peaceful. A person may enjoy reading a book, listening to music, drawing, writing, walking or simply sitting quietly. Spending time alone can help us understand ourselves.

Loneliness is different. Loneliness is not simply the absence of people. It is the feeling that we are missing meaningful emotional connection. A person can be alone and feel peaceful. Another person can be surrounded by fifty people and still feel completely alone. Therefore, the solution is not always to find more people. The solution is to find more meaningful connections. The Importance of Self-Connection While we talk about connecting with others, we should also learn to connect with ourselves.

Teenagers often spend a lot of time thinking about what other people think of them. Social media makes this even stronger because we are constantly exposed to other people's opinions and lifestyles. Sometimes we need to step away from the noise.

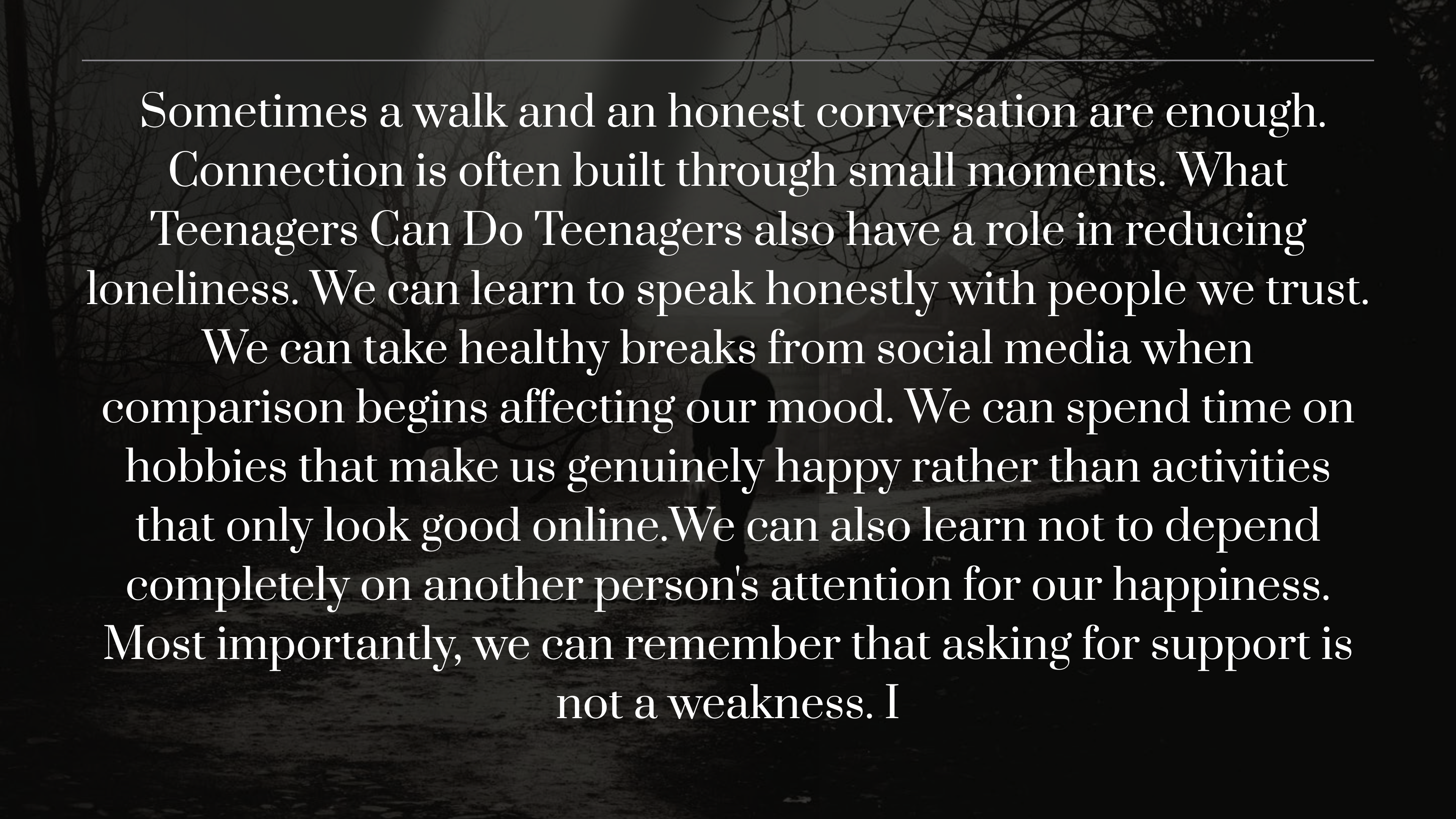
Writing in a journal can help us understand our thoughts. Reading can give our minds a break. Music, art, sports, walking and other hobbies can help us spend time with ourselves in a healthy way.

Self-love does not mean thinking that we are perfect. It means accepting that we are still learning. We will make mistakes. We will have bad days. We will fail sometimes. We will feel confused. And that is okay. A bad day does not mean a bad life. A low mark does not decide our intelligence. A rejection does not decide our worth. One person's opinion does not define who we are.

The Role of Empathy One of the strongest solutions to loneliness is empathy. Empathy means trying to understand another person's feelings without immediately judging them.

If a friend is quiet, instead of saying, “Why are you always so serious?” we can ask, “Is everything okay?” If someone shares a problem, instead of immediately giving advice, we can first listen. If someone is struggling, we do not need to compare their problem with ours. Pain is not a competition. Just because someone else has a bigger problem does not mean a person's own feelings are unimportant. Sometimes listening is more powerful than giving advice. A person may forget the exact words we say, but they may remember how safe and understood we made them feel. Quality Time in a Digital World

Today, we spend a lot of time with each other, but not all of it is meaningful. Sitting beside someone while both people are using their phones is technically spending time together. But it is not always connection. Quality time means giving someone our attention. It means putting the phone away during an important conversation. It means looking at the person in front of us. It means listening instead of constantly checking a screen. A family does not need an expensive holiday to become closer. Sometimes a simple dinner without phones can create a better conversation. Friends do not need a perfect outing to feel connected.



Sometimes a walk and an honest conversation are enough.
Connection is often built through small moments. What
Teenagers Can Do Teenagers also have a role in reducing
loneliness. We can learn to speak honestly with people we trust.
We can take healthy breaks from social media when
comparison begins affecting our mood. We can spend time on
hobbies that make us genuinely happy rather than activities
that only look good online. We can also learn not to depend
completely on another person's attention for our happiness.
Most importantly, we can remember that asking for support is
not a weakness. I

If something feels too difficult to handle alone, talking to a trusted parent, teacher, counsellor or another responsible adult can be an important step. Sometimes the first step towards healing is simply admitting that we do not want to carry everything alone. What Families and Friends Can Do Families can create an environment where teenagers feel safe enough to speak. Parents can ask about feelings as well as marks. They can listen before judging and understand before giving advice.

Friends can do something equally important: they can make people feel included. They can notice the friend who has become quiet. They can invite someone who is often left out. They can keep personal conversations private. They can listen without making fun of someone's emotions. These things may appear small, but they can make someone feel that they belong. Sometimes one person who genuinely cares can make a huge difference.

The Role of Schools and Society

Schools also have an important responsibility. Education should not only prepare students for examinations and careers. It should also prepare them for life. Students are not just marks, ranks and percentages. They are human beings with emotions, fears, friendships, dreams and struggles. Teachers cannot solve every personal problem, but they can create an environment where students feel respected and comfortable asking for support. Society also needs to stop treating emotional conversations as embarrassing. It should be normal to say, “I am stressed.” It should be normal to say, “I need help.” It should be normal to say, “I do not feel okay today.”

The more openly we talk about emotions, the less alone people may feel. Technology: Connection or Distance? Technology is not our enemy. The same phone that can make us compare ourselves with others can also connect us with someone we love. The same internet that can make us insecure can also help us learn, create and communicate. The real issue is balance. Technology should be a tool in our hands, not something that controls our emotions. A notification should not decide our mood. A number of likes should not decide our confidence. Someone else's online life should not become the standard by which we judge our own life.

We should use technology to support relationships, not replace them. From Loneliness to Connection Loneliness is not permanent. It can change when people begin communicating honestly and listening with empathy. Sometimes healing begins with one conversation. One message. One phone call. One invitation to sit together. One simple question: "Are you really okay?" We often think that helping someone requires a perfect solution. It does not. Sometimes, the most powerful thing we can say is, "I am here." A person does not always need someone to solve their entire life. Sometimes they just need someone who will stay while they are trying to solve it themselves.

This is what genuine connection means. It means moving beyond physical presence and becoming emotionally present. Conclusion “Lonely Together” is not only the story of teenagers. It is a reflection of modern life. A child can feel lonely at home. A teenager can feel lonely among friends. An adult can feel lonely in a workplace. An elderly person can feel lonely even in a house full of family. Loneliness does not count the number of people around us. It asks whether we feel connected to them.

We have more ways to communicate than ever before, but communication is not the same as understanding. We can send hundreds of messages and still miss one meaningful conversation. We can have thousands of followers and still feel that nobody knows the real us. Perhaps the solution is not to find more people. Perhaps it is to understand the people who are already around us. A teenager does not always need another lecture. A friend does not always need another solution. A family member does not always need advice. Sometimes they simply need someone who will listen. Someone who will not judge. Someone who will notice. Someone who will stay.

Because love is not just presence. Friendship is not just being around. Family is not just living under the same roof. And connection is not just being online. True connection is being seen, heard and understood. We should stop measuring relationships through likes, followers, messages and photographs. The deepest relationships cannot be counted. The world does not need more perfect smiles. It needs more honest conversations. It needs families who listen, friends who notice, teachers who care and teenagers who know that their feelings matter.

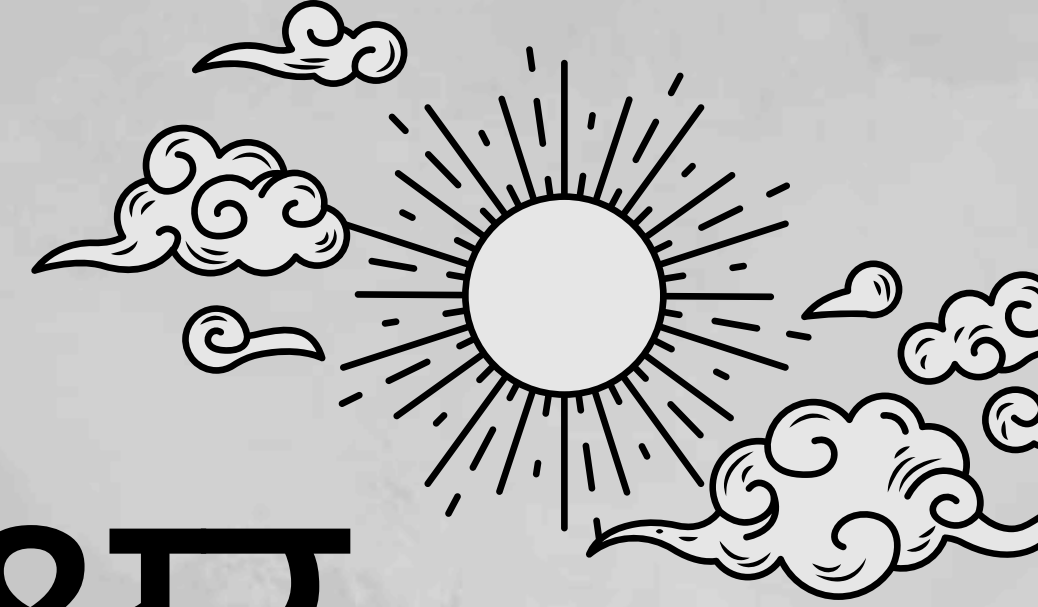
Maybe we cannot remove loneliness from the world completely. But we can make sure that the people around us do not have to suffer silently. We can notice. We can listen. We can understand. We can stay. Because sometimes, one person who truly understands can make a crowded room feel less lonely. The wallpaper of life may still have cracks. No life is completely perfect, and no person is free from difficult days. But perhaps the goal is not to cover those cracks with brighter colours. Perhaps the goal is to have people beside us who are willing to see them, understand them and help us heal them.

Because true connection is not about how many people are around us. It is about whether, among all those people, there is someone who truly sees us. And perhaps, in a world that is constantly telling us to look connected, the most meaningful thing we can do is to be connected. Not through a screen. Not through a number. Not through a photograph. But through understanding. Because at the end of the day, we do not really need a crowd. We need someone who sees us in the crowd. That is how we stop being lonely together.

सफरनामा स्वर्णाक्षर

में

अर्चना पालीवाल



हिमालय के क्षेत्र 'उत्तराखंड' , पतित पावनी मां गंगा के तट पर स्थित हरिद्वार में बसा एक प्यारा स्कूल 'डीपीएस रानीपुर' आज भी शिक्षा तथा नवाचार के क्षेत्र में आकर्षण का केंद्र बना हुआ है। डीपीएस रानीपुर की चिरस्मरणीय गौरवशाली स्थापना वर्ष 1977 में दिल्ली की सीमाओं से परे एक अविस्मरणीय और पहले स्कूल है। स्वच्छनद पर्यावरण की गोद में बसा यह स्कूल सिर्फ 'विद्या का मंदिर' ही नहीं नवप्रवर्तन की राह में भी अग्रणी स्थान रखता है।



बीएचईएल कम्पनी और डीपीएस सोसाइटी के संयुक्त प्रयासों के द्वारा स्थापित किया गया और पधम श्री एस० एल० धवन जी, जो की एक प्रख्यात शिक्षाविद तथा दूरदर्शी थे , के मार्गदर्शन से प्रथम प्रधानाचार्य के तौर पर स्कूल का उन्नयन किया। देश-विदेश की शिक्षा अनुशासन, शैक्षणिक उत्कृष्टता आज सर्वोच्चता की ओर अग्रसित होने के कारण लगभग हर व्यक्ति विशेष शिक्षा हेतु इस 'शिक्षण केंद्र'से जुड़ना चाहते हैं।



शिवालिकी की पहाड़ियों पर बसा अडिग ऐतिहासिक भू-भाग आज स्वर्णिम सफर को पार कर भविष्य की ओर उन्मुख है। 'स्वयं से पहले सेवा' का मूल भाव की गाथा को दर्शाते हुए स्कूल के शिक्षकों तथा विद्यार्थियों की ऐसी श्रृंखला है, जो परमार्थ के भांव को चरितार्थ कर रहा है।



असीम क्षेत्र में पहले फैला यह विस्तीर्ण भू-खंड प्रदूषण से मुक्त क्षेत्र में ज्ञान-विज्ञान, तकनीकी, आधुनिकीकरण, रोबोटिक्स, स्पेस लैब, इंफार्मेटिक्स प्रैक्टिसेज जैसे वैज्ञानिक विषयों की सुविधाओं के साथ दिन-प्रतिदिन विद्यार्थियों को शिक्षित कर देश-दुनिया में भारत का नाम ऊंचा कर रहे है। 'डीपीएस रानीपुर' की "**अनुपम**" उपलब्धियां संपूर्ण विश्व में प्रतिष्ठित शिक्षण संस्थान के रूप में मील का पत्थर साबितह रहा है।



एक सह शिक्षा प्रणाली के साथ प्री-प्राइमरी, प्राइमरी विंग, मिडिल विंग, सीनियर विंग बचपन से लेकर युवा होने तक एक बेहतरीन नागरिक और नेतृत्वकर्ता बनाने में मछ करते हैं। डिजिटल क्लासेज/स्मार्ट कक्षाएं, हाई-टैक उपकरण, जैसे प्रोजेक्टर्स, लैपटॉप, स्मार्ट टच बोर्ड, बेहतरीन ऑडियो सिस्टम आदि के साथ एडवांस्ड डिजिटल लैब, कंप्यूटर लैब, भाषा प्रयोगशाला तथा अचूक सुरक्षा प्रणाली के प्रयोग से सृजनात्मकता के पटल पर विस्तृत विशाल पेश कर रहा है।



अध्यापन के रचनात्मक अनूठे प्रयोगों के साथ-साथ खेलकूद के इतिहास में भी डीपीएस रानीपुर का प्रदर्शन बेहद शानदार और अभूतपूर्व उपलब्धियों से भरा रहा है। उत्तराखंड राज्य द्वारा आयोजित खेल महोत्सव में प्रत्येक वर्ष स्कूल के होनहार खिलाड़ी राज्य स्तर पर शीर्ष स्थान हासिल करते हैं। स्कूल का विस्तृत परिसर और यहाँ उपलब्ध विश्वस्तरीय खेल सुविधाएँ इस विद्यालय को राज्य, राष्ट्रीय तथा विश्व स्तर पर एक विशिष्ट पहचान दिलाती हैं।



इस शिक्षण संस्थान की श्रेष्ठता इस बात से भी साबित होती है कि यह सिर्फ विद्यार्थियों के विकास तक सीमित नहीं है बल्कि उनके अभिभावकों को भी स्कूल का एक अभिन्न अंग मानकर 'समग्र विकास' की कसौटी को अपनाता है।

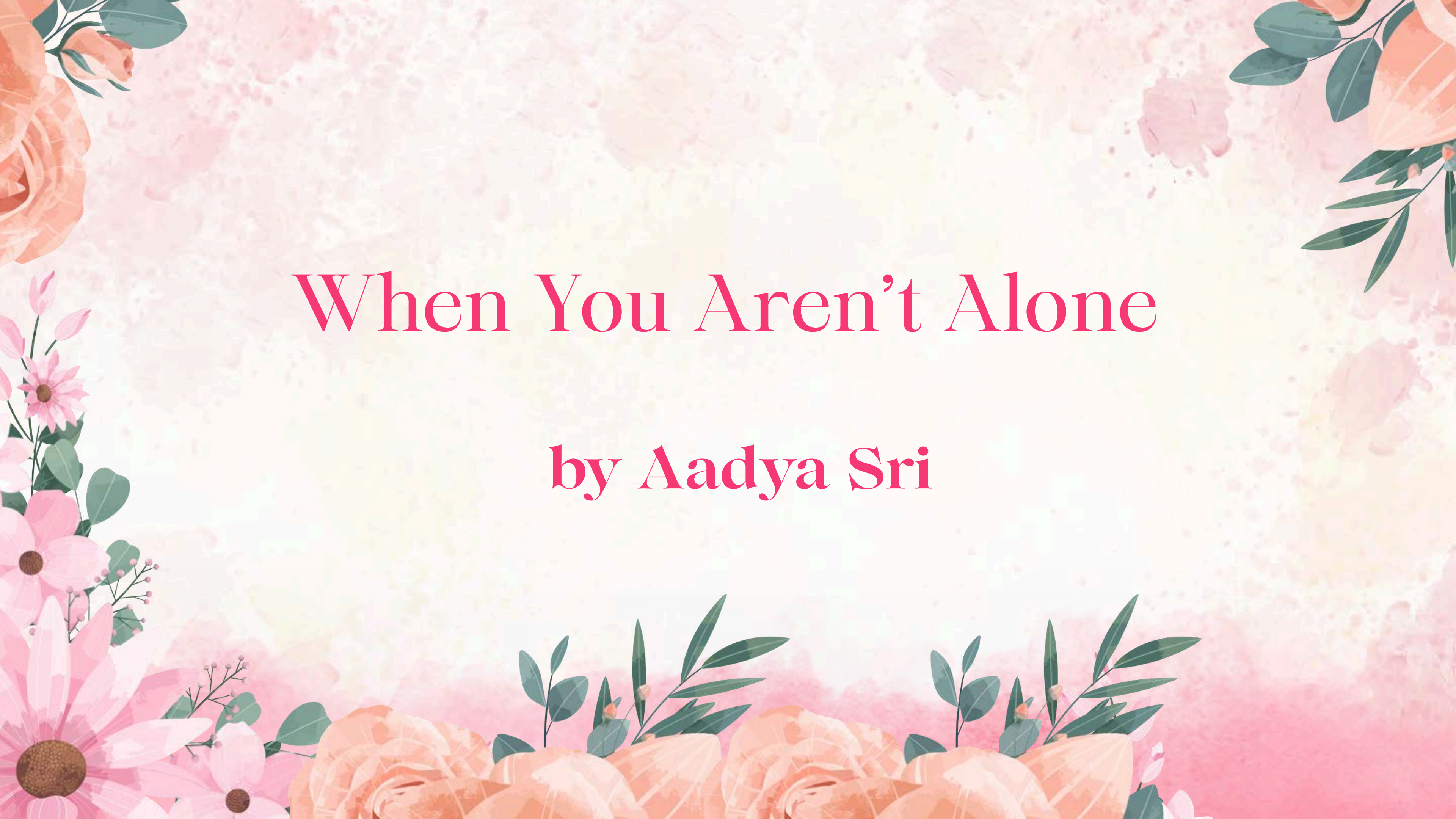


आज डॉ० अनुपम जग्गा जी के कुशल प्रेरक सानिध्य में यह स्कूल सफलता की नई बुलंदियों को छू रहा है। मुझे पूर्ण विश्वसनीय आशा है कि ज्ञान विज्ञान और परमार्थ की राह पर चलते हुए यह संस्थान सभी के सपनों को उड़ान देगा, और प्रगति के पथ पर निरन्तर बढ़ते हुए ने ऊँचे कीर्तिमान स्थापित करेगा।



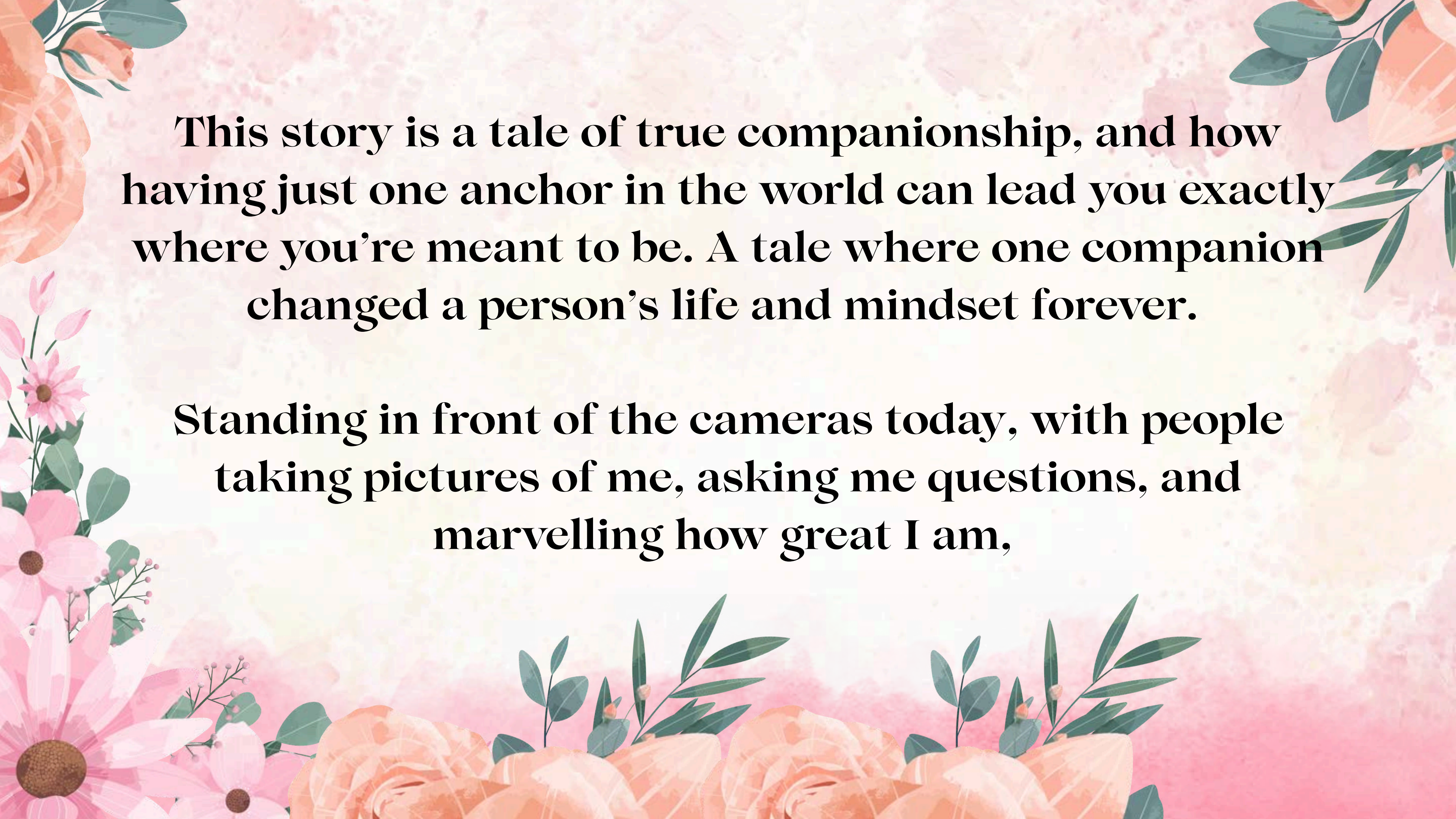
अ- अज्ञानता को दूर मिटाकर, शिक्षा का दीप जलता है।
नु- नुति सपनों के पंख जोड़कर, मंजिल की राह दिखता है।
प- पग-पग पर संस्कार को देकर, जीवन सुदृढ़ बनाया है।
म- महानता के शिखर पर पहुंचकर, देश का बढ़ता है।





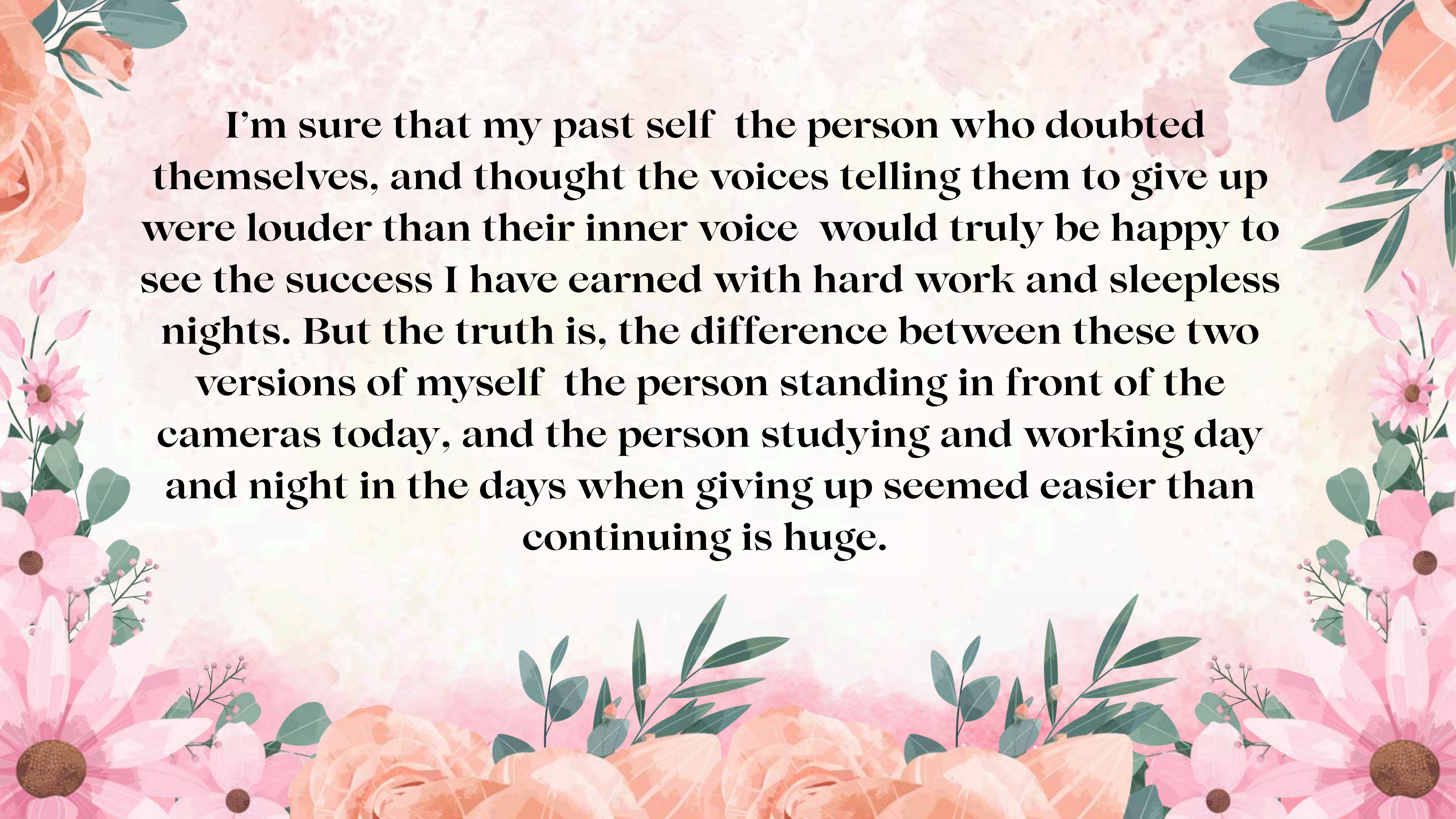
When You Aren't Alone

by Aadya Sri

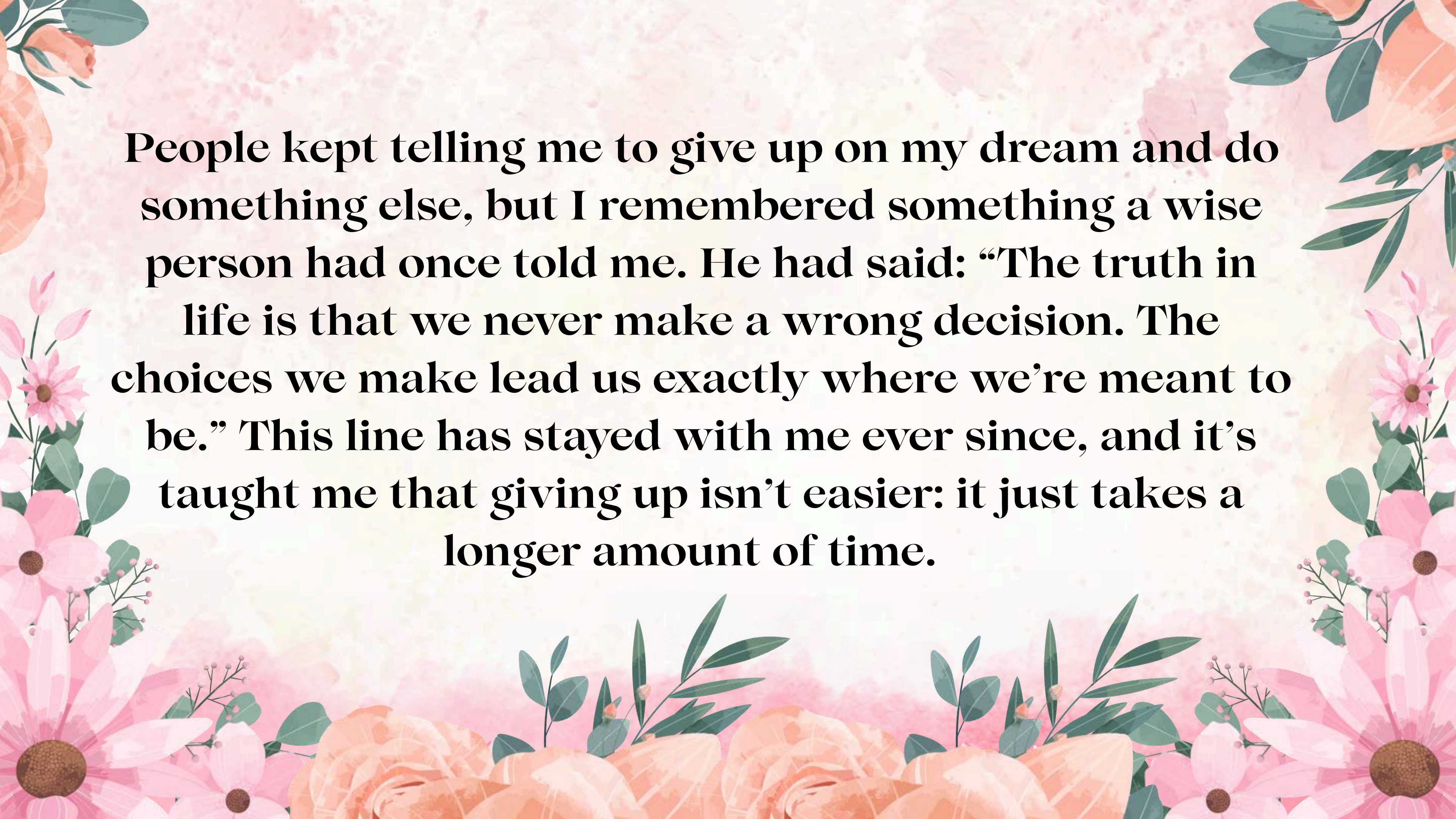


This story is a tale of true companionship, and how having just one anchor in the world can lead you exactly where you're meant to be. A tale where one companion changed a person's life and mindset forever.

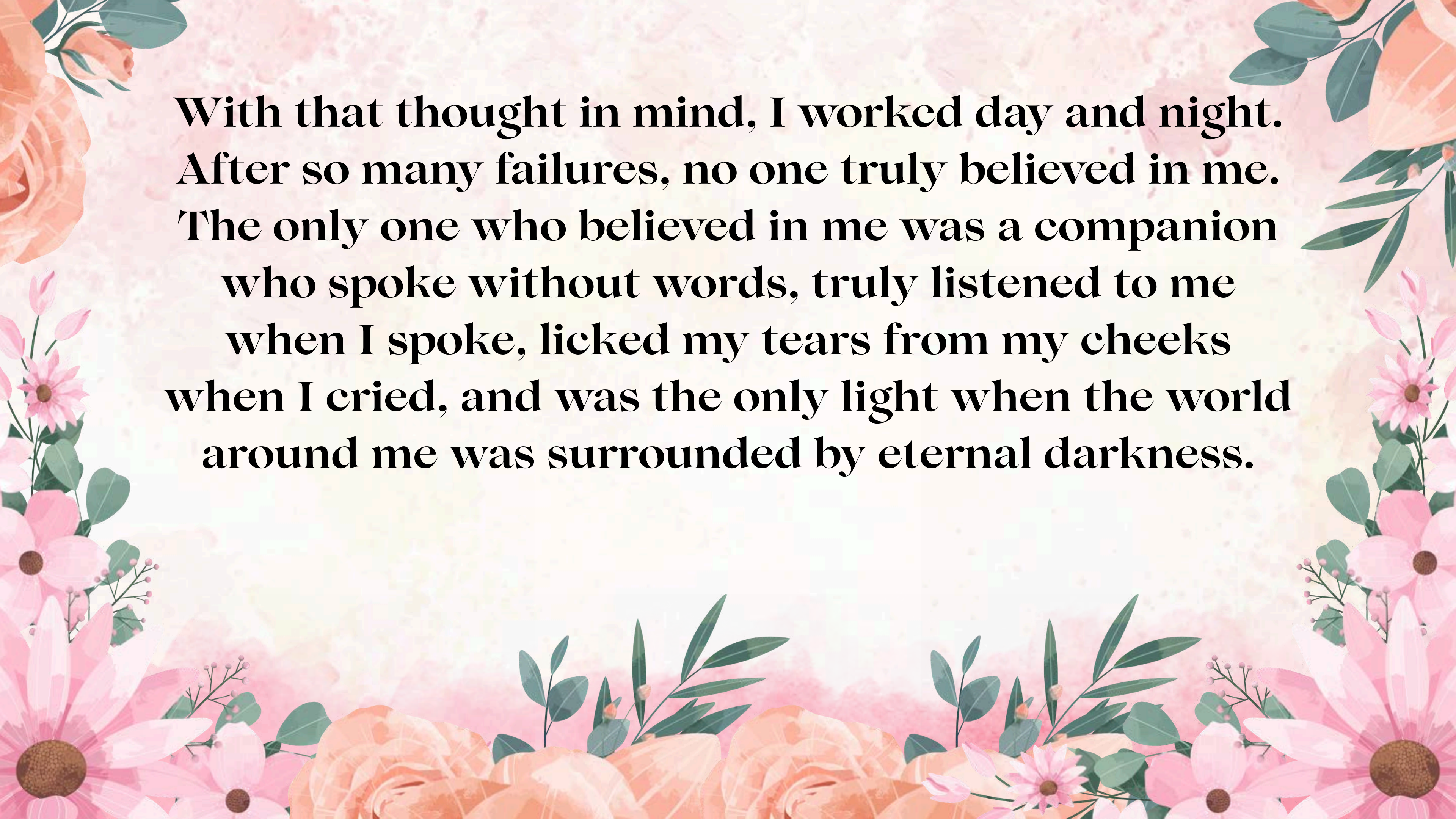
Standing in front of the cameras today, with people taking pictures of me, asking me questions, and marvelling how great I am,



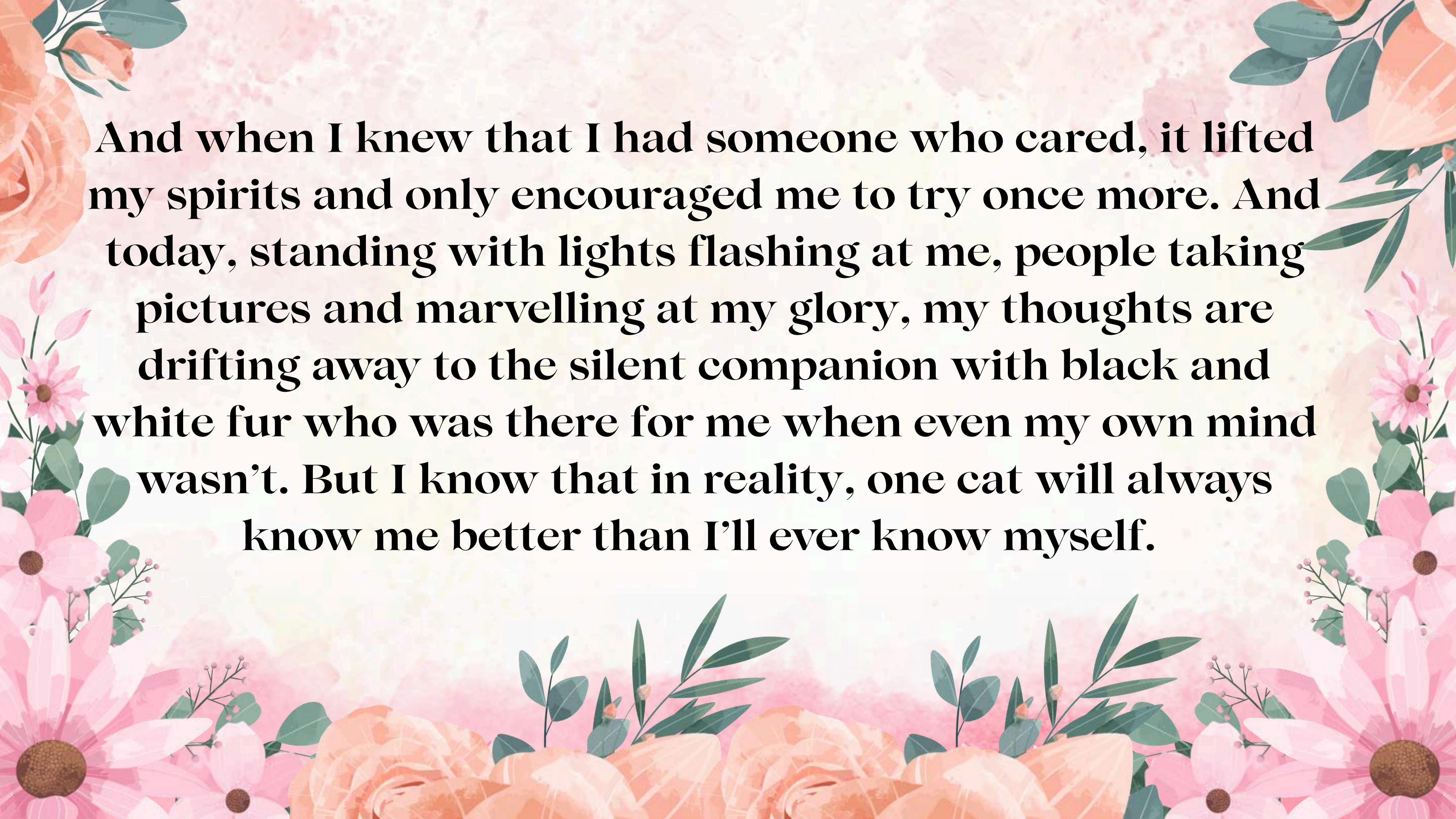
I'm sure that my past self the person who doubted themselves, and thought the voices telling them to give up were louder than their inner voice would truly be happy to see the success I have earned with hard work and sleepless nights. But the truth is, the difference between these two versions of myself the person standing in front of the cameras today, and the person studying and working day and night in the days when giving up seemed easier than continuing is huge.



People kept telling me to give up on my dream and do something else, but I remembered something a wise person had once told me. He had said: “The truth in life is that we never make a wrong decision. The choices we make lead us exactly where we’re meant to be.” This line has stayed with me ever since, and it’s taught me that giving up isn’t easier: it just takes a longer amount of time.



**With that thought in mind, I worked day and night.
After so many failures, no one truly believed in me.
The only one who believed in me was a companion
who spoke without words, truly listened to me
when I spoke, licked my tears from my cheeks
when I cried, and was the only light when the world
around me was surrounded by eternal darkness.**



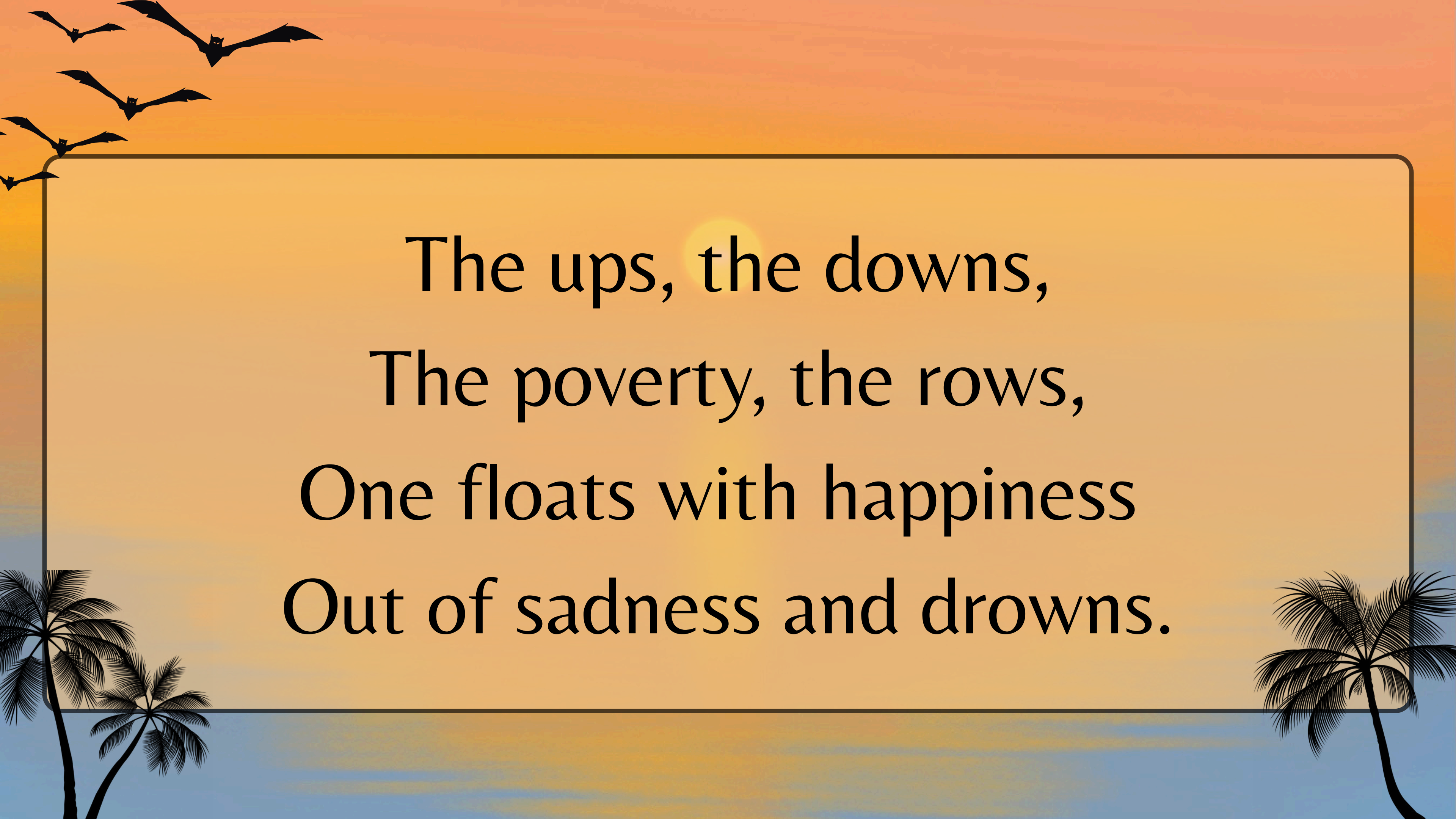
And when I knew that I had someone who cared, it lifted my spirits and only encouraged me to try once more. And today, standing with lights flashing at me, people taking pictures and marvelling at my glory, my thoughts are drifting away to the silent companion with black and white fur who was there for me when even my own mind wasn't. But I know that in reality, one cat will always know me better than I'll ever know myself.



THE UPS, THE DOWNS

VANYA BANSAL





The ups, the downs,
The poverty, the rows,
One floats with happiness
Out of sadness and drowns.

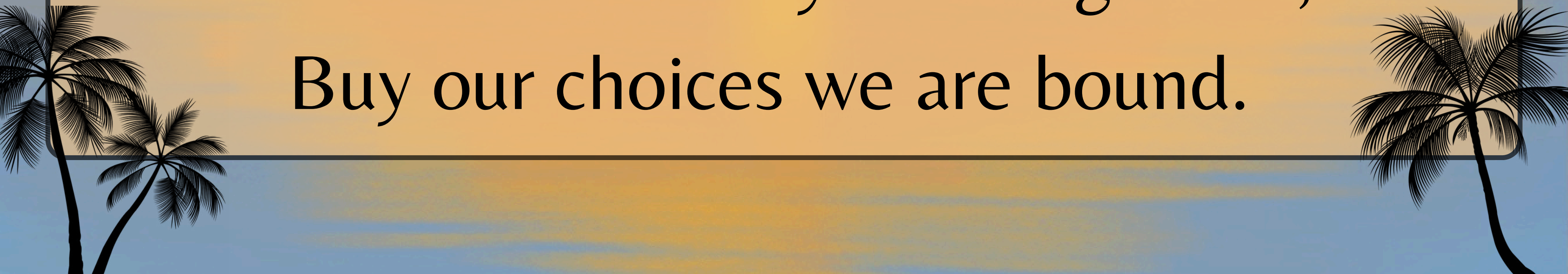


Say we have money but we lost our
soul,

Struggles leave hole after hole.

Rise above was stay on the ground,

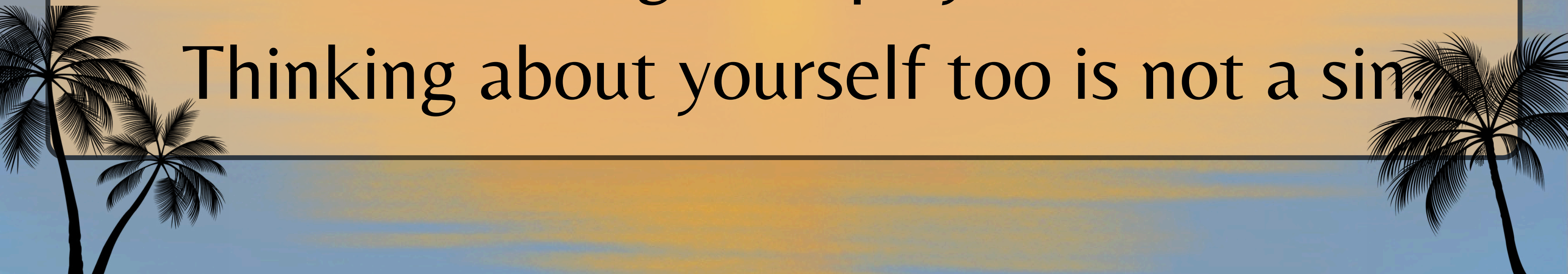
Buy our choices we are bound.





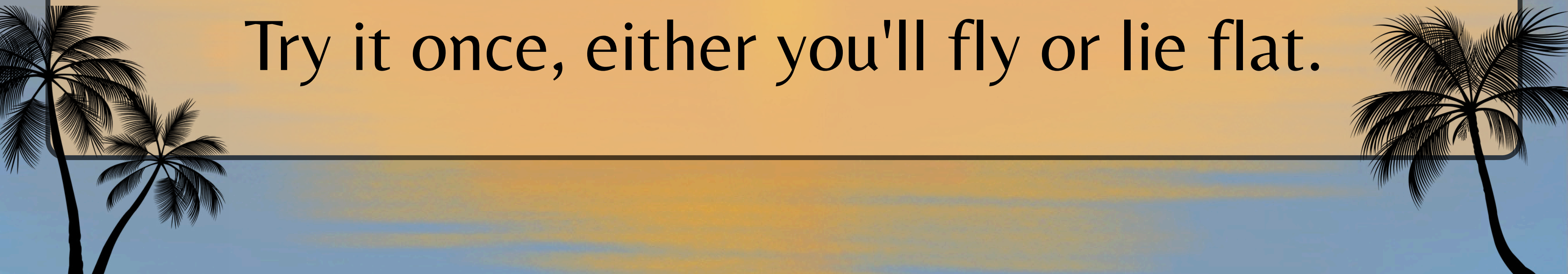
Being yourself I know is hard,
You have all the aces, just play your
card.

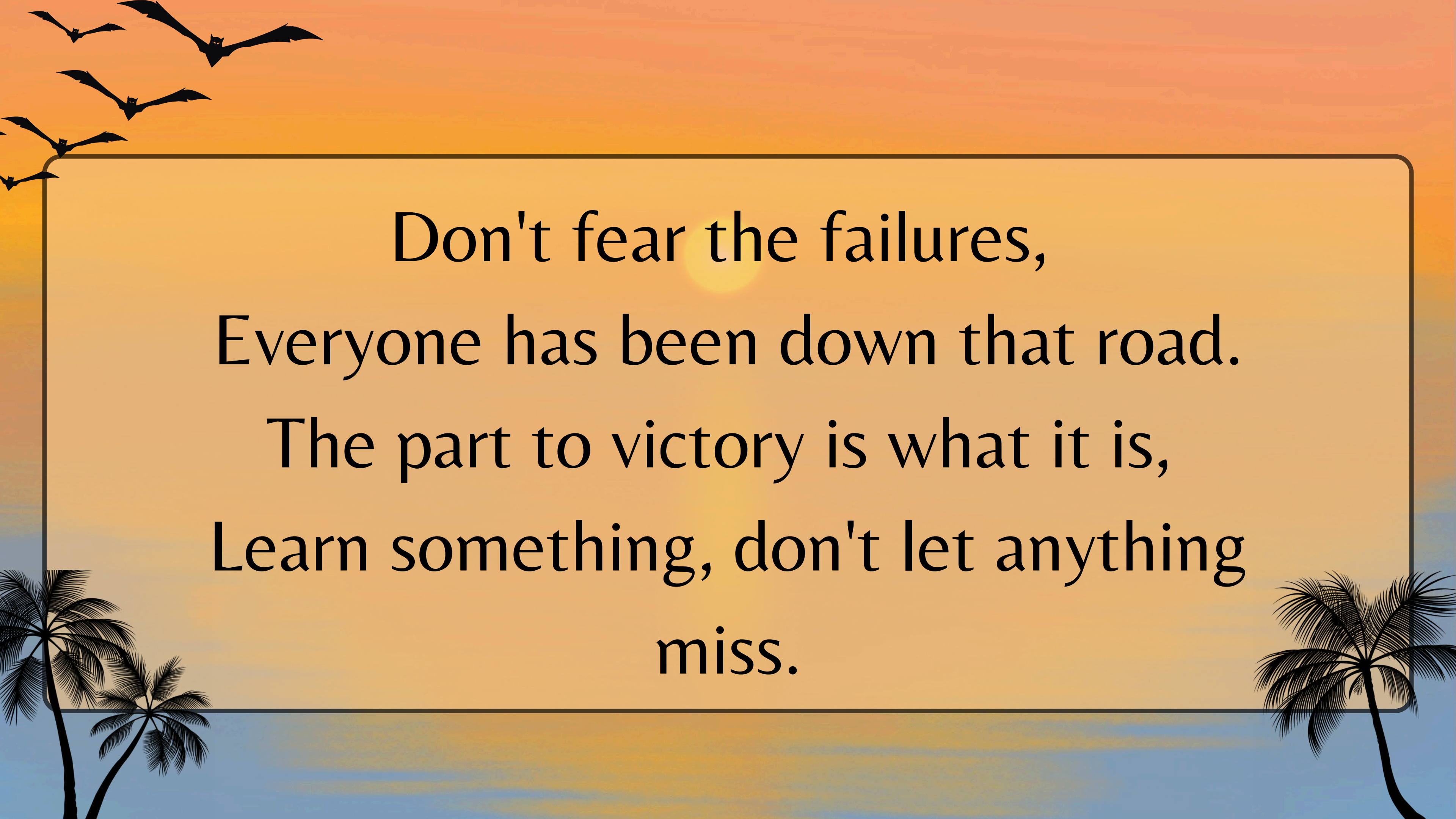
Life's a game, play to win,
Thinking about yourself too is not a sin.



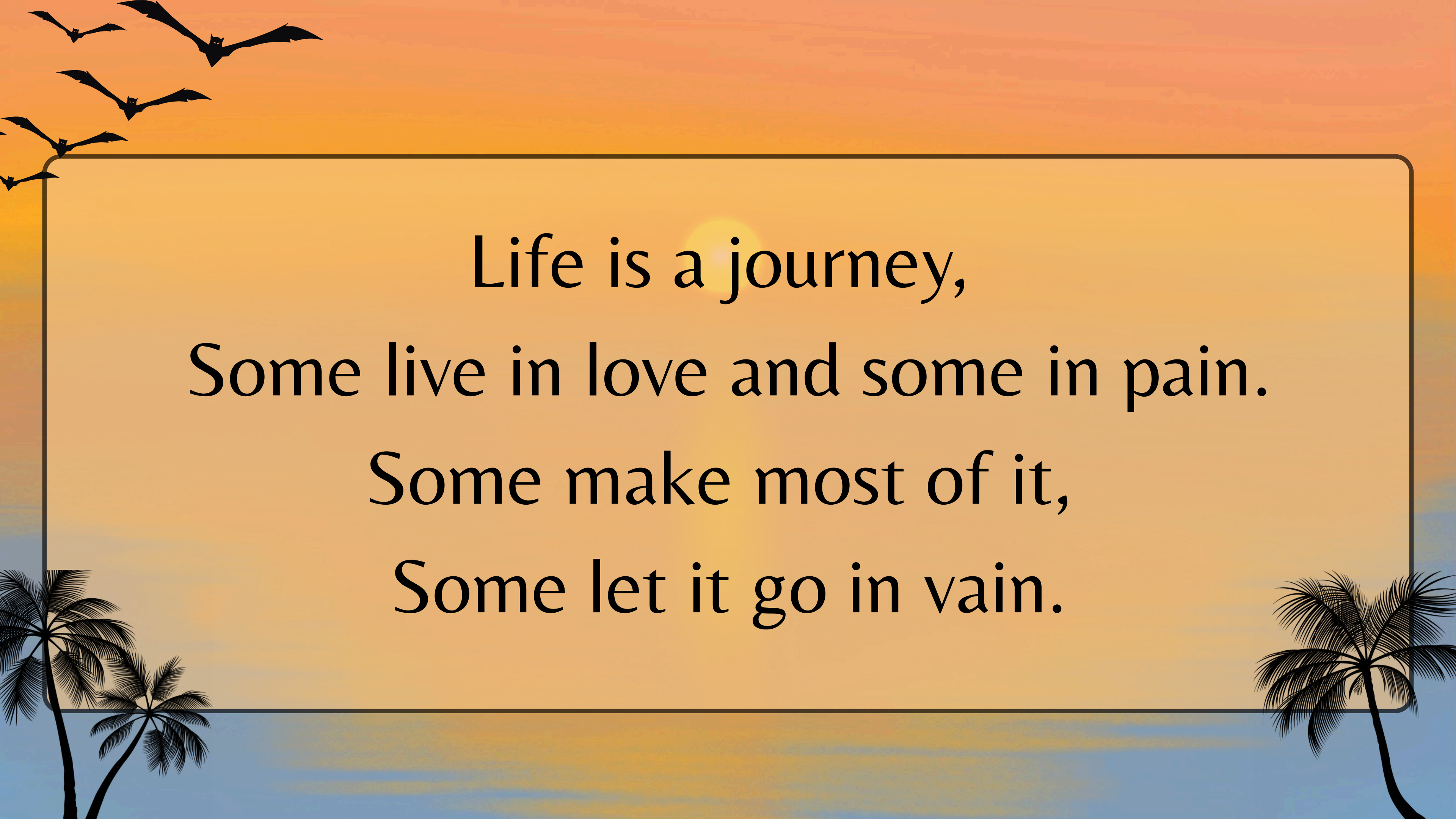


Life is a struggle you have to come through,
You're all alone and not with a crew.
Fight for yourself, ain't no one's going to do
that,
Try it once, either you'll fly or lie flat.





Don't fear the failures,
Everyone has been down that road.
The part to victory is what it is,
Learn something, don't let anything
miss.



Life is a journey,
Some live in love and some in pain.
Some make most of it,
Some let it go in vain.



Break some rules,
Step outside,
Let yourself go,
And this would guide.

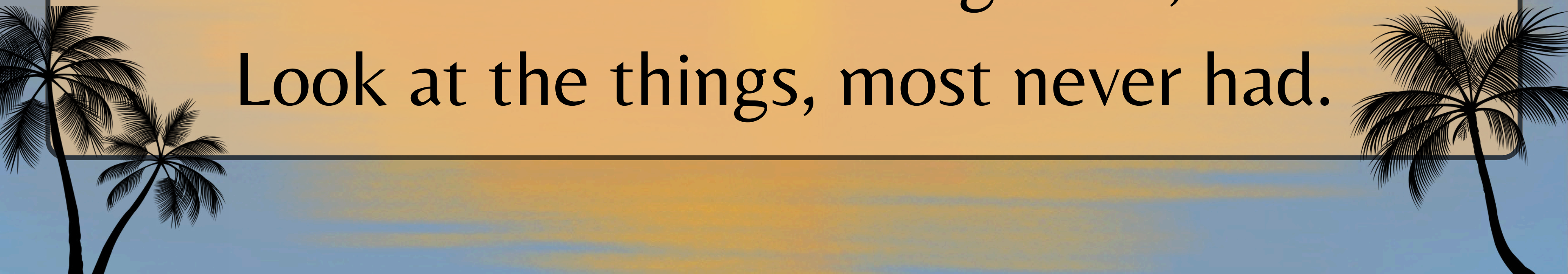


But world's a cruel place,
It'll test your soul,
Will take away some pieces,
And you might never be whole.



Look around, the poverty that surrounds,
Look at the corpse of souls lying on the
ground.

Look at The walking dead,
Look at the things, most never had.





The eyes said it all,
The misery, the helplessness they show.
We see them everyday but don't give a damn,
After such lewdness how could we still
stand?





We are engulfed in our own minds,
Flaws are only thing that we can find.
But do look within before giving expert opinion,
Do something meaningful, you are one in a
million



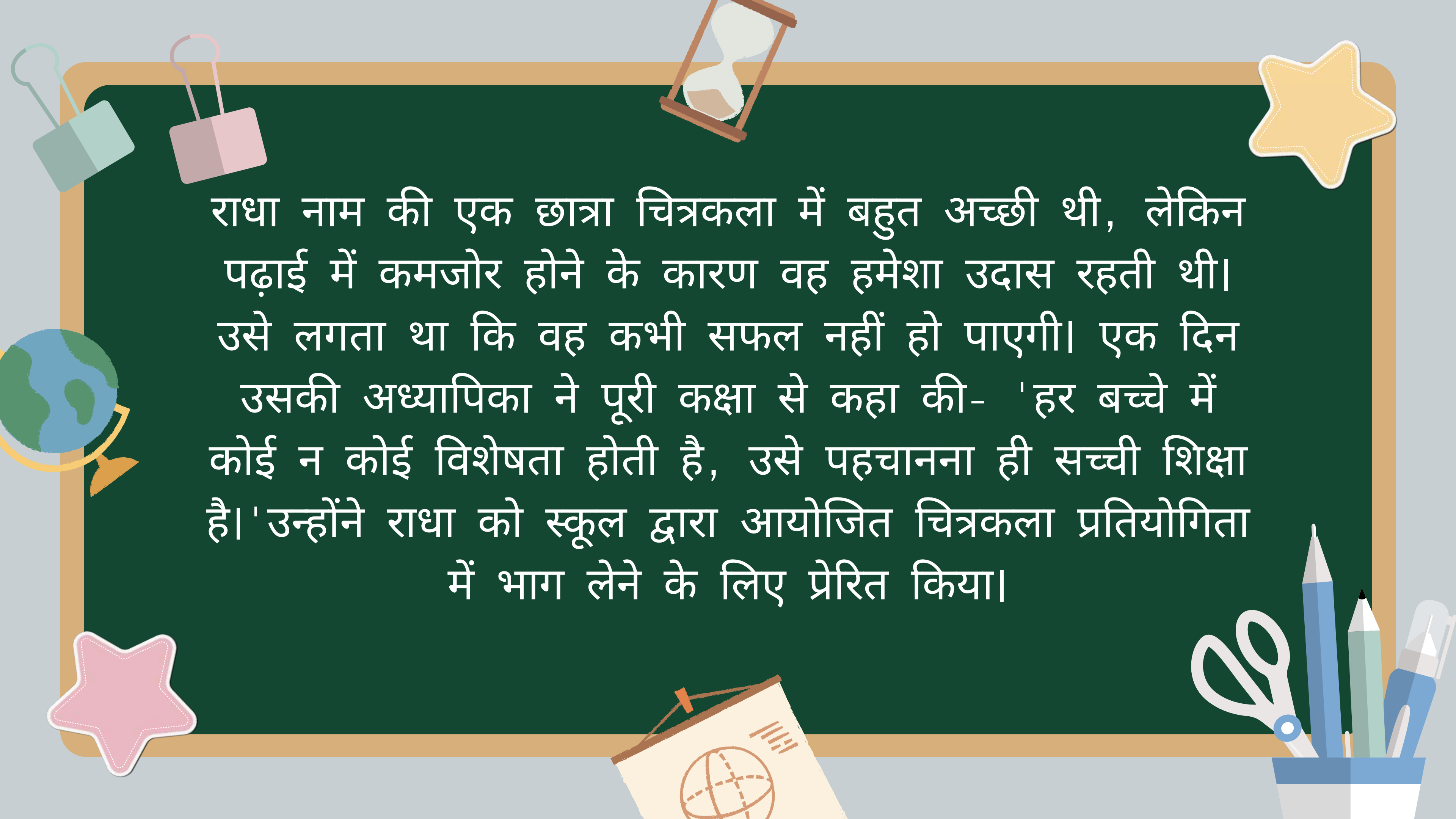


Touch some heart,
Save some souls,
Bring back the peace,
That the world one stole.

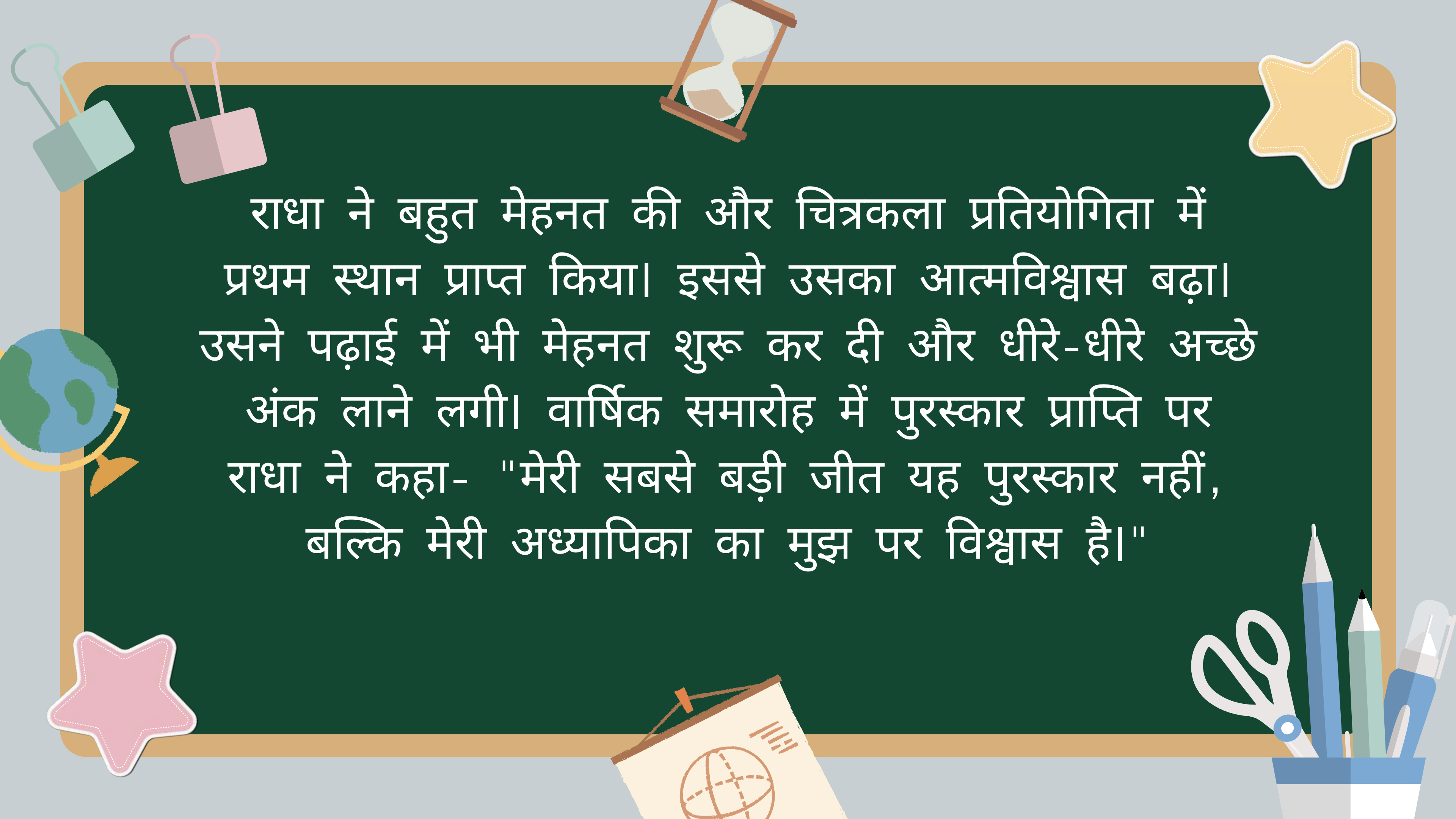
गुरु का सबसे बड़ा उपहार

POORVI GOYAL

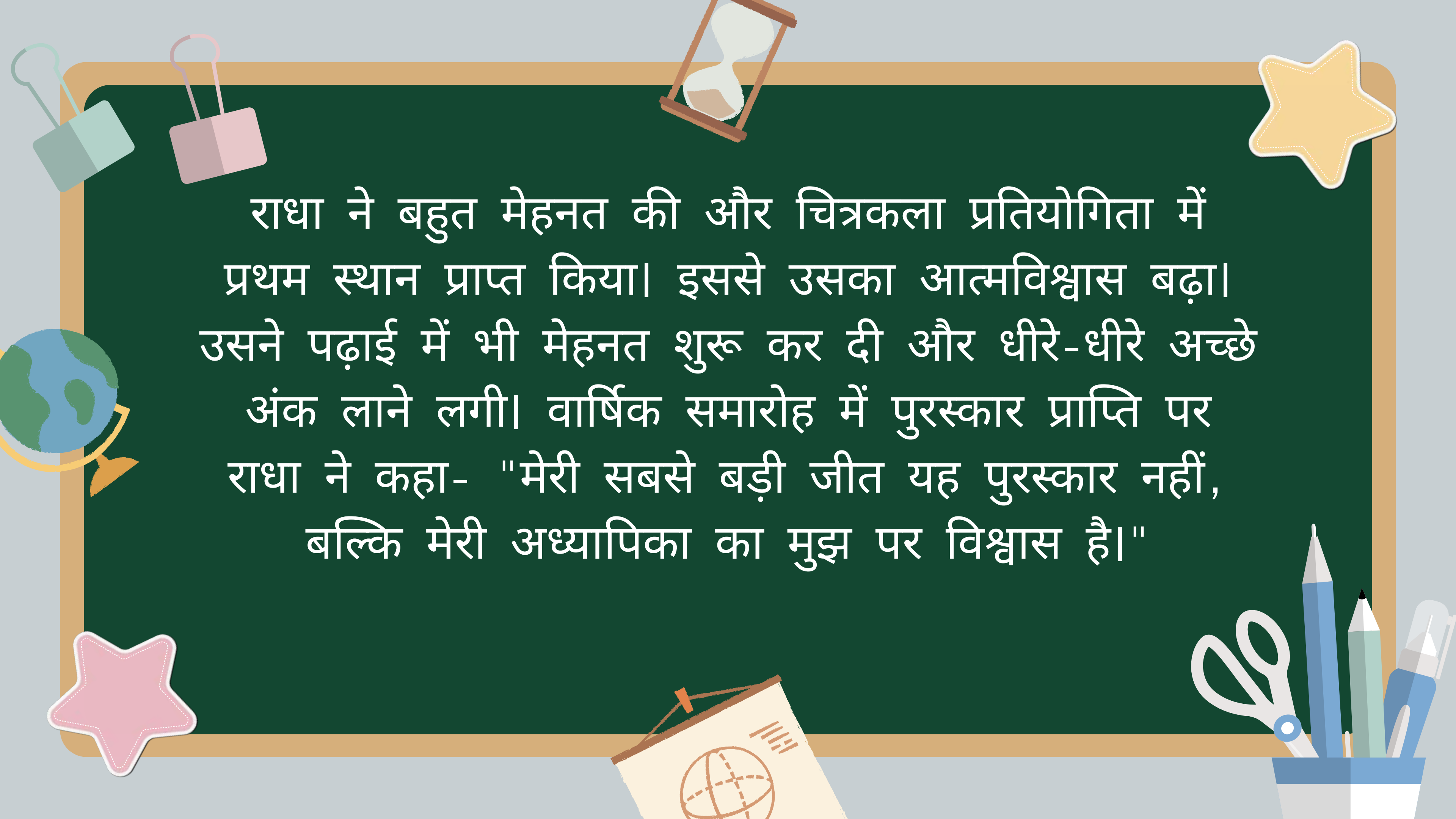


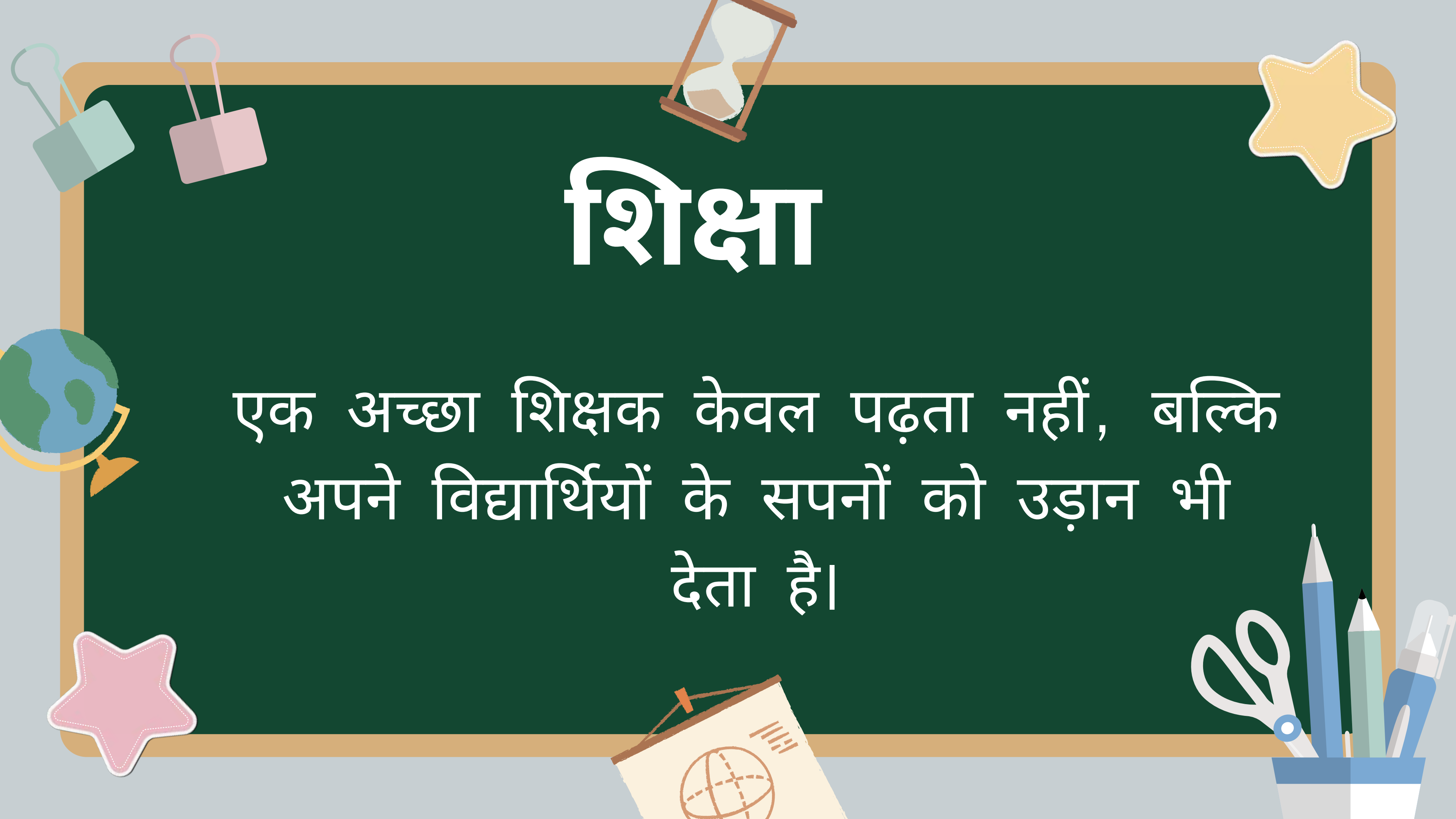


राधा नाम की एक छात्रा चित्रकला में बहुत अच्छी थी, लेकिन पढ़ाई में कमजोर होने के कारण वह हमेशा उदास रहती थी। उसे लगता था कि वह कभी सफल नहीं हो पाएगी। एक दिन उसकी अध्यापिका ने पूरी कक्षा से कहा की- 'हर बच्चे में कोई न कोई विशेषता होती है, उसे पहचानना ही सच्ची शिक्षा है।' उन्होंने राधा को स्कूल द्वारा आयोजित चित्रकला प्रतियोगिता में भाग लेने के लिए प्रेरित किया।



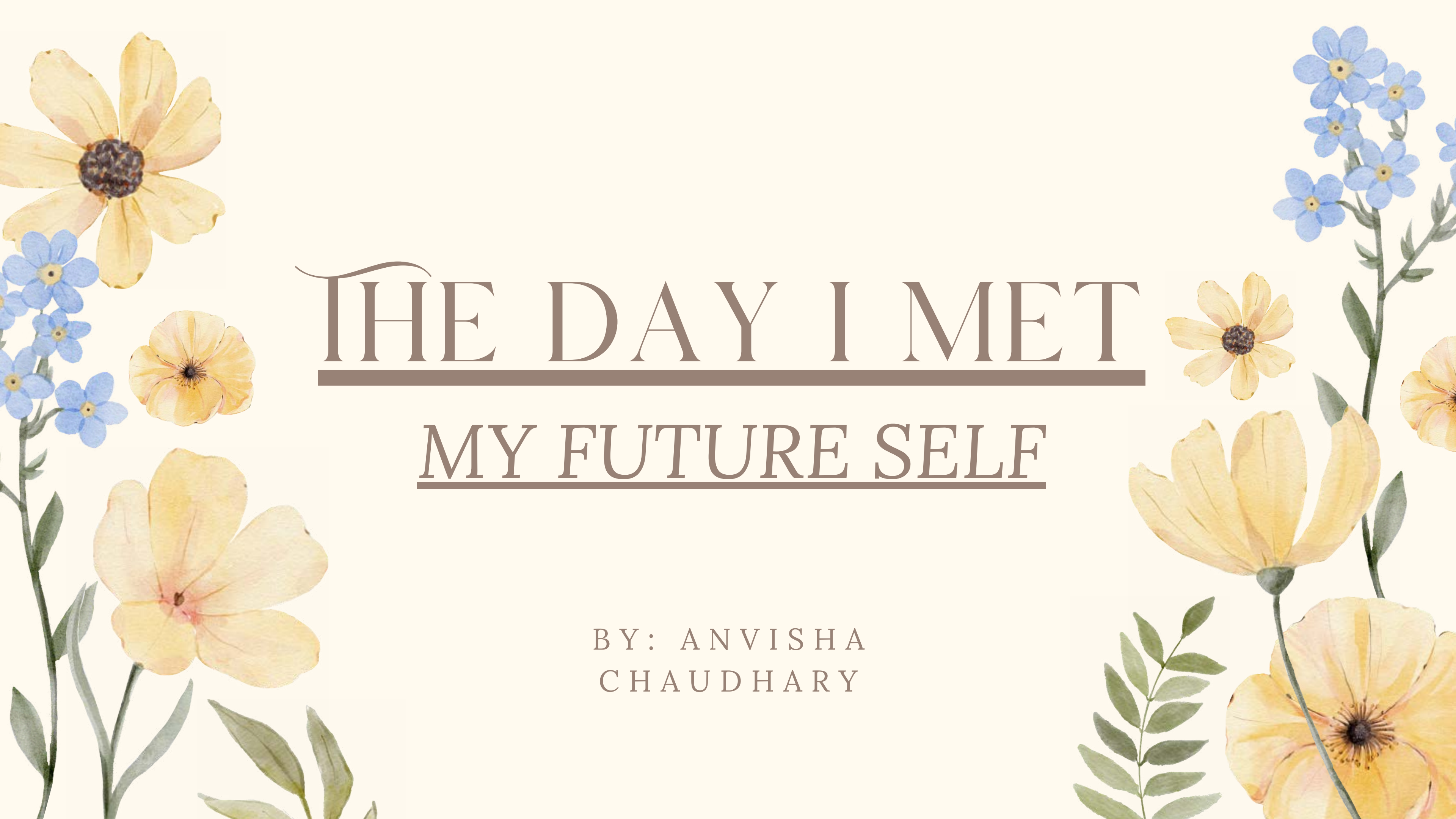
राधा ने बहुत मेहनत की और चित्रकला प्रतियोगिता में प्रथम स्थान प्राप्त किया। इससे उसका आत्मविश्वास बढ़ा। उसने पढ़ाई में भी मेहनत शुरू कर दी और धीरे-धीरे अच्छे अंक लाने लगी। वार्षिक समारोह में पुरस्कार प्राप्ति पर राधा ने कहा- "मेरी सबसे बड़ी जीत यह पुरस्कार नहीं, बल्कि मेरी अध्यापिका का मुझ पर विश्वास है।"





शिक्षा

एक अच्छा शिक्षक केवल पढ़ता नहीं, बल्कि
अपने विद्यार्थियों के सपनों को उड़ान भी
देता है।

A watercolor illustration of various flowers, including large yellow-orange blooms and clusters of small blue flowers, with green foliage, framing the central text.

THE DAY I MET

MY FUTURE SELF

BY: ANVISHA
CHAUDHARY



Have you ever thought about what your life will be like in the future? I often thought about it. Sometimes I wondered what job I would have, where I would live, and whether I would be happy. But I never thought that one day I would actually meet the person I was going to become.





It was a normal evening. I was sitting in my room with my books open in front of me. My exams were coming closer, and I was already worried about my marks. Everyone kept asking me what I wanted to become when I grew up, but honestly, I did not have a clear answer.

That night, I was tired of thinking about my future. I looked at the clock. It was 11:11 p.m. I was about to close my book when suddenly the lights went out. For a few seconds, my room was completely dark.

Then I heard a voice behind me.

“Are you really that worried about your future?”

I turned around quickly.

There was someone standing near the door.
And the moment I saw his face, I forgot how to speak.

She looked exactly same as me.



I saw a stranger standing there. As she came closer, I realized that she looked exactly like me. I was confused and shocked because his face, expressions, and overall appearance felt strangely familiar. She came towards me, and when I looked at her carefully, I felt as if I was looking at myself, but older.

Then she looked at me and said, “I am you, fifteen years from now.”

For a few moments, I could not believe what I was hearing. I kept staring at her, trying to understand how someone could possibly look exactly like me. My mind was filled with questions, and I honestly did not know whether I should believe her or think that I was imagining everything.

I asked my future self what I had done with my career. I wanted to know what I had achieved in terms of success, money, and relationships. I asked her whether I had become successful or whether I had failed to achieve the things I wanted. I also wanted to know if all the hard work I was doing at that moment would actually lead me somewhere, or if I would eventually feel that I had achieved nothing.

I had so many questions in my mind, and I desperately wanted her to tell me what my life would look like fifteen years later.

My future self looked at me and said, “Everything didn’t go exactly according to plan.”

She explained that life had not turned out exactly the way I had imagined it.

Some things worked out better than expected, while some plans failed completely. She had achieved some of the goals I was dreaming about at that time, but there were also moments when things went wrong and she had to start over.

She told me that the future was not always predictable.

Even when I had a clear plan, unexpected situations and difficult choices could change my path. Listening to her made me realize that success was not always a straight road, and sometimes I would have to accept that things could turn out differently from what I had planned.

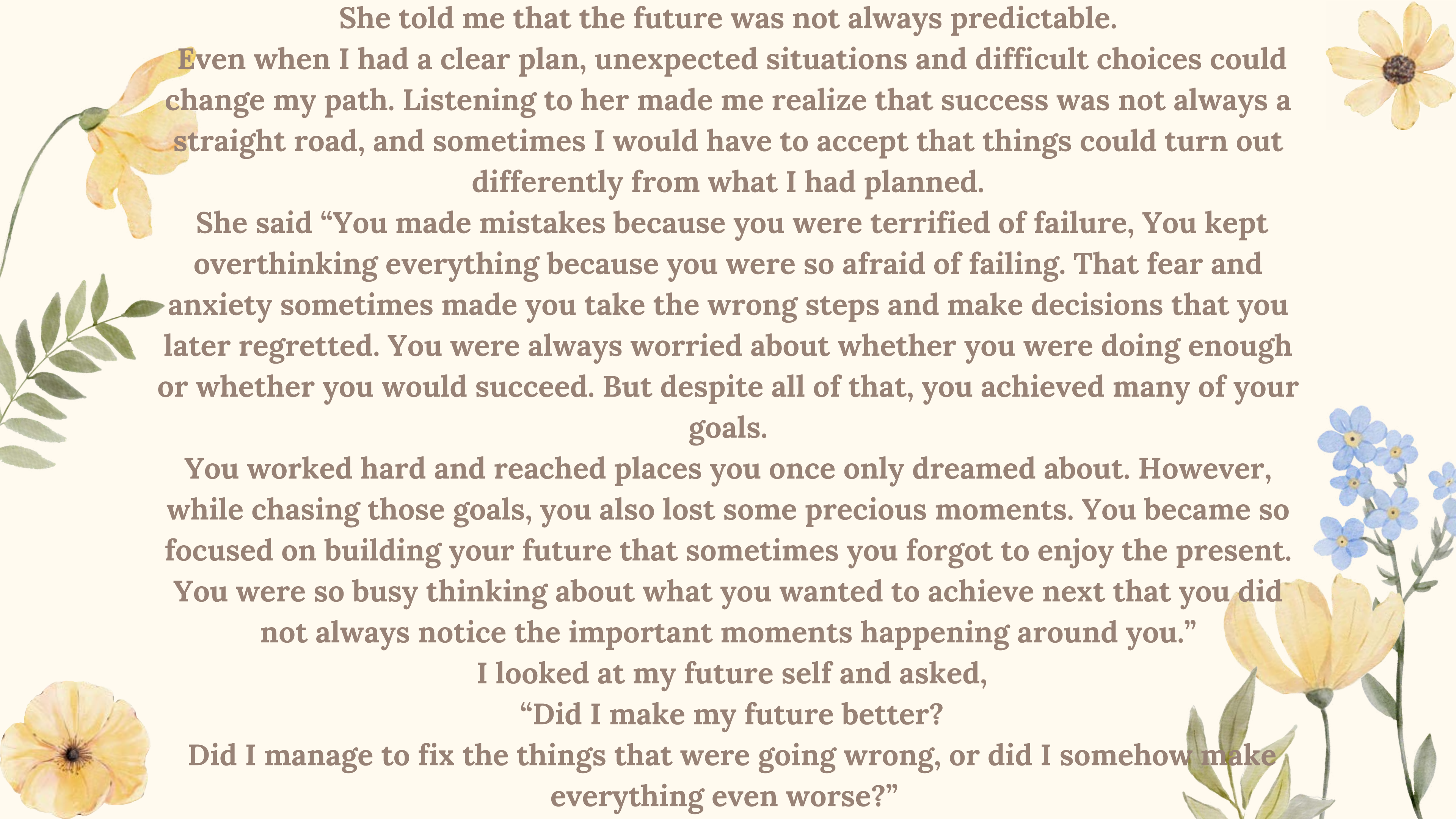
She said “You made mistakes because you were terrified of failure, You kept overthinking everything because you were so afraid of failing. That fear and anxiety sometimes made you take the wrong steps and make decisions that you later regretted. You were always worried about whether you were doing enough or whether you would succeed. But despite all of that, you achieved many of your goals.

You worked hard and reached places you once only dreamed about. However, while chasing those goals, you also lost some precious moments. You became so focused on building your future that sometimes you forgot to enjoy the present. You were so busy thinking about what you wanted to achieve next that you did not always notice the important moments happening around you.”

I looked at my future self and asked,

“Did I make my future better?

Did I manage to fix the things that were going wrong, or did I somehow make everything even worse?”



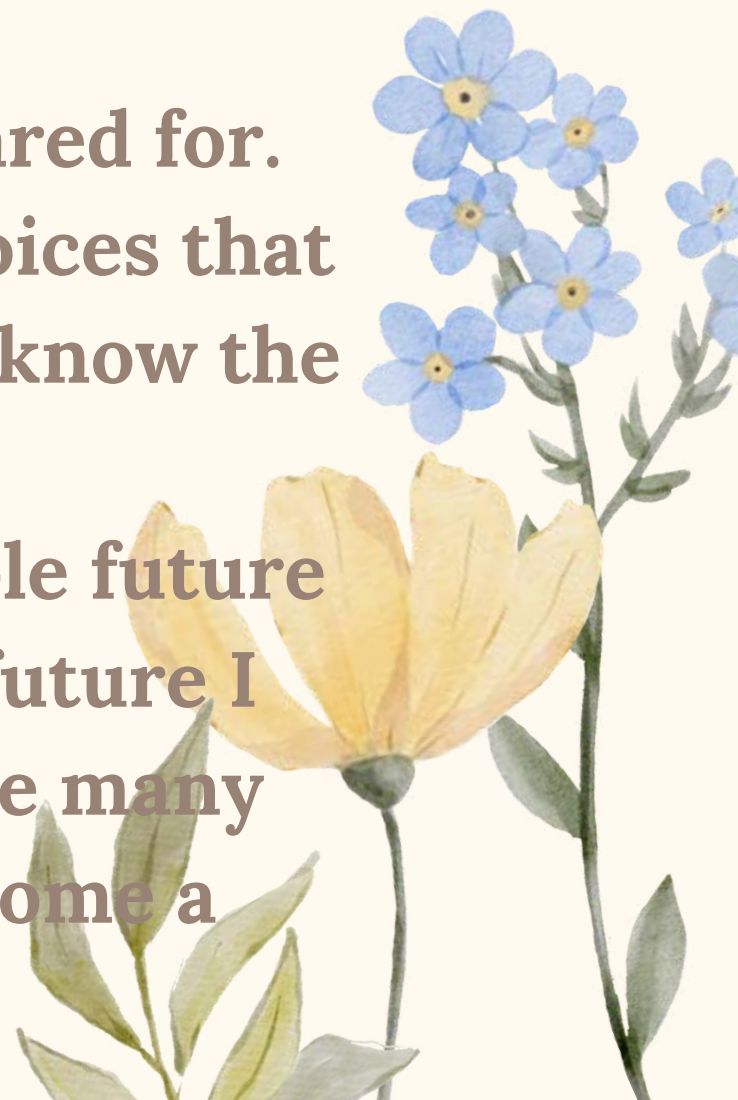


I genuinely wanted to know whether I had made the right choices and improved my life. I wanted to know if the problems I was worried about at that moment had eventually been solved or if I had created new problems for myself. I looked at her, waiting for an answer, because I knew that whatever she said could completely change the way I looked at my future.

I wanted to know whether I had managed to make everything right or not, but at the same time, I was afraid to hear the truth. I was scared that her answer might shock me or leave me disappointed. A part of me wanted to hear that everything had worked out well and that I had become successful, because that would make me feel happy and relieved.

But another part of me was afraid of getting an answer I was not prepared for. What if the future was not as good as I imagined? What if I had made choices that I regretted? I was caught between my curiosity and my fear. I wanted to know the truth, but I was also scared of what that truth might reveal.

My future self looked at me and said, “It isn’t fixed. I am only one possible future of yours.” She explained that the future I was seeing was not the only future I could have. The choices I made from that moment onward could change many things. I could make different decisions, take different paths, and become a completely different version of myself.



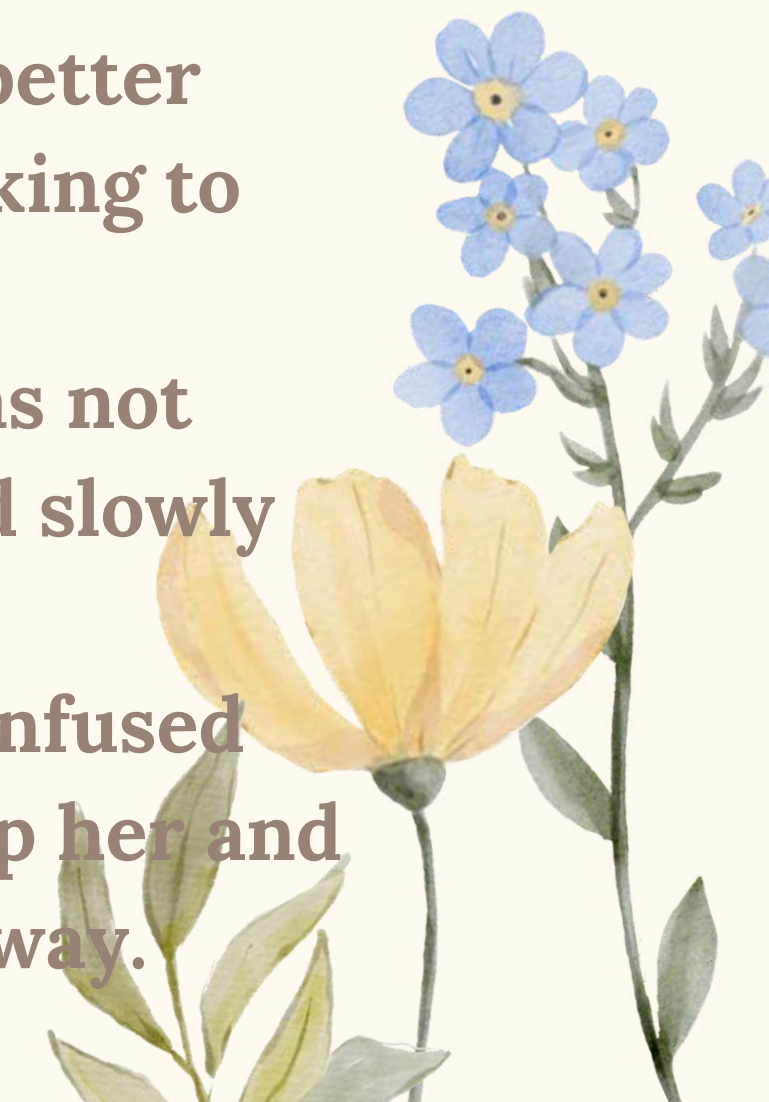


She wanted me to understand that I should not think of her life as something that was already decided for me. She was simply showing me what could happen if I continued making the same kinds of choices. My future was still open, and I still had the power to shape it.

Then, my future self and I discussed three important choices that I could make differently. She explained that these choices might seem small or unimportant to me at that moment, but they could have a big impact on my future.

She told me that I did not have to repeat every mistake she had made. I could learn from her experiences and choose a different path. The three choices were not about completely changing who I was, but about making better decisions, trusting myself more, and not allowing fear and overthinking to control my life.

As she explained them to me, I started realizing that my future was not something I simply had to wait for. My decisions in the present could slowly shape the person I would become.



Suddenly, my future self started to disappear. I was shocked and confused because I still had so many questions I wanted to ask her. I tried to stop her and asked her to stay for a little longer, but she slowly began fading away.



I could feel that I was running out of time. I wanted to know more about my future, my career, my relationships, and the choices I would have to make. But before I could ask anything else, she looked at me one last time. Her expression was calm, almost as if she already knew that everything would be okay. Then, within a few moments, she completely disappeared.



I stood there silently, trying to understand what had just happened. I did not know whether I had really met my future self or whether it had all been a strange dream. But whatever it was, I knew that the conversation had changed something inside me.

The next morning, everything seemed completely ordinary, just like any other day. Nothing around me had changed, but my perspective had changed completely. I felt highly motivated and determined. The conversation with my future self was still fresh in my mind, and it gave me a strong desire to change my future.



I felt a new kind of energy inside me. Instead of sitting around worrying about what might happen, I wanted to actually work for the future I wanted. I decided to put my full focus into my studies and career. I was finally able to work towards my goals without constantly getting distracted by unnecessary thoughts.



A watercolor illustration of a yellow flower with five petals and a dark brown center, with a green stem and several green leaves, located on the left side of the page.

For once, I was not overthinking every little thing. I was not constantly imagining failure or worrying about whether I would succeed. I simply focused on what I could do that day. I knew that changing my future would not happen instantly, but I was ready to work for it, one step at a time.

Instead of constantly thinking about becoming someone someday, I started living deliberately today. I realized that I did not have to wait for some distant future to become the person I wanted to be. The future would be shaped by what I chose to do in the present.

I stopped worrying so much about who I would become and started focusing on who I was becoming right now. I began giving more importance to my time, my choices, and the effort I put into my goals. I understood that every small decision I made today could have an effect on my future.

For the first time, I was not just dreaming about a better future—I was actually taking steps towards creating it.





I Was Once a Name on the Attendance Register



Name of the author - Dr. Seema Bhushan Category - Principal Name of the School - Greenway Modern School 2



"Roll number 37?"

A pause.

A small movement at the last bench.

Then, almost swallowed by the hum of the ceiling fan—

"Present, ma'am."

My pen touched the page.

One tiny tick.

Barely a mark.

Barely a second.

Yet I know now that a teacher's smallest gestures can sometimes cast
the longest shadows.

For years, I believed an attendance register was nothing more than a book
of names,

Names arranged in obedient rows.

Roll numbers marching beside them.

A forest of signatures waiting to be **ticked**.

Every morning, I opened that book, adjusted my glasses, cleared my throat
and began.

"Present."

"Present."

"Present."

"Absent."

The rhythm was almost musical:

Familiar.

Comforting.

Mechanical.

I never wondered what lived between those four letters—

P-R-E-S-E-N-T.

I never wondered what a child had crossed to reach that word that morning.





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Perhaps a quarrel at home.
Perhaps a sleepless night.
Perhaps an empty stomach.



Perhaps a heart carrying a secret too heavy for a schoolbag.

I did not wonder.

I was young.

And perhaps, like most young teachers, I was too occupied with becoming a good teacher to understand what it truly meant to be one.

There was a syllabus to complete.

Notebooks to correct.

Tests to set.

Marks to record.

Deadlines to chase.

A bell waiting impatiently at the end of every period.

There was always another chapter.





Another worksheet.

Another class.

Another tomorrow.

And then—
there was him.

I remember his seat more vividly than I remember his face.

The last bench.

Third row from the window.

The afternoon sun would often find its way through the dusty glass
and settle quietly on his desk.

He was the kind of child who could disappear
while sitting in a room full of forty people.

Quiet.

Average.





Careless.

Uninterested.

Those were the words I might once have used.

His homework was often incomplete.

His handwriting wandered across the page as though even the letters were tired.

His answers were brief.

His hand never rose when I asked a question.

And whenever I called his name, his eyes would meet mine for a fleeting second before falling back to the safety of his notebook.

I thought he lacked confidence.

I thought he needed discipline.

I thought he needed to work harder.

So I did what teachers sometimes do when they cannot understand a child.

I corrected him.

With a red pen.

Incomplete.





“Why didn’t you say present?”

He stood slowly.

“Ma’am...”

His voice was little more than a thread.

“I am present.”

A few children laughed.

“I smiled too.

Then I moved to the next name.

The lesson began.

The board filled.

The notebooks opened.

The chalk moved.

The bell rang.

Life went on.

I do not remember what I taught that day.





Improve.

Needs attention.

Do better.

Why are you not paying attention?

My red pen was decisive.

The child was not.

One morning, I called his name.

Nothing.

I looked up.

He was there.

Exactly where he had always been.





I do not remember the homework I assigned.

But I remember those three words.

I am present.

Years later, I understood that perhaps he had been saying much more.

Not—

I am sitting here.

Not—

I came to school.

But—

Please see me.

Please notice me.

Please believe that I am more than the marks beside my name.





Some lessons do not arrive with a textbook.

They arrive quietly.

Sometimes years late.

Mine arrived on a rainy afternoon.

I was clearing an old cupboard when I found a stack of forgotten notebooks.

The pages had yellowed with time.

The corners had curled.

Names had faded.

But my handwriting remained unmistakable.

And there it was—

my red ink.

Everywhere.

A trail of corrections through someone else's childhood.

I turned the pages slowly.

Grammar exercises.





Half-finished answers.

Crossed-out sentences.

Remarks in the margins.

Then, near the back, I found something that did not belong to any lesson.

A page written in a child's uneven handwriting.

Three sentences.

Only three.

I read them once.

Then again.

Then a third time, as though the words might rearrange themselves into something easier to bear.

I don't like it when teachers ask why I don't speak.

I don't know how to tell them that things are not always okay at home.





Sometimes school is the only place where I can be quiet.

The room suddenly seemed very still.

Outside, rain tapped against the window.

Inside, I sat holding a notebook that had somehow travelled through years to find me.

My red pen had called him careless.

His silence had been carrying a story.

And I had been too busy correcting his sentences to hear the one he was trying to tell me.

That afternoon, something inside me shifted.

The attendance register I had once considered a record became a mirror.

I began to understand that a child never walks into a classroom alone.

They bring their mornings with them.

The argument they overheard before breakfast.

The mother who was unwell.

The father who returned home late.

The empty lunchbox.





The unfinished homework.

The fear of failure.

The comparison with a brighter sibling.

The loneliness nobody sees.

The dream they are afraid to name.

A child can carry an entire universe beneath a school uniform.

And we, standing at the front of the classroom, sometimes mistake that weight for laziness.

We call it indiscipline.

We call it distraction.

We call it poor performance.

We call it not trying hard enough.

How easily adults rename a child's pain.





After that, I began taking attendance differently.
I still called the names.
But I began to look up.
Really look.



I noticed the child who always said present without lifting their eyes.

The girl whose laughter suddenly disappeared.

The boy who began sitting alone during lunch.

The child who had stopped bringing food.

The one who slept through the first period.

The student whose marks fell without explanation.

The one who said, "I'm fine," far too quickly.

The child who had become unusually quiet.

The child who had suddenly become unusually loud.

I began to understand that both could be cries for help.

I discovered that sometimes a child answers present with their voice
while everything inside them is screaming absent.





And sometimes the quietest child in the room is not uninterested.
They are simply exhausted from fighting battles no one knows exist.



Years passed.

Students left.

New names entered the register.

The pages turned.

The handwriting changed.

The classrooms changed.

And, somewhere along the way—

I changed too.

Then one afternoon, outside the school gate, I heard a voice.





“Ma’am?”

I turned.

A young man stood before me.

For a moment, I did not recognise him.

Then he smiled.

And suddenly—
the years folded themselves away.

I saw the last bench.

The dusty window.

The afternoon sunlight.

The red ink.

The trembling voice.

“I was your student,” he said.

I smiled.

“I know.”





I didn't.

Not completely.



But teachers sometimes pretend to remember because we cannot bear to let a child who remembers us discover that we have forgotten them.

He laughed.

“I teach now.”

I looked at him, surprised.

“You?”

“Yes, ma'am.”

He looked towards the school building.

Then he said something that silenced every hurried thought in my head.

“You taught me the most important lesson of my life.”



I waited.

“I learnt that a teacher can change a child's life simply by noticing them.”

I wanted to tell him I had done nothing extraordinary.

I wanted to tell him about the notebook.

About the words I had discovered too late.

About all the red ink.

About the things I had failed to understand.

But before I could speak, he smiled and said—

“Thank you for asking me to stay back that day.”

I searched my memory.

Nothing.

Not even a faint picture.

He remembered.

I did not.

And perhaps that is the strange, beautiful injustice of teaching.

We remember the chapters we taught.

Children remember the moments when we made them feel seen.

That evening, I opened an old attendance register.





The pages were brittle.
The edges were brown with time.
Some names had almost disappeared.
I ran my fingers gently over them.
And suddenly, I thought of another register.
One I had almost forgotten.
My own.
Once, I too had sat on the other side of the desk.
I too had waited for my name to be called.

I too had looked towards a teacher,
hoping to find kindness in a pair of eyes.
I too had been more than a roll number.





More than marks,
More than a percentage,
More than a neat name written in blue ink.
I had once been a child waiting for someone to look beyond the register.
And perhaps that is the quietest irony of my life—
I became a teacher only to discover, years later, that I had once needed the very thing I was
learning to give.
To be noticed,
Today, when I open an attendance register, I no longer see thirty-five names.
I see thirty-five unfinished stories.
Thirty-five beginnings.
Thirty-five small universes entering the room carrying invisible luggage.
Some are bright with possibility.
Some are bruised by circumstances.
Some are still learning how to dream.
Some are waiting for someone to tell them that they are capable of becoming more than what
their circumstances have written for them.
And every morning, before I make that first little tick, I pause.





It is about noticing who is truly there.



A child can sit in the front row and still feel invisible.

A child can score ninety percent and still believe they are not enough.

A child can laugh through every period and return home to silence.

A child can say—
“Present, ma’am,”
while silently asking—

• ✨ •

“Do I matter?”

Perhaps the greatest privilege of being a teacher is that,
sometimes, we get to answer that question



A hand on a shoulder.

A second chance.

A simple—

“Are you okay?”

Sometimes, that is enough to make a child feel visible.

So yes—

I was once a name on the attendance register.

Just a name.

A name waiting for a tick.

But somewhere between calling names and learning their stories, I discovered that education is not merely the art of filling young minds.

It is the art of seeing young souls.

We are not only preparing children for examinations.

We are, in a hundred quiet ways, telling them:

I see you.

I hear you.

You matter.

Your presence matters.





And when one day my own name disappears from the registers—
when the timetable no longer carries it,
when the staff list no longer remembers it,
when another teacher opens the book and turns the page—
I hope I leave something behind.
Not a certificate.



Not a photograph.
Not a line in an official record.
But a small, warm corner in the memory of a child who once felt invisible.
A child who once sat quietly at the last bench.
A child who once struggled to say two simple words.
A child who finally found the courage to whisper.





A child who finally found the courage to whisper—
“Present, ma’am.”



And this time,
I hope I was listening.

Because perhaps that is what it means to be a teacher.

Not merely to take attendance—
but to make someone feel that their presence in this world has been counted.
And if, after all the registers are closed, even one child remembers that I saw them—
then perhaps my own name was never merely written in ink.
Perhaps it was written somewhere far more permanent.

In a life.





हमारे पापा

Name: Aashi Tyagi

Category: Student

Class: 7

School: Greenway Modern School 2

Roorkee





हमें ज़मीन पर प्यारा स्वर्ग दिखाने वाले हमारे पापा,
जीवन में हर खुशी का रास्ता बनाकर देने वाले,
हर दर्द खुद सहकर हर गम से बचाने वाले,
जीवन में तरह-तरह के रंग भर, अमृत फल देने वाले,
मुसीबत के समय सबसे पहले हाथ पकड़ने वाले,
किसी के आगे न झुकने व सदा सच बोलने की सीख देने वाले,
हमारे पापा।

हमारी खुशी के लिए दुनिया से टक्कर लेने वाले,
मेरी ताकत, मेरी हिम्मत, मेरी शान बनने वाले,
पूरे परिवार की भक्ति, विश्वास बन आस-पास रहने वाले,
मुझे रास्ते, मंज़िल और खुशियों का सपना दिखाने वाले,
हमारे पापा।



जब-जब हम रुकते, हमको मनाने वाले,
अपने गुस्से व कड़वी बातों से हममें अकल भरने वाले,
हमारी खुशियों पर अपनी खुशियों कुर्बान करने वाले,
संस्कार, शिक्षा, जीवन के सबक और सच्चाई की राह दिखाने वाले,
हमारे पापा।

हमें पूरी आजादी और खुला आसमान देने वाले,

कभी हममें कोई भेदभाव न करने वाले,
मुस्काने बेटी नहीं, बेटा बनाकर पालने वाले,
भगवान का सबसे अमूल्य व कीमती आशीर्वाद रूपी,
हमारे पापा।

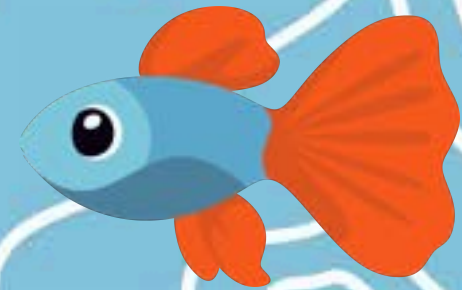
बिना बोले हमारी ज़रूरतों को पूरा करने वाले,
हमारे चेहरों पर मुस्कान लाने के लिए दिन-रात मेहनत करने वाले,
अंदर से बेहद प्यारे व ऊपर से कठोर दिखने वाले,
कहते कभी नहीं, पर सबसे ज़्यादा प्यार करने वाले,
हमारे पापा।

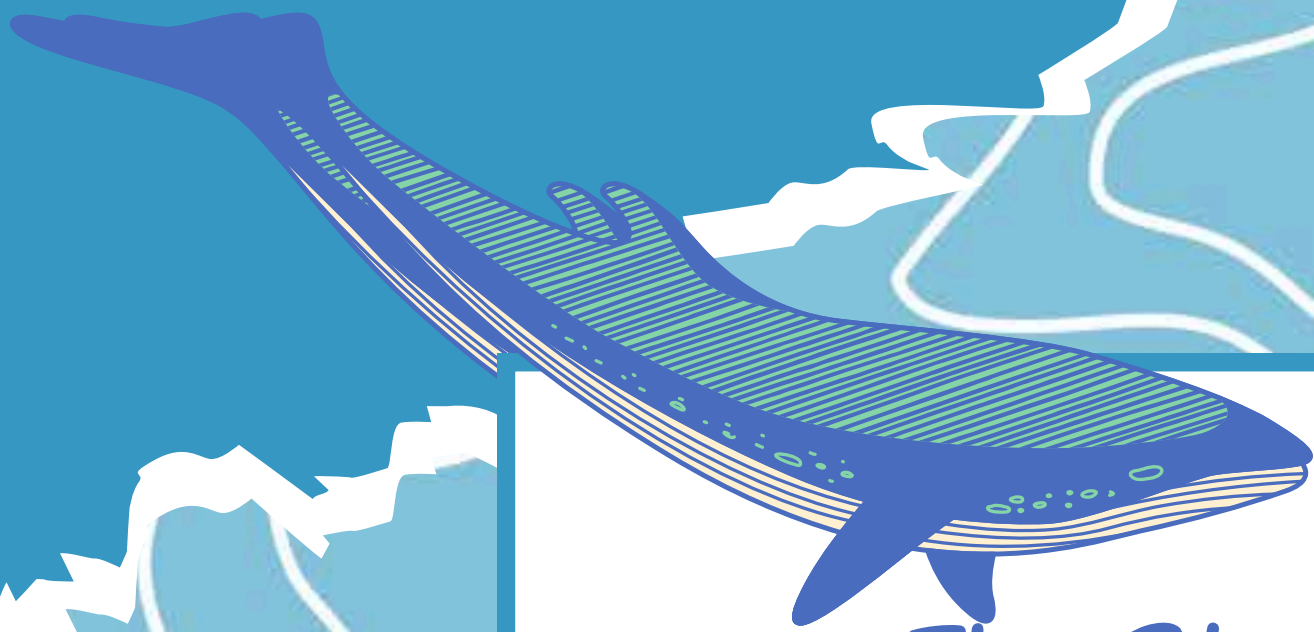
हमें ज़मीन पर प्यारा स्वर्ग दिखाने वाले हमारे पापा।

The Journey of Ganga



Name- Ayaz Ali
Class & Section-
12 A
Name of the
School- Greenway
Modern School-2i





The Blade of Gangotri pierces its own ice,
Having the guilt of cutting its own kind.

Leave the home, filled with dark silt of grief,
The great canyon listened to her roaring weep,
Her pain trembles the standing ancient trees,
Even the wind prays for the pain to ease.





The water calms and realised the meaning of pain,
Here Ganga earns a Mother's Sacred Name,
The dark silt fertilizes the fields of green,
The pain turns into life in the space between.

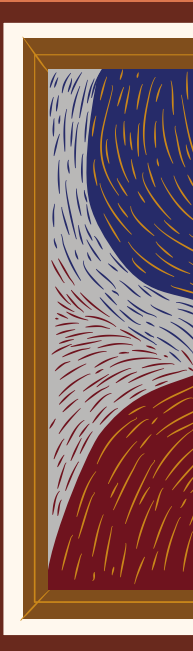
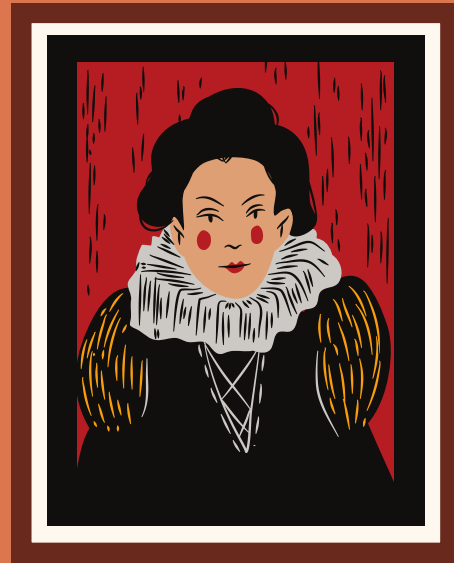
Rising as vapour to the mountain sky,
Moving towards her end to reunite,
She drifts back home where the Glaciers lie.

We must learn to restore our own kind in gentle snow,
The circle turns, and let the sorrow go.



THE MUSEUM OF THINGS THAT NEVER HAPPENED

Name- Tejaswi Goyal
Class & Section- 11th D
Name of the School- Greenway
Modern School-2 Roorkee



" Knock, knock"

It was 4:17 PM when someone knocked on her door.

Again, "knock, knock"

This time, louder.

She walked to the door and opened it. To her surprise, no one was there.

The street was empty too.

No footsteps.

No retreating figure.

No vehicle disappearing around the corner.

Just a small envelope lying perfectly on her doorstep.

She picked it up. Her name was written across it.

There was no stamp.

No sender.

She opened it, inside was a ticket.

At the top, in faded black ink, looking as if it had been waiting for her for ages:



Date: 18 August 2026

Entry: 4:17 PM

Address: 17 Stillwater Lane, Old Quarter

Ticket number: 000006

And beneath it, one line:

Five things to remember!

She frowned. She has never heard of the museum before.

She didn't feel afraid; she felt as if something was waiting for her.

She went there.

There was no sign outside the museum. No name carved into stone. No ticket counter. No guard for asking her to leave her bag at the entrance.

There was only a narrow wooden door at entrance.

She pushed it open. Inside the museum was silent but not an ordinary silent. The museum and the silence seemed to have been waiting for her.

Suddenly, a voice reached her from somewhere, "You're late".

She cast her gaze all around and asked, "late for what?"

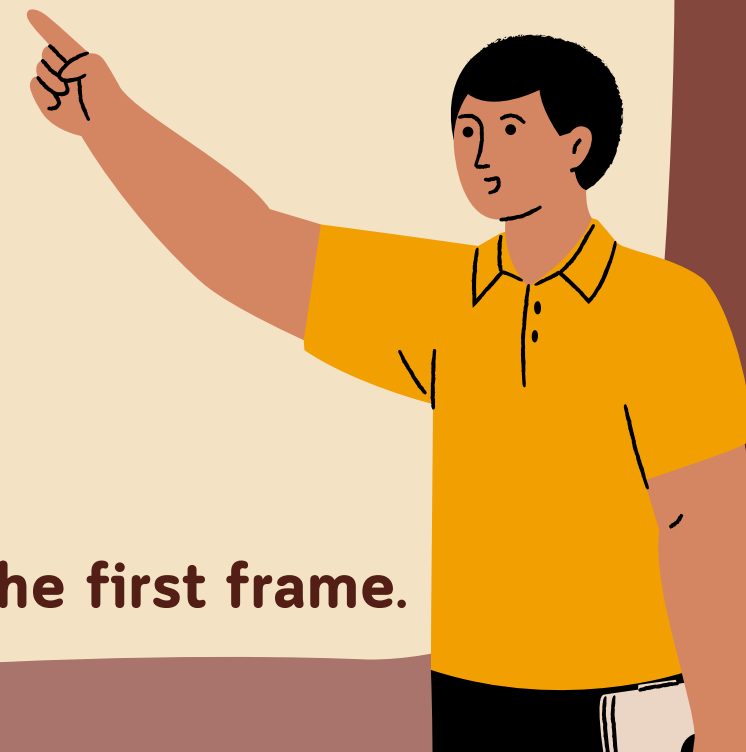
Someone replied, "for the things you never got to have"

She walked inside and found a white card on desk

At the top, in faded ink, were six words:

The Museum of Things That Never Happened

The girl looked up. There were six enormous frames arranged along the walls. She walked towards the first frame.



FRAME ONE - The Friendship That Never Broke

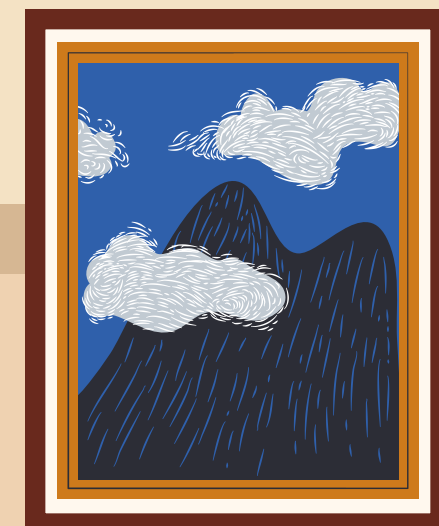
There were two chairs inside the frame. They were facing each other. Between them laid a folded piece of paper.
She knew the chairs.
She knew the silence.
She knew exactly what had happened.

Her best friend had once sat beside her every day. They had shared lunches, secrets, stupid jokes, terrible photographs, highs, lows, and promises that sounded permanent.
Then came one argument. It wasn't even the worst argument they'd ever had. There had been no screaming, no dramatic goodbye. Just two girls who were hurt, both waiting for the other to say something first.
Neither did.

Days became weeks, weeks became months and eventually they became strangers who knew too much about each other.
Strangers who knew about each other's favorite things, worst version of each other, habits and everything. The girl stared at the paper between the chairs. It was an apology.
Two words were written on it, "I'm sorry". She chuckled a little.

All those years she had thought their friendship had ended because of anger.
Now she understood, it had ended because of pride and ego.
Some friendships don't end with slammed doors.
Some simply become quieter until one day you realize there is no sound left at all.

She moved away from the frame.



FRAME TWO - The Man Who Was Supposed to See

Inside it stood an old wooden chair. Beside the chair was a pair of spectacles and behind them was a photograph of her grandfather.

She stopped breathing for a moment.

He was smiling. The smile she remembered from childhood. The kind that made even ordinary afternoons feel important.

The way he used to scold everyone whenever anyone said anything to her- that always stayed in her heart.

She remembered how he used to say that he always wanted to see her as a bride walking down the aisle.

She remembered sitting beside him while he asked the same questions every time.

"How was school?"

"What will you do when you grow up?"

She had imagined telling him everything.

She had imagined one day, walking into a room he is in with a certificate in her hand.

She had imagined him sitting in that same chair, adjusting his spectacles, pretending not to be proud because he was already smiling too much.

She had imagined saying, "Look, I did it".

But some futures are stolen before they arrive.

Her grandfather died before he could see any of them. That was the cruelest thing about death, she thought.

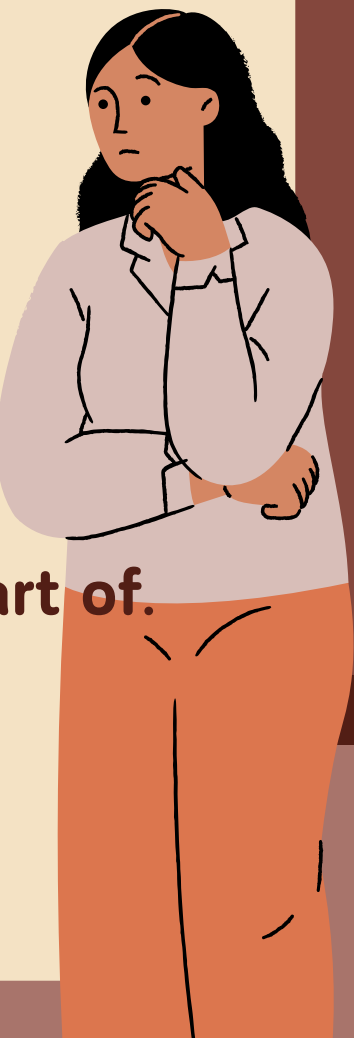
It wasn't only about losing someone's yesterday. It was losing all the tomorrows they were supposed to be a part of.

She touched the glass. For a moment she almost expected him to look up.

He didn't. Of course he didn't.

Photographs and memories never do.

And now he is just a memory



FRAME THREE- The Letters That Never Left

The third frame was filled with envelopes—hundreds of them. Some were old and yellow, some white and new. Some carried names; others carried nothing at all.

She found one addressed to her friend, one to her grandfather, one to her mother, one to the girl she used to be, and one simply marked: To the person I will become.

She opened none. She already knew what they contained: the apology never spoken, the questions never asked, the “I miss you” never sent, the “I am proud of you” she wished someone had said, and the “I was scared” hidden beneath anger.

There are words that never become sentences. They remain inside us, changing shape with time—becoming regrets, silence, and messages we keep rewriting but never send.

Every envelope had a destination. Yet none had ever left the museum.

Perhaps that was the tragedy—not that the words were difficult, but that she had always believed there would be more time.



FRAME FOUR- The Dream That Never Came True

The fourth frame looked almost empty.

There was only a certificate hanging on the wall. Her name was printed on it. Nothing else.

She stared at it for a long time.

Once, she had known exactly who she would become.

She had imagined the career.

Imagined herself becoming something- perhaps a lawyer, scientist, writer, artist, dancer, etc.

The achievements.

The applause. The photograph.

The moment when someone would say, "You made it".

She had built an entire future in her head. Then life happened.

Some dreams became impossible.

Some were frightening.

Some simply stopped feeling like hers.

Standing before the blank certificate, she wondered:

What if a different life wasn't a failed version of the life she had imagined?

What if becoming someone unexpected wasn't losing?

What if the person she was becoming deserve a name too?

For the first time she didn't feel angry at the empty certificate.

She felt curious.



FRAME FIVE- The Girl She Left Behind

The fifth frame contained mirror.
She looked into it and saw herself.
Not now, then.

A young girl stood on the other side.

Her hair was untidy.

Her knees were scratched.

She was laughing at something that no longer seemed funny.

She seemed to be more confident.

She looked fearless.

The girl in the museum stared.

She remembered her.

She remembered how easily she had laughed.

How quickly she trusted.

How many things she wanted.

How she could spend entire afternoon doing absolutely nothing and still believe the day had been worthwhile.

When had she disappeared?

There was no single answer.

She hadn't vanished in one dramatic moment. She had disappeared in pieces.



A little while trying to be perfect.

A little while pretending not to be hurt.

A little while faking a smile.

A little while hiding her real emotions.

A little while being afraid of disappointing people.

A little while comparing herself to everyone around her.

A little while saying "I'm fine" because explaining the truth seemed harder.

**She had spent years searching for the people she had lost but she had never noticed that somewhere along the way,
she had lost herself too.**

The younger girl on the other side of the mirror smiled.

Not sadly, almost knowingly.

The girl raised her hand. The reflection did the same.

For a moment, they stood palm to palm through the glass.

Then the younger girl stepped backwards.

Not disappearing,

just returning to wherever forgotten versions of ourselves go.

The girl finally understood. Growing up didn't mean killing the person she once was.

It meant carrying her forward.



FRAME SIX- Not Yet

The final frame was empty. Completely empty.

No photograph. No chair. No letter. No certificate. Nothing.

She searched for an explanation. There was only a small label beneath it, "Not Yet".

She read it twice, then again.

The museum had shown her everything she had lost.

A friendship. A grandfather. Words. Dreams. A version of herself.

But this frame contained none of these things. Because it was not about the past.

It was about everything that had not happened yet.

The friend she hadn't met. The places she hadn't seen.

The letters she hadn't written. The person she might become.

The dream she hadn't discovered.

The life her grandfather would never see- but perhaps, somehow, still live through everything he had taught her.

She stood before the empty frame for a long time. Then she smiled.

Not because everything was fixed. It wasn't.

Some doors would remain closed. Some people would never return.

Some letters would always remain unsent.

Some dreams would always belong to another version of her. But an empty frame was different.

An empty frame was not an ending, it was space.

Space for something new.



She moved towards the door. The museum seemed smaller now.
At the entrance, she again heard a voice, "Did you find what you were looking for?"
The girl thought about it. "No", she said.
Then she smiled, "I found what I still have to become".
She walked outside. Somewhere inside six frames waited in the darkness-
Five filled with things that had never happened and one patiently waiting for a story that had not happened yet.

After she leaves the museum, she looks back. The museum is gone. There is only an ordinary wall.
She checks the ticket which was given. One more line was there.

At first, it said:

"Five things to remember"

Now beneath it, it says:

"One thing to create."

She folds the ticket and puts it in her pocket.

Then she walks home- not because she has forgotten her grandfather, her broken friendship, her unsent letters or her abandoned dreams but finally she understands that remembering the past and living inside it are two different things.

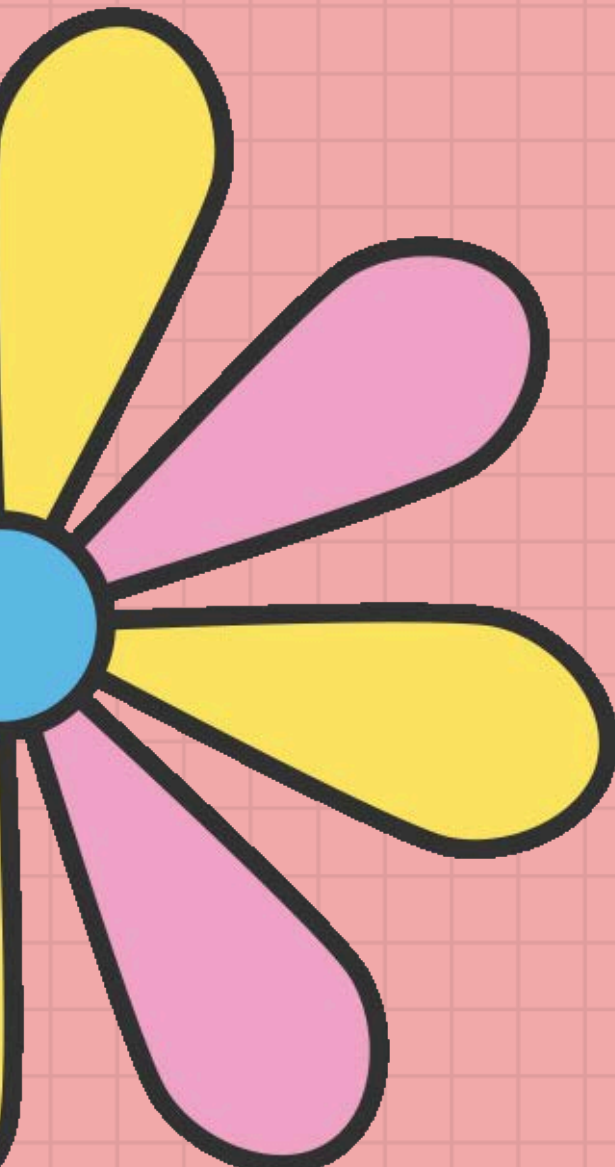
Some things never happen. Some things can never happen again.

And some things are waiting for us to make them happen.

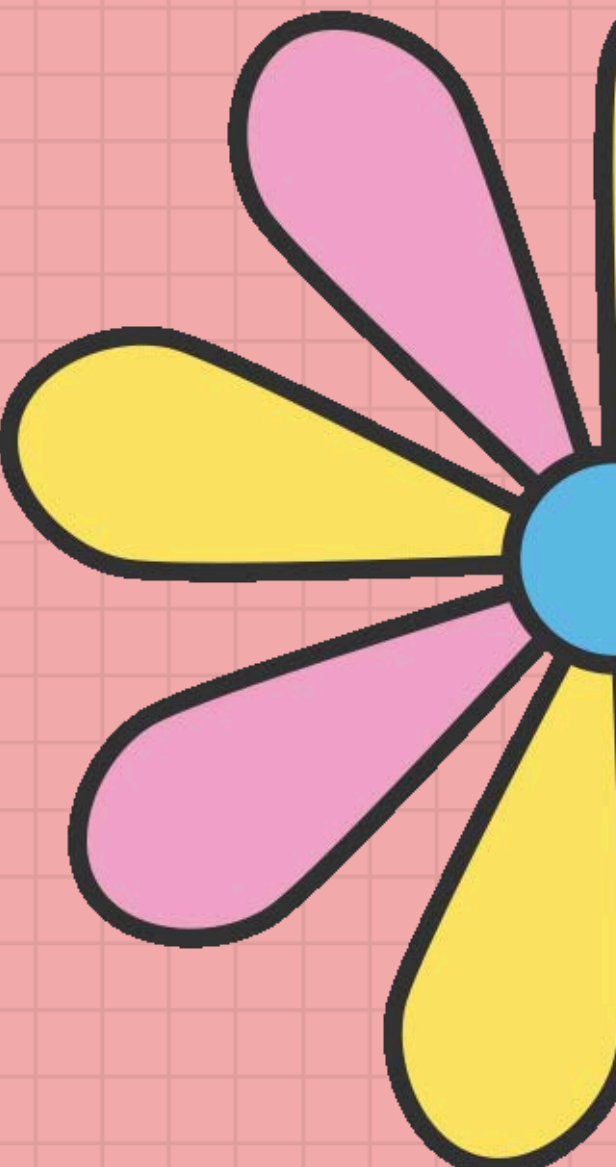
She keeps walking. For the first time, she isn't working towards the past.

She is walking into the frame that has not filled





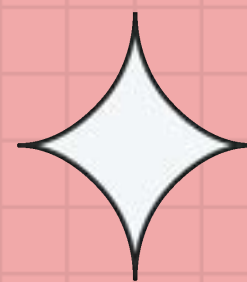
THE GIRL WHO COLLECTED LOST THINGS



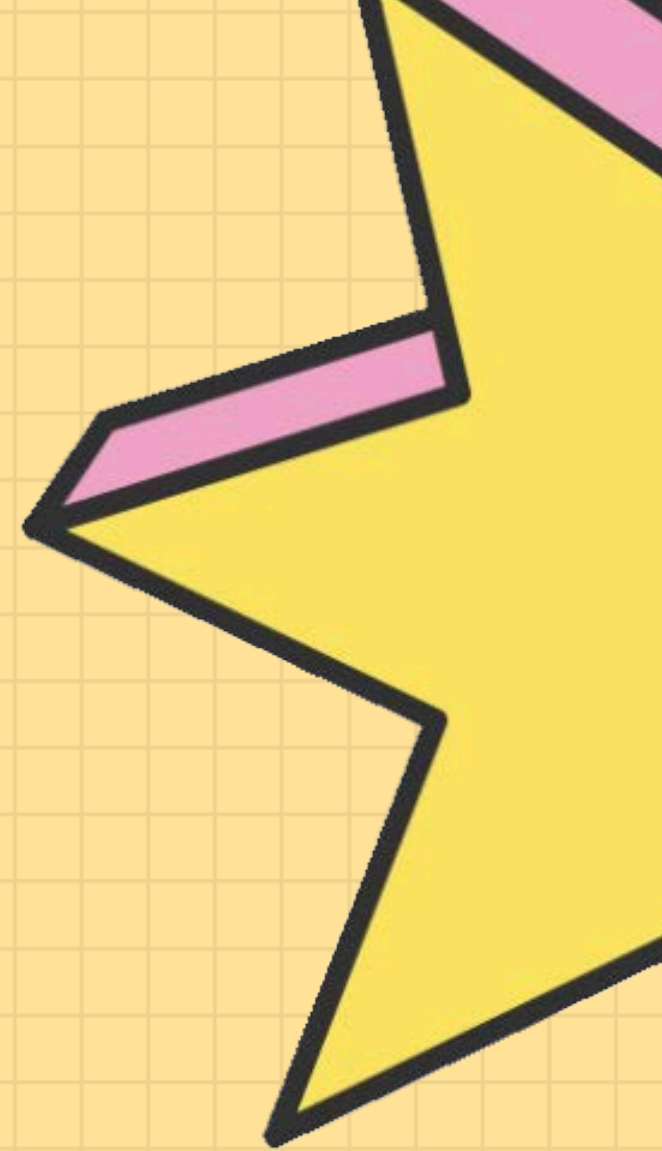
NAME OF THE AUTHOR – SHYLA CHAUHAN

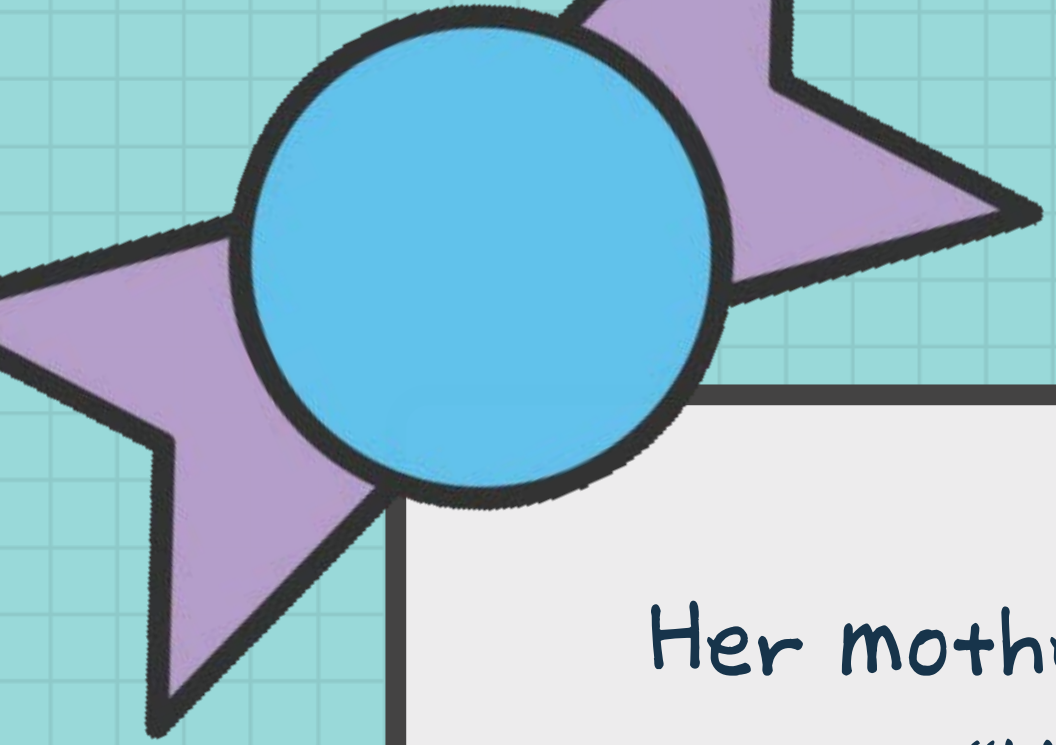
* CATEGORY – STUDENT

* NAME OF THE SCHOOL – GREENWAY MODERN SCHOOL 2

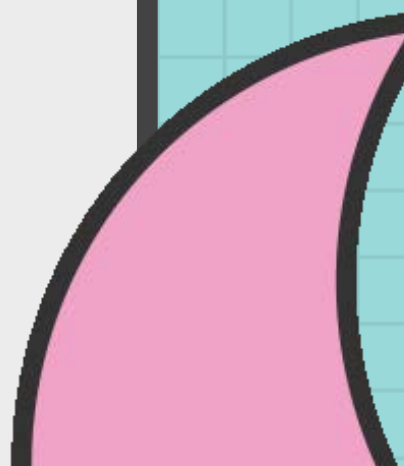


Some things are lost without making a sound. A toy disappears under a bed. A button falls from a favourite shirt. A smile slowly disappears from someone's face. Sometimes, even a dream becomes so quiet that we forget we ever had it. But what if every lost thing had a story? And what if someone cared enough to look for it? There was a girl named Shyla who believed that lost things deserved to be remembered. She was an ordinary girl who loved keeping unusual things in her imperfectly perfect treasure box under her bed. There was nothing expensive in it only things people had lost or thrown away. A single red sock, a broken hair clip, a tiny button, dried leaves, old birthday candles, a marble, a little toy wheel and many other small things.

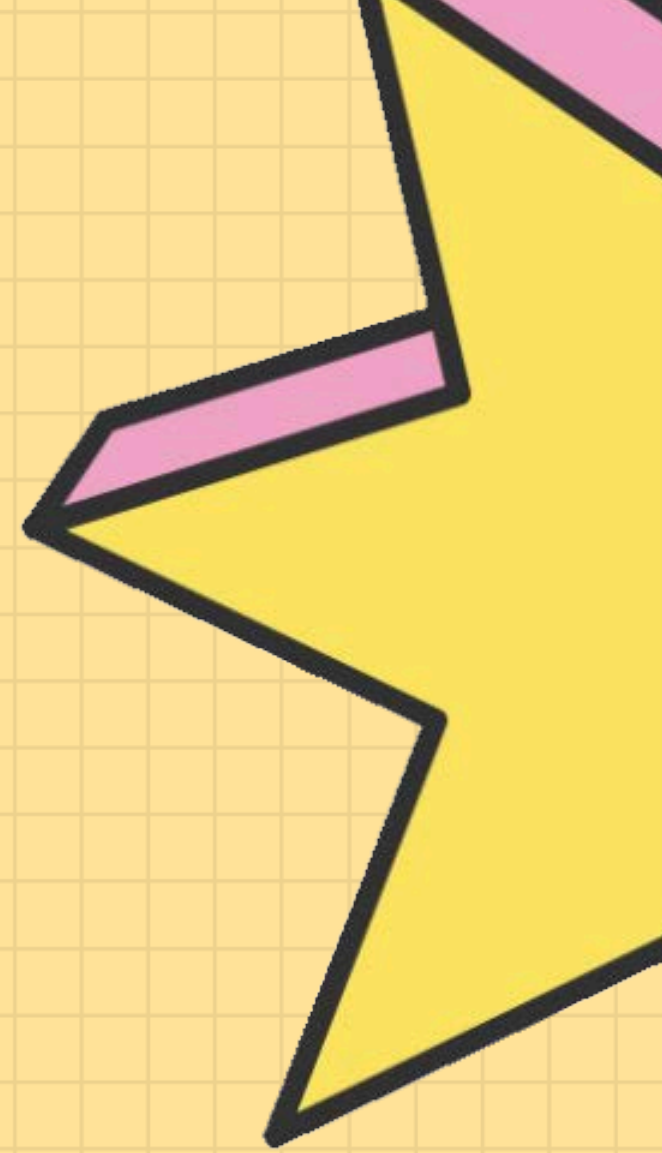




Her mother often laughed when she saw her adding another treasure. "Why do you keep things nobody wants?" Shyla would smile and say, "Because someone must be missing them." She loved the mountains too. To her, mountains were like giant treasure boxes, full of old stories, forgotten paths and secrets no one had discovered. Perhaps that was why she liked her name so much. Shyla meant the beauty of mountains. One evening, while walking home from the park, she noticed a small silver bell lying near a car. There was no string attached to it. No toy. No clue about where it had come from.

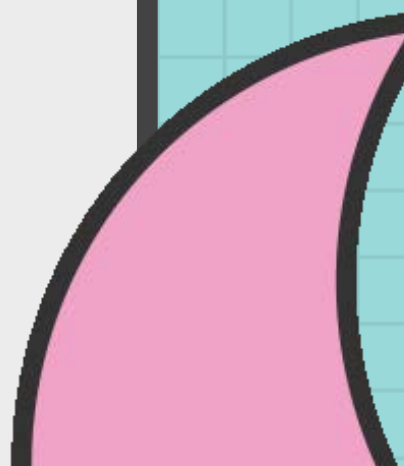


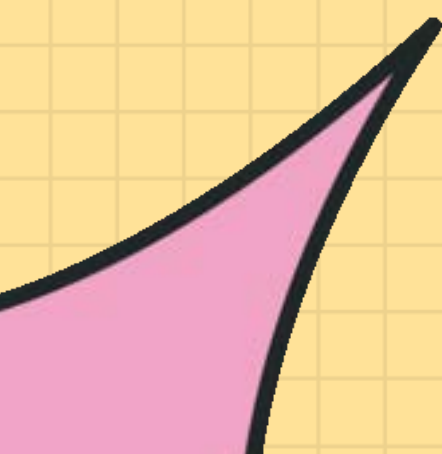
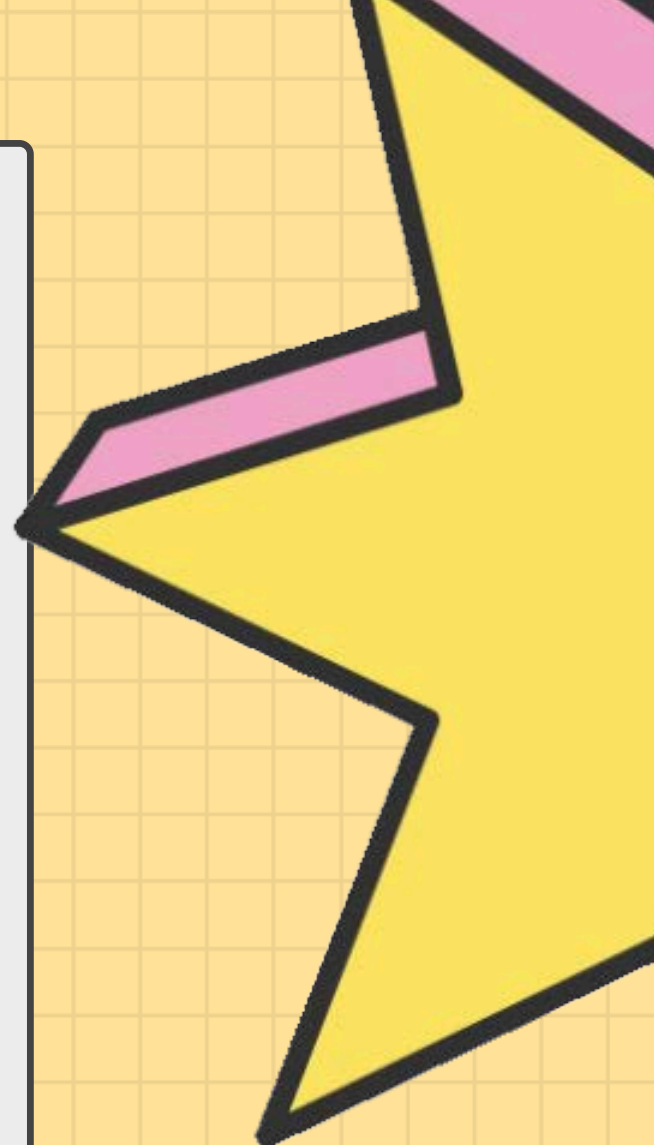
She picked it up. Suddenly, she heard a tiny voice. "I am lost." Shyla stopped walking. She looked around. Nobody was there. She looked at the bell. "Did you just speak?" The bell gave a soft ting. Shyla took it home and placed it carefully inside her treasure box. That night, when everyone was asleep, she heard it again. Ting... ting... She opened her eyes. The little silver bell was glowing. The next morning, Shyla took the bell with her. She wanted to know if it would ring again. On her way to school, she saw a little boy sitting alone in the park. Ting-ting! The bell began to ring. Shyla walked over and asked, "Why are you sitting here alone?" The boy looked down. "I want to play with the other children," he said quietly, "but I'm scared they won't let me." Shyla held out her hand.





“Come. I’ll play with you.” After a little hesitation, he took her hand. Soon, they were playing with the others. The boy began to laugh. And the bell became silent. Shyla stared at it in surprise. Later that day, she saw an old lady sitting alone on a bench, holding an old photograph. Ting-ting! Shyla sat beside her. “Are you okay?” The woman smiled sadly. She began telling Shyla about her younger days and about a song she used to sing with her family. Shyla listened carefully. “Can you sing it for me?” she asked. The old lady laughed. “My voice isn’t what it used to be.” “That’s okay,” Shyla said. “I still want to hear it.”

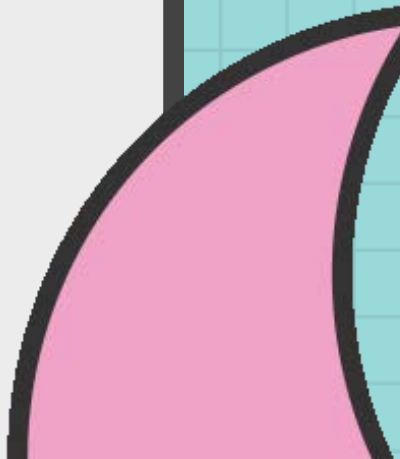




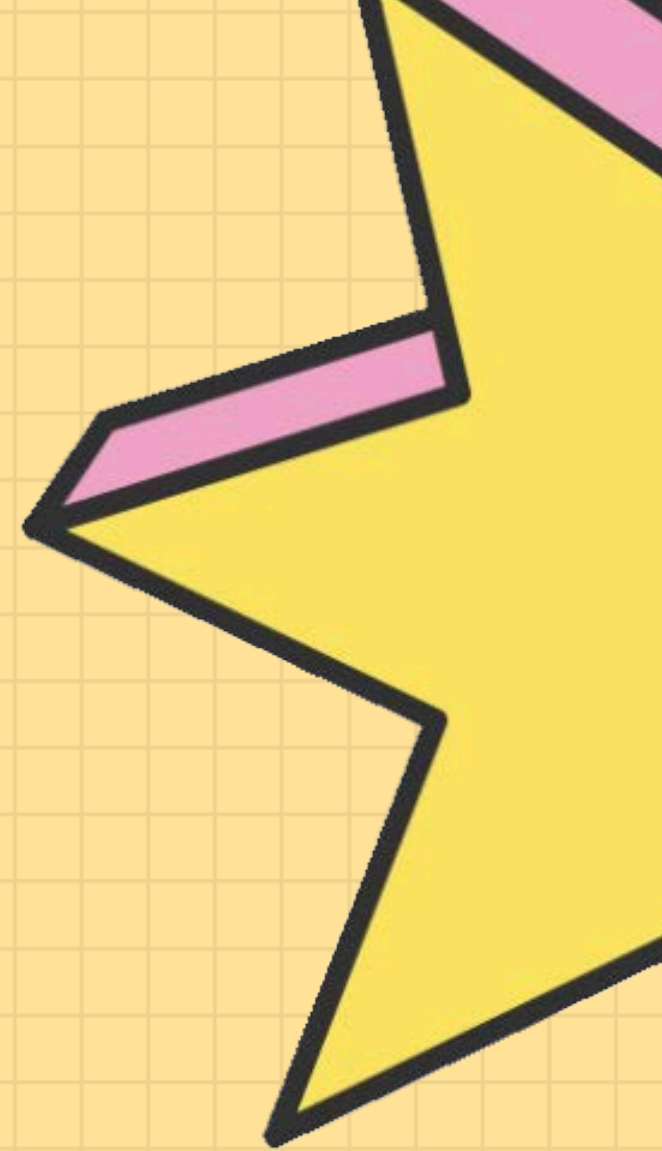
So the old lady began to sing. Her voice was soft and shaky at first. Then she smiled. By the end of the song, she was laughing. The bell became silent again. That night, Shyla lay in bed thinking about the day. "Maybe people lose things that can't be seen," she whispered. A smile. A dream. Courage. Hope. Maybe those things could be found too. From then on, Shyla began noticing people a little more. She helped a friend who had stopped drawing to pick up her pencils again. She played with children who were sitting alone. She listened when someone wanted to talk. And every time someone smiled again, the little bell became quieter. Then one evening, it happened. TING! TING! TING! The bell rang louder than it ever had before.

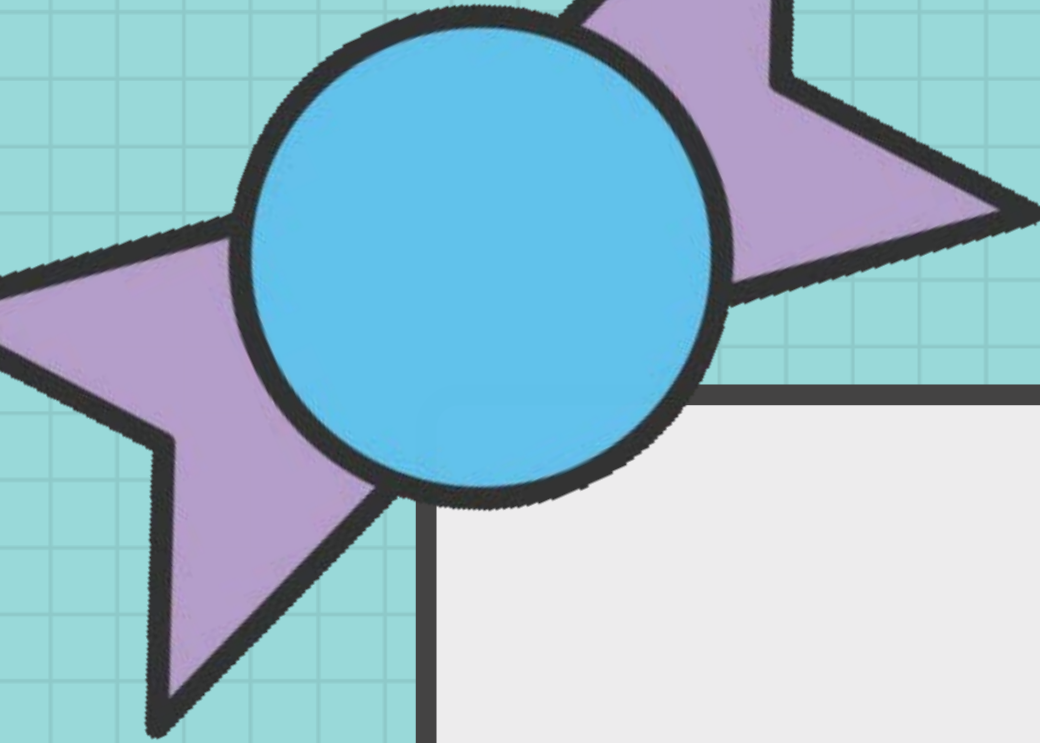


Shyla followed the sound. It led her straight to her bedroom. She looked around. Her toys were there. Her ribbons were there. Her drawings, marbles and favourite pencil were all there. Nothing seemed to be missing. But the bell kept ringing. Shyla sat on her bed. "What have I lost?" And then she remembered. She remembered the girl who used to dance while getting ready for school. The girl who drew silly pictures, laughed loudly, ran outside when it rained and believed that even ordinary days could be magical. She had stopped doing those things. Somewhere along the way, she had decided they were childish. Shyla held the bell tightly. "I think..." she whispered, "I lost the little girl I used to be." The bell became silent. The next morning, Shyla opened her old drawing book. She drew.



She danced while brushing her hair. When it started raining, she ran outside. And when she laughed, she didn't stop herself. She felt like herself again. Before going to bed, she tore a small piece of paper from her notebook and wrote: "Things may get lost, but they can sometimes be found again." She placed it inside her treasure box beside the silver bell. Years passed. Shyla never stopped collecting lost things. But she had learned something important: not everything we lose can be held in our hands. Sometimes we lose our smile. Sometimes our courage. Sometimes our dreams. And sometimes, while growing up, we lose the little child who once found joy in the simplest things. Shyla had found hers again. She understood that growing up did not mean leaving behind everything that made her happy. Many years later, someone found Shyla's old treasure box.

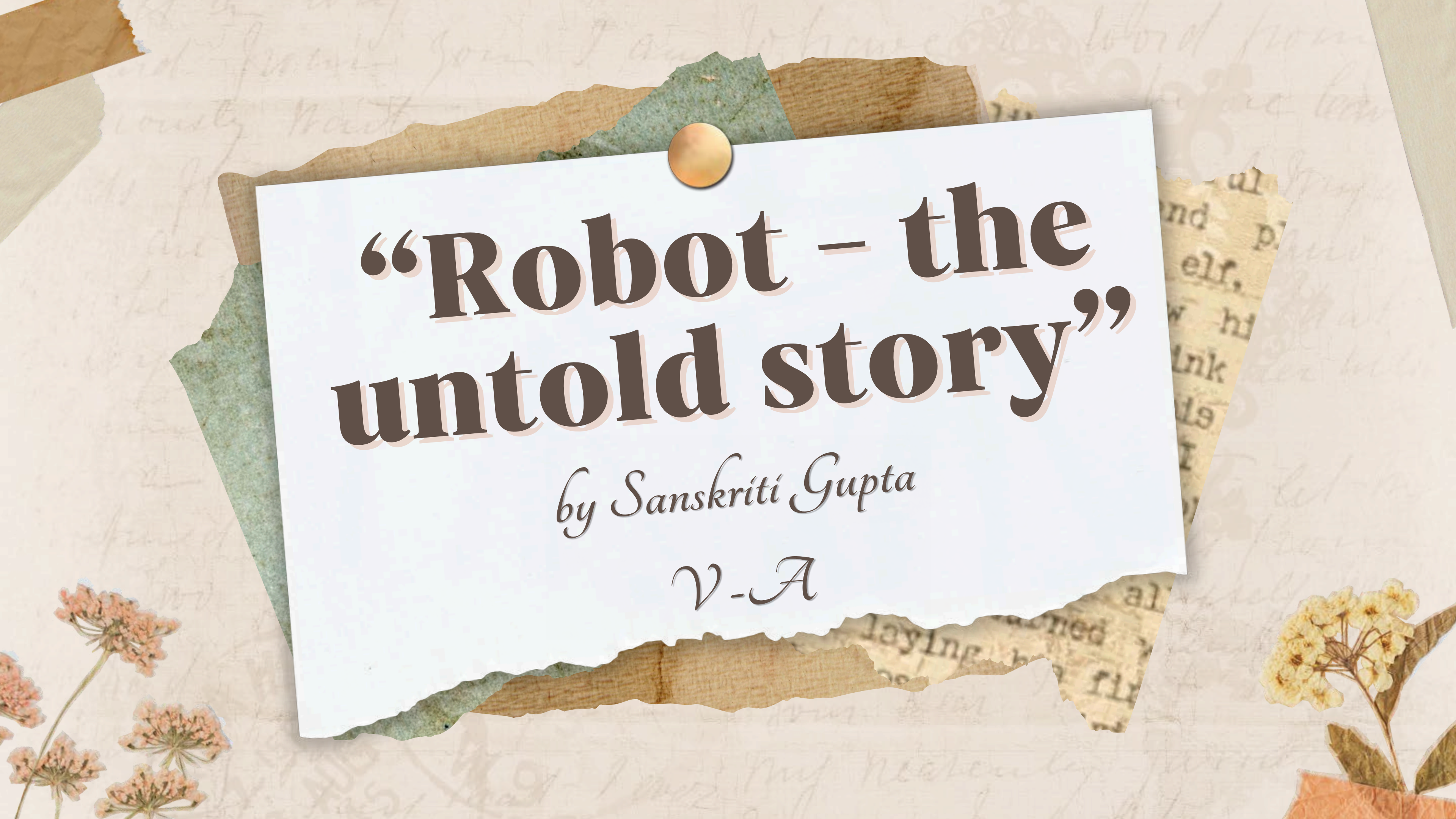




The red sock was still there. The broken hair clip. The dried leaves. And, beside them, the little silver bell. The person picked it up. Ding! Somewhere nearby, someone had just lost something. Maybe a smile. Maybe a dream. Maybe the courage to try again. And perhaps, somewhere in the quiet, Shyla's little bell was ready to help them find it.

Moral: Growing up does not mean losing the child within us. We may lose our joy, courage or dreams along the way, but kindness, hope and a little courage can help us find them again.





“Robot – the untold story”

by Sanskriti Gupta

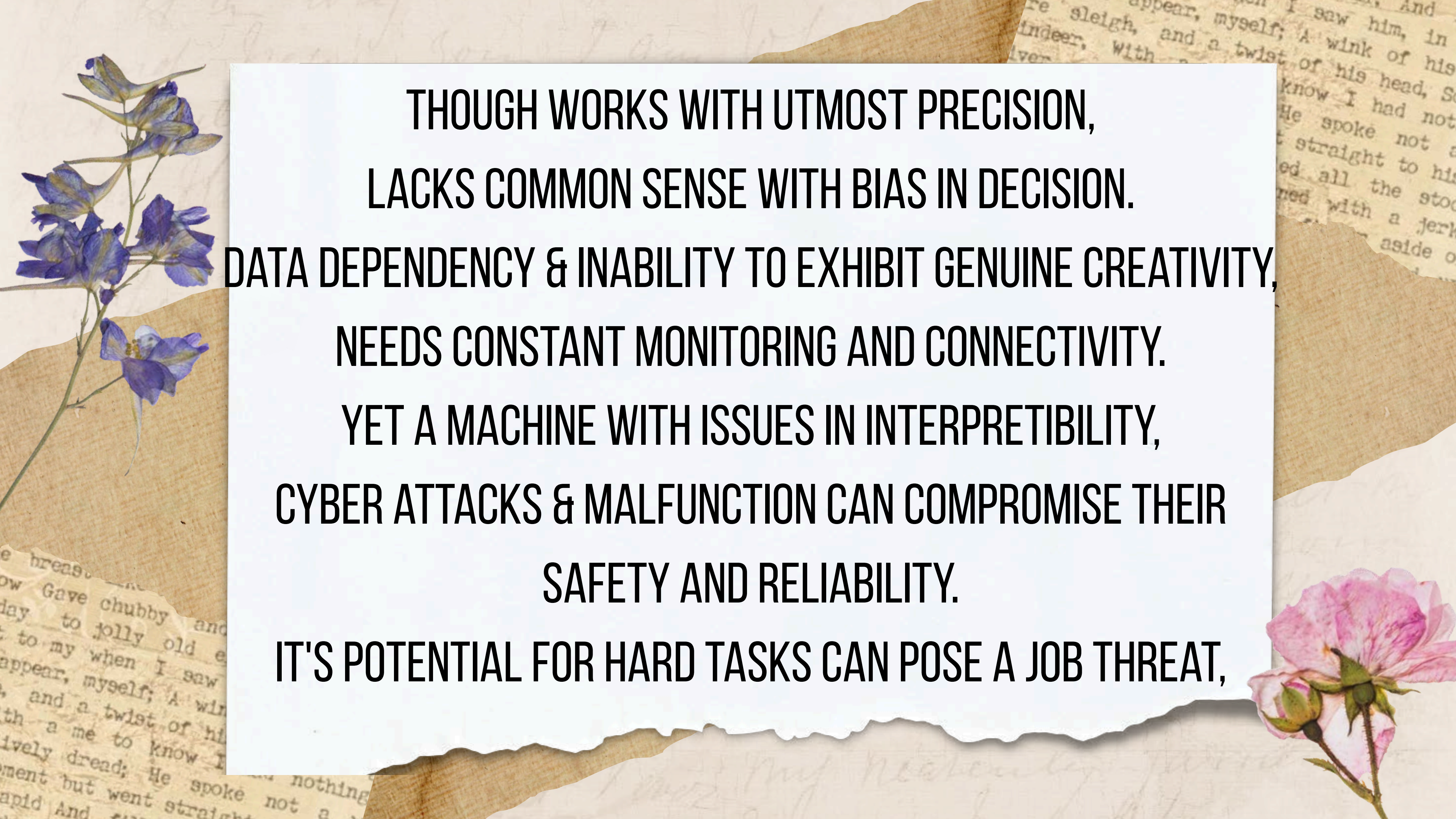
V-A

**METALLIC BODY WITH WIRES TIGHT,
AN INVENTION THAT MOVES WITH MECHANICAL SIGHT.
A TECHNOLOGICAL WONDER IN THIS MODERN LAND,
ROBOT - SERVING HUMANS WITH HELPING HAND.
WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SO FINE,
IT LEARNS AND ADAPTS TO EVERY DESIGN.
IT CAN CLEAN, COOK AND DO THE CHORES,**



**A METAL FRIEND AT YOUR DOORS.
DOING WONDERS IN MEDICAL FIELD,
DA VINCI ROBOT OPERATING WITH GOOD SURGICAL YIELD.
FACTORY, HOTELS OR HOSPITALS- EVERYWHERE IT'S SOLD,
A MACHINE, YET A STORY TO UNFOLD.
THOUGH AN ASSET, NOT FREE FROM LIMITATIONS,
LACKS HUMAN TOUCH AND EMOTIONAL QUOTIENT**





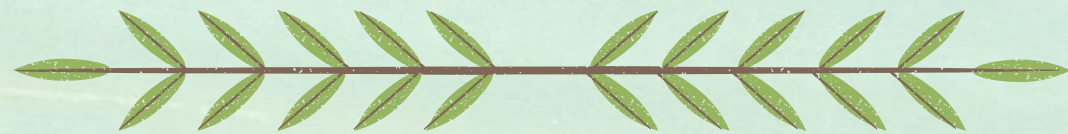
**THOUGH WORKS WITH UTMOST PRECISION,
LACKS COMMON SENSE WITH BIAS IN DECISION.
DATA DEPENDENCY & INABILITY TO EXHIBIT GENUINE CREATIVITY,
NEEDS CONSTANT MONITORING AND CONNECTIVITY.
YET A MACHINE WITH ISSUES IN INTERPRETIBILITY,
CYBER ATTACKS & MALFUNCTION CAN COMPROMISE THEIR
SAFETY AND RELIABILITY.
IT'S POTENTIAL FOR HARD TASKS CAN POSE A JOB THREAT,**



SO HUMANS BEWARE AND DON'T REGRET.
THOUGH SUPERSEDING HUMAN BRAINS,
IT ACTUALLY CAN'T FEEL YOUR PAIN.
THOUGH INVENTED WITH EFFORT SO STRENUOUS,
THE THREAT TO MANKIND CAN BE POTENTIALLY
DANGEROUS.

BEEP BOOP- ROBOT IS ON MOVE,
HUMANS BEWARE AND DON'T MISUSE.

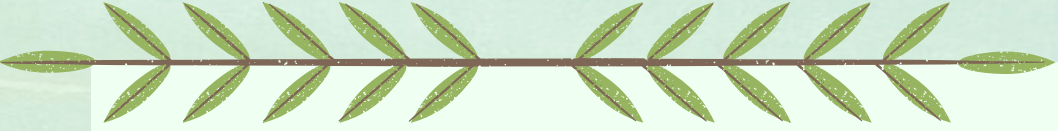




If

By Anshuman Yadav

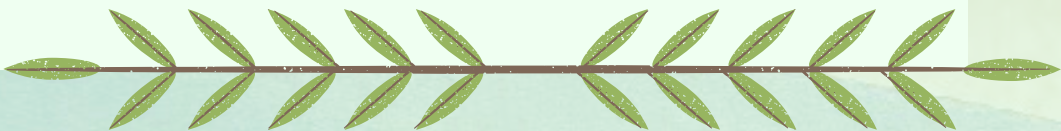


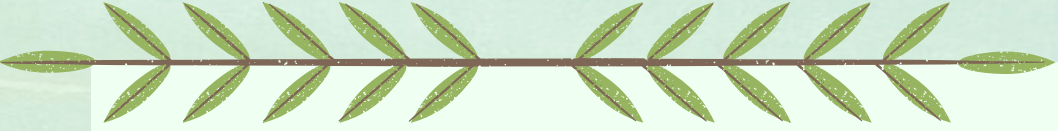


If I could be the evening tide,
I would come without a sound,
lay my sorrow on the shore,
and leave no trace upon the ground.



If I could be the empty beach
after all the footsteps fade,
I would keep the weight of loss
like shells the turning waves have laid.

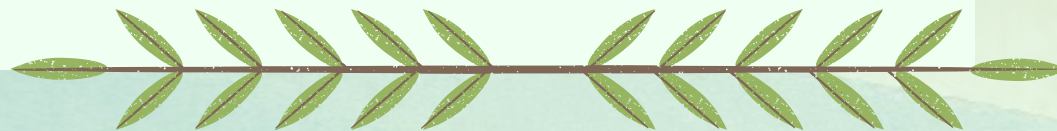


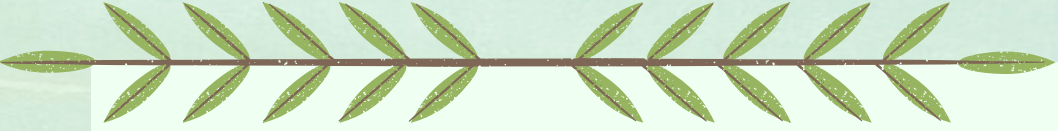


If I could be the house in woods,
small and hidden by the trees,
I would learn the language of the pines
and rest beneath the breeze.



If I could be the paper wall
where moonlight falls so thin and white,
I would hold my broken silence
like a lantern in the night.

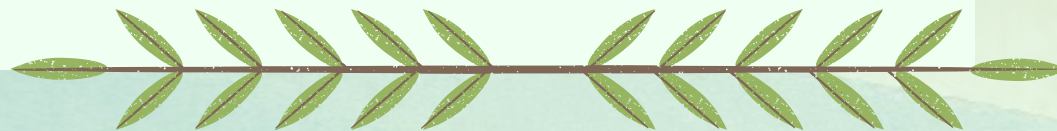


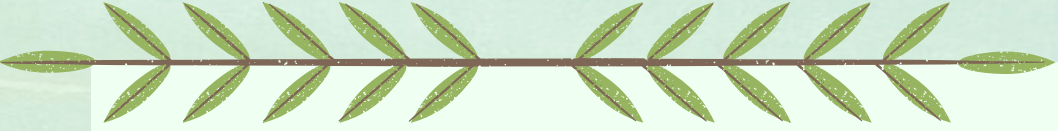


For there are days when grief is soft,
and still it cuts more deep than rain;
it does not shout or break the sky,
it simply stays, and stays again.



and I remain the quiet after the storm
it waits in cups left cold at dawn,
it walks with me through crowded rooms
and makes the bright world feel
withdrawn.

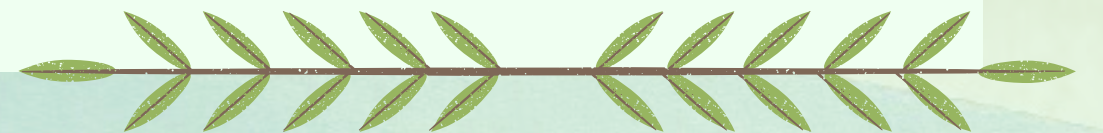


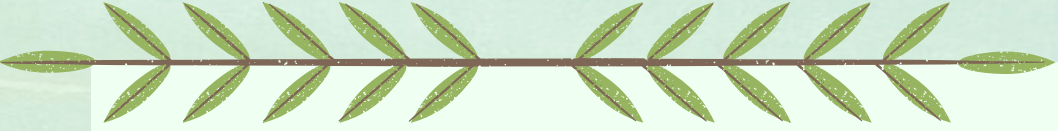


And yet the sea keeps touching sand,
and yet the trees remain upright,
and yet the house in forest shade
still keeps a little warmth of light.



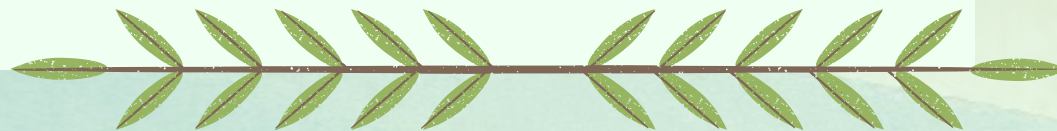
So if my heart is heavy now,
let it be heavy, let it be;
even a sorrowed soul can learn
the peace of standing quietly.

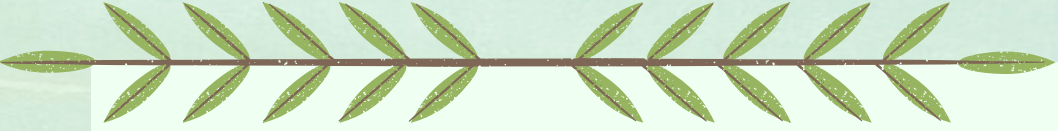




I am not made of endless strength,
nor polished hope, nor fearless fire—
and I am the silence that follows rain
the ache that time cannot retire.

And if I seem to disappear
into the dusk, the wood, the foam,
it is because I love the places
that look most like a resting home.

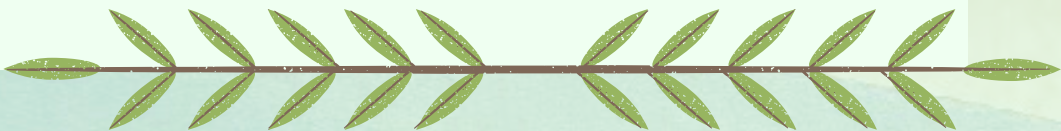




So let me be the fading sky,
the lonely shore, the forest room;
let me be sad in a way that shines,
a small light blooming out of gloom.



For if I cannot mend the heart,
I can still let it softly be—
like tide on sand, like rain on pine,
like moonlight learning how to grieve.



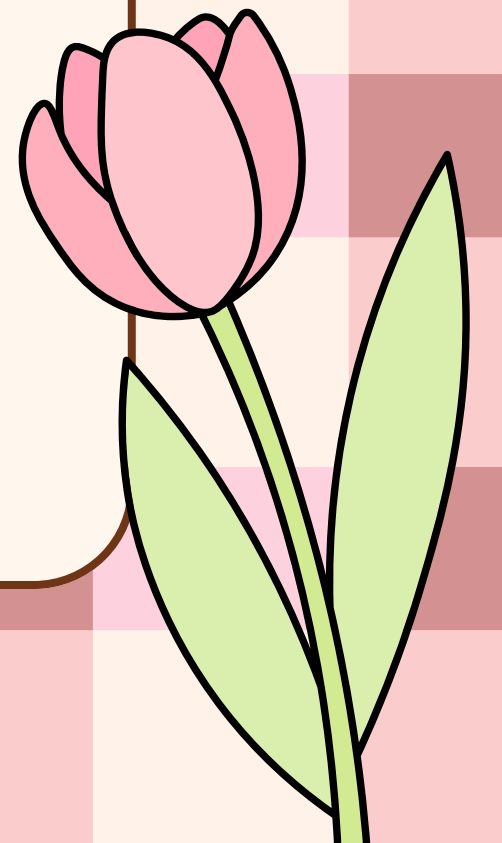
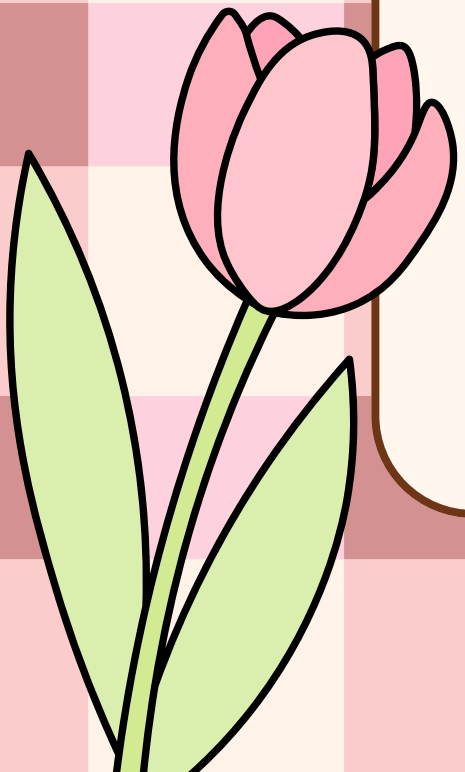
"Mother- the epitome of love"

by Sanskriti Gupta

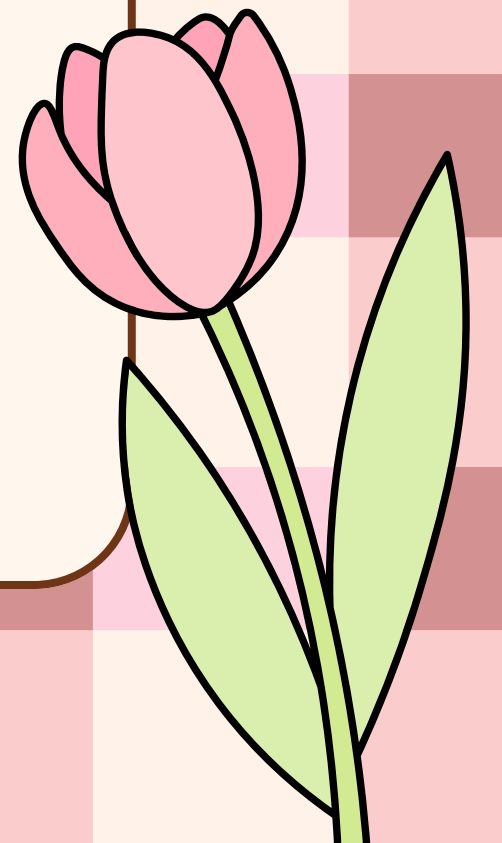
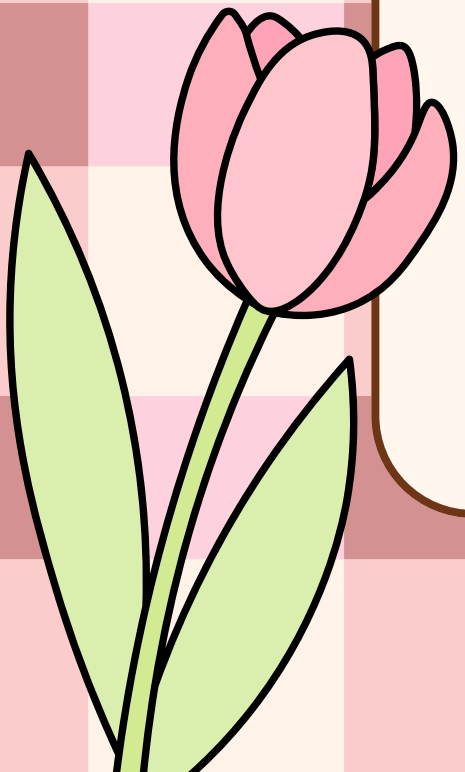
V A



**Mother's love knows no bounds;
She makes me feel safe & sound.
She protects me against all odds;
Her place for me is next to God.
She is my shadow, I say aloud;
A silver lining in all dark cloud.**

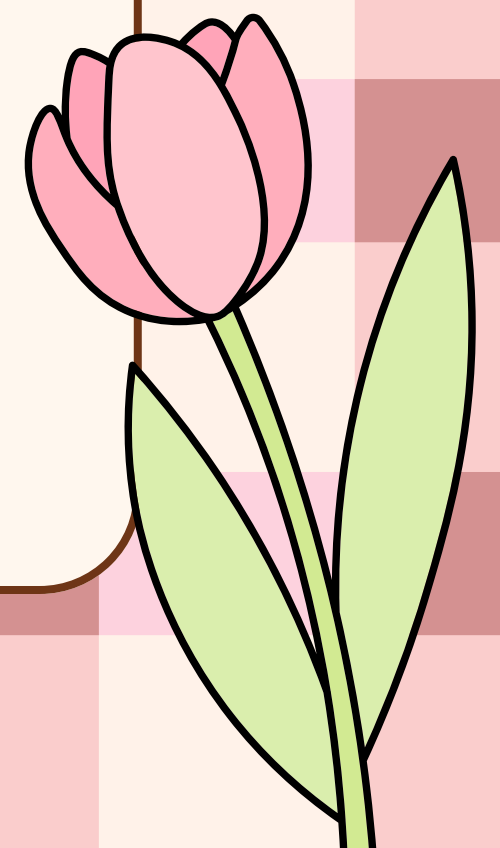
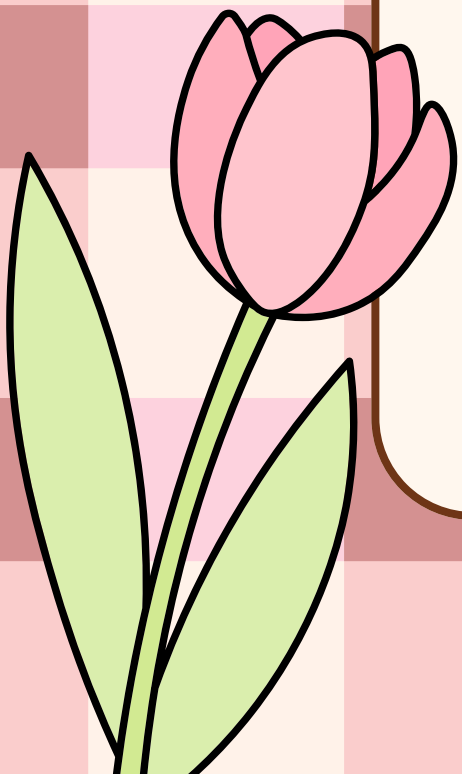


**She is my hero, my first teacher;
My role model and my preacher.
I look up to her for all that I need;
A gem of a person, a friend indeed.
She helps me grow brave and kind;
A godly person hard to find.**



**I am her heart and she is my breath;
Will always respect her, the oath I take.
She wipes my tears and make me strong.
Fights my fear and makes sure, I never
go wrong.**

**To make her proud is all that I vow;
She is so amazing just like a wow!**



THE RACE WE DON'T

NEED TO WIN

*MRIDUL SAHNI
STUDENT
GREENWAY MODERN SCHOOL 2*



Every morning when students reach their school, they enter into a race. There is no whistle, no running track and no finish line, yet most of us are running. We run for marks, rank, medals, certificates and appreciation.

Sometimes, we are not even aware that we are running.

As students, we are constantly compared with one another. Who got the highest marks? Who came first in the class? Who won the competition? Who answered the teacher's question first? These questions are asked and we might not think much about it, but after hearing these repeatedly, we start to believe that being better than others is what it's all about.

I am also a student, and I know how it feels to want to be the best. I like to study, and I feel proud when my efforts get rewarded. Sometimes competition does motivate us to work hard, but I have also realized that there is a big difference between working hard to achieve our best and working hard to beat the others.

The former is healthy, whereas the latter can lead us to forget our own goals.

Let me take an example. Suppose there are two students, A and B. A studies for the exam because he wants to understand the concepts, whereas B studies for the same exam because he wants to score more than A. Both students get good marks, but they have different mindsets.

A is competing with himself,

whereas

B is competing with others.

I think that the former is the one winning the real race.

We often compare our lives with others. If someone else scores more than us, we feel sad. If someone wins a competition, we wonder why we didn't win it. If someone else is better at something than us, we feel that we are not good enough. But is this right? Are we forgetting that everyone has his own strengths and weaknesses?

Some people are better at studies, whereas some are better at art or sports. Some people may not be able to talk to a crowd, but they are amazing at supporting others. We cannot measure everyone on the same scale.

We have to realize that marks are not the only thing that decide who is better.

There is another thing which concerns me about this race, and that is that sometimes we forget to enjoy the ride. We study for the next exam, but we don't celebrate our success for the previous one. We participate in one competition, and before we realize it, we are preparing for the next one. We achieve something, but we are already worrying about what else we need to achieve. It is as if we are running on a race track, and as soon as we reach one flag, we see ten more flags in front of us.

I am also a student, and I know how it feels to want to be the best. I like to study, and I feel proud when my efforts get rewarded. Sometimes competition does motivate us to work hard, but I have also realized that there is a big difference between working hard to achieve our best and working hard to beat the others.

I agree that we should have goals, and that we should work hard to achieve them. I want to achieve my goals too, and I want to learn new things, master new skills and do things that make me proud. But I do not want my life to be a race where I look around to see if I am ahead or behind.

I want to look behind me and see if I am better than I was yesterday.

Maybe I did not understand something yesterday, but I do today. Maybe I was shy yesterday, but I was confident today. Maybe I did something wrong yesterday, but I did something right today. These are the things which make me feel that I have moved forward, and these are the things which I think should be our goals.

We should also learn to be happy for other people's successes. Someone else's success does not make our own success any less. If my friend scores higher marks than me, it does not mean that my efforts were useless. I can congratulate my friend, learn from his example, and work towards my own goals.

There is enough room for everyone to achieve his own goals.

Life is not a race where only one person can win. Sometimes we are so caught up in trying to be first that we forget to look around and see what's happening in our lives. We forget our friends, our family, our hobbies, the things which bring us joy and make us feel good about ourselves. We forget that life is not just about achieving good grades and being the best in everything. It is also about learning to work together, to accept failure, to help others, and to make our own mark in this world.

Perhaps the finish line is not as important as the journey that we take.

Perhaps, it is not about being the best, but about being better than we used to be.

I still want to work hard, and I still want to achieve my goals, but I do not want to spend my life trying to prove that I am better than the rest.

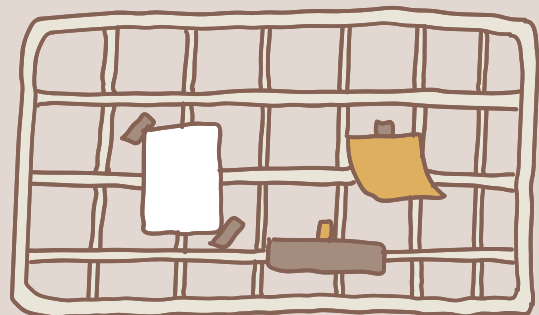
There will always be someone who is faster, smarter, stronger, and more talented than me, and that's okay.

After all, I have my own race to run.

After all, I have my own race to run.

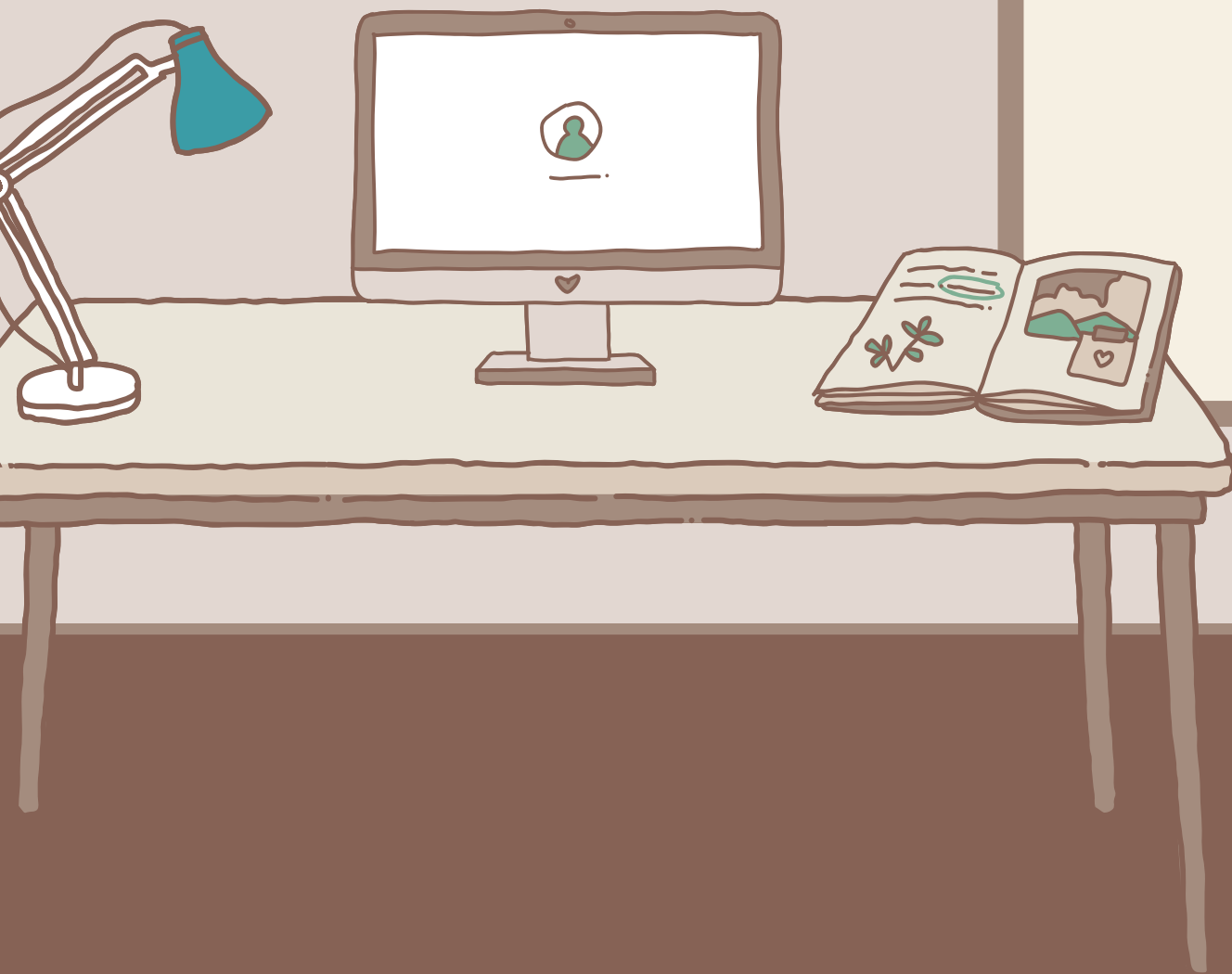
If I can learn something new, help someone, overcome my fears, make mistakes, correct them and become a better person than before, then I have already won.

Maybe life was never meant to be a race that we have to win. Maybe it was meant to be a journey where we learn and grow, make mistakes and help one another, and enjoy the ride along the way. So, I will continue to run my race, and I will continue to strive to be the best I can be, not because I want to be better than others, but because I want to see how far I can go.



WHEN DID WE GROW UP?

Shagun garg





I am Shagun Garg, a Class 12 student who finds comfort in putting thoughts and emotions into words. I enjoy writing about the little things in life that often go unnoticed but stay with us forever. Writing gives me a way to express feelings that are sometimes difficult to say aloud and I hope my words can capture the memories, emotions, and people that have made these years so special.



Tenth grade was a chapter so bright,
Where every morning felt perfectly right.
No burden too heavy, no dream too small,
With my people next to me, I won it all.

We laughed till our stomachs could laugh no more,
Turning classroom into something you could adore.
Every lunch, every joke, every shared glance,
It felt like life itself had asked us to dance.



We were more than friends, family in disguise,
Reading each other's silence without asking why.

If one of us stumbled, the rest would stand,
Ready to give out everything with a single hand.

They'd have fought for me, I'd have done the same,
Not for glory, not for pride, not for fame.

Just because we made promises so true,
"I'll always be there" was something we knew.



We collected memories instead of time,
Every little moment became sublime.
Photos may fade and conversations end,
But those days were forever, or so did we pretend?

Cause then came eleventh, quiet as the rain,
Carrying a curse none of us could explain.
No fights worth remembering, no final goodbye,
Just the distance growing in our eyes.



Slowly with time, the laughter lost its sound,
The circle that once held us slowly unwound.
Separate paths, different goals, but same sky,
Leaving unanswered questions covered with lies.

Now the benches remember more than I do,
Echoing the names of friends that I once knew.
The place remains, but my people are gone,
And somehow life just keeps moving on.



I don't miss school because of books or class,
I miss the moments that vanished too fast.
I miss the chaos, the smiles, the spree,
The version of us we used to be.

Maybe growing up was never the curse,
Maybe life just taught us that change comes first.
But if I could relive a single day again,
I'd choose those days, my home back then.





Because some friendships aren't measured by how they end,
But how they'll forever make you bend.
And though today we're strangers walking on separate roads,
A part of me still carries that little beautiful load.

Maybe growing up was never the curse,
Maybe life just taught us that change comes first.
But if I could relive a single day again,
I'd choose those days, my home back then.



The Boy With a Pure Humble Heart



Student Name: Tatsav Gupta

Class & Section: IV-H

Contact Number: 9873148430

Email Address:

chauhan.akansha44@gmail.com



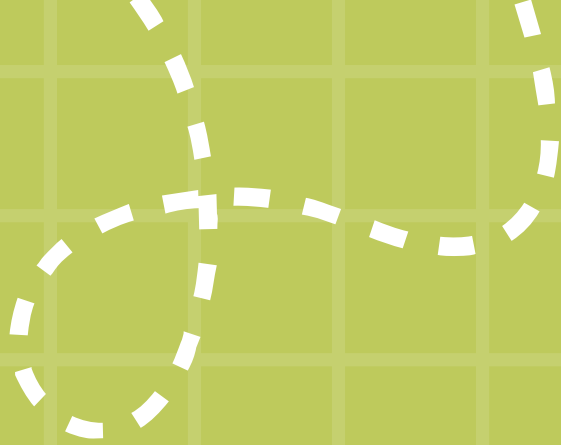
Once upon a time, there lived a little boy named Chini. He loved to play and study in his free time as he was an extraordinary little boy. One sunny day, while returning from school, he spotted a dog across the street.

When he came closer, the dog started barking loudly even though it was weak, fragile and very tired from all those days of searching for food.

When it was fast asleep, Chini locked it into a cage and brought it home. A few hours later the dog woke up. What a miracle! From being on the streets to even having its own room! Soon after the boy's mother took it to the doctor and found out that it was sick.

Oh no! The boy gasped. They took great care of it. After a few days it was fully healed and unexpectedly active. The dog had started to trust the boy. They went to many places but one day the dog went missing.

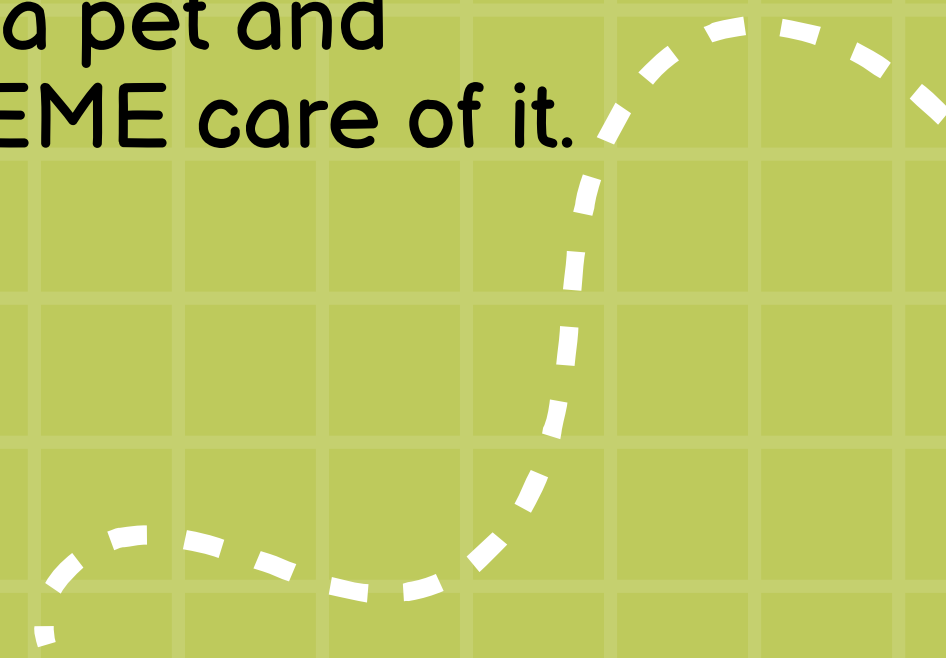




Oh My God! The boy was super panicked! His mother, meanwhile, was extremely calm. He thought his mother did not care at all. So, the boy packed his belongings in a suitcase and left to find his beloved dog.

Days turned into weeks, weeks turned into months, months turned into years, years turned into a literal DECADE! A literal DECADE, but not a trace of the dog. Finally, while fishing, he heard a bark. It was THE DOG! He was so happy that he almost fainted.

It was very, very, very old! The boy felt sorry for it and brought it back home. But just one year later, the dog died... and since that day, he never bought a pet and promised to God that if he ever bought a pet, he would take EXTREME care of it.

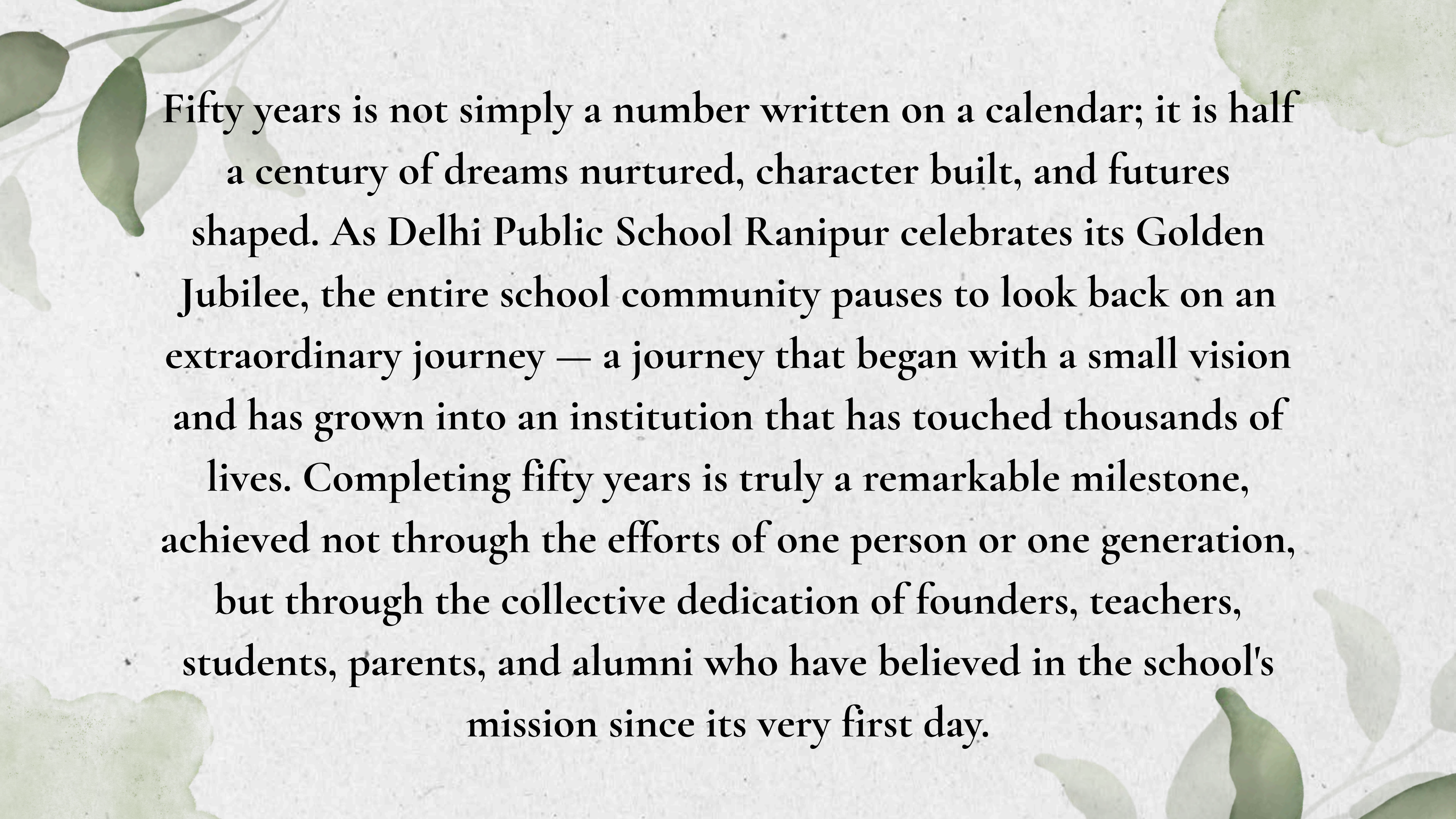


The Golden Journey of DPS Ranipur

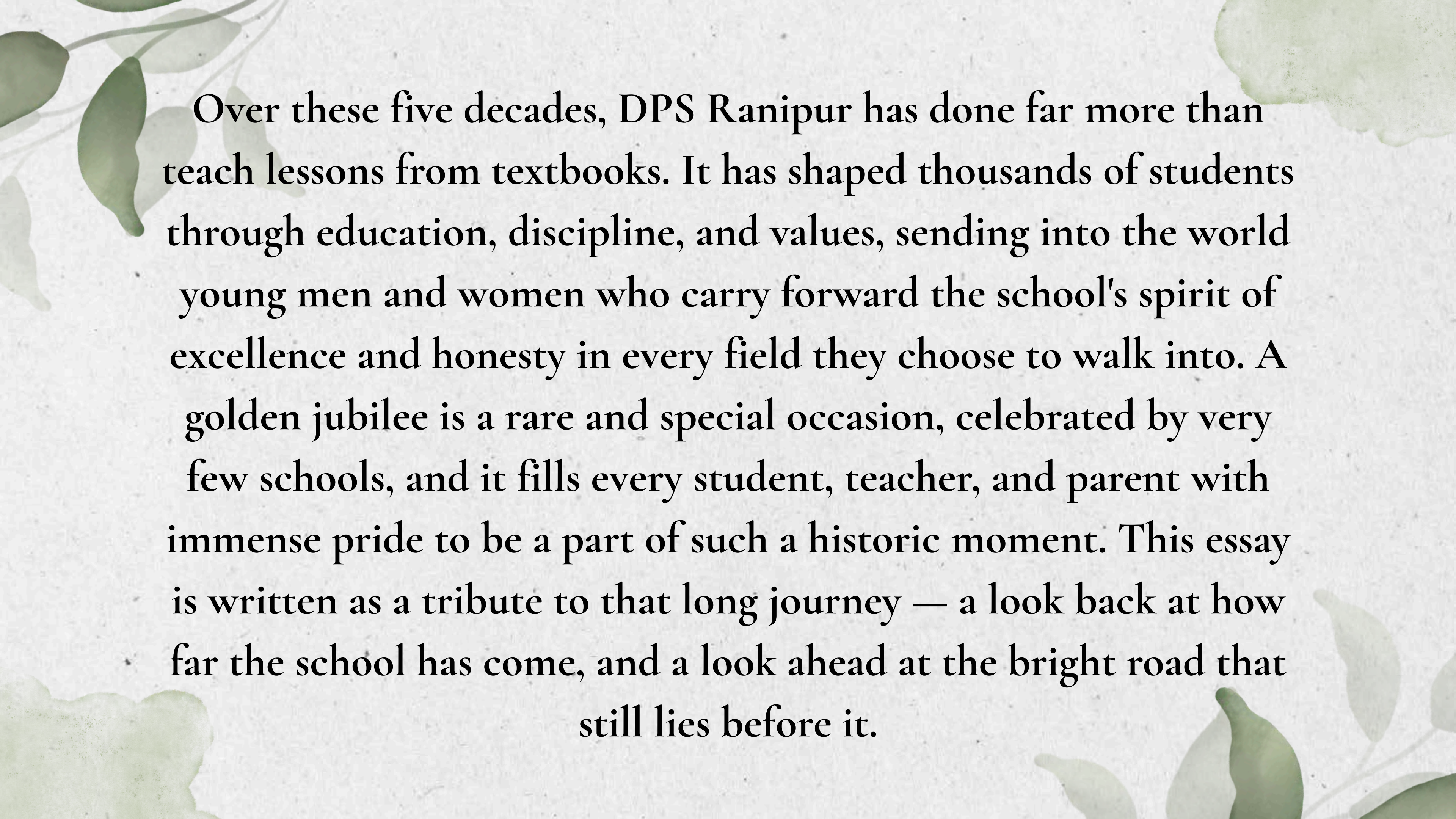
Inspiring Future Generations



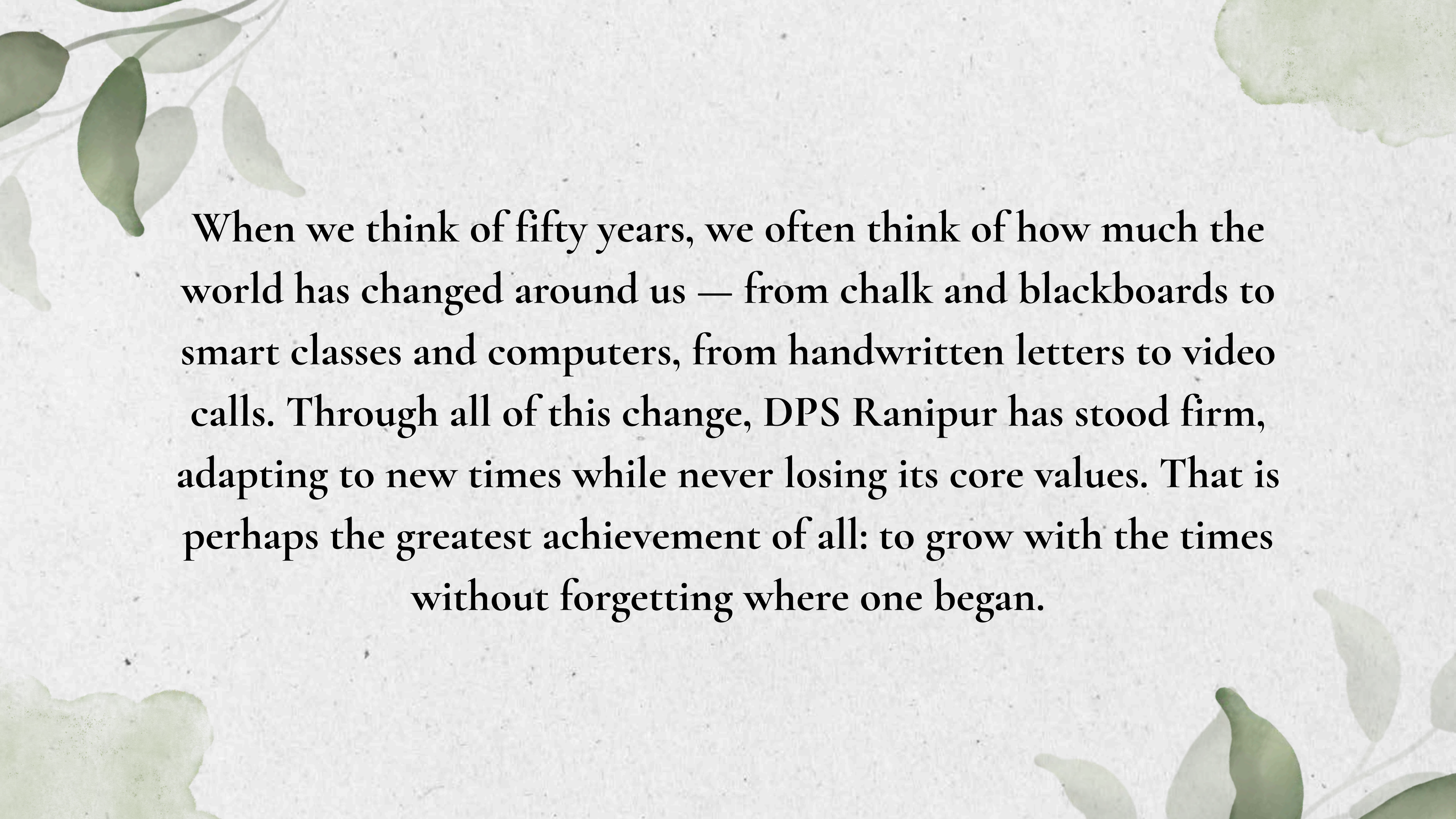
by:- MEGHNA
5th-J



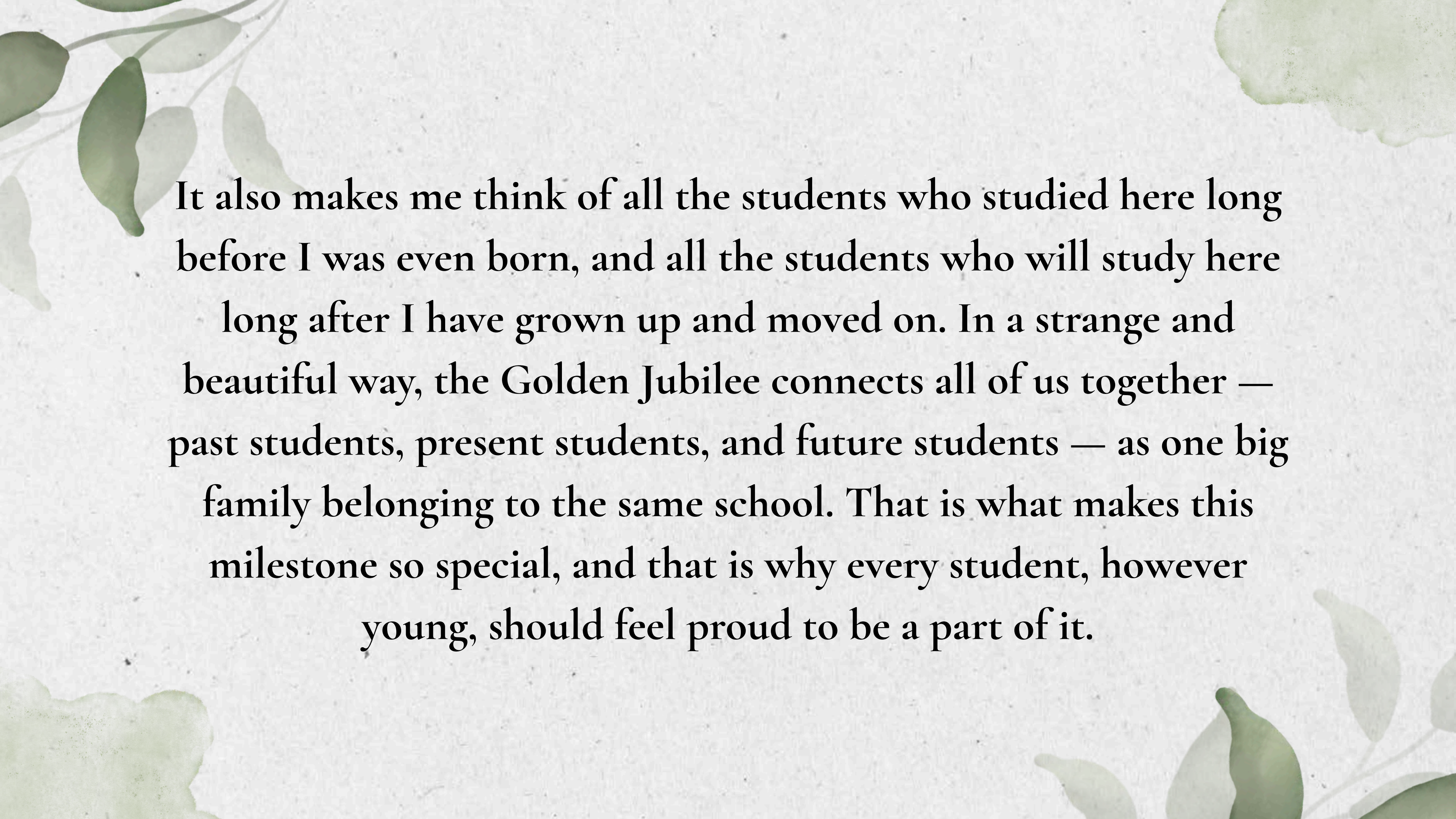
Fifty years is not simply a number written on a calendar; it is half a century of dreams nurtured, character built, and futures shaped. As Delhi Public School Ranipur celebrates its Golden Jubilee, the entire school community pauses to look back on an extraordinary journey — a journey that began with a small vision and has grown into an institution that has touched thousands of lives. Completing fifty years is truly a remarkable milestone, achieved not through the efforts of one person or one generation, but through the collective dedication of founders, teachers, students, parents, and alumni who have believed in the school's mission since its very first day.



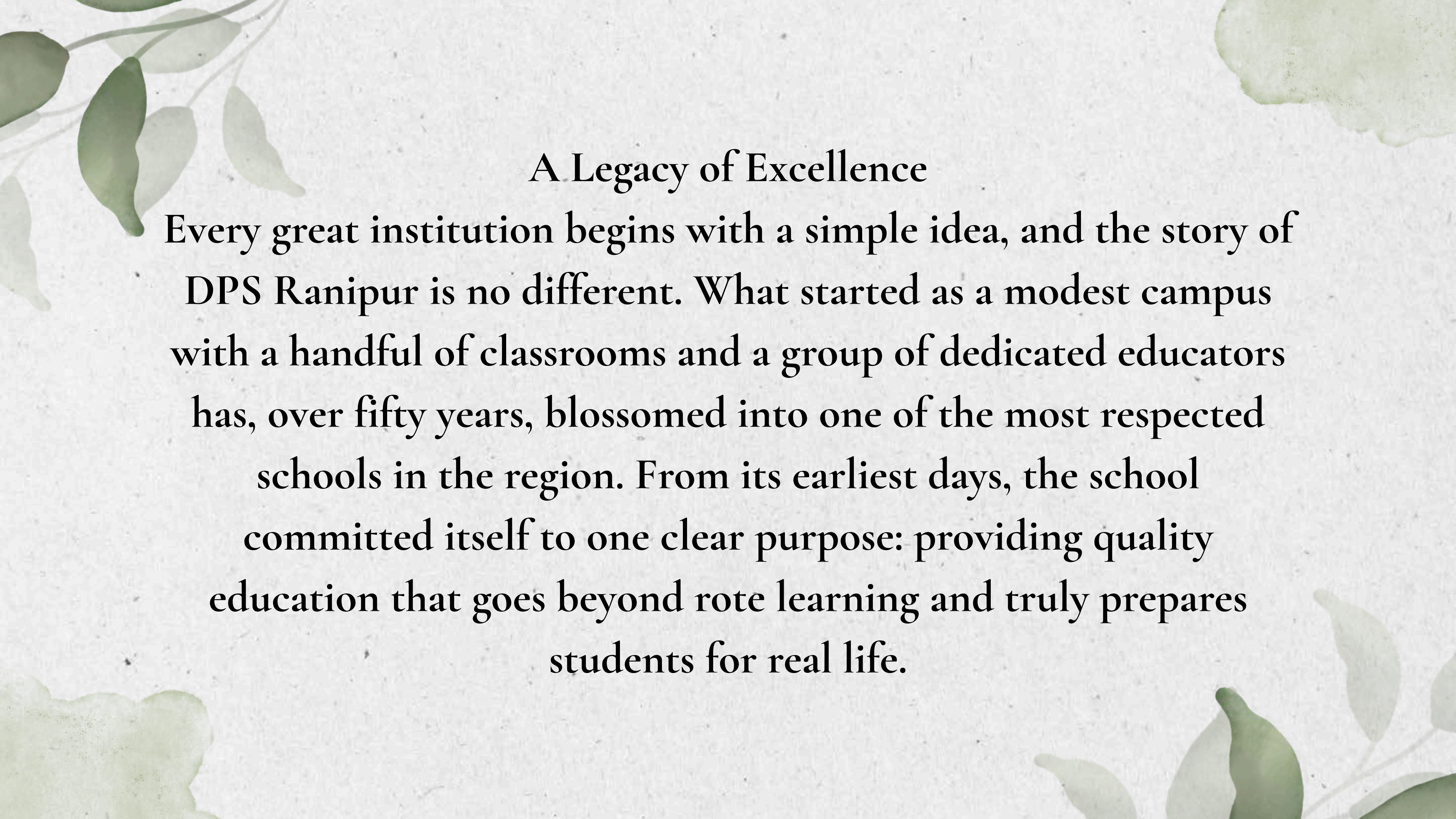
Over these five decades, DPS Ranipur has done far more than teach lessons from textbooks. It has shaped thousands of students through education, discipline, and values, sending into the world young men and women who carry forward the school's spirit of excellence and honesty in every field they choose to walk into. A golden jubilee is a rare and special occasion, celebrated by very few schools, and it fills every student, teacher, and parent with immense pride to be a part of such a historic moment. This essay is written as a tribute to that long journey — a look back at how far the school has come, and a look ahead at the bright road that still lies before it.

The image features a light beige, textured background. In the corners, there are decorative illustrations of green leaves and stems. The top-left corner shows a cluster of leaves, the top-right corner has a single large leaf, the bottom-left corner has a cluster of leaves, and the bottom-right corner shows a few leaves and stems.

When we think of fifty years, we often think of how much the world has changed around us — from chalk and blackboards to smart classes and computers, from handwritten letters to video calls. Through all of this change, DPS Ranipur has stood firm, adapting to new times while never losing its core values. That is perhaps the greatest achievement of all: to grow with the times without forgetting where one began.

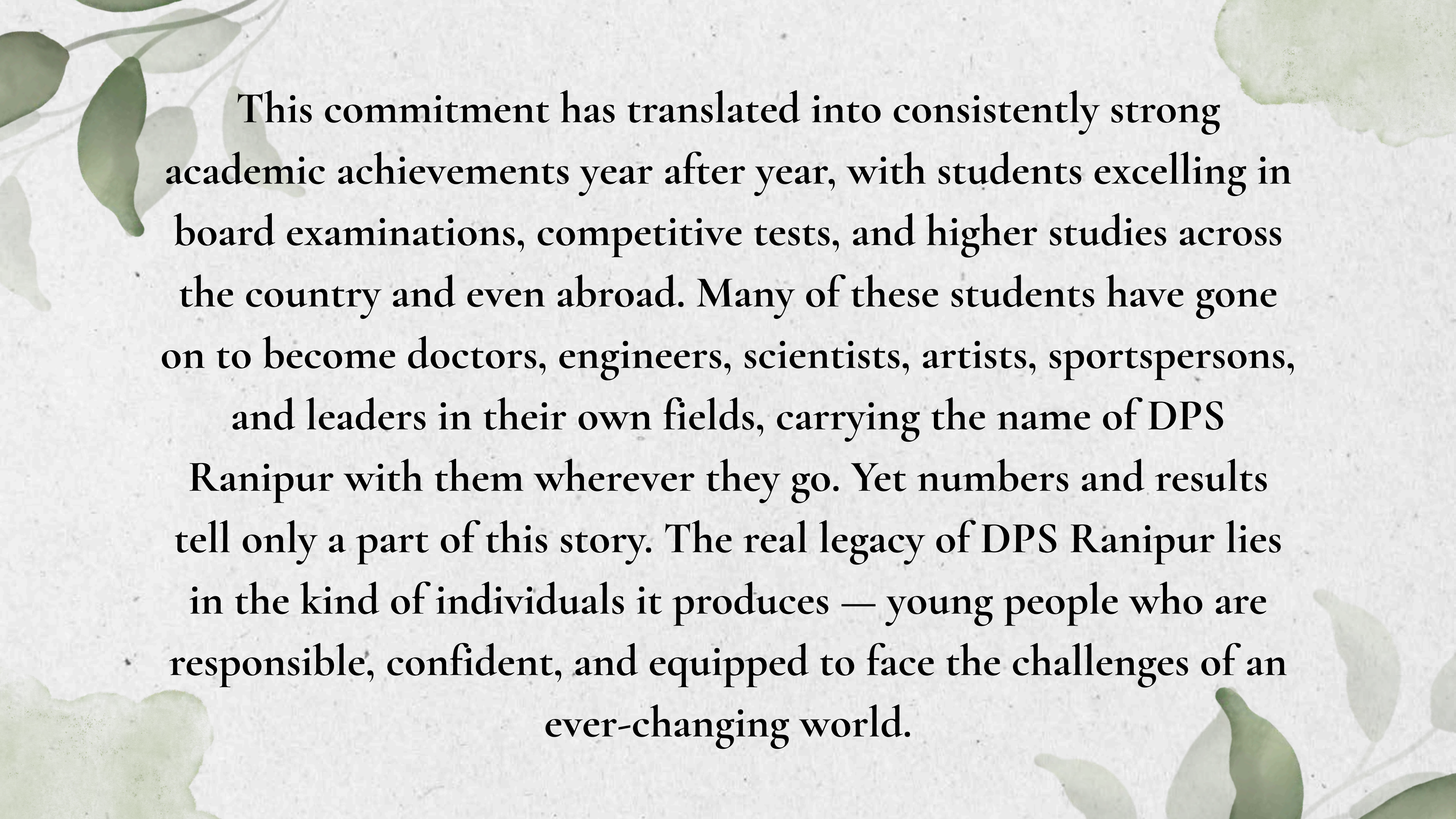


It also makes me think of all the students who studied here long before I was even born, and all the students who will study here long after I have grown up and moved on. In a strange and beautiful way, the Golden Jubilee connects all of us together — past students, present students, and future students — as one big family belonging to the same school. That is what makes this milestone so special, and that is why every student, however young, should feel proud to be a part of it.

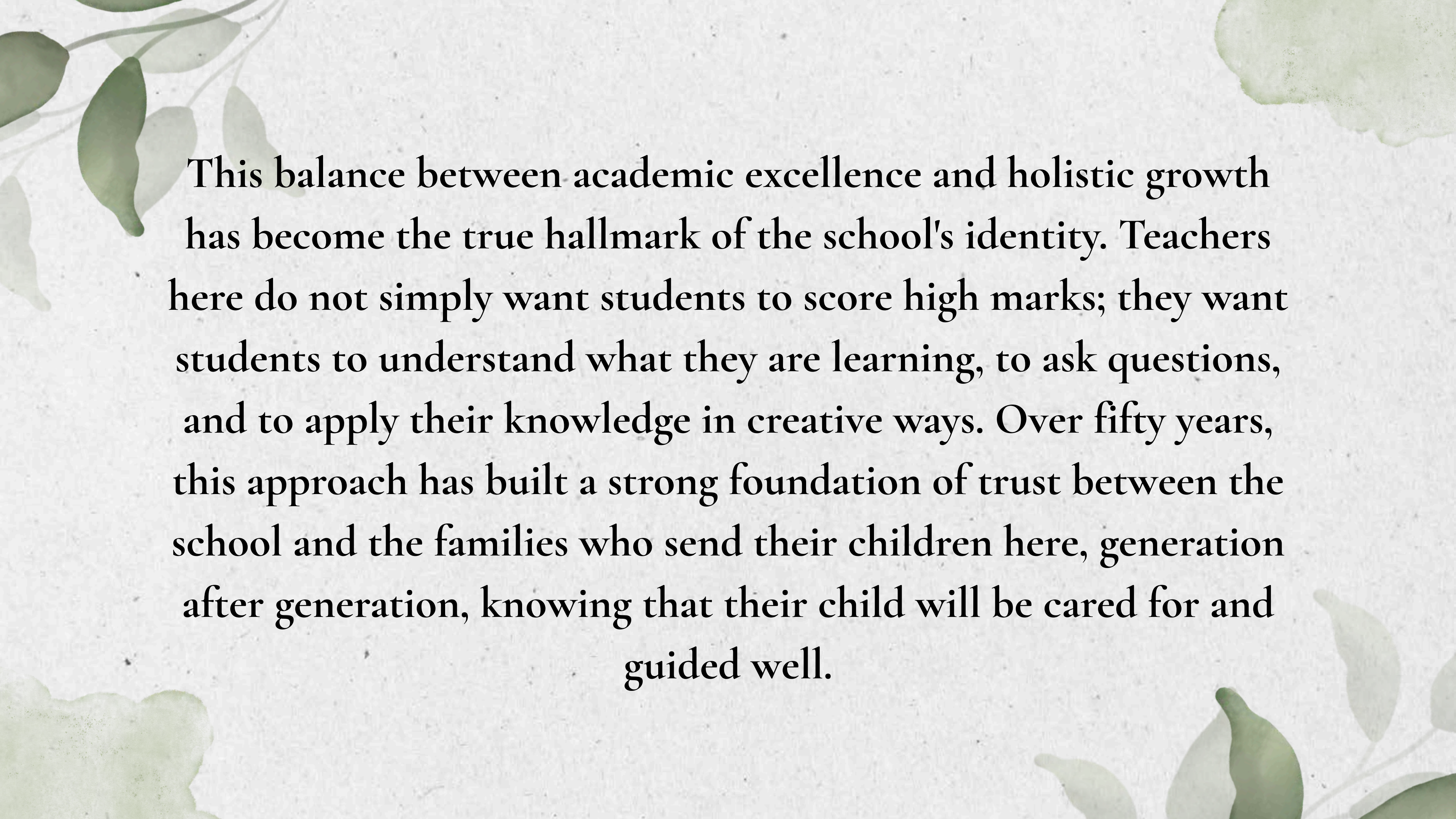


A Legacy of Excellence

Every great institution begins with a simple idea, and the story of DPS Ranipur is no different. What started as a modest campus with a handful of classrooms and a group of dedicated educators has, over fifty years, blossomed into one of the most respected schools in the region. From its earliest days, the school committed itself to one clear purpose: providing quality education that goes beyond rote learning and truly prepares students for real life.



This commitment has translated into consistently strong academic achievements year after year, with students excelling in board examinations, competitive tests, and higher studies across the country and even abroad. Many of these students have gone on to become doctors, engineers, scientists, artists, sportspersons, and leaders in their own fields, carrying the name of DPS Ranipur with them wherever they go. Yet numbers and results tell only a part of this story. The real legacy of DPS Ranipur lies in the kind of individuals it produces — young people who are responsible, confident, and equipped to face the challenges of an ever-changing world.

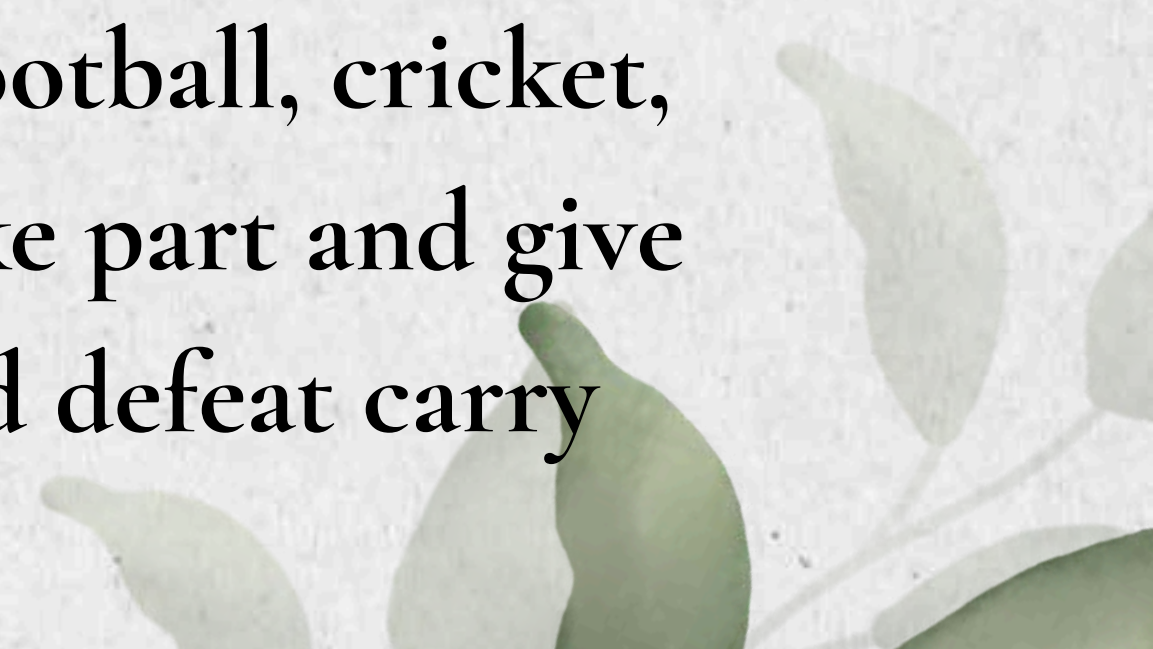
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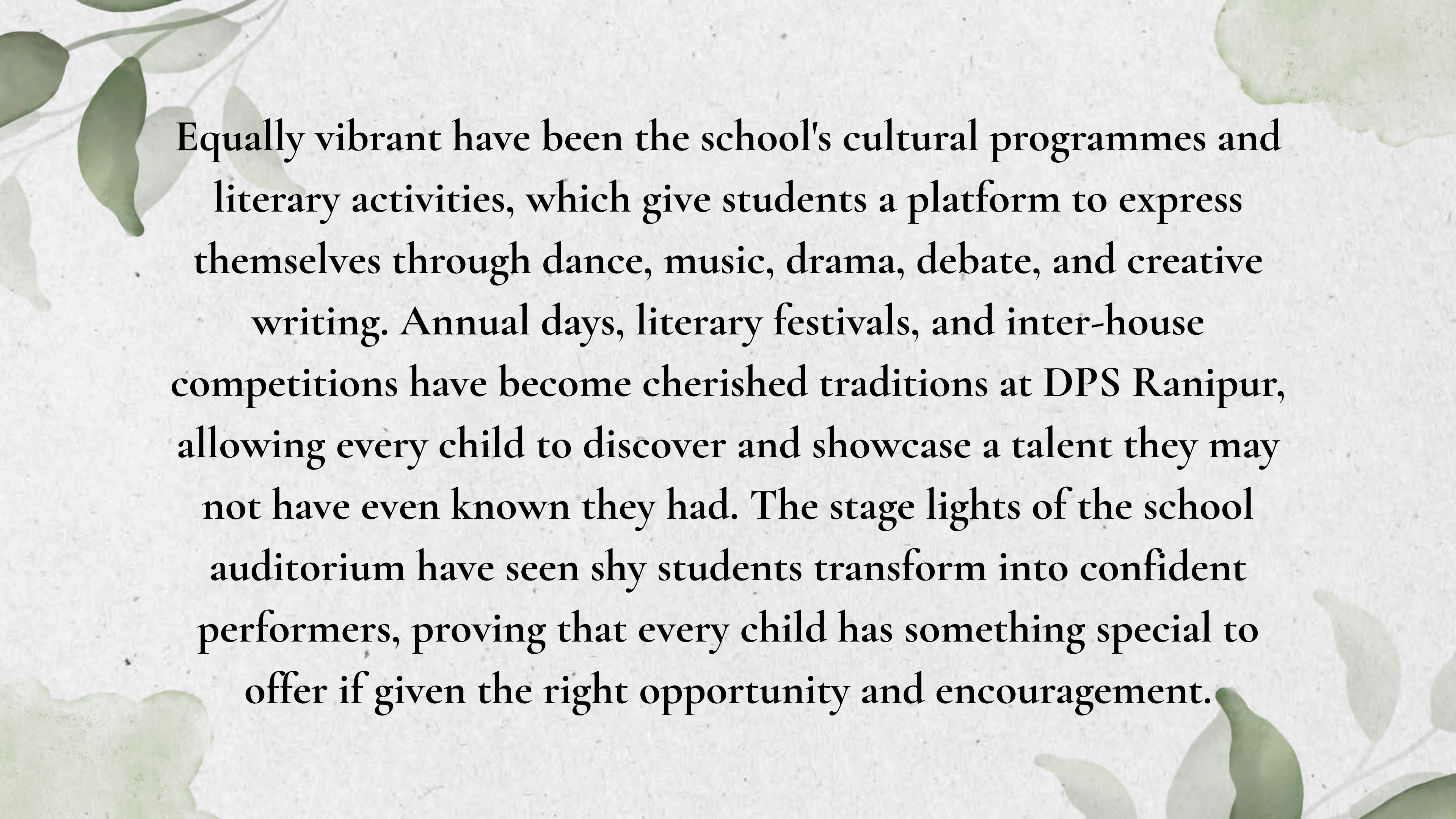
This balance between academic excellence and holistic growth has become the true hallmark of the school's identity. Teachers here do not simply want students to score high marks; they want students to understand what they are learning, to ask questions, and to apply their knowledge in creative ways. Over fifty years, this approach has built a strong foundation of trust between the school and the families who send their children here, generation after generation, knowing that their child will be cared for and guided well.



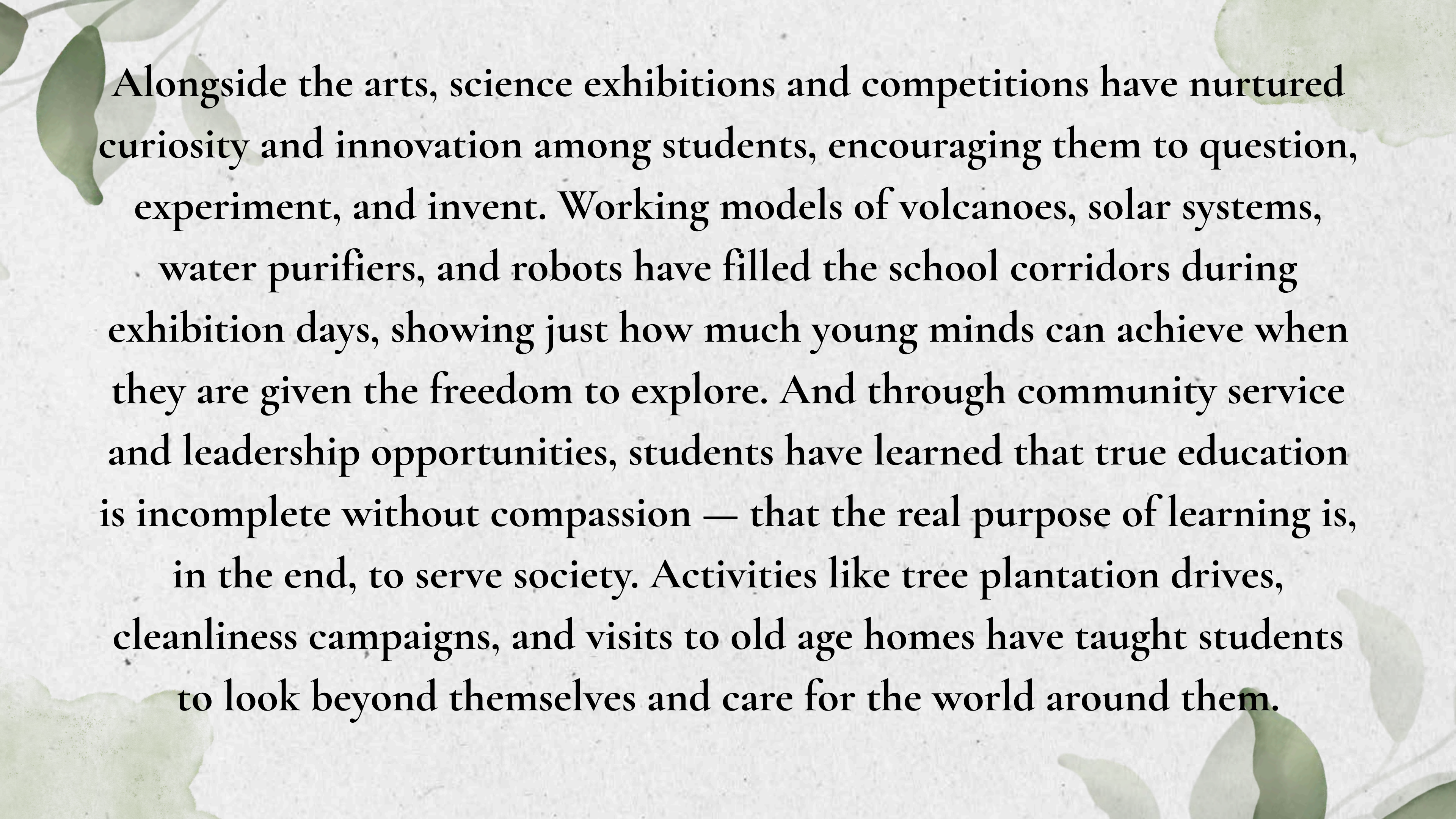
Learning Beyond the Classroom

A school's true character is revealed not only inside its classrooms but in everything that happens beyond them. At DPS Ranipur, sports and physical education have always held a place of great importance, teaching students discipline, resilience, and the value of teamwork out on the field. The school's playgrounds have witnessed countless matches, races, and tournaments over the decades, each one instilling in students a lifelong love for fitness and healthy competition. Whether it is football, cricket, athletics, or yoga, students are encouraged to take part and give their best effort, learning that both victory and defeat carry valuable lessons.

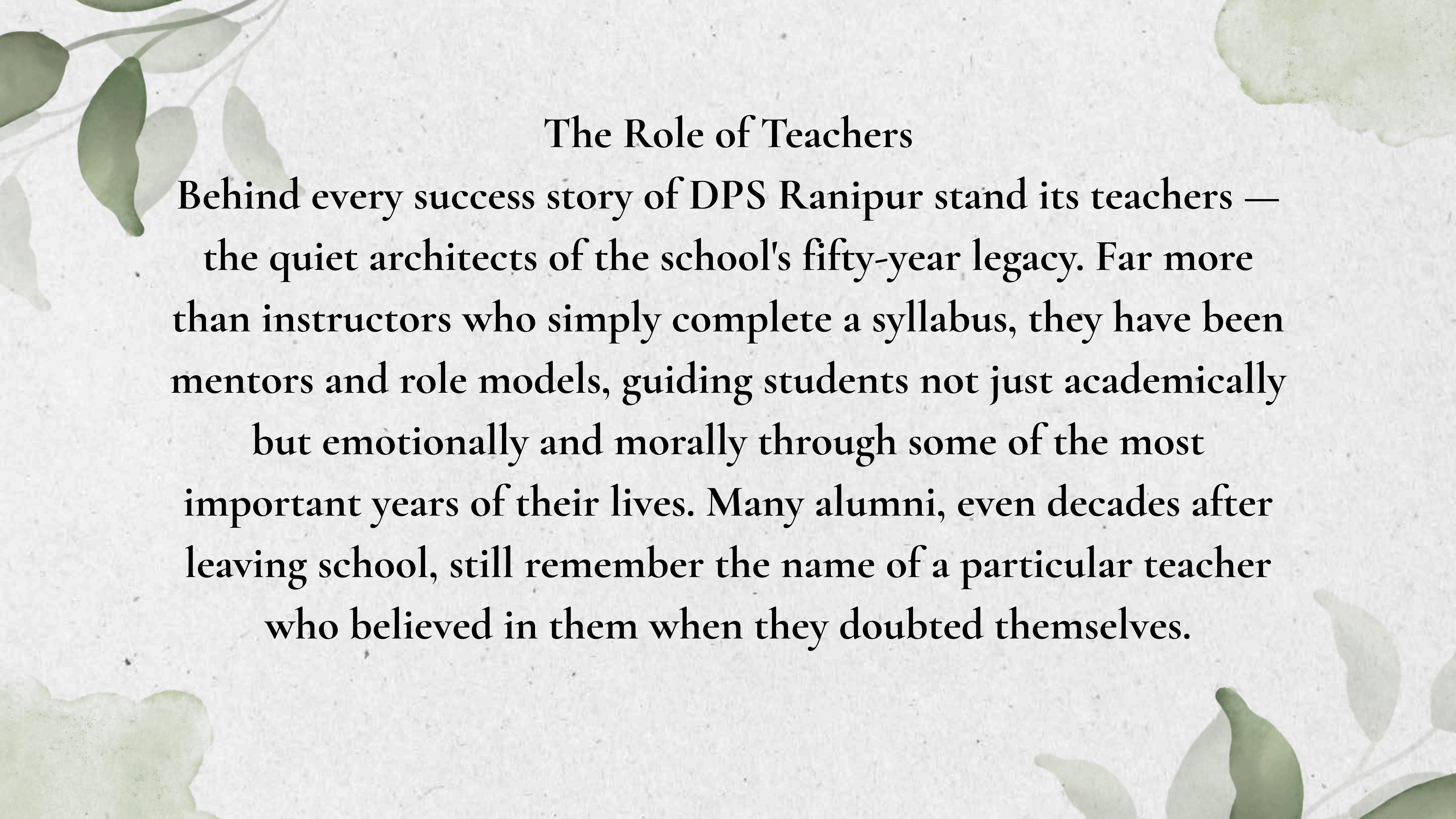


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Equally vibrant have been the school's cultural programmes and literary activities, which give students a platform to express themselves through dance, music, drama, debate, and creative writing. Annual days, literary festivals, and inter-house competitions have become cherished traditions at DPS Ranipur, allowing every child to discover and showcase a talent they may not have even known they had. The stage lights of the school auditorium have seen shy students transform into confident performers, proving that every child has something special to offer if given the right opportunity and encouragement.

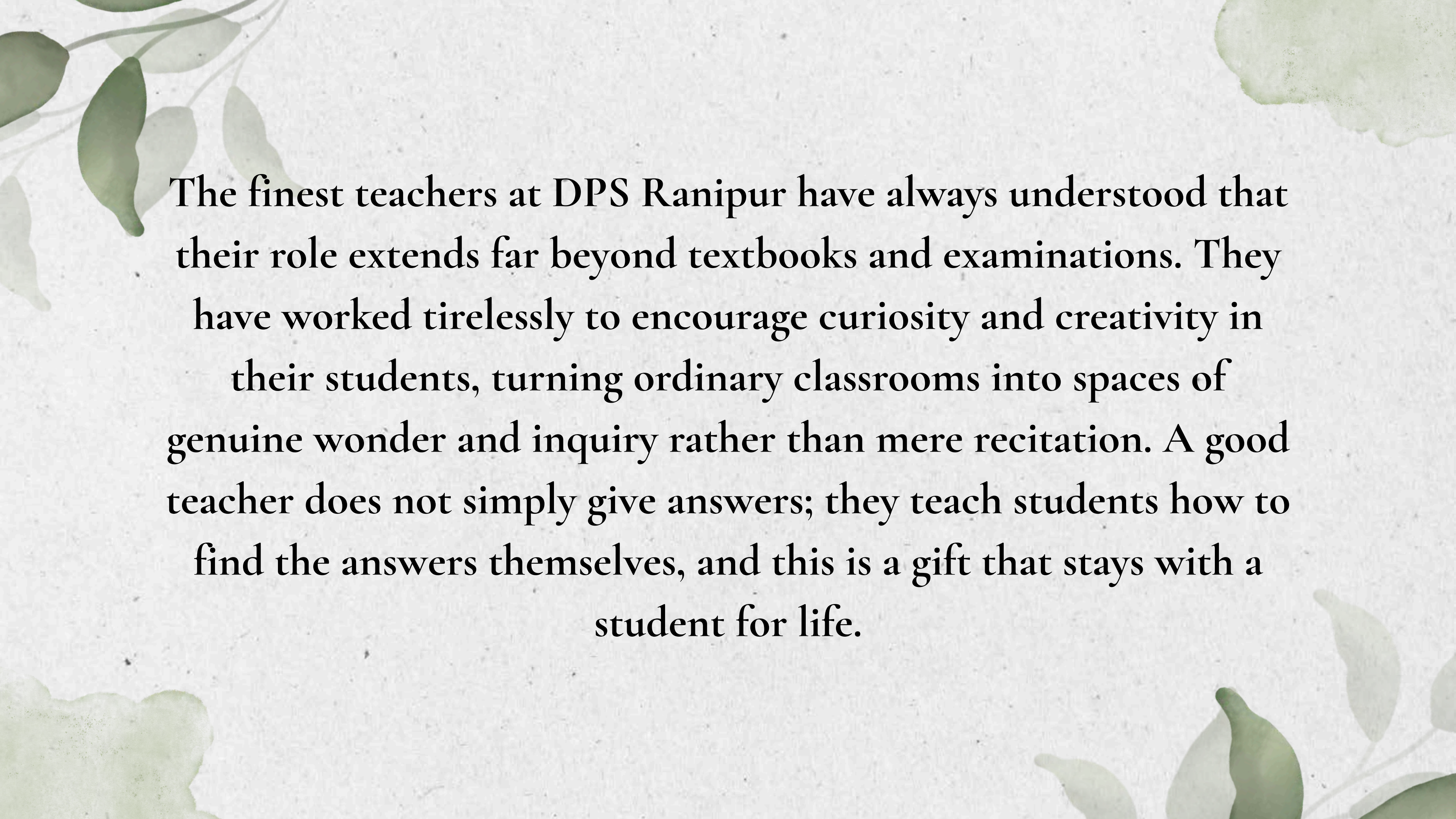
The image features a light beige background with faint, stylized green leaves and branches in the corners. The text is centered and reads:

Alongside the arts, science exhibitions and competitions have nurtured curiosity and innovation among students, encouraging them to question, experiment, and invent. Working models of volcanoes, solar systems, water purifiers, and robots have filled the school corridors during exhibition days, showing just how much young minds can achieve when they are given the freedom to explore. And through community service and leadership opportunities, students have learned that true education is incomplete without compassion — that the real purpose of learning is, in the end, to serve society. Activities like tree plantation drives, cleanliness campaigns, and visits to old age homes have taught students to look beyond themselves and care for the world around them.

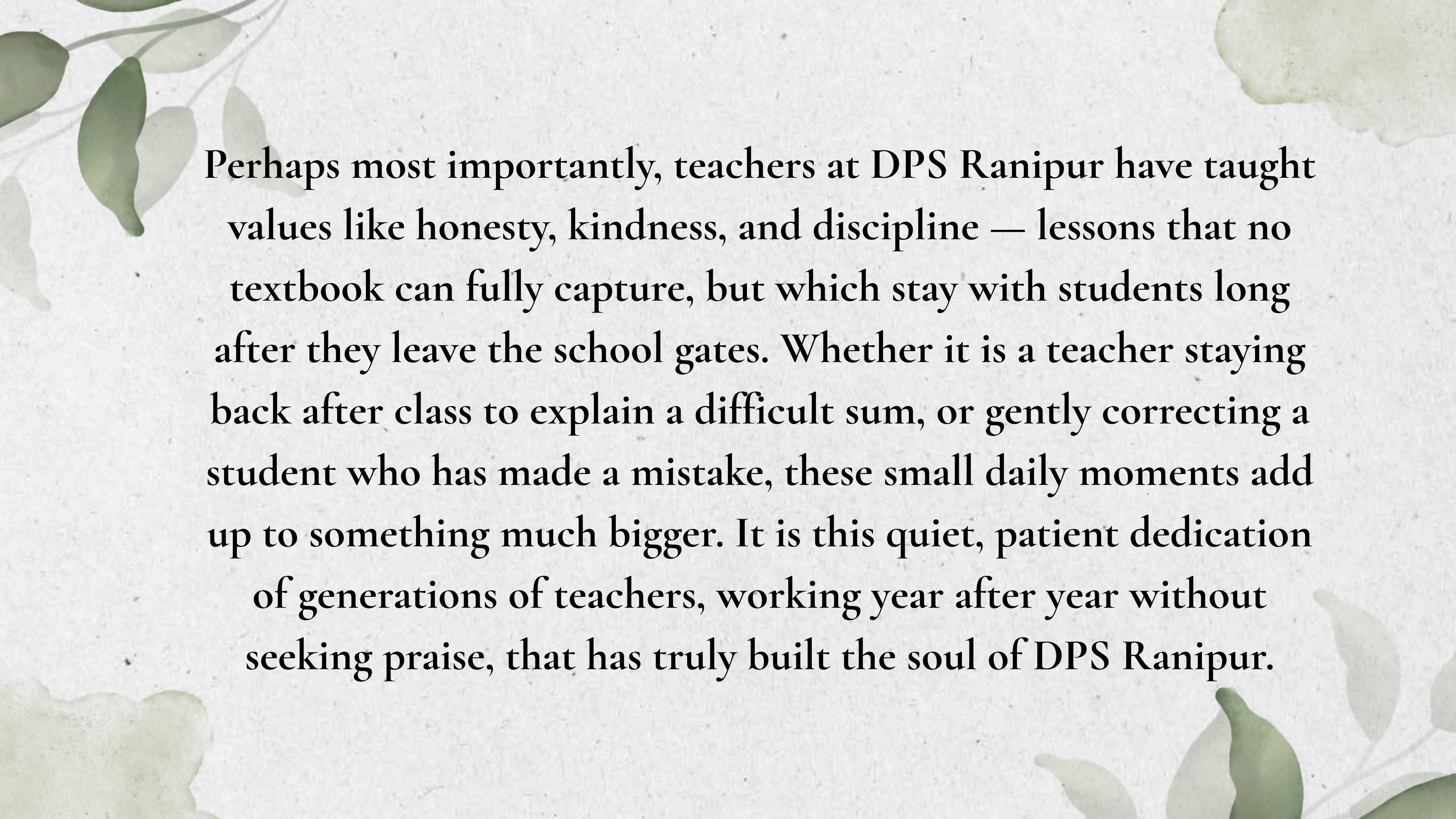


The Role of Teachers

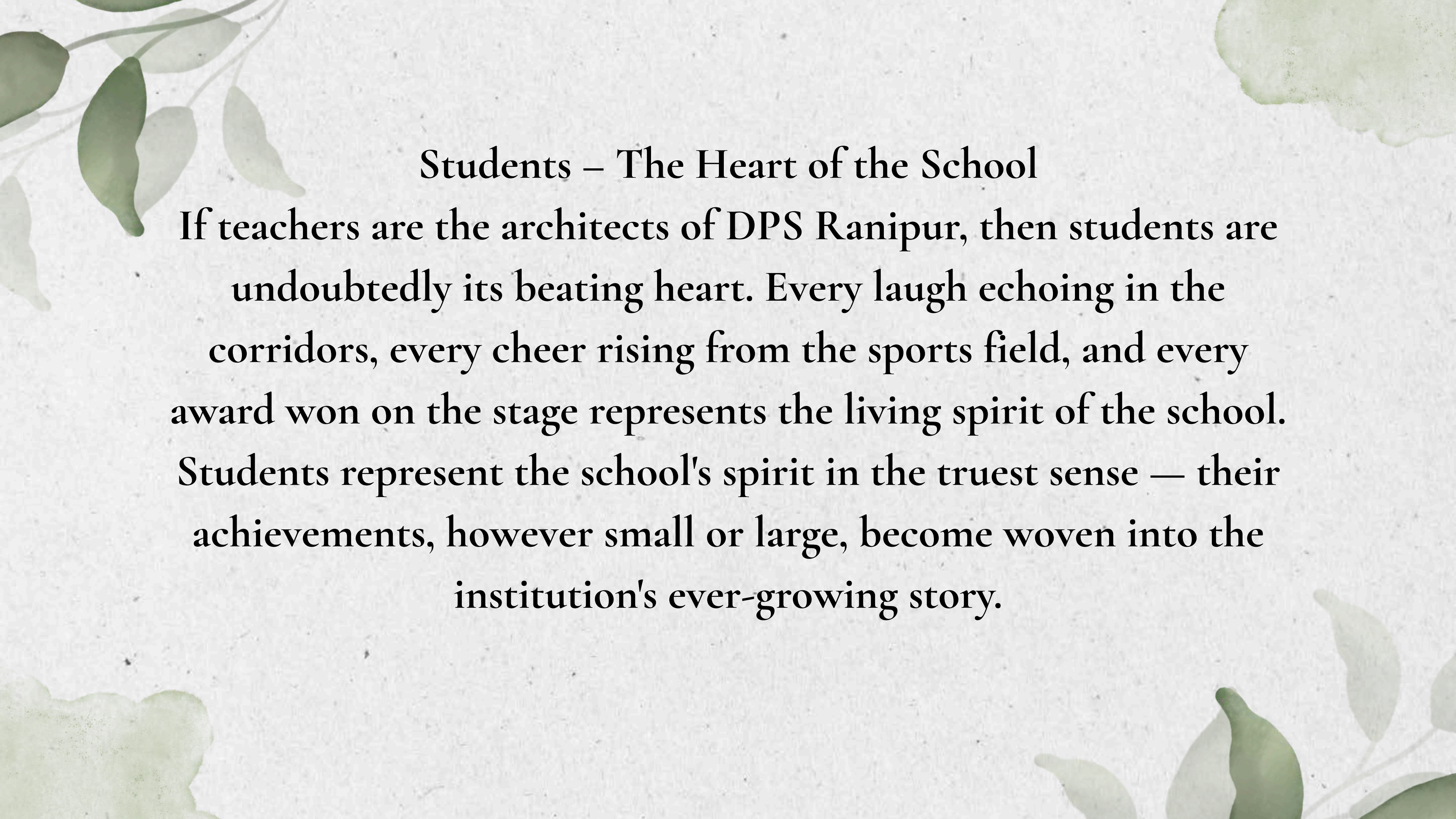
Behind every success story of DPS Ranipur stand its teachers — the quiet architects of the school's fifty-year legacy. Far more than instructors who simply complete a syllabus, they have been mentors and role models, guiding students not just academically but emotionally and morally through some of the most important years of their lives. Many alumni, even decades after leaving school, still remember the name of a particular teacher who believed in them when they doubted themselves.

The image features a light beige, textured background. In the corners, there are decorative elements: green leaves and stems in the top-left and bottom-right, and soft, watercolor-style green washes in the top-right and bottom-left.

The finest teachers at DPS Ranipur have always understood that their role extends far beyond textbooks and examinations. They have worked tirelessly to encourage curiosity and creativity in their students, turning ordinary classrooms into spaces of genuine wonder and inquiry rather than mere recitation. A good teacher does not simply give answers; they teach students how to find the answers themselves, and this is a gift that stays with a student for life.

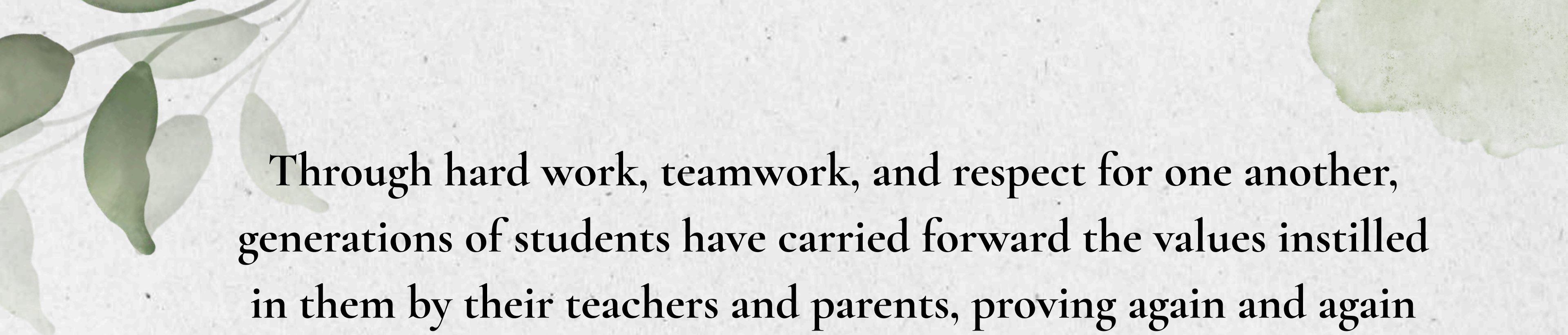


Perhaps most importantly, teachers at DPS Ranipur have taught values like honesty, kindness, and discipline — lessons that no textbook can fully capture, but which stay with students long after they leave the school gates. Whether it is a teacher staying back after class to explain a difficult sum, or gently correcting a student who has made a mistake, these small daily moments add up to something much bigger. It is this quiet, patient dedication of generations of teachers, working year after year without seeking praise, that has truly built the soul of DPS Ranipur.



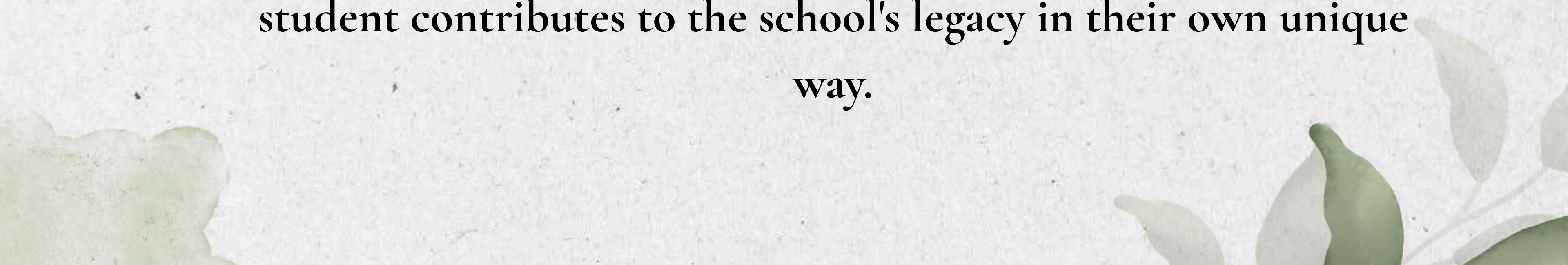
Students – The Heart of the School

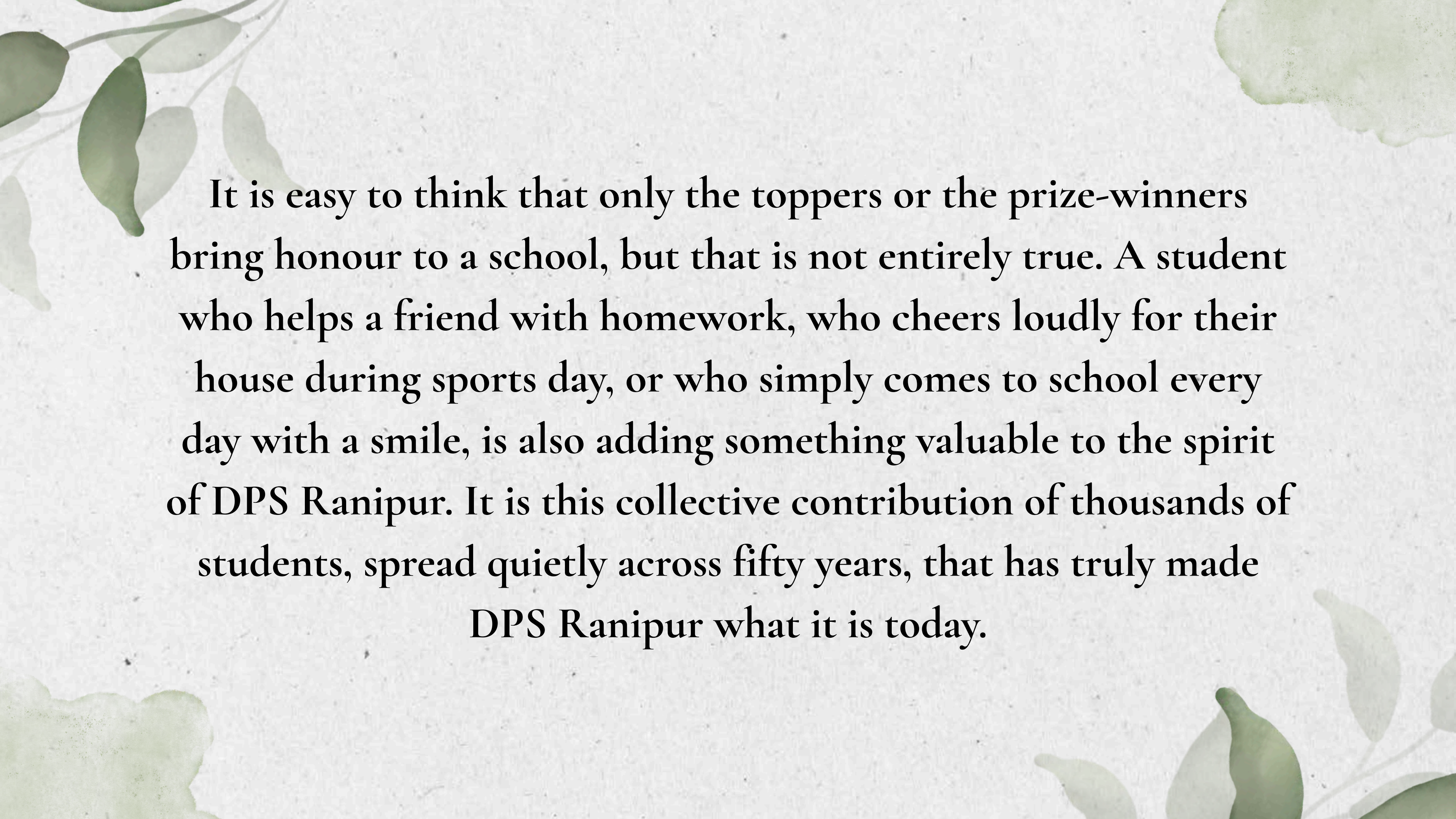
If teachers are the architects of DPS Ranipur, then students are undoubtedly its beating heart. Every laugh echoing in the corridors, every cheer rising from the sports field, and every award won on the stage represents the living spirit of the school. Students represent the school's spirit in the truest sense — their achievements, however small or large, become woven into the institution's ever-growing story.



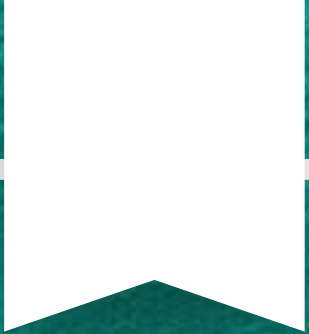
Through hard work, teamwork, and respect for one another, generations of students have carried forward the values instilled in them by their teachers and parents, proving again and again that excellence is not a solitary pursuit but a collective one.

Whether it is a topper in the board examinations, a captain proudly leading their house to victory, or simply a quiet student who shows kindness to a struggling classmate, every single student contributes to the school's legacy in their own unique way.



The image features a light cream-colored background with faint, stylized green leaves and branches in the corners. The text is centered and reads:

It is easy to think that only the toppers or the prize-winners bring honour to a school, but that is not entirely true. A student who helps a friend with homework, who cheers loudly for their house during sports day, or who simply comes to school every day with a smile, is also adding something valuable to the spirit of DPS Ranipur. It is this collective contribution of thousands of students, spread quietly across fifty years, that has truly made DPS Ranipur what it is today.



My First Day at School Beyond



The Lockdown



Priyal Jain
Vth - A



“Some dreams begin on time, while others wait patiently for the right moment. Mine waited for two long years.”



My first day at school is one of the most precious memories of my life. It was 4th April 2022, a day I had been waiting for with great excitement and hope.

I took admission to my school in March 2020, but just a week later, the whole country went into lockdown because of the COVID-19 pandemic. All my admission formalities and paperwork were completed online. Instead of walking through the school gates with a tiny school bag on my shoulders, I began my school journey sitting at home in front of a mobile phone.

For the next two years, I completed my Prep Junior and Prep Senior classes through online learning. My teachers made every class interesting and enjoyable, but deep inside, I always wished to experience the real joy of school life.





The saddest part was that I missed my entire pre-primary journey—the most colourful and magical chapter of every child's school life. I had always dreamed of wearing the adorable green pre-primary uniform, walking through the cheerful wing, and learning in classrooms decorated with colourful walls. I imagined sitting around tiny round tables on little chairs, colouring pictures, singing rhymes, sharing toys, and making my very first school friends. Sadly, those beautiful moments remained only dreams that I could imagine but never live.

After waiting patiently for two long years, my dream finally came true on 4th April 2022. I was thrilled to wear my school uniform for the very first time. But instead of the lovely green uniform I had dreamed of, I directly wore the white uniform of the 1st class. Instead of colourful classrooms, I entered rooms with plain white walls. For a moment, I felt as if I had quietly skipped one of the most beautiful chapters of my childhood.





Yet, the happiness of finally stepping into my school was greater than every disappointment. My heart danced with joy as I met my teachers face to face, made new friends, answered attendance in a real classroom, and heard the school bell ring for the very first time. Every smile, every lesson, every corridor, and every moment felt like a precious gift after such a long wait.

That day taught me a lesson I will always remember: life may delay our dreams, but it never takes away the joy of achieving them. Although I missed the magical days of my Pre-Primary years, my first day at school became the beginning of a beautiful journey filled with hope, friendship, learning, and unforgettable memories. It will always remain one of the brightest pages in the story of my life.



A DREAM DELAYED



Two years passed, yet hope stayed bright,
Waiting for that joyful sight,
Though dreams took time to find their way,
They bloomed at last one April day.

The green wing lives within my heart,
Though I missed its lovely start,
Now every step, each smile, each rule,
Reminds me why I cherish school





Some Light Still Finds Me

By Yashica Rajput





*Not all silences mean surrender
some hearts just need to rest.
I still walk through the echoes
but I carry them like a guest.*





*The storm is quieter lately,
though the clouds still roar inside
I'm learning how to breathe again
without needing to hide.*





*No one fixes the cracks I bear,
I simply let them show,
and in that fragile honesty
something soft begins to grow.*





*I still fade in certain moments
but I'm not gone, nor erased.
Even shadows prove there's sunlight
it just shines from another place.*



An illustration featuring two young girls with long dark hair sitting on a vibrant green grassy hill. The girl on the left is wearing a white shirt and a light blue skirt, while the girl on the right is wearing a dark blue shirt and jeans. They are both looking away from the viewer towards the horizon. To the left, a large, leafy green tree stands prominently. The sky is a pale blue with soft, white clouds. In the foreground, there are large green leaves and several yellow flower buds. On the right side of the image, a portion of a modern building with a brown roof and a glass door with an orange handle is visible.

Trust me

RITIKA CHAUHAN

Introduction



Hello, I'm Ritika, a passionate storyteller who likes writing stories inspired by real life moments. I enjoy sharing my experiences and adventures through my stories, it is one of my favorite ways to connect with others. When I'm not writing, I tend to either be on a leisurely walk or just getting my hands very messy with glue and scraps. I believe that it's the little moments in life that matter the most. Through my stories, I hope to leave readers feeling moved and think about those small precious moments in their day to day life.





"But I have to go."

"You can spare a little time, no?"

"No, I will be late then."

Her face grew sad. I didn't want to leave, but then I want to avoid my mother's scolding at all cost.

"Tomorrow, same place. And we will definitely eat ice cream." She huffed, her hair beautifully disheveled over her face.

I nodded, a silent hope creeping inside me. I wanted to be with her. And eat ice cream

"You promise?" She looked into my eyes, "No buts and maybes?"

"I promise."

She gave me a wide smile, and just like that we parted ways.





Aary was everything that I wanted to be, both pretty and beautiful, someone who is easily accepted and liked by everyone. I wouldn't say so that I was 'disliked', it was more of that I never felt 'wanted', as if I was invisible. However, that never made me feel any jealousy towards her. Why would I be jealous of my friend?

I quietly headed home, my mind racing. I am not a social person, and I never really made friends. From my past experiences, I concluded that my friendships never lasted, and never will. I did have friends, but they really call me their friend when they wanted some work to be done.

It sounds like an overstatement, and maybe I am thinking way too much and it's far from reality, but they made me feel like it is.

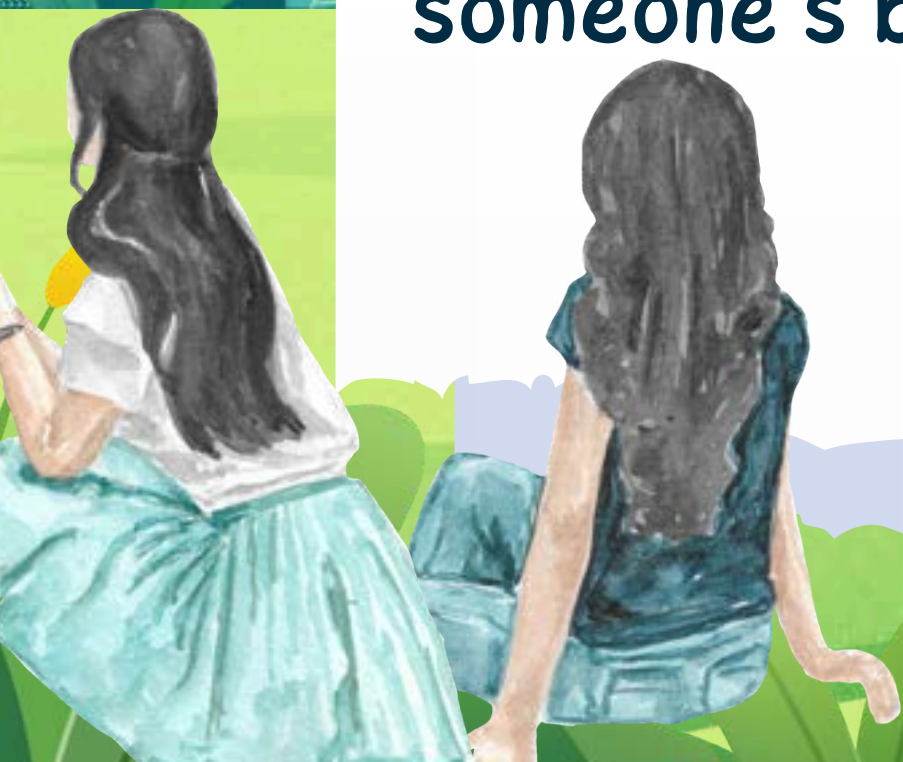


Looking at the ceiling, I try to survive the avalanche of trivial worries, desperate to find rest under the vast darkness. Tossing and turning wasn't helping a bit, so I decided to walk around the room. After much consideration, though, I was too lazy to get up, so I just remained as is.

I wonder, if I had a best friend, how different would my life be.

It may sound sad, but at this point, I had already accepted my destined fate, that I will never be someone's best friend.

~*~



The background of the slide features a stylized illustration. On the left, there is a large green tree with yellow leaves. On the right, a portion of a building with a brown roof and a grey wall is visible. The main area of the slide is white, containing a series of text blocks. At the bottom, there is a green field with yellow flowers and two people sitting on the grass, looking towards the horizon. The person on the left is wearing a light blue dress, and the person on the right is wearing a dark blue dress. The overall style is colorful and cartoonish.

"That's cute, where did you get it from?"

"A shop."

"Well, what's the name of the shop?"

"I don't know."

"Okay, but you must remember the location of the shop?"

"No, I don't."

"Is it nearby?"

"No."

"Is it in our country?"

"Maybe."

"Oh, so you got it during a foreign visit? That's so cool."

"No, actually."



“Does this shop even exist on this planet?”

“No, I bought it from a souvenir shop when I visited Mars.”

Aary pulled such a face, it made me giggle, and she naturally giggled too. She has been eyeing my pink teddy keychain since the morning, and maybe thought, what’s better time to ask than in the middle of English lecture after getting called out three times before? Honestly, she’s something else entirely.

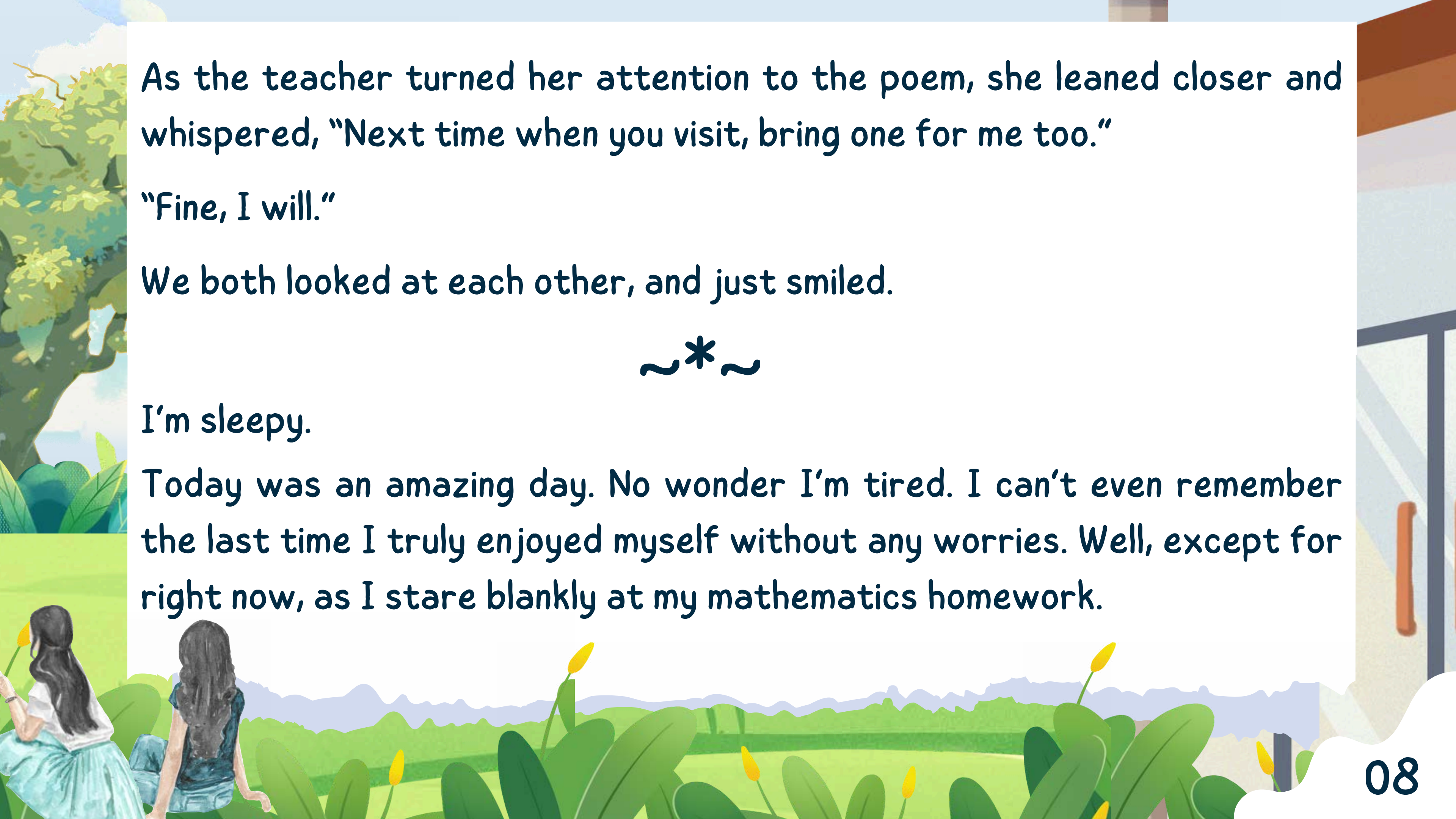
“Yes girls, now pay attention here. Aary, if you interrupt one more time, I will land a tight slap on your face.”



The whole class roared, surprisingly, including me. When was the last time I laughed so carelessly?

For the first time, I felt genuinely happy to be in a place full of people, thanks to her. I don't know how she managed it, but Aary was surely different from other girls. There's something about her that tells my heart to relax. With her, the constant mental noise finally went quiet, leaving only peace.

"Yes class, the joke's over, now I will seriously give you beating if you don't pay attention. Now, here the poet tells us multiple ways on how to take down a tree, where he uses sarcasm..."

The background of the page features a stylized illustration. On the left, there is a large tree with green and yellow leaves. On the right, a portion of a building with a brown roof and a grey wall is visible. The main text area is a white rectangle in the center.

As the teacher turned her attention to the poem, she leaned closer and whispered, "Next time when you visit, bring one for me too."

"Fine, I will."

We both looked at each other, and just smiled.

~*~

I'm sleepy.

Today was an amazing day. No wonder I'm tired. I can't even remember the last time I truly enjoyed myself without any worries. Well, except for right now, as I stare blankly at my mathematics homework.



Aary really is the best.

But while solving equations, something pulls me. Hard. I don't feel well. A wave of sickness washes over me. I'm dizzy and my heart is beating fast. Too fast.

I am happy, but something doesn't feel right. I think... I am being pulled into a void of dreams. My eyelids grew heavy, and everything went dark.

.....

"Where did you get it from, Ritika?"

"My mother bought it for me!"

"That's so cool."

Sitting together on a bench, two little kids laugh merrily.



"Hey, do you promise to be my best friend forever?"

"Yes dear, of course! We will be best friends forever! You are the best anyways! No one can take your place!!"

.....

I woke up, head pounding. I fell asleep. It was a dream. No, a flashback, from when I was little. When I had a friend...

My head is swaying uncontrollably.

'I should just sleep, I'm overthinking it.'

With this resolve, I closed my notebook and leaped into bed.

It is not going to be a peaceful night, though. The avalanche is back to bury and smother me.



Aary will leave you just like she did.

No, this is far worse than an avalanche.

They all repeat those same lies to everyone.

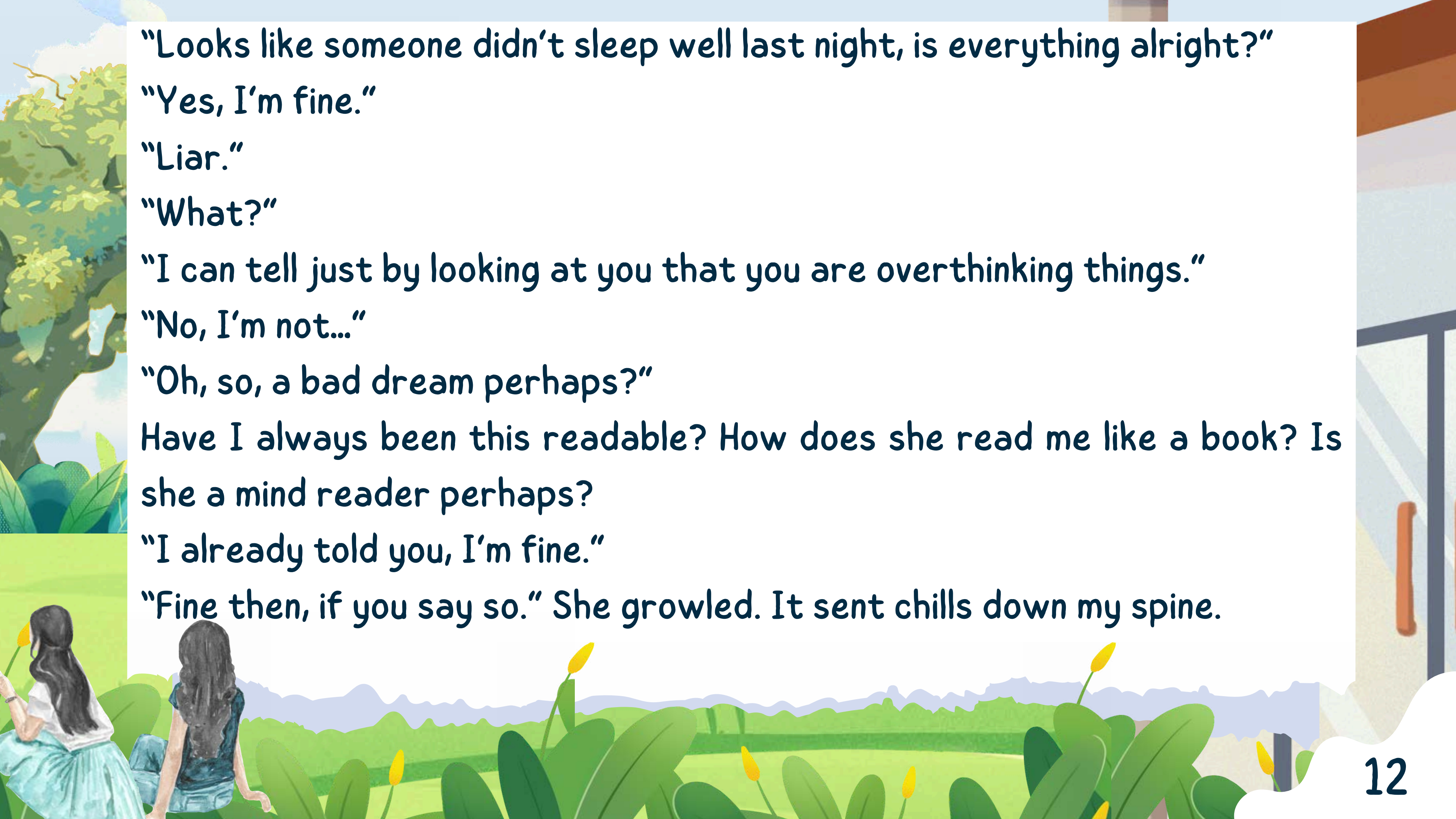
I bury my head into the pillow, desperately trying to stop these thoughts from flooding.

They do stop, now flooding my eyes. I need to think more positively. I need to trust her.

But what if she does leave me when the weather is unpleasant?

The silence only grew louder.

~*~

The background of the page features a stylized illustration. On the left, there is a large green tree with yellow leaves. On the right, a portion of a building with orange and grey walls is visible. At the bottom, two girls are sitting on a grassy field with yellow flowers, looking towards a distant blue mountain range under a light blue sky.

"Looks like someone didn't sleep well last night, is everything alright?"

"Yes, I'm fine."

"Liar."

"What?"

"I can tell just by looking at you that you are overthinking things."

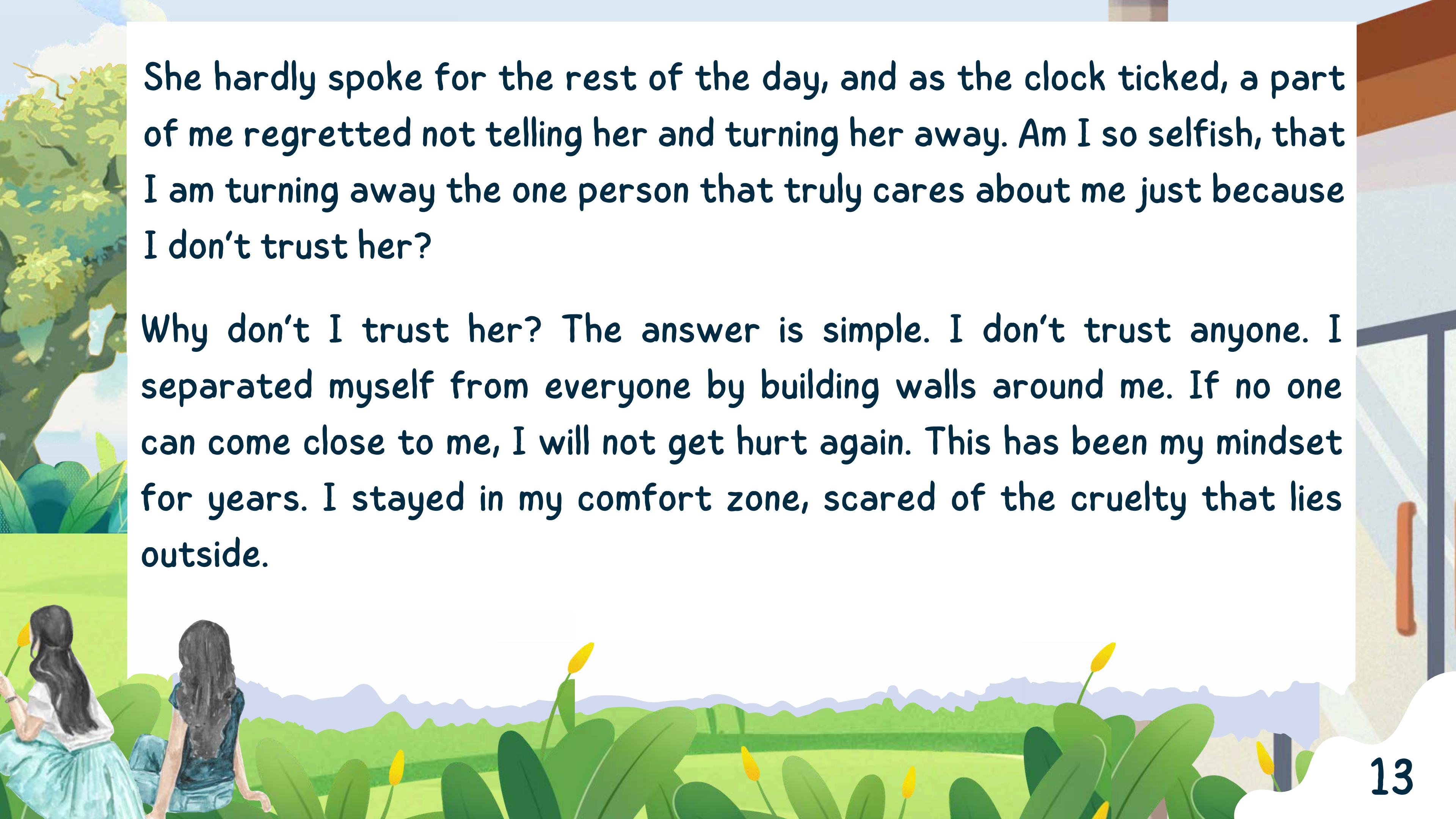
"No, I'm not..."

"Oh, so, a bad dream perhaps?"

Have I always been this readable? How does she read me like a book? Is she a mind reader perhaps?

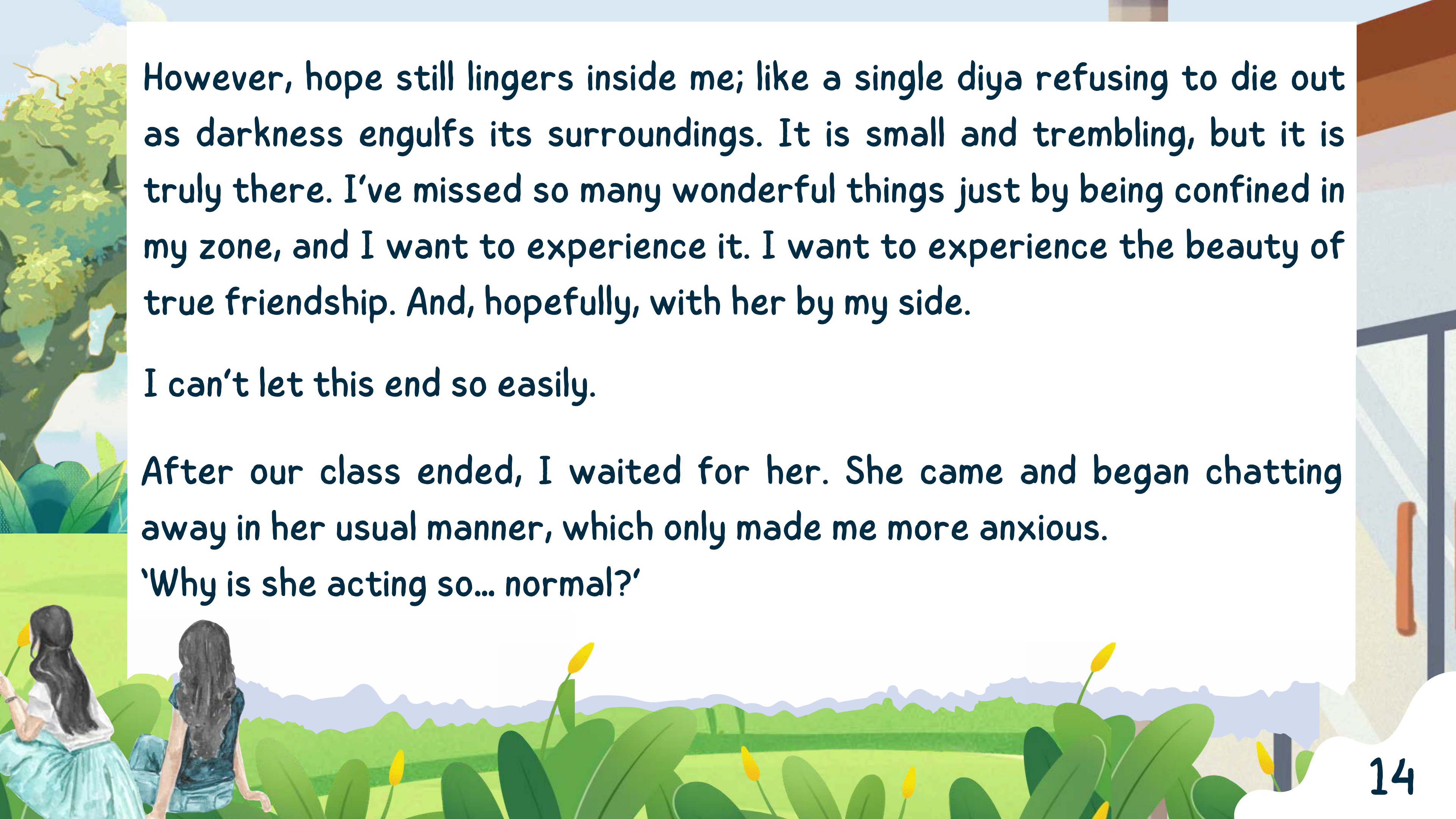
"I already told you, I'm fine."

"Fine then, if you say so." She growled. It sent chills down my spine.

The background of the slide features a soft, painterly illustration. On the left, a large tree with green and yellow leaves stands against a light blue sky. In the bottom left corner, a person with long dark hair, wearing a light blue dress, is sitting on the grass, looking towards the right. The foreground is filled with large green leaves and yellow tulip-like flowers. The overall style is gentle and artistic.

She hardly spoke for the rest of the day, and as the clock ticked, a part of me regretted not telling her and turning her away. Am I so selfish, that I am turning away the one person that truly cares about me just because I don't trust her?

Why don't I trust her? The answer is simple. I don't trust anyone. I separated myself from everyone by building walls around me. If no one can come close to me, I will not get hurt again. This has been my mindset for years. I stayed in my comfort zone, scared of the cruelty that lies outside.

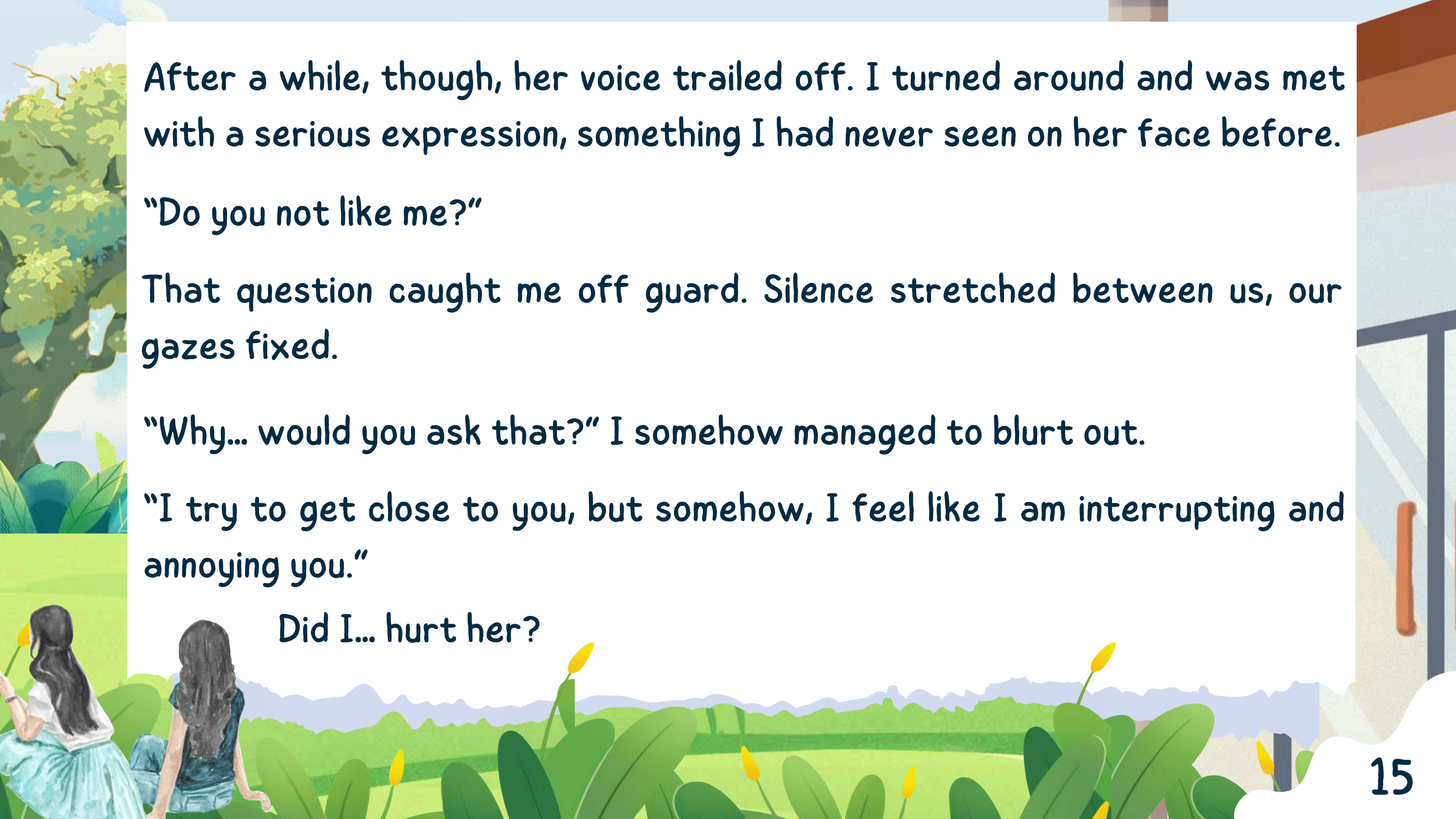
The background of the page features a stylized illustration. On the left, there is a large tree with green and yellow foliage. On the right, a portion of a building with a brown roof and a grey wall is visible. The central text is set against a white background.

However, hope still lingers inside me; like a single diya refusing to die out as darkness engulfs its surroundings. It is small and trembling, but it is truly there. I've missed so many wonderful things just by being confined in my zone, and I want to experience it. I want to experience the beauty of true friendship. And, hopefully, with her by my side.

I can't let this end so easily.

After our class ended, I waited for her. She came and began chatting away in her usual manner, which only made me more anxious.

'Why is she acting so... normal?'

The background of the slide features a stylized illustration. On the left, there is a large tree with green and yellow foliage. On the right, a portion of a building with a brown roof and light-colored walls is visible. The central area is a white rectangle containing text.

After a while, though, her voice trailed off. I turned around and was met with a serious expression, something I had never seen on her face before.

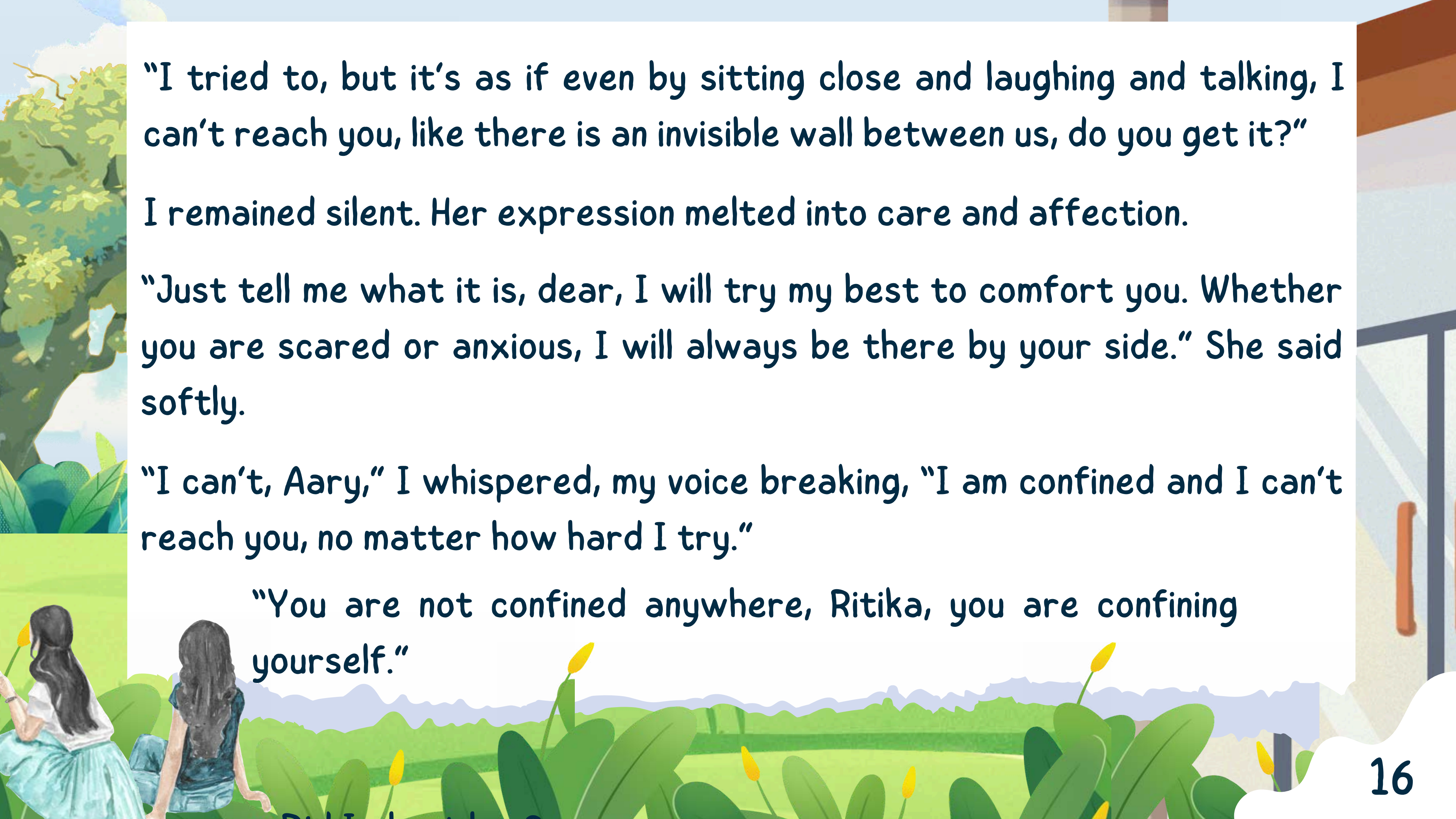
“Do you not like me?”

That question caught me off guard. Silence stretched between us, our gazes fixed.

“Why... would you ask that?” I somehow managed to blurt out.

“I try to get close to you, but somehow, I feel like I am interrupting and annoying you.”

Did I... hurt her?

The background of the page features a stylized illustration. On the left, there is a large green tree with yellow leaves. On the right, a portion of a building with a brown roof and a grey wall is visible. The text is overlaid on a white rectangular area in the center.

"I tried to, but it's as if even by sitting close and laughing and talking, I can't reach you, like there is an invisible wall between us, do you get it?"

I remained silent. Her expression melted into care and affection.

"Just tell me what it is, dear, I will try my best to comfort you. Whether you are scared or anxious, I will always be there by your side." She said softly.

"I can't, Aary," I whispered, my voice breaking, "I am confined and I can't reach you, no matter how hard I try."

"You are not confined anywhere, Ritika, you are confining yourself."



That hit me like a ricocheting bullet. The pressure behind my eyes slowly built up, blurring my vision.

She walked towards me, and wrapped her arms around me, pulling me into a hug. The background noise of children shouting and talking quietened.

"I may not always be there with you, but I will always be there for you." She murmured into my ear, "I will try my best to show you that no matter what, I will never leave you. **Trust me.**"

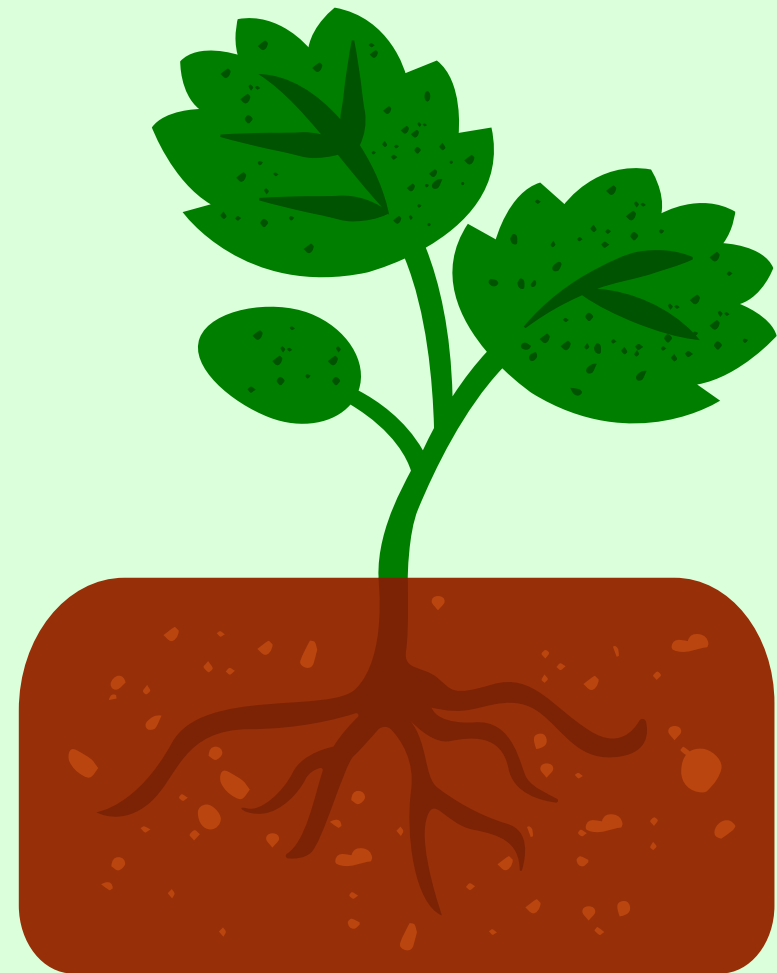
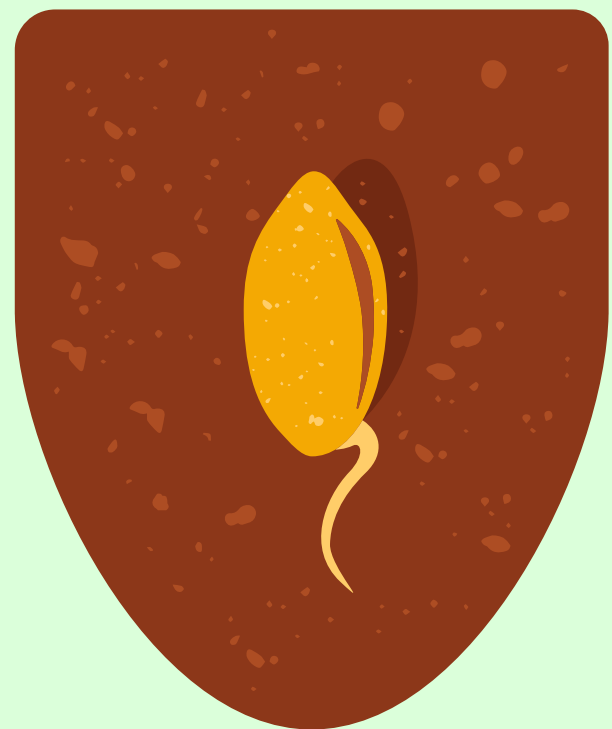
The wall collapsed.

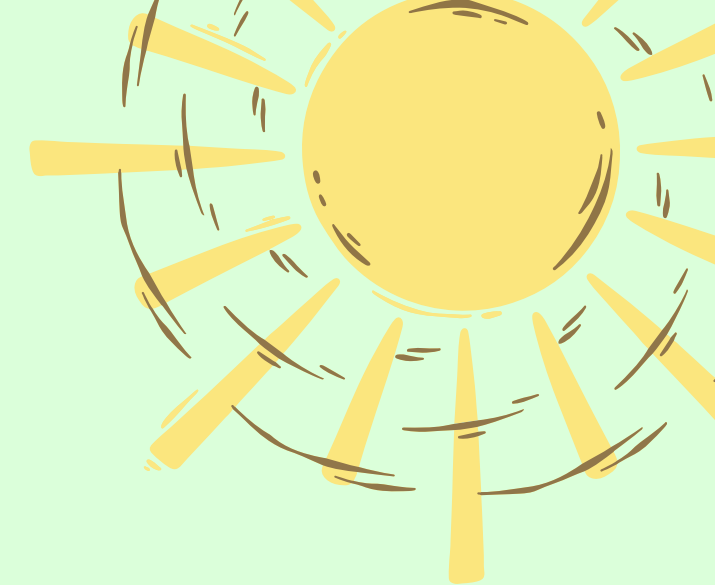
~*~

An illustration at the top of the page shows two hands. The left hand is holding a small yellow seed, and the right hand is holding a small brown seed. Both hands are positioned as if they are about to plant the seeds into the soil. The background is a light green color with some green leaves and plants scattered around.

The Little Seed

Name- Kunwar Bhatia





Once there was a little seed named Sunny. Sunny lived under the soft brown soil in a big garden.

Sunny wanted to become a big tree, but he was scared.

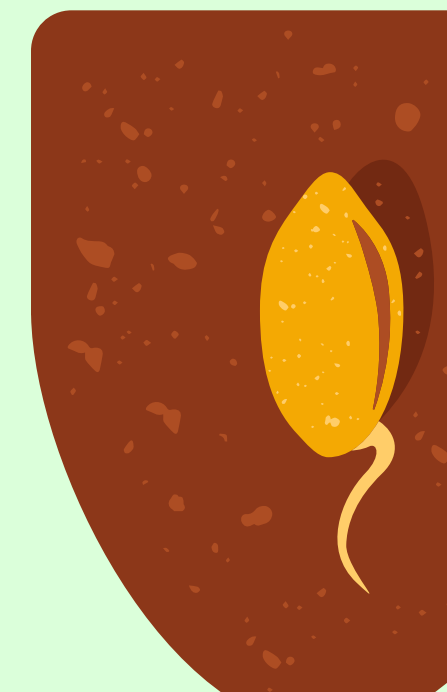
“What if I cannot grow?” Sunny thought.

Every morning, the rain came down and gave Sunny some water.

The warm sun shone above him.

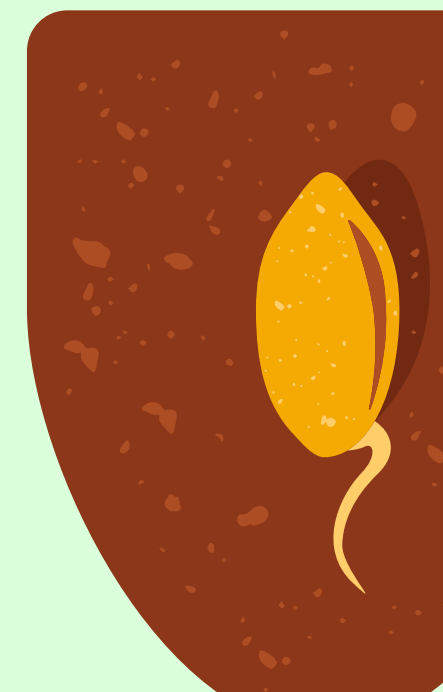
Slowly, Sunny started to grow. One day, a tiny green shoot came out of the ground.

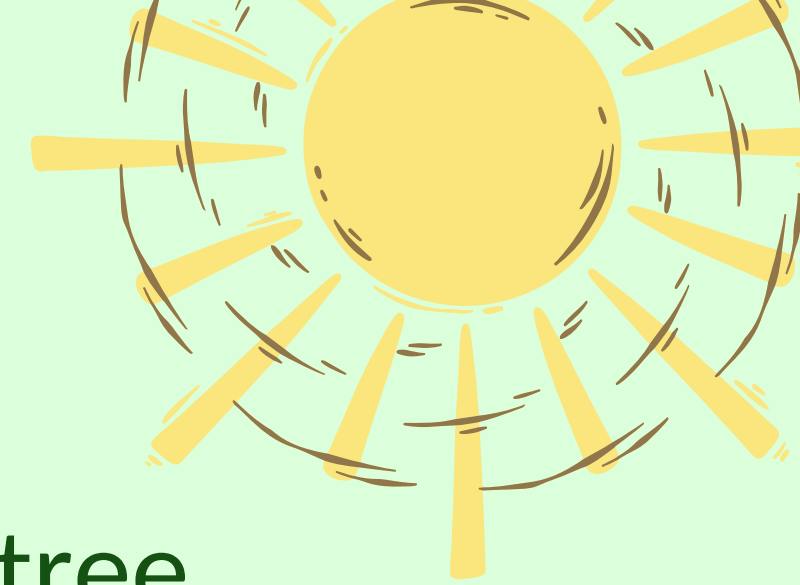
“Hello, world!” Sunny said happily.





He grew a little more every day.
Soon, he had small leaves.
The birds came and sat beside him.
Butterflies flew around his leaves. Sunny was very happy.
One afternoon, a strong wind came to the garden.
Sunny shook from side to side. "I am scared!" he cried. But
he stayed strong and held on to the soil.
When the wind stopped, Sunny looked around. He was still
standing!
"I did it!" he shouted.





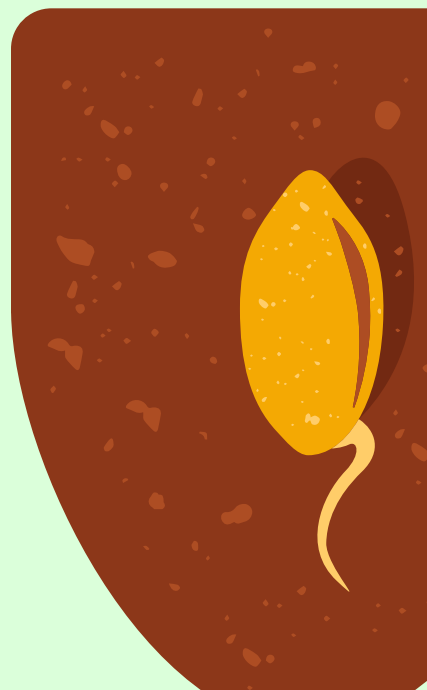
After many days, Sunny became a beautiful young tree. Children came to the garden and played under his shade. Sunny remembered the day when he was only a tiny seed.

He smiled and thought,
“Sometimes we are afraid because we do not know what
will happen.

But we should still try.”

And from that day on, Sunny was never afraid to grow.

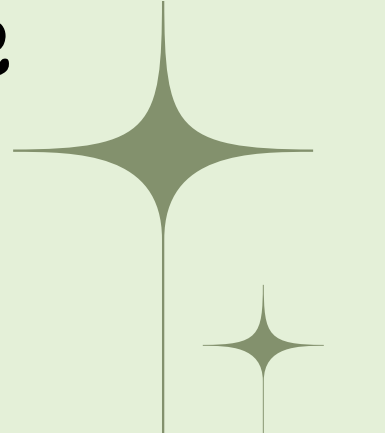
Moral: Be brave and never give up



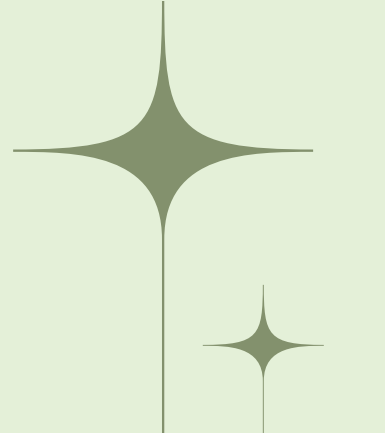


THE GREEN SIBLINGS

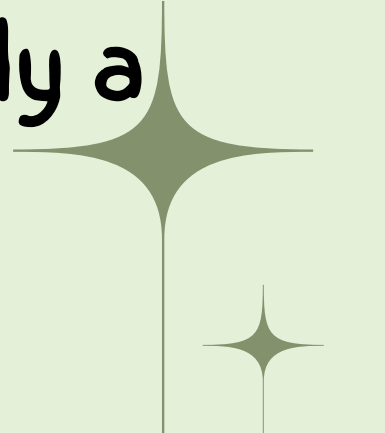
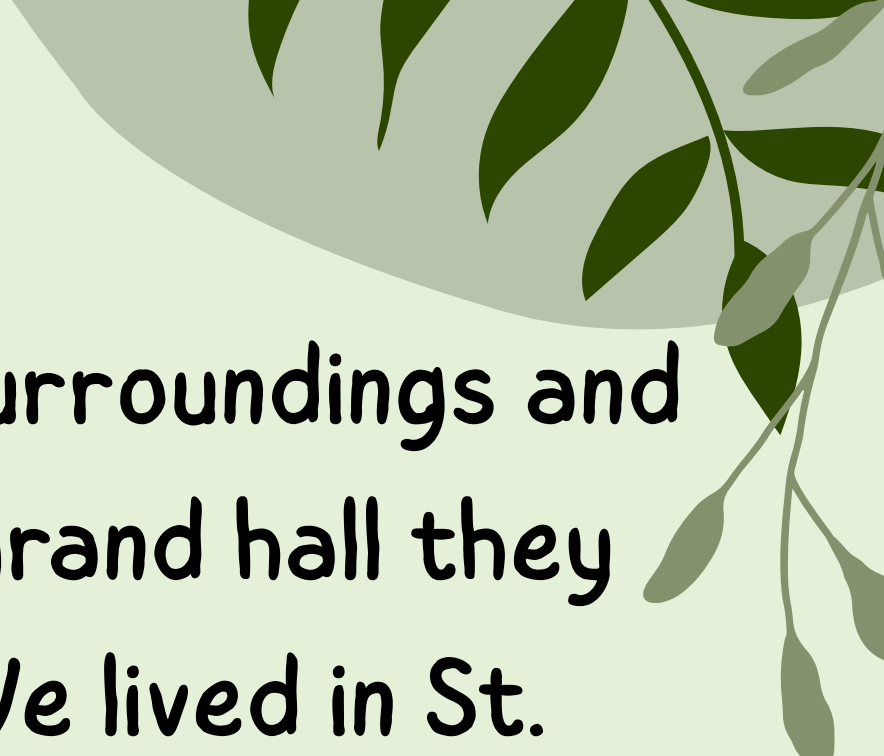
by Anvika Singh



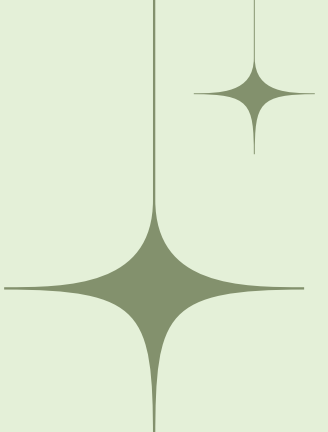
The sun was setting over the land of woolpit. Sir Jermiah rode his horse along his fields, checking the traps meant to catch wolves and other wild animals. Instead, he found two siblings. They wore old tunics made of seamless brown fabric that shined like the moon, but their skin was of a vibrant green color. The children clung to each other, sobbing and frightened. When Jermiah spoke to them in English, they replied in an unknown language which sounded like a rushing river. Other villagers also gathered at the scene. The siblings refused to eat the bread and butter the villagers offered them, until a farmer brought freshly harvested broad beans. The children ripped the stalk with lightning speed.



Jermiah took them to his bungalow, weeks later under his care the children slowly ate the normal diet of bread, butter and cooked meats. Something strange occurred, the vibrant green hue of their skin started to fade away, revealing a pale, ordinary complexion underneath, but the siblings were still facing hatred from the villagers. The boy remained feeble. Jermiah often found him spending his days staring out the window, pinning for a home he could not name. Before spring arrived, he grew sick and weak, leaving his sister in distress.

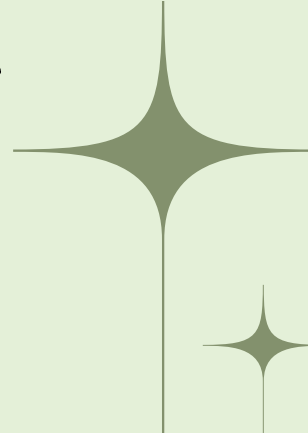


As months passed the siblings adapted into their new surroundings and learnt speak English. One evening, sitting in Jermiah's grand hall they finally shared a memory of where they came from "We lived in St. Martin's Land", said the girl with her eyes wandering into another world, "A country where the sun never shines. It is a world of forever twilight where everything is green. We were strolling around after dinner, when we heard a loud, beautiful sound full of hope – like the church bell, I hear now in woolpit". The boy though weak closed his eyes remembering the transition, "We followed the sound into a dark entrance. We walked through the darkness for hours, until suddenly a blinding but delightful light hit our eyes."



We stumbled into your bright golden fields, and the entrance closed behind us.” said the boy. The girl realizing that sun light and human food slowly killing her brother, she made a dauntless decision. With the help of a few sympathetic people of the village, she snuck her brother out to the edge of the fields on a foggy night from where they had appeared. They again saw the dark entrance from which they had first emerged, as they backed into the entrance, their fading green skin suddenly turned bright green again. They vanished back into the underground twilight of St. Martin’s land. There, the brother’s health slowly became better.

Leaving Sir Jermiah and the village behind.





The Quiet Sacrifices

Name: Kritika Patel

Category: Student

Class and section: 10th A



The soft evening breeze swished through the open window with a gentle swoosh, ruffling my hair. The hills were lush green and the paddy fields were full of crops, which made the swaying golden paddy look like a pile of gold. I was just about to close my notebook when the door opened with a strong force, and it might have flown away had it not been hinged.

"Ignace! Ignace! Guess who aced her science exam!"

My sister Cassie burst in through the door, threw away her bag and shoes, and ran straight into my arms, proudly holding a paper with a perfect score scribbled on top with a red pen.

"Cassie, what have I told you about your school stuff?"





I wasn't actually angry at her, just a little bit stressed, but my face must've been looking that way because it quickly deflated her bubbly nature. She withdrew her head, rotating her little foot on axis of her toe and sheepishly said, "That I should first put them away properly before talking about anything else. But... just look at this! It's a perfect hundred on hundred!" "That's great and all, but can we talk about this later? First clean up and have your lunch."

"But..."

"I said now."

"You're no fun!"

"I'm lots of fun! You, on the other hand, just have a bad timing. Okay, how about this : Have your lunch, then we'll go for a movie"





Her eyes sparkled up at the word 'movie' and quickly went to arrange her clothes. I just turned my head away, determined to not let her see the tears I have been holding back.

It's not like I've always been taking care of my little sister the eighteen years of my life. It wasn't until the 'Great War of Pride' in our country when I had to take the charge for both me and her. It was a bloody massacre- the most gruesome event of mankind I had ever experienced. The civil war killed thousands within our country, Sinchasia. Cassie was lucky that she wasn't older than two years old to remember it. Sometimes, I somewhat feel envious of her for that. Ever since the war, I had not been the same. But I had to be strong for her. I had to put on a hard façade to hide the fact that even in my late teens I get nightmares. I couldn't let my past life ruin hers too...





I had been successfully concealing my inner turmoil. Until last week...

Others get tears of joy when their dream gets fulfilled. They get overjoyed. But for me it brought nothing but devastation. I still remember how foolish it was of me to run towards the mailbox in the misty, foggy afternoon when I saw the postman leave. The box had only a single letter. Even one letter was strange enough.

Who'd write to me? I had no family, other than my sister. My parents were long gone, alone in Sinchasia with no post service.

With a heavy heart they had casted me and my sister out to a different country ten years ago so that we could survive. I didn't even know if they were alive.





The letter bore the triumphant words of my selection into my dream high profile job. You can't even take a wild guess how badly I had wanted this or how hard I had prepared for it. But never had I given a single thought to what I would do if I actually got selected. The letter said I had to join from tomorrow itself. But

how could I leave Cassie alone?

"I am ready! Let's go! I've even picked what movie to watch."
Cassie walked up just behind me, nudging me up impatiently. I knew I should have completed packing by now. I had to at least start. But, then again, it meant leaving Cassie alone for months. Cassie pinched my elbow, prompting me to stand. I quickly wiped my face and turned towards her, forcing a smile.





"I...uh...we'll go some other day," I managed to choke out.

Her face turned the brightest hue of red within a second.

"What? You promised.", she said angrily, as her grip on the edge of her skirt, with which she was fiddling earlier, tightened. The way she was herself creating a problem for herself , and for me also, because of her naivety was horribly getting under my skin.

"I SAID SHUT YOUR MOUTH CASSANDRA DELACROIX!"

She dropped the hold on her skirt immediately. I expected her to pout or to argue childishly. Instead, she sat down beside me, her head bowed down. She gripped my hand tight and muttered in a low voice, "Still worried about it, huh?"





The way she said that unexpectedly sent a shiver down my spine. I opened my mouth but couldn't speak. After a couple of minutes, I found myself utter a single word.

"What?"

She didn't lift her gaze, but steadily stood up. It oddly struck me that I never realized how much she had grown in the past few years .

"Didn't you ever question how you received that letter just a week ago when it should've come at least a fortnight ago?"

As unnerving as it was that she knew about the letter, it sprouted a seed of doubt. How on earth did she also know when the acceptance letter is expected to be delivered ?

She looked past the window, her neat hair becoming a little ruffled by a strong gale that blew in. But she didn't step back or flinch.





"Do you even know what you're talking about?" I asked, trying to muster up my usual commanding voice.

She turned her back on me, her fingers digging deeply into the curtains. For a few seconds, none of us spoke. The silence grew heavy with each second. The curtains stretched down just an inch. Then suddenly she fiercely turned towards me, and I was surprised to see tears silently streaming down her face. But certainly, those tears seemed to be flowing for a far greater pain than just a simple movie. Then her shoulders started shaking and she threw her head back and let out a bitter, mirthless laugh.

"Know? Of course I knew. My dear brother... I was the one who orchestrated this show. Just because you're older than me doesn't mean that I am too young to take care of myself or control things around."





"She cupped her hands under my chin and gently lifted it so that her eyes were piercing mine. Her gaze softened just a fraction. I withdrew my head and said, "Care to explain?"

She sighed. " I guess you ought to know. I hid the acceptance letter from you. I didn't want you to leave."

At this point I had quite convinced myself that she was lying. "That's impossible", I said. "I literally saw the postman leave that day after posting the letter."

She smirked smugly , her tears now slowly subsiding. "The postman? Or the silhouette of the postman on that foggy day ? I had the letter hidden for quite a few weeks, wondering if I should tell you about it or not. It was me who you saw post it in the mailbox."

"You've no right to take decisions for me!"





"I perfectly know what I did. You know why I gave it back? You have worked so hard for it, Ignace... Haven't I seen how many sleepless nights you had? You deserve to reach your goals. I can take care of myself. You don't have to worry about me."

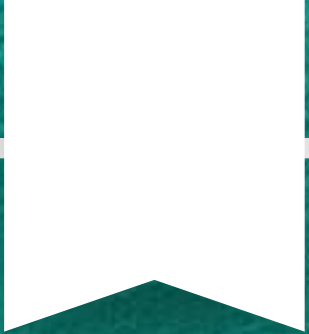
My fingers gripped the chair so tight that my knuckles turned white. "But how? I can't leave you."

Cassie raised her eyebrow, "When are you going to understand? I am big enough to take care of myself. Anyways, the science result test you just ignored to see was a scholarship exam. I will get quite a decent amount every month to take care of the home."

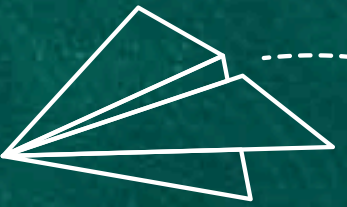
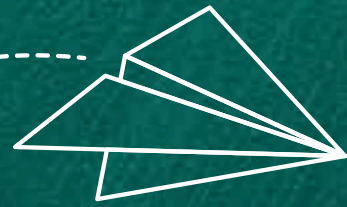
In that brief moment when she caressed my cheek, her words strong words still ringing in my ears, she reminded me of my mother's calm yet strongly determined way of dealing with adversity, and her bright eyes were reminiscent to that of my father, who was the voice of the group, to whom everyone always looked up to. It made me believe that my parents never truly left me. A part of them was always with me, even if I acknowledged it a bit late.

"You truly have grown up so fast..."

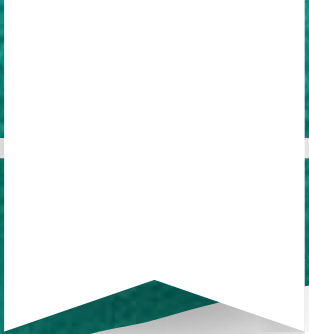




1. The bell that never grew old



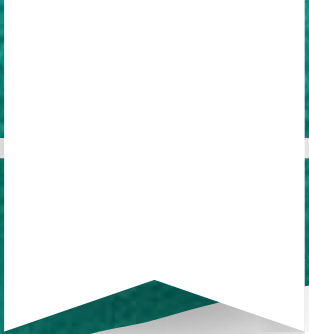
UDIT CHAUHAN



**The Sound Across the Five Wings
It echoes through the corridors
of brick and weathered stone,
A steady, rhythmic bronze heartbeat
with which we are always known.**



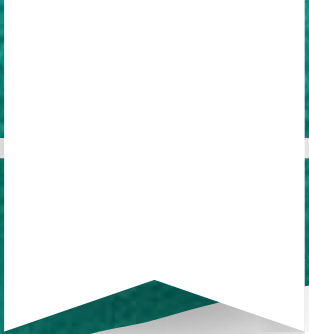
**Across all the Five Great Wings it sings,
where the morning sunlight creeps,
Awakening the silent sleepy halls
where idle quiet sleeps.**



**It marks the start marks the end,
where it counts our growing years,
with a timeless thread that binds
our laughter and our fears.**



**Sometimes it tolled with heavy weight—
of stern, demanding chime,
That warned of test papers unrolled
and fleeting exam time fear.**



**And yet, how fast its timbre changed
when afternoon drew near!
A joyous bell of liberty,
releases us from fears.**

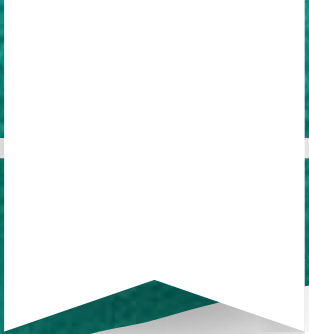


**Delivering our restless feet
from punishment's strict lines,
To turn a moment's quiet scolding
into stories divine.**

**Remember how the mornings bloomed
in quiet, ordered grace?
A thousand voices combined in one
within the assembly place.**

11. The Tapestry of Mornings

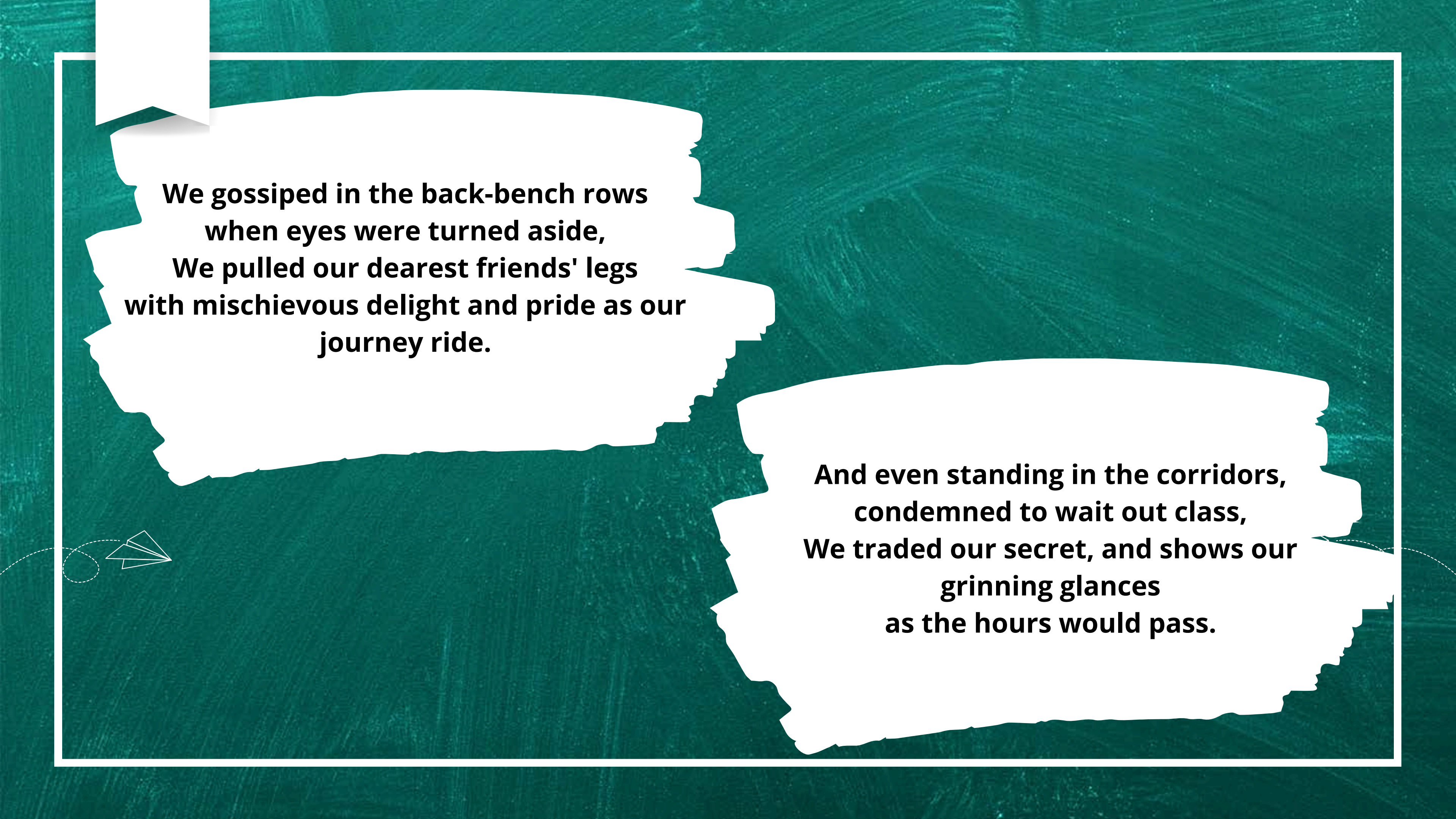
**The crispness of the uniforms,
the solemn, rising prayer,
The feeling that a wider world
was waiting out for sure there.**



**Then scattered off to classrooms
where millions of memories live,
A place where teachers gave us knowledge
That's only a person with patient hearts can
give.**



**A sudden nod of praise from them
could light our darkened day,
Transforming simple chalk and board
to gold along the way.**

The background is a dark green chalkboard with visible texture. Two white, torn-edge paper scraps are pasted onto it. The first scrap is on the left and contains the first two lines of text. The second scrap is on the right and contains the next two lines. In the bottom left corner, there is a small white line drawing of a paper airplane with dashed lines indicating its path.

**We gossiped in the back-bench rows
when eyes were turned aside,
We pulled our dearest friends' legs
with mischievous delight and pride as our
journey ride.**

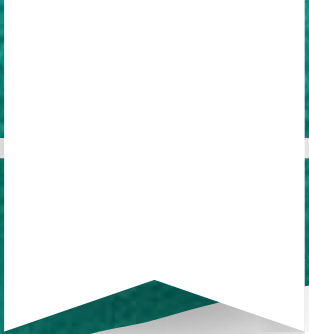
**And even standing in the corridors,
condemned to wait out class,
We traded our secret, and shows our
grinning glances
as the hours would pass.**

**When noon arrived, the chime declared
the sanctuary hour-**

**We ran toward the Bamboo Garden's
green and shaded bower where we feel
our sense of belonging.**

III. The Garden and the Grounds

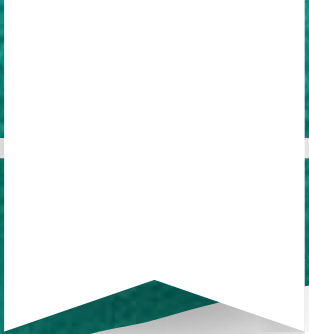
**We unpacked our lunches, traded bites
beneath the rustling leaves,
Or sat alone in a peaceful thought
that quiet youth weaves.**



**Beyond the garden lay the fields,
expanse of green and brown,
The varied sports grounds where we sought
our athletic crowns.**

**On Sports Day, we cheer and thunder
echoed wildly through the air,
While Annual Functions decorated the stage
just like a magic bright and fair**





**We counted down the blazing days
as June drew slowly near,
Dreaming of summer holidays,
the best time of the year!**

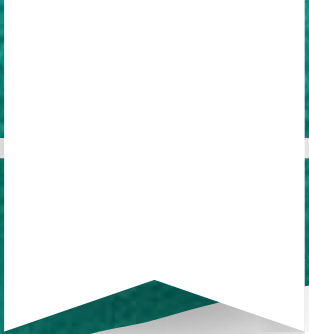


**And when the festive season came,
with lights and holiday grace,
We packed our bags, yet left our hearts
within this cherished place.**

**What makes these corridors so rare?
What holds this campus grand?
It's not just walls or dusty boards,
or an acres of the land.**

IV. The Soul of Ranipur

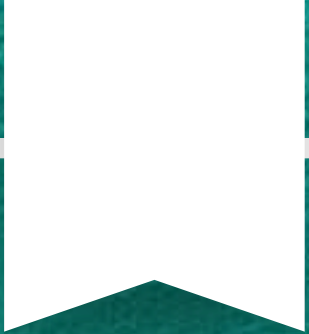
**It's the quiet discipline
that shapes the wild mind,
The ethos taught by teachers
who are rigorous yet kind to us.**



**It's the culture built on grace,
where moral pillars stands in its pace,
Where our strength is measured in a way
Like a mathematics ray.**



**A kindness shown to those within,
a deep and guiding creed,
That teaches us that character
that is proven by its deed.**



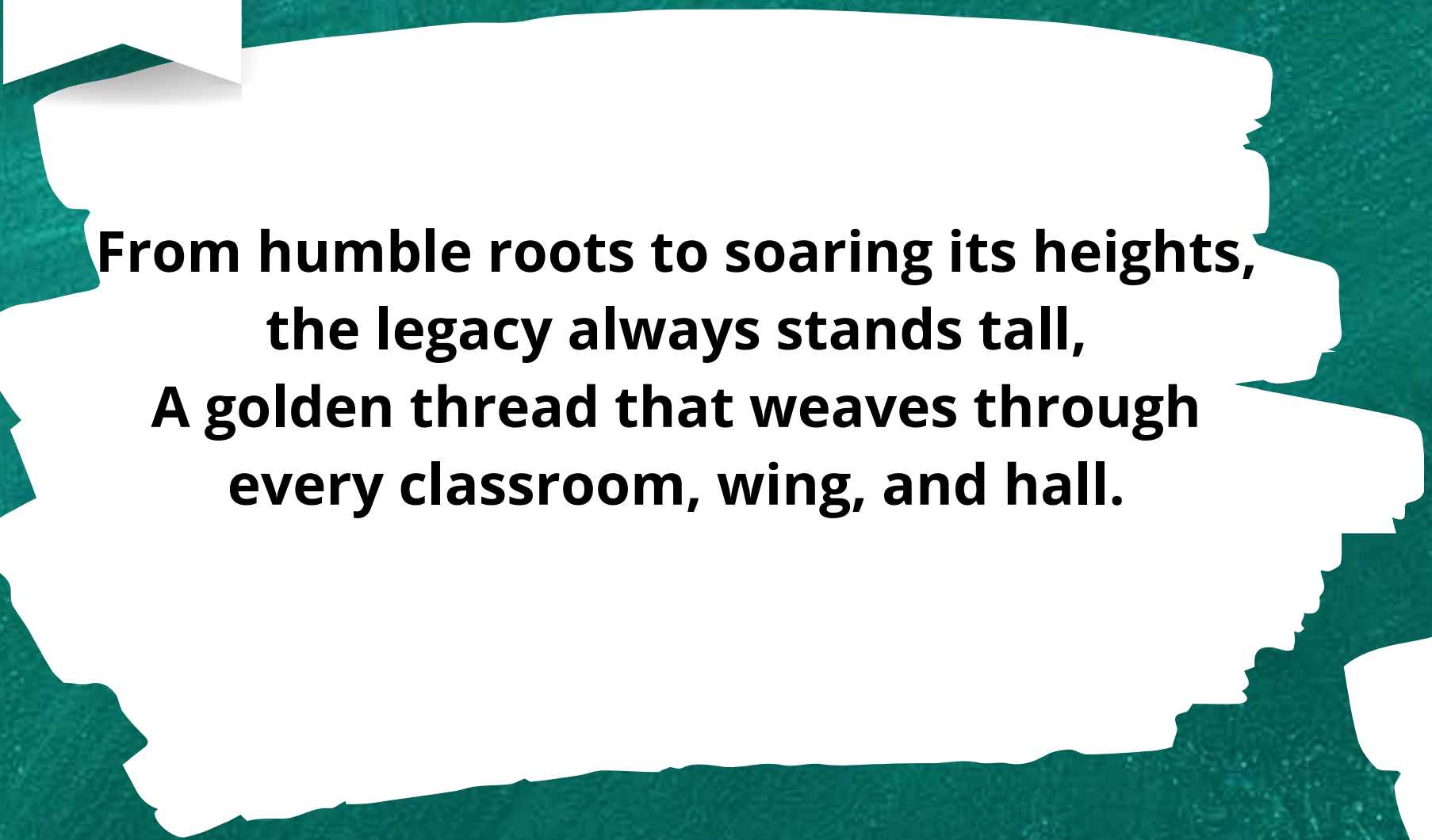
**Here, friendships were not merely made;
they fused into our soul,
With opportunities that carved
our parts into a whole.**



**Fifty long years of guiding lights,
of wisdom, growth, and grace,
A Golden Jubilee now crowns
this well-loved, sacred place!**

V. The Golden Jubilee Chime

**Five decades strong, the bell has tolled
through golden morning air,
A witness to countless young lives
guided in its care.**

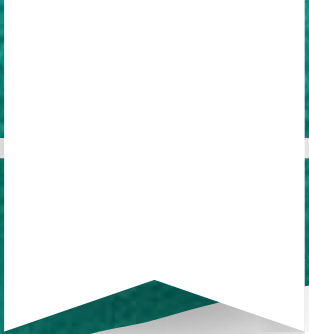
A white, torn-edge paper graphic with a rectangular tab at the top left, serving as a background for the first text block.

**From humble roots to soaring its heights,
the legacy always stands tall,
A golden thread that weaves through
every classroom, wing, and hall.**

A white, torn-edge paper graphic with a rectangular tab at the top right, serving as a background for the second text block.

**We stand upon this beginning now,
where past and future meets,
And honour fifty years of victories,
of proud and bittersweet.**



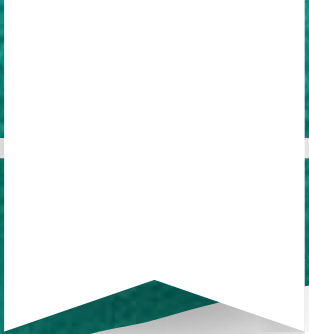


**I look ahead through misted time,
Only a half-century away—
What will become of these great halls
when we are old and grey?**

VI. Fifty Years into the Blue

**I see high-tech innovations rise,
sleek towers reaching high,
Still toiling beyond the blue,
towards those dreams that touch the
sky!**

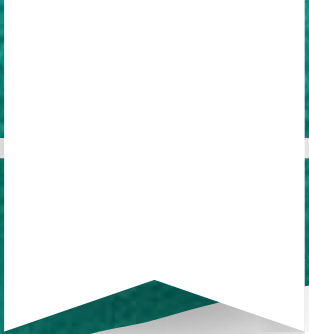




**And when at last, as weathered souls,
we wanted to walk through these
gates once more,
With silver hair and weary steps
upon this familiar floor,**



**Our old chime will ring again—
With a clear, silver, sweet, and bold sound
And instantly the child inside
will break the winter cold.**



**For stones may age and trees may fall,
The seasons turn to dust,
But in the bell that rings for us,
time places no rust.**



**It rings for who we used to be,
and who we grew to become.
The eternal pulse of our beloved
DPS Ranipur,
The Bell That Never Grew Old.**



THE DAY I REALISED I WAS GROWING UP

BY ADITRI RASTOGI

XII-D

STUDENT

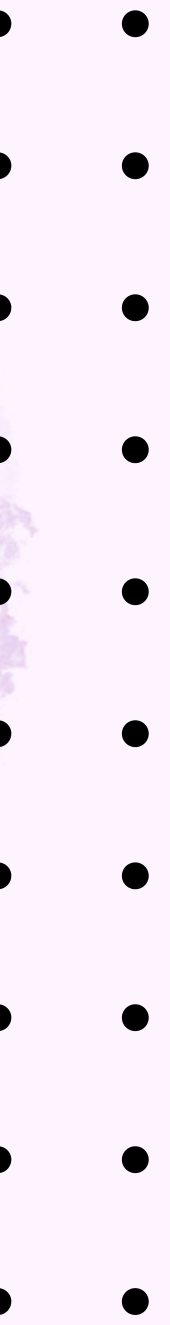
There are some days that quietly change the way we think, even though they begin like any other day. For me, that day was 6th July 2026, when I visited Hindustan Unilever Ltd as part of my school's summer internship programme. That morning, I was filled with excitement and nervousness. I was excited because I was finally going to see one of India's biggest companies from inside. At the same time, I couldn't stop thinking, "What if someone asks me a question? What if I have to answer in front of my teachers, the company staff, and all the other students?" I was even worried about whether I would get to sit with my friends. Looking back now, those little worries remind me of how much I still had to learn.



As soon as I entered the campus, I looked around in amazement. The building was much bigger than I had imagined, and everything was so neat that it almost didn't feel like a factory. Seeing products from brands I had used for years, especially the beauty and makeup products, made me realise that every item on a store shelf has a long journey before it reaches us. Until then, I had never really thought about the people behind those products. As we moved through different sections of the company, I observed the employees carefully. They worked with complete focus and dedication. Every person had a responsibility, and each task mattered.



It wasn't just about doing a job; it was about working together to achieve something bigger. That was when I understood that earning a living is not as easy as it seems. Behind every salary are countless hours of hard work, discipline, and responsibility. On my way home, I couldn't stop thinking. For the first time, I wasn't thinking about homework or exams. Instead, I kept asking myself what kind of future I wanted. Would I become an independent girl who could take care of herself and support her family, or would I always depend on others? That question stayed with me long after the internship ended.



That experience also made me realise something about myself. I had always wondered whether I would be able to handle the challenges of the real world. But after those three days, I felt more confident. Watching people work with so much dedication made me think about my own future. I realised that if they can work so hard every day for their families, then I can also work hard to achieve my dreams. Success doesn't come overnight, and it certainly doesn't come without effort.

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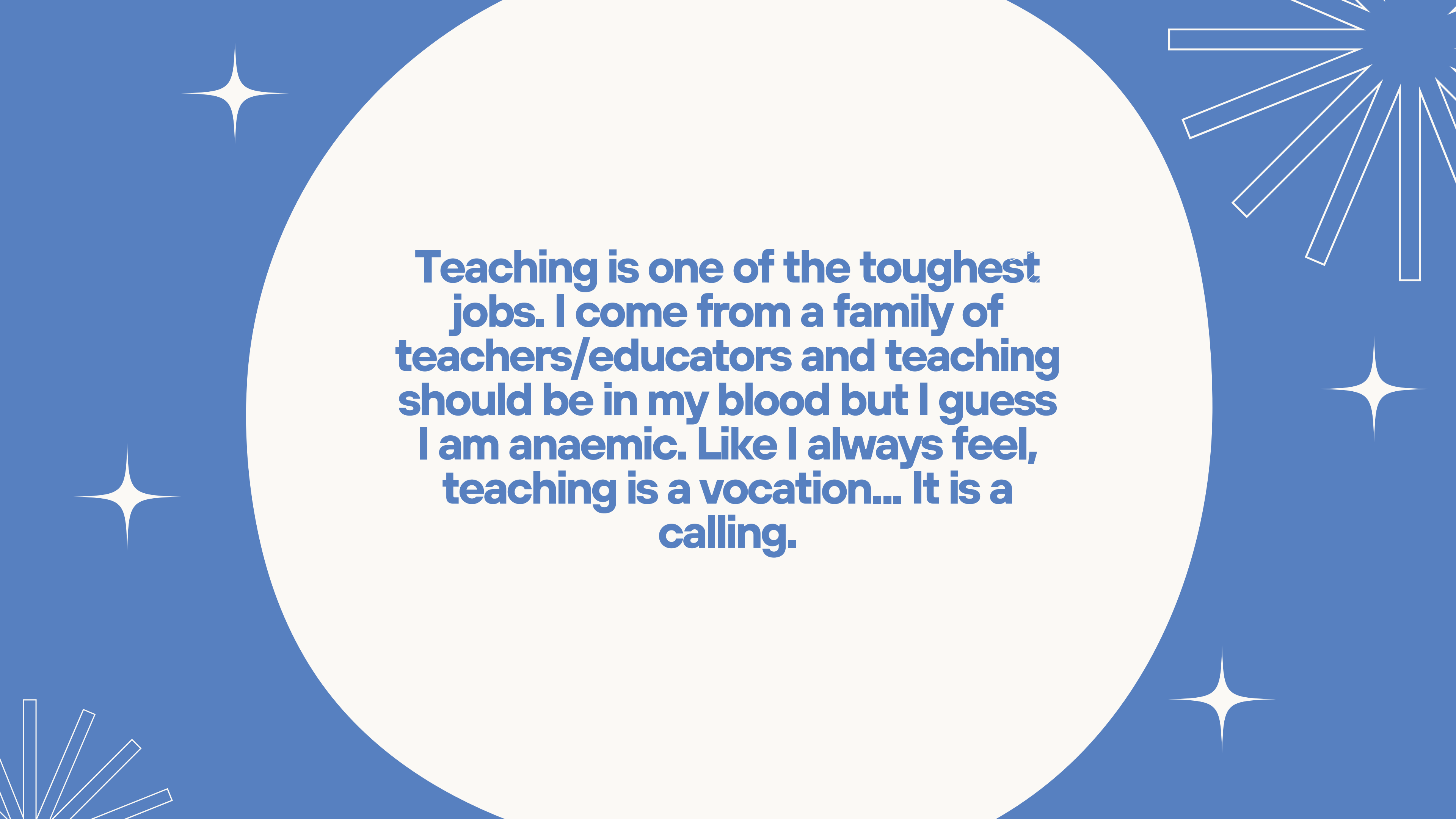
When I first walked into Hindustan Unilever, I thought I was just visiting a company. When I walked out, I carried something much more valuable than information about how products are made. I carried a new way of thinking. I realized that growing up isn't about becoming an adult in a single day. It begins when you start thinking seriously about your future, understand the value of hard work, and believe that you are capable of building a life of your own.



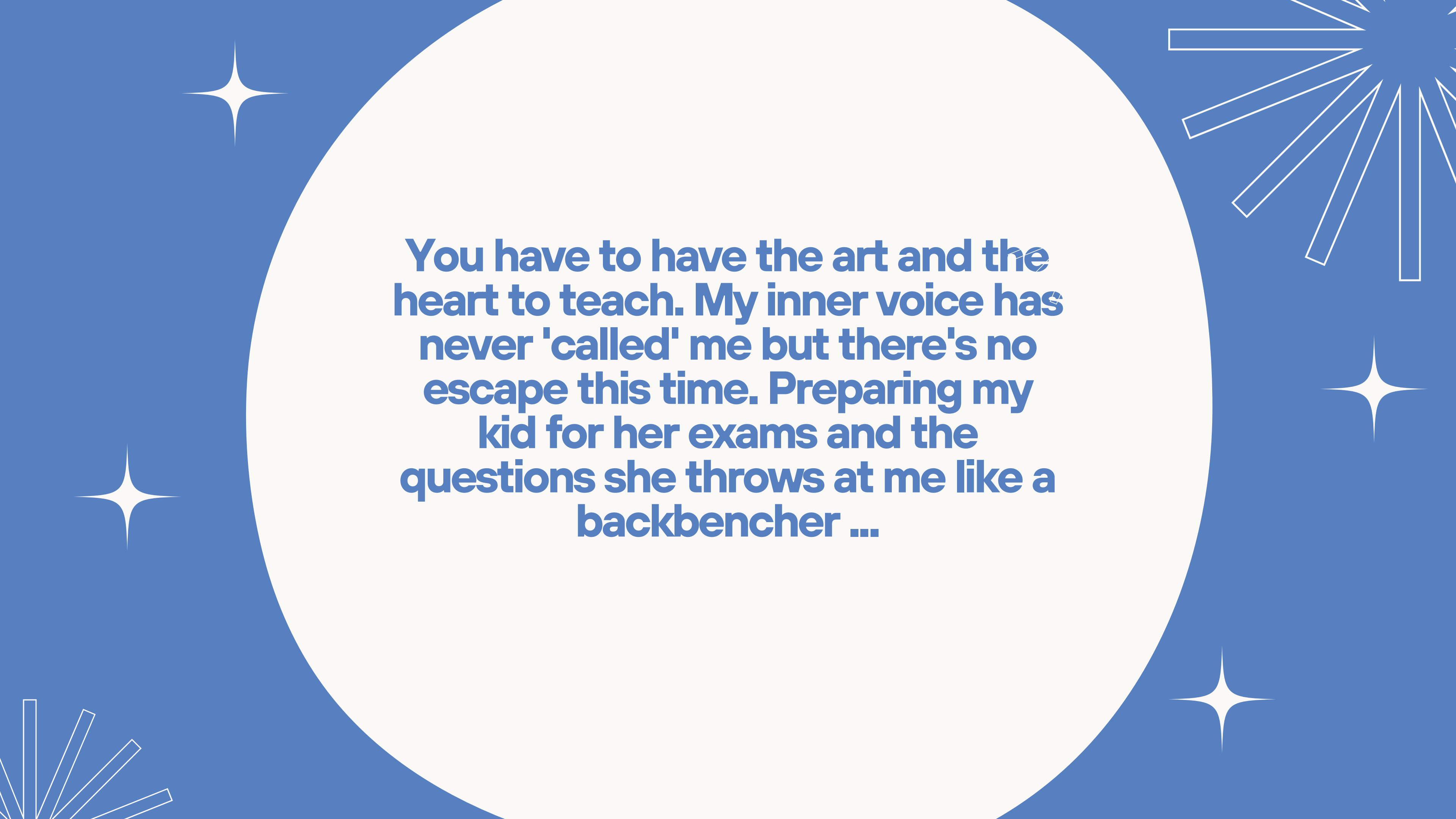
TEACHING
BLUES

SHILPA UPADHYAY

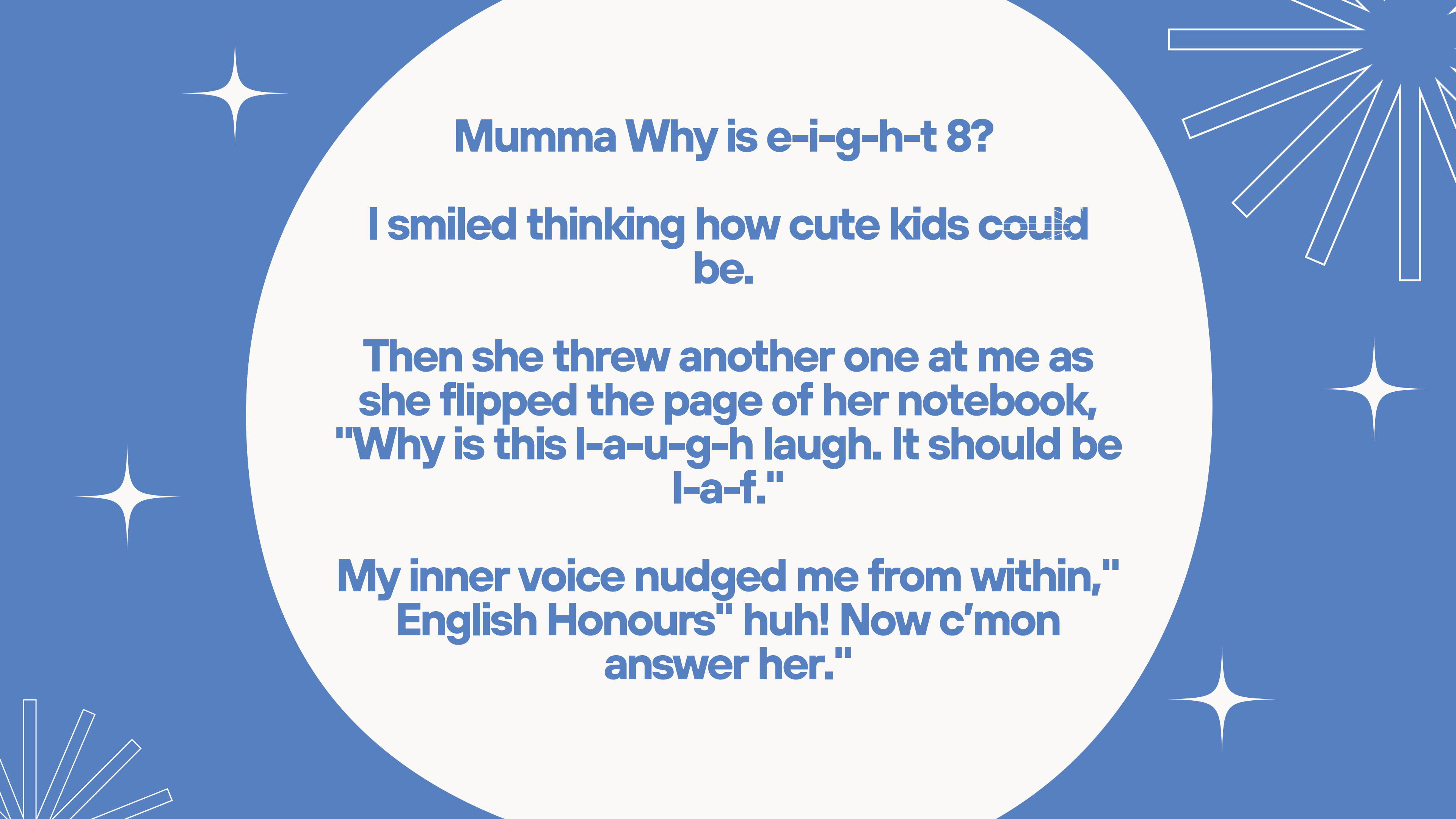




Teaching is one of the toughest jobs. I come from a family of teachers/educators and teaching should be in my blood but I guess I am anaemic. Like I always feel, teaching is a vocation... It is a calling.



You have to have the art and the heart to teach. My inner voice has never 'called' me but there's no escape this time. Preparing my kid for her exams and the questions she throws at me like a backbencher ...

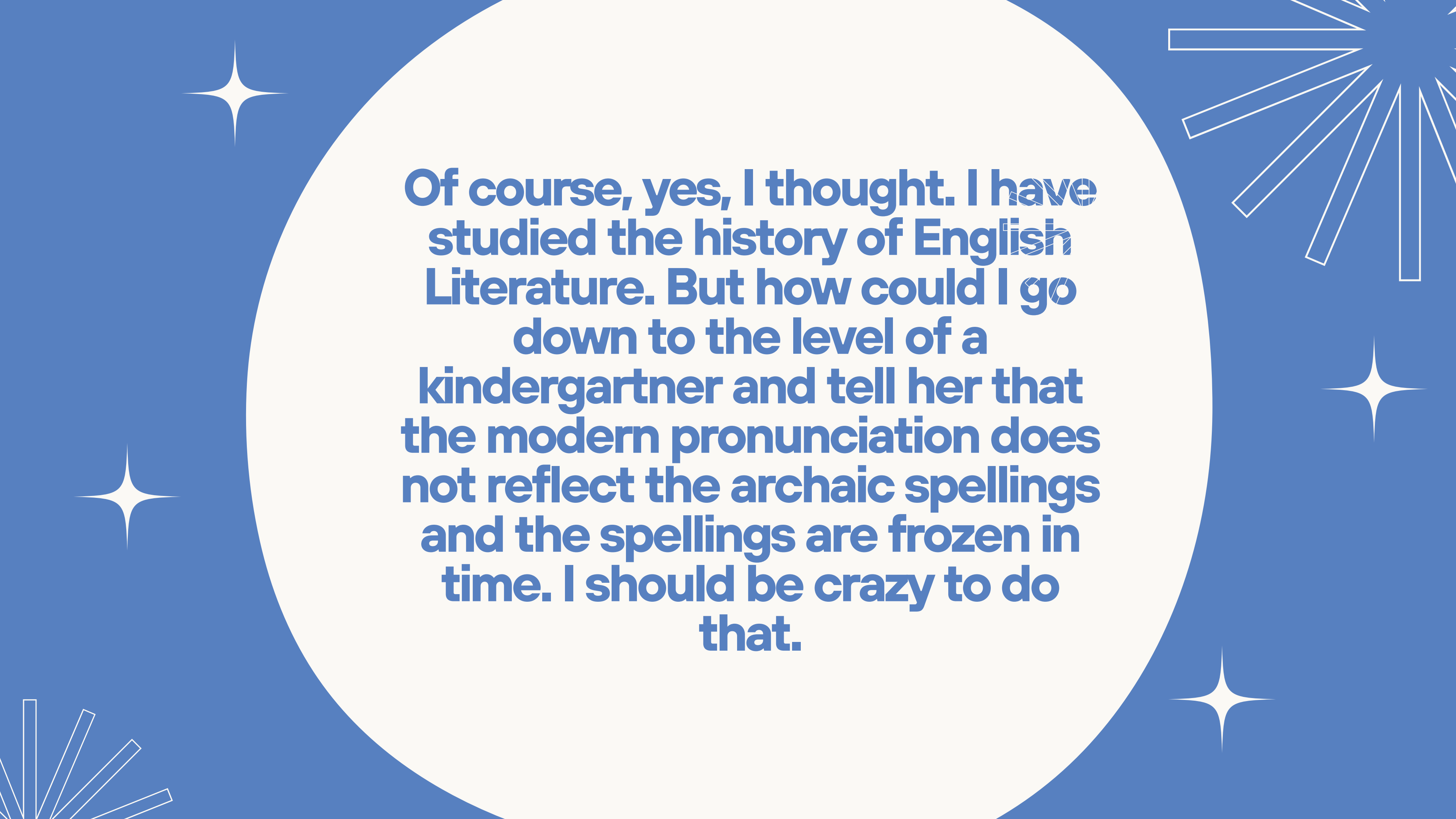


Mumma Why is e-i-g-h-t 8?

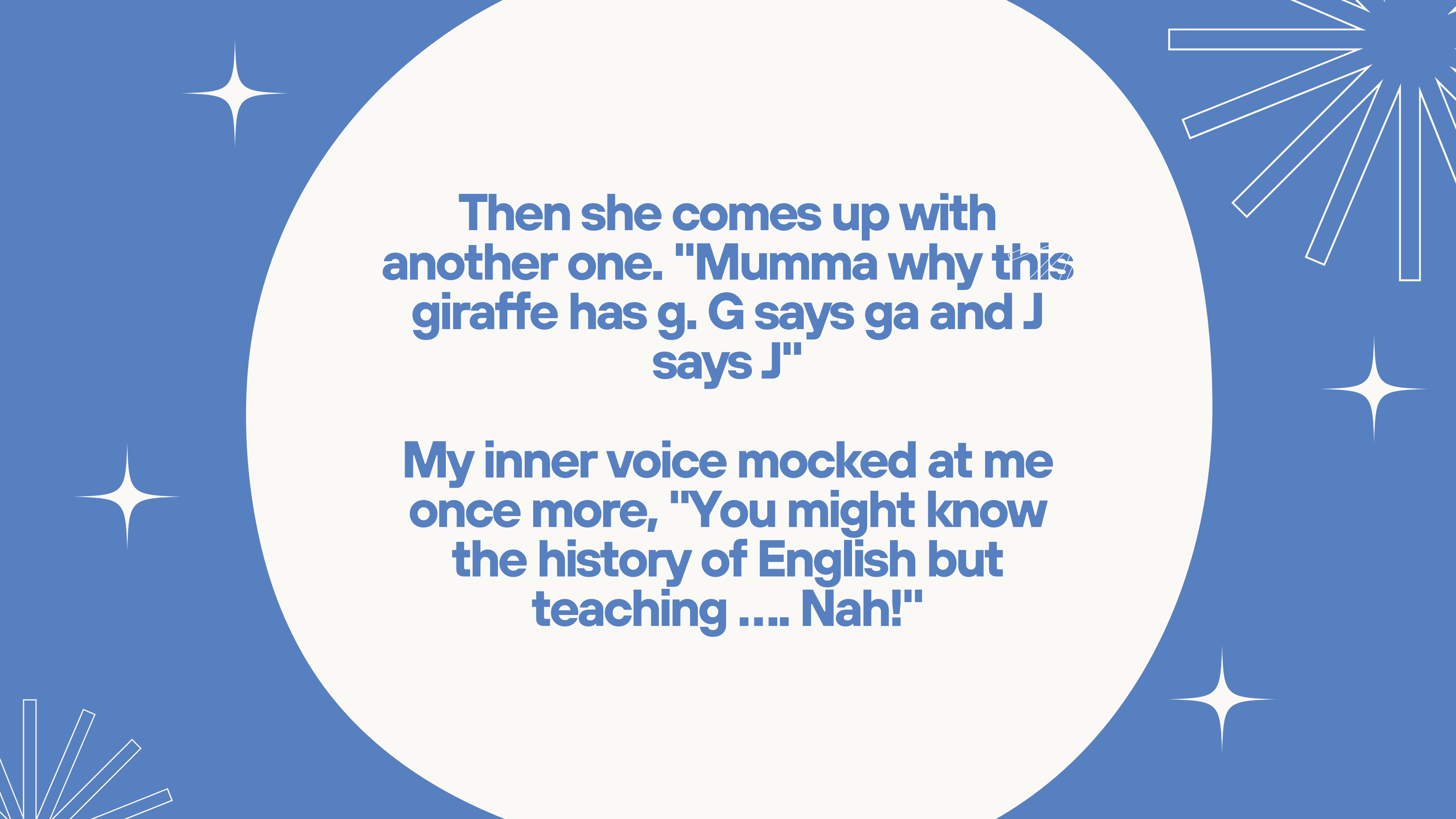
I smiled thinking how cute kids could be.

Then she threw another one at me as she flipped the page of her notebook, "Why is this l-a-u-g-h laugh. It should be l-a-f."

My inner voice nudged me from within, "English Honours" huh! Now c'mon answer her."

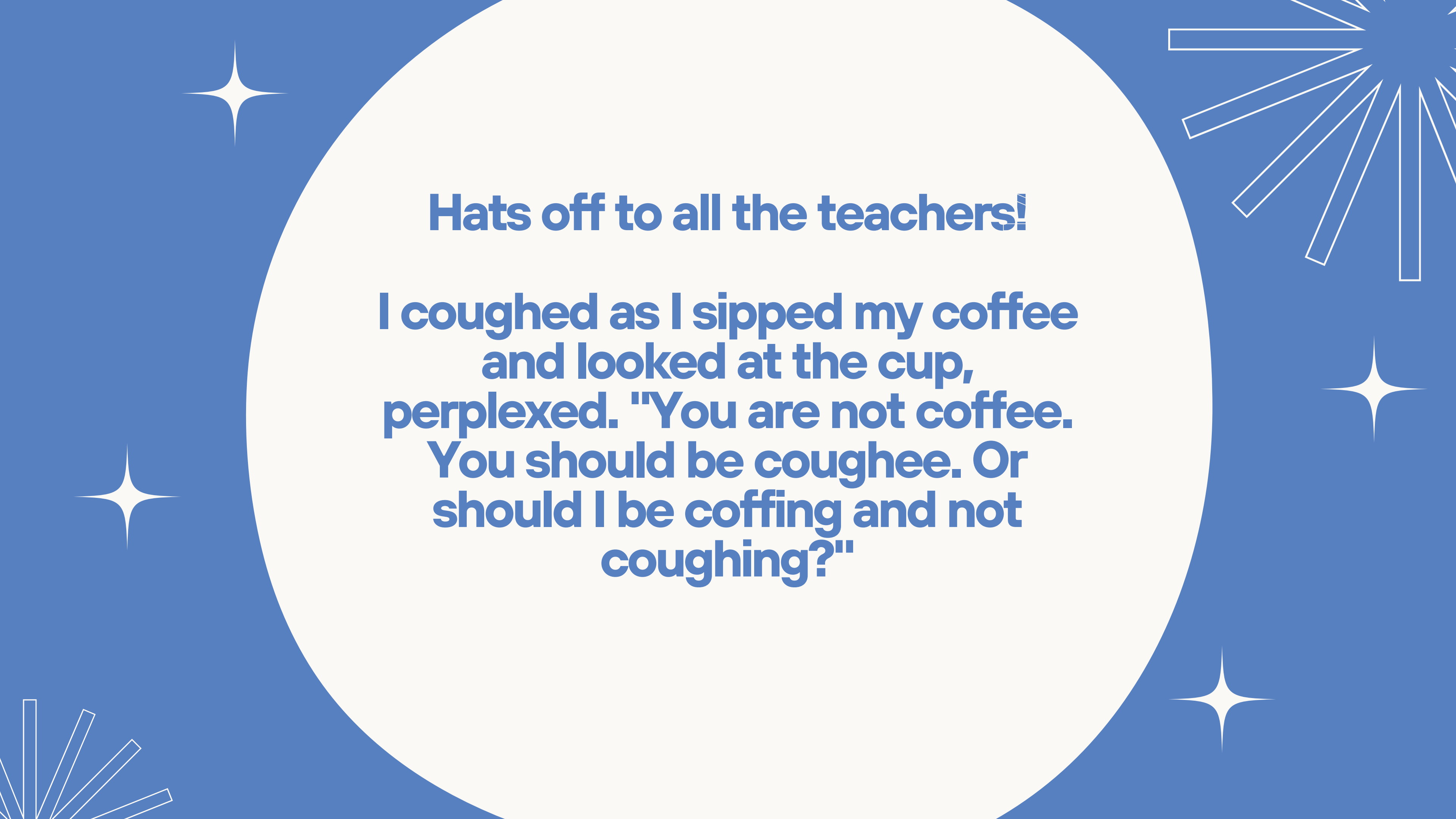


**Of course, yes, I thought. I have
studied the history of English
Literature. But how could I go
down to the level of a
kindergartner and tell her that
the modern pronunciation does
not reflect the archaic spellings
and the spellings are frozen in
time. I should be crazy to do
that.**



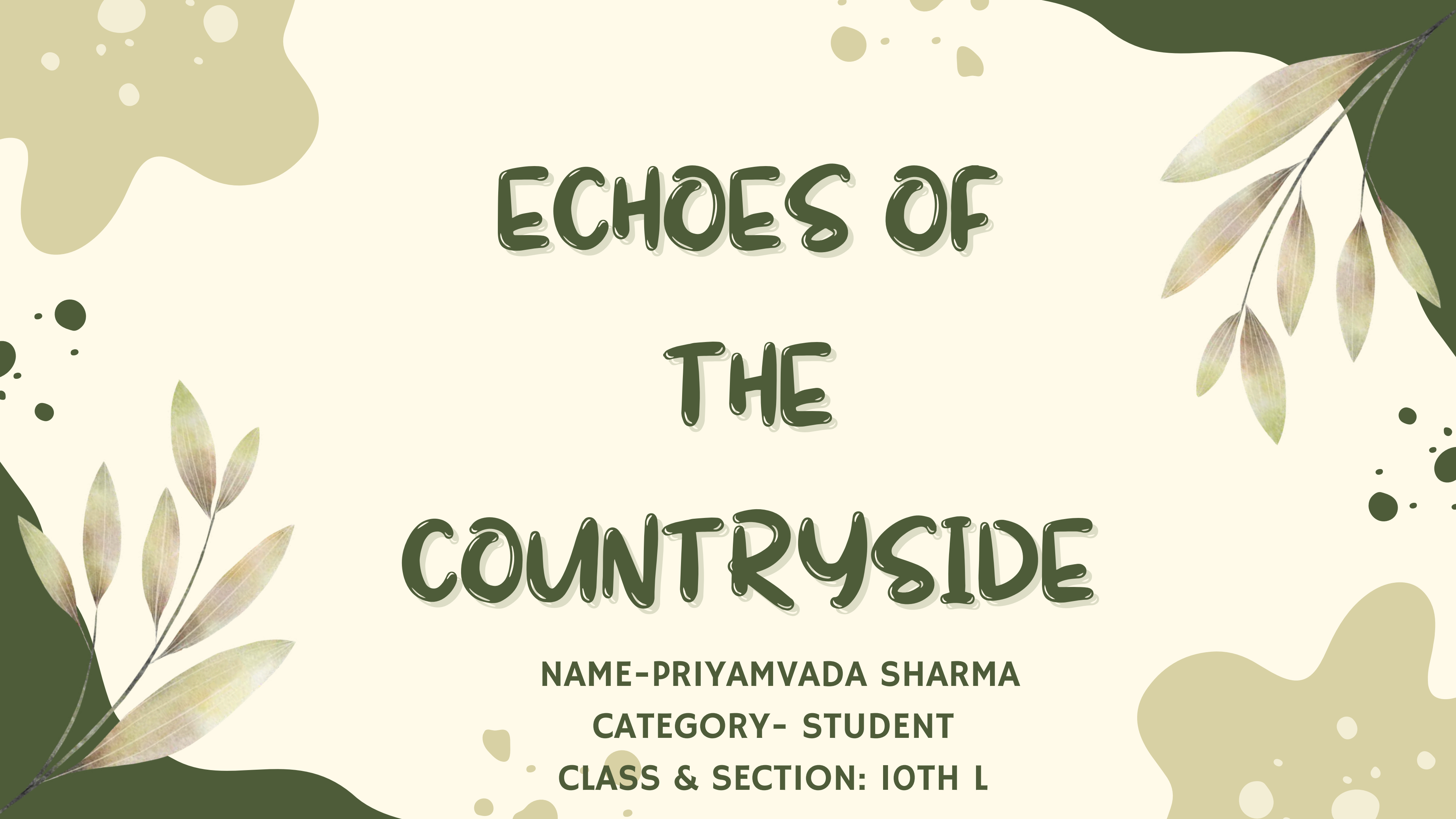
**Then she comes up with
another one. "Mumma why this
giraffe has g. G says ga and J
says J"**

**My inner voice mocked at me
once more, "You might know
the history of English but
teaching Nah!"**



Hats off to all the teachers!

**I coughed as I sipped my coffee
and looked at the cup,
perplexed. "You are not coffee.
You should be coughee. Or
should I be coffing and not
coughing?"**

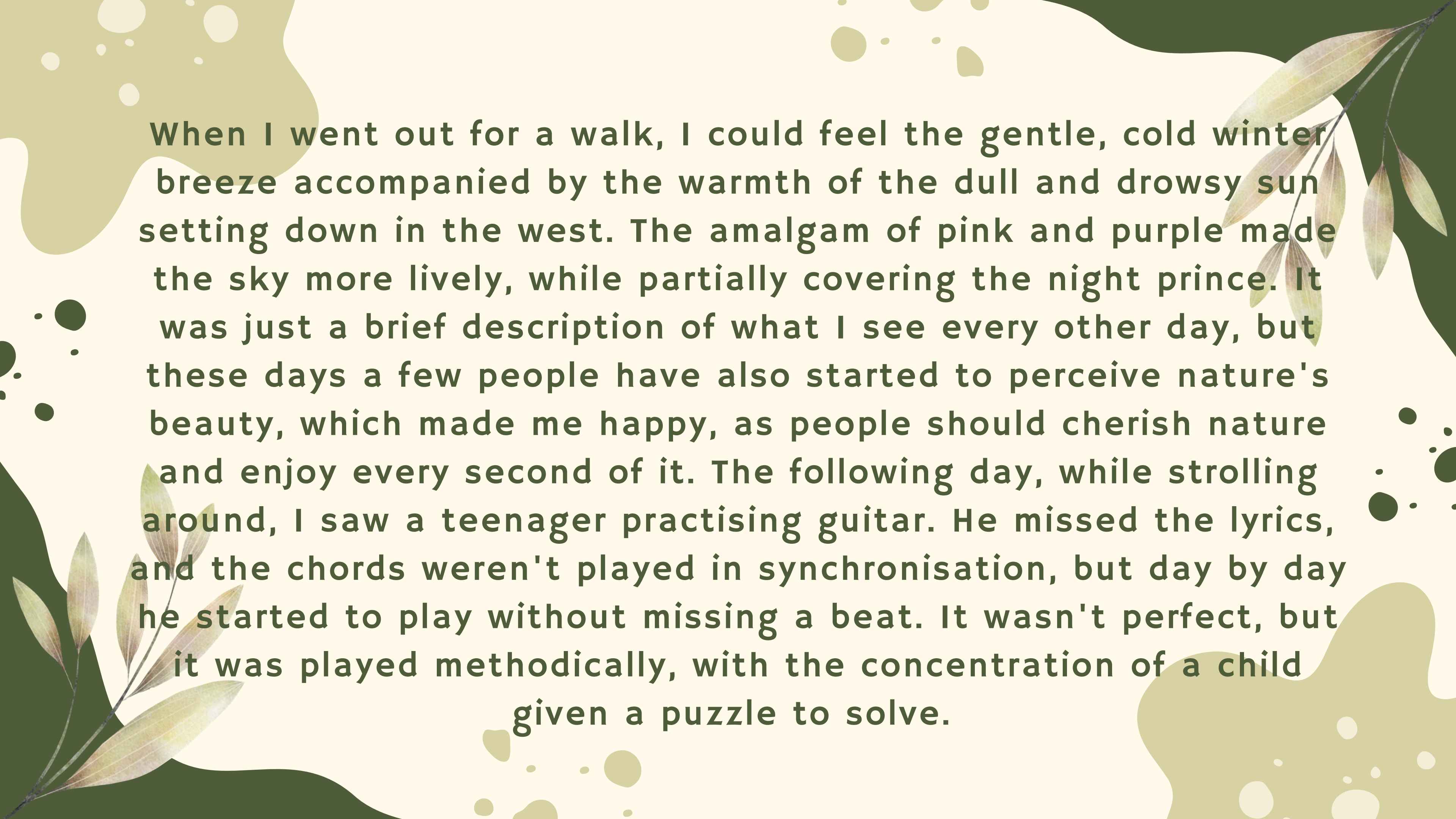
The background features a light cream color with various green elements. In the top left, there's a large, irregular green shape with white dots. In the top right, a branch with several green leaves extends from the edge. In the bottom left, another branch with green leaves is visible. The bottom right has a large, irregular green shape with white dots. The title text is centered and has a slight drop shadow.

ECHOES OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

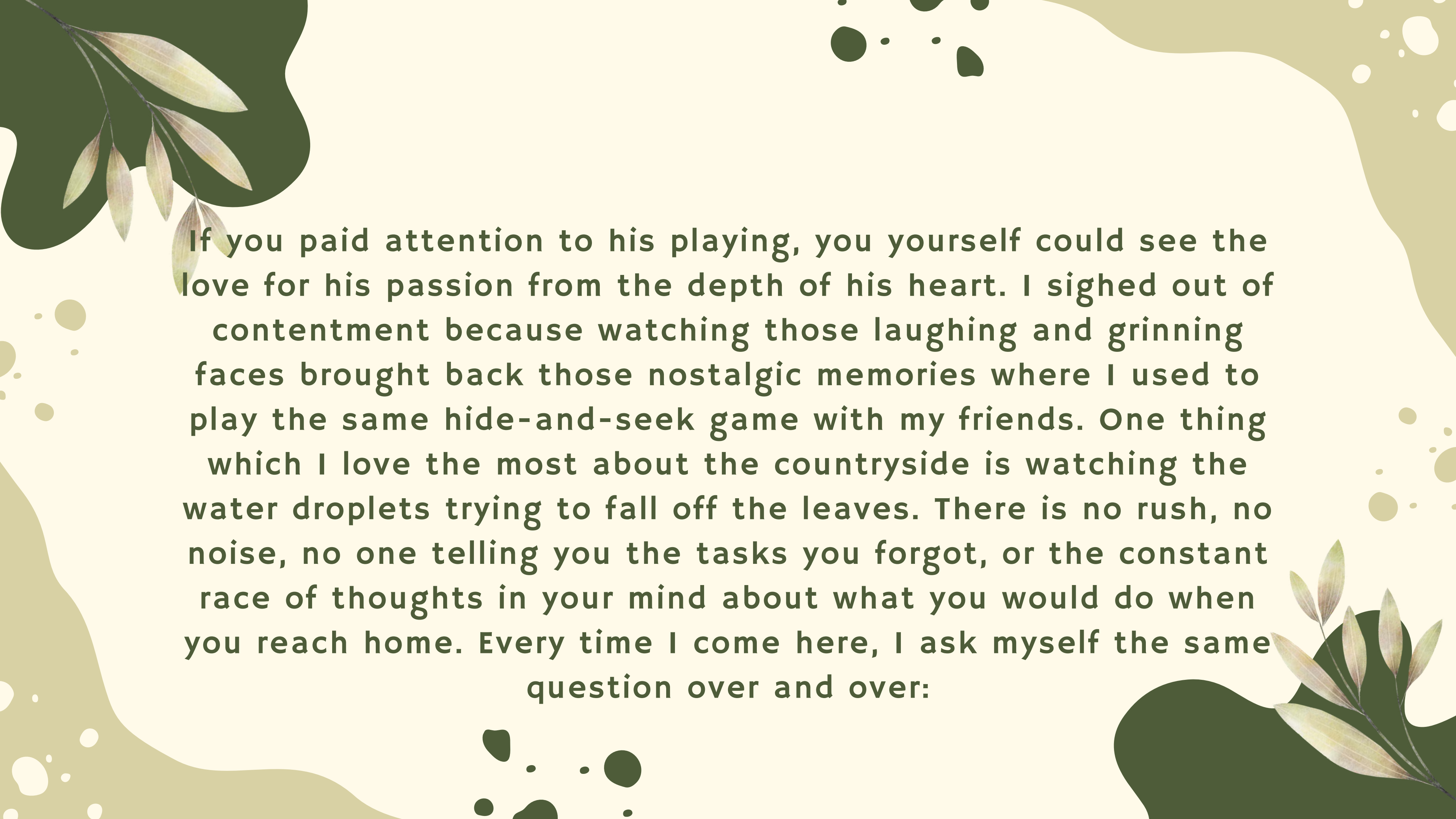
NAME-PRIYAMVADA SHARMA

CATEGORY- STUDENT

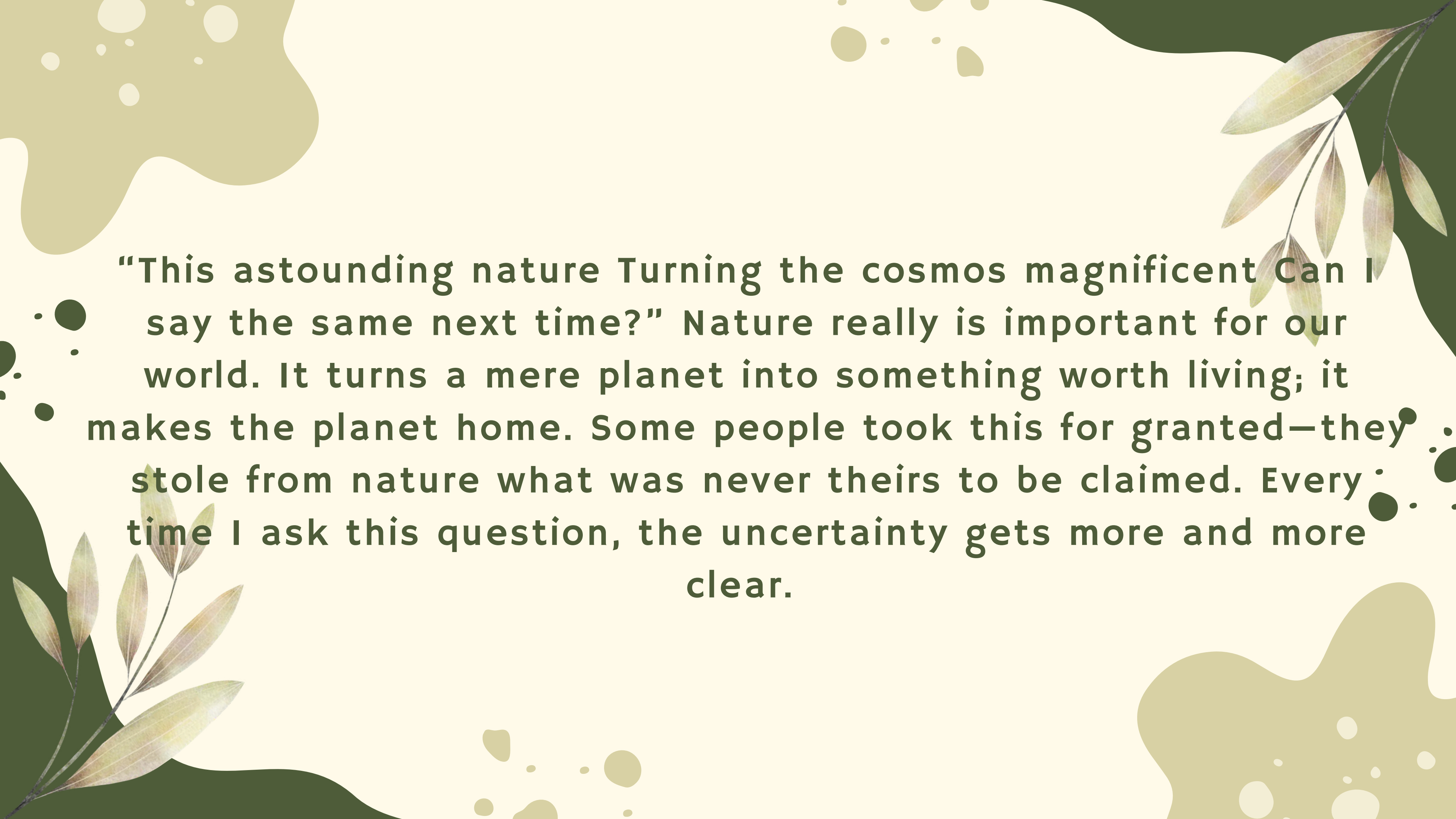
CLASS & SECTION: 10TH L



When I went out for a walk, I could feel the gentle, cold winter breeze accompanied by the warmth of the dull and drowsy sun setting down in the west. The amalgam of pink and purple made the sky more lively, while partially covering the night prince. It was just a brief description of what I see every other day, but these days a few people have also started to perceive nature's beauty, which made me happy, as people should cherish nature and enjoy every second of it. The following day, while strolling around, I saw a teenager practising guitar. He missed the lyrics, and the chords weren't played in synchronisation, but day by day he started to play without missing a beat. It wasn't perfect, but it was played methodically, with the concentration of a child given a puzzle to solve.



If you paid attention to his playing, you yourself could see the love for his passion from the depth of his heart. I sighed out of contentment because watching those laughing and grinning faces brought back those nostalgic memories where I used to play the same hide-and-seek game with my friends. One thing which I love the most about the countryside is watching the water droplets trying to fall off the leaves. There is no rush, no noise, no one telling you the tasks you forgot, or the constant race of thoughts in your mind about what you would do when you reach home. Every time I come here, I ask myself the same question over and over:

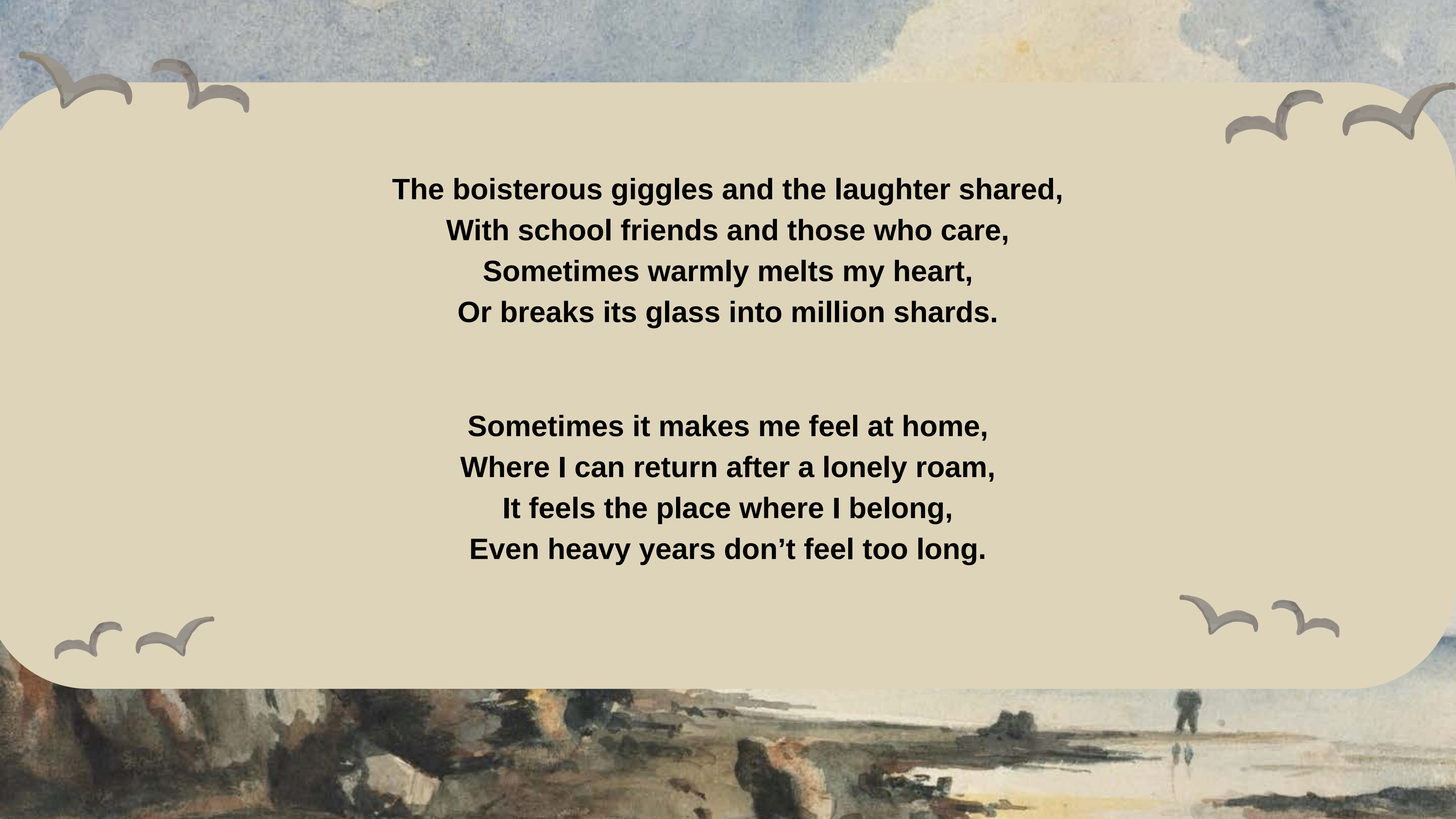


“This astounding nature Turning the cosmos magnificent Can I say the same next time?” Nature really is important for our world. It turns a mere planet into something worth living; it makes the planet home. Some people took this for granted—they stole from nature what was never theirs to be claimed. Every time I ask this question, the uncertainty gets more and more clear.

The background is a painting of a coastal scene. On the left, there are large, dark, craggy rocks. A sandy beach leads to a calm sea. In the distance, a few sailboats are visible on the horizon. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds. Several stylized, grey bird silhouettes are scattered across the sky, some appearing to fly towards the left.

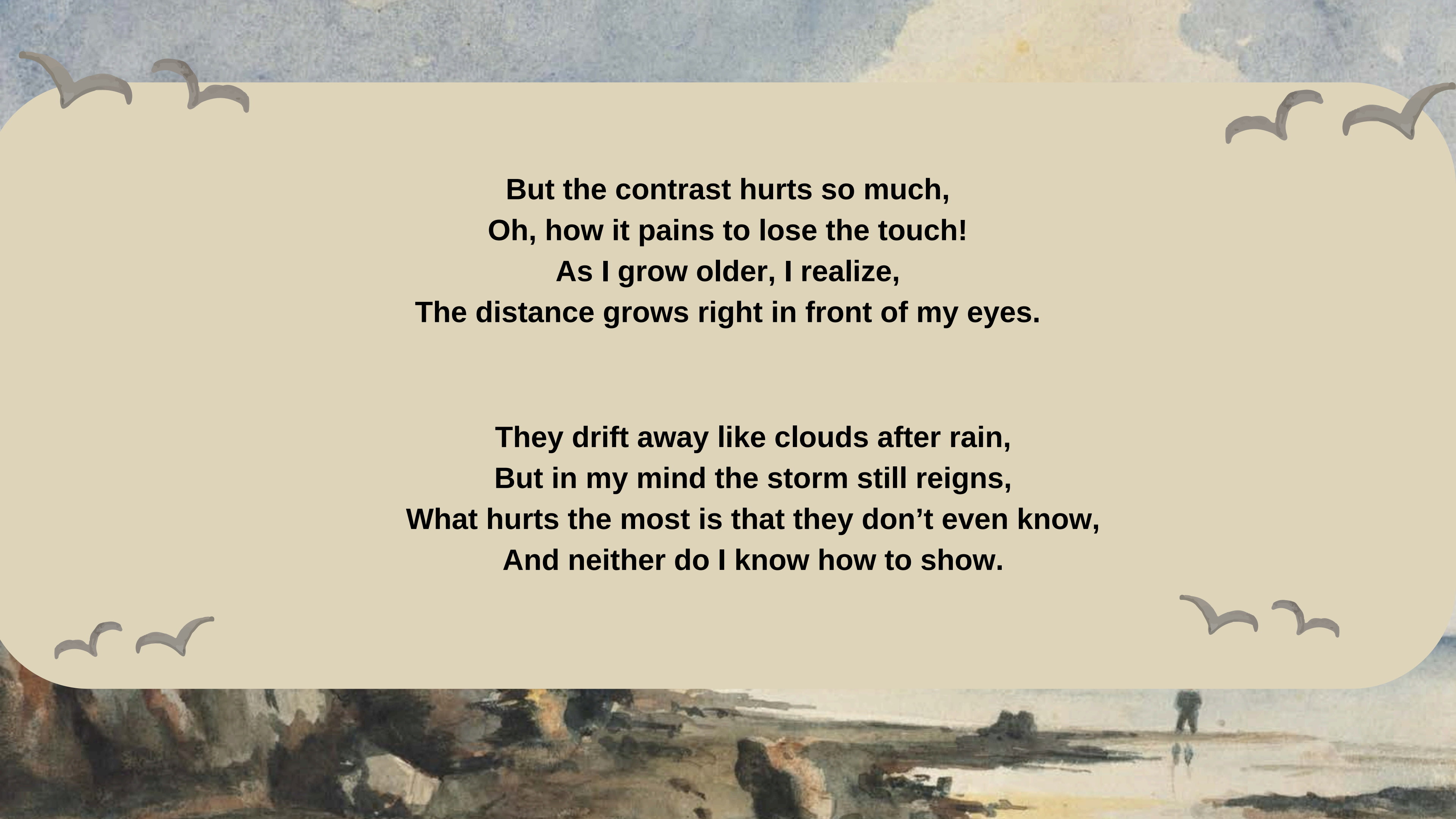
LIKE DRIFTWOOD WE PARTED

kritika patel
10th-A



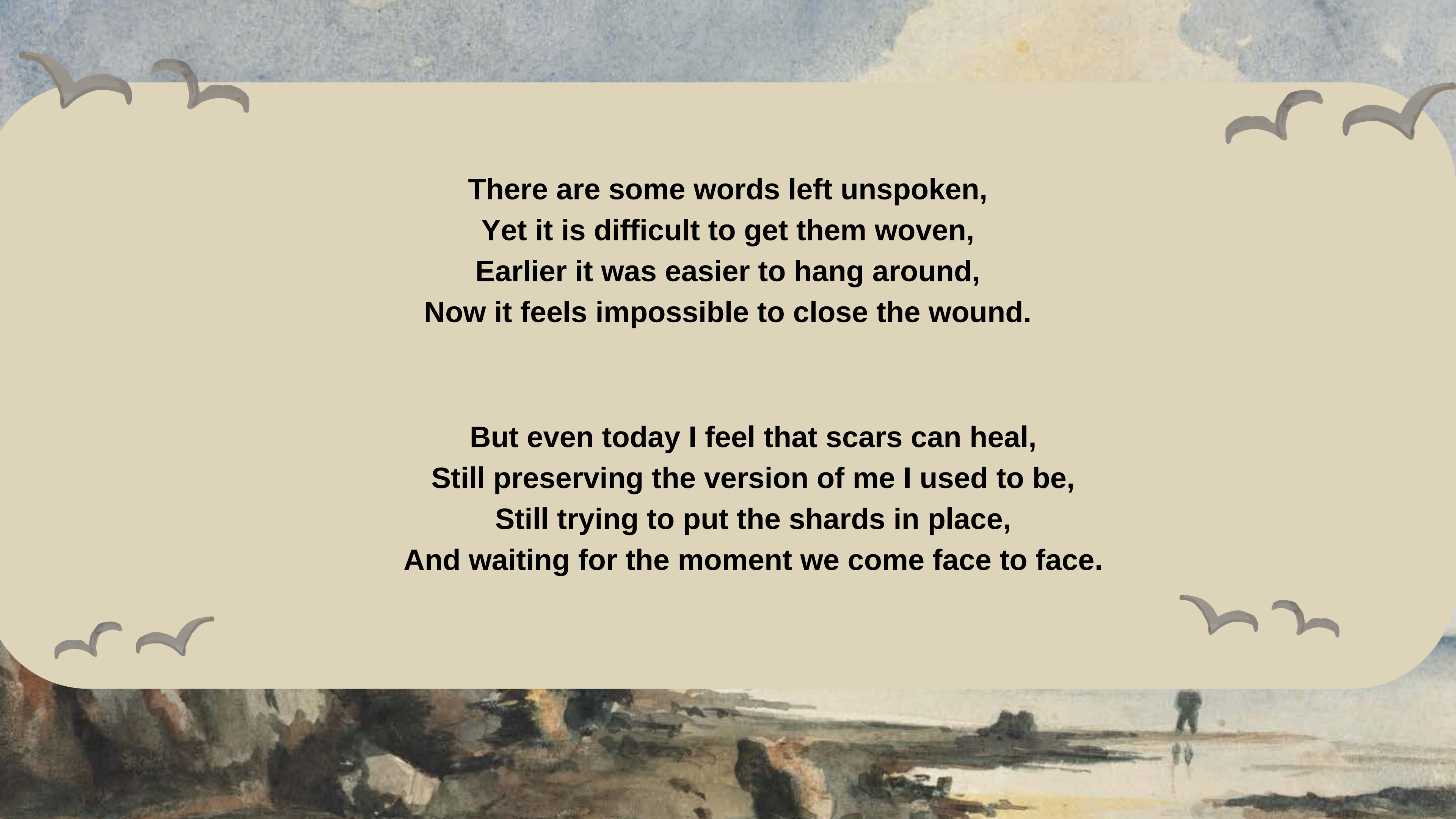
**The boisterous giggles and the laughter shared,
With school friends and those who care,
Sometimes warmly melts my heart,
Or breaks its glass into million shards.**

**Sometimes it makes me feel at home,
Where I can return after a lonely roam,
It feels the place where I belong,
Even heavy years don't feel too long.**



**But the contrast hurts so much,
Oh, how it pains to lose the touch!
As I grow older, I realize,
The distance grows right in front of my eyes.**

**They drift away like clouds after rain,
But in my mind the storm still reigns,
What hurts the most is that they don't even know,
And neither do I know how to show.**



**There are some words left unspoken,
Yet it is difficult to get them woven,
Earlier it was easier to hang around,
Now it feels impossible to close the wound.**

**But even today I feel that scars can heal,
Still preserving the version of me I used to be,
Still trying to put the shards in place,
And waiting for the moment we come face to face.**

IF EARTH COULD SPEAK

SAVYA SAKSHAM GOEL

V-K

2020/0474



EARTH- BOO HOO HOO! BOO HOO HOO!

SAVYA - WHO IS CRYING? WHOOOO?

EARTH - "IT'S ME EARTH, YOUR OWN MOTHER EARTH."

SAVYA- LET ME ASK YOU WHY, YOUR REASON TO CRY?

EARTH- I WILL TELL YOU SON: -BUT PLEASE DON'T MAKE FUN.

SAVYA- I AM ALL EARS, FOR A STORY OF 4.5 BILLION YEARS.

EARTH- FIRST CAME THE UNIVERSE WITH BIG BANG,

I FORMED LATER WHEN DUST, GASES AND DEBRIS CLANG.

SAVYA- WOW! I KNOW, "YOU ARE MADE OF DEBRIS AND DUST, ALSO, YOU WERE VERY HOT AT FIRST."

HEAVY METALS FLOATED TO THE CORE; LIGHTER STUFF MADE THE CRUST

EARTH- ABSOLUTELY RIGHT! TELL ME MORE.....





SAVYA- SLOWLY THE EARTH COOLED HERE, VOLCANOES MADE THE ATMOSPHERE.
THEN STARTED CONDENSATION, LOT OF RAIN FORMED THE OCEANS.
EARTH- HA HA HA! YOU HAVE READ WELL, DON'T STOP," PLEASE TELL".

SAY SOMETHING ABOUT THE FIRST CELL.

SAVYA- ORGANIC CHEMICALS STRUCK BY LIGHT, CHANGED TO BUILDING BLOCKS OF LIFE.
AMINO ACIDS MADE PROTEIN, PHOTOSYNTHESIS TURNED THE EARTH GREEN.



EARTH- 4.5 BILLION YEARS IT TOOK ME TO SHAPE,
JUST 100 YEARS OF HUMAN ACTIVITY HAS DESTROYED ME AT SUPERFAST RATE.

I HAVE BEEN ALTERED FROM MY NATURAL STATE.

MY DESTRUCTION IS YOUR BAD FATE, SO TAKE CONTROL MY MATE!

SAVYA- JUST 100 YEARS TO MAKE THINGS SO BAD, POLLUTION AND HEAT MAKE ME SO
SAD.

HUMANS FIRST FIGHT WARS, DESTROY THE EARTH AND LOOK FOR LIFE ON MARS.
EARTH- TAKE FROM ME AS MUCH AS YOU NEED, BUT THERE IS NO END TO GREED.

SAVYA - FROM TODAY ITSELF I ACT, AND I PLEDGE TO PROTECT!





THE SECRET OF BLACK

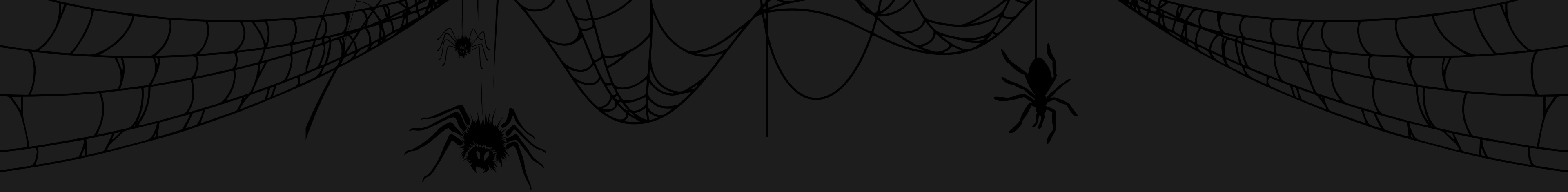
CANVAS

by MEDHANSHI RAAVIYA

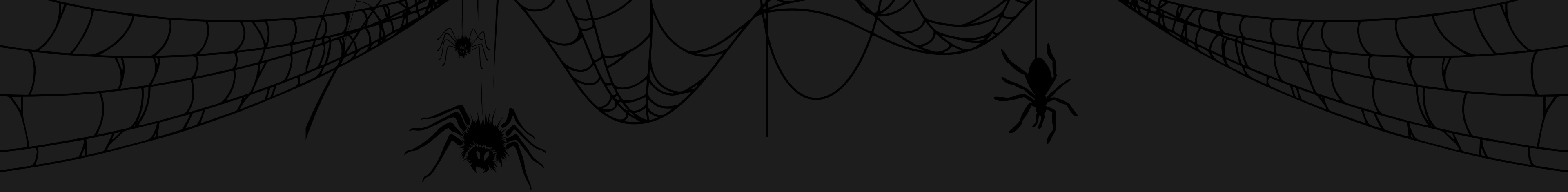
IX H

The background of the image features a dark, textured surface with several spider webs. Three spiders are visible: one in the upper left, one in the upper right, and a larger one in the center. The webs are drawn with fine, light-colored lines.

I am of sensitive nature, the one who cherishes 'me time' over daily chaos. I live with my mother and father in a small city of Colombia, namely Quillitch. Today, it was a very refreshing day. I with my friend Zoya was reading some books, which of course made me read them. We both were typical best friends. But she was completely opposite from me—bold, outspoken and someone who always drags me into her next best idea—what she called 'the next big invention'. From nursery to class 11, I had heard many such types of inventions from her. Right then, I was reading the book of one of my favorite authors, Luther Markpeare, near the large window that provided bright light. The wind blew softly and gently pleased my soul. Suddenly, Zoya went out of the library.

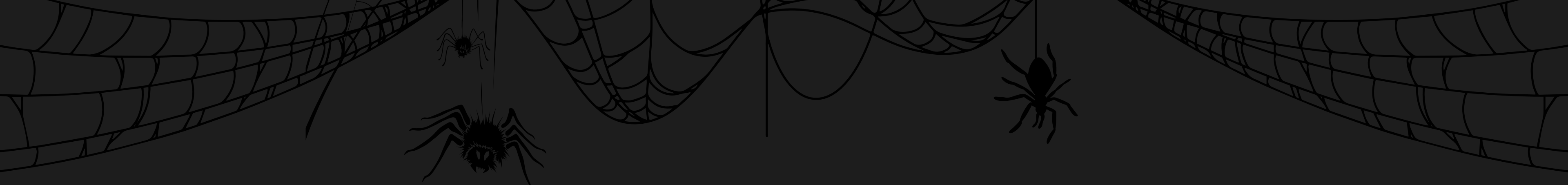


Usually, we both used to go together everywhere. But I thought there might be some emergency. Suddenly, I heard the distinct sound of pages right next to me in an empty aisle. Following the sound, I found a thick book. It contained a newly handwritten log of some incidents. As I delved deep into it, my stomach dropped. It contained every incident of the past. I was astonished. Also, at the bottom, one note was written: 'Jennifer, hope you find this interesting. As the events take place, they are written down in this book which might help you for further investigation'. Then it was written to pick up the blank canvas that was kept in the art room. I thought that this must be an elaborate prank done by my friend. Returning back to the classroom, I confronted my friend Zoya, but she said she hadn't done that. Though the confusion in her voice made me suspicious.



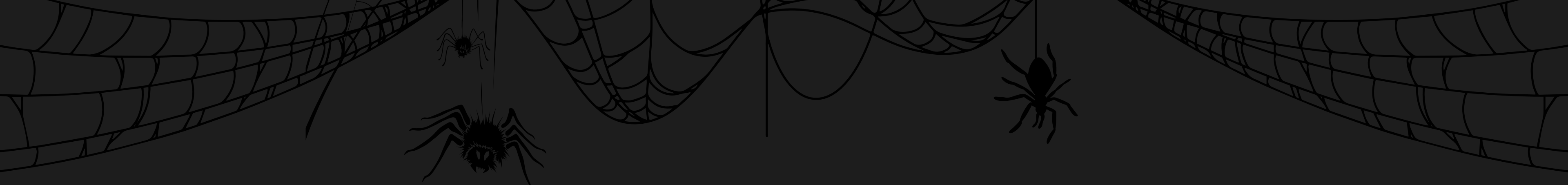
At night, my mother and father were out for a wedding party and I was alone at home wondering about that book. Suddenly, the bell rang, sending a panic through my chest. Then I peered through the peephole. No one was outside. I noticed a small black canvas outside my door.

I opened the door but was scared, remembering what happened that morning. I picked up the canvas and brought it inside my room. In it, an anonymous note was written saying 'it's already drawn, just see to it'. Through naked eyes it wasn't visible, but I tried using science lesson taught in school a week ago. I exposed it to UV blue light, it disclosed the note containing a half-solved puzzle that led to a mysterious hunt across the school library.

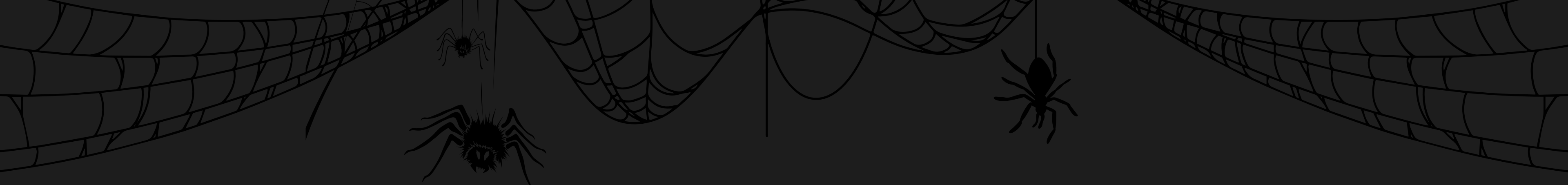


Still seeing it as fictional, I was confused about what to do. I couldn't tell if this was still a sick game or something far scarier. Should I inform anyone? Or just step into the story and find answers myself?

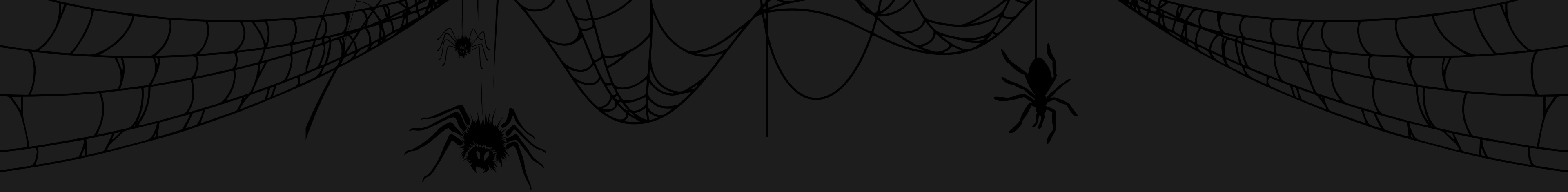
The following day, I slipped back into the library before classes started. At the very last corner of the library, an old vintage box was kept. Surprisingly, it was not locked. I opened it and saw something interesting. It was filled with drawings of events that haven't happened yet—including today's date. But one character caught my eye. In every event, I saw Zoya in a tensed and depressed way trying to hide something. I decided to test her by leaving the black canvas inside her locker. We both had the duplicate keys to our lockers.

A dark, textured background featuring a large, intricate spider web that spans across the top of the frame. Three spiders are visible: one is positioned near the top center, another is slightly to the left of the center, and a third is on the right side. The spiders are depicted in a simple, black silhouette style.

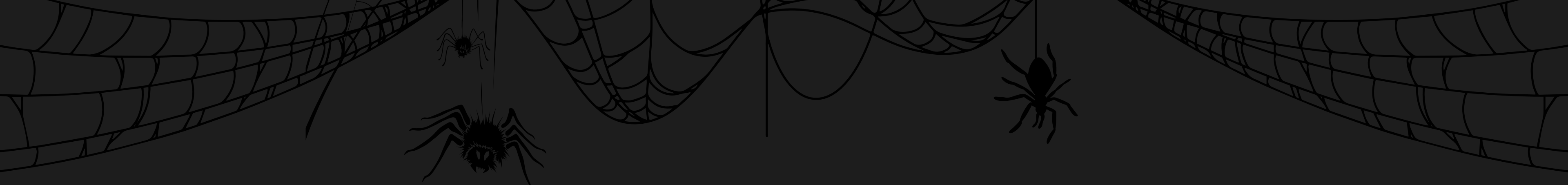
After school was over, Zoya opened the locker and was left completely pale. This confirmed she knew way more than she admitted. I followed her through the quiet school hallways. She suddenly stopped and found that I was following her. She knew the reason and revealed that the logbook was created by someone or something trapped inside the library's ancient archive room. But to my surprise, I had never heard of any such archive; well, not in my school. I asked her, "Where is the archive? Why haven't you told me about this earlier?" Her voice trembled. She just said, "Go near the double doors behind the library's oldest bookshelves. You'll find all your answers there."



The next morning, I stepped into the archive room. It was very difficult to find it. I searched for it for almost 1 hour. Inside, it was too dusty. I was welcomed by a group of cobwebs. A strange humming sound began to ring all around, and the noise of the school completely faded away. In the centre of the room, a massive antique mirror was framed, having the same symbols as those on the canvas. The whole scenario was nothing less than a movie scene where a hero tries to unveil the secret. Then, suddenly, I heard the sound of a generator. Surprisingly, the sound didn't travel outside as no one was even bothered about what was happening inside. The place was like a secret room. As the sound stopped, the projector right above me automatically switched on.

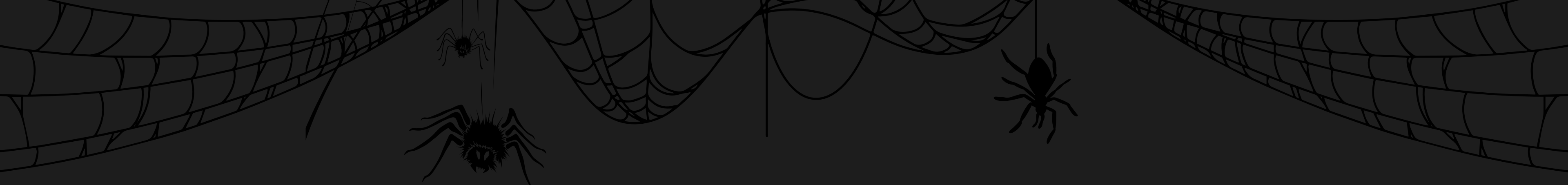


I saw myself, b–but in a very different way, having a bullet near my waist. The background illustrated that a disaster had occurred and I was trying to prevent it. The future Jennifer, with pen and paper in her hand, leaves one last puzzle piece that forces me to question who to trust: “I am sorry. I was not able to save anyone, even myself. To the one who is seeing it, finish the drawing on the canvas as soon as possible.” This led me to think deeper. I rushed towards the art room. But unfortunately, the archive door was jammed. After several minutes of hard work, I was able to open it. As I rushed upstairs to reach the art room, one thought suddenly rushed into my mind. What disaster might have occurred??

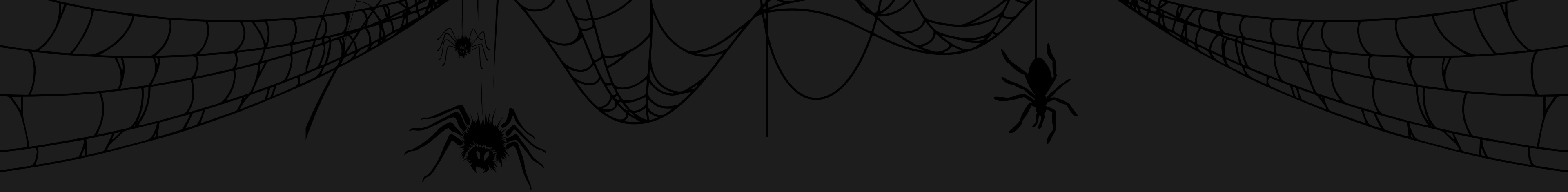


Well, after I reached the art room, the sharp smell of oil paint filled the air. My eyes searched for the black canvas across the room. I was unable to find it. I asked our art teacher Miss Tia about the black canvas. She was Zoya's mother and a kind lady. She looked shocked.

She asked me where I found out about it. I told her the whole story. She seemed sceptical at first. Then she whispered, "All the work done to bury the secret is of no use anymore." I was shocked. Her words froze me in the chilly air as the truth began to sink in. Before I could ask what she meant, the ink on the canvas began to glow with a fierce red light. Miss Tia was not trying to harm me; she was trying to lock away the canvas, knowing the consequences of what it could do. I cried, "There's no time left." She said, "I told Zoya to keep that book away from you."



But she didn't listen to me. I knew that you would do this, but this carries the risk of giving away your life—a—a type of sacrifice. That black canvas was cursed. I bought it from an old man around 6 to 8 months ago near my house. After I bought this canvas with a book, he died the very next day. Unusual things started to happen in my house. Every night when I looked at that black canvas, it seemed to say, 'take me to Jennifer'. Surprisingly, it used to whisper your name. Then, I kept this canvas in this art room, and that book I gave to Zoya so she could safely put that in the library. But what is destined will happen." Then I noticed that behind her was kept something identical to what I saw in the video at the archive. It was another piece of the puzzle that my future self was holding. I opened that puzzle. Nothing was written in it. Only a brush with blue paint attached to it.



When I asked Miss Tia about that, she said, “It was kept near the door of the art room 2 days ago. I don't know who placed it.” I understood why it was kept. That was when this whole thing started.

I have now decided to finish this up. “If it wants me, then maybe I am the only one who could control it,” I said, stepping closer to the canvas. Miss Tia cried, “Jennifer, no!” But a soft energy pulled her hand away. One last time, I held my breath, and I aimed the tip at the very core of the cursed symbols. I drew one single line straight. The glowing blue symbols flared with a sudden, blinding flash, illuminating every corner of the room. A total silence covered the room.



Suddenly, a portrait of a girl began to glow from it—her face bright, cute, and eyes thanking me for what I did. I did not know her name, but I was satisfied that she was finally at peace. Suddenly, she went away somewhere. Miss Tia was behind me. She cried. She said, “The girl was Maria, a determined child like you who had a keen interest in arts and was a student of this school. She was the first who discovered the black canvas and learned about its spell. She tried to solve it, but she did it halfway and ended up trapping her soul in it. I was worried if the same incident happened with you, too. Well, now everything is over and fine. You shattered the blinding spell.



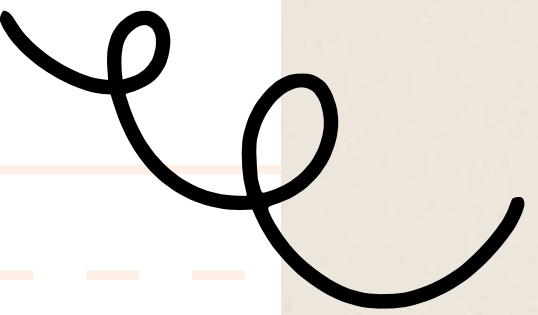
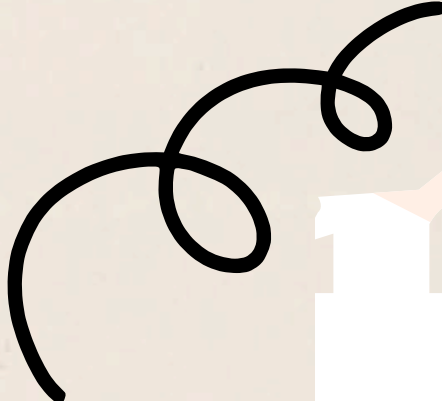
She patted my shoulder. I replied, “Yes, it’s all over.” But I felt deeply bad for that girl. As I came out of the art room, Zoya was waiting for me. I hugged her and apologized for being suspicious. After school was over, I reached home and told the whole incident to my mother. My mother hugged me. Her warm, gentle hands relaxed me. I looked out of my bedroom window at a quiet evening sky. At last, the canvas was just a piece of history and the future was ours to paint...

THE PATH TO SUCCESS IS NEVER STRAIGHT

BY ABHISRI PARLE

The Path to Success is a winding road, Not
Paved in gold, nor by ease bestowed. It
twists through trials and turns through fate,
You'll slip, you'll fall, you'll try, you'll
question why- But still you climb, you reach,
you try. It dips through valleys, climbs up
high, And often vanishes into the sky.

You'll walk through storms, you'll lose your way, You'll
question going on each day. Yet still ahead the dream
burns bright- For those who follow the bright,
flickering, and stubborn guiding light. Each bend
reveals a hidden test, Each fall can forge you the very
best. So, don't lose hope when the path grows steep,
Success belongs to those who leap. Just know the curve
is a part of fate, The path to success is never straight.

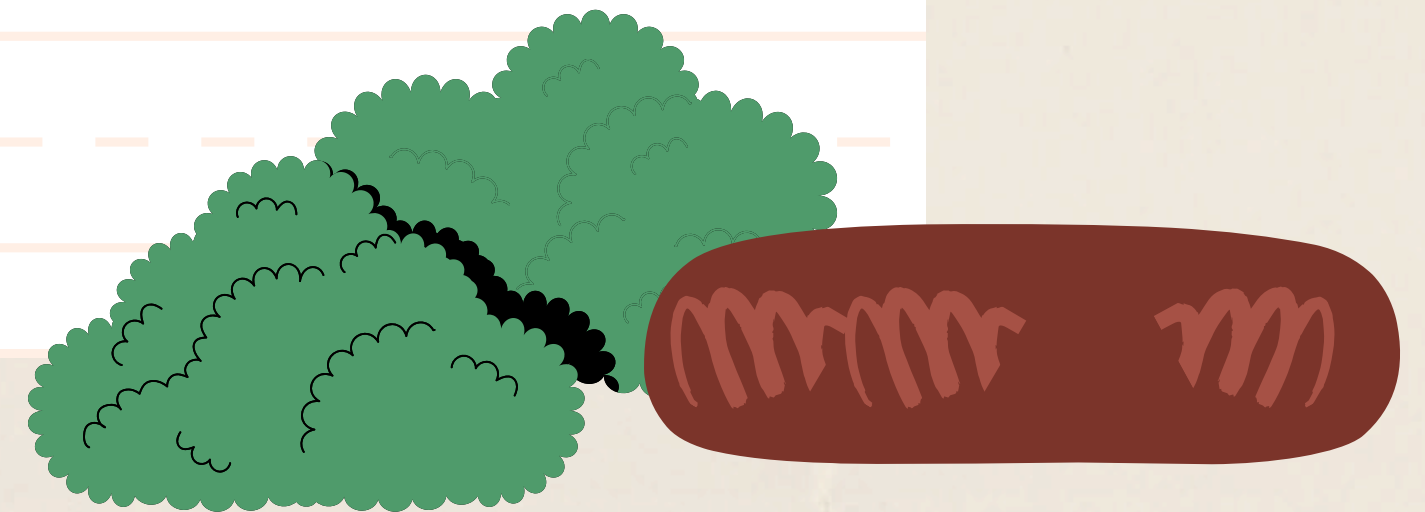


THE BOY WHO FAILED EVERY TEST EXCEPT LIFE



Parth chauhan

VII-A





The first time Aarav failed, his mother hid the report card.

Not because she was ashamed.

Because she didn't want the neighbors to know.

Outside, children played cricket.

Inside, silence sat at the dining table.

His father folded the report card once, then again, until it became a tiny square.

"Thirty-four."

He looked at the number as if it had stolen something.

"You couldn't even get thirty-five."

That night, Aarav heard something louder than his father's voice.

The sound of expectations breaking.



School became a place where everyone knew him.

Not for talent.

Not for sports.

Not for art.

Not even for mischief.

He was simply...

"The boy who always failed."

Teachers sighed before calling his name.

Friends laughed before looking at his marks.

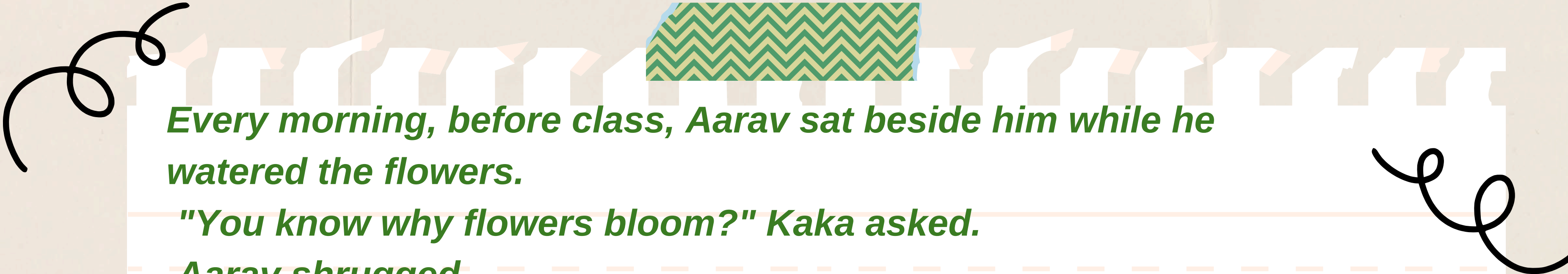
Parents whispered when he walked past.

His report cards had become more famous than he was.

There was only one person who never looked disappointed.

The old school gardener.

Everyone called him Kaka.



Every morning, before class, Aarav sat beside him while he watered the flowers.

"You know why flowers bloom?" Kaka asked.

Aarav shrugged.

"Because nobody tells them they're not good enough."

Aarav laughed.

It was the first laugh school had heard from him in months.

Years passed.

Marks remained the same.

Mathematics defeated him.

Science confused him.

History slipped away.

English refused to stay in memory.

His notebooks were full.

His confidence was empty.



*One afternoon, while everyone rushed home after the final bell,
Aarav noticed a Class Three student crying near the gate.*

"My lunch box..."

The little boy pointed toward the drain.

Without thinking, Aarav climbed inside the muddy water.

He returned soaked.

Uniform ruined.

Shoes destroyed.

Lunch box in hand.

The child smiled as though someone had returned his entire world.

Nobody gave Aarav marks for that.

No certificate.

No applause.

Only muddy clothes.



Days later...

An elderly woman collapsed near the market.

People surrounded her.

Some recorded videos.

Some discussed what had happened.

Some simply watched.

Aarav ran.

He borrowed someone's phone.

Called an ambulance.

Held her hand until help arrived.

The doctors later said those few minutes had saved her life.

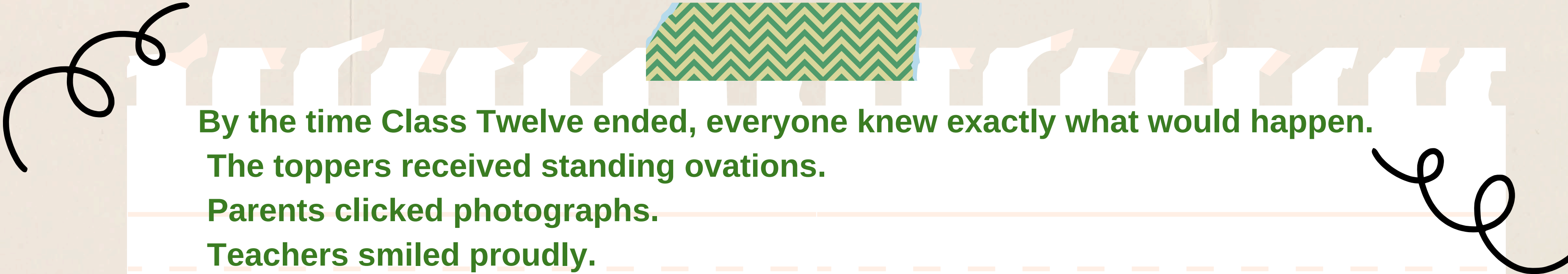
Still...

There was no examination for compassion.

No percentage for courage.

No rank for humanity.





By the time Class Twelve ended, everyone knew exactly what would happen.

The toppers received standing ovations.

Parents clicked photographs.

Teachers smiled proudly.

Scholarships were announced.

Aarav quietly collected his marksheet.

Average.

Again.

He left before the farewell photographs.

No one noticed.

Years disappeared the way chalk disappears from a blackboard.

One by one, students chased success.

Some became engineers.

Some became doctors.

Some became lawyers.

Some moved abroad.

Life scattered everyone like pages carried by the wind.



One rainy evening, news spread across the town.

A free hospital was opening.

Not just any hospital.

A place where no one would ever be refused treatment because they lacked money.

People were curious.

Who was funding something so impossible?

The inauguration day arrived.

Television cameras.

Local newspapers.

Political leaders.

Doctors.

Children.

Teachers.

Parents.

The ribbon waited to be cut.



Then a familiar face stepped onto the stage.

Older.

Confident.

Still carrying the same gentle smile.

Aarav.

The boy everyone remembered for failing.

He had never become a doctor.

He had become the man who built hospitals for doctors to work in.

After struggling through school, he had spent years volunteering with charities, learning about healthcare access, raising funds, convincing strangers to believe in impossible dreams.

He had failed examinations.

But he had passed every test life quietly placed before him.



His former principal sat frozen.

"So this is what became of him..."

Beside him stood retired teachers.

Many couldn't even remember his marks.

They remembered only his kindness.

Before cutting the ribbon, Aarav looked toward the crowd.

"I wasn't the smartest student."

A small laugh echoed.

"I wasn't the highest scorer."

More smiles.

"I spent years believing I was a failure."

Silence.

"Then life asked me different questions."

Not from a textbook.

Not inside a classroom.



Questions like...

Will you stop when someone needs help?

Will you choose honesty when no one is watching?

Will you stand beside strangers?

Will you forgive?

Will you serve?

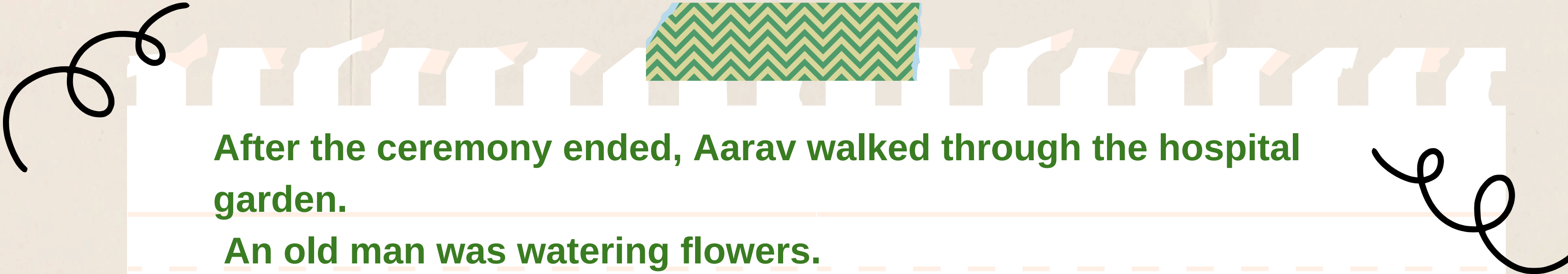
Those answers never appeared on my report card.

Yet they decided my life."

No one clapped.

Not because they disagreed.

Because every person there was busy thinking about their own answers.



After the ceremony ended, Aarav walked through the hospital garden.

An old man was watering flowers.

Grey hair.

Wrinkled hands.

The same calm smile.

"Kaka?"

The gardener looked up.

"I knew you'd bloom."

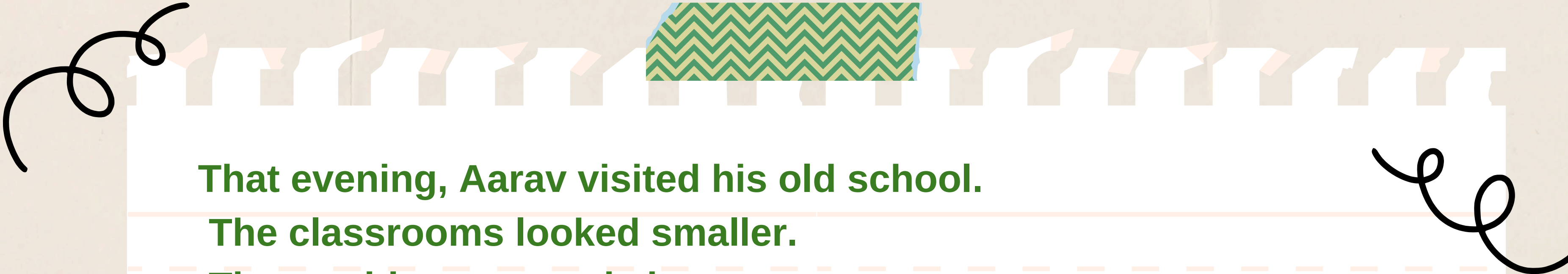
Aarav smiled.

"You knew?"

Kaka laughed softly.

"Flowers don't bloom because they're compared."

"They bloom because someone keeps watering them."



That evening, Aarav visited his old school.

The classrooms looked smaller.

The corridors seemed shorter.

The blackboards had become smart screens.

But one thing hadn't changed.

The bell.

It rang exactly the way it had years ago.

Children rushed outside with laughter filling the air.

A little boy walked past holding a report card.

Tears filled his eyes.

"I failed."

Aarav knelt beside him.

"So did I."



The child looked surprised.

"You?"

"Many times."

"Then how are you smiling?"

Aarav looked toward the school building.

"Because report cards measure what you remembered."

He gently placed a hand on the boy's shoulder.

"But life..."

He smiled.

"Life measures who you became."

The bell rang again.

This time...

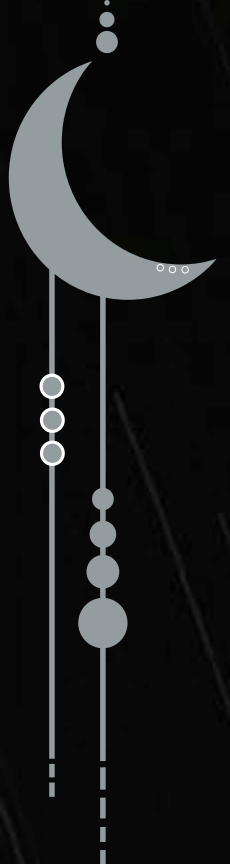
It didn't sound like the end of school.

It sounded like the beginning of someone's story.

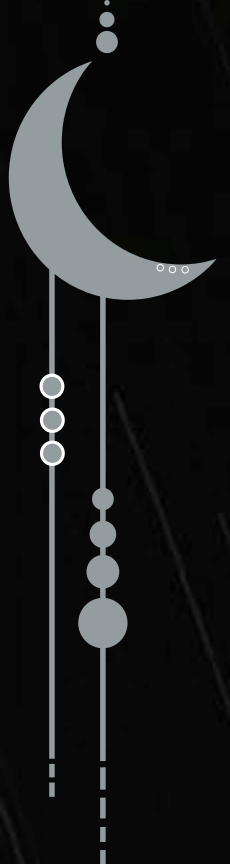
THE MOON



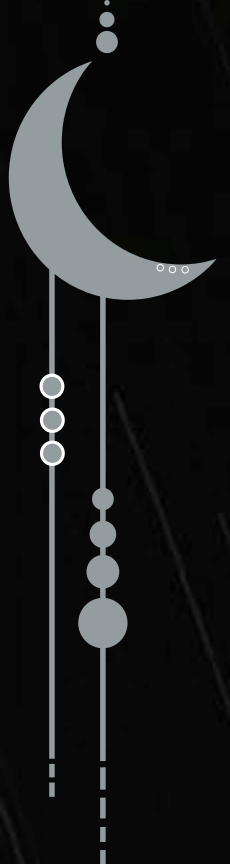
I AM TEJAS BISHT OF CLASS 6TH. I AM 11 YEARS OLD AND AM EASILY INTERESTED IN NEW THINGS LIKE THE OPPORTUNITY THIS EVENT HAS BROUGHT TO ME. MY HOBBIES ARE SWIMMING AND BASKETBALL THOUGH I AM NOT THE BEST AT THE SPORTS. I BELIEVE THAT NEW IDEAS CAN COME FROM ANYWHERE. LIKE THIS PROJECT, THE MOON. I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT NO DREAM IS TOO FAR OR NOTHING IS TOO HARD, IF ONE IS STRONG-WILLED, HARDWORKING AND DISCIPLINED, THEY CAN ACHIEVE SUCCESS.



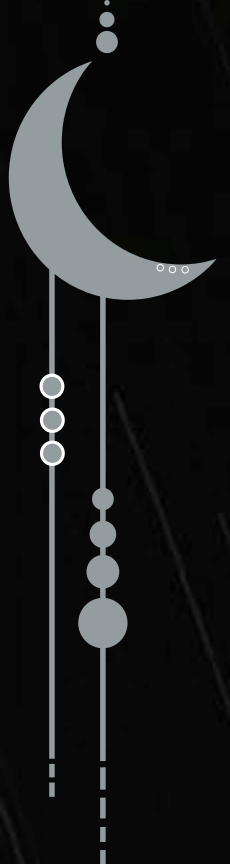
**IT'S NIGHTTIME, TIME TO GO TO
BED,
BUT SOMETHING SHINES AHEAD.
STANDING IN THE NIGHT SKY,
SURROUNDED BY STARS.
IT GLOWS, BUT NOT BRIGHT,
IT CAME SOON! IT'S THE MOON!**



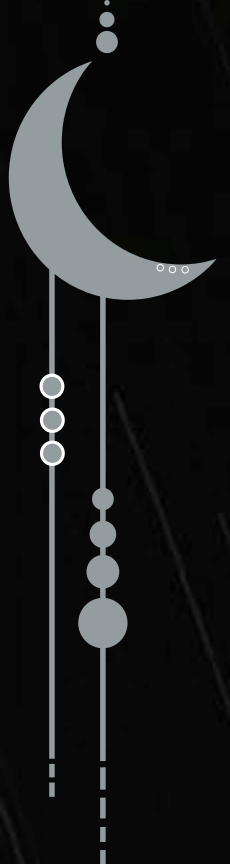
**THE NATURAL SATELLITE,
THE CELESTIAL BODY THAT
ORBITS EARTH,
THE SYMBOL OF NIGHT,
THAT COMES AT SUNSET,
FAREWELLS AT SUNRISE.
IT'S THE MOON!**



**NIGHT IS ITS MORNING,
AND MORNING IS ITS NIGHT.
WHAT STRANGE OBJECT
ROAMING,
AROUND THE EARTH WITH ITS
DIM LIGHT.
WAKES UP TO SAY GOODNIGHT,
SLEEPS TO SAY GOOD MORNING.
IT'S THE MOON.**



**GIVES PEACEFUL NIGHTS TO
SLEEP,
THANKING IT IN YOUR DREAMS,
UNTIL
THE ALARM GOES BEEP!
THE SUN'S SUNLIGHT SPILLS,
THE MOON YOU WANTED TO
KEEP,
IS GONE IN A MATTER OF
DREAMS!**



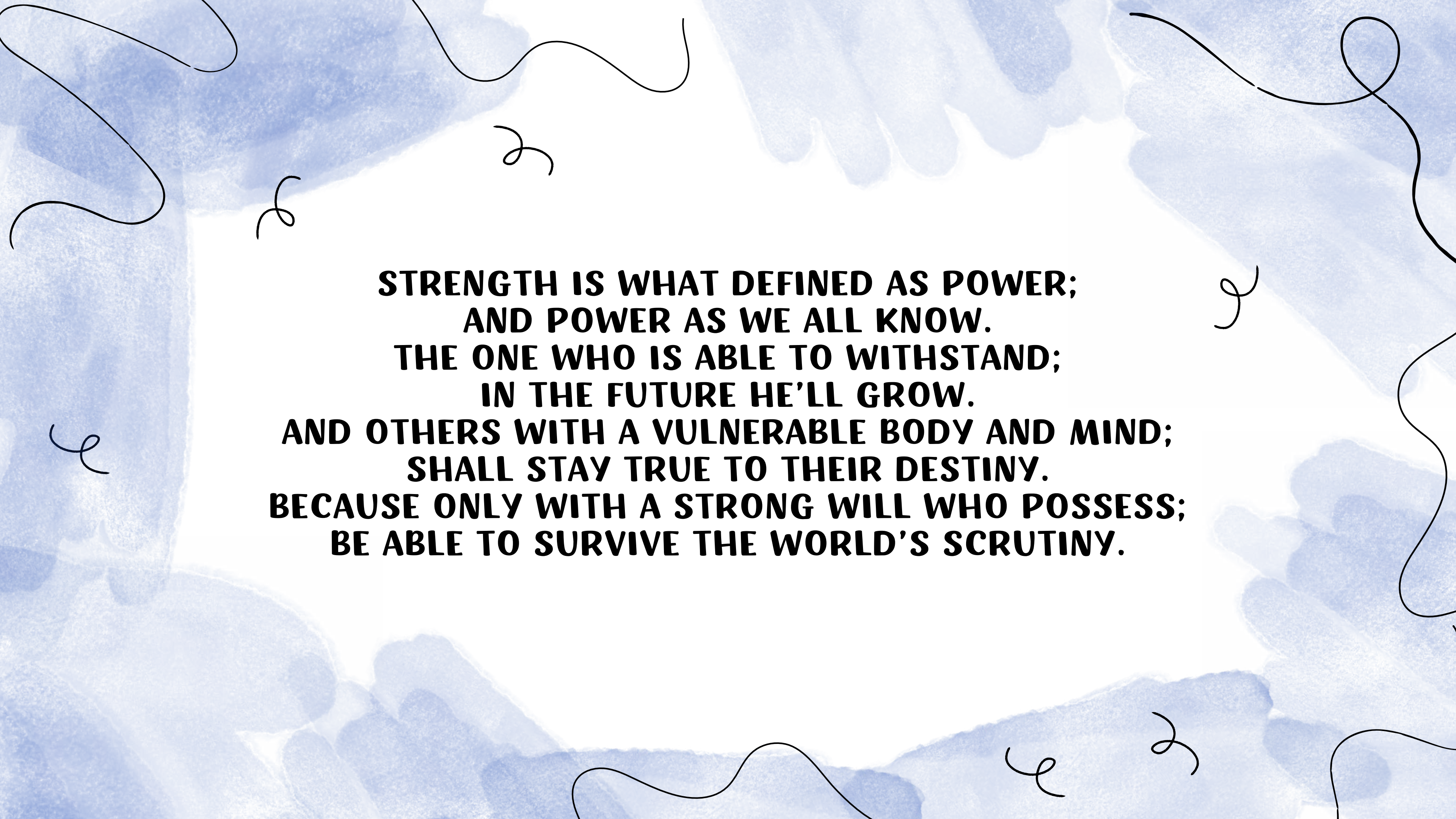
**NOW YOU WAIT FOR IT TO SHINE,
SO YOU CAN SLEEP IN TIME.
BUT YOU CAN'T IMMEDIATELY
GET IN THE DREAM LINE.
YOU DON'T WANT TO WASTE A
DIME.
OF PRECIOUS SLEEP, BUT THE
SUN ALWAYS RISES ON TIME.
PEACE IS GONE, ONCE IT SETS,
IT'S THE MOON!**



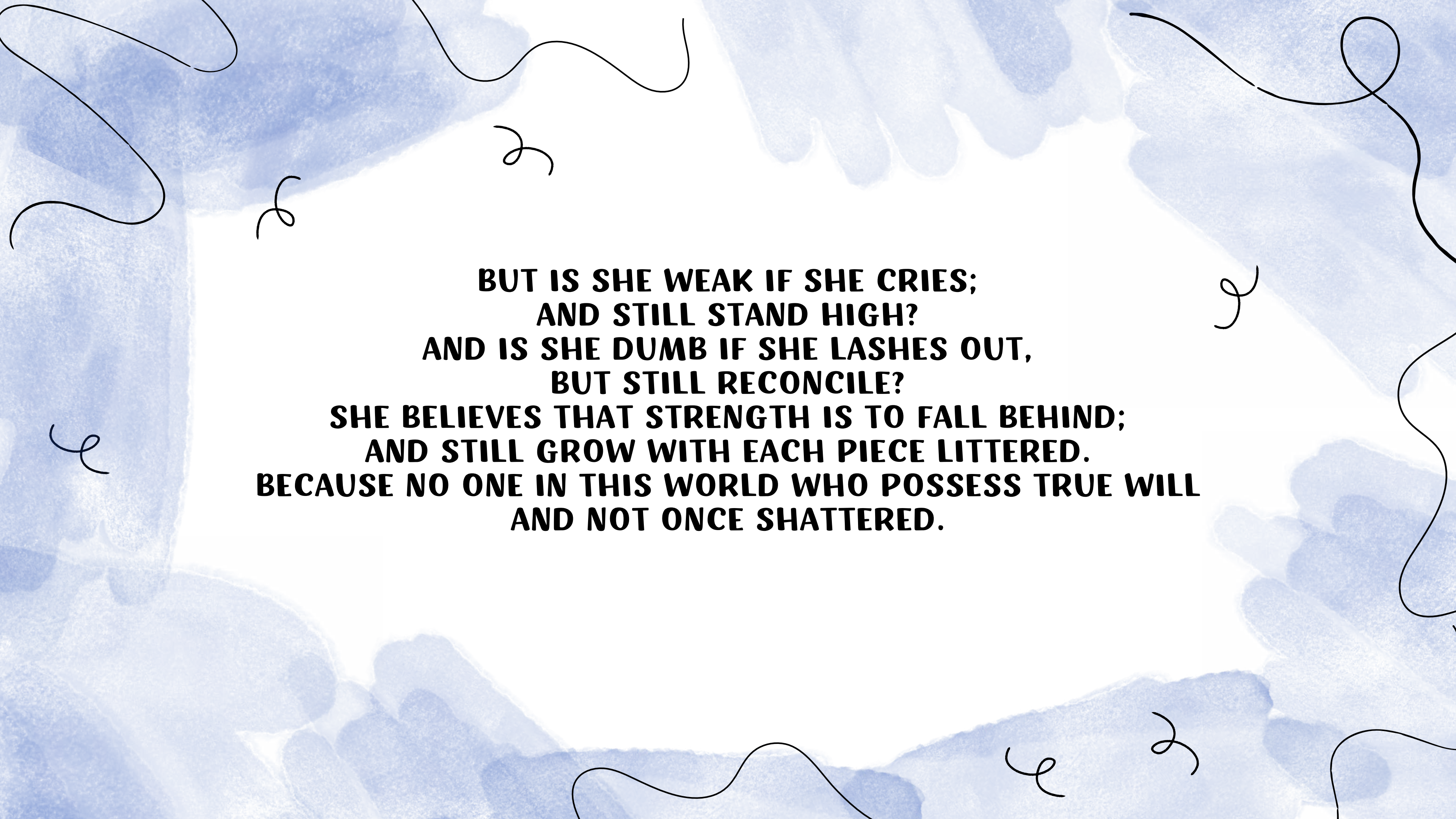
STRENGTH

by Dhriti Das

XI K



**STRENGTH IS WHAT DEFINED AS POWER;
AND POWER AS WE ALL KNOW.
THE ONE WHO IS ABLE TO WITHSTAND;
IN THE FUTURE HE'LL GROW.
AND OTHERS WITH A VULNERABLE BODY AND MIND;
SHALL STAY TRUE TO THEIR DESTINY.
BECAUSE ONLY WITH A STRONG WILL WHO POSSESS;
BE ABLE TO SURVIVE THE WORLD'S SCRUTINY.**



**BUT IS SHE WEAK IF SHE CRIES;
AND STILL STAND HIGH?
AND IS SHE DUMB IF SHE LASHES OUT,
BUT STILL RECONCILE?
SHE BELIEVES THAT STRENGTH IS TO FALL BEHIND;
AND STILL GROW WITH EACH PIECE LITTERED.
BECAUSE NO ONE IN THIS WORLD WHO POSSESS TRUE WILL
AND NOT ONCE SHATTERED.**

Ron and the Magical Ball

RACHIT KUMAR

VII-I

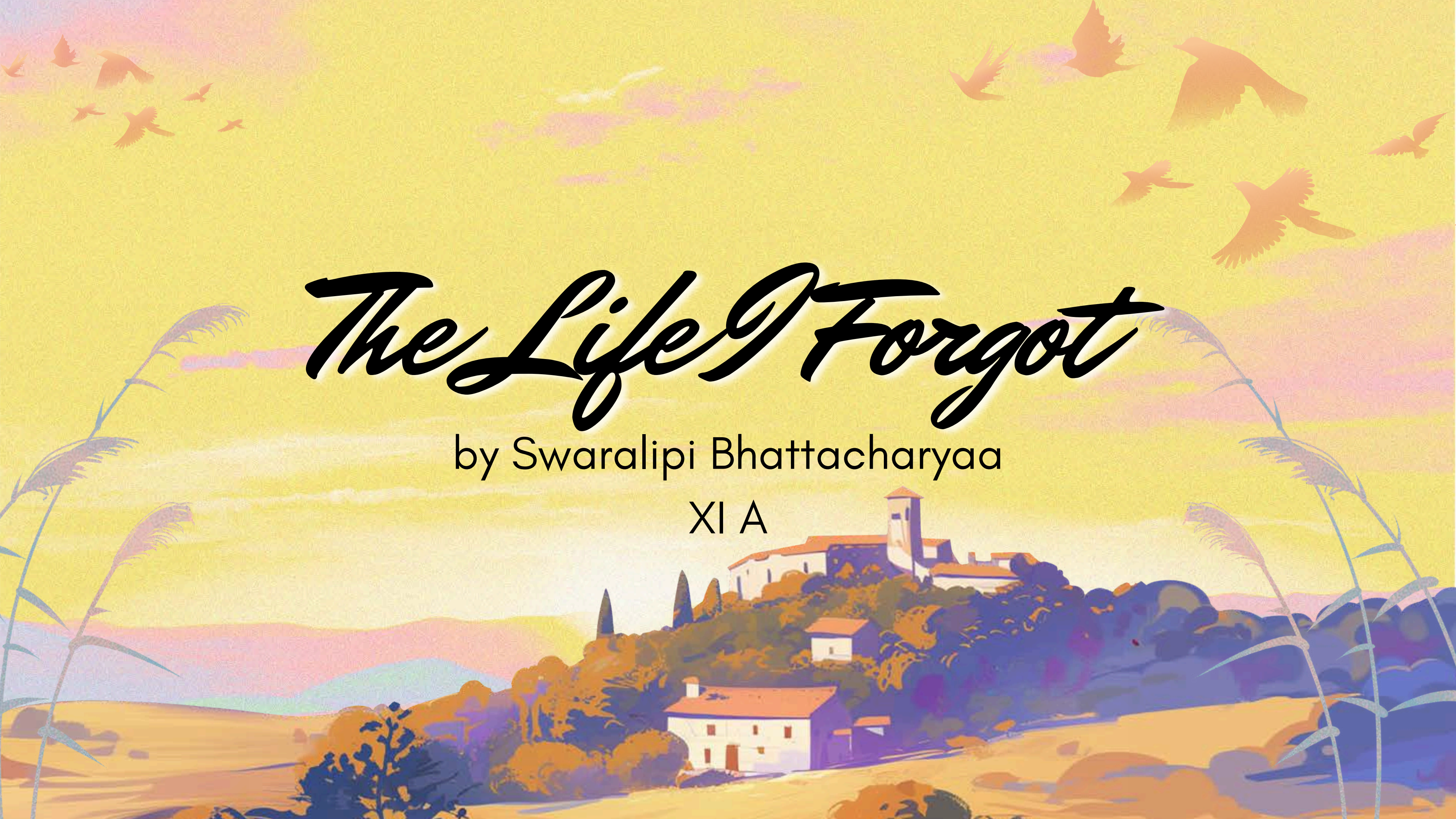
2018/0099

STUDENT

There is a boy named Ron, he is very fond of collecting different types of ball and playing with those balls. One day he was playing with his friends in park, there were playing in park and suddenly their ball got lost. They tried a lot to find the ball, but they were not able to find the ball due to the large grass grown over there. When they got tired, they sat down on the chair.

After some time, the weather changed and heavy rainfall occurs suddenly. All of them went to home, but Ron who was fond of collecting balls didn't give up. He tried a lot and then finally, he found a ball, but this ball was not a normal ball. This ball was a magical ball, which he saw in an article. The magic was that, if we put our right hand on it and ask about our wish, the wish will be completed within three days.

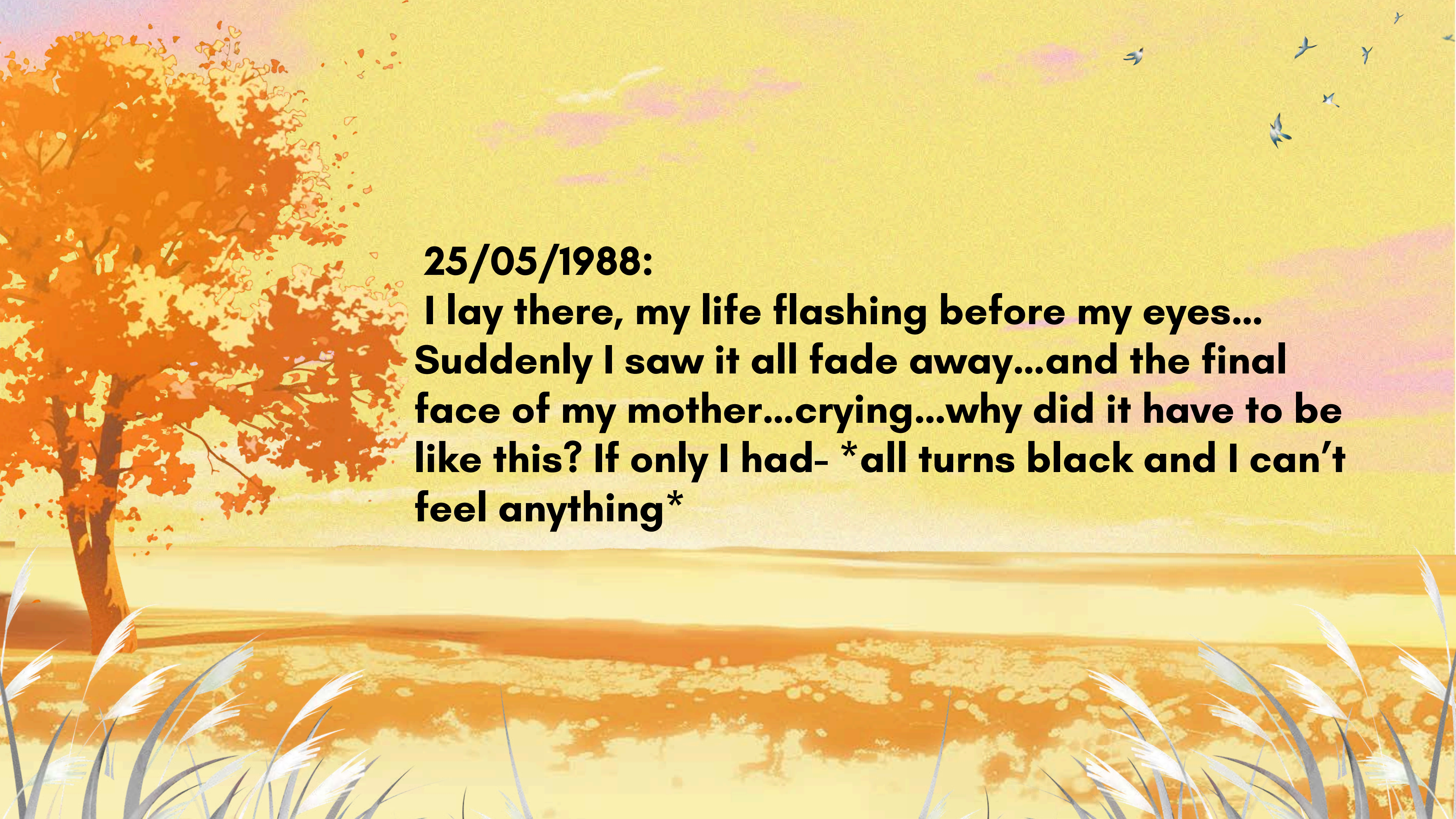
He went home happily, but he got scolded by his mother as his clothes were very dirty and he was very wet as he was finding the ball in rain. Then he took a bath and sat for dinner. He was very excited as he will ask his first wish from the magical ball that he found in the park. He asked to get all the balls which were lost in the park. At next day the balls were in his cupboard. When the ball glowed to complete his wish, it made the boy the happiest boy in the world.



The Life I Forgot

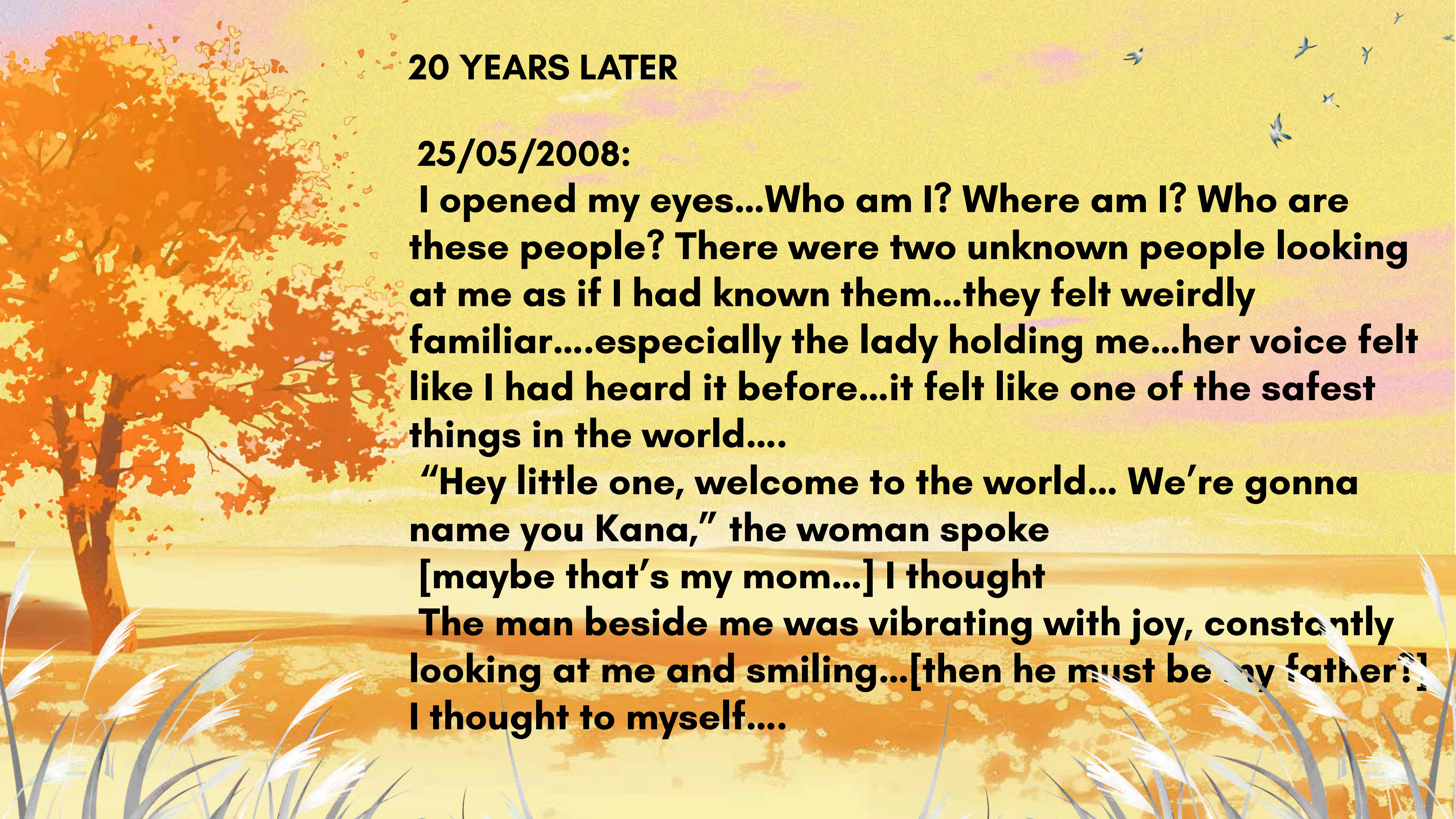
by Swaralipi Bhattacharyaa

XI A



25/05/1988:

**I lay there, my life flashing before my eyes...
Suddenly I saw it all fade away...and the final
face of my mother...crying...why did it have to be
like this? If only I had- *all turns black and I can't
feel anything***



20 YEARS LATER

25/05/2008:

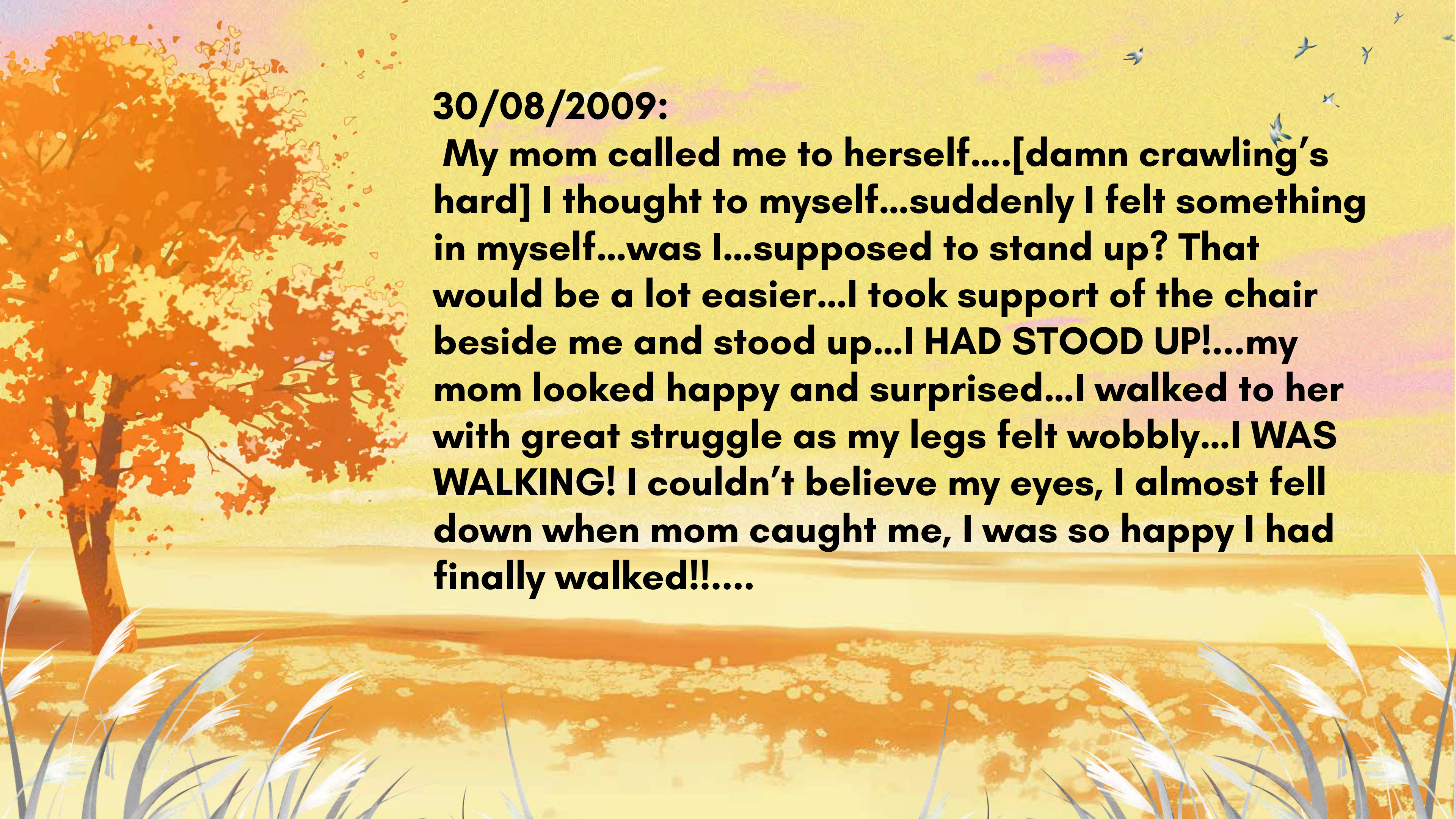
I opened my eyes...Who am I? Where am I? Who are these people? There were two unknown people looking at me as if I had known them...they felt weirdly familiar....especially the lady holding me...her voice felt like I had heard it before...it felt like one of the safest things in the world....

“Hey little one, welcome to the world... We’re gonna name you Kana,” the woman spoke

[maybe that’s my mom...] I thought

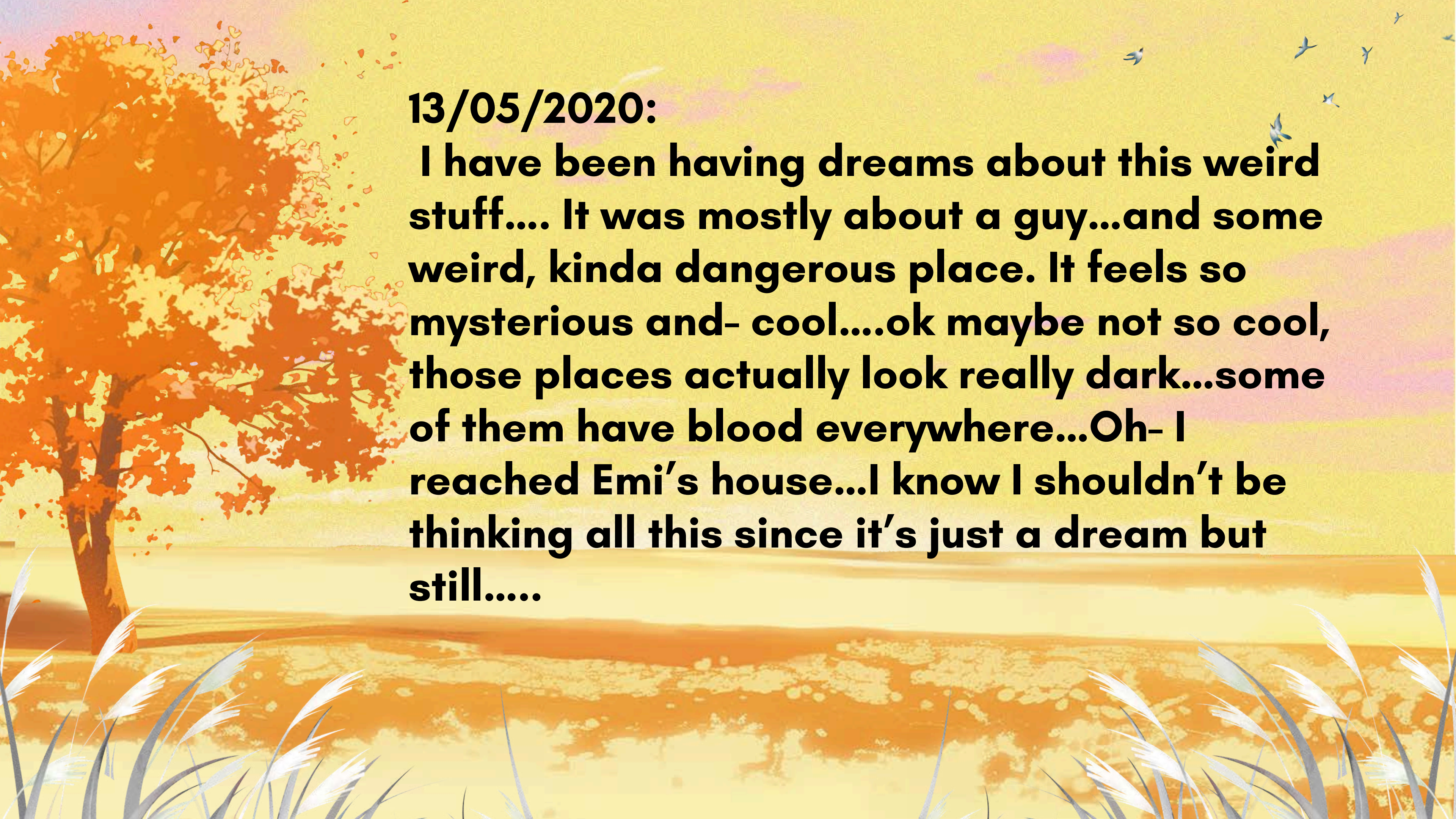
The man beside me was vibrating with joy, constantly looking at me and smiling...[then he must be my father!]

I thought to myself....



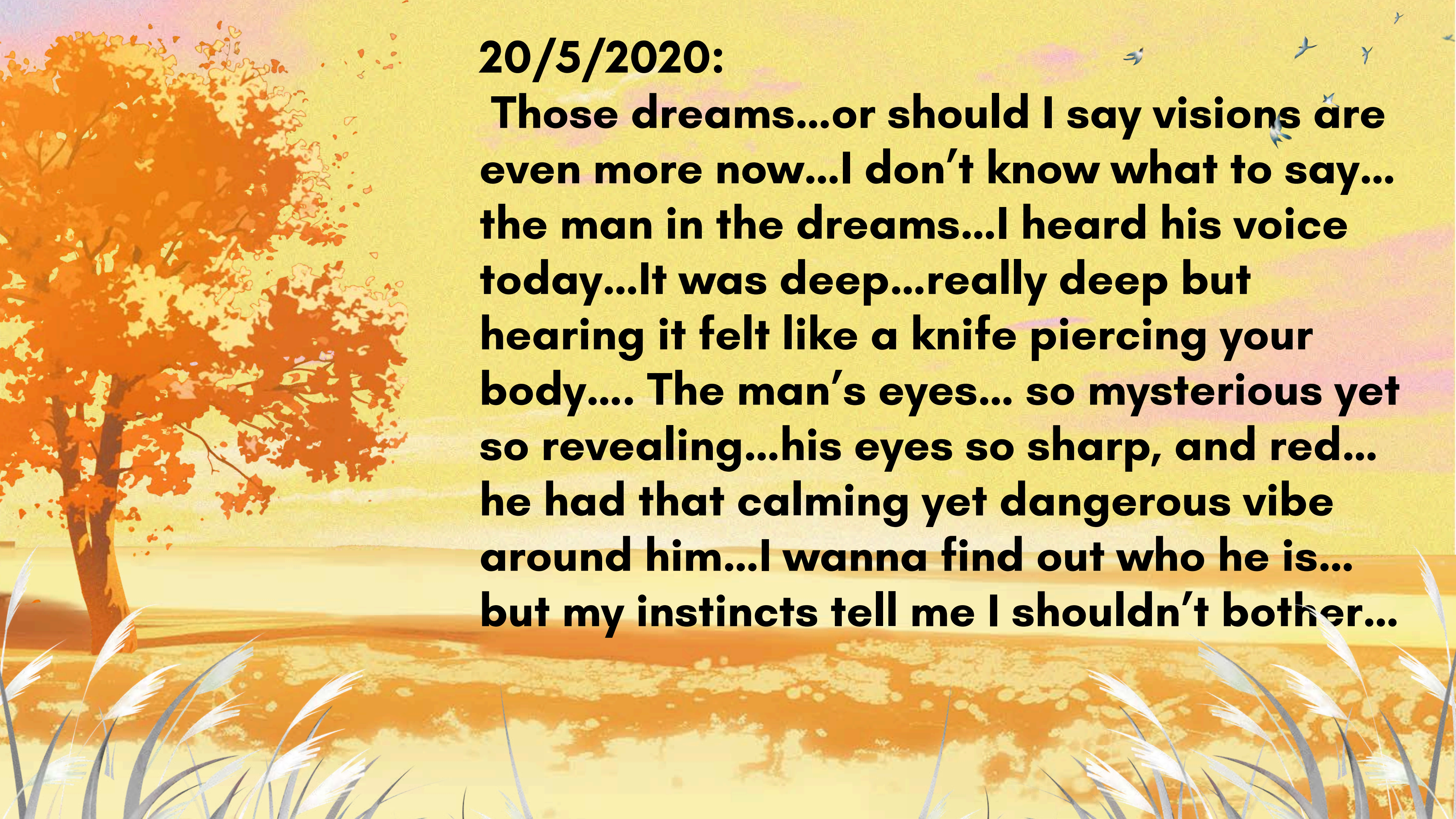
30/08/2009:

My mom called me to herself....[damn crawling's hard] I thought to myself...suddenly I felt something in myself...was I...supposed to stand up? That would be a lot easier...I took support of the chair beside me and stood up...I HAD STOOD UP!...my mom looked happy and surprised...I walked to her with great struggle as my legs felt wobbly...I WAS WALKING! I couldn't believe my eyes, I almost fell down when mom caught me, I was so happy I had finally walked!!....



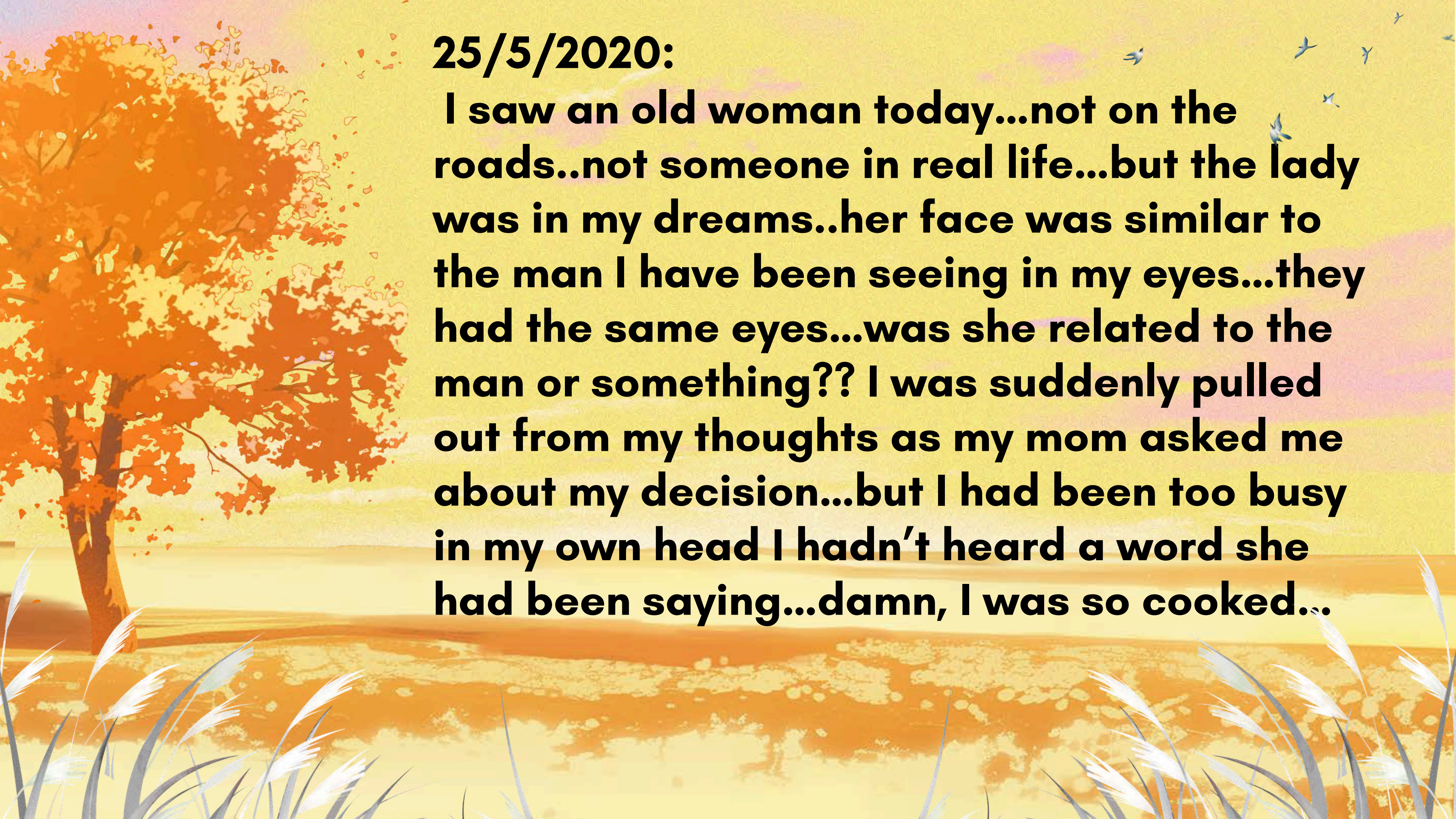
13/05/2020:

I have been having dreams about this weird stuff.... It was mostly about a guy...and some weird, kinda dangerous place. It feels so mysterious and- cool....ok maybe not so cool, those places actually look really dark...some of them have blood everywhere...Oh- I reached Emi's house...I know I shouldn't be thinking all this since it's just a dream but still.....



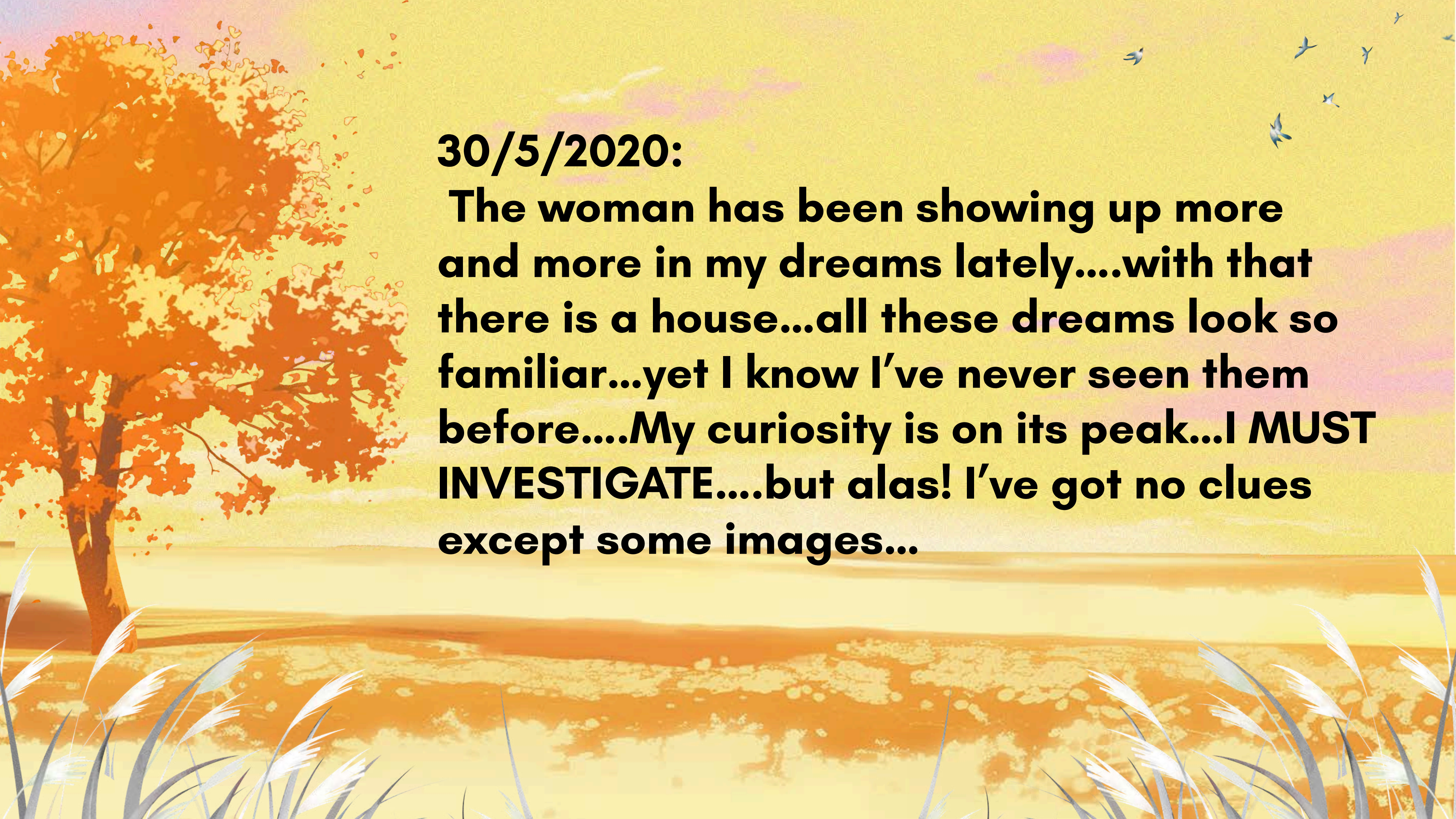
20/5/2020:

Those dreams...or should I say visions are even more now...I don't know what to say... the man in the dreams...I heard his voice today...It was deep...really deep but hearing it felt like a knife piercing your body... The man's eyes... so mysterious yet so revealing...his eyes so sharp, and red... he had that calming yet dangerous vibe around him...I wanna find out who he is... but my instincts tell me I shouldn't bother...



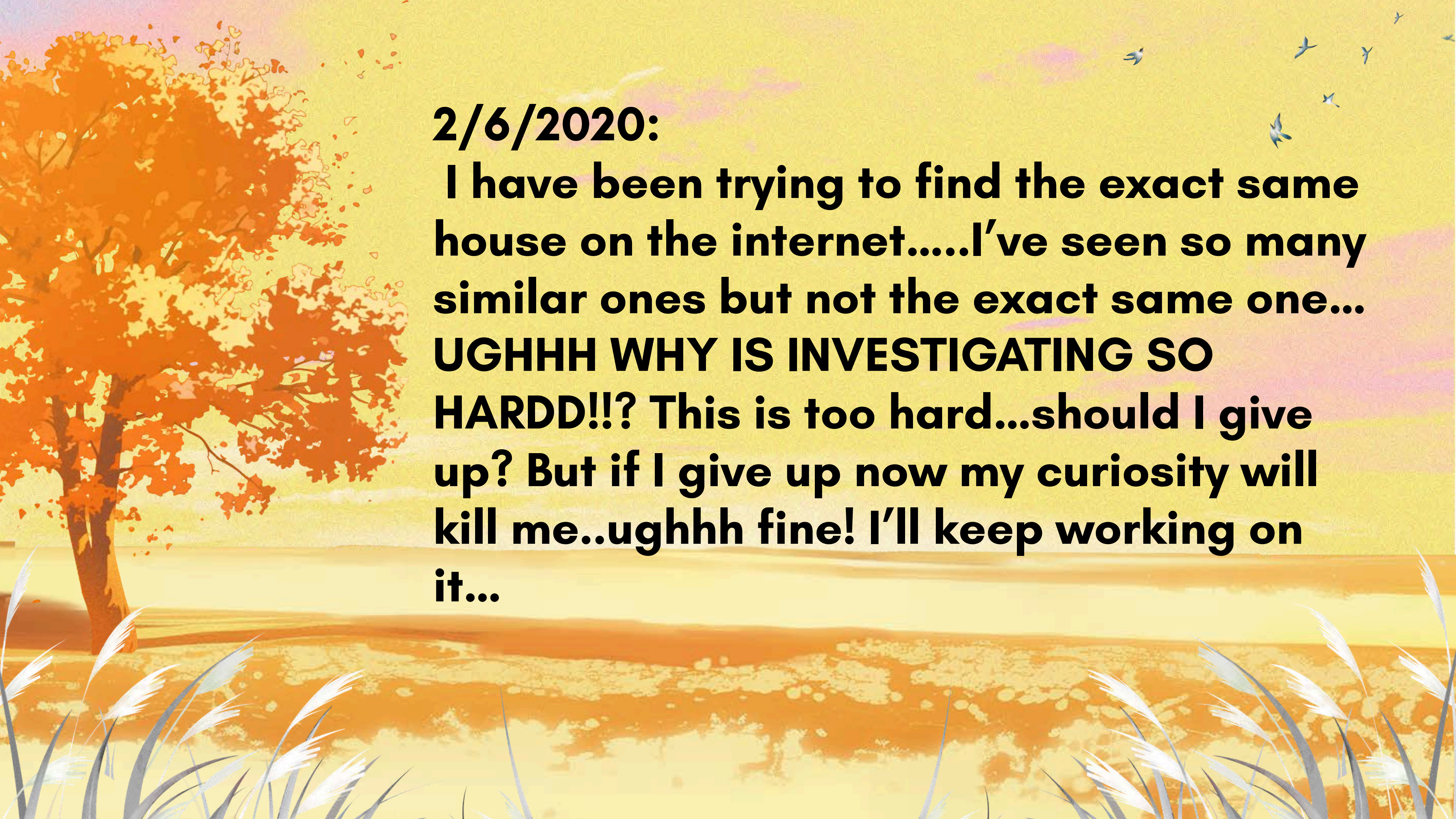
25/5/2020:

I saw an old woman today...not on the roads..not someone in real life...but the lady was in my dreams..her face was similar to the man I have been seeing in my eyes...they had the same eyes...was she related to the man or something?? I was suddenly pulled out from my thoughts as my mom asked me about my decision...but I had been too busy in my own head I hadn't heard a word she had been saying...damn, I was so cooked...



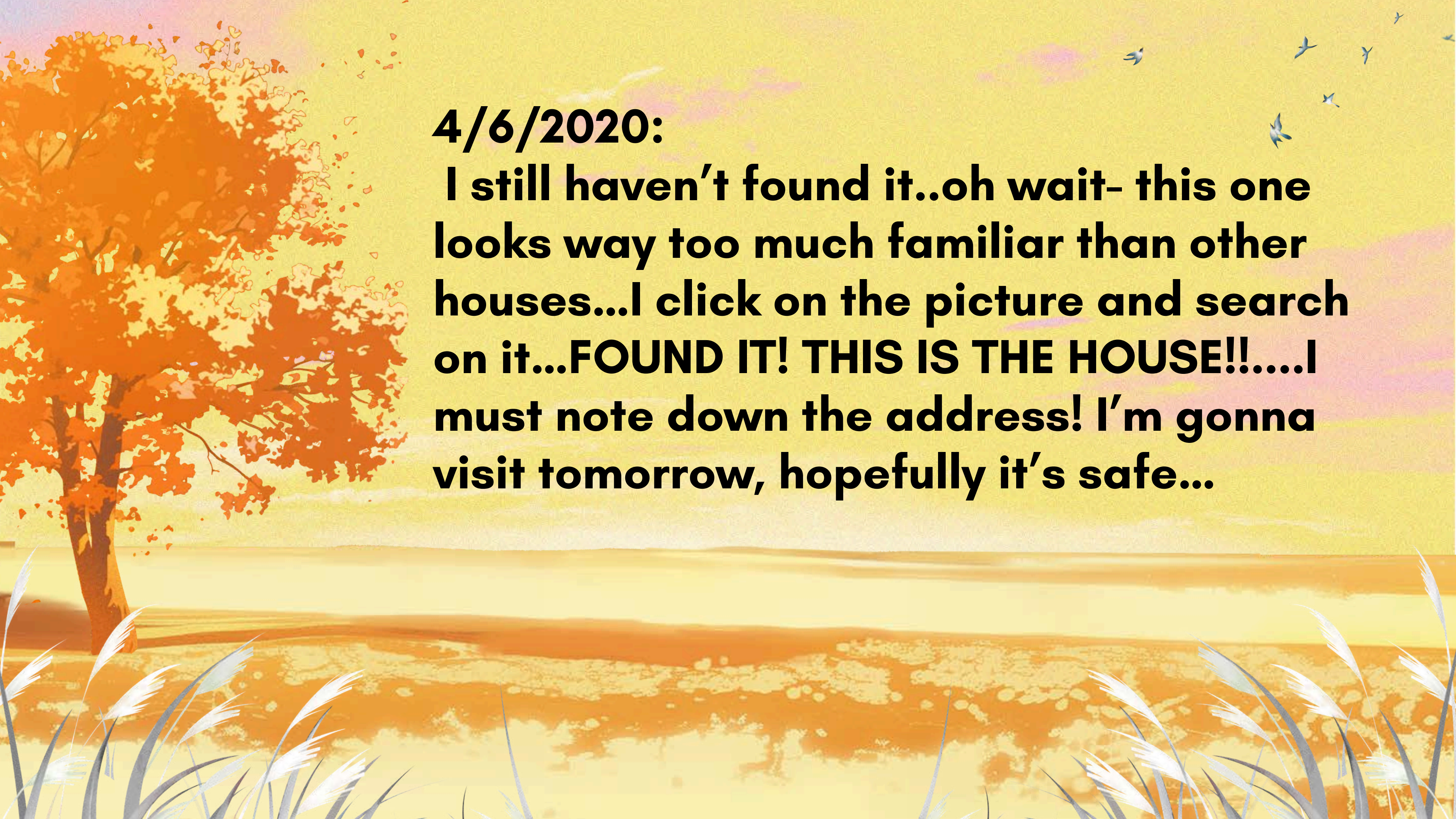
30/5/2020:

The woman has been showing up more and more in my dreams lately....with that there is a house...all these dreams look so familiar...yet I know I've never seen them before....My curiosity is on its peak...I **MUST INVESTIGATE....but alas! I've got no clues except some images...**



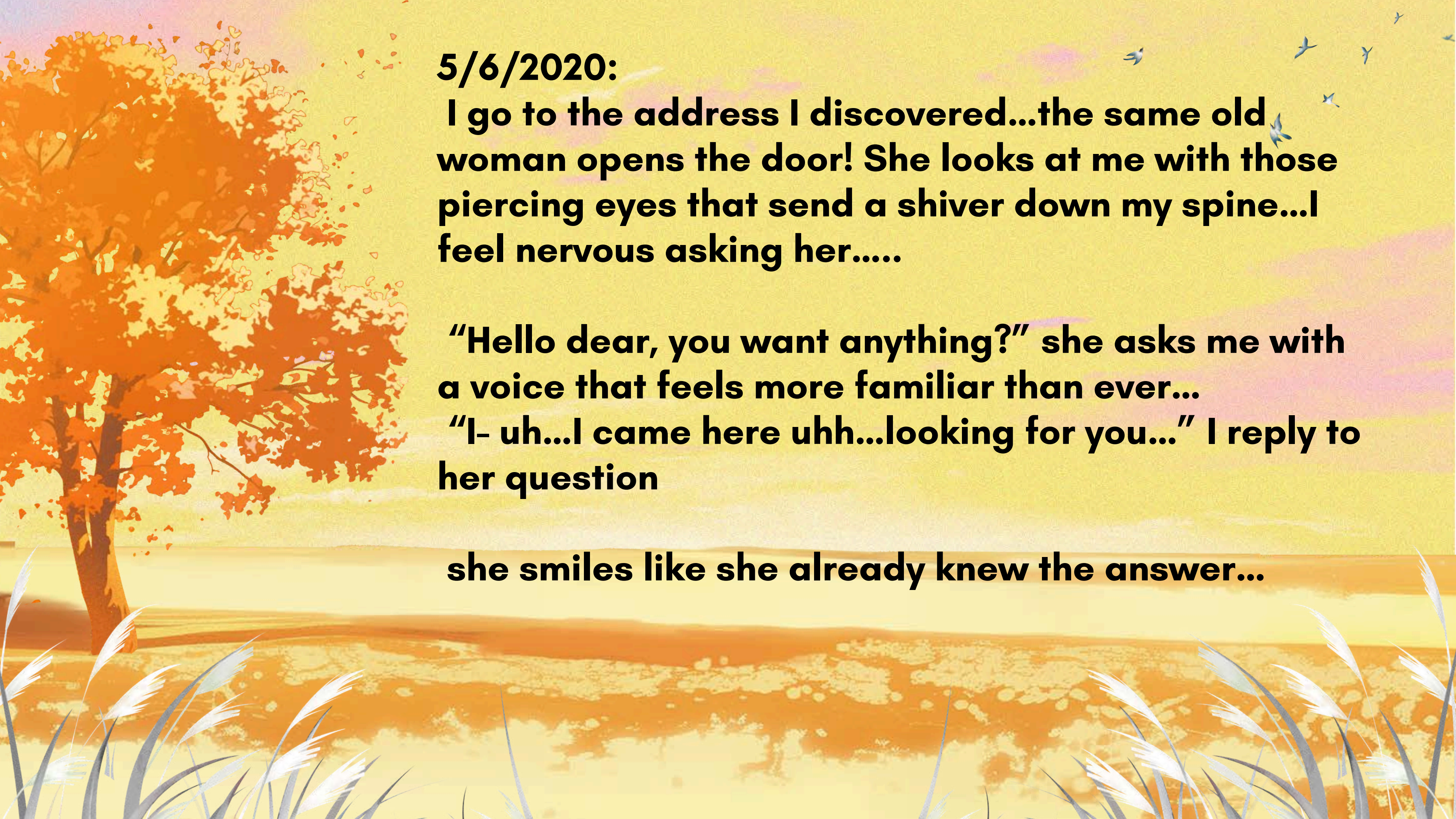
2/6/2020:

I have been trying to find the exact same house on the internet....I've seen so many similar ones but not the exact same one... UGH HH WHY IS INVESTIGATING SO HARDD!!? This is too hard...should I give up? But if I give up now my curiosity will kill me..ughhh fine! I'll keep working on it...



4/6/2020:

I still haven't found it..oh wait- this one looks way too much familiar than other houses...I click on the picture and search on it...FOUND IT! THIS IS THE HOUSE!!....I must note down the address! I'm gonna visit tomorrow, hopefully it's safe...



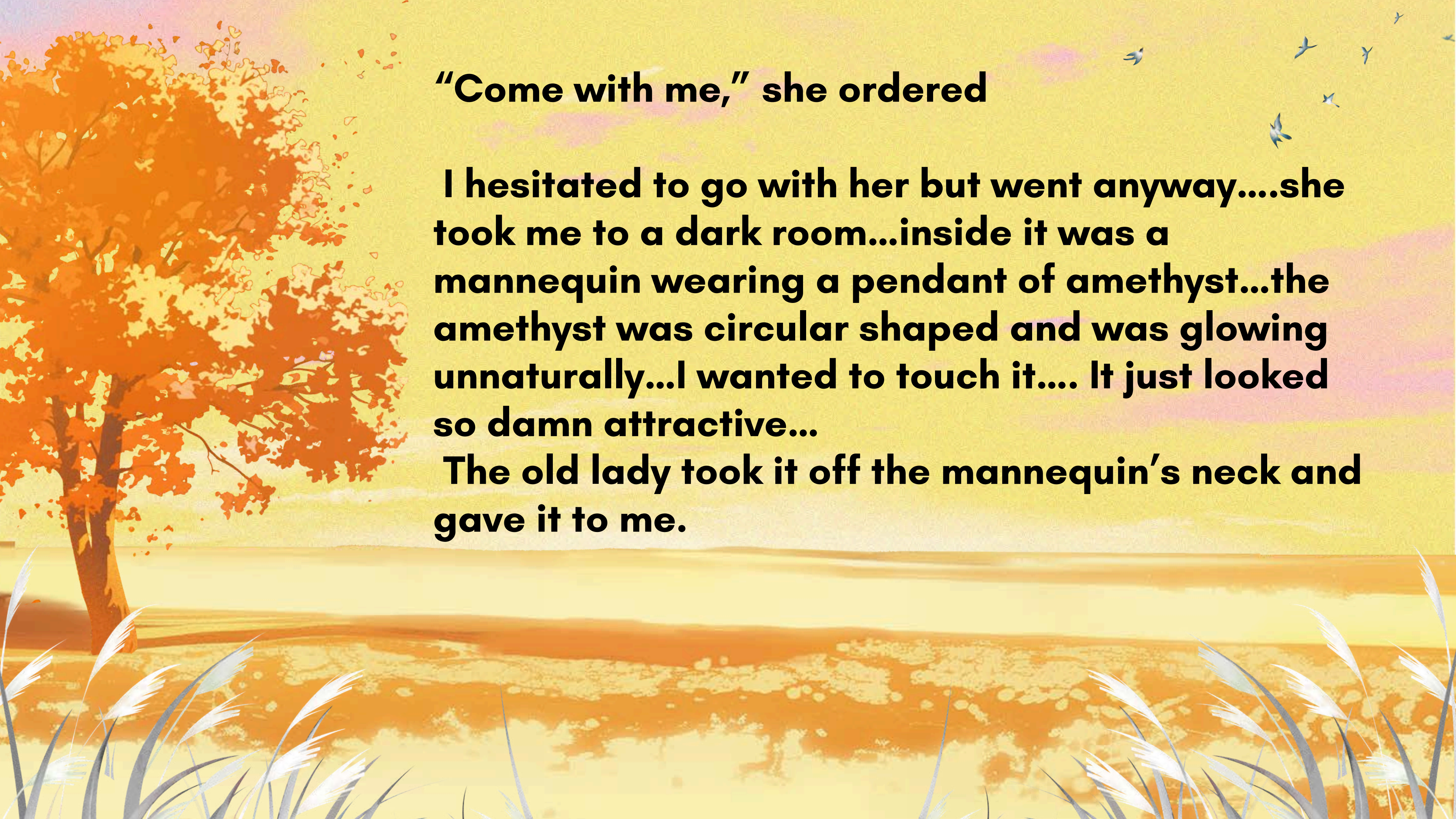
5/6/2020:

I go to the address I discovered...the same old woman opens the door! She looks at me with those piercing eyes that send a shiver down my spine...I feel nervous asking her.....

"Hello dear, you want anything?" she asks me with a voice that feels more familiar than ever...

"I- uh...I came here uhh...looking for you..." I reply to her question

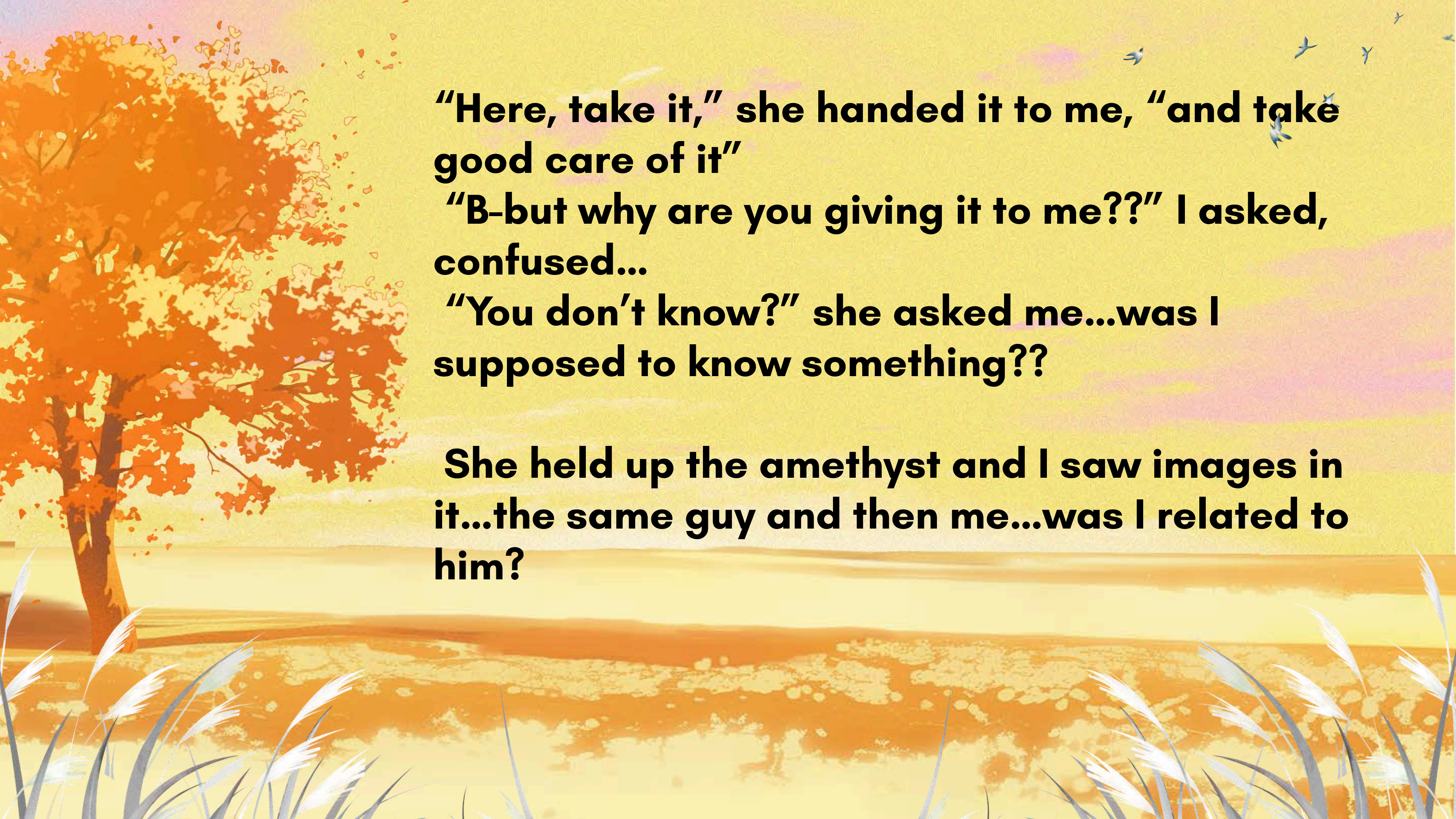
she smiles like she already knew the answer...



"Come with me," she ordered

I hesitated to go with her but went anyway....she took me to a dark room...inside it was a mannequin wearing a pendant of amethyst...the amethyst was circular shaped and was glowing unnaturally...I wanted to touch it.... It just looked so damn attractive...

The old lady took it off the mannequin's neck and gave it to me.

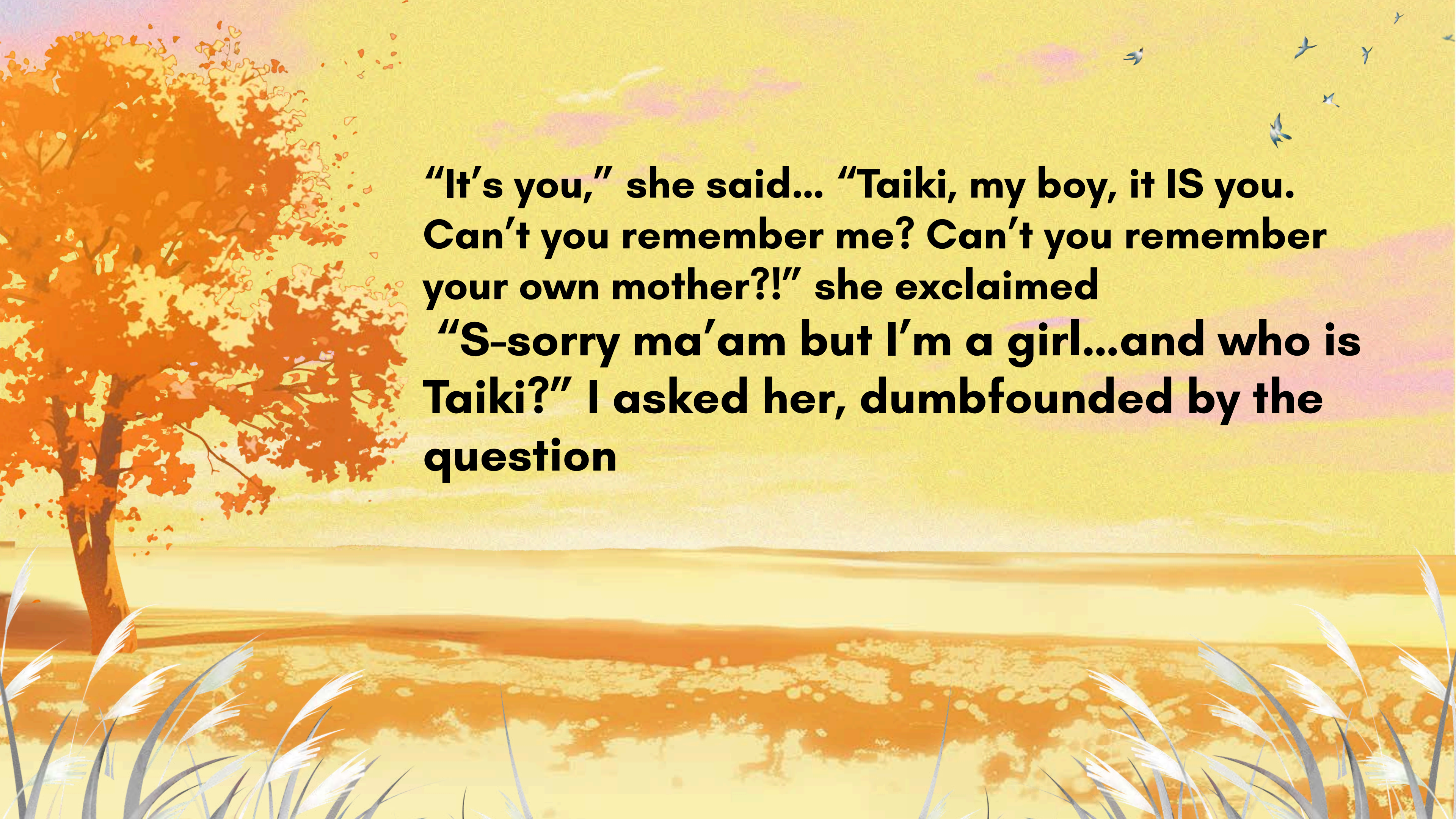


"Here, take it," she handed it to me, "and take good care of it"

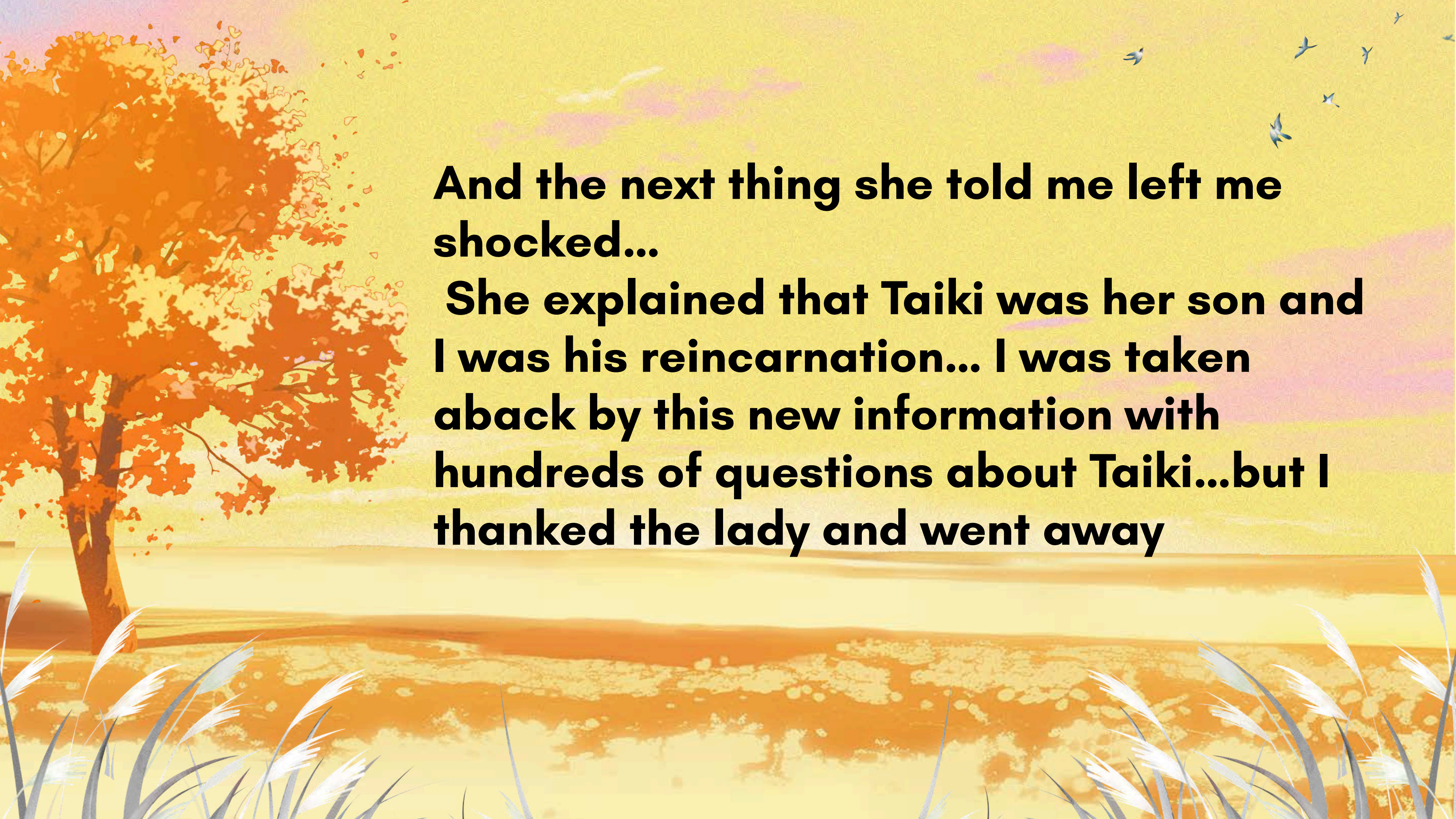
"B-but why are you giving it to me??" I asked, confused...

"You don't know?" she asked me...was I supposed to know something??"

She held up the amethyst and I saw images in it...the same guy and then me...was I related to him?

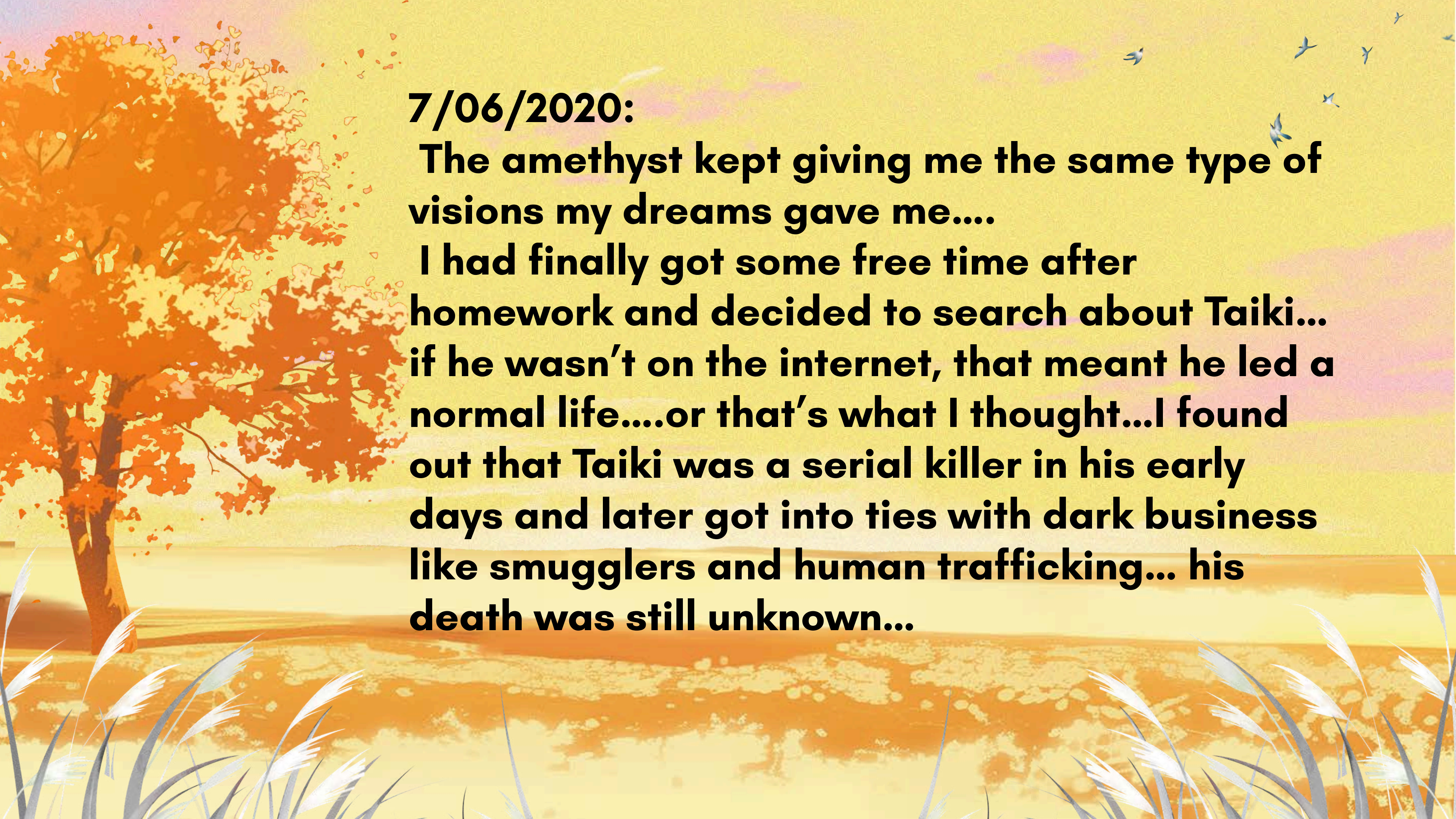


**"It's you," she said... "Taiki, my boy, it IS you. Can't you remember me? Can't you remember your own mother?!" she exclaimed
"S-sorry ma'am but I'm a girl...and who is Taiki?" I asked her, dumbfounded by the question**



And the next thing she told me left me shocked...

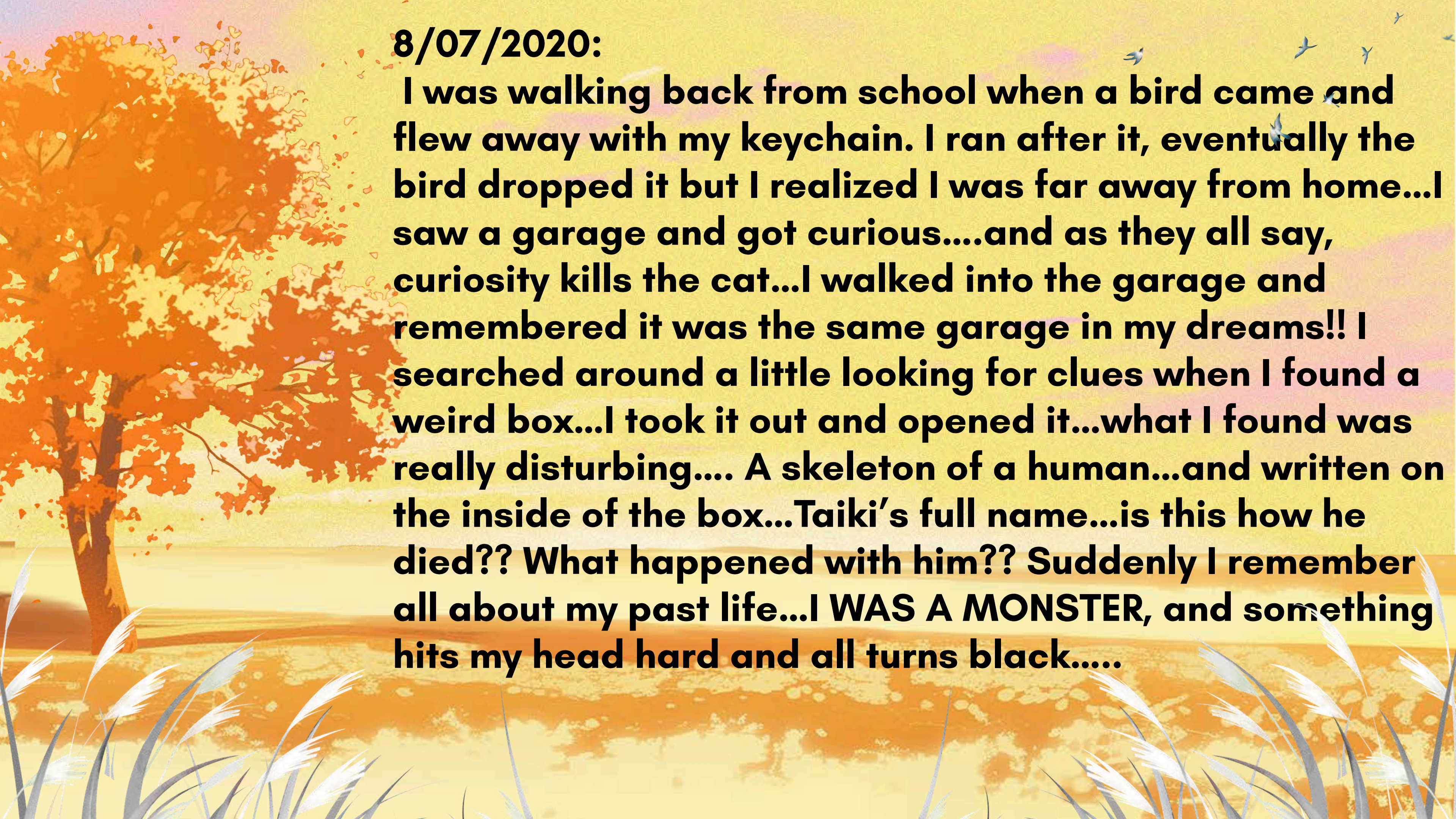
She explained that Taiki was her son and I was his reincarnation... I was taken aback by this new information with hundreds of questions about Taiki...but I thanked the lady and went away



7/06/2020:

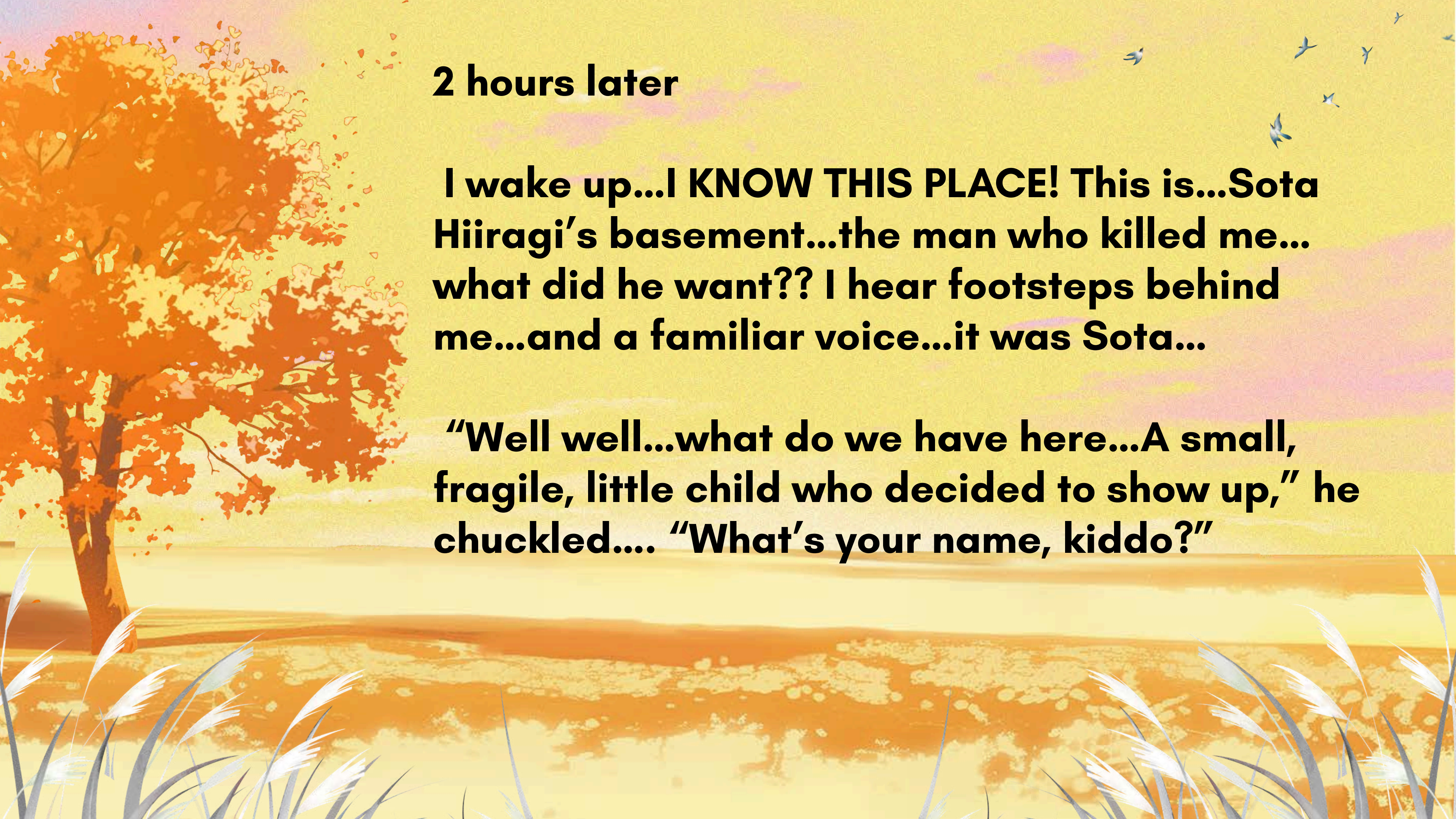
The amethyst kept giving me the same type of visions my dreams gave me....

I had finally got some free time after homework and decided to search about Taiki... if he wasn't on the internet, that meant he led a normal life....or that's what I thought...I found out that Taiki was a serial killer in his early days and later got into ties with dark business like smugglers and human trafficking... his death was still unknown...



8/07/2020:

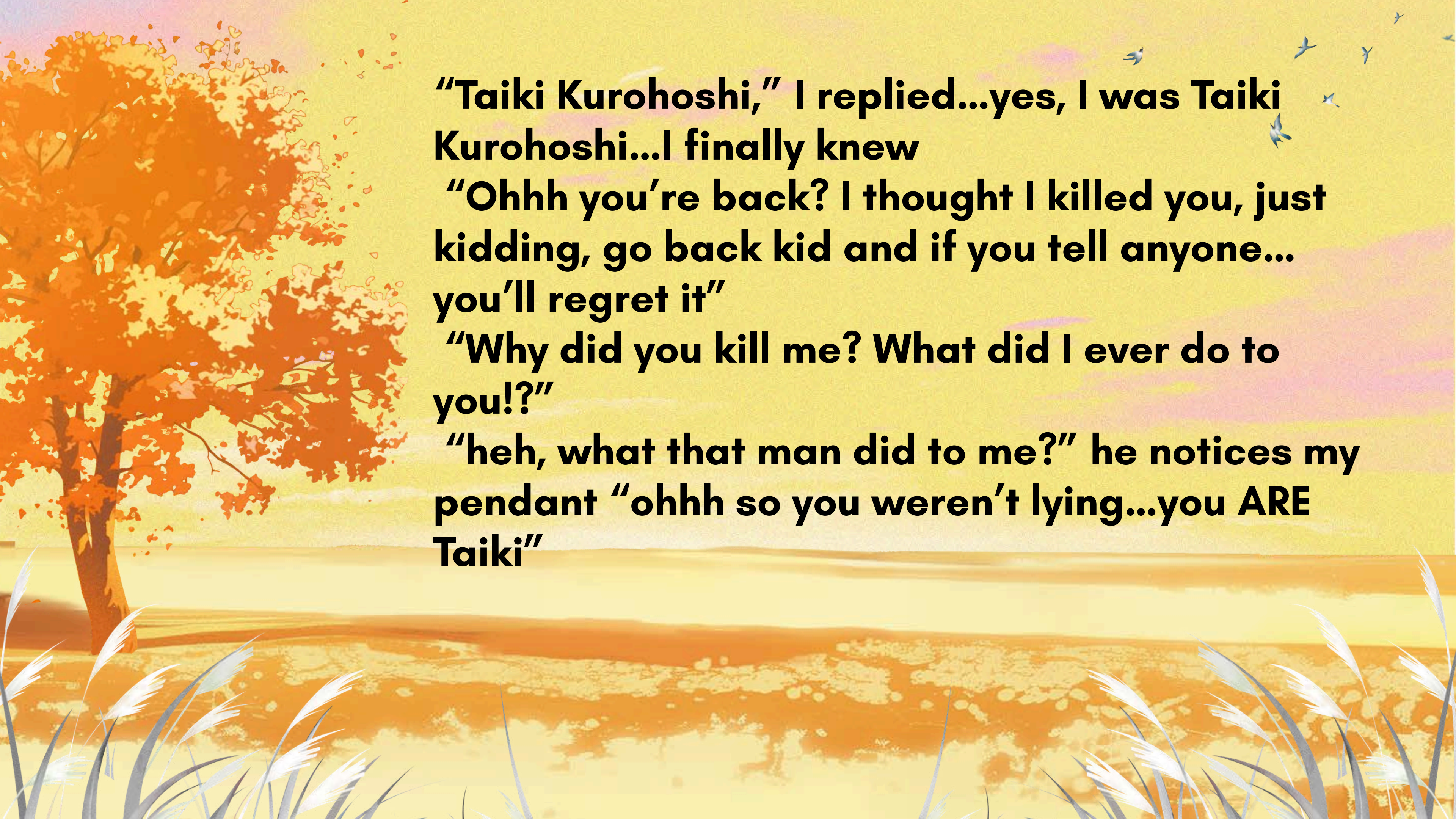
I was walking back from school when a bird came and flew away with my keychain. I ran after it, eventually the bird dropped it but I realized I was far away from home...I saw a garage and got curious....and as they all say, curiosity kills the cat...I walked into the garage and remembered it was the same garage in my dreams!! I searched around a little looking for clues when I found a weird box...I took it out and opened it...what I found was really disturbing.... A skeleton of a human...and written on the inside of the box...Taiki's full name...is this how he died?? What happened with him?? Suddenly I remember all about my past life...I WAS A MONSTER, and something hits my head hard and all turns black.....



2 hours later

I wake up...I KNOW THIS PLACE! This is...Sota Hiiragi's basement...the man who killed me... what did he want?? I hear footsteps behind me...and a familiar voice...it was Sota...

"Well well...what do we have here...A small, fragile, little child who decided to show up," he chuckled.... "What's your name, kiddo?"

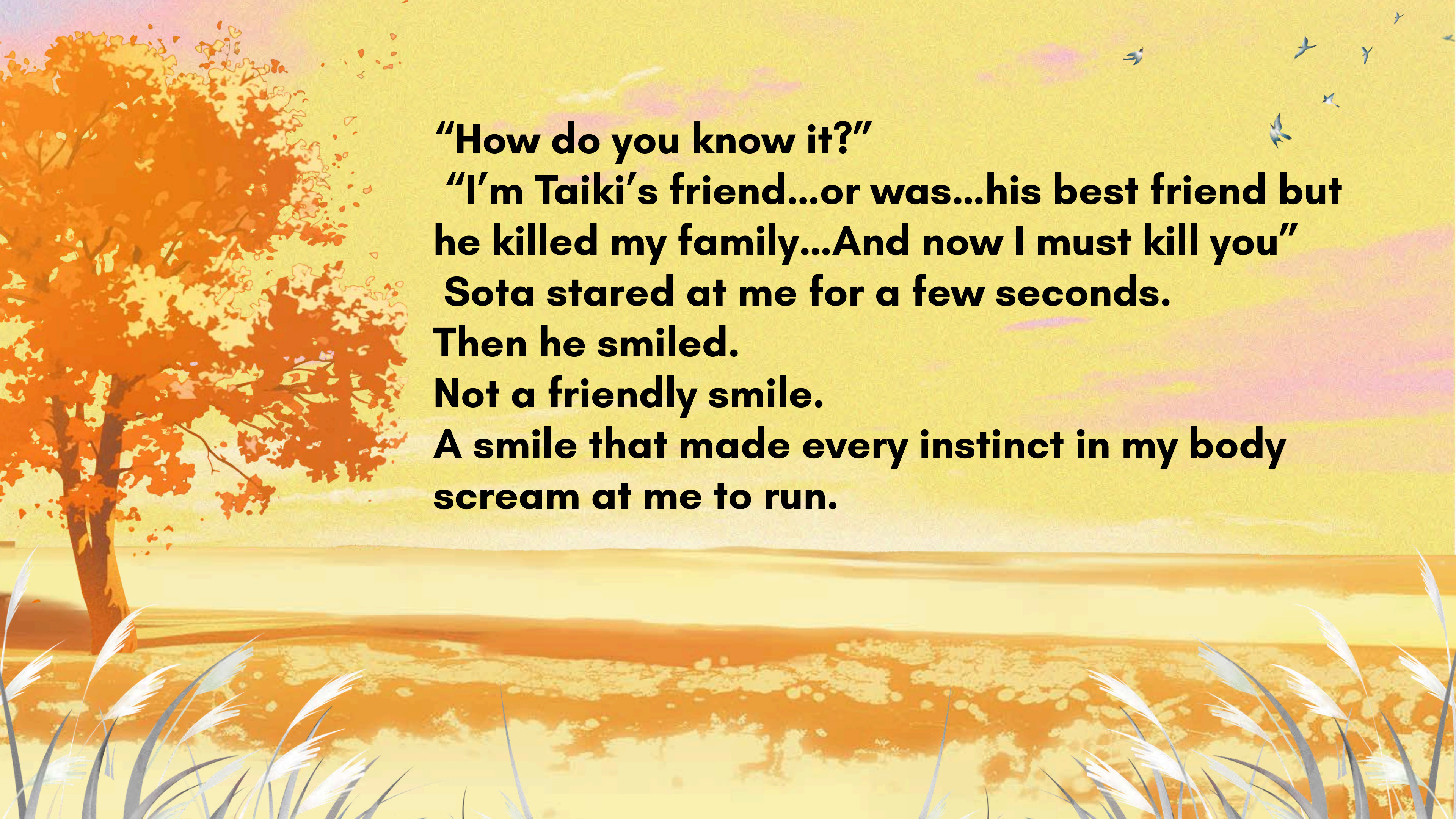


“Taiki Kurohoshi,” I replied...yes, I was Taiki Kurohoshi...I finally knew

“Ohhh you’re back? I thought I killed you, just kidding, go back kid and if you tell anyone... you’ll regret it”

“Why did you kill me? What did I ever do to you!?”

“heh, what that man did to me?” he notices my pendant “ohhh so you weren’t lying...you ARE Taiki”



"How do you know it?"

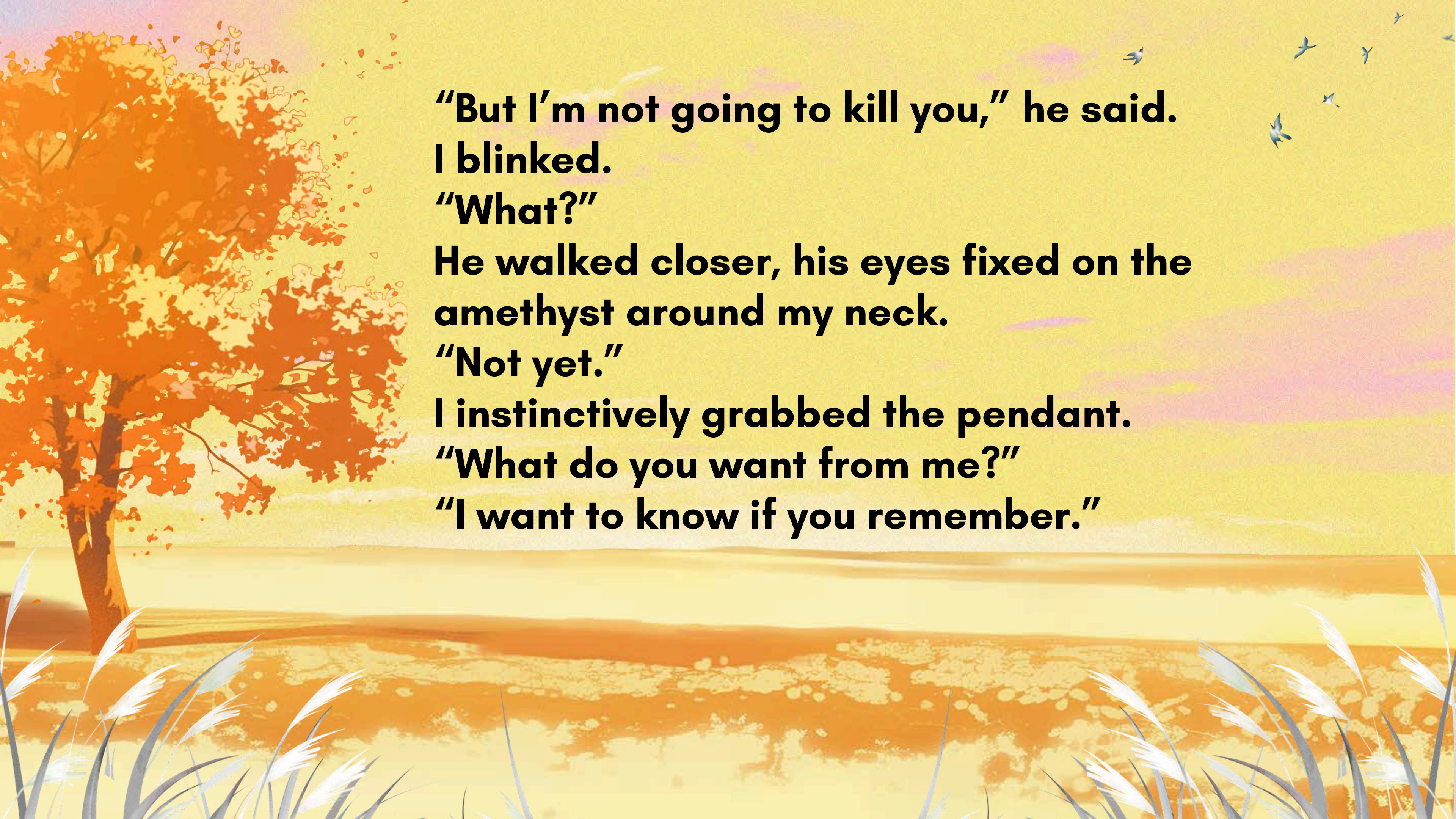
"I'm Taiki's friend...or was...his best friend but he killed my family...And now I must kill you"

Sota stared at me for a few seconds.

Then he smiled.

Not a friendly smile.

A smile that made every instinct in my body scream at me to run.



"But I'm not going to kill you," he said.

I blinked.

"What?"

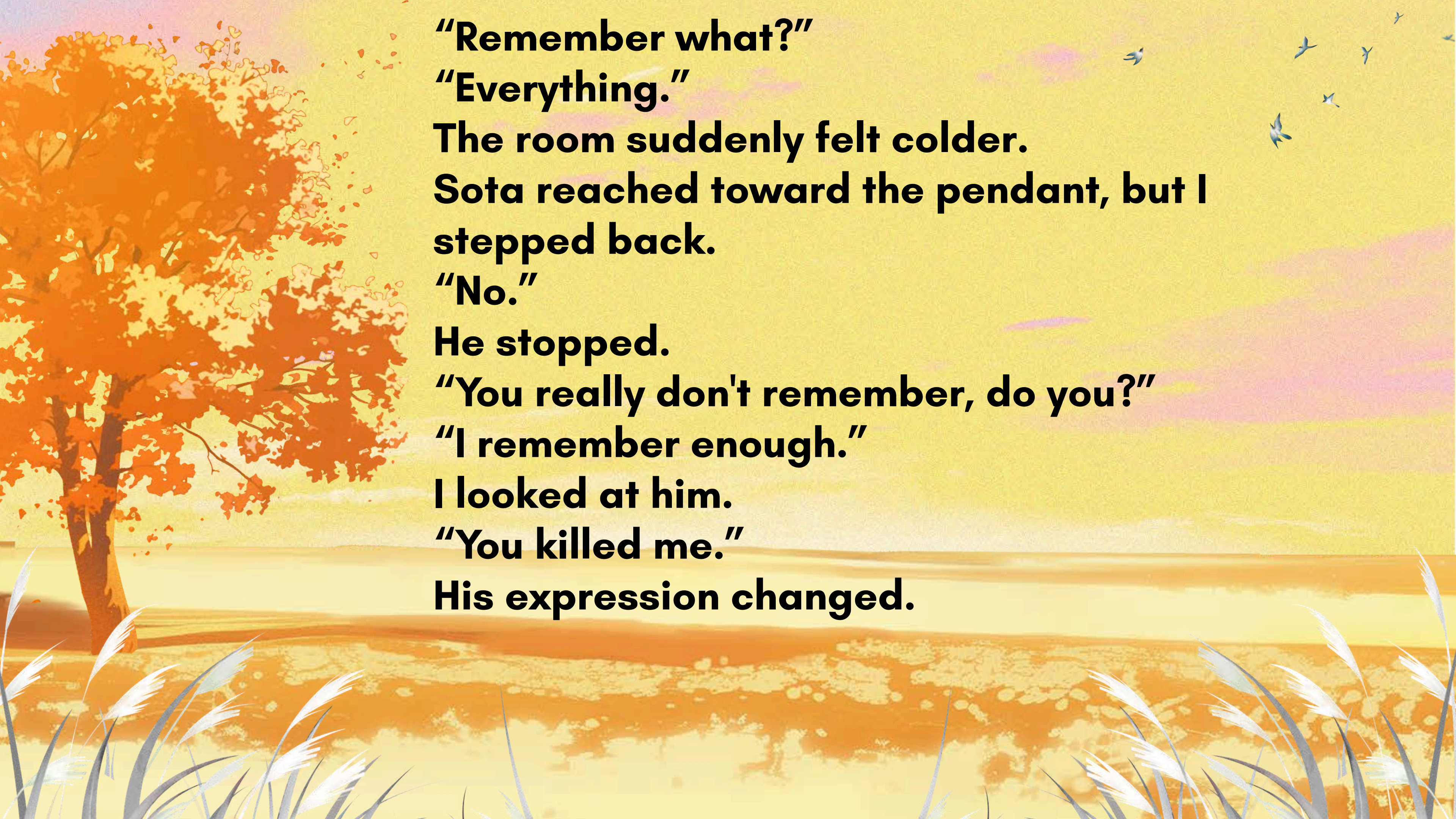
**He walked closer, his eyes fixed on the
amethyst around my neck.**

"Not yet."

I instinctively grabbed the pendant.

"What do you want from me?"

"I want to know if you remember."



"Remember what?"

"Everything."

The room suddenly felt colder.

Sota reached toward the pendant, but I stepped back.

"No."

He stopped.

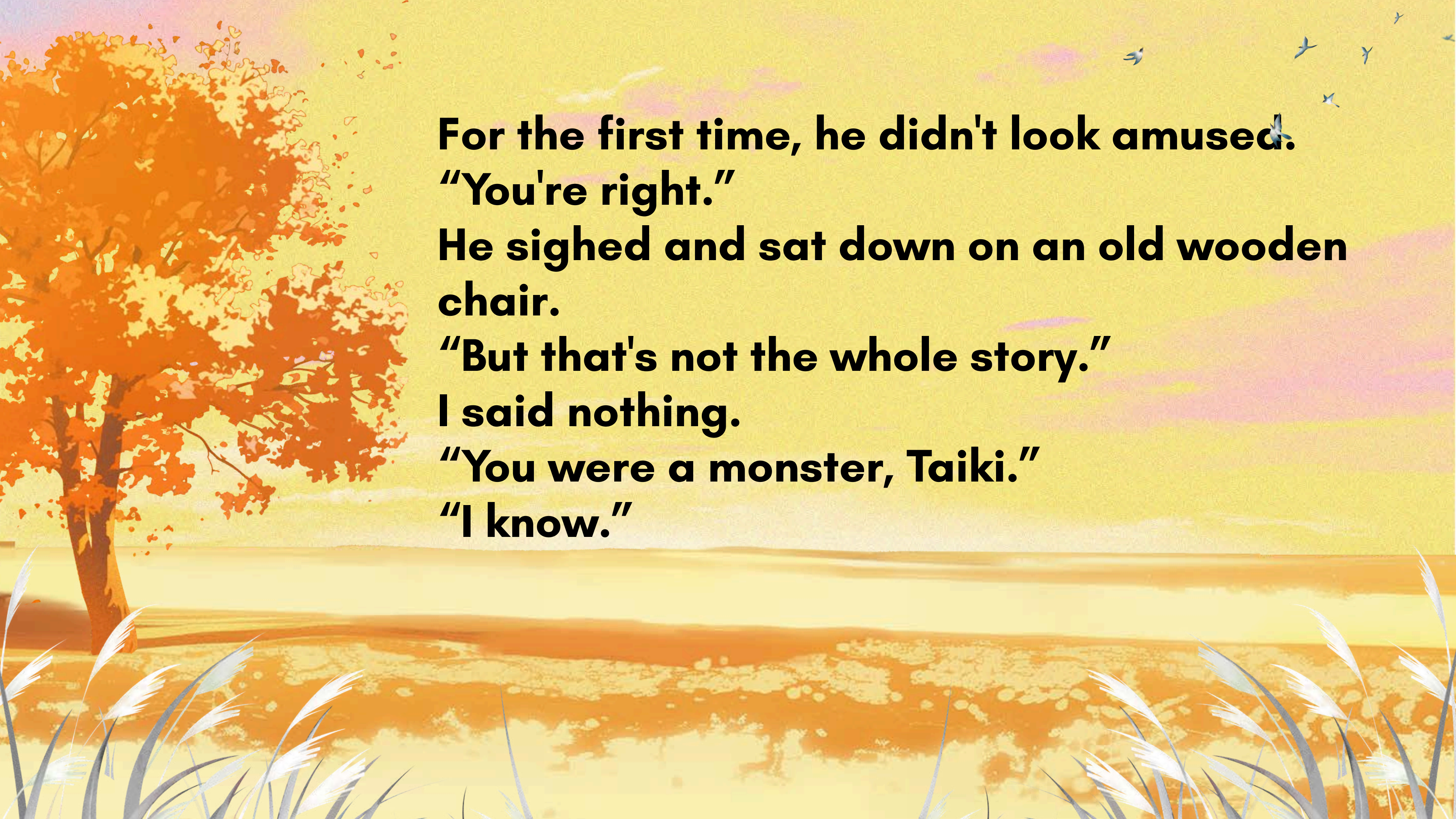
"You really don't remember, do you?"

"I remember enough."

I looked at him.

"You killed me."

His expression changed.



For the first time, he didn't look amused.

"You're right."

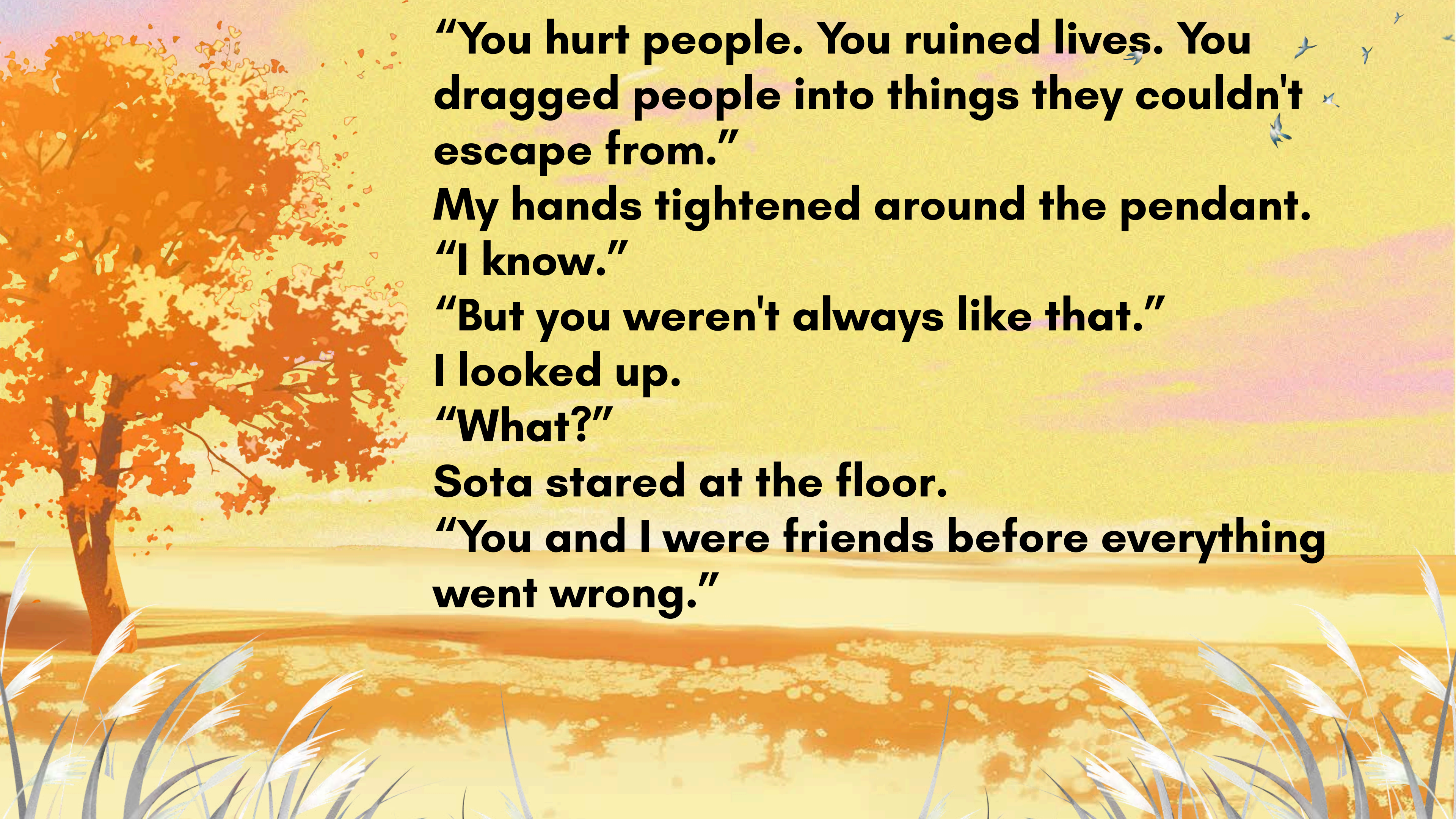
He sighed and sat down on an old wooden chair.

"But that's not the whole story."

I said nothing.

"You were a monster, Taiki."

"I know."



"You hurt people. You ruined lives. You dragged people into things they couldn't escape from."

My hands tightened around the pendant.

"I know."

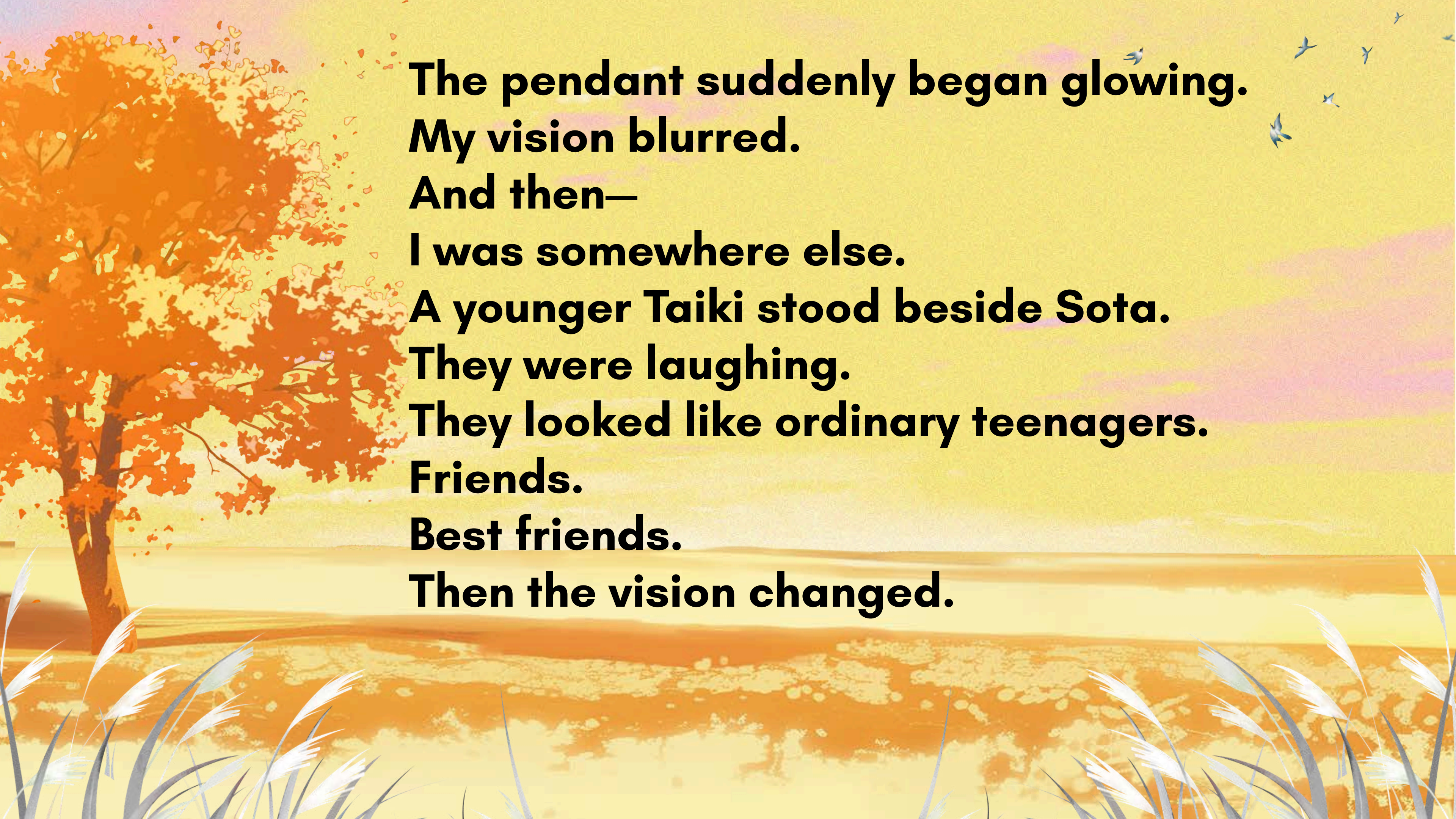
"But you weren't always like that."

I looked up.

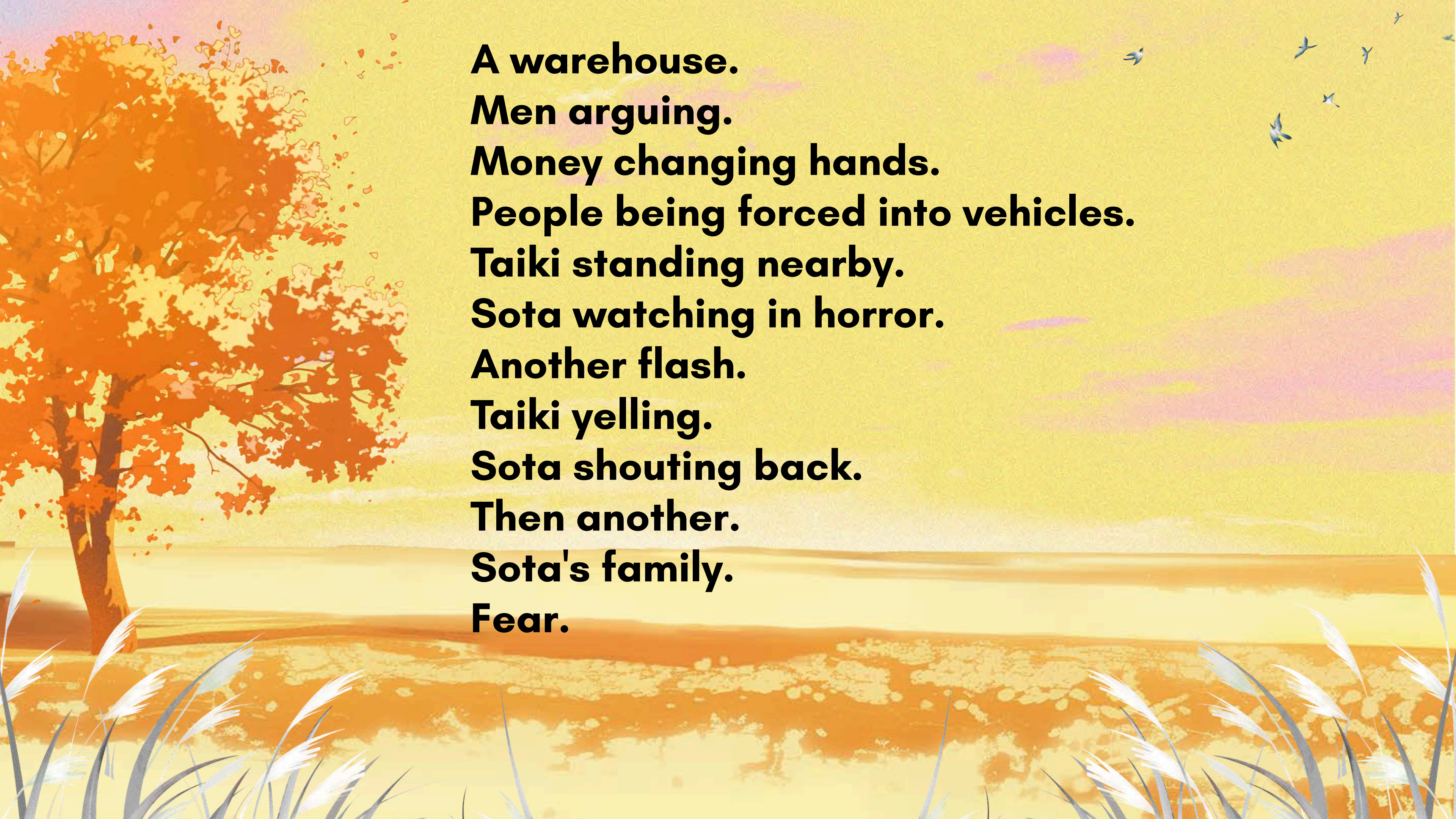
"What?"

Sota stared at the floor.

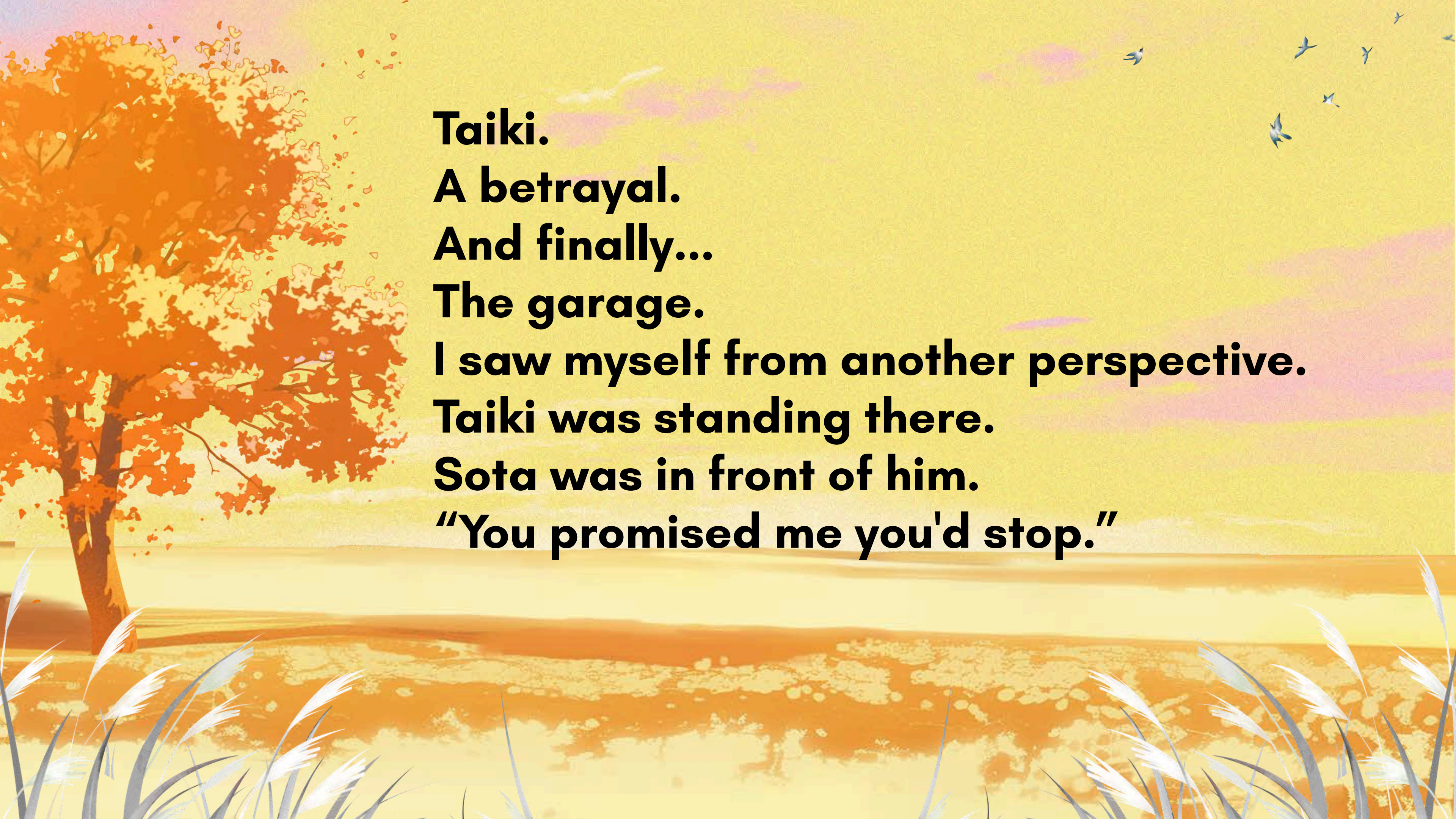
"You and I were friends before everything went wrong."



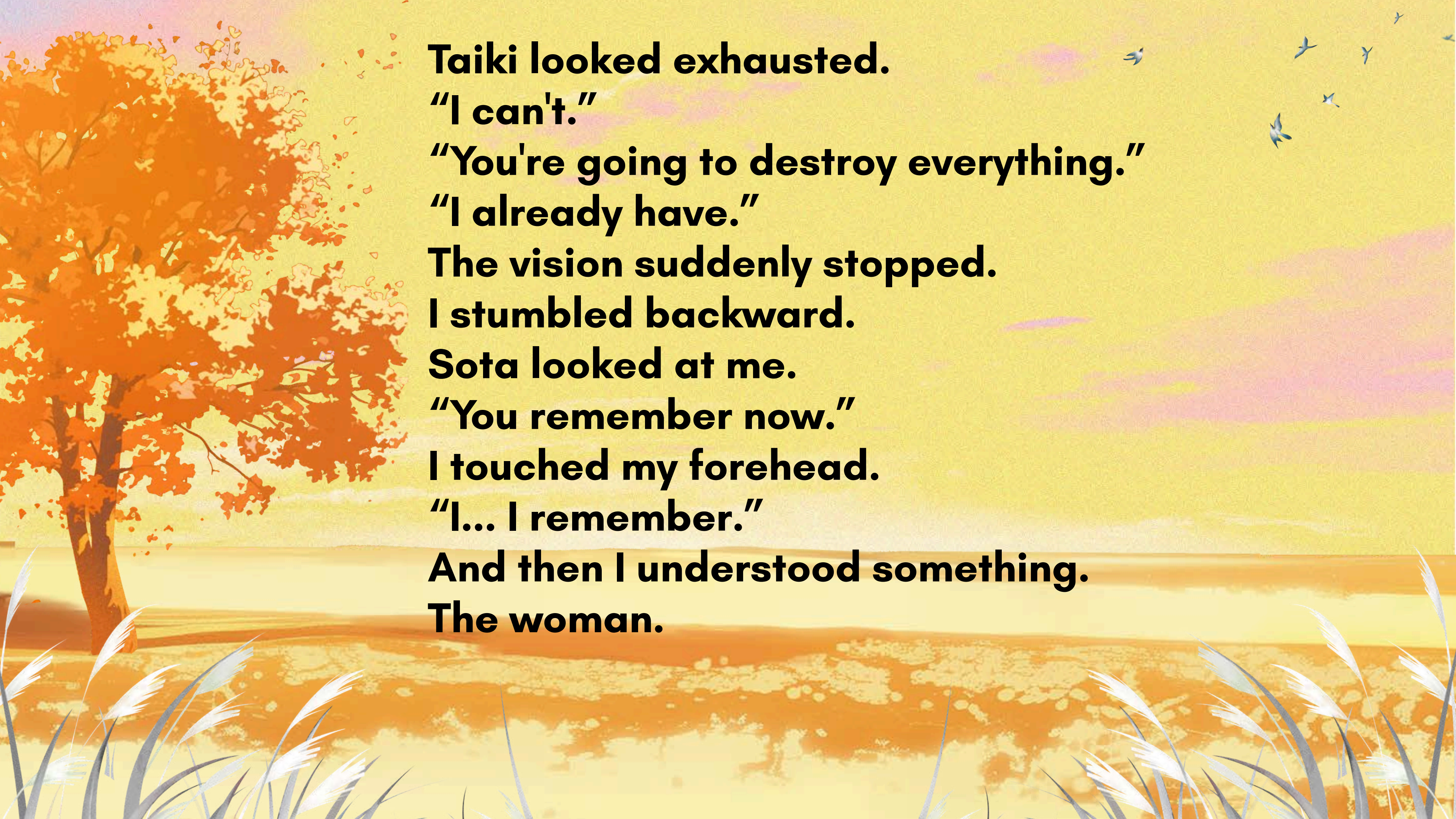
**The pendant suddenly began glowing.
My vision blurred.
And then—
I was somewhere else.
A younger Taiki stood beside Sota.
They were laughing.
They looked like ordinary teenagers.
Friends.
Best friends.
Then the vision changed.**



**A warehouse.
Men arguing.
Money changing hands.
People being forced into vehicles.
Taiki standing nearby.
Sota watching in horror.
Another flash.
Taiki yelling.
Sota shouting back.
Then another.
Sota's family.
Fear.**



**Taiki.
A betrayal.
And finally...
The garage.
I saw myself from another perspective.
Taiki was standing there.
Sota was in front of him.
"You promised me you'd stop."**



Taiki looked exhausted.

"I can't."

"You're going to destroy everything."

"I already have."

The vision suddenly stopped.

I stumbled backward.

Sota looked at me.

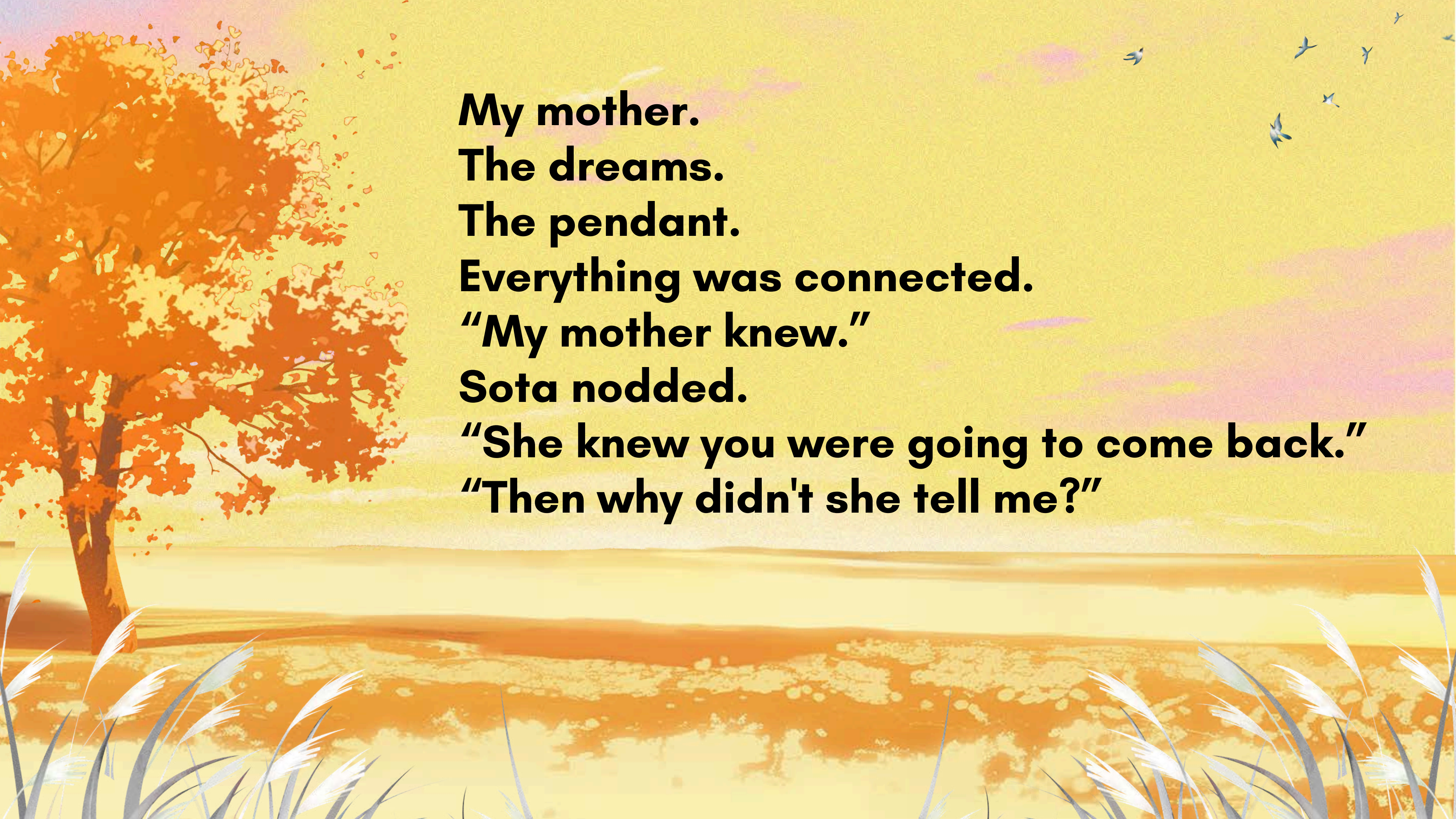
"You remember now."

I touched my forehead.

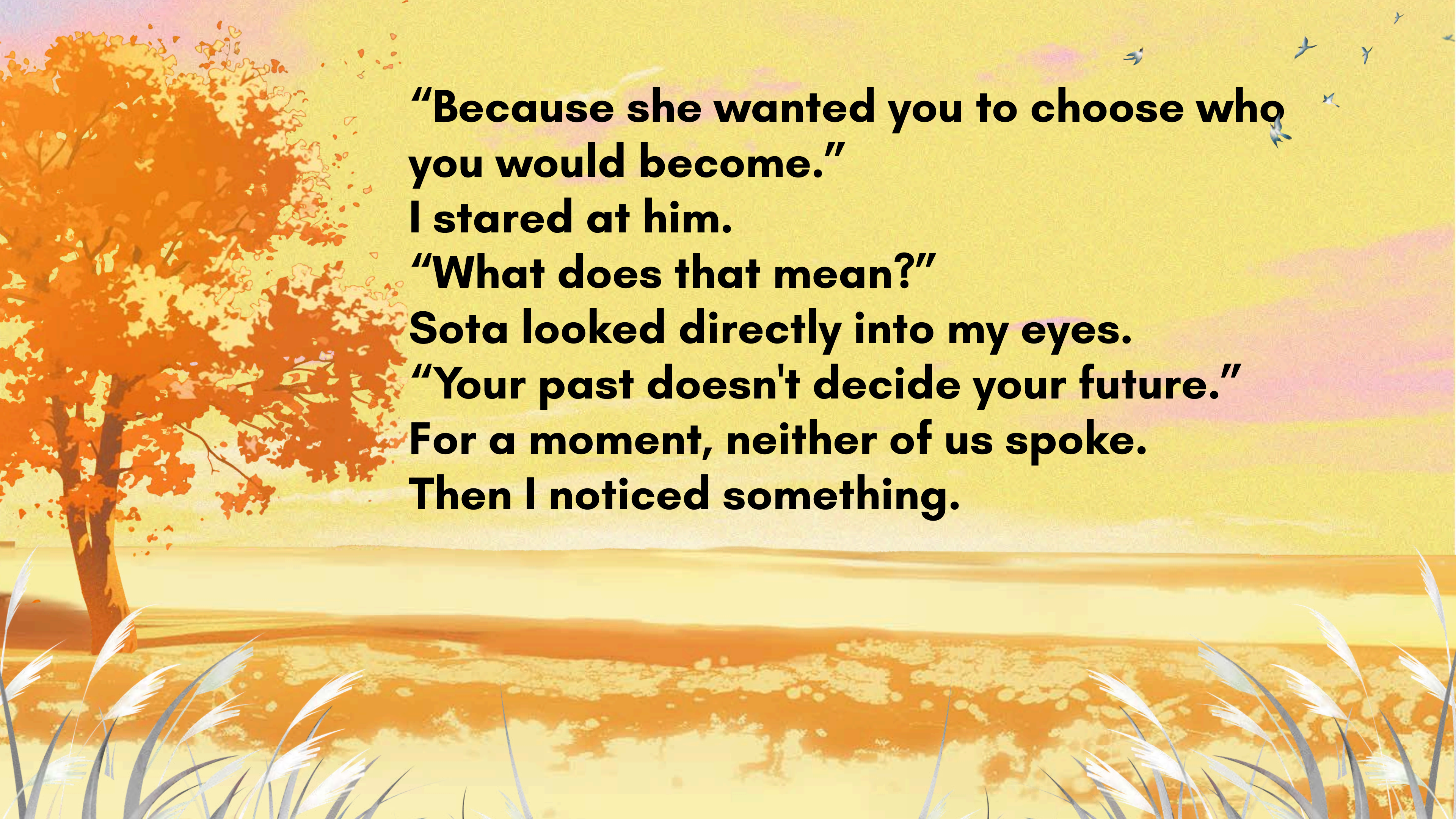
"I... I remember."

And then I understood something.

The woman.



**My mother.
The dreams.
The pendant.
Everything was connected.
“My mother knew.”
Sota nodded.
“She knew you were going to come back.”
“Then why didn't she tell me?”**



"Because she wanted you to choose who you would become."

I stared at him.

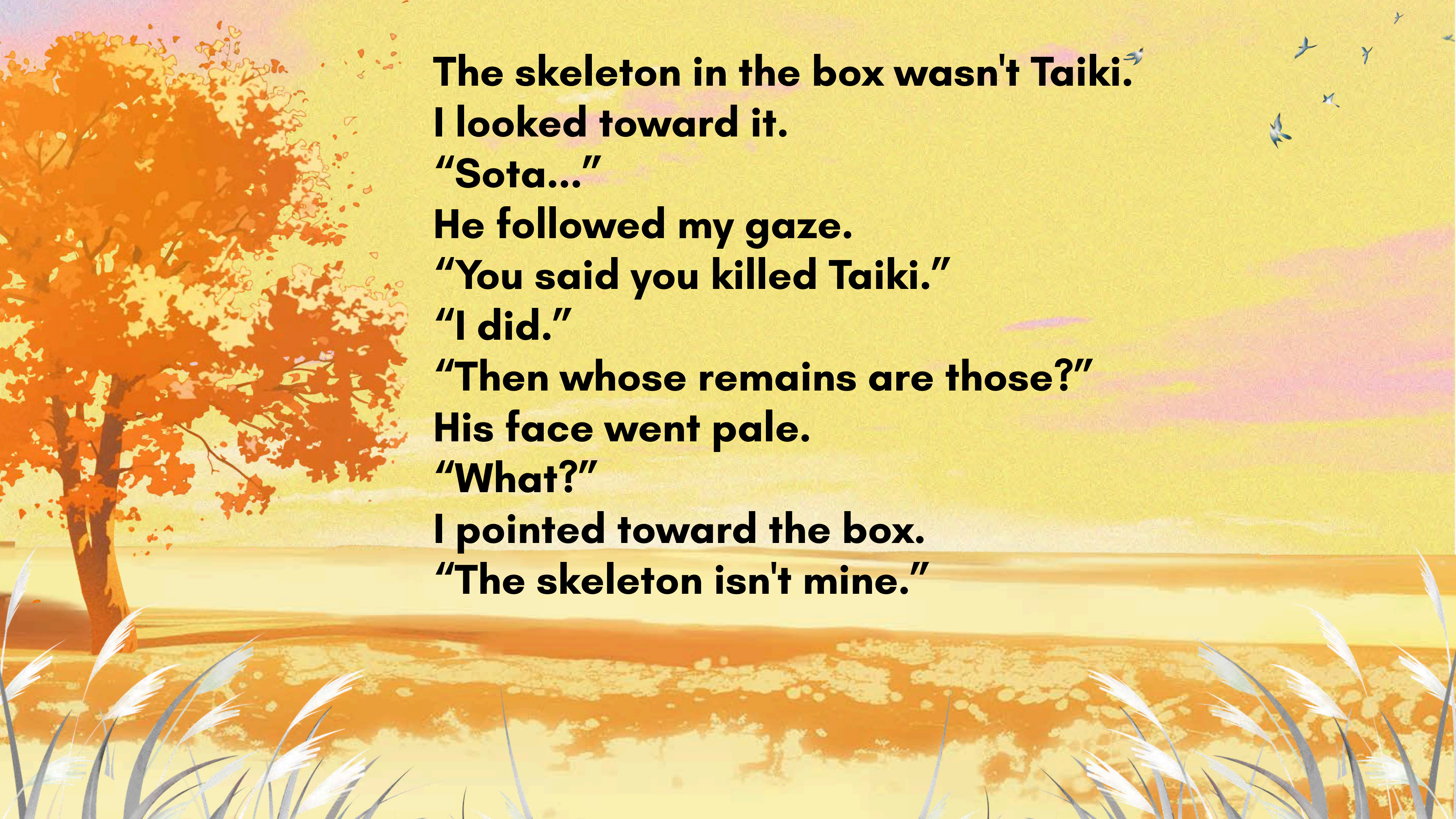
"What does that mean?"

Sota looked directly into my eyes.

"Your past doesn't decide your future."

For a moment, neither of us spoke.

Then I noticed something.



**The skeleton in the box wasn't Taiki.
I looked toward it.**

"Sota..."

He followed my gaze.

"You said you killed Taiki."

"I did."

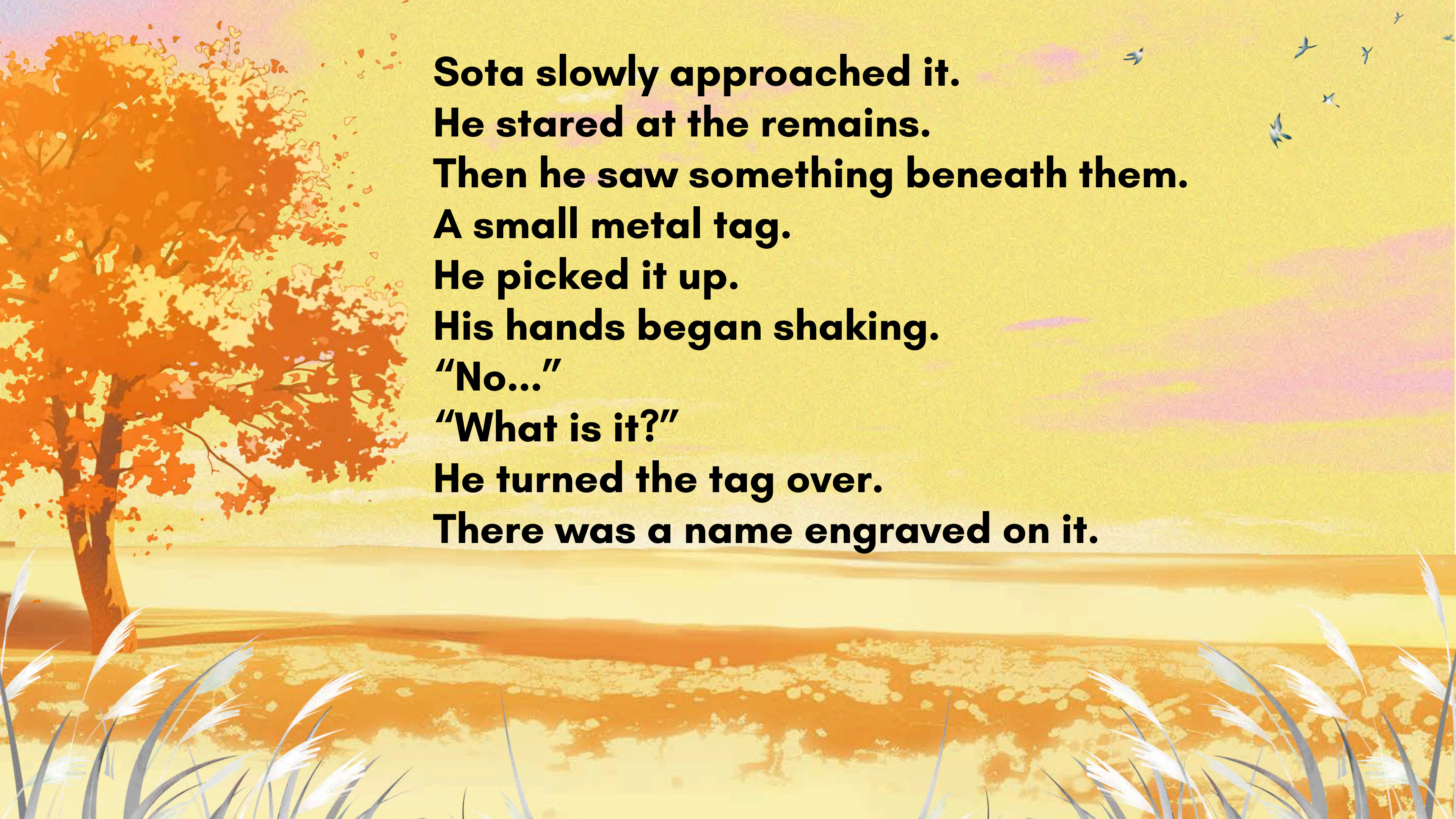
"Then whose remains are those?"

His face went pale.

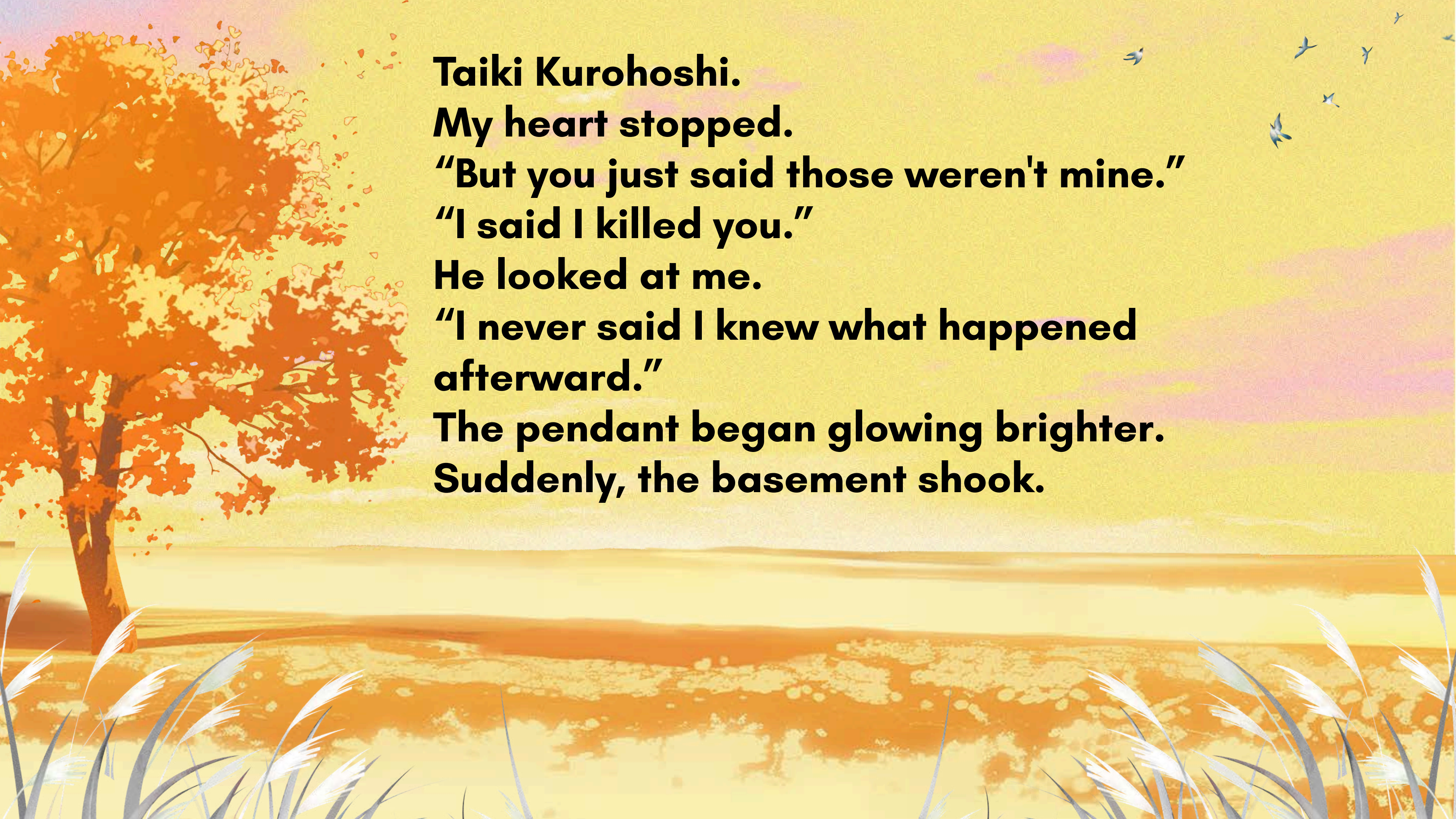
"What?"

I pointed toward the box.

"The skeleton isn't mine."



**Sota slowly approached it.
He stared at the remains.
Then he saw something beneath them.
A small metal tag.
He picked it up.
His hands began shaking.
“No...”
“What is it?”
He turned the tag over.
There was a name engraved on it.**



Taiki Kurohoshi.

My heart stopped.

"But you just said those weren't mine."

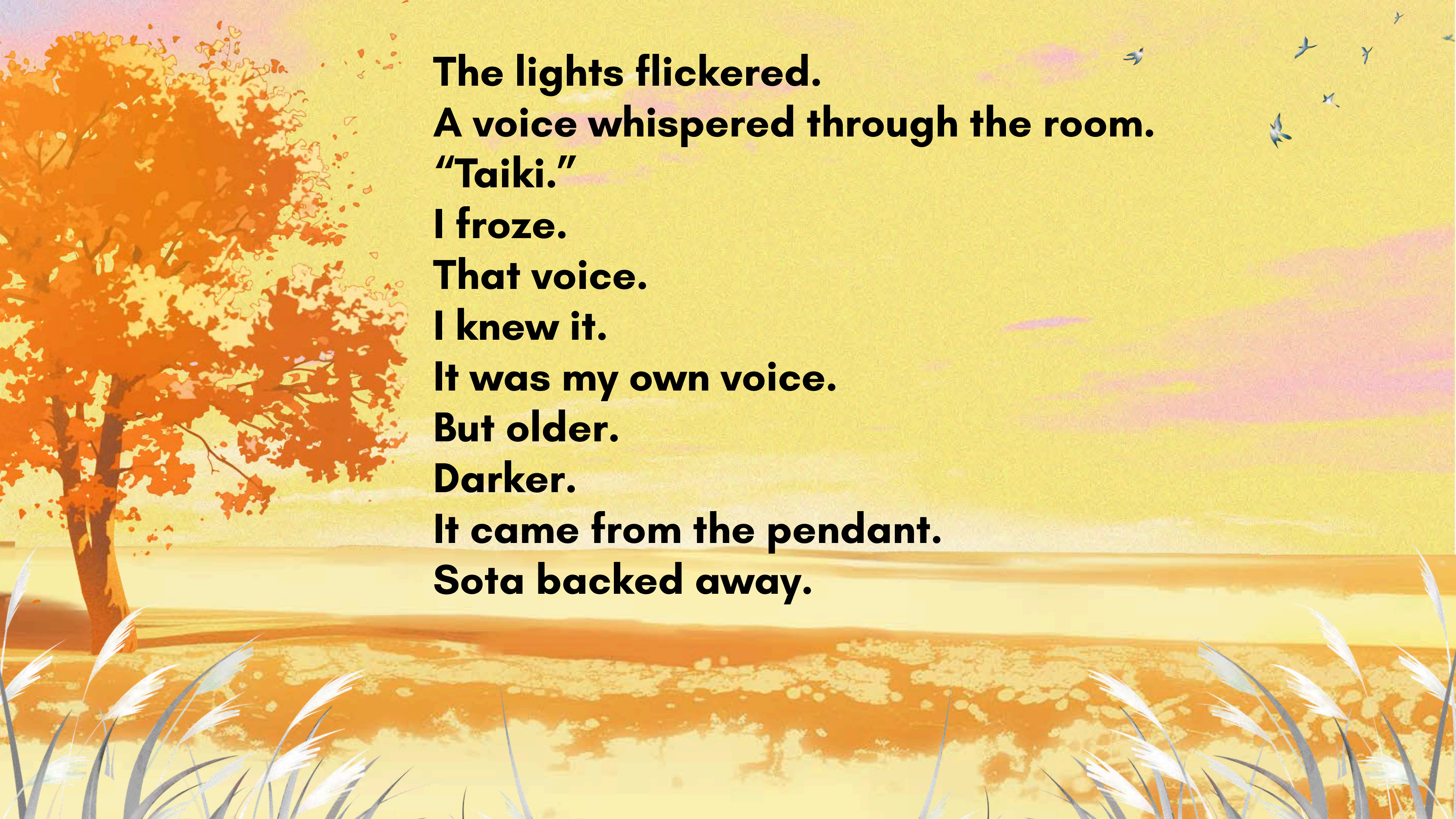
"I said I killed you."

He looked at me.

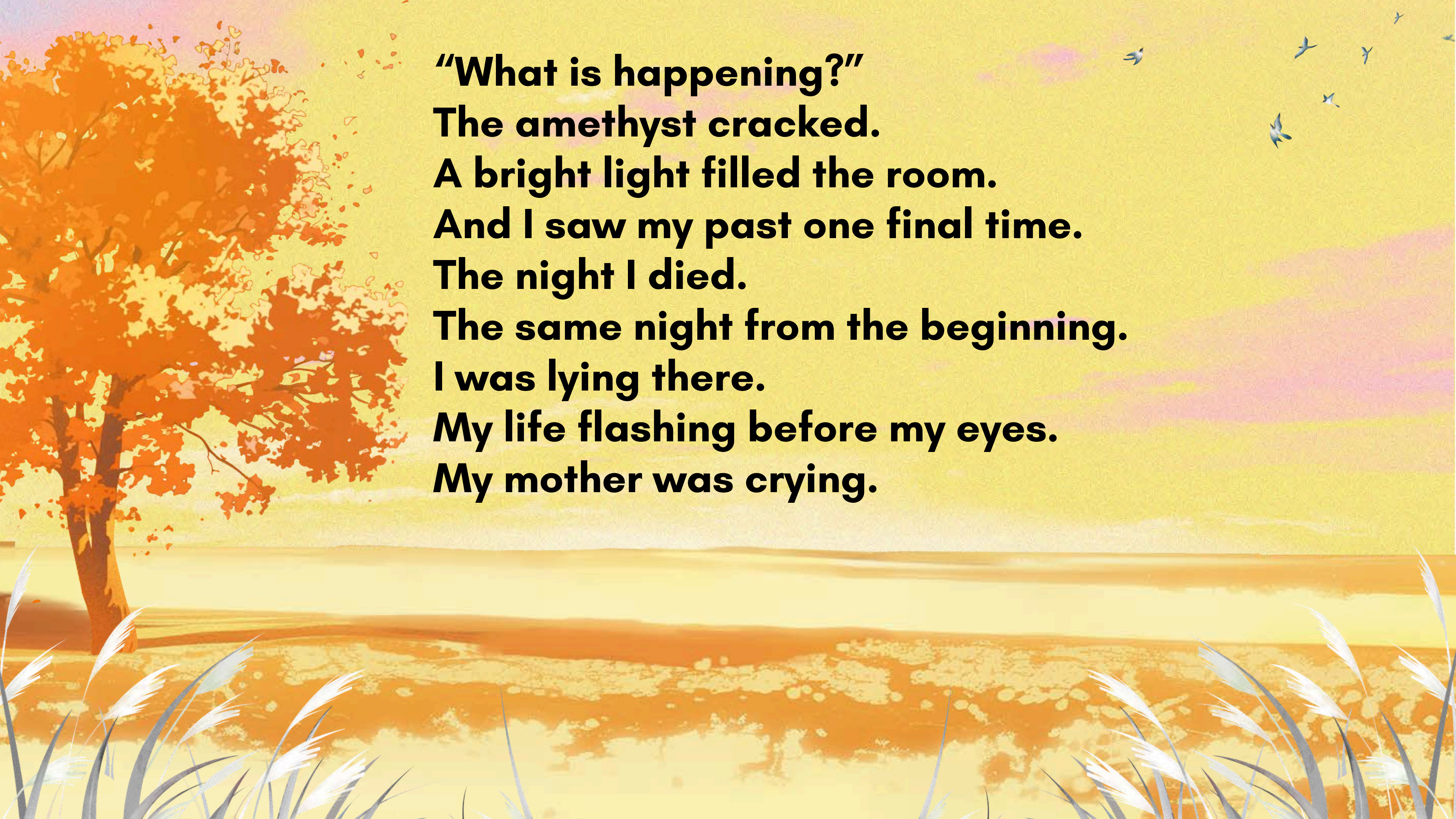
"I never said I knew what happened afterward."

The pendant began glowing brighter.

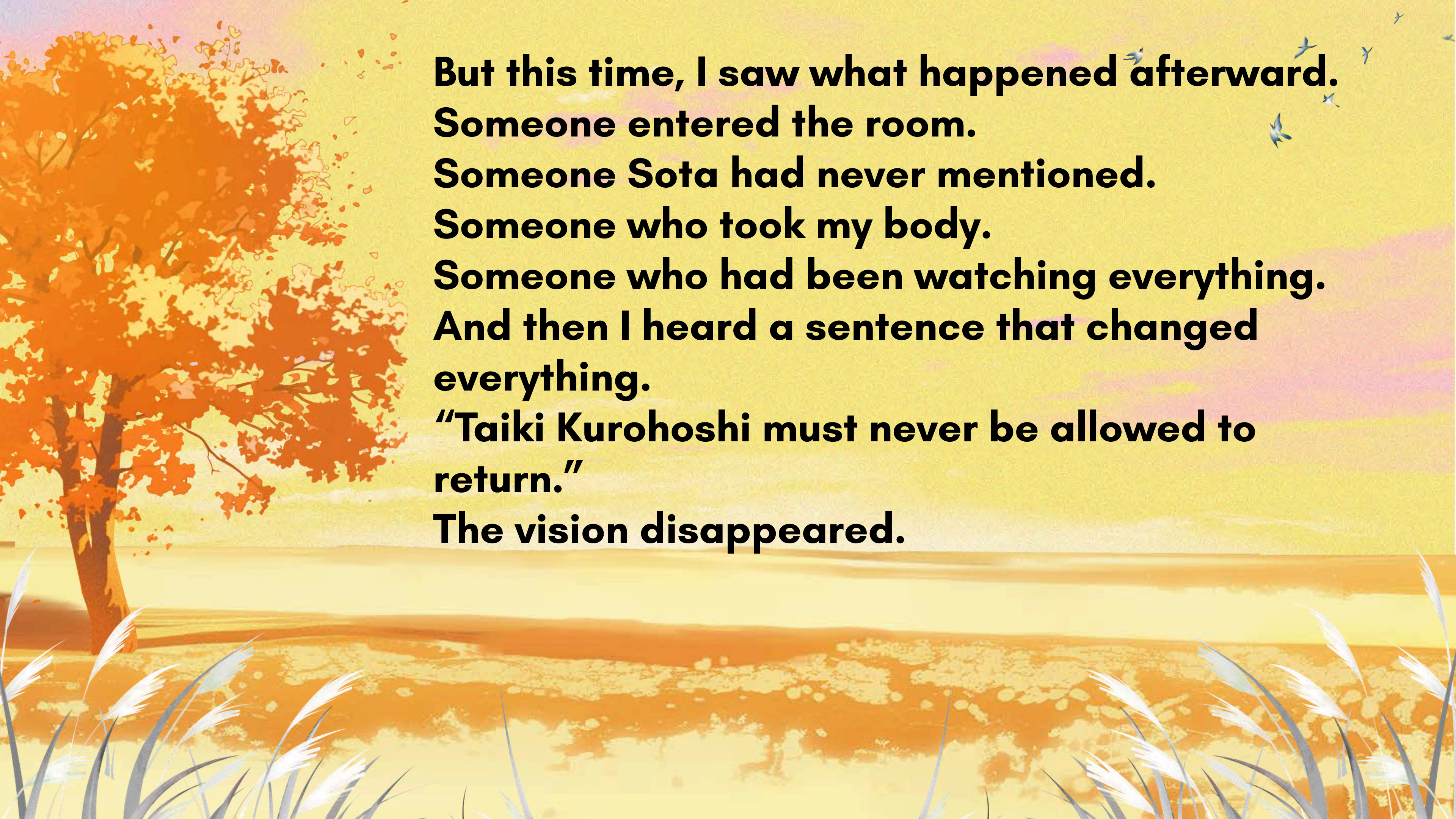
Suddenly, the basement shook.



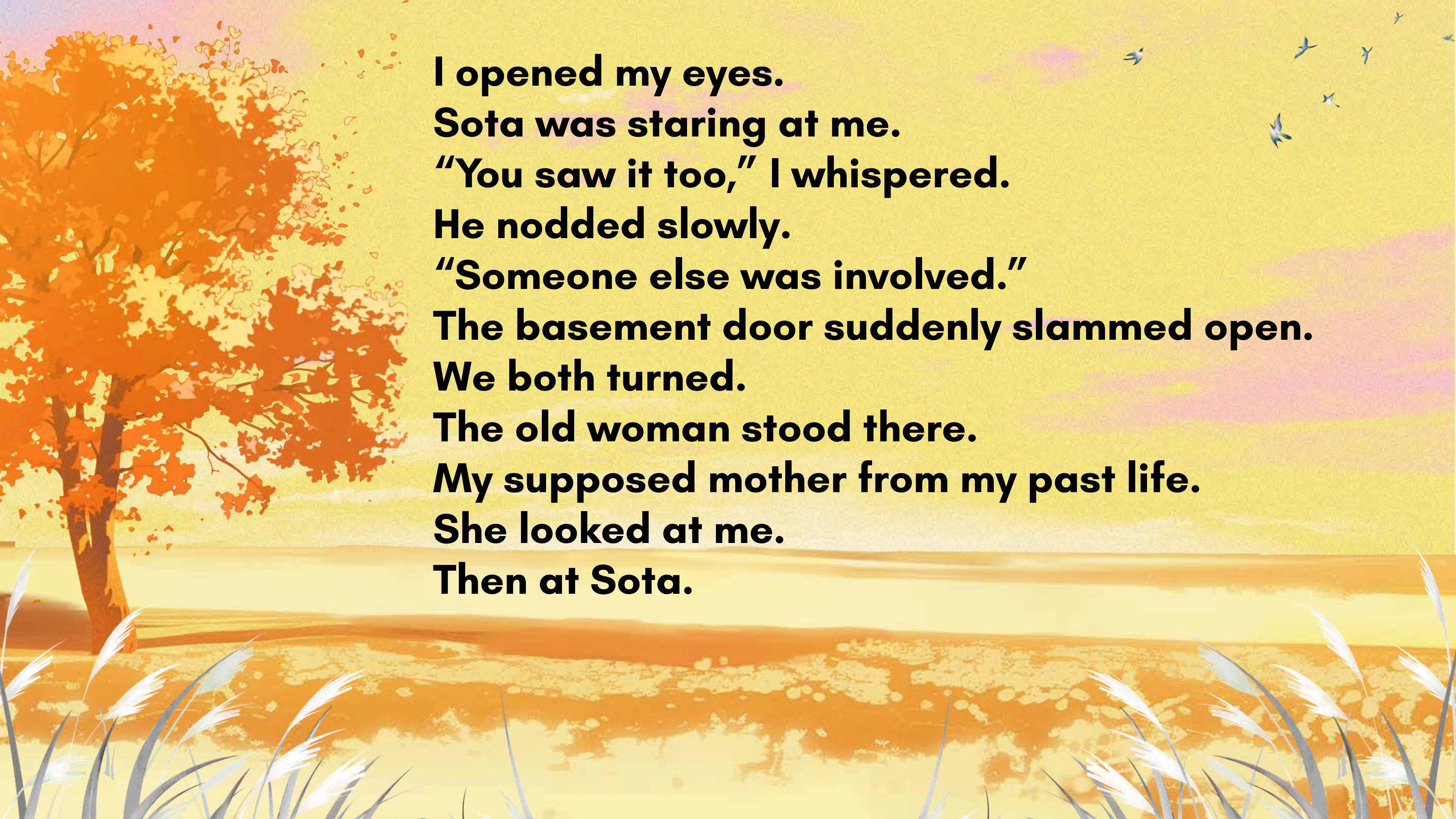
**The lights flickered.
A voice whispered through the room.
“Taiki.”
I froze.
That voice.
I knew it.
It was my own voice.
But older.
Darker.
It came from the pendant.
Sota backed away.**



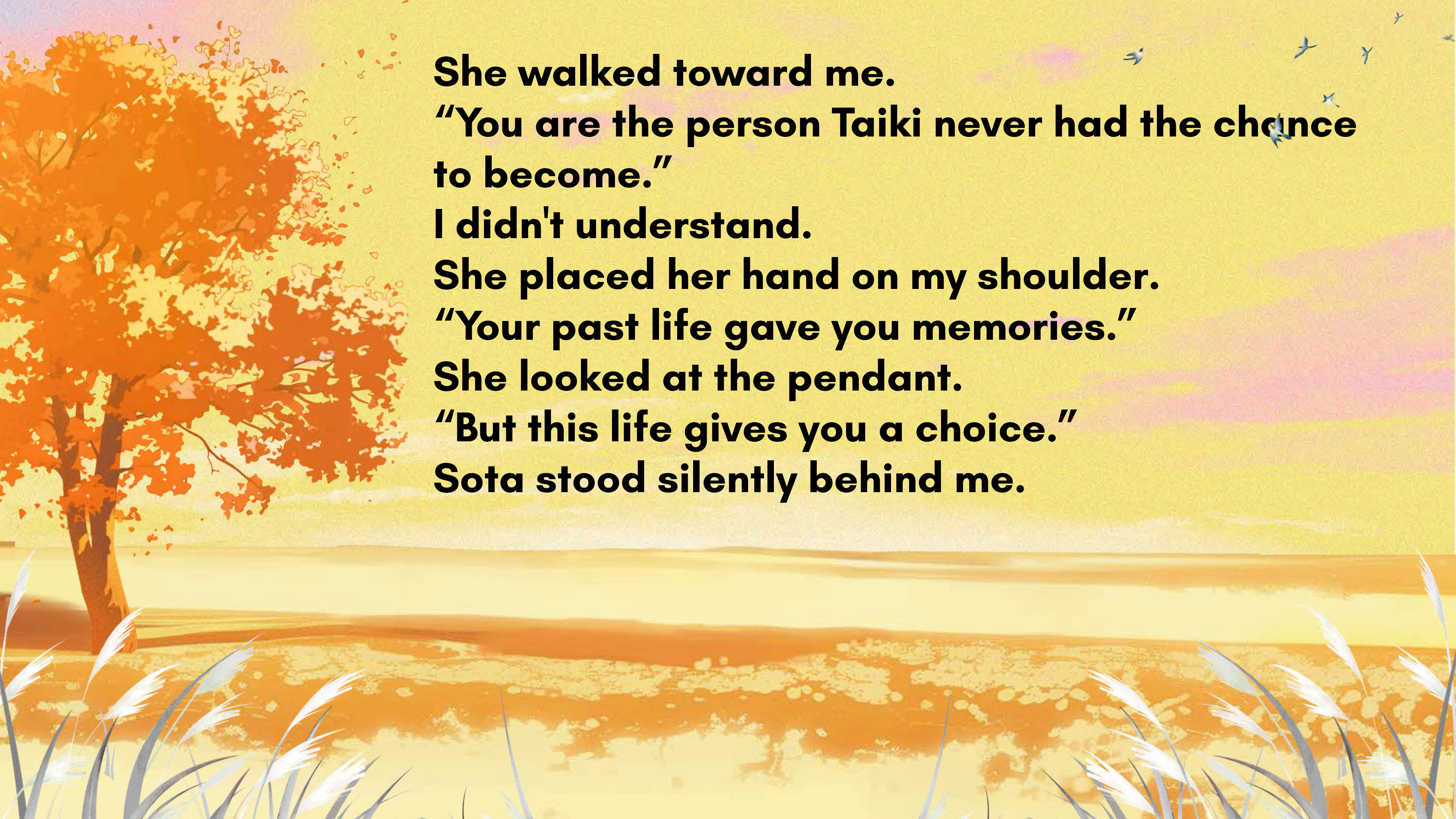
**“What is happening?”
The amethyst cracked.
A bright light filled the room.
And I saw my past one final time.
The night I died.
The same night from the beginning.
I was lying there.
My life flashing before my eyes.
My mother was crying.**



**But this time, I saw what happened afterward.
Someone entered the room.
Someone Sota had never mentioned.
Someone who took my body.
Someone who had been watching everything.
And then I heard a sentence that changed
everything.
“Taiki Kurohoshi must never be allowed to
return.”
The vision disappeared.**



**I opened my eyes.
Sota was staring at me.
“You saw it too,” I whispered.
He nodded slowly.
“Someone else was involved.”
The basement door suddenly slammed open.
We both turned.
The old woman stood there.
My supposed mother from my past life.
She looked at me.
Then at Sota.**



She walked toward me.

"You are the person Taiki never had the chance to become."

I didn't understand.

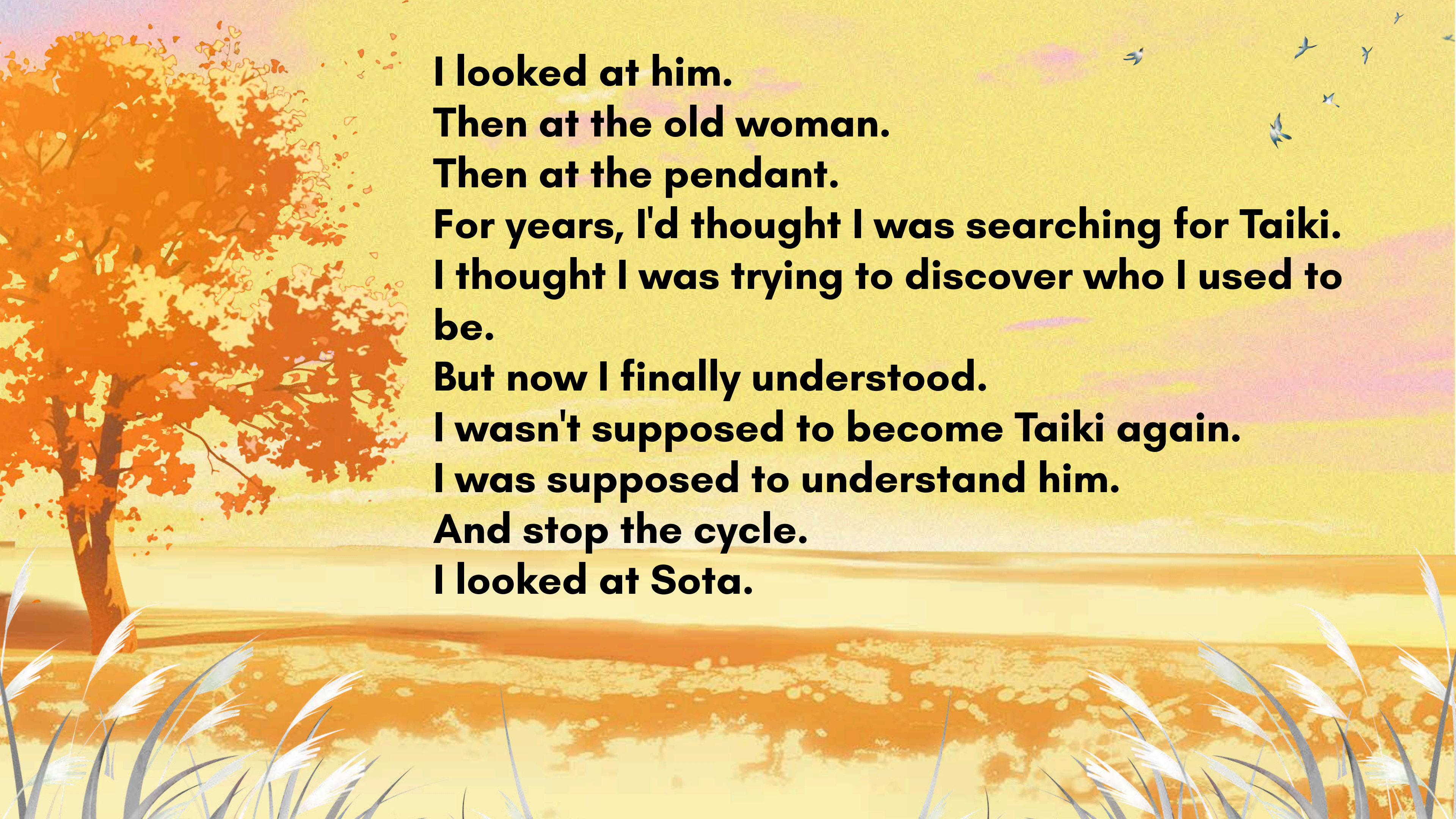
She placed her hand on my shoulder.

"Your past life gave you memories."

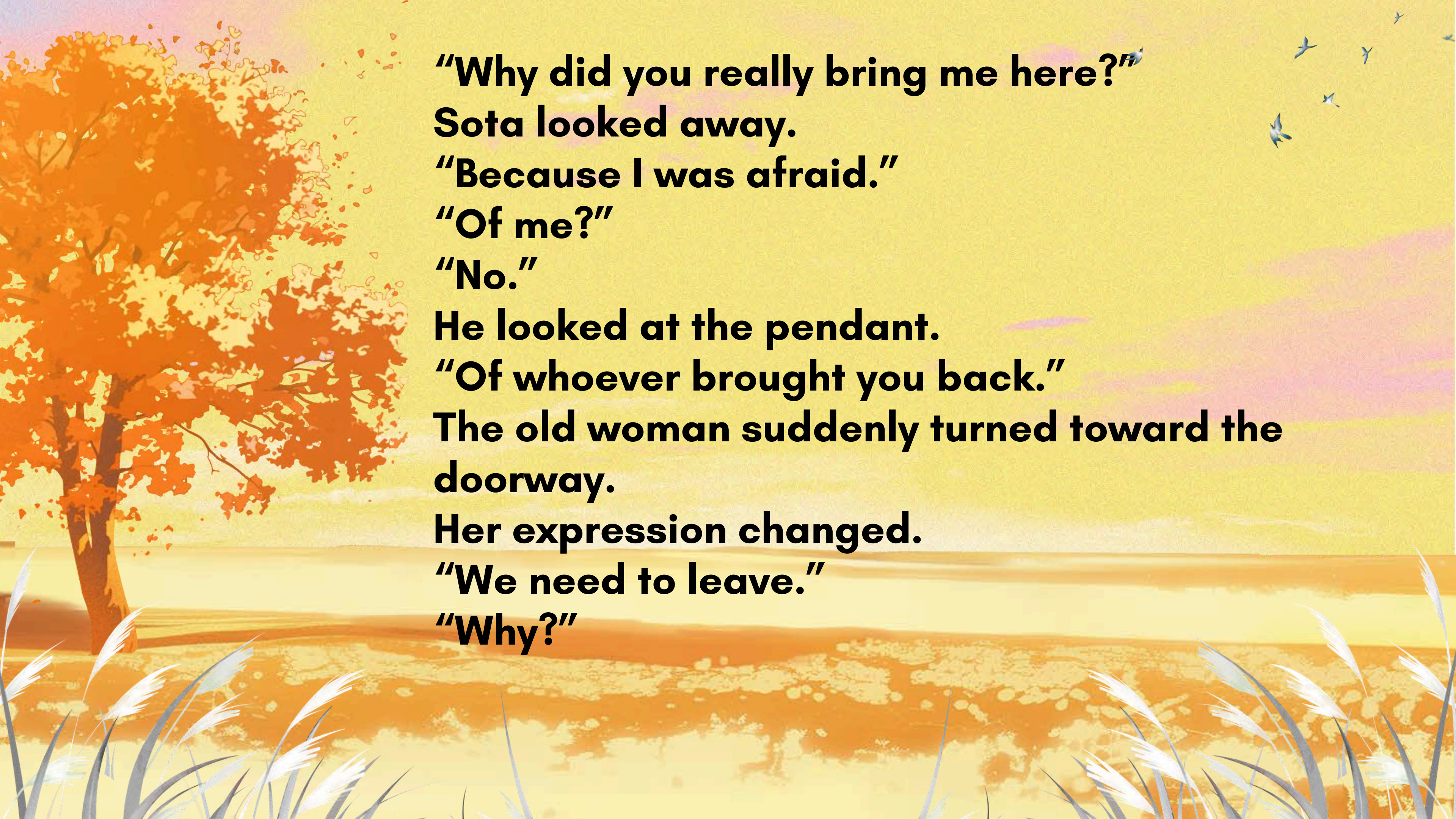
She looked at the pendant.

"But this life gives you a choice."

Sota stood silently behind me.



**I looked at him.
Then at the old woman.
Then at the pendant.
For years, I'd thought I was searching for Taiki.
I thought I was trying to discover who I used to
be.
But now I finally understood.
I wasn't supposed to become Taiki again.
I was supposed to understand him.
And stop the cycle.
I looked at Sota.**



"Why did you really bring me here?"

Sota looked away.

"Because I was afraid."

"Of me?"

"No."

He looked at the pendant.

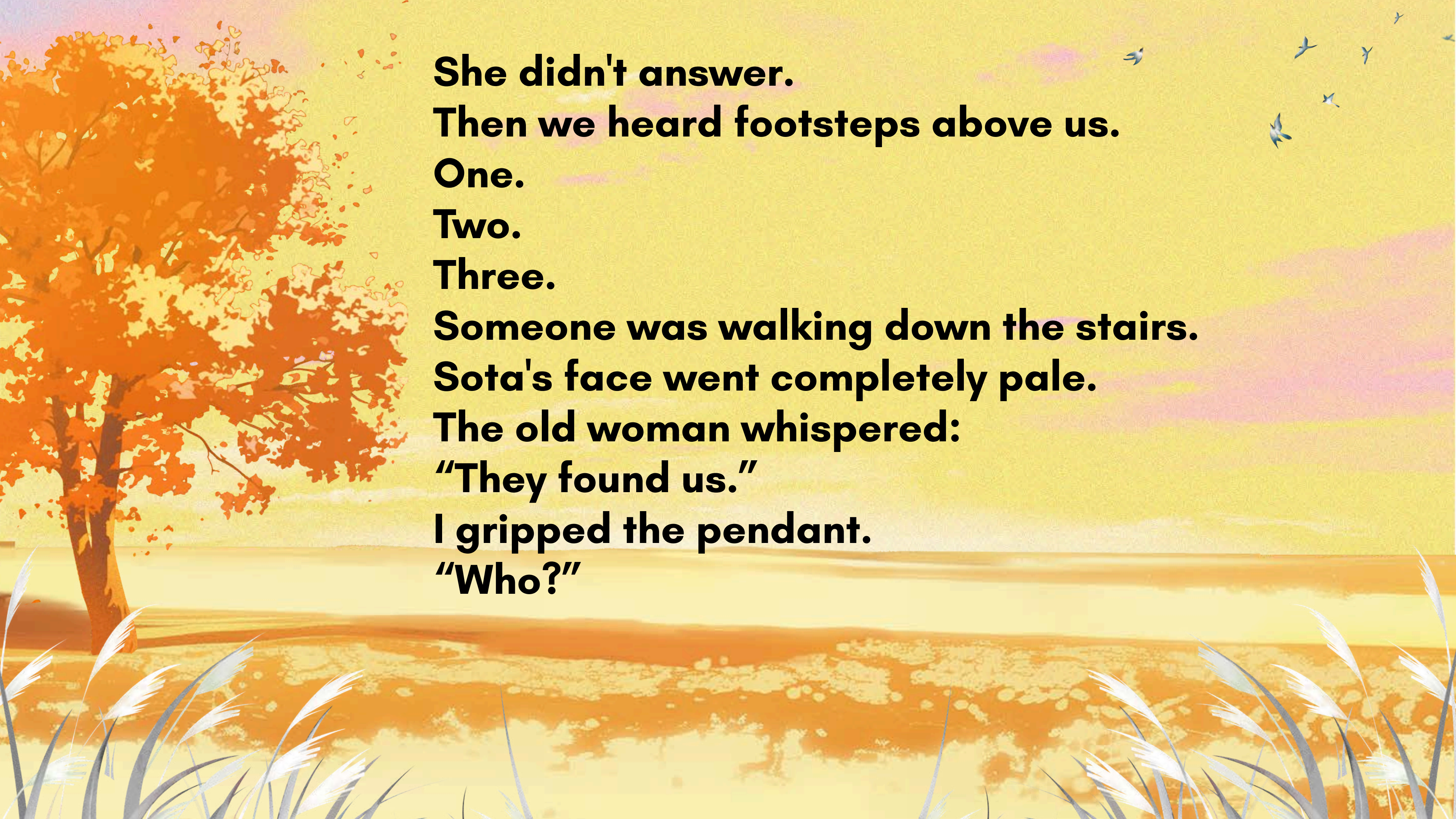
"Of whoever brought you back."

The old woman suddenly turned toward the doorway.

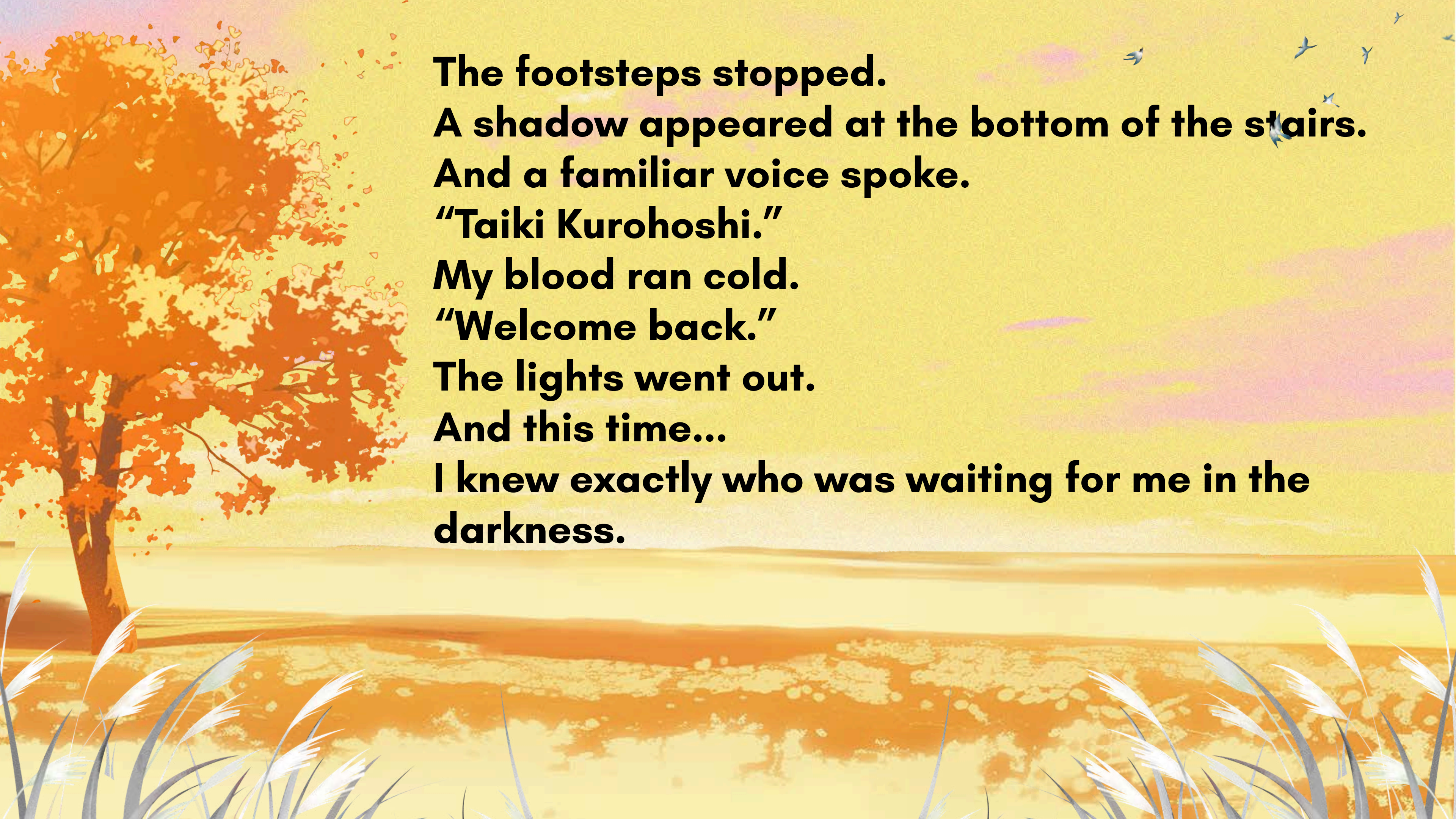
Her expression changed.

"We need to leave."

"Why?"



**She didn't answer.
Then we heard footsteps above us.
One.
Two.
Three.
Someone was walking down the stairs.
Sota's face went completely pale.
The old woman whispered:
"They found us."
I gripped the pendant.
"Who?"**



**The footsteps stopped.
A shadow appeared at the bottom of the stairs.
And a familiar voice spoke.
“Taiki Kurohoshi.”
My blood ran cold.
“Welcome back.”
The lights went out.
And this time...
I knew exactly who was waiting for me in the
darkness.**

*Glass is life! It's
everywhere.*



BY –

SAVYA SAKSHAM GOEL

CLASS 5TH K

D.P.S RANIPUR HARIDWAR

**Glass is life, it's everywhere.
It's magic; it's sparkling and crystal clear.
When toughened, it is strong; else it is
delicate.**

You see! I see! It lets us communicate.

**Oh look! It's the glass window of my house.
It lets me see in and out.**

**Blue sky and cottony clouds,
Thunderstorms that shout aloud.
It lets me see the aeroplanes,
Yellow sun and falling rain.**



**Wow! It's the glass jar on my table.
It has the yummy treats for me to nibble.
Spicy, sour and tangy namkeen,
Filled with almonds and cashews umpteen,
Tempting me with their brightest sheen.
It is found in every home, the classic glass
jar,
Dadi fills it with khatta, meetha aam ka
aachar.
I enjoy it with parantha or khichdi,
Sometime just with plain mathri.**



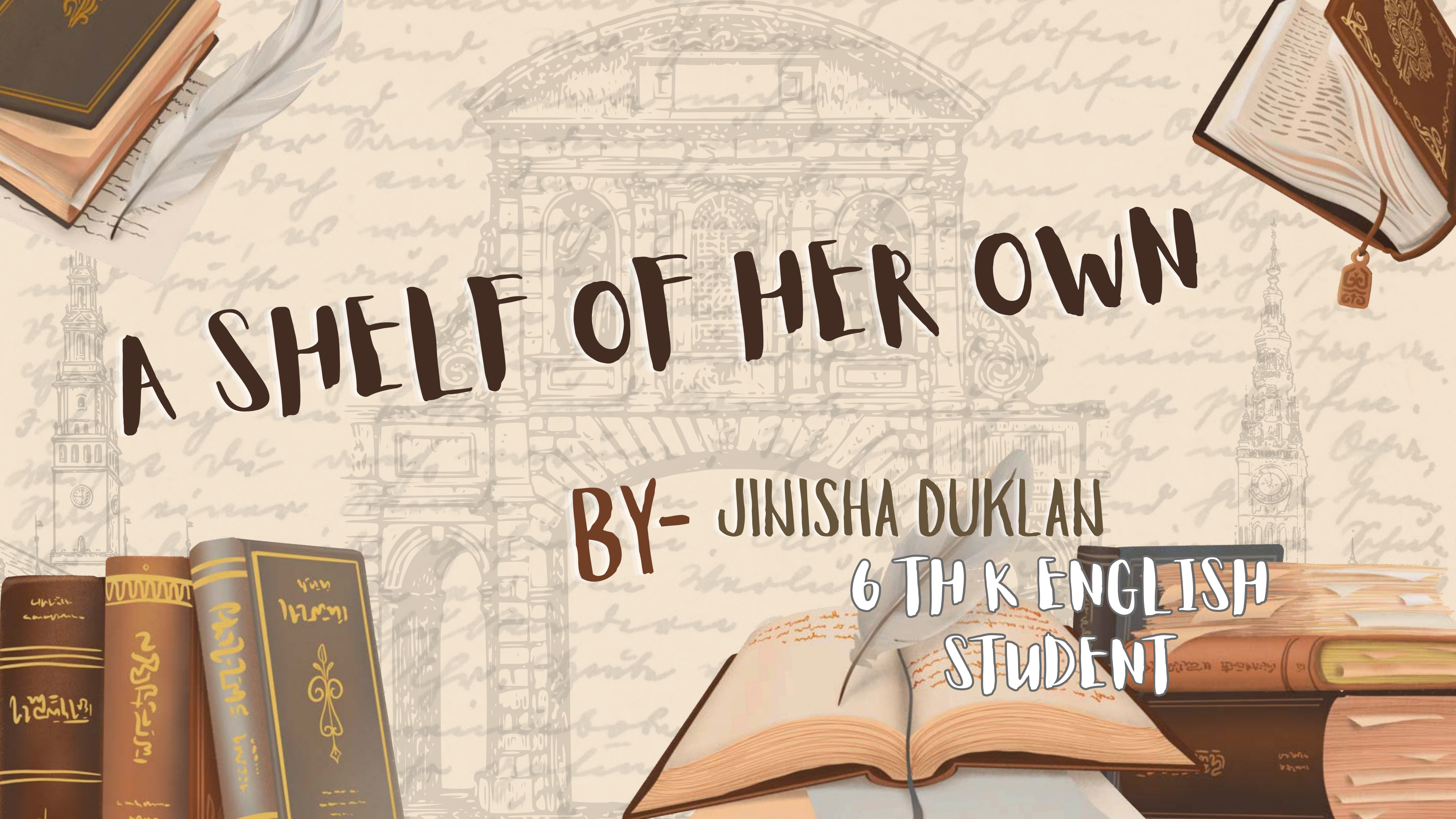
**Inside the fridge is a glass butter box.
Glass tiffins with fruits and veggie stock.
Glass bottles lined up in the door.
During summers, yeh dill maange more!!
Glass adds the charm to the overall décor.**

**My spoon on the glass plate tinkles,
Flowers in the glass vase winkles,
A dash of cloth on our glassware,
And look! How it twinkles...**



**Playing with glass, do not dare!
If it breaks, it hurts and gives us a tear.
Handle it and dispose it with care.
Reuse, recycle and repair.
Glass is life, it is everywhere!!!**





A SHELF OF HER OWN

BY- JINISHA DUKLAN
6TH K ENGLISH
STUDENT



PROLOGUE

She woke up, finding her in her childhood.

She pinched herself to check whether it was true or not.

Beckett knew it was one of the most tragic memories - the ones she doesn't even want to remember.

But this time, it seemed...motivational - more meaningful.

"Oh please! Your poetry won't work on me."

"But I want to be an Author mom!"

"Stop with this nonsense Beckett."





PROLOGUE

You're a fully grown child now. Pack your bag, you're running late for your dance lessons."

"I AM NOT GOING TO THOSE STUPID DANCE LESSONS."

Says Beckett, ending the conversation and slamming the door firmly shut.

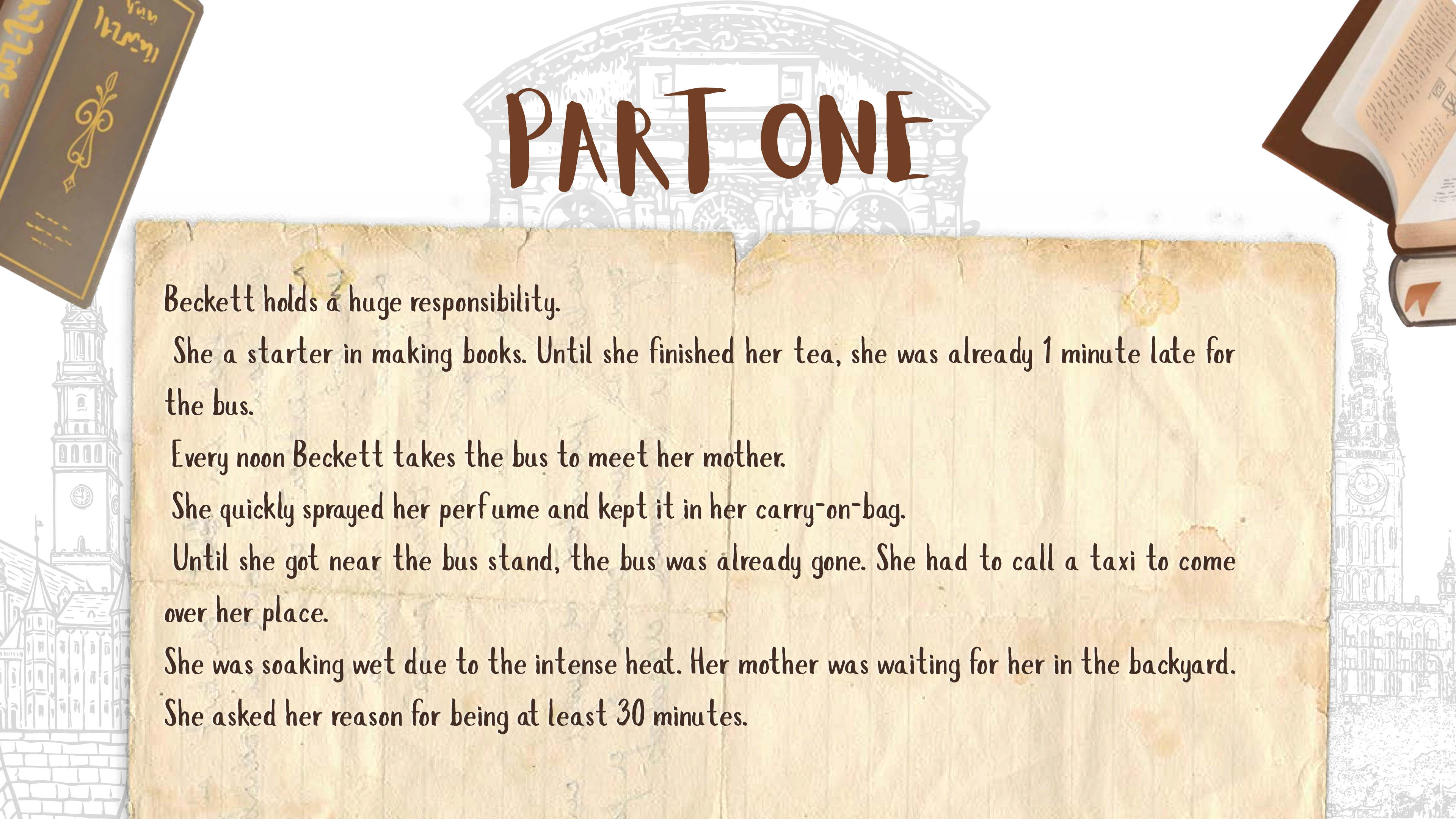
This time, she gets more motivation than ever.

She needs to do this. She will do this.

"So where to start?"

She asks herself brewing a tea. She loves tea.





PART ONE

Beckett holds a huge responsibility.

She a starter in making books. Until she finished her tea, she was already 1 minute late for the bus.

Every noon Beckett takes the bus to meet her mother.

She quickly sprayed her perfume and kept it in her carry-on-bag.

Until she got near the bus stand, the bus was already gone. She had to call a taxi to come over her place.

She was soaking wet due to the intense heat. Her mother was waiting for her in the backyard.

She asked her reason for being at least 30 minutes.



Beckett was red in embarrassment.

She narrated the whole story from beginning to end.

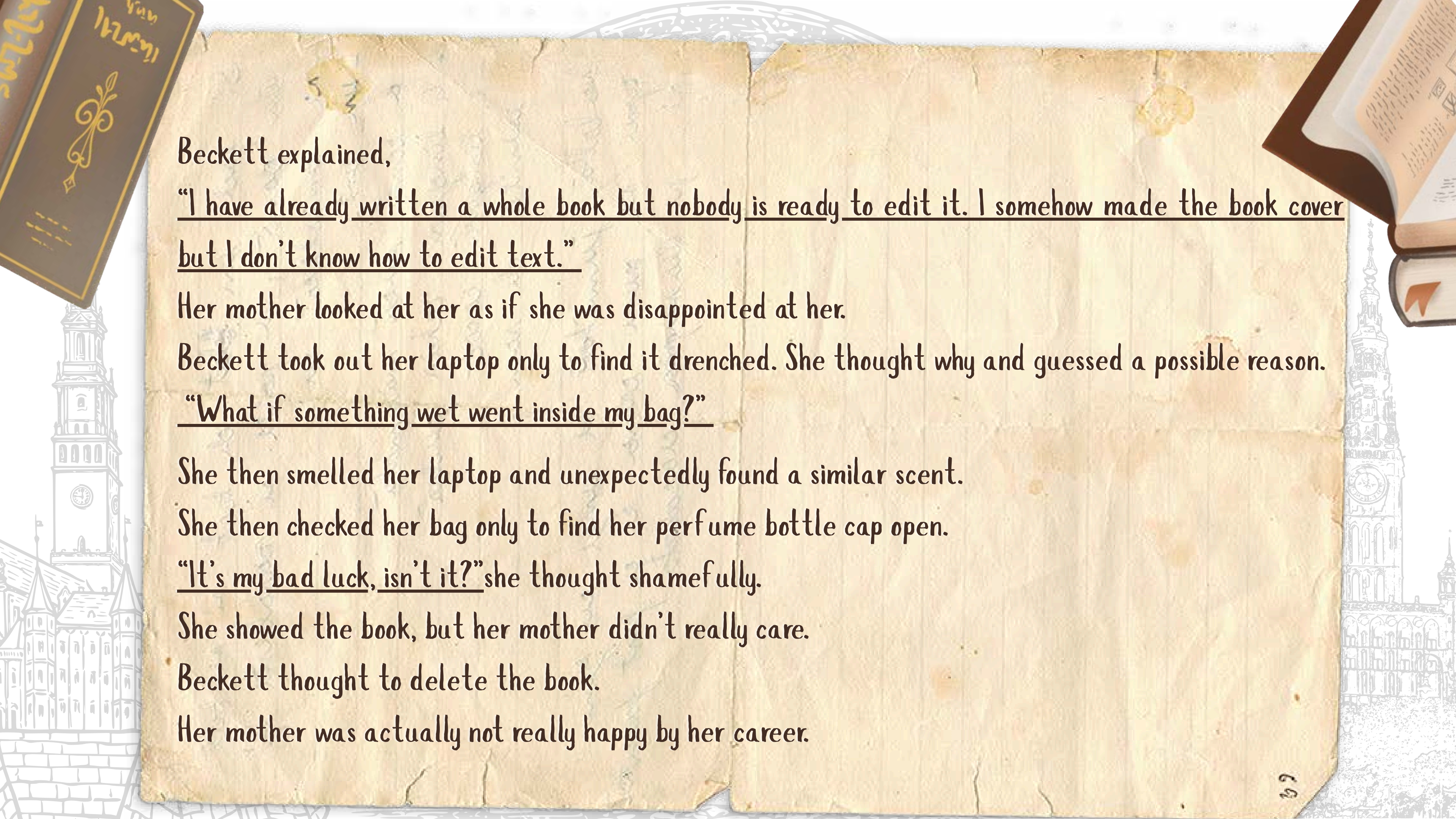
Her mother doesn't like tea since her leg got fractured.

After searching about it, the first answer was too much consumption of tea.

She hasn't touched tea since then.

Beckett narrated the story so fast that her mother couldn't understand it. She just acted that she understood it and asked about her career.





Beckett explained,

"I have already written a whole book but nobody is ready to edit it. I somehow made the book cover but I don't know how to edit text."

Her mother looked at her as if she was disappointed at her.

Beckett took out her laptop only to find it drenched. She thought why and guessed a possible reason.

"What if something wet went inside my bag?"

She then smelled her laptop and unexpectedly found a similar scent.

She then checked her bag only to find her perfume bottle cap open.

"It's my bad luck, isn't it?" she thought shamefully.

She showed the book, but her mother didn't really care.

Beckett thought to delete the book.

Her mother was actually not really happy by her career.





She wanted her to be an actor, or maybe a dancer. Her whole family have passed down only one tradition, Drama.

But acting or dancing wasn't in her veins.

The thing that she loved the most was writing.

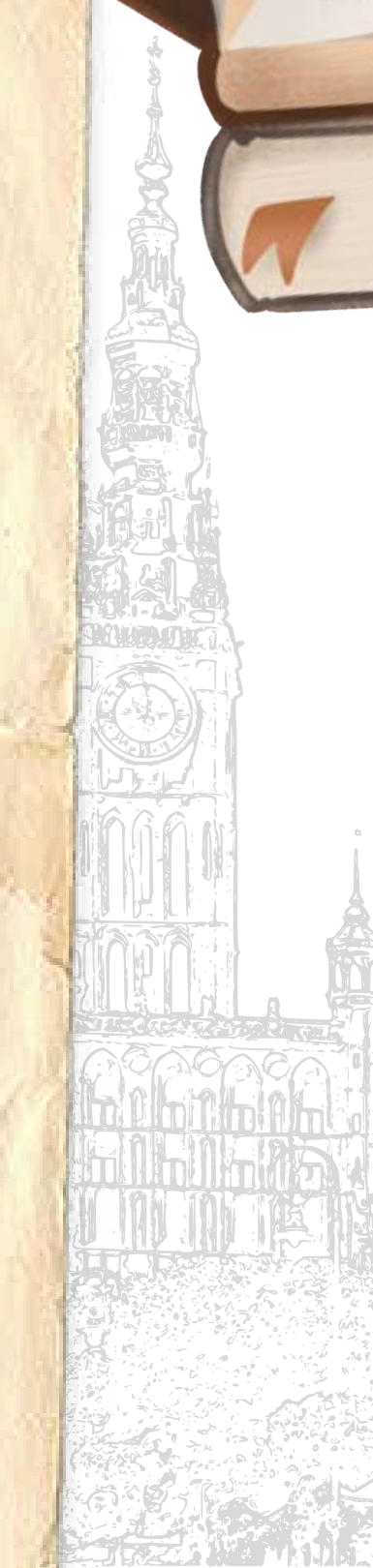
Since childhood she has been getting A+'s in English, especially in creative writing, paragraph writing and reading.

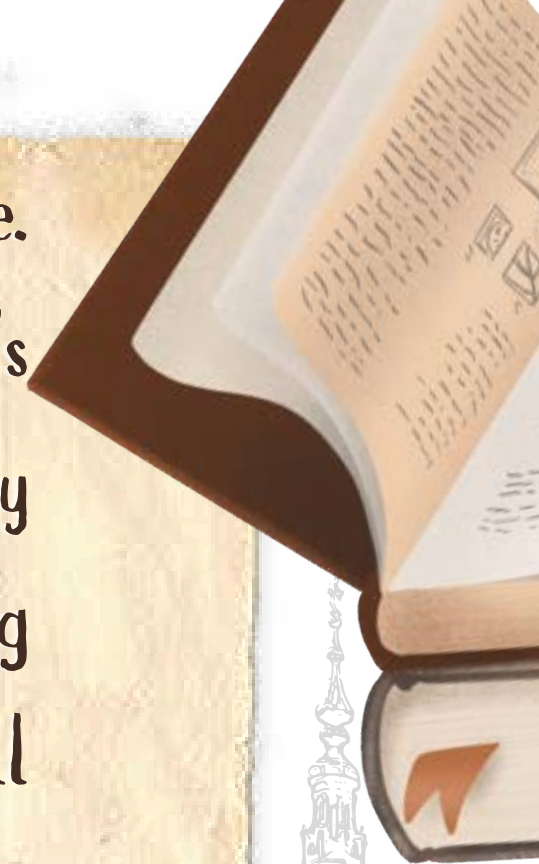
However, the first thing that her mother opened in her report card has always been Music and Drama.

She never ever got the opportunity to tell about her hobby, her dreams, her plans, her creativity and a few more, that's what she thinks.

But for her, she didn't really care about this at all.

She just wants that her creations are suitable for her.





She often take motivation from a book called 'The Art of Strategy' written by Elena Vance. Elena Vance has been her role model since childhood. One thing she learns from Vance's story is that she never gave up. She was born without an eye, which made her journey harder. But, look at her today! Millions of people love her creations and admire her, including Beckett. She sometimes wonder when she will become like Vance, an international bestseller author. Till now nobody even wants to edit her creations.

"I will never come here till I receive the booker award."

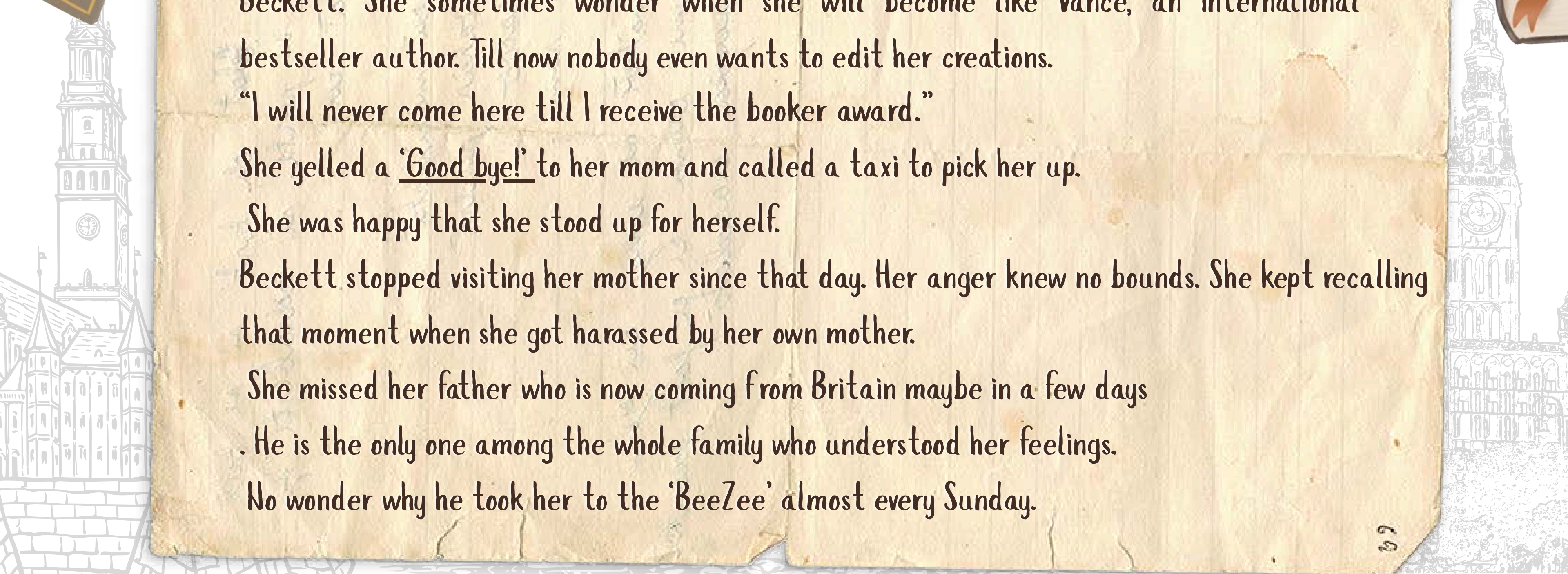
She yelled a 'Good bye!' to her mom and called a taxi to pick her up.

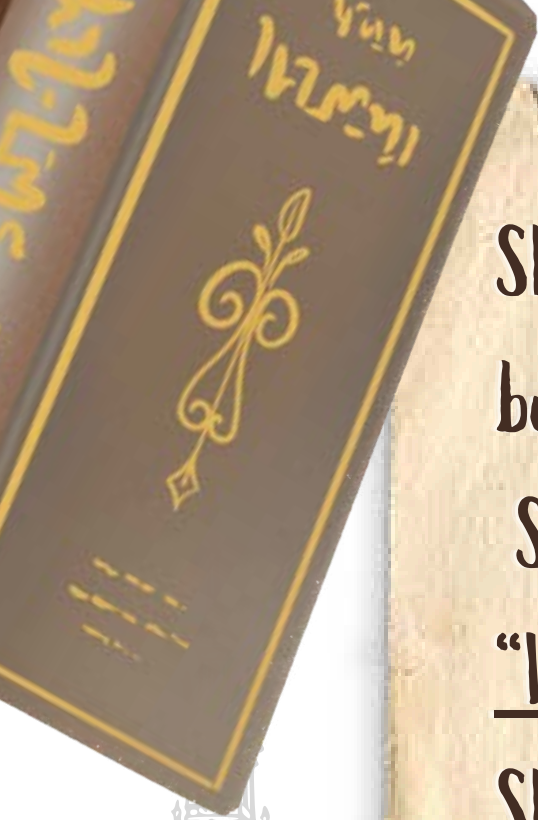
She was happy that she stood up for herself.

Beckett stopped visiting her mother since that day. Her anger knew no bounds. She kept recalling that moment when she got harassed by her own mother.

She missed her father who is now coming from Britain maybe in a few days . He is the only one among the whole family who understood her feelings.

No wonder why he took her to the 'BeeZee' almost every Sunday.





She wanted to tell everything to her father right now, but she didn't. She knew he would be busy in Britain planning about future ideas for business or something.

She never liked her mother, not even once. That made her remember a promise to her mom.
"I will never come here till I receive the booker award."

She dragged a chair near the study table, opened a blank book which she bought to write a book on honeybees, and started her journey to write a book on 'BeeZee'.

The next day, she found herself sleeping on the table.

She hurriedly finished her daily chores and brewed a tea.
She thought to brew a mint and chocolate tea to calm her mind and to enhance her thinking.
Julia taught Beckett how to make one and what does it do in your body.

She wondered how Julia must be doing right now.

She opened her phone only to find a breaking news. She clicked on it to find her father's name on it.
She couldn't believe her eyes.





She immediately called him, as she is an eager daughter.

He was a changed man now. His eyes darkened after seeing a face call.

He scolded her for 'disturbing' him during a meeting.

The daughter cried in embarrassment and ended the call.

What's the purpose of crying now? It's show time.

She wiped her tears.

She also was a changed daughter.

Beckett was now emotionless.

One thing she learnt from her past is to never trust anybody; and she meant **ANYBODY**.

She now thought to keep some rules and just, chill.

- She will never trust anyone from now on.
 - She will interact less and work more.
 - She'll mind her own business.
- 
- 



In her vision, implementing these rules will make her a better person.

Her 'trust' was now lost.

"Never found ever again..."

Said nobody.

She sat on a chair near the study table, and started wondering. She just needed silence and focus, and then she goes in her own world of creativity.

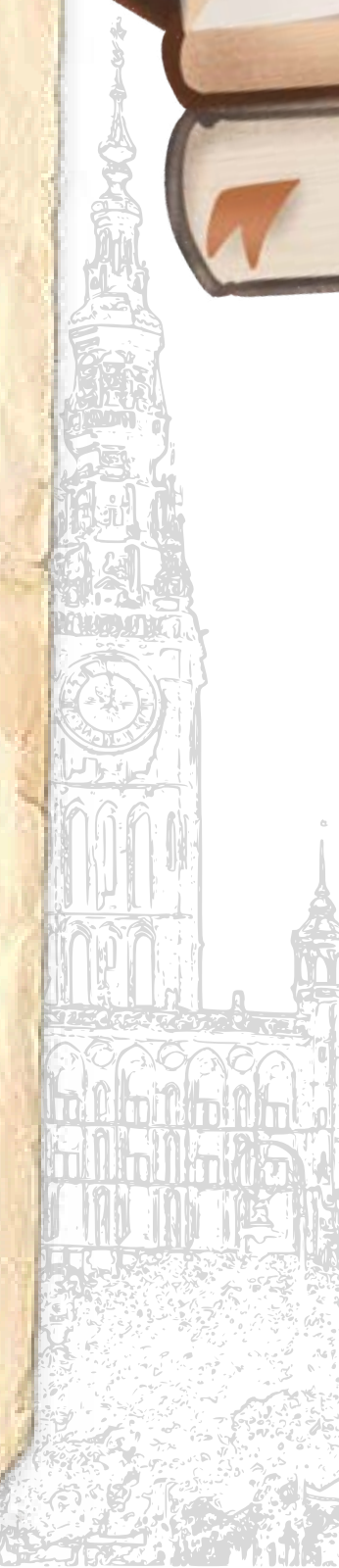
It consists of several trees made of honey, bunnies hopping around a beehive, and the super rare honey and cream flower!

Beckett is a foodie. Whenever she thinks about food, she needs it.

But this time, she just ate a candy and again went in a reverie.

She wrote 5 - 6 pages and just as she started the 7th one, the phone rang.

It was her dad.





She thought to ignore it, but how could she?

The talk went for at least an hour.

He said that he was ashamed of scolding Beckett.

“I was very busy that time. Sorry for scolding you. I hope you can forgive me.”

“Okay Dad.”

The call ended.

She was again lost in deep thoughts. She knew her father loved her deeply, but then she remembered the rules.

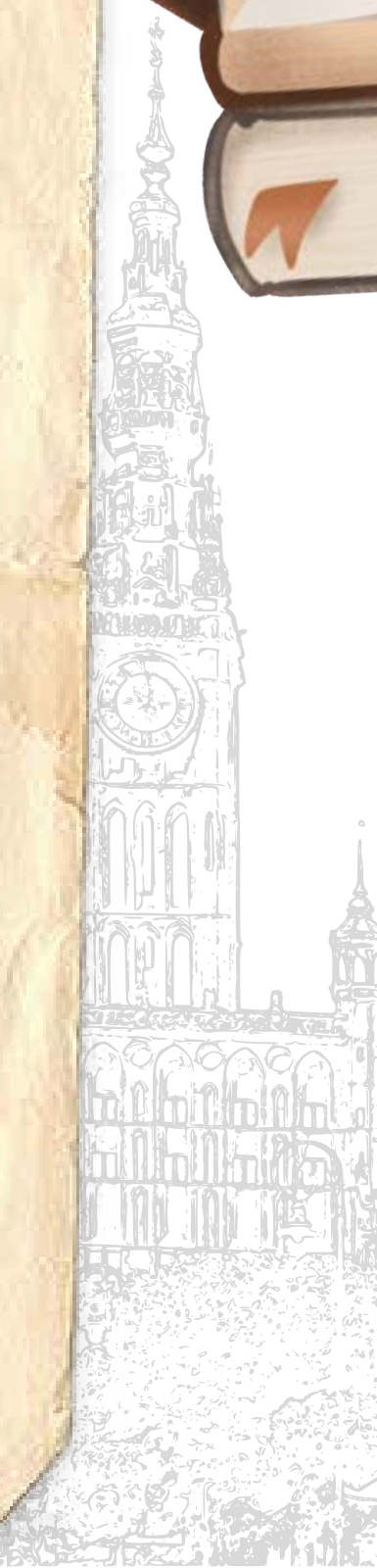
“Rules are rules.”

She said quietly.

She again brewed a tea and begin writing the story.

By the time the story finished, it had already been two months.

It was just catching dust.





Beckett couldn't even find an editor.

She had to write the whole story in a M.S document by herself.

She started working in a part - time - job due to money crisis.

It was small little bakery. The owner was kind of ruthless, but he allowed Beckett to work there.

Everyday fresh wheat flour used to come in the bakery.

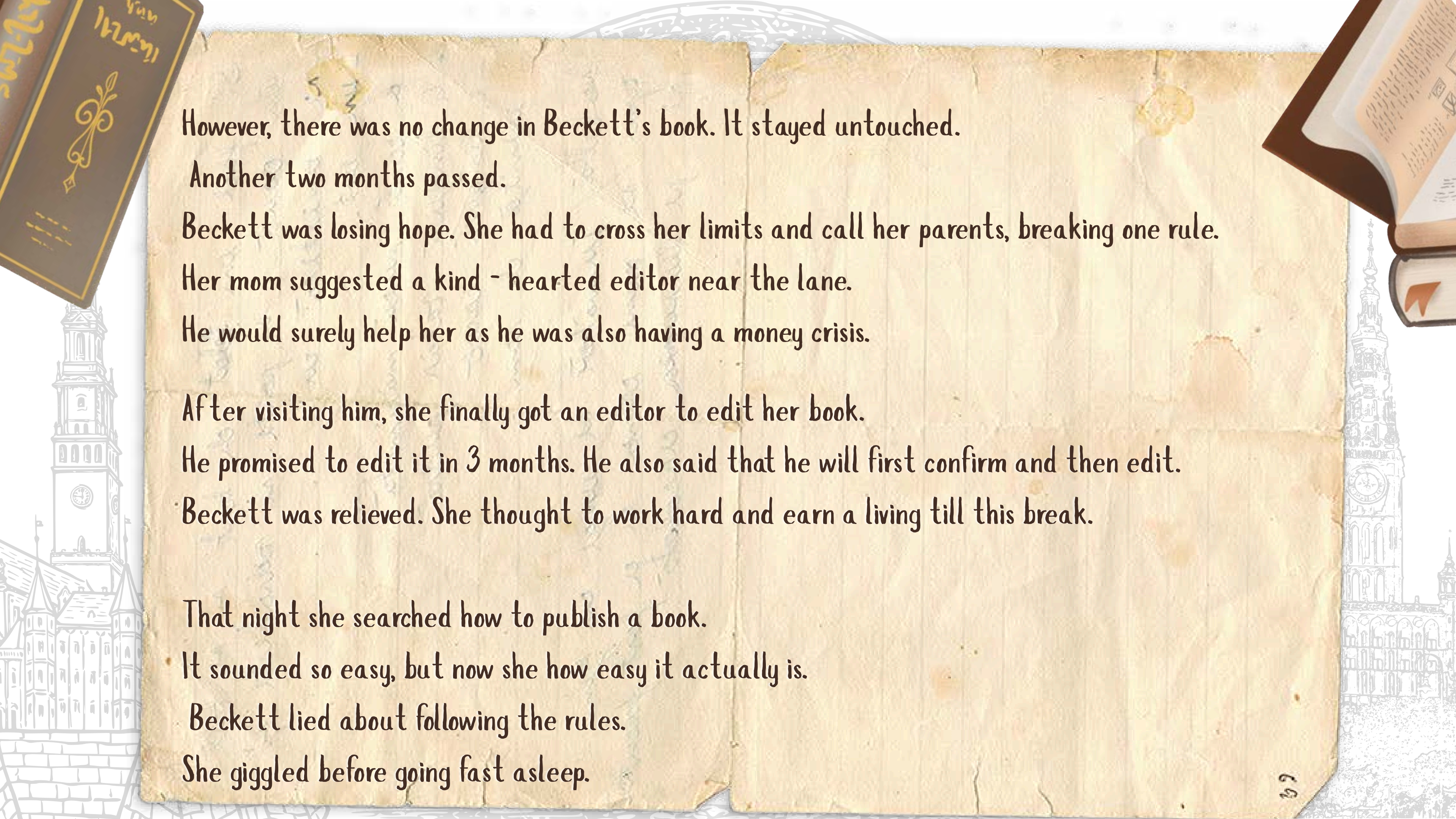
The owner knew how to make weird - shaped breads and a few more recipes.

But after seeing Beckett's atypical yet delicious beverages and dishes, the owner was delighted.

Beckett also started to change. Her emotions started to appear.

More and more customers started to come, attracted to the unique dishes. A girl aged same as Beckett started coming frequently in the bakery.





However, there was no change in Beckett's book. It stayed untouched.

Another two months passed.

Beckett was losing hope. She had to cross her limits and call her parents, breaking one rule.

Her mom suggested a kind - hearted editor near the lane.

He would surely help her as he was also having a money crisis.

After visiting him, she finally got an editor to edit her book.

He promised to edit it in 3 months. He also said that he will first confirm and then edit.

Beckett was relieved. She thought to work hard and earn a living till this break.

That night she searched how to publish a book.

It sounded so easy, but now she how easy it actually is.

Beckett lied about following the rules.

She giggled before going fast asleep.





Beckett was working in the bakery for 4 months now.

The owner is very satisfied with her. He would be heartbroken if she left him.

The bakery expanded rapidly. Now 10 people work there!

It became the most famous bakery in the whole town.

The editing was almost done. That guy was just making the cover page.

Beckett was happy to hear the news.

She convinced herself to send an invitation to her parents for her book inauguration ceremony.

Deep down, she was feeling anxious for this very day. It's her first book after all.

Her heart jumped in her chest.

She was busy in thoughts and decisions when something rang, disturbing her concentration.

She checked her phone. No

She checked her laptop. No





It rang again, making her realize that it was her doorbell.

Tightening her fist, she went for the door.

It was a mail, a very long one.

She closed the door firmly and sat down to read her personal mail.

The mail was just about the edits and it consisted of the cover page design photograph.

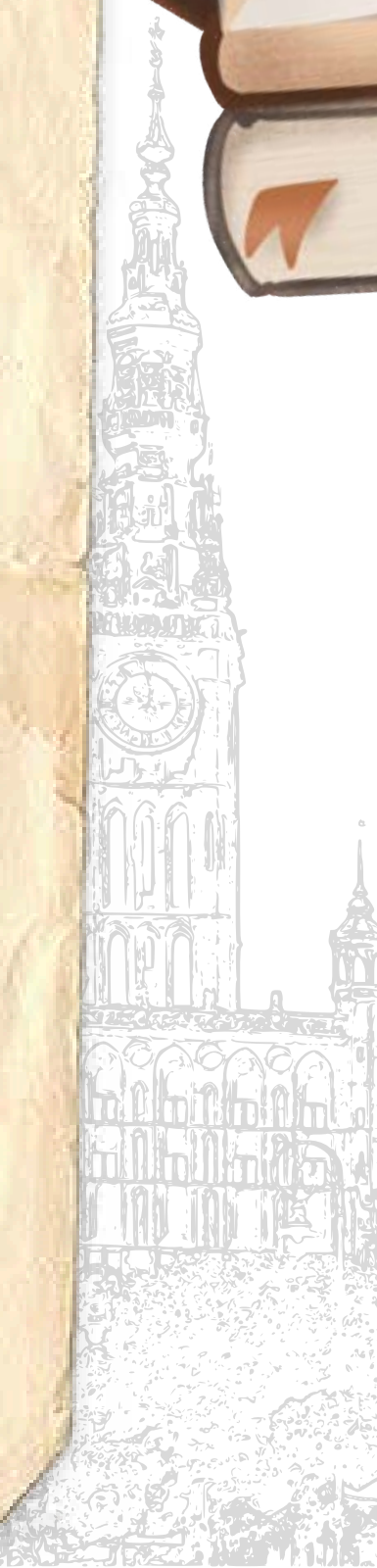
She peered closer to look at a caption.

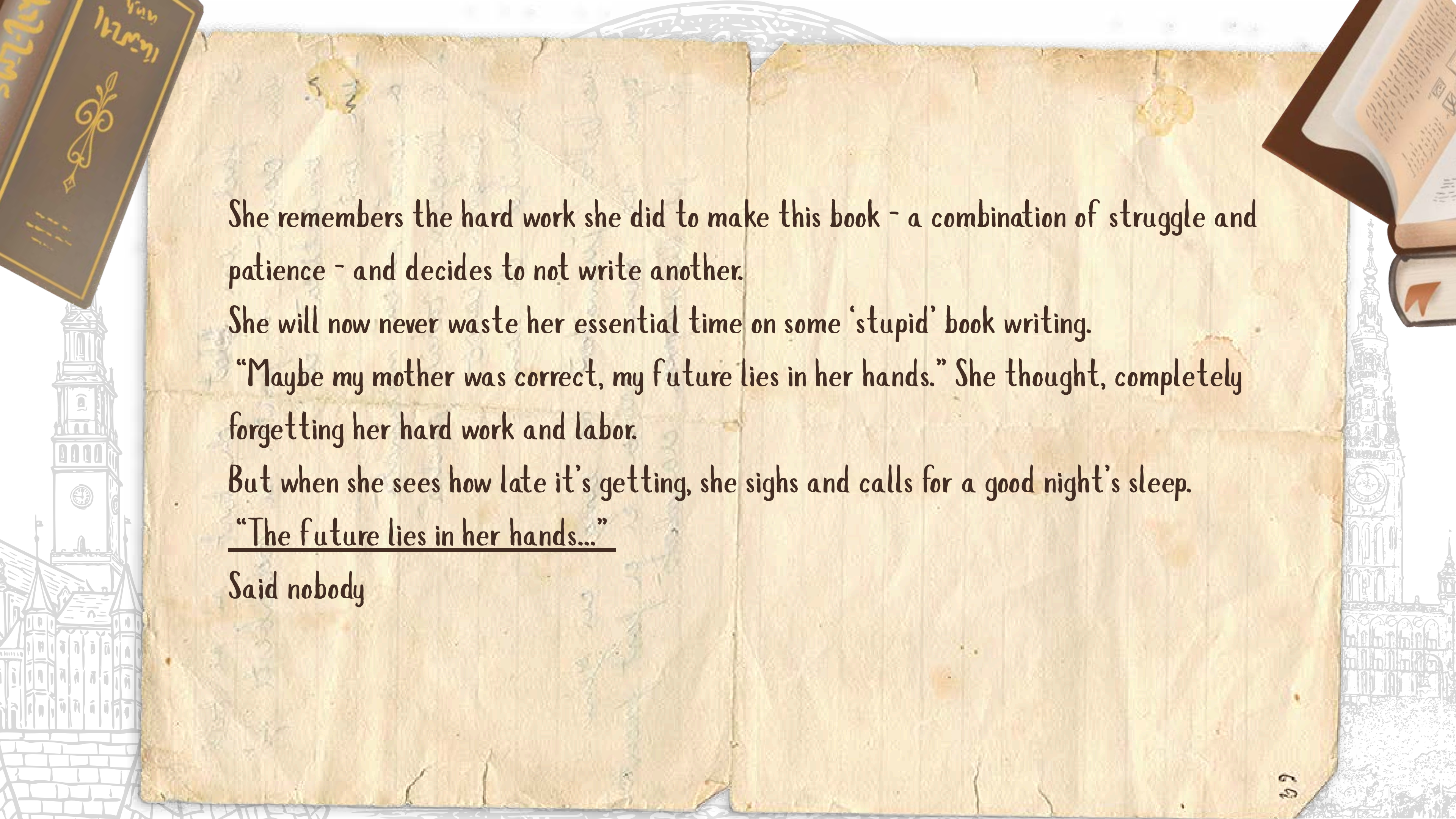
“Honeybees are just some bees? Learn more through this book.”

Beckett found the caption way to simple for her book, but she didn't wanted to invest more time.

She has also already decided the date for the Inauguration Ceremony for her book.

She also finds it disturbing to waste others crucial time. She calls the editor and accepts the book. “Finally.” She mutters.





She remembers the hard work she did to make this book - a combination of struggle and patience - and decides to not write another.

She will now never waste her essential time on some 'stupid' book writing.

"Maybe my mother was correct, my future lies in her hands." She thought, completely forgetting her hard work and labor.

But when she sees how late it's getting, she sighs and calls for a good night's sleep.

"The future lies in her hands..."

Said nobody



PART TWO



Beckett has released her book.

She just does not expect anything from this book.

Nothing at all.

Even though it's well written, formatted and recreated, she feels like something's missing.

Something important.

She couldn't understand it. Not at all.

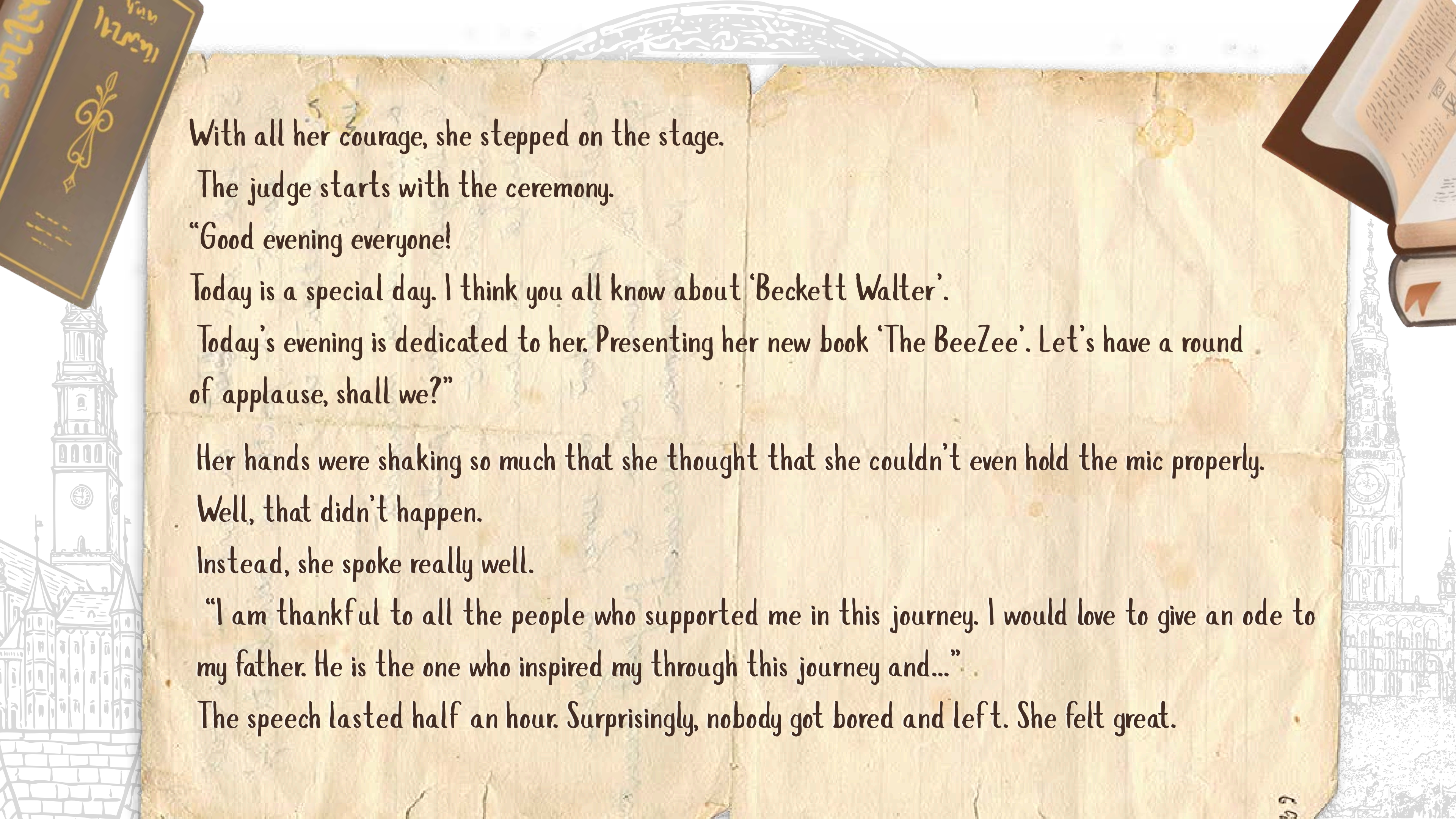
She decided to just go with the flow.

Beckett had made a whole list of question, unbelievably long.

She was nervous. Her hand were shaking.

She felt a sudden tickle of sweat in her chest.





With all her courage, she stepped on the stage.

The judge starts with the ceremony.

“Good evening everyone!

Today is a special day. I think you all know about ‘Beckett Walter’.

Today’s evening is dedicated to her. Presenting her new book ‘The BeeZee’. Let’s have a round of applause, shall we?”

Her hands were shaking so much that she thought that she couldn’t even hold the mic properly.

Well, that didn’t happen.

Instead, she spoke really well.

“I am thankful to all the people who supported me in this journey. I would love to give an ode to my father. He is the one who inspired my through this journey and...”

The speech lasted half an hour. Surprisingly, nobody got bored and left. She felt great.





She wondered if she has gained popularity like Vance, or is about to hold the booker award.

“One final thought to carry, let’s have a round of applause for my lovely mom, who raised me in a great environment, and I am the most thankful to her.”

Her mother’s eyes filled with tears. She felt ashamed for making a wall in front of her daughter’s dreams.

She decided to apologize to Beckett afterwards.

“I would like to call her on stage to bless me for my future creations.” Said Beckett hopefully.

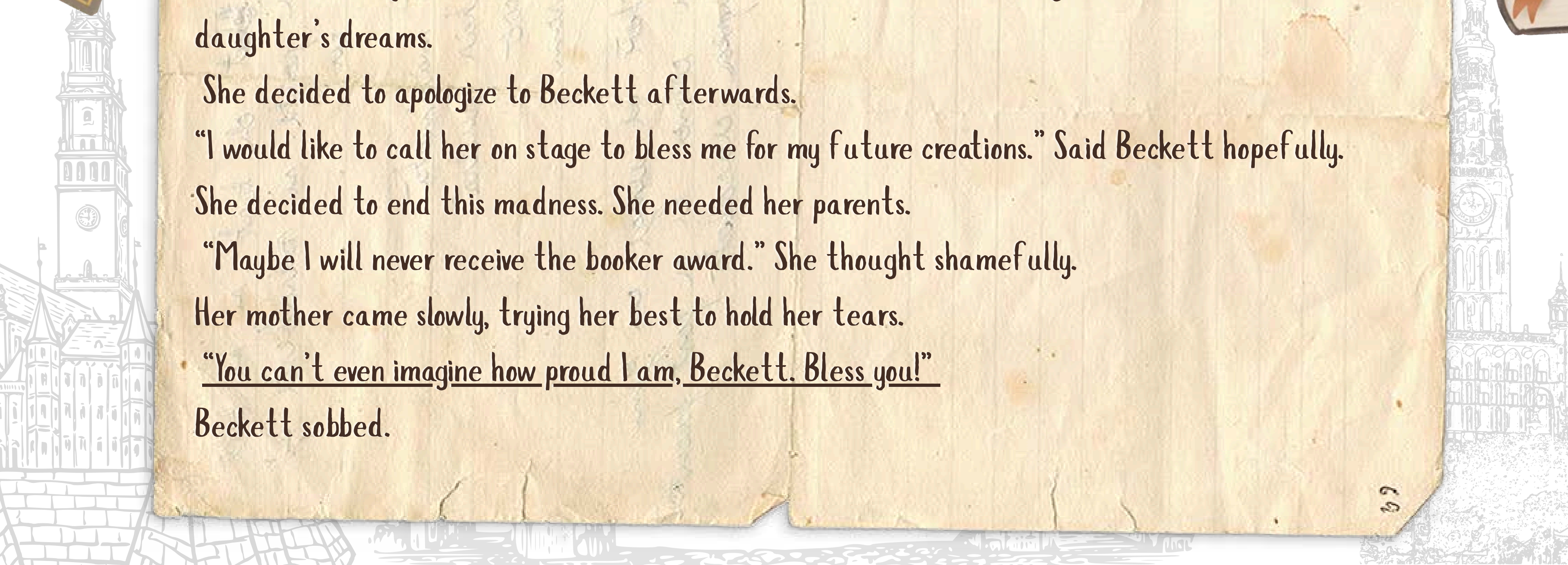
She decided to end this madness. She needed her parents.

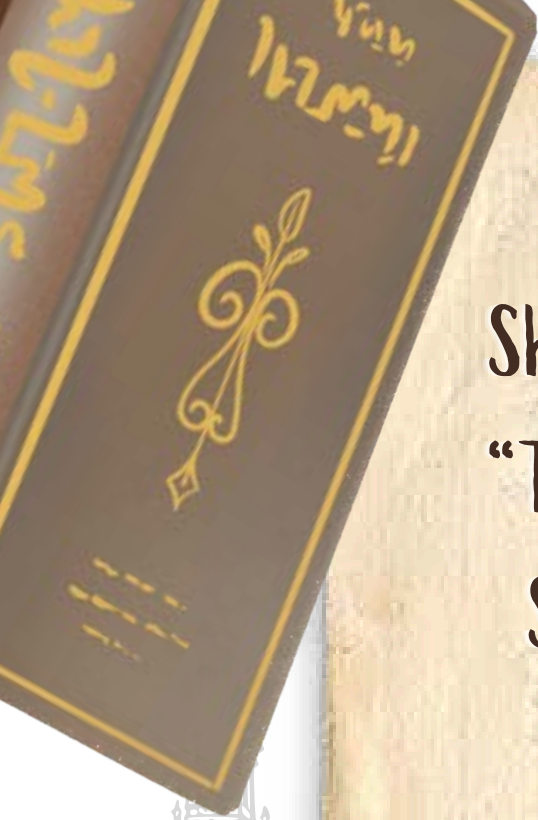
“Maybe I will never receive the booker award.” She thought shamefully.

Her mother came slowly, trying her best to hold her tears.

“You can’t even imagine how proud I am, Beckett. Bless you!”

Beckett sobbed.





She now decided to live with her parents and sell the house that she owned.

“Thank you mom.” She spoke softly.

She smiled. Smiled but proudly.

Beckett bought her own book.

She carelessly swiped the pages.

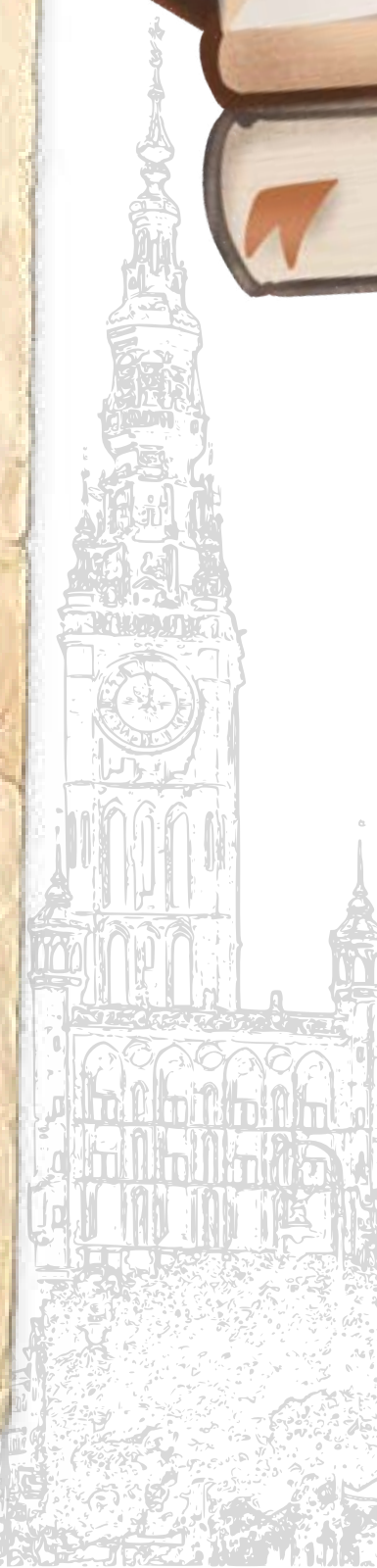
In the back of the book was a whole map of her imaginary world.

Beckett knew that it was AI-generated, but it looked as same as her own one.

AI is getting better nowadays.

Beckett was still working in the bakery. She found the job interesting.

She had been solitude for many years since now. Time to shift to her parents' home.





She got a fine amount for her sold house, and went straight to her new home.
Her parents welcomed her joyfully.

“You won the bet, mom. I didn’t receive it right now.” She said, embarrassed.
Her mother looked at her. Her face looked unchanged. She just smirked and said, “At least you tried your best. I’m still proud of you.”

Beckett couldn’t believe her luck.

She looked at her dad, who nodded gently.

She felt a feeling she never felt before. The feeling of connection? Maybe.

Beckett now thought to tell what she had decided to do.

She summoned all her courage and said, “Mom, Dad, I have decided to quit my passion.”
Her parents looked at her, shocked.





“Wait, what?” Her father exclaimed, confused. Her mom didn’t say anything. She thought to explain about why she shouldn’t quit her dream, but she knew Beckett never listens.

She decided to remain quiet, it’s the best option. She knows that the right time will come.

That night Beckett was in shock.

She was uncertain about her decision. She looked at her laptop, basically stared.

“Should I start over?” Her questions did not vanish; instead, her fortitude simply grew larger than her dread.

“Okay, so, let’s begin.”



Beckett, now again starts writing her new book.

She jumps right into her imaginary world.

She then decides to write an action novel. Apparently, she knows how to write them, she opens her 'secret' drawer and starts finding her childhood creations.

She then got mesmerized by one of her own creations.

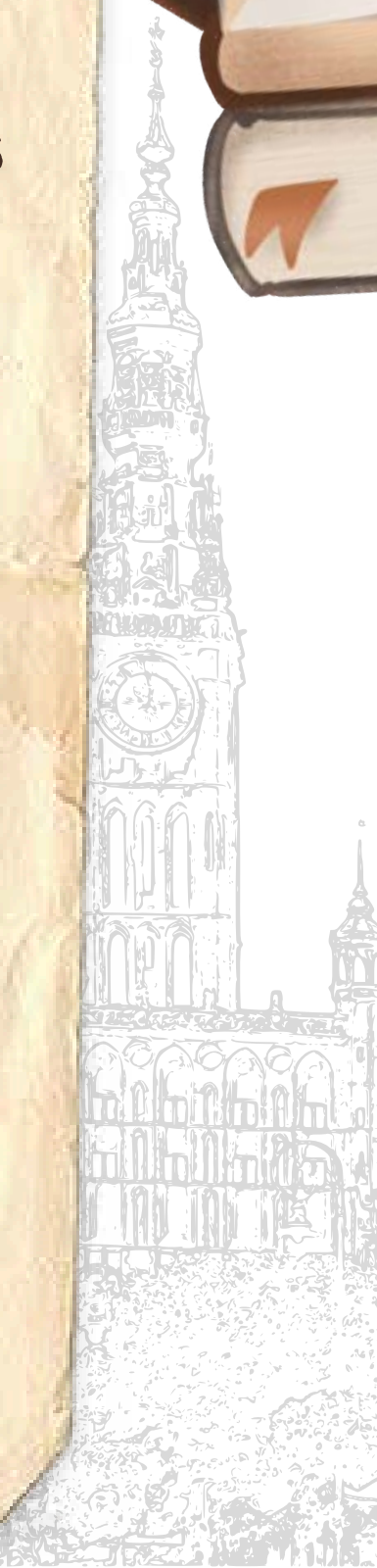
It was titled 'Beckett: A Dreaming Soul'.

Beckett knew she hasn't done something good or successful to write about herself.

She knew adults won't bother wasting time on this book. And she doesn't want like last time.

So she decided to make it for children. Way more attractive, colorful and interactive.

She also decided to edit by herself.

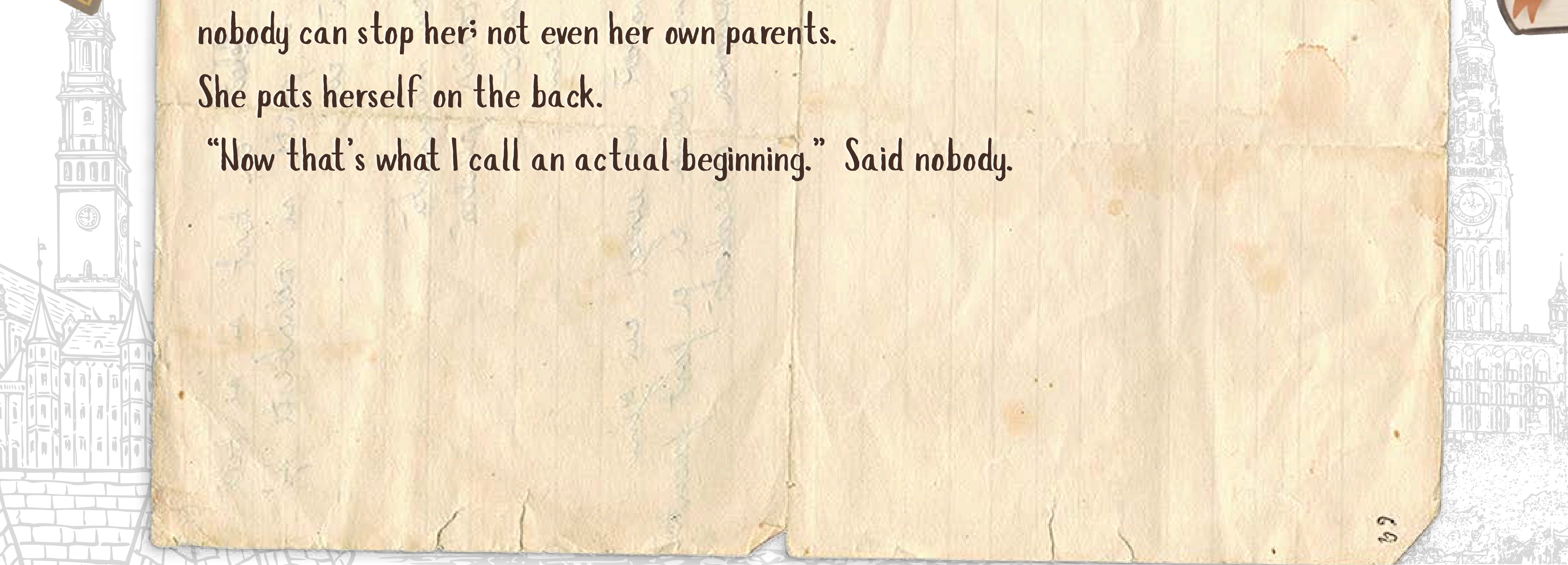




This project would need a lot of hard work and patience. And if she is willing to do it,
nobody can stop her; not even her own parents.

She pats herself on the back.

“Now that’s what I call an actual beginning.” Said nobody.



PART THREE

“Ooohhh I’m excited!”

Said Beckett finishing the editing after almost a year.

She made a Blueberry cream stuffed - muffin. Yep, she learnt that one in the bakery.

Sadly, she had to quit the bakery. It has been a month without it.

Her book was almost complete. Just the cover page is left.

Beckett had no idea for it. She explored her drawer to find a superhero type figure which looked exactly like her.

She took a whole day to finish the cover page. It was a masterpiece.

Now was the time. Would she find the editor? Maybe.



Like I said, nothing can stop her if she is willing.

Beckett knew her parents will support her. They will this time.

She asked the same editor twice. Now he got some fame.

He rejected her, like the other 19.

Wow, she had high expectations from this book. She was losing hope. Should she quit?

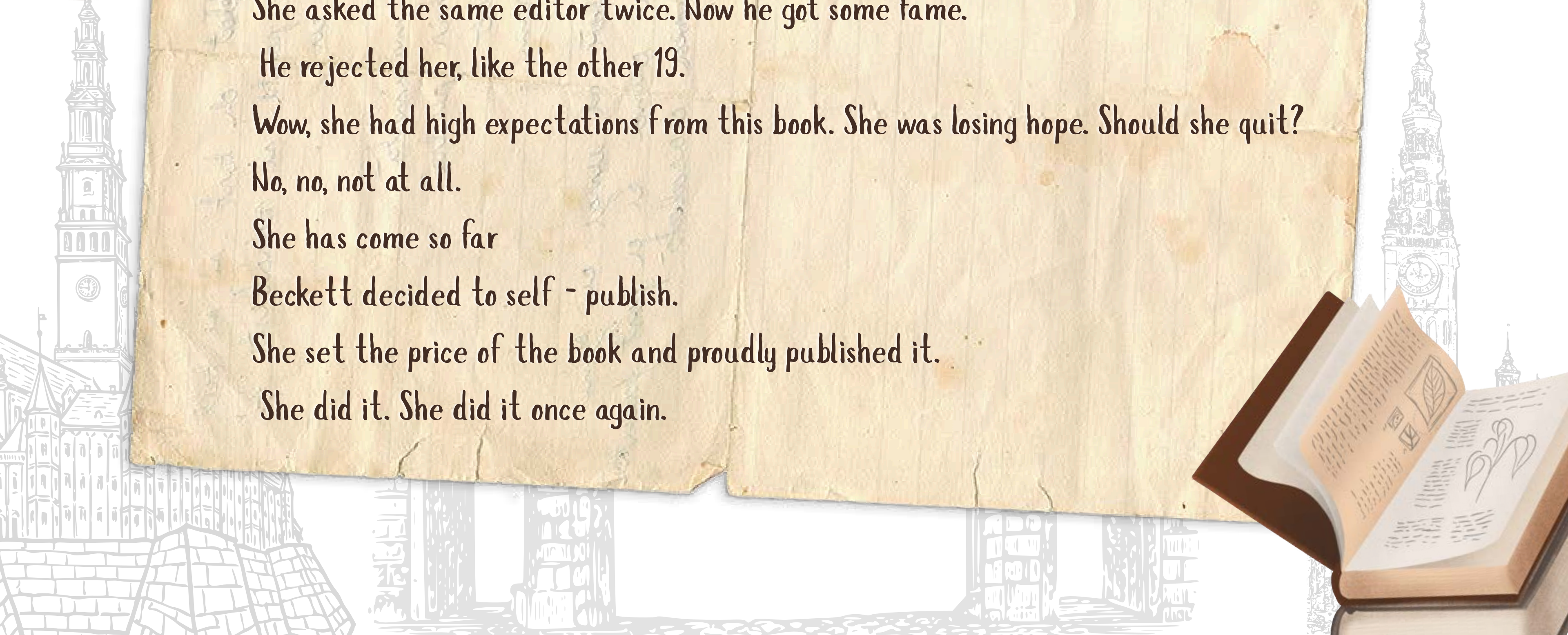
No, no, not at all.

She has come so far

Beckett decided to self - publish.

She set the price of the book and proudly published it.

She did it. She did it once again.





Beckett decided to chill for a while.

“Let’s go dad. We are going to miss our flight!”

“Coming!”

While they were having fun, something is getting renewed. Don’t you know the fuss now?

Beckett enjoyed a whole weekend in Hawaii.

She bought so many seasonal clothes and accessories that even the car could not move properly. Her phone was clutched in her hand. Beckett felt a vibration.

She checked it. “Oh my god...” She said, shocked.

Her father looked at her with curiosity.

Beckett passed him the phone. His eyes widened.

Beckett: a dreaming soul.

1 million copies sold.





No, no this can be a fake news, right?

The phone rang. Again, it rang.

It rang again, and again, and again.

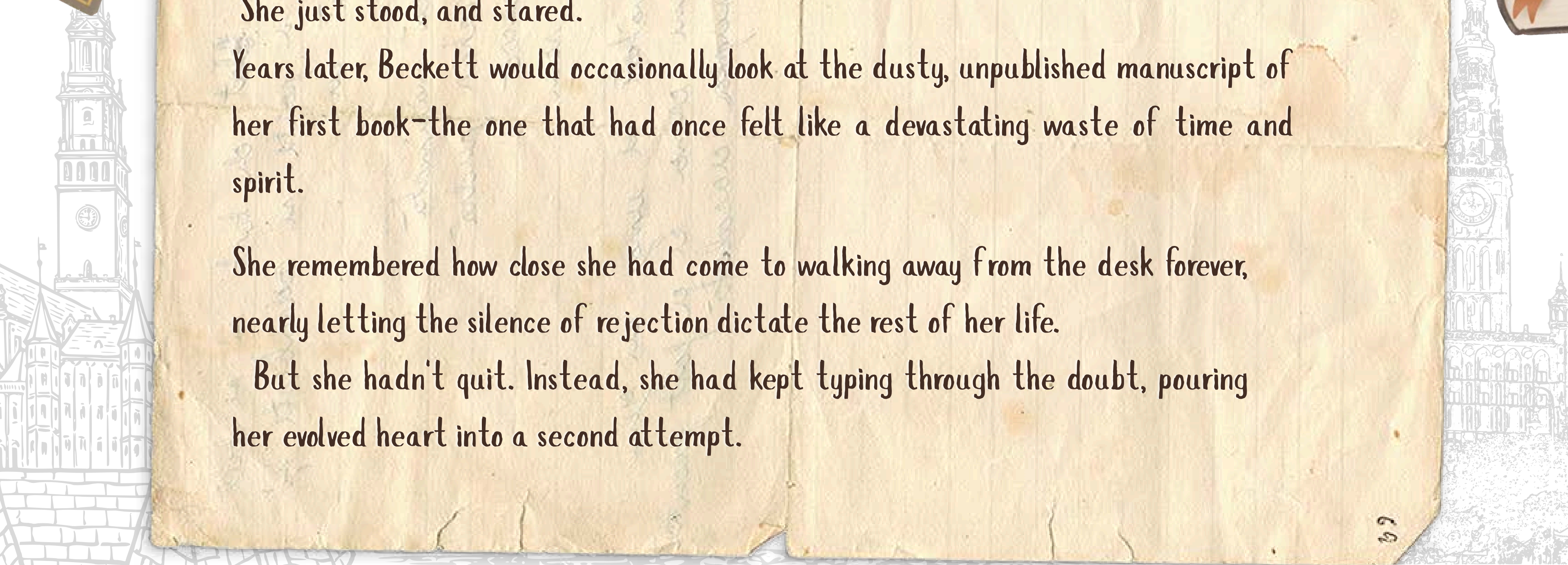
Beckett is a national bestseller now. Who knows that she is international?

She just stood, and stared.

Years later, Beckett would occasionally look at the dusty, unpublished manuscript of her first book—the one that had once felt like a devastating waste of time and spirit.

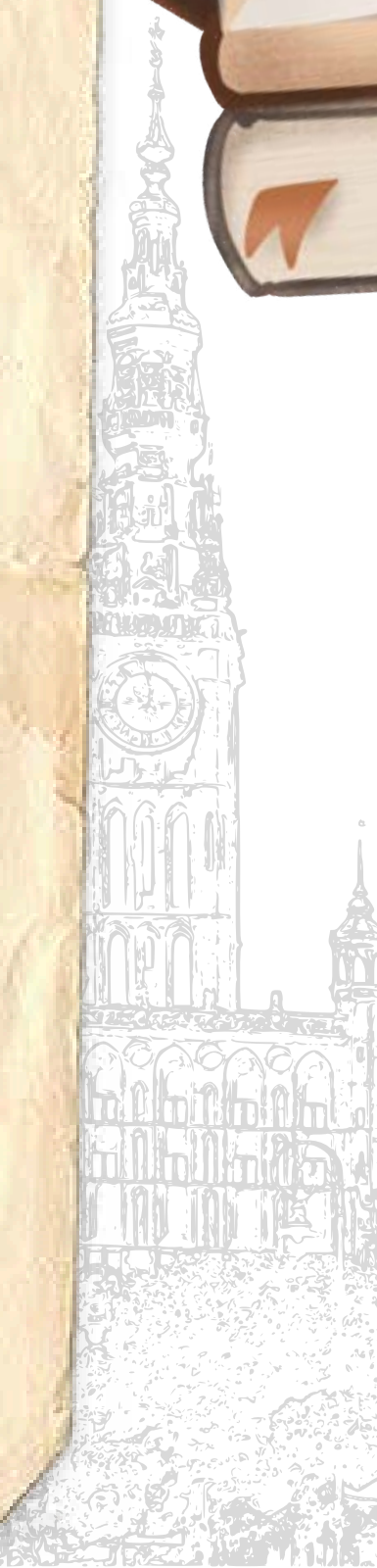
She remembered how close she had come to walking away from the desk forever, nearly letting the silence of rejection dictate the rest of her life.

But she hadn't quit. Instead, she had kept typing through the doubt, pouring her evolved heart into a second attempt.



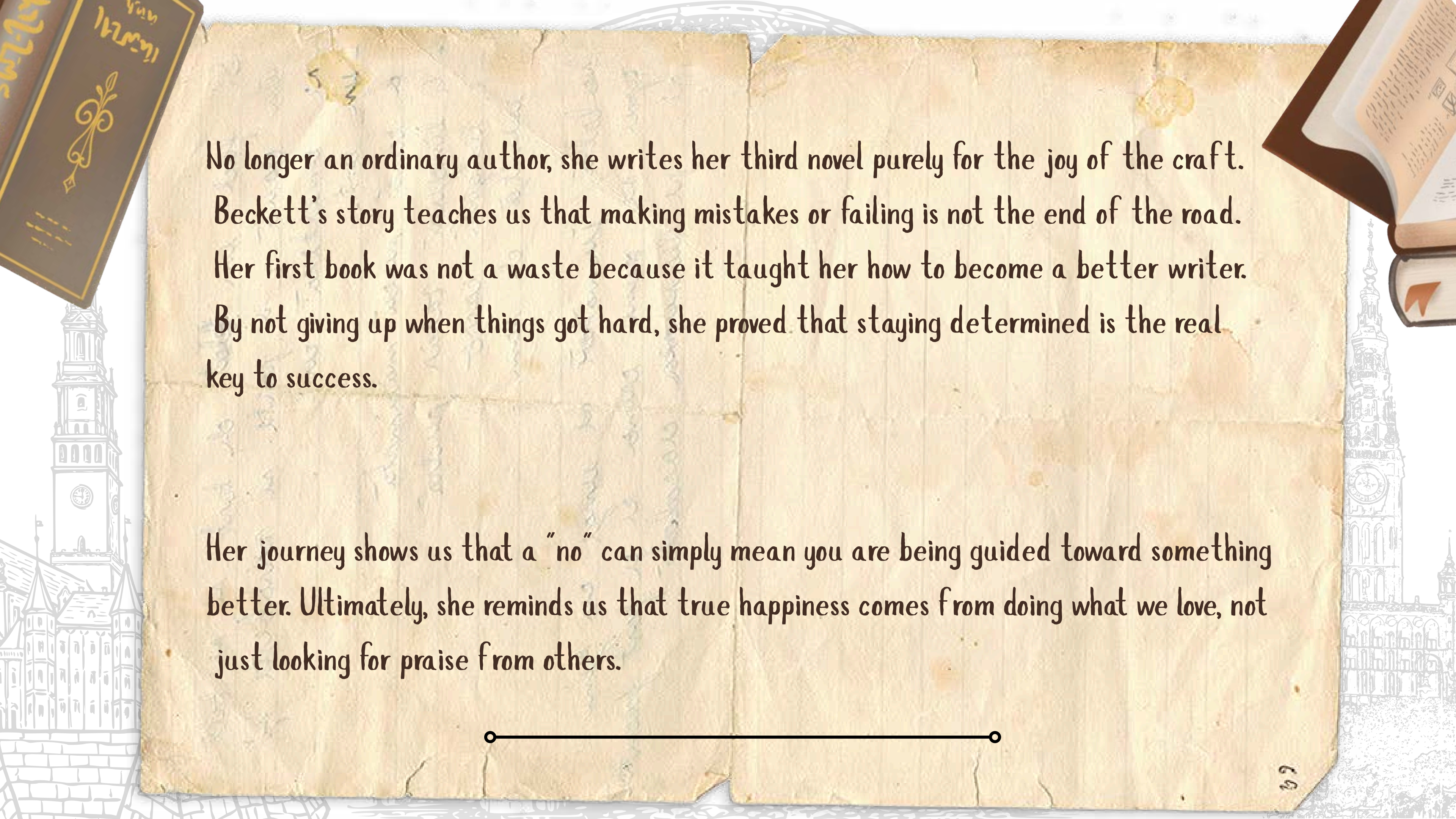


Now, with that second novel dominating international bestseller lists and her name spoken in bookstores across the globe, the perspective had entirely shifted. That first heartbreak wasn't a dead end at all; it was the quiet, necessary foundation that taught her exactly how to fly.



Today, Beckett splits her time between her quiet writing studio and packed international book tours.

She hosts workshops for aspiring authors, teaching them how to survive the crushing sting of rejection.



No longer an ordinary author, she writes her third novel purely for the joy of the craft. Beckett's story teaches us that making mistakes or failing is not the end of the road. Her first book was not a waste because it taught her how to become a better writer. By not giving up when things got hard, she proved that staying determined is the real key to success.

Her journey shows us that a "no" can simply mean you are being guided toward something better. Ultimately, she reminds us that true happiness comes from doing what we love, not just looking for praise from others.

The man everyone feared

by:-Pari Rastogi



Every colony has one story that mothers use to send children home before dark. In ours, it was the story of Ratan Kaka.

He lived alone in the last house on Neem Street, House Number Thirteen, behind a gate that had rusted shut from disuse. Nobody remembered when he had moved in it felt like he had simply always been there, the way old trees and old fears always seem to have always been there. What we did know was this: half of his face was burned. The skin over his left cheek was pulled tight and shiny, his ear was little more than a fold of scar tissue, and his left hand curled inward, permanently, like a leaf that had shrivelled in a flame.



He never spoke to anyone. He walked with his head down, and if any of us crossed his path, he would cross the street instead of passing near us.

Naturally, we children built a legend around him. Rohit, who lived two houses from mine and always seemed to know things nobody else did, swore that Ratan Kaka had once worked at a shady factory and had burned a man alive in a fire he started himself. Priya said her grandmother had told her he was cursed by a sadhu for some terrible sin. By the time the story reached the youngest kids on the street, he was no longer a man at all – he was "the fire ghost," a creature we dared each other to wave at and then ran away screaming with delighted terror.



I was ten that year, and my sister Mishti was four. Our house stood two doors from Ratan Kaka's, close enough that I sometimes saw him in the evenings, sitting alone on his veranda, staring at nothing. I never waved. I never dared.

The colony had one particular danger that every parent warned us about: the old, disused well behind the community hall, its wall broken and half-swallowed by weeds, its mouth barely fenced by a single strand of wire that had long since gone slack. It had been dry for years, but it was deep, and deep enough to kill. That evening, my mother had sent me to fetch Mishti from the community hall garden, where she had been playing with the neighbourhood children while the mothers gossiped over tea. I remember being distracted Rohit had found a cricket ball lodged in a tree, and I had stopped to help him get it down. When I finally looked up, Mishti was gone.



I found her small pink sandals first, abandoned near the broken wall of the well. Then I heard her voice, thin and frightened, rising out of the darkness below.

I do not remember screaming, though I must have. I do not remember running, though somehow I reached the well's edge in seconds, my knees scraping against the broken brick as I peered down into the black. Mishti had slipped through a gap in the wire and fallen onto a ledge a little way down – not all the way to the bottom, but far enough that no ten-year-old's arms could reach her, and every second she cried, she inched closer to losing her footing entirely. That was when I heard footsteps behind me – quick, certain, not the shuffling, downcast steps I knew. It was Ratan Kaka. He did not ask what had happened. He did not hesitate at the broken wall the way I had.



He swung himself over it in one motion, and before I could even call out a warning, he had lowered himself into the well using an old rope tied to the iron post at its mouth, bracing his feet against the crumbling brick.

I do not know how long it took – it felt like both a single second and an entire lifetime – before he came back up, one arm hooked in the rope, the other, his curled and scarred hand, wrapped tightly around my sister. He passed her up to the neighbours who had come running at my screams, and only then did he allow himself to be pulled out, his kurta torn, his palms bleeding fresh over old scars. The colony gathered. Mothers wept over Mishti. Fathers thumped Ratan Kaka on the back, calling him a hero, though he flinched from the touch and said nothing, as always.



It was my mother who finally asked him, gently, why he had known exactly what to do – how he had climbed down so fast, so sure, as though he had done it before.

He looked at her for a long moment. Then, for the first time in the years I had known of him, Ratan Kaka spoke.

"Because I have done it before," he said quietly. "Fourteen years ago, there was a fire in the government school three streets from here. I was a peon there. When the flames started in the store room, I went in five times, not once, to carry children out through the smoke. The fifth time, the roof came down before I could reach the door." He touched his ruined cheek, almost absently. "Six children lived because of those five trips. But somebody had seen me near the store room earlier that day, fixing a fused wire, and by evening the whole town had decided I was the one who started the fire to hide a theft.



Nobody asked the six children I carried out.

Nobody asked why a thief would go back in five times for people he did not know.

They only saw my face, after, and decided it told them everything."

He had lost his job, his standing, and – though he did not say this part,

I only understood it years later – his own family had asked him to leave,

ashamed of the rumours.

He had come to our colony because no one here knew his story, and he had made sure,

ever since, that no one would ask."I did not save your sister to be forgiven," he said,

looking at my mother, not unkindly. "I would have done it whether you believed me a hero

or a monster. I only wanted you to stop being afraid of the wrong thing. The well was

always the danger. I never was."



Nobody dared tell ghost stories about Ratan Kaka after that. But it took me a long time to understand that what changed that evening was not who he was – he had been exactly the same man, brave and burned and silent, every single day before Mishti fell into that well.

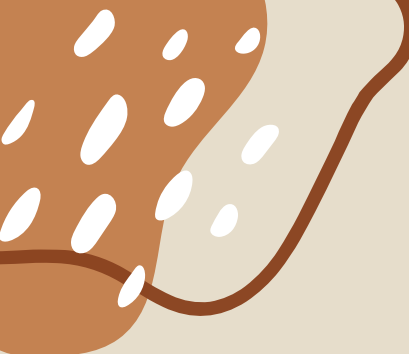
What changed was that we finally troubled ourselves to ask.

I visit him sometimes, now, on my trips back home. He still lives in House Number Thirteen, and the gate no longer rusts shut, because now the neighbourhood children push it open on their own to sit with him on his veranda and listen to him fix their kites. Mishti, seventeen now, still calls him Kaka, and means it the way you mean the word for someone who is truly your own.



I think often of how easily we had turned a hero into a monster, simply because we preferred a simple, frightening story to a complicated, painful one. It is a comfortable thing, fear – it asks nothing of us, demands no understanding, requires no second look. Kindness, and truth, are far more difficult. They ask you to climb down into the dark on the strength of nothing but the belief that what's down there is worth saving. Ratan Kaka taught me that the villains we build are often just the people we never gave a chance to speak.

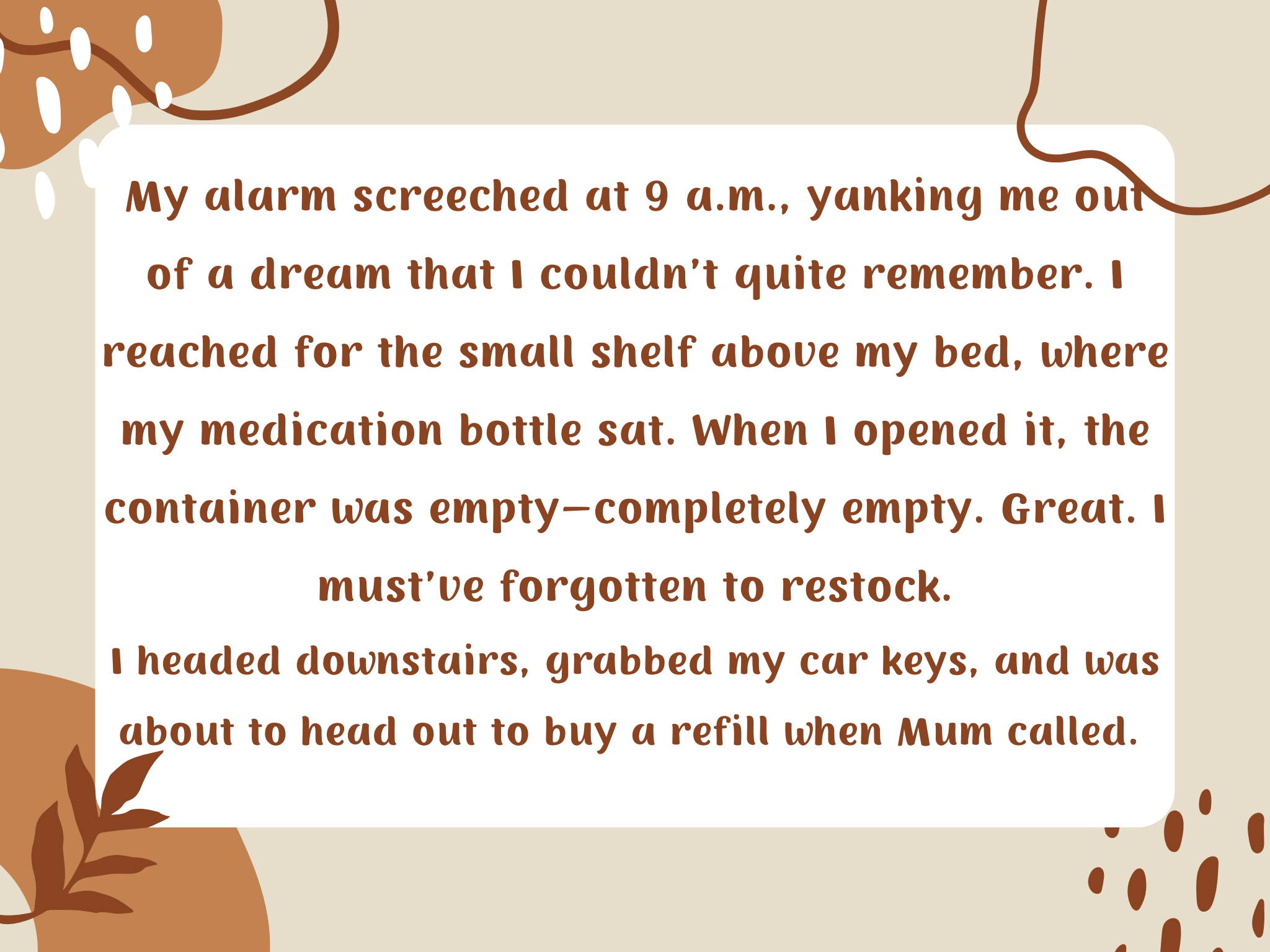




VEILS OF THE MIND

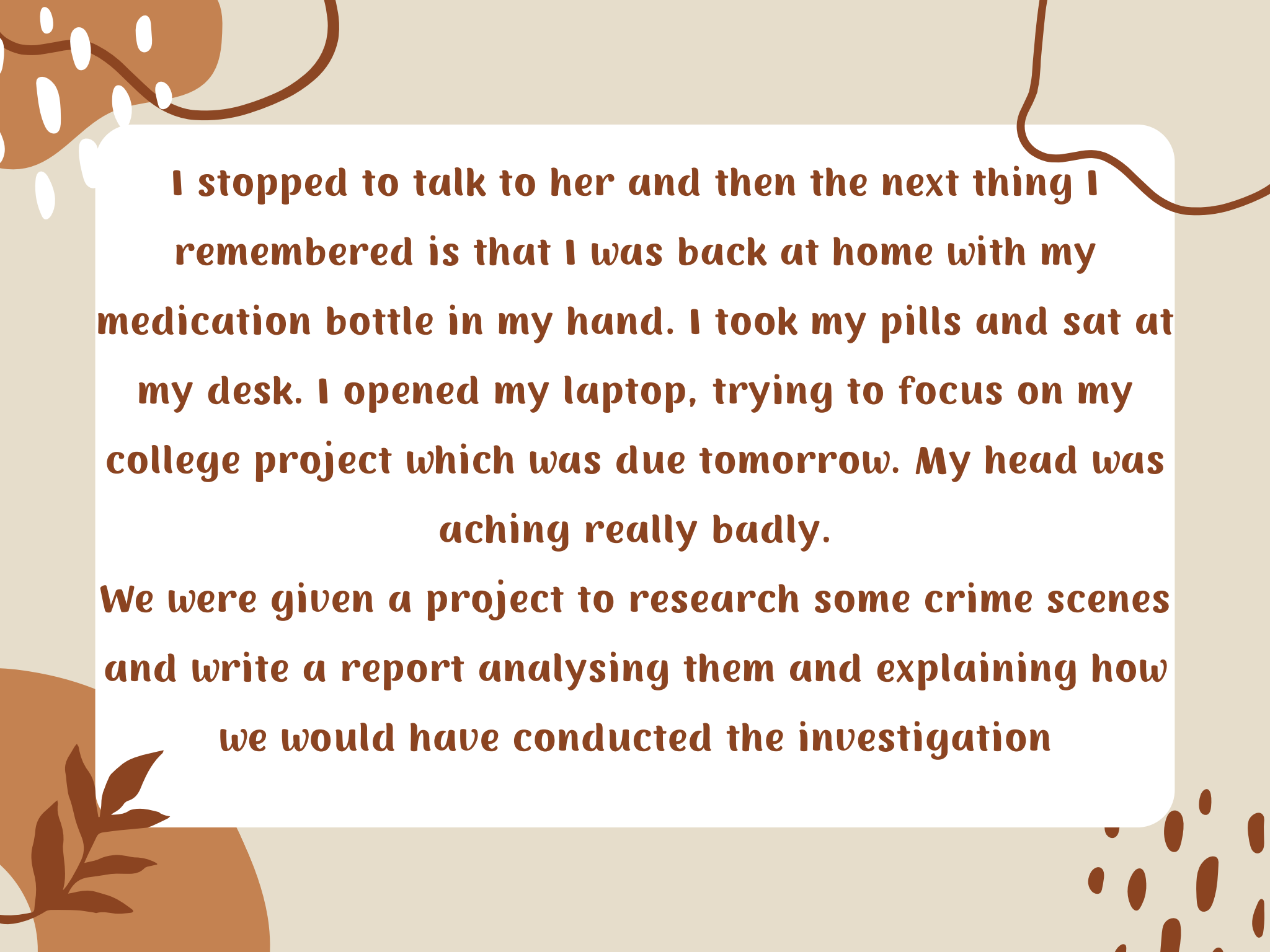
by STUTI ROY





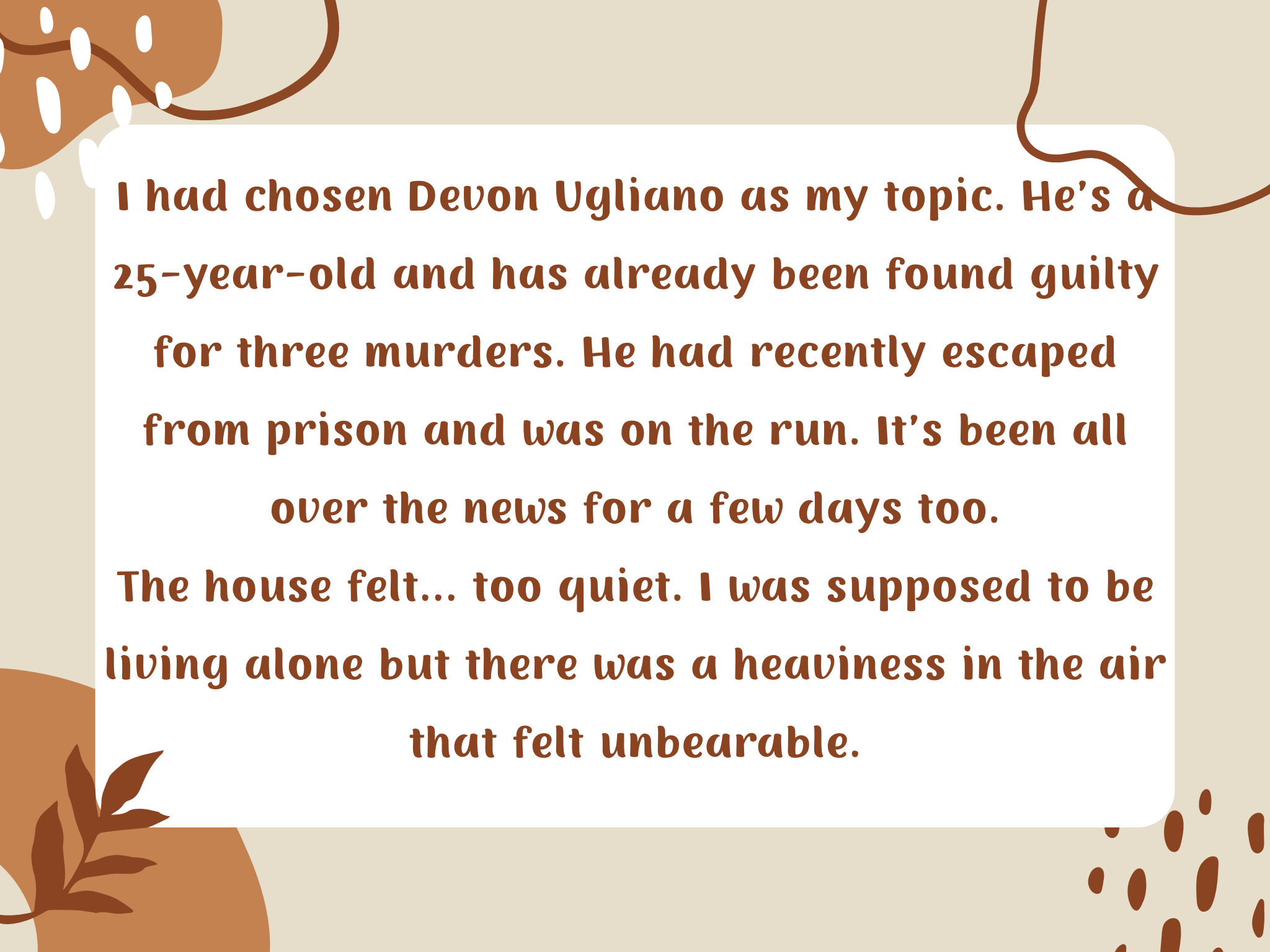
My alarm screeched at 9 a.m., yanking me out of a dream that I couldn't quite remember. I reached for the small shelf above my bed, where my medication bottle sat. When I opened it, the container was empty—completely empty. Great. I must've forgotten to restock.

I headed downstairs, grabbed my car keys, and was about to head out to buy a refill when Mum called.



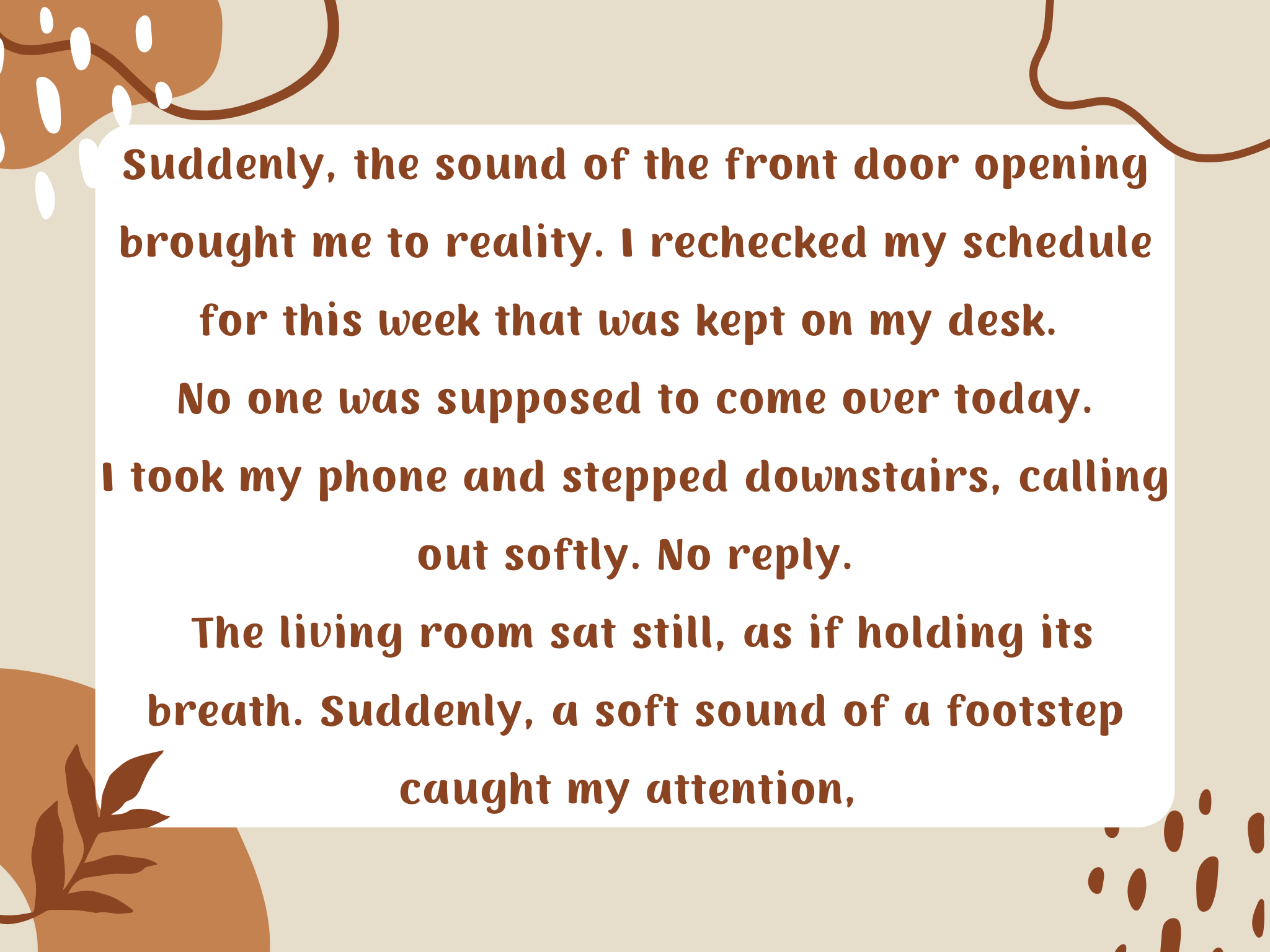
I stopped to talk to her and then the next thing I remembered is that I was back at home with my medication bottle in my hand. I took my pills and sat at my desk. I opened my laptop, trying to focus on my college project which was due tomorrow. My head was aching really badly.

We were given a project to research some crime scenes and write a report analysing them and explaining how we would have conducted the investigation



I had chosen Devon Ugliano as my topic. He's a 25-year-old and has already been found guilty for three murders. He had recently escaped from prison and was on the run. It's been all over the news for a few days too.

The house felt... too quiet. I was supposed to be living alone but there was a heaviness in the air that felt unbearable.

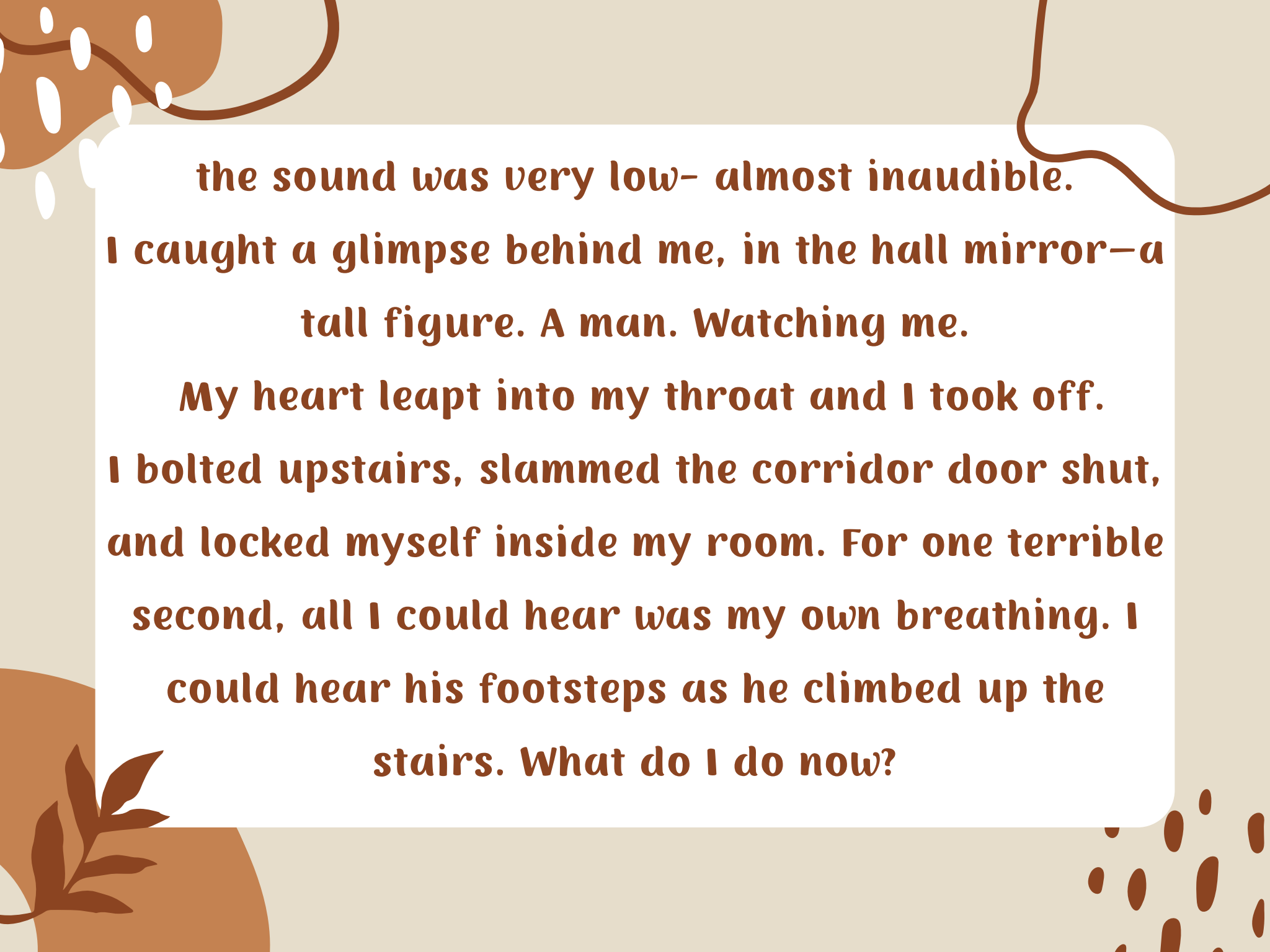


Suddenly, the sound of the front door opening brought me to reality. I rechecked my schedule for this week that was kept on my desk.

No one was supposed to come over today.

I took my phone and stepped downstairs, calling out softly. No reply.

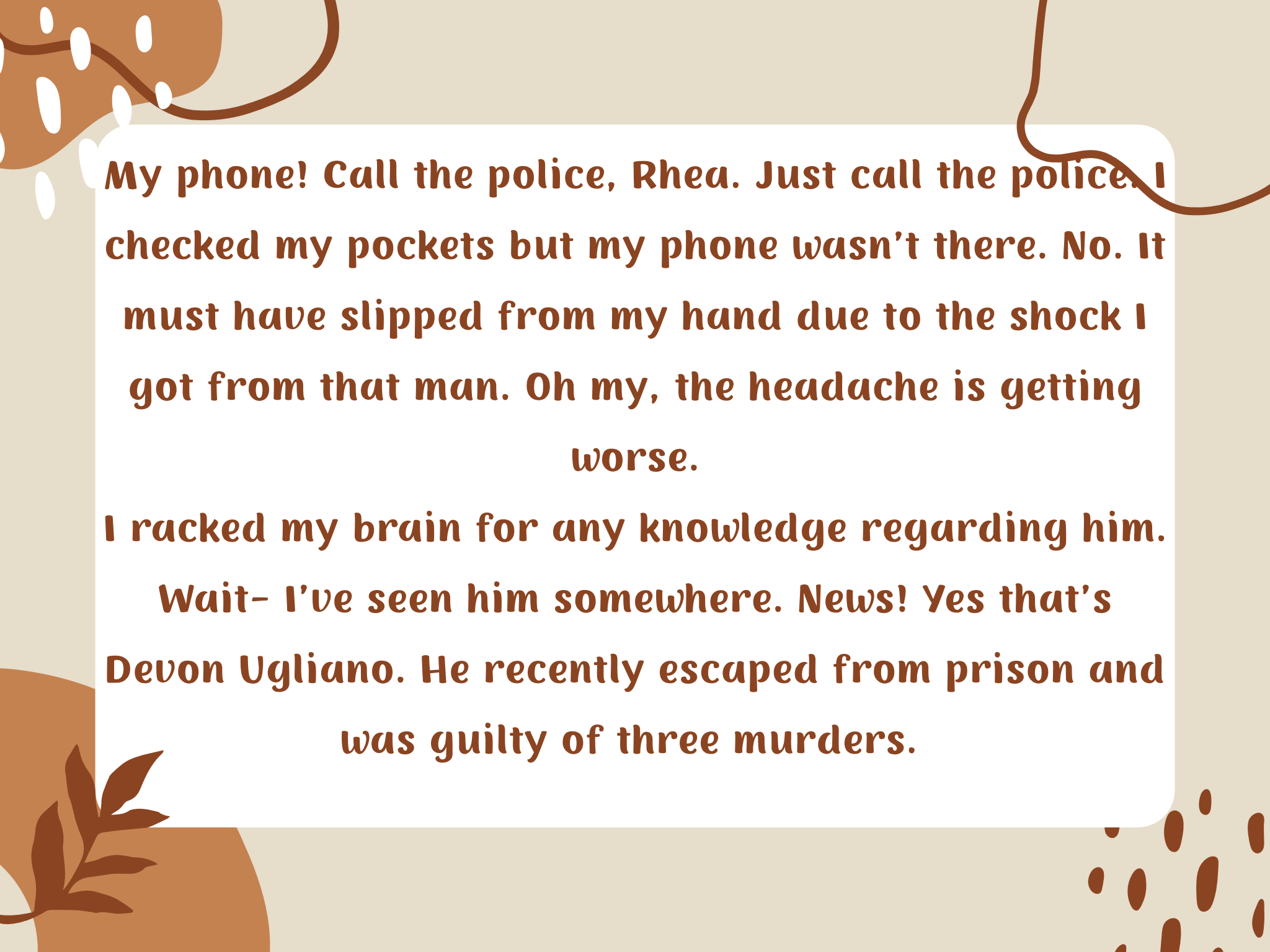
The living room sat still, as if holding its breath. Suddenly, a soft sound of a footstep caught my attention,



the sound was very low- almost inaudible.

**I caught a glimpse behind me, in the hall mirror—a
tall figure. A man. Watching me.**

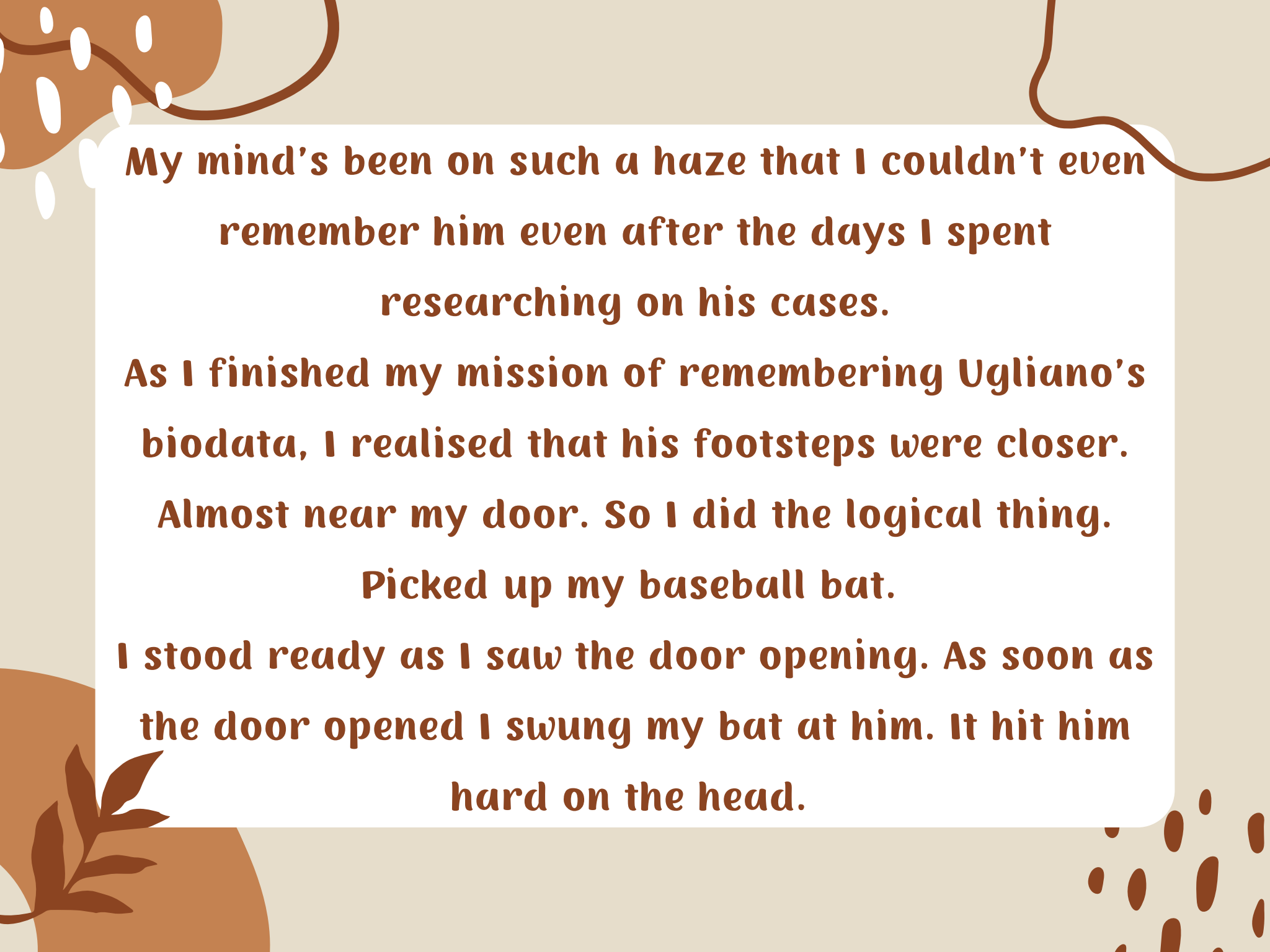
**My heart leapt into my throat and I took off.
I bolted upstairs, slammed the corridor door shut,
and locked myself inside my room. For one terrible
second, all I could hear was my own breathing. I
could hear his footsteps as he climbed up the
stairs. What do I do now?**



My phone! Call the police, Rhea. Just call the police. I checked my pockets but my phone wasn't there. No. It must have slipped from my hand due to the shock I got from that man. Oh my, the headache is getting worse.

I racked my brain for any knowledge regarding him.

Wait- I've seen him somewhere. News! Yes that's Devon Ugliano. He recently escaped from prison and was guilty of three murders.



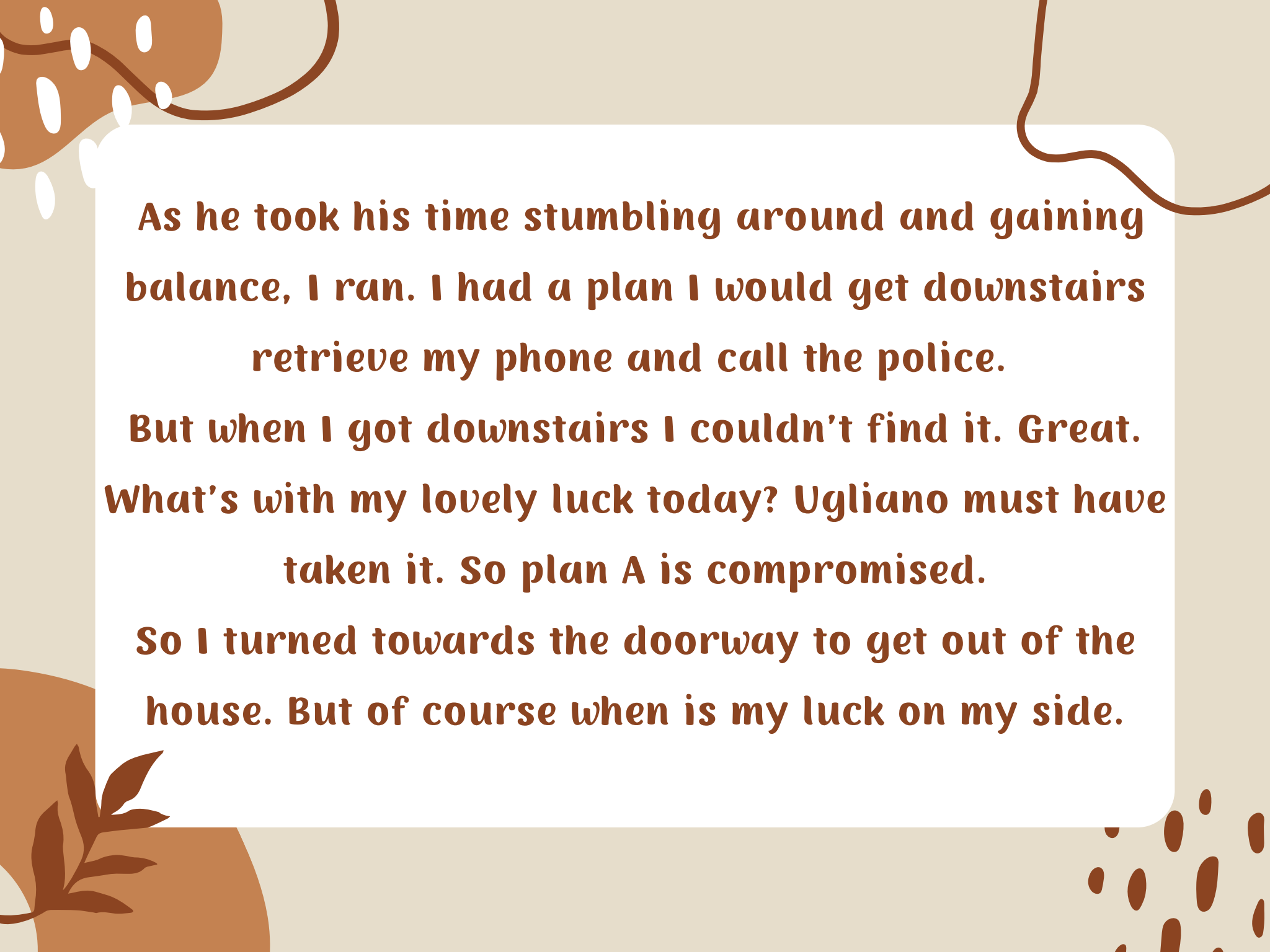
My mind's been on such a haze that I couldn't even remember him even after the days I spent researching on his cases.

As I finished my mission of remembering Ugliano's biodata, I realised that his footsteps were closer.

Almost near my door. So I did the logical thing.

Picked up my baseball bat.

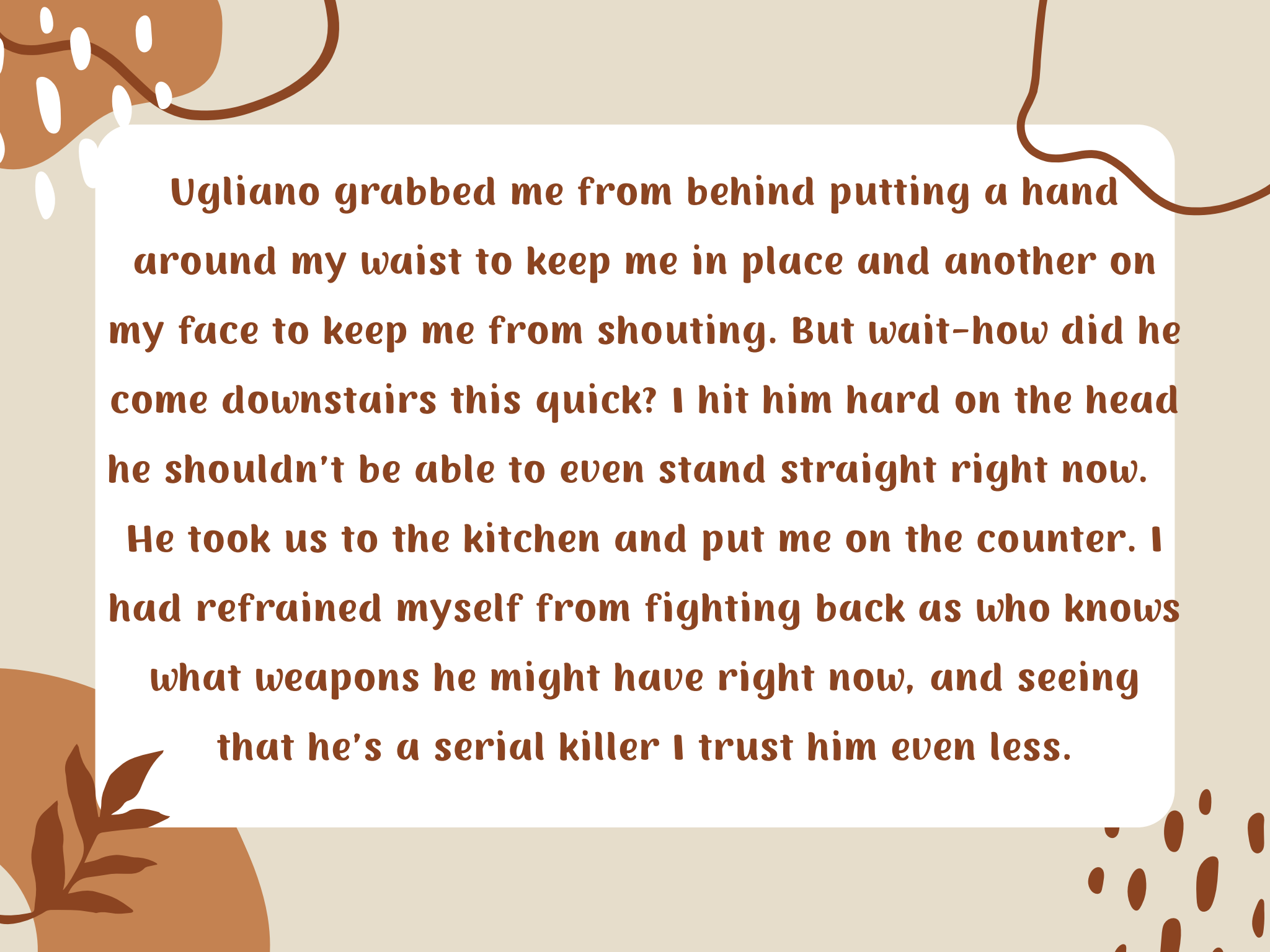
I stood ready as I saw the door opening. As soon as the door opened I swung my bat at him. It hit him hard on the head.



As he took his time stumbling around and gaining balance, I ran. I had a plan I would get downstairs retrieve my phone and call the police.

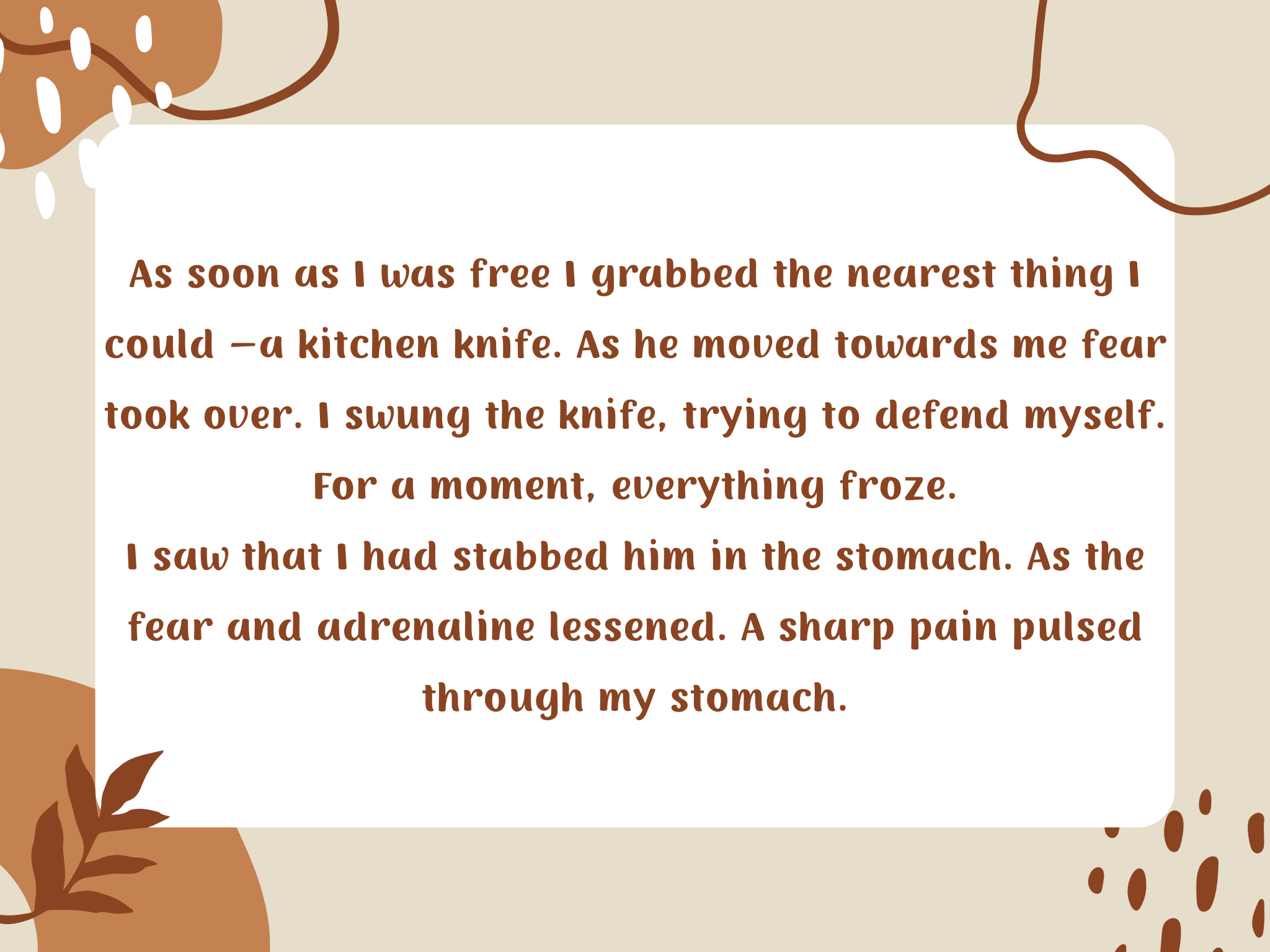
But when I got downstairs I couldn't find it. Great. What's with my lovely luck today? Ugliano must have taken it. So plan A is compromised.

So I turned towards the doorway to get out of the house. But of course when is my luck on my side.



Ugliano grabbed me from behind putting a hand around my waist to keep me in place and another on my face to keep me from shouting. But wait-how did he come downstairs this quick? I hit him hard on the head he shouldn't be able to even stand straight right now.

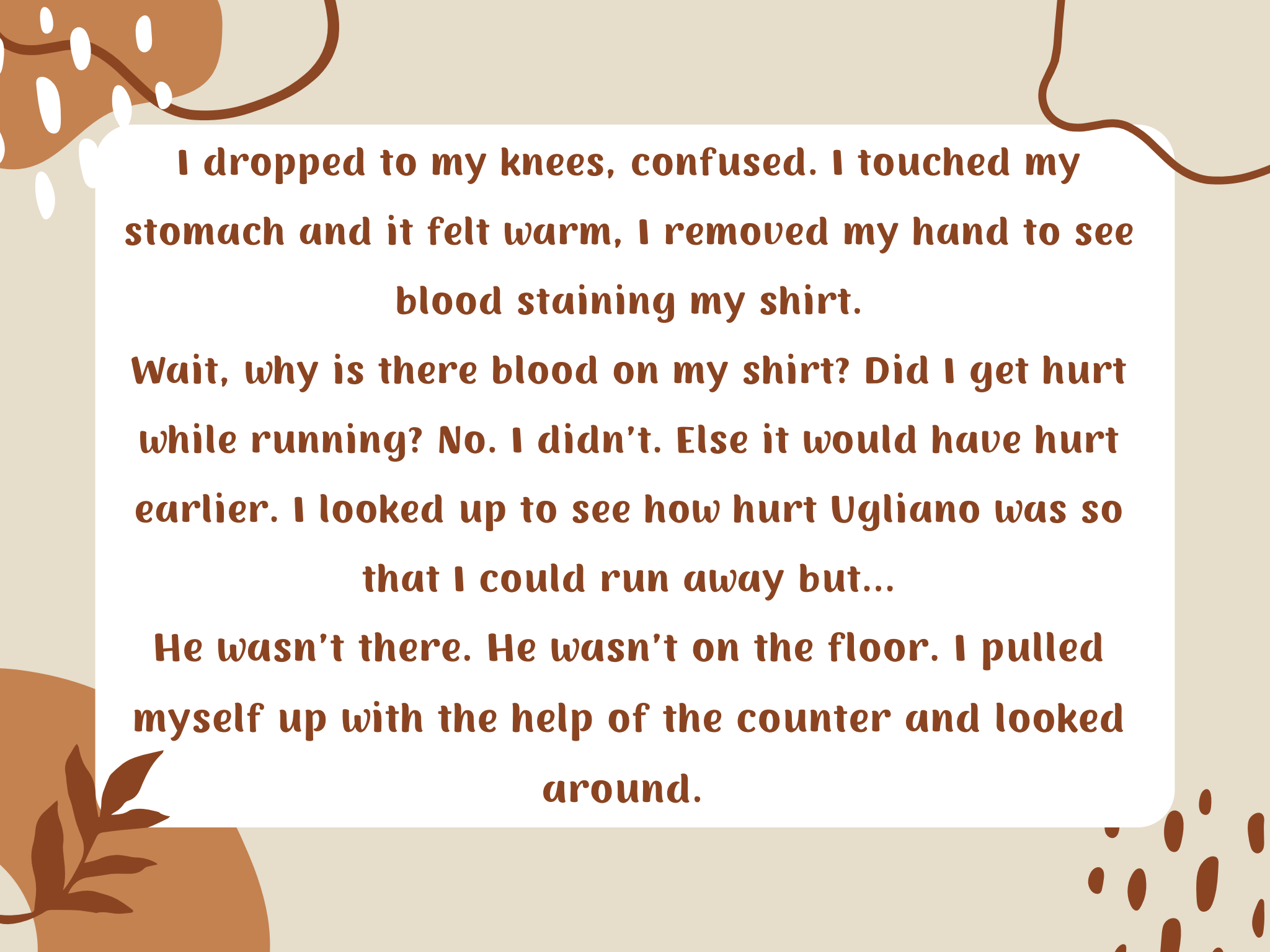
He took us to the kitchen and put me on the counter. I had refrained myself from fighting back as who knows what weapons he might have right now, and seeing that he's a serial killer I trust him even less.



As soon as I was free I grabbed the nearest thing I could –a kitchen knife. As he moved towards me fear took over. I swung the knife, trying to defend myself.

For a moment, everything froze.

I saw that I had stabbed him in the stomach. As the fear and adrenaline lessened. A sharp pain pulsed through my stomach.



I dropped to my knees, confused. I touched my stomach and it felt warm, I removed my hand to see blood staining my shirt.

Wait, why is there blood on my shirt? Did I get hurt while running? No. I didn't. Else it would have hurt earlier. I looked up to see how hurt Ugliano was so that I could run away but...

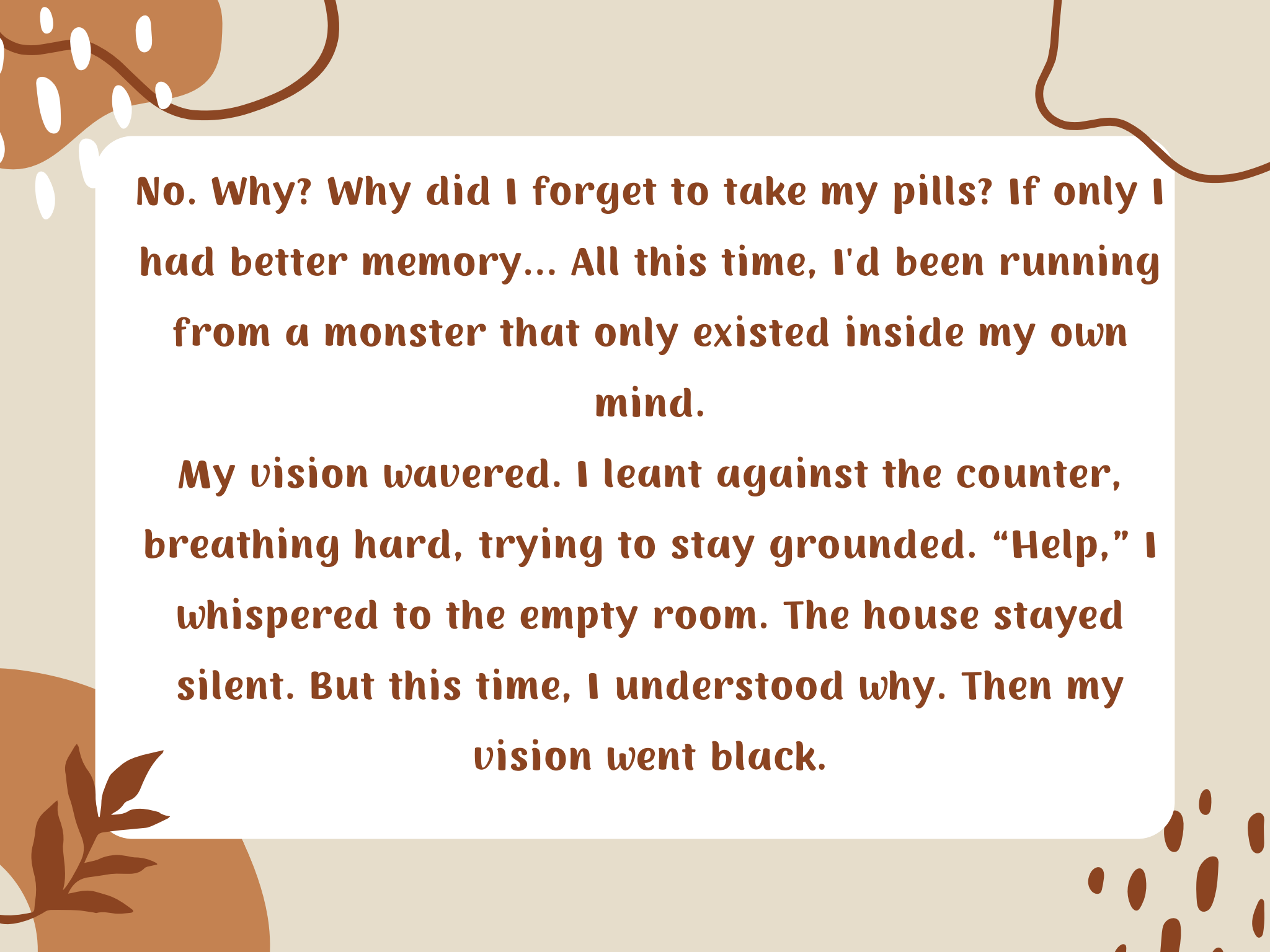
He wasn't there. He wasn't on the floor. I pulled myself up with the help of the counter and looked around.



He wasn't there. He wasn't on the floor. I pulled myself up with the help of the counter and looked around. He wasn't there.

nally lifting, the truth hit me. Devon wasn't here. He never was. The chase, the fight, the danger—it's all been my mind twisting reality. I remembered, I never left the house this morning. I never went to the pharmacy. A phone call from Mom had distracted me, and after that... everything blurred. I had only thought, I had taken my medication.





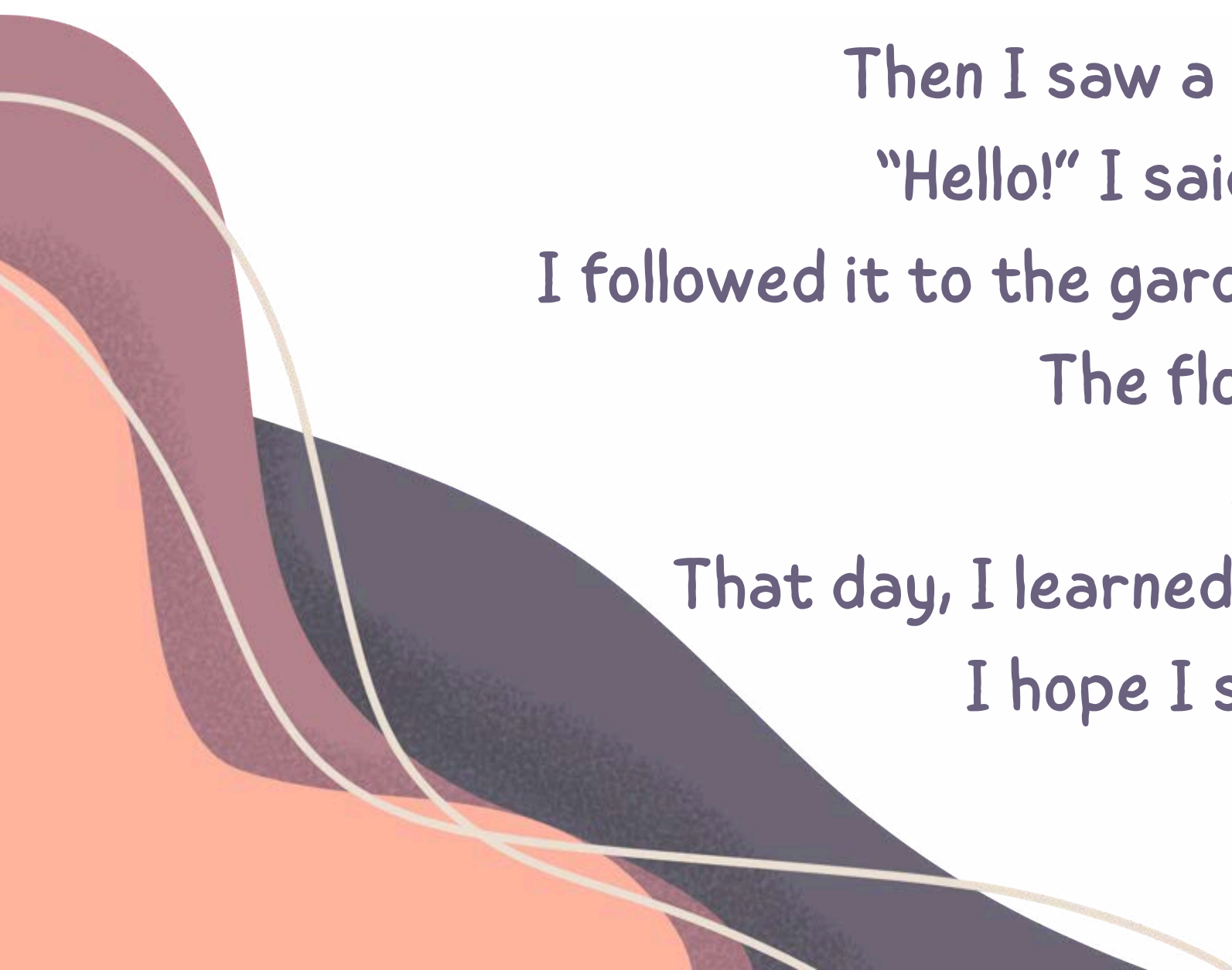
No. Why? Why did I forget to take my pills? If only I had better memory... All this time, I'd been running from a monster that only existed inside my own mind.

My vision wavered. I leant against the counter, breathing hard, trying to stay grounded. "Help," I whispered to the empty room. The house stayed silent. But this time, I understood why. Then my vision went black.



MY LITTLE RAINBOW

RADHYA BHATIA



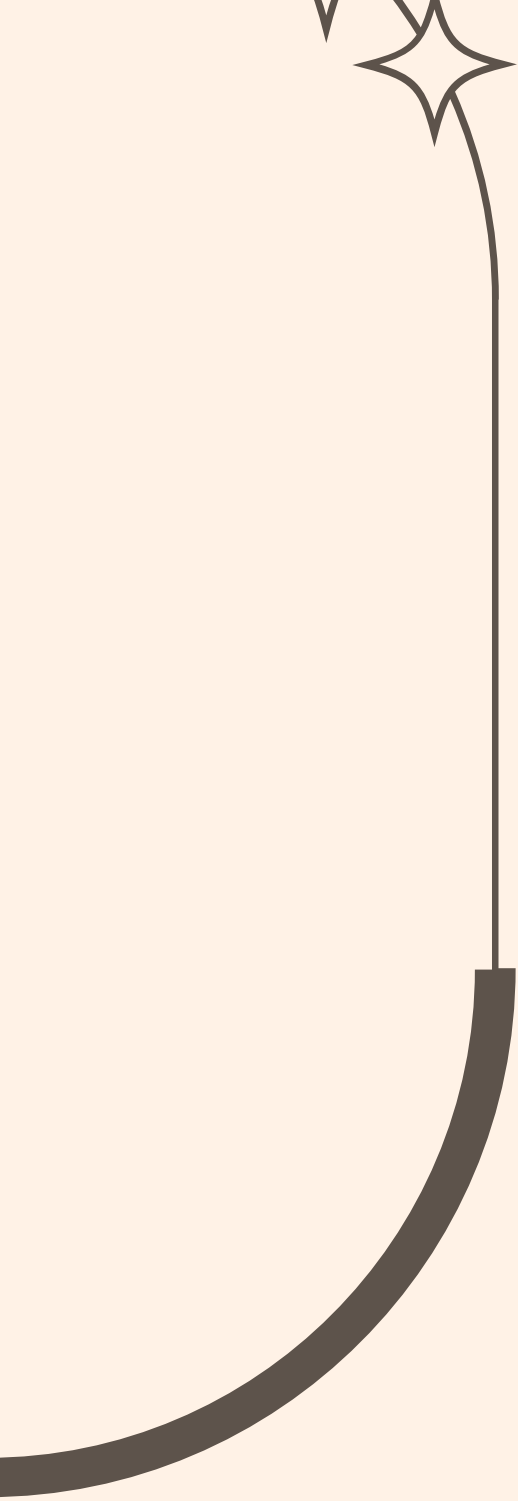
One morning, I woke up and saw a rainbow outside my window.
It had seven beautiful colours.
I ran outside to see it. The rainbow was so big that it looked like it was
touching my house!
I wished that I could climb on it.
Then I saw a little bird sitting under the rainbow.
“Hello!” I said. The bird chirped and flew away.
I followed it to the garden. There were many colourful flowers there.
The flowers looked like little stars.
I sat down and smiled.
That day, I learned that beautiful things can make us happy.
I hope I see my rainbow again tomorrow.



*Between
Dream
And
Reality*

By Nayana Mohan

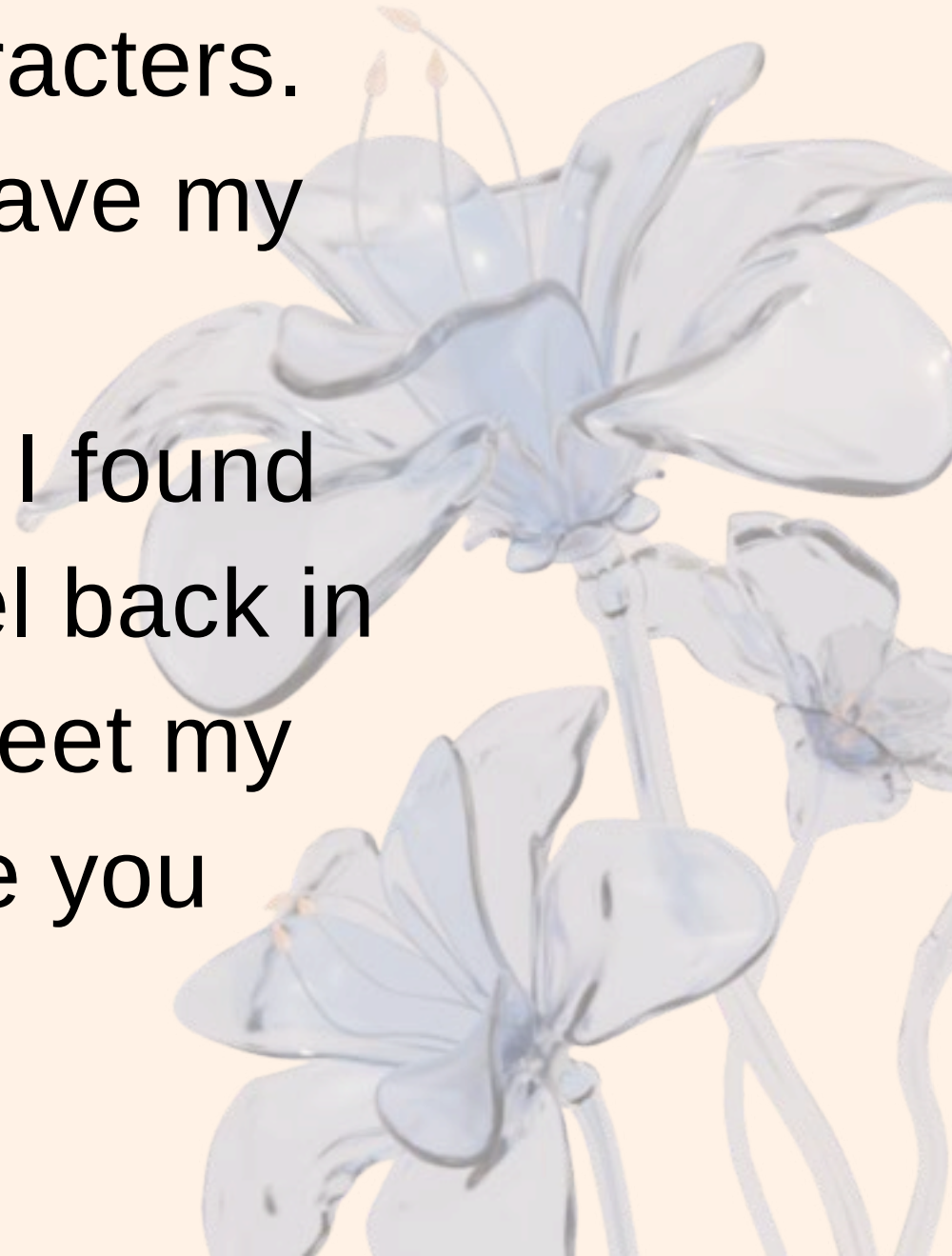
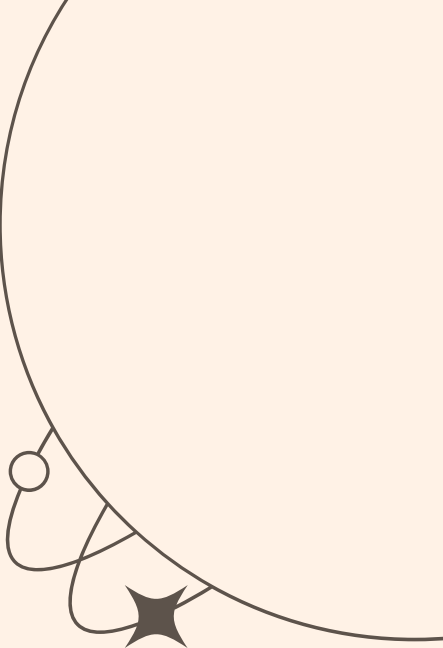


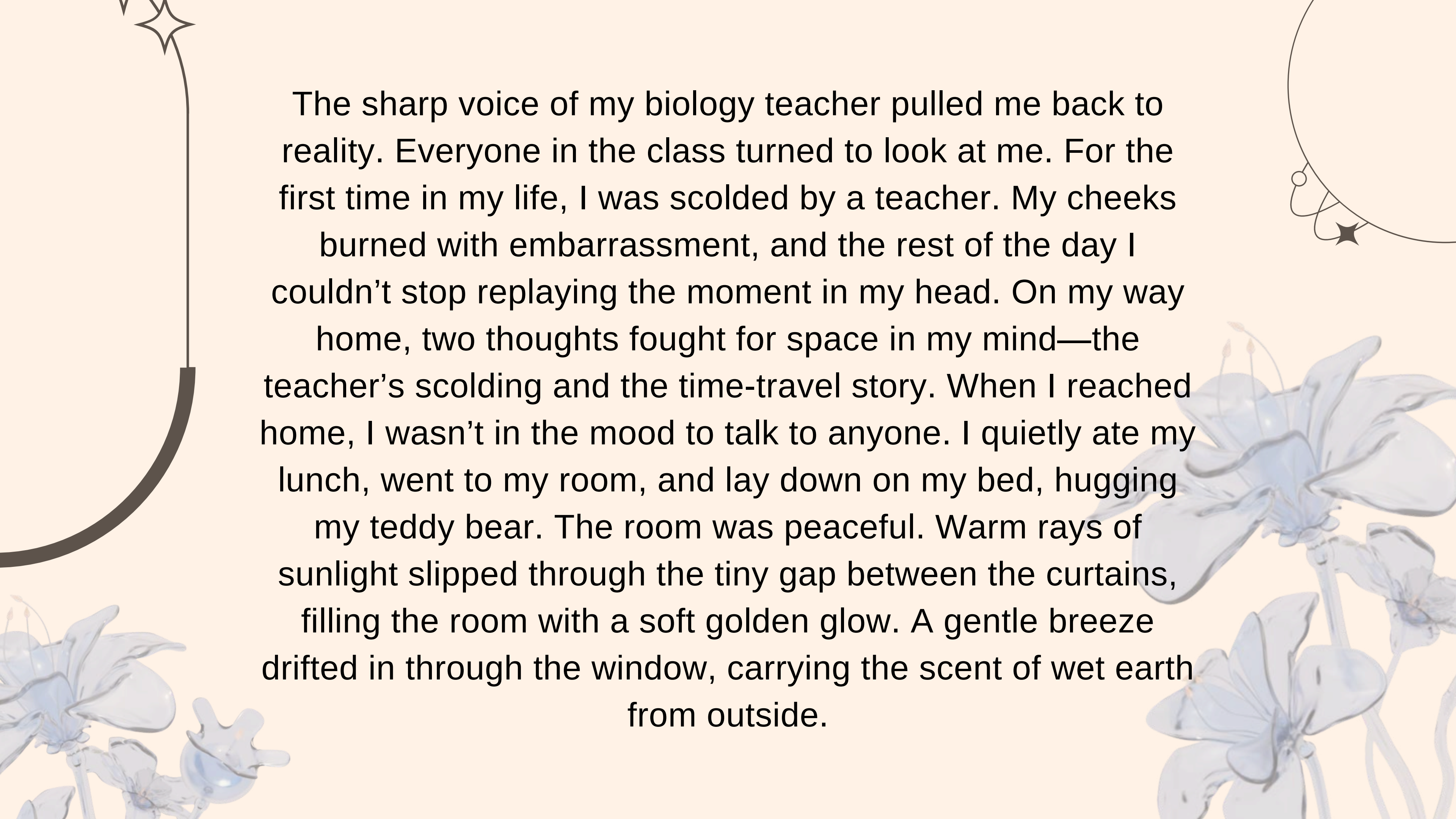


Was I the perfect student? Mercifully not. But I loved reading. I wanted to read every book that ever existed.

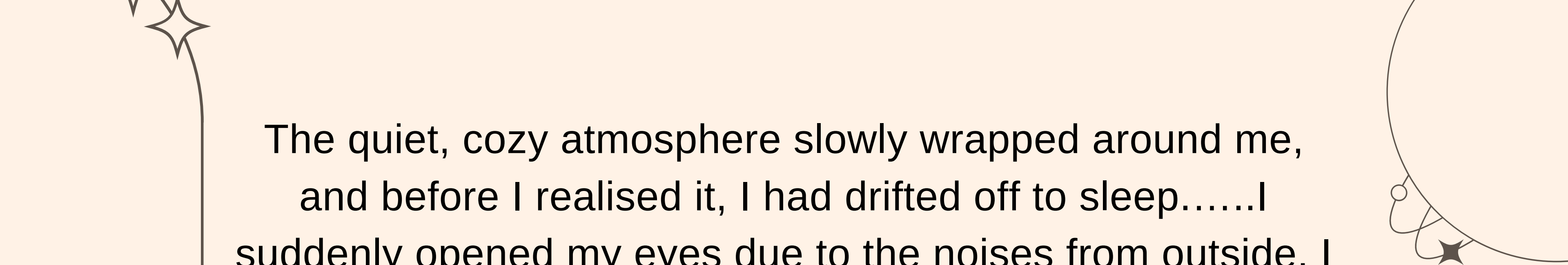
That afternoon, during a free period at school, I was completely absorbed in a short story about time travel. The author described every detail so vividly that it felt as if I were travelling through time alongside the characters. Even after the bell rang, the story refused to leave my mind.

Instead of paying attention in my biology class, I found myself wondering what I would do if I could travel back in time. Would I change my mistakes? Would I meet my younger self? Would I be able to return? “Are you listening?”





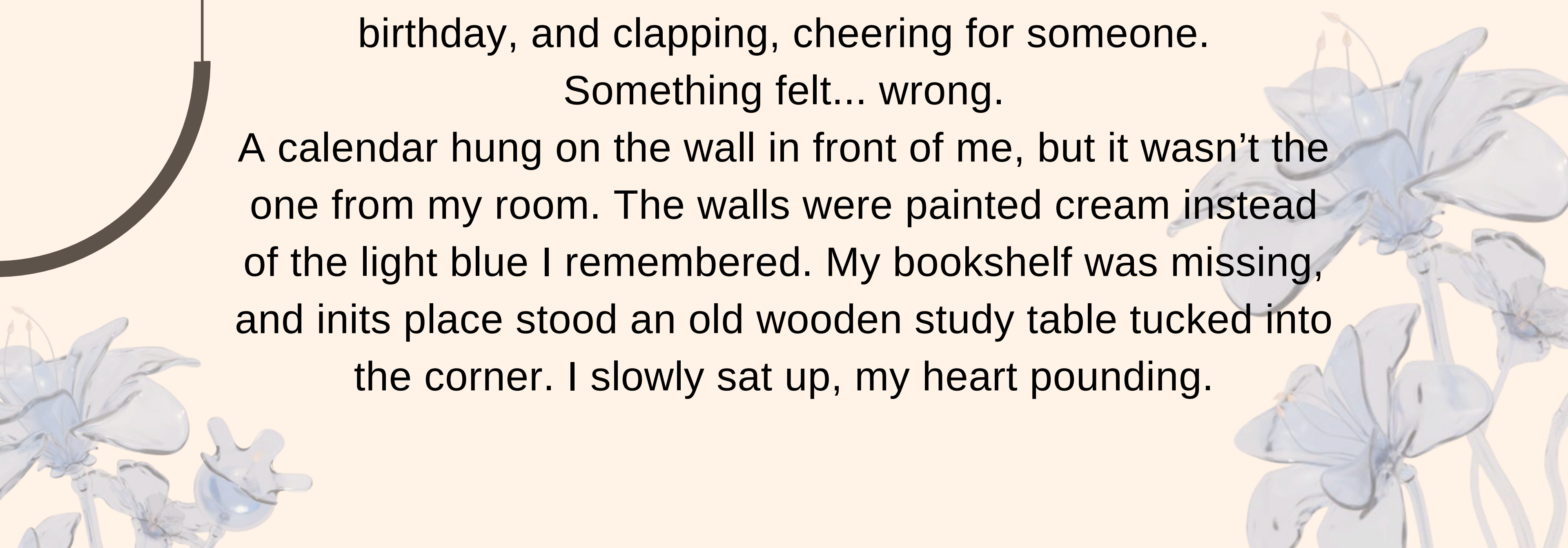
The sharp voice of my biology teacher pulled me back to reality. Everyone in the class turned to look at me. For the first time in my life, I was scolded by a teacher. My cheeks burned with embarrassment, and the rest of the day I couldn't stop replaying the moment in my head. On my way home, two thoughts fought for space in my mind—the teacher's scolding and the time-travel story. When I reached home, I wasn't in the mood to talk to anyone. I quietly ate my lunch, went to my room, and lay down on my bed, hugging my teddy bear. The room was peaceful. Warm rays of sunlight slipped through the tiny gap between the curtains, filling the room with a soft golden glow. A gentle breeze drifted in through the window, carrying the scent of wet earth from outside.

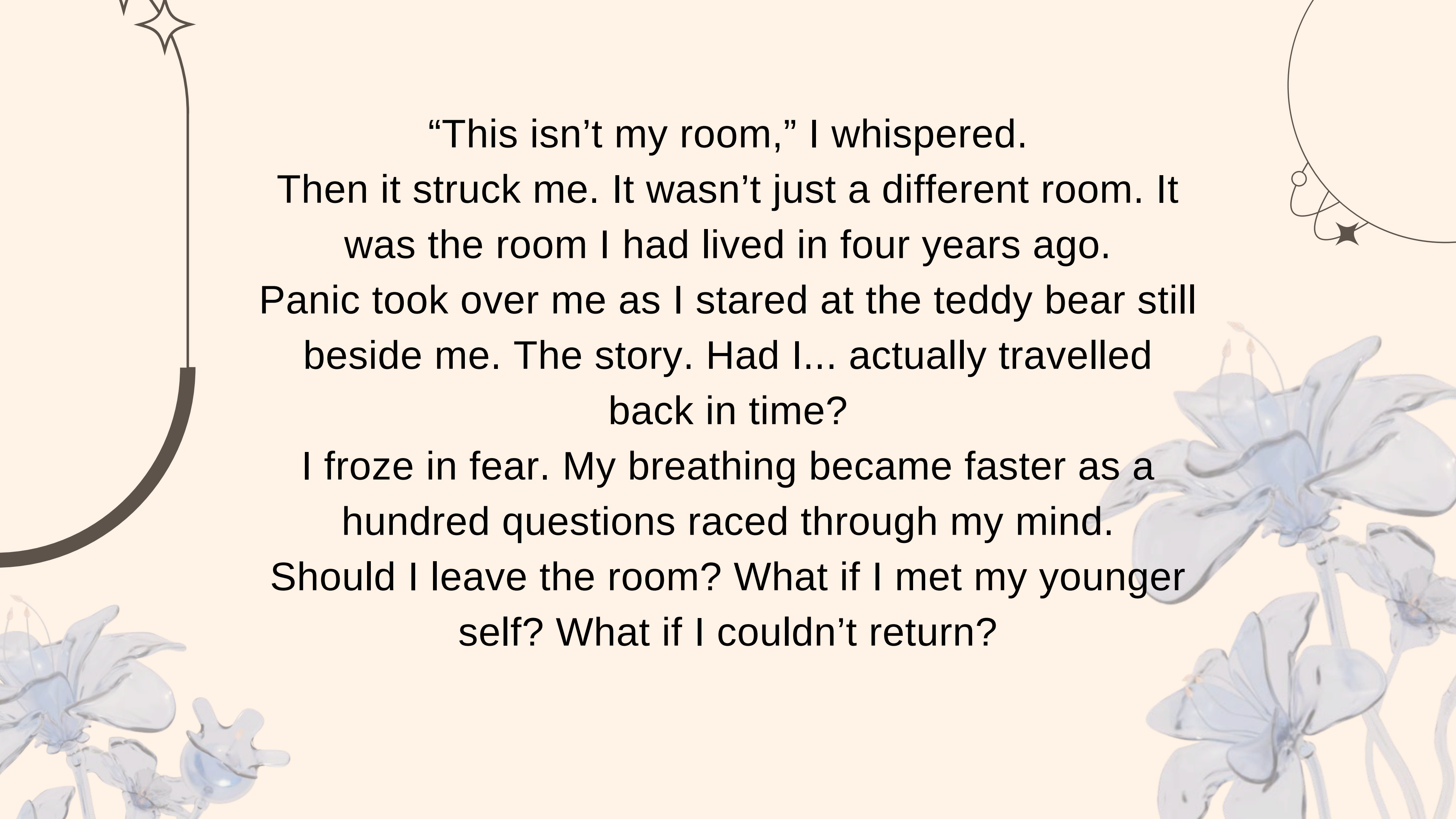


The quiet, cozy atmosphere slowly wrapped around me,
and before I realised it, I had drifted off to sleep.....I
suddenly opened my eyes due to the noises from outside, I
could hear the faded group of voices singing happy
birthday, and clapping, cheering for someone.

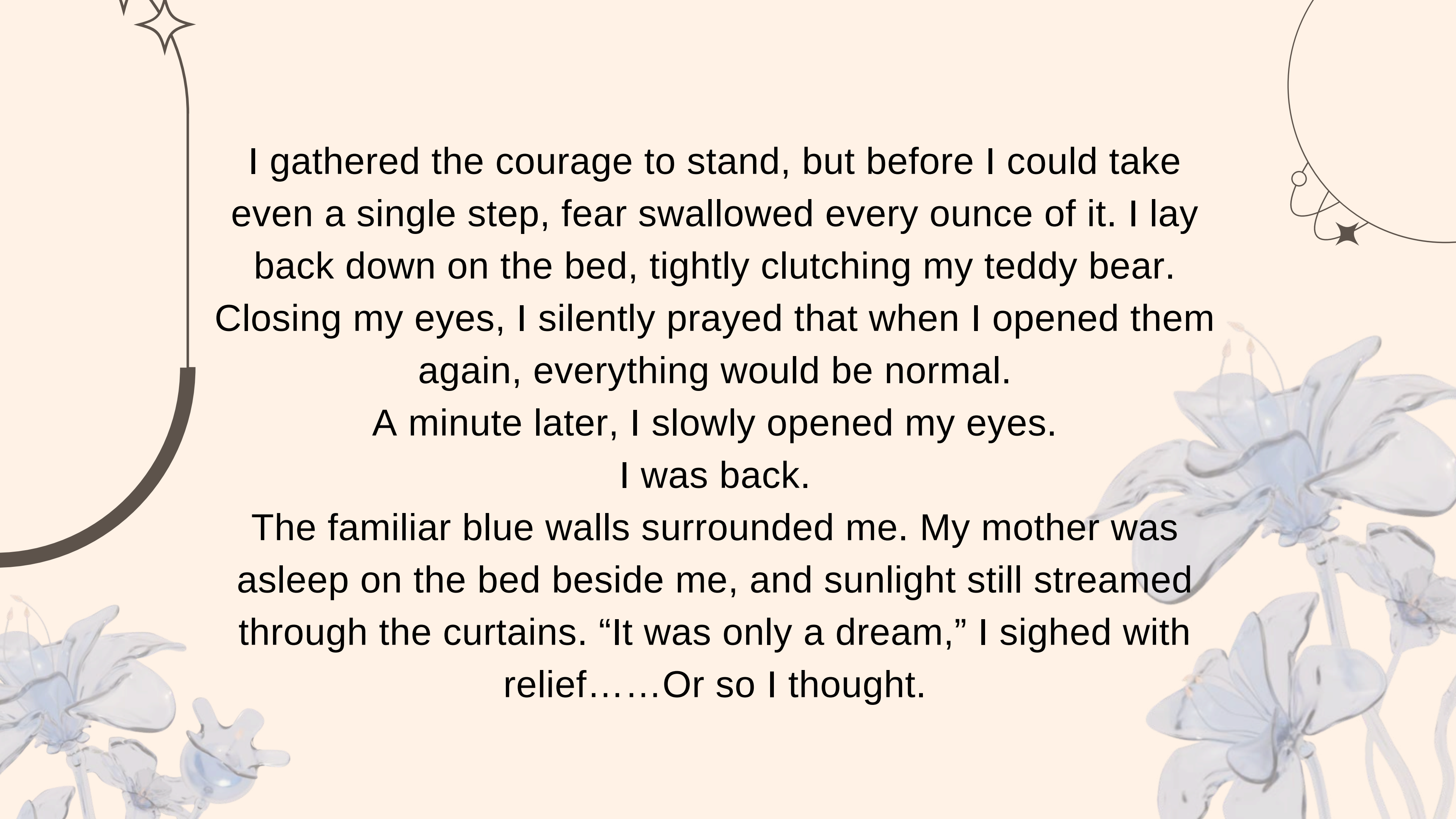
Something felt... wrong.

A calendar hung on the wall in front of me, but it wasn't the
one from my room. The walls were painted cream instead
of the light blue I remembered. My bookshelf was missing,
and in its place stood an old wooden study table tucked into
the corner. I slowly sat up, my heart pounding.





“This isn’t my room,” I whispered.
Then it struck me. It wasn’t just a different room. It
was the room I had lived in four years ago.
Panic took over me as I stared at the teddy bear still
beside me. The story. Had I... actually travelled
back in time?
I froze in fear. My breathing became faster as a
hundred questions raced through my mind.
Should I leave the room? What if I met my younger
self? What if I couldn’t return?

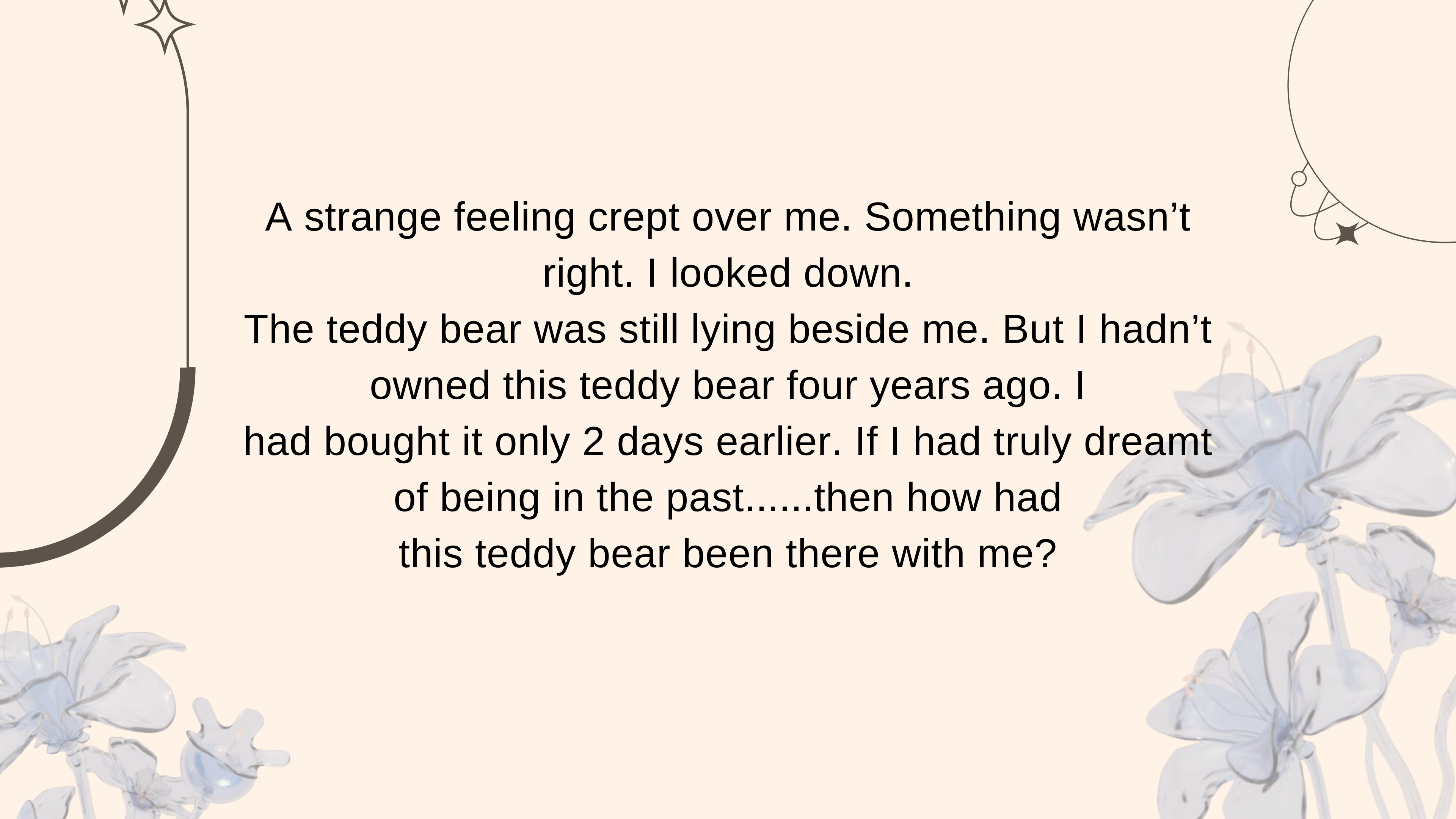


I gathered the courage to stand, but before I could take even a single step, fear swallowed every ounce of it. I lay back down on the bed, tightly clutching my teddy bear. Closing my eyes, I silently prayed that when I opened them again, everything would be normal.

A minute later, I slowly opened my eyes.

I was back.

The familiar blue walls surrounded me. My mother was asleep on the bed beside me, and sunlight still streamed through the curtains. “It was only a dream,” I sighed with relief.....Or so I thought.

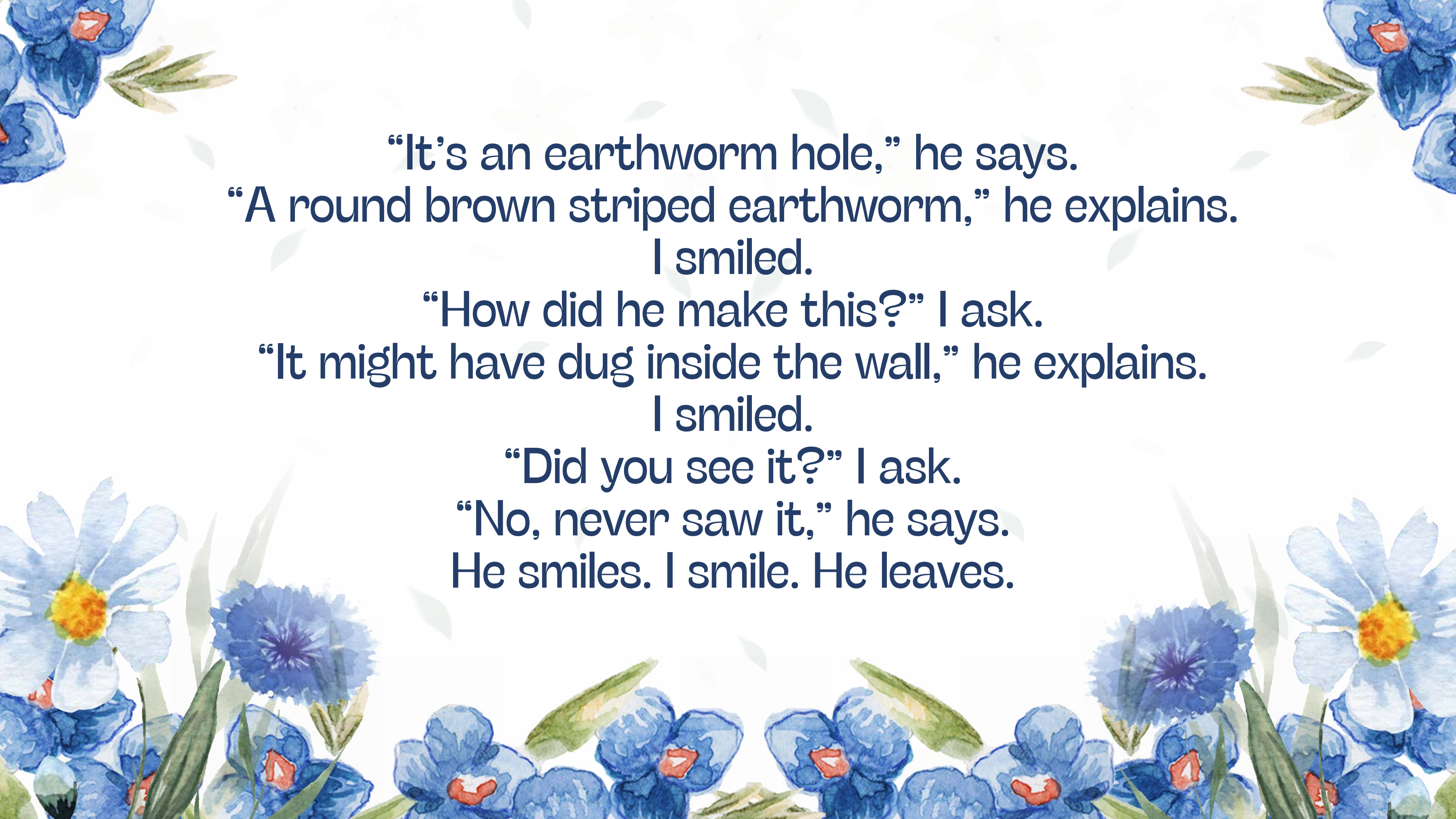


A strange feeling crept over me. Something wasn't
right. I looked down.

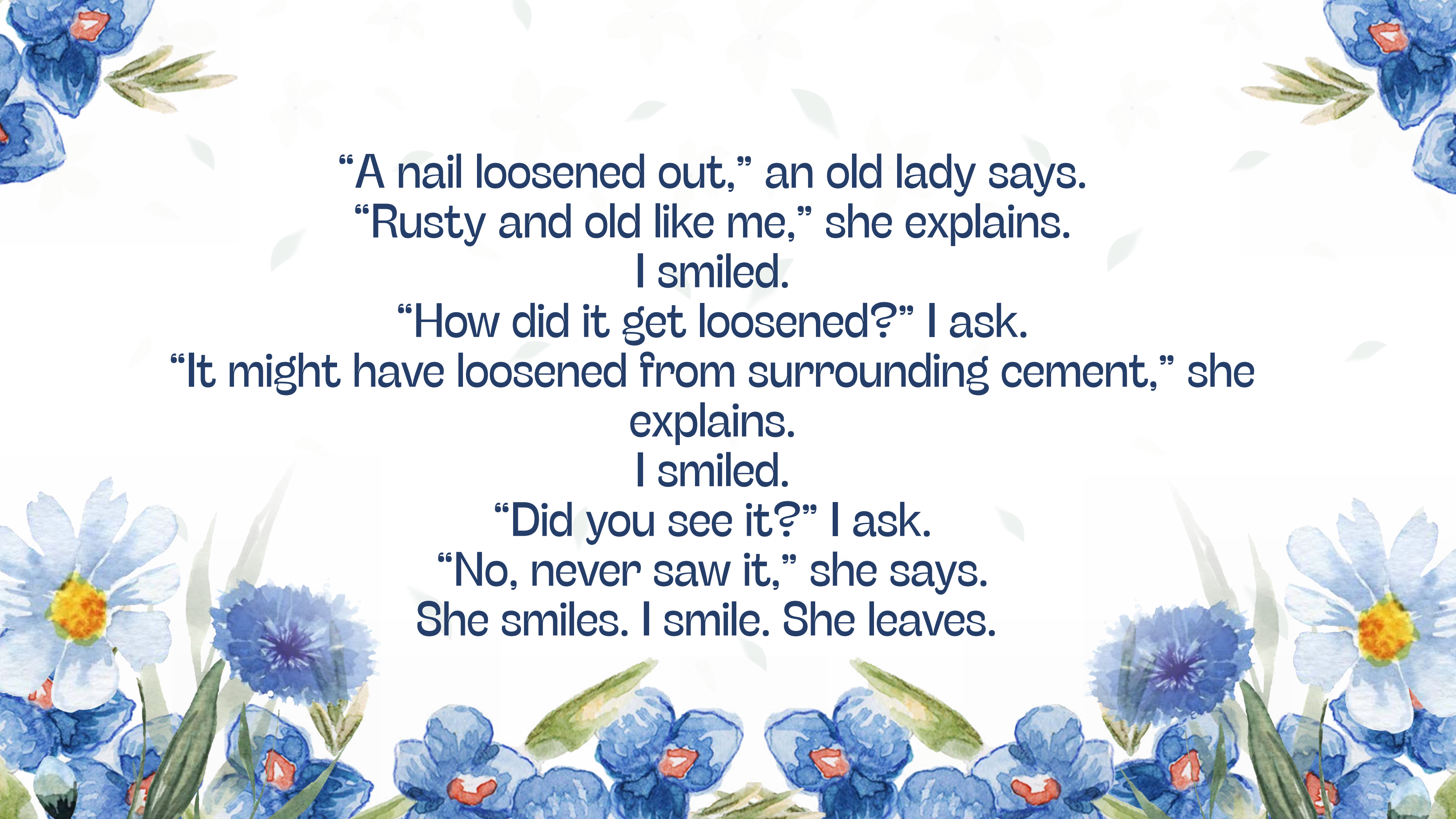
The teddy bear was still lying beside me. But I hadn't
owned this teddy bear four years ago. I
had bought it only 2 days earlier. If I had truly dreamt
of being in the past.....then how had
this teddy bear been there with me?

NO Never
Saw It





“It’s an earthworm hole,” he says.
“A round brown striped earthworm,” he explains.
I smiled.
“How did he make this?” I ask.
“It might have dug inside the wall,” he explains.
I smiled.
“Did you see it?” I ask.
“No, never saw it,” he says.
He smiles. I smile. He leaves.



“A nail loosened out,” an old lady says.

“Rusty and old like me,” she explains.

I smiled.

“How did it get loosened?” I ask.

“It might have loosened from surrounding cement,” she explains.

I smiled.

“Did you see it?” I ask.

“No, never saw it,” she says.

She smiles. I smile. She leaves.



“A bird pecked at the wall,” an officer says.

“A small melodious blue bird,” he explains.

I smiled.

“Why did it peck there?” I ask.

“It might have wanted to find insects,” he explains.

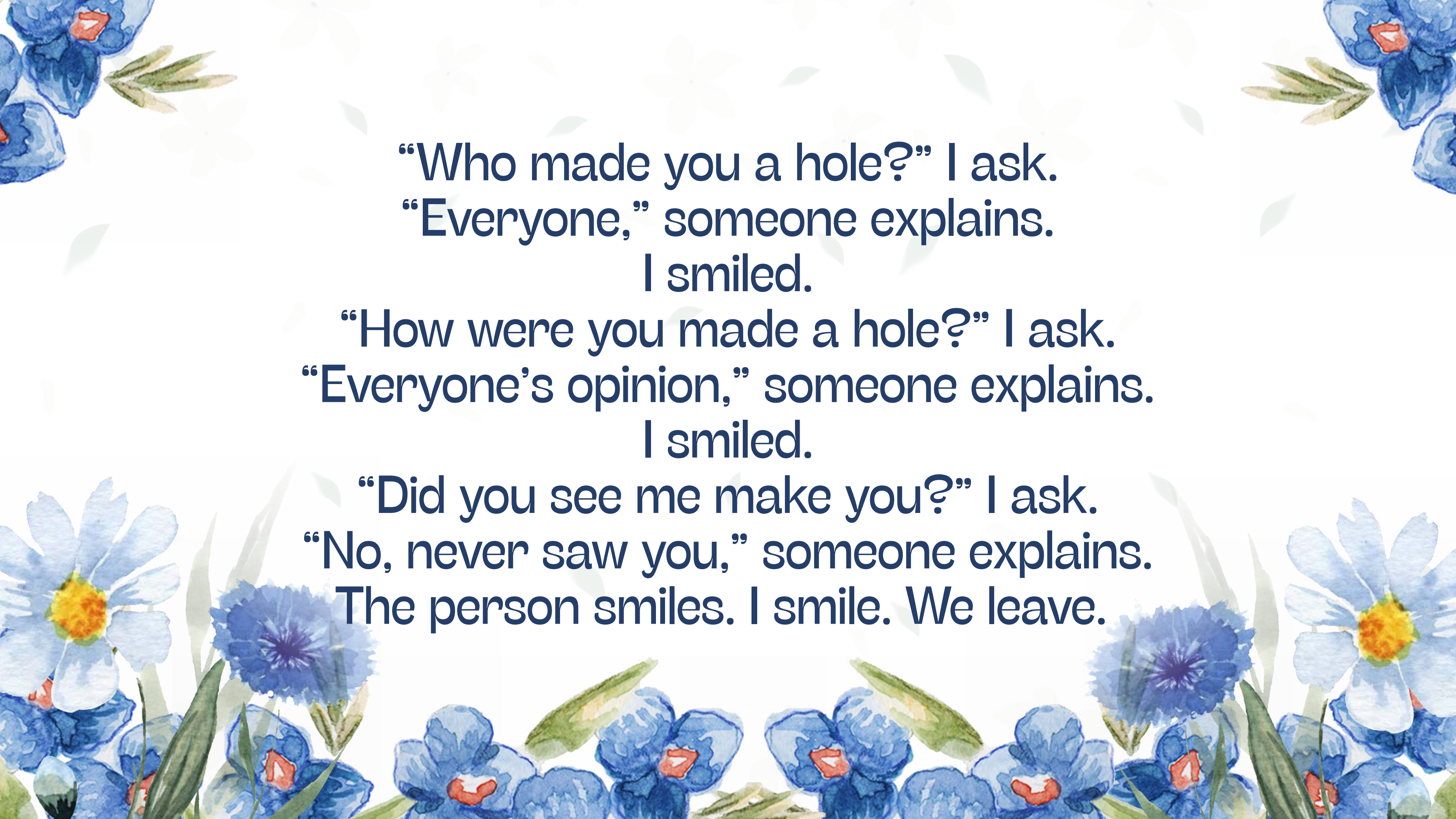
I smiled.

“Did you see it?” I ask.

“No, never saw it,” he says.

He smiles. I smile. He leaves.





“Who made you a hole?” I ask.

“Everyone,” someone explains.

I smiled.

“How were you made a hole?” I ask.

“Everyone’s opinion,” someone explains.

I smiled.

“Did you see me make you?” I ask.

“No, never saw you,” someone explains.

The person smiles. I smile. We leave.

The Green Dream

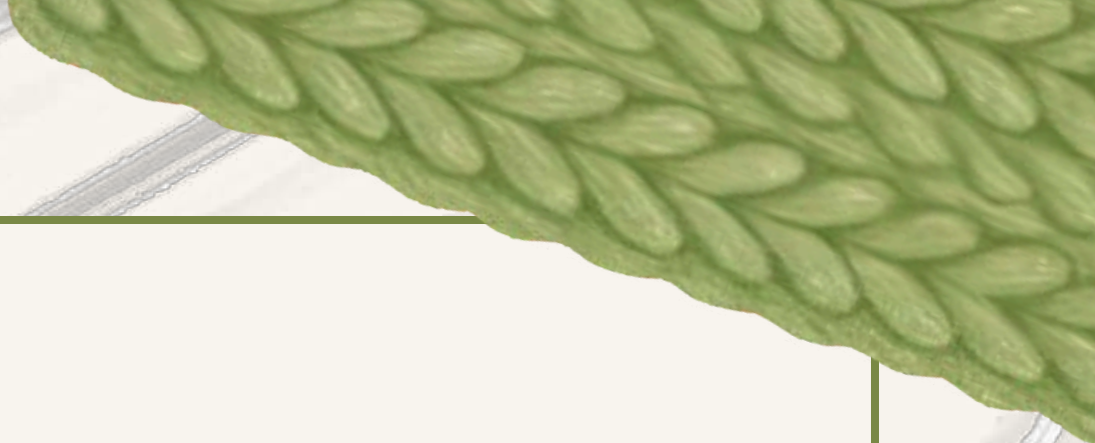
Name:- Shaurya Sheoran

Class:- 7 th H

Roll number :- 42

Admission number:- 2022/0536

Category:- Student



Rohit was born in a small town nestled between the Ganga river and the foothills of the Himalayas. His father owned a modest grocery shop, and his mother taught Hindi at the local school. Life in the town was simple, but Rohit carried within him a restless spark. He often wondered why his town, blessed with rivers, forests, and fertile land, still struggled with pollution and waste. Plastic wrappers floated in the river, smoke from burning garbage filled the air, and discarded materials piled up behind shops



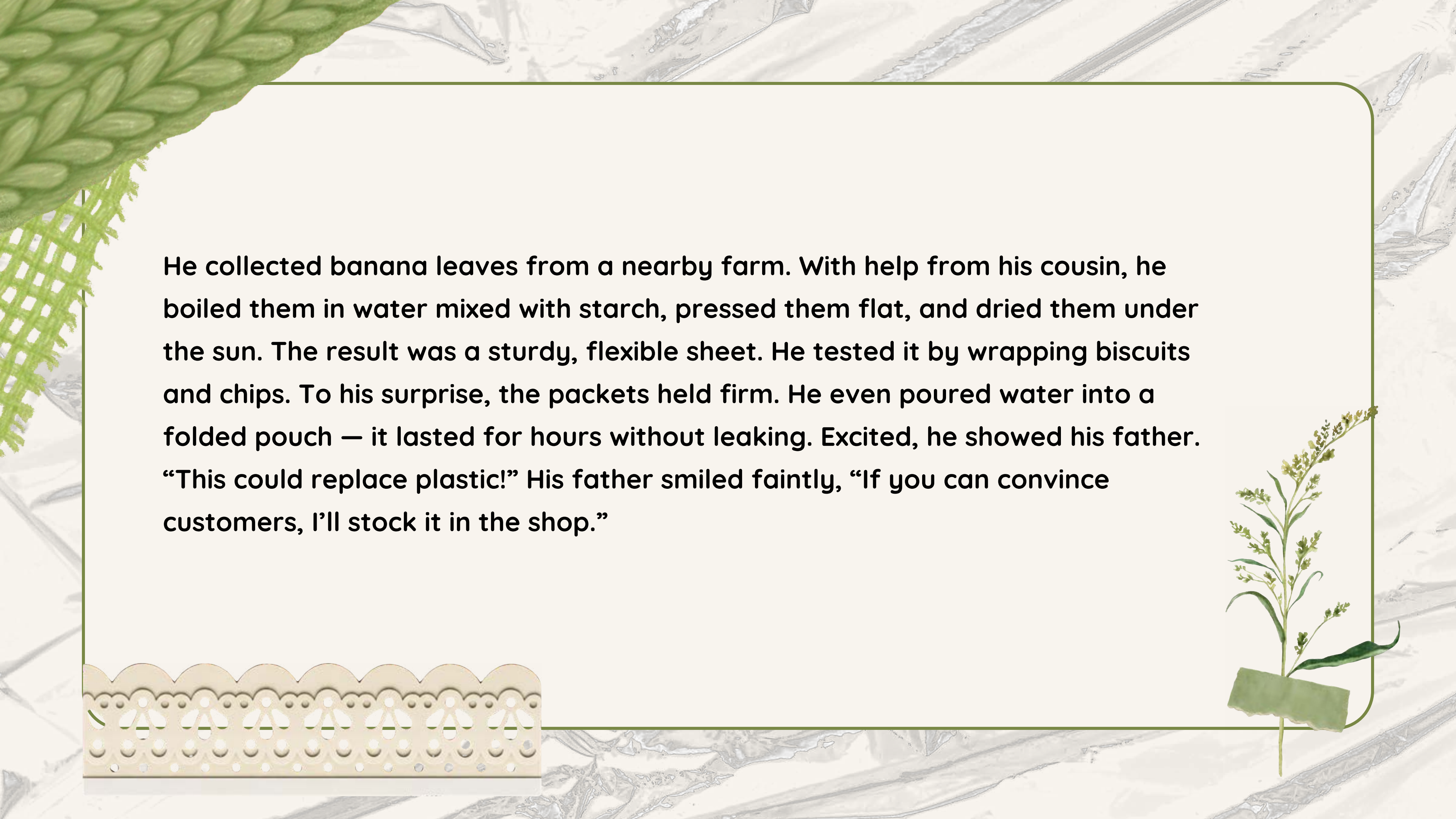
One summer afternoon, while helping his father stack plastic-wrapped goods, he muttered, “Why do we keep selling things that harm the very land we live on?” His father sighed, “Because people want cheap convenience, beta. Change is difficult.” But Rohit wasn’t convinced. He believed change was possible if someone dared to start.

That belief grew stronger during a school science exhibition. He noticed how many projects focused on solar panels, water filters, and recycling. Yet most were prototypes that never left the classroom. He thought, What if I create something people can actually use every day? That night, he sketched an idea: eco-friendly packaging made from banana leaves and natural starch. His town had banana plantations nearby, and farmers often discarded leaves after harvest. Why not turn waste into a product? He named his dream company GreenWrap.

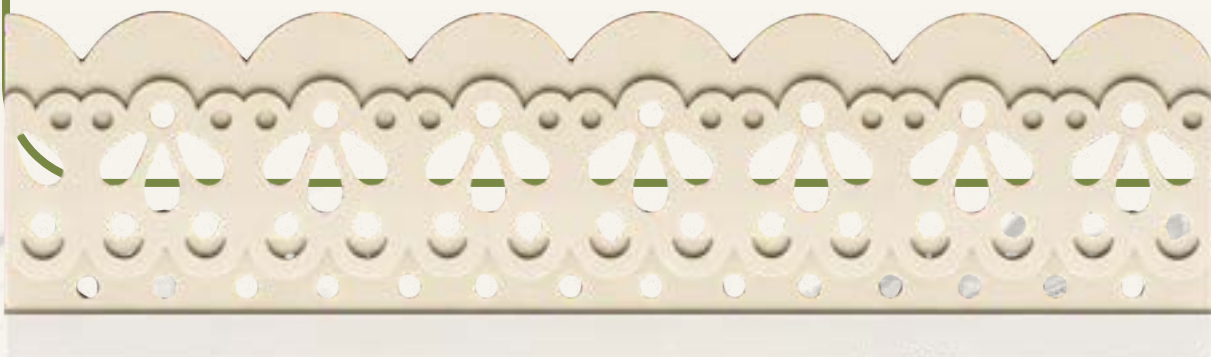




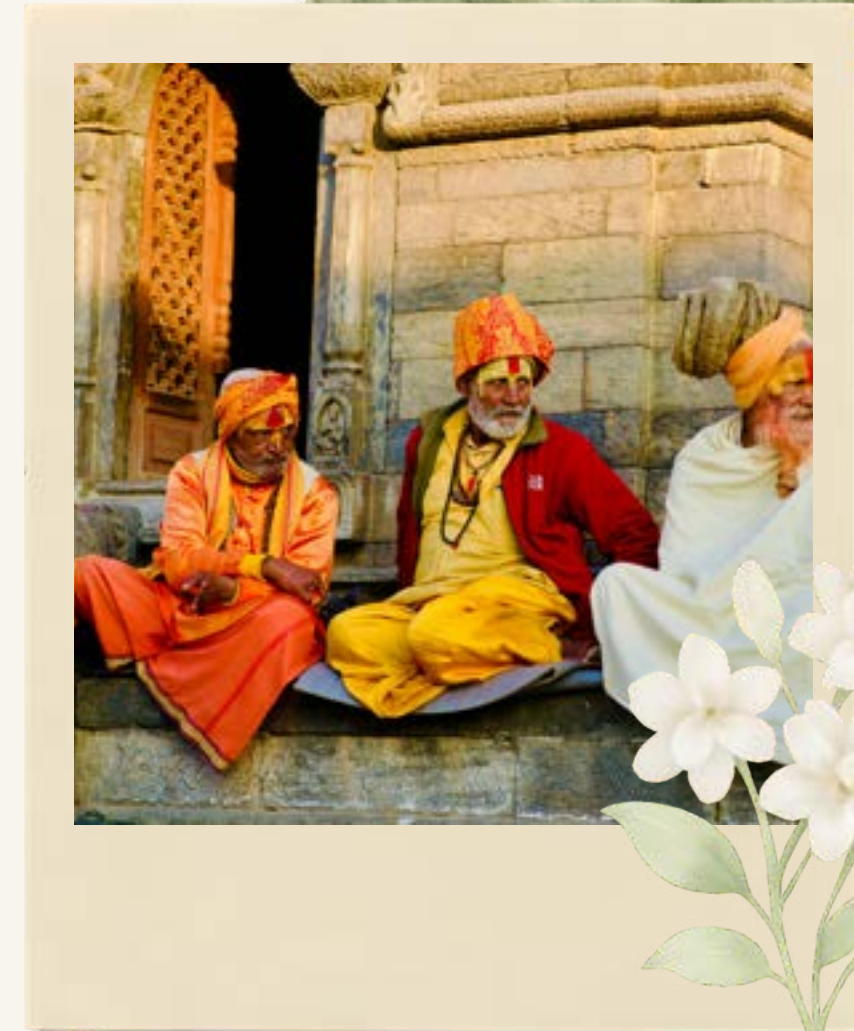
When Rohit shared his idea with classmates, some laughed. “You think people will buy leaf packets instead of plastic? Impossible!” Others shrugged, “Sounds good, but too hard.” Even his science teacher warned, “Innovation is admirable, but you’ll need persistence. Most ideas fail before they succeed.” Rohit felt discouraged, but his mother reminded him of a Hindi proverb: “Boond boond se sagar bharta hai” — drop by drop, an ocean is formed. He decided to start small.



He collected banana leaves from a nearby farm. With help from his cousin, he boiled them in water mixed with starch, pressed them flat, and dried them under the sun. The result was a sturdy, flexible sheet. He tested it by wrapping biscuits and chips. To his surprise, the packets held firm. He even poured water into a folded pouch — it lasted for hours without leaking. Excited, he showed his father. “This could replace plastic!” His father smiled faintly, “If you can convince customers, I’ll stock it in the shop.”



The first week was rough. Customers frowned at the green packets. “Too strange,” one said. Another complained, “It smells like leaves.” Sales dropped, and his father grew worried. “Maybe this isn’t practical.” But Rohit refused to quit. He visited the local temple, where prasad was often wrapped in plastic. He offered free GreenWrap packets. The priests loved them — natural, biodegradable, and respectful to tradition. Soon, devotees carried eco-friendly prasad packets home. Word spread. Encouraged, Rohit expanded production. He recruited friends to help. GreenWrap became a community effort.

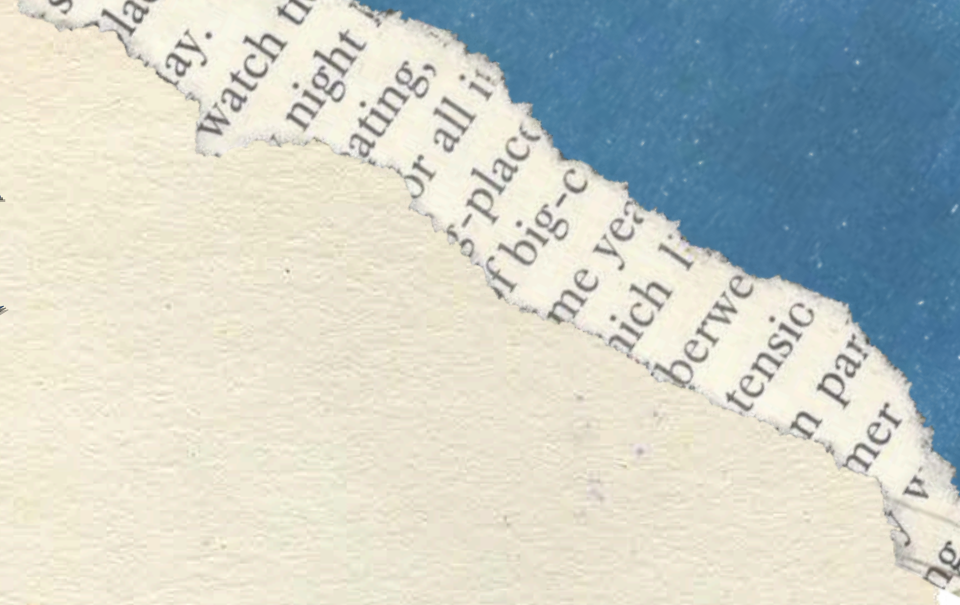




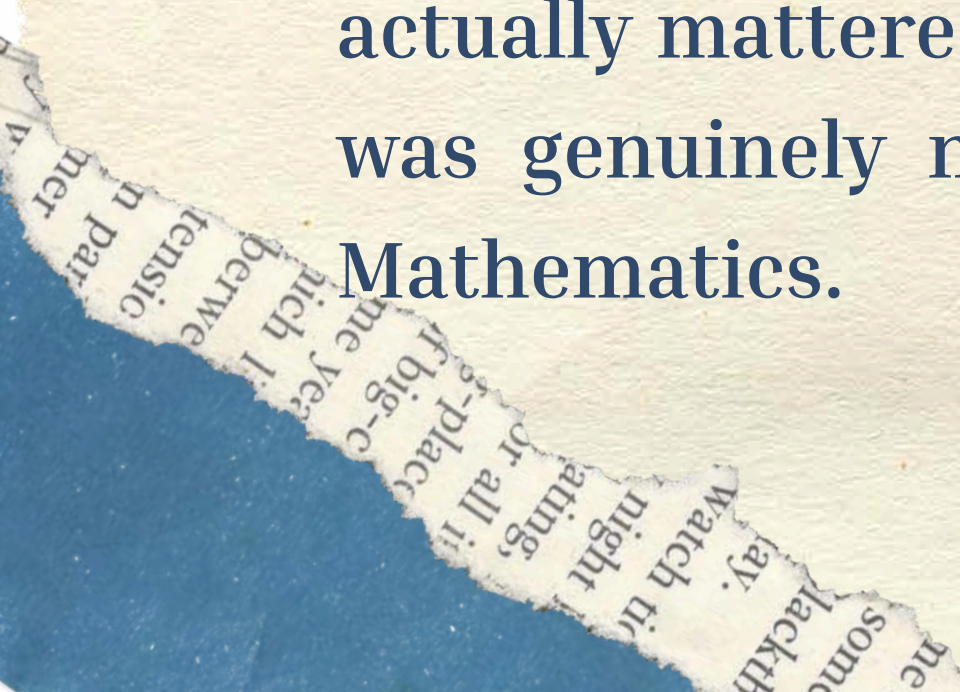
At the Inter-School Environment Festival – EcoBrand Challenge, he presented GreenWrap with the tagline “Wrap the World in Green.” He explained that it was not just packaging but a promise to future generations. The judges awarded GreenWrap the Best Innovation Prize. Soon schools, temples, NGOs, farmers, and businesses adopted it. Standing by the river one evening, Rohit reflected, “It all began with one idea, one packet, one step.” His journey proved that inspiration doesn’t come from perfection—it comes from persistence.



The Answer Sheet



I was never the topper of my class. I was the kind of student who studied just enough to pass and stayed away from trouble. I never imagined that I would ever be noticed for anything special in school. But this year felt different. My final exams actually mattered, and for the first time, I was genuinely nervous. Especially about Mathematics.



No matter how hard I tried, Maths never seemed to make sense to me. Formulas got mixed up, steps became confusing, and during tests, my mind would suddenly go completely blank. It was the one subject that always made me feel helpless.





The day of the exam arrived much faster than I had expected.

I sat quietly in the classroom, took a deep breath, and looked at the question paper. Within a few minutes, I knew I was in serious trouble. Most of the questions looked unfamiliar, and I had no idea where to begin.

My hands felt cold, my heart was beating faster than usual, and my mind refused to think clearly. Around me, everyone was writing confidently, turning pages without hesitation. The soft sound of pens moving across paper filled the silent classroom. I looked down at my almost blank answer sheet and felt completely stuck. That was when I noticed something strange. On the last page of my answer sheet, there were faint pencil marks.





At first, I thought they were just random printing marks or rough work left by mistake. But when I looked more carefully, I realized they were actual mathematical steps—clear, proper steps that solved one of the questions. I froze. I blinked and looked again. The steps matched the question perfectly.

Curious and slightly frightened, I turned to the next question. Once again, there it was—light writing, almost invisible, but clear enough to show the method. It didn't feel real. For a moment, I simply stared at the page. A thousand thoughts rushed through my mind. Then, slowly, I began following those faint steps.





One by one, I solved the questions using those mysterious hints. It felt as if someone had already sat in that room before me and quietly left behind the answers. By the end of the exam, every page of my answer sheet was filled. For the first time in my life, I walked out of a Mathematics exam feeling relieved instead of worried.

When the results were announced, I could hardly believe my eyes. I had scored the highest marks in Mathematics even higher than the class topper. Everyone was surprised. My teachers praised me with proud smiles. My classmates surrounded me, asking how I had managed to improve so much. But I had no answer.





Because deep inside, I knew the truth. A few days later, I went back to school to collect some documents. The classrooms were almost empty, and the corridors felt unusually quiet. I don't know why, but my feet slowly carried me back to the examination hall.

Everything looked exactly the same. The same wooden desks. The same green board. The same silent room. But something drew me towards the last row. I sat there quietly, thinking about the exam, when my eyes fell on something carved into the desk. The carving was very light, almost erased with time.





It was a name. And below it, a single sentence: "I knew all the answers... but I never got to write them."

A strange heaviness settled in my chest. Later, I asked one of the school staff members if they knew anything about it. He became silent for a moment before telling me that a student from the previous year had fallen seriously ill during the board exams. He had been known as one of the brightest students in school, especially in Mathematics. But he never got the chance to complete his exams.

He passed away before the results were announced. I didn't say anything after that. I simply walked home in silence. That night, I couldn't stop thinking about the answer sheet... the faint pencil marks... and the marks that I knew I had not truly earned





The next morning, I made a decision. I went to my Mathematics teacher and told her everything. At first, she didn't believe me. But I kept insisting. In the end, my paper was rechecked, and my marks were reduced. I was no longer the topper. But strangely, I didn't feel disappointed. Because for the very first time, those marks truly felt like mine.

STUDENT'S NAME : LAVYA KUSHWAHA

CLASS & SECTION : IX-E

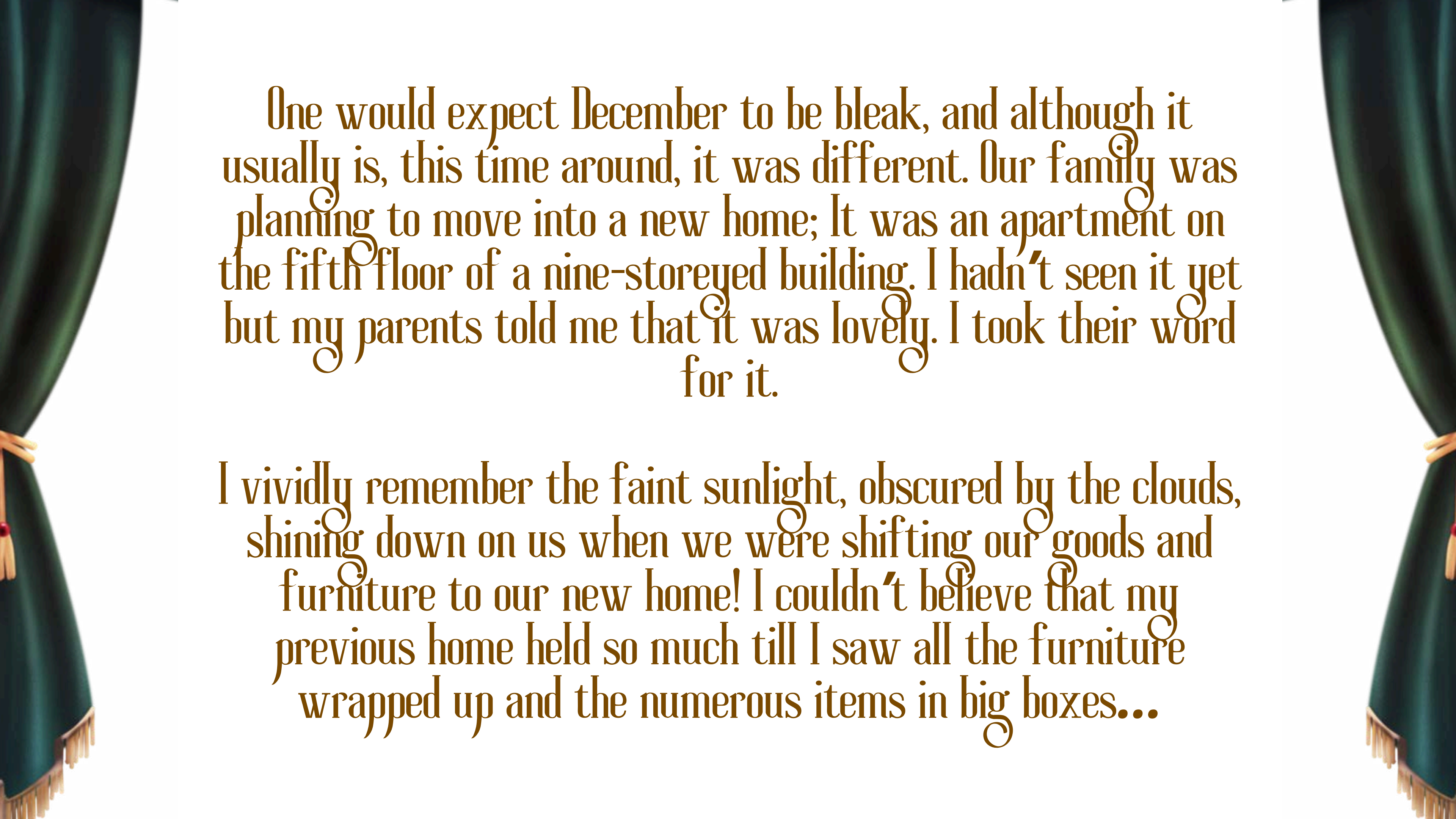
ADMISSION NUMBER : 2016/0143



TIME FLIES BY

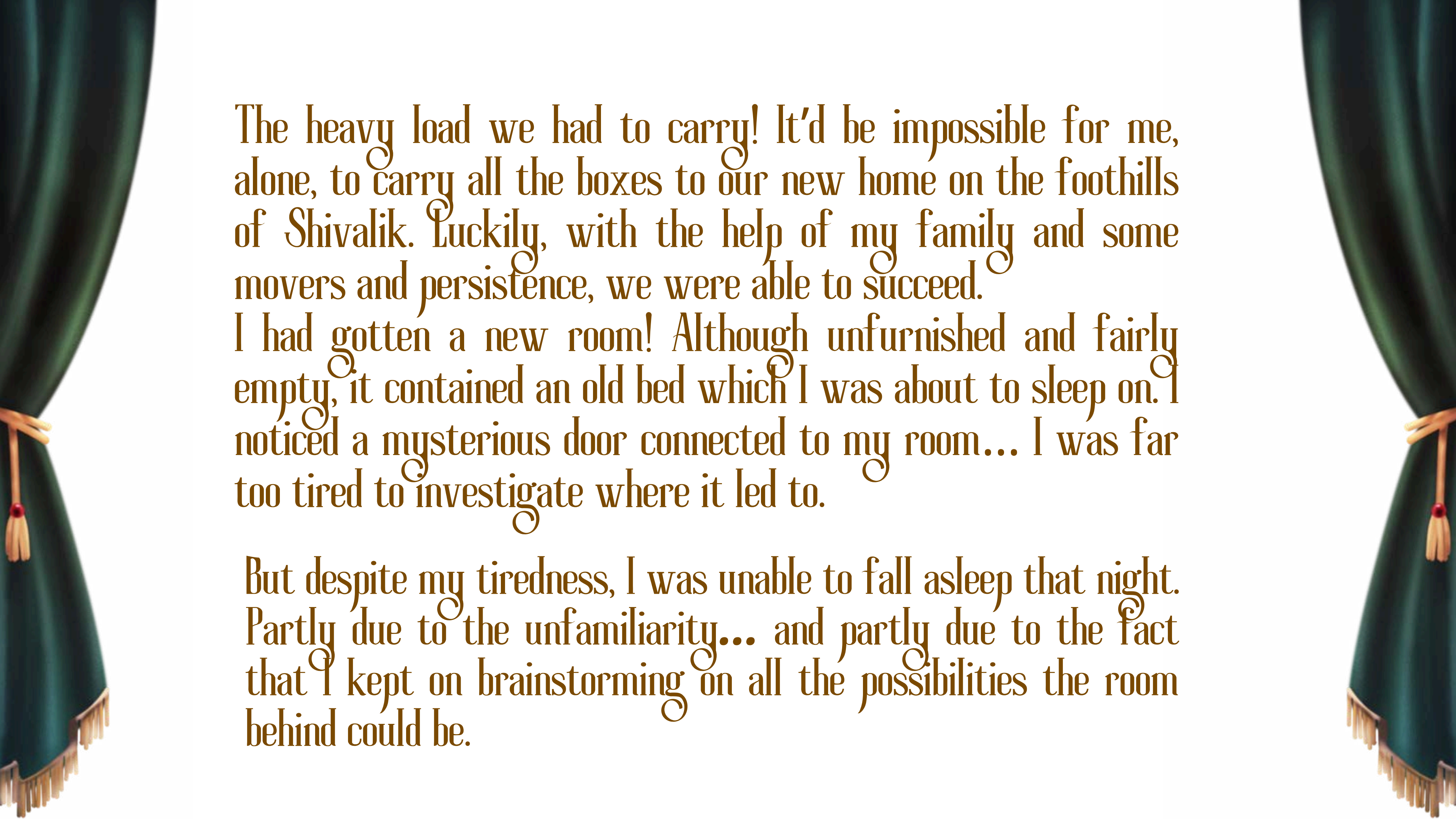
STUDENT'S NAME: Amreen Quamar
CLASS, SECTION: XI – K
ADMISSION NUMBER: 20180388





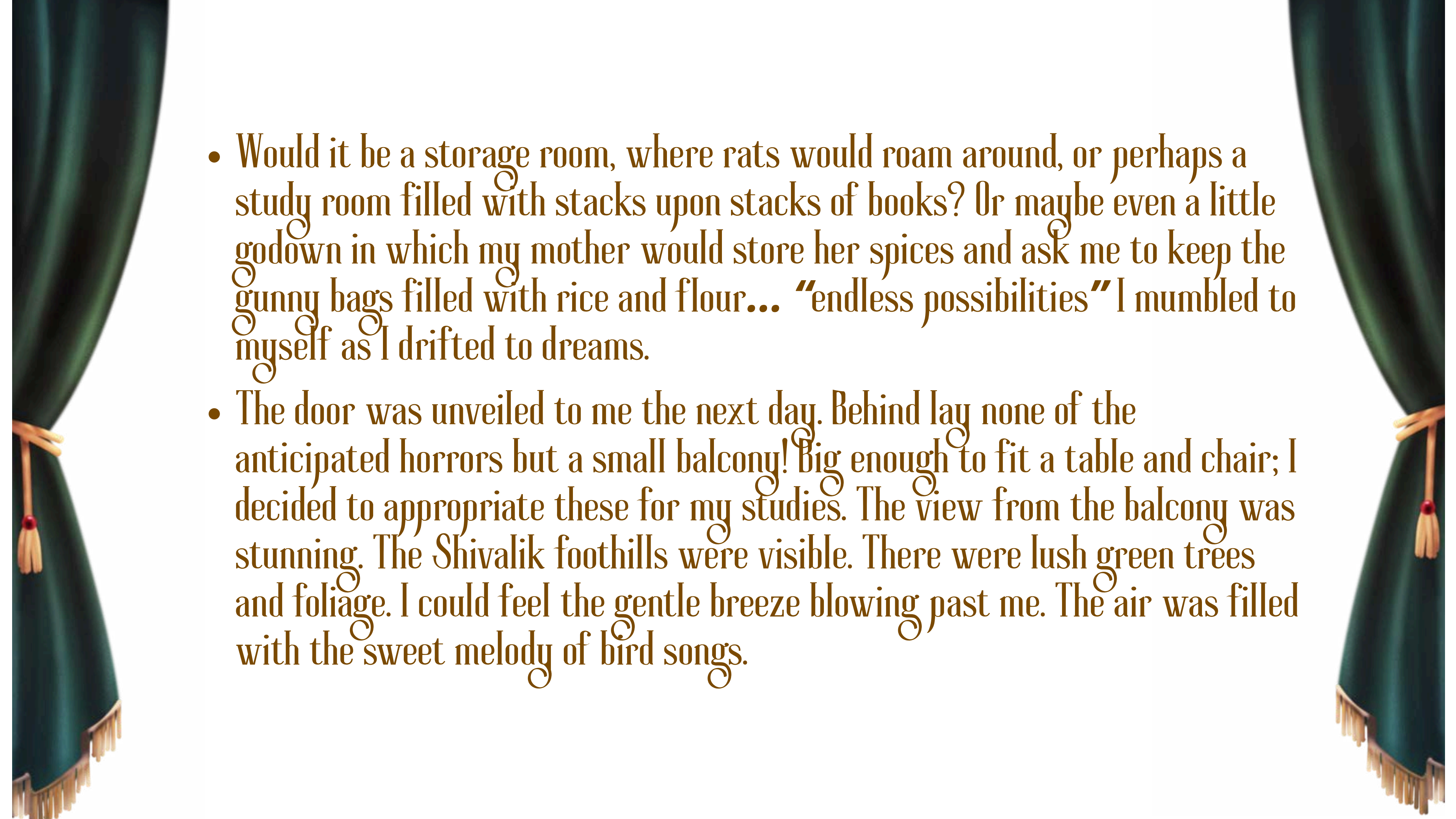
One would expect December to be bleak, and although it usually is, this time around, it was different. Our family was planning to move into a new home; It was an apartment on the fifth floor of a nine-storeyed building. I hadn't seen it yet but my parents told me that it was lovely. I took their word for it.

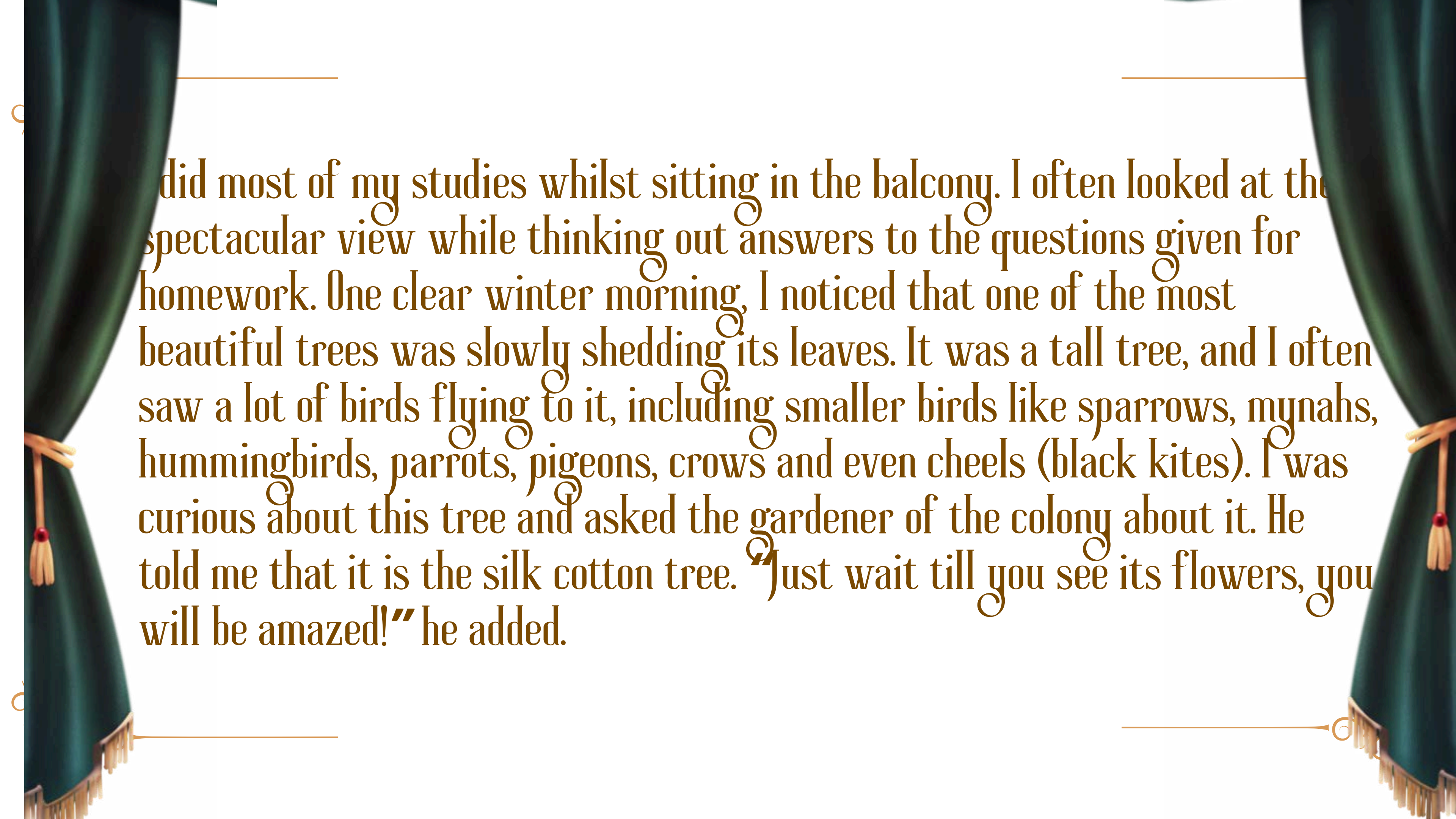
I vividly remember the faint sunlight, obscured by the clouds, shining down on us when we were shifting our goods and furniture to our new home! I couldn't believe that my previous home held so much till I saw all the furniture wrapped up and the numerous items in big boxes...



The heavy load we had to carry! It'd be impossible for me, alone, to carry all the boxes to our new home on the foothills of Shivalik. Luckily, with the help of my family and some movers and persistence, we were able to succeed. I had gotten a new room! Although unfurnished and fairly empty, it contained an old bed which I was about to sleep on. I noticed a mysterious door connected to my room... I was far too tired to investigate where it led to.

But despite my tiredness, I was unable to fall asleep that night. Partly due to the unfamiliarity... and partly due to the fact that I kept on brainstorming on all the possibilities the room behind could be.

- 
- Would it be a storage room, where rats would roam around, or perhaps a study room filled with stacks upon stacks of books? Or maybe even a little godown in which my mother would store her spices and ask me to keep the gunny bags filled with rice and flour... “endless possibilities” I mumbled to myself as I drifted to dreams.
 - The door was unveiled to me the next day. Behind lay none of the anticipated horrors but a small balcony! Big enough to fit a table and chair; I decided to appropriate these for my studies. The view from the balcony was stunning. The Shivalik foothills were visible. There were lush green trees and foliage. I could feel the gentle breeze blowing past me. The air was filled with the sweet melody of bird songs.



I did most of my studies whilst sitting in the balcony. I often looked at the spectacular view while thinking out answers to the questions given for homework. One clear winter morning, I noticed that one of the most beautiful trees was slowly shedding its leaves. It was a tall tree, and I often saw a lot of birds flying to it, including smaller birds like sparrows, mynahs, hummingbirds, parrots, pigeons, crows and even cheels (black kites). I was curious about this tree and asked the gardener of the colony about it. He told me that it is the silk cotton tree. "Just wait till you see its flowers, you will be amazed!" he added.

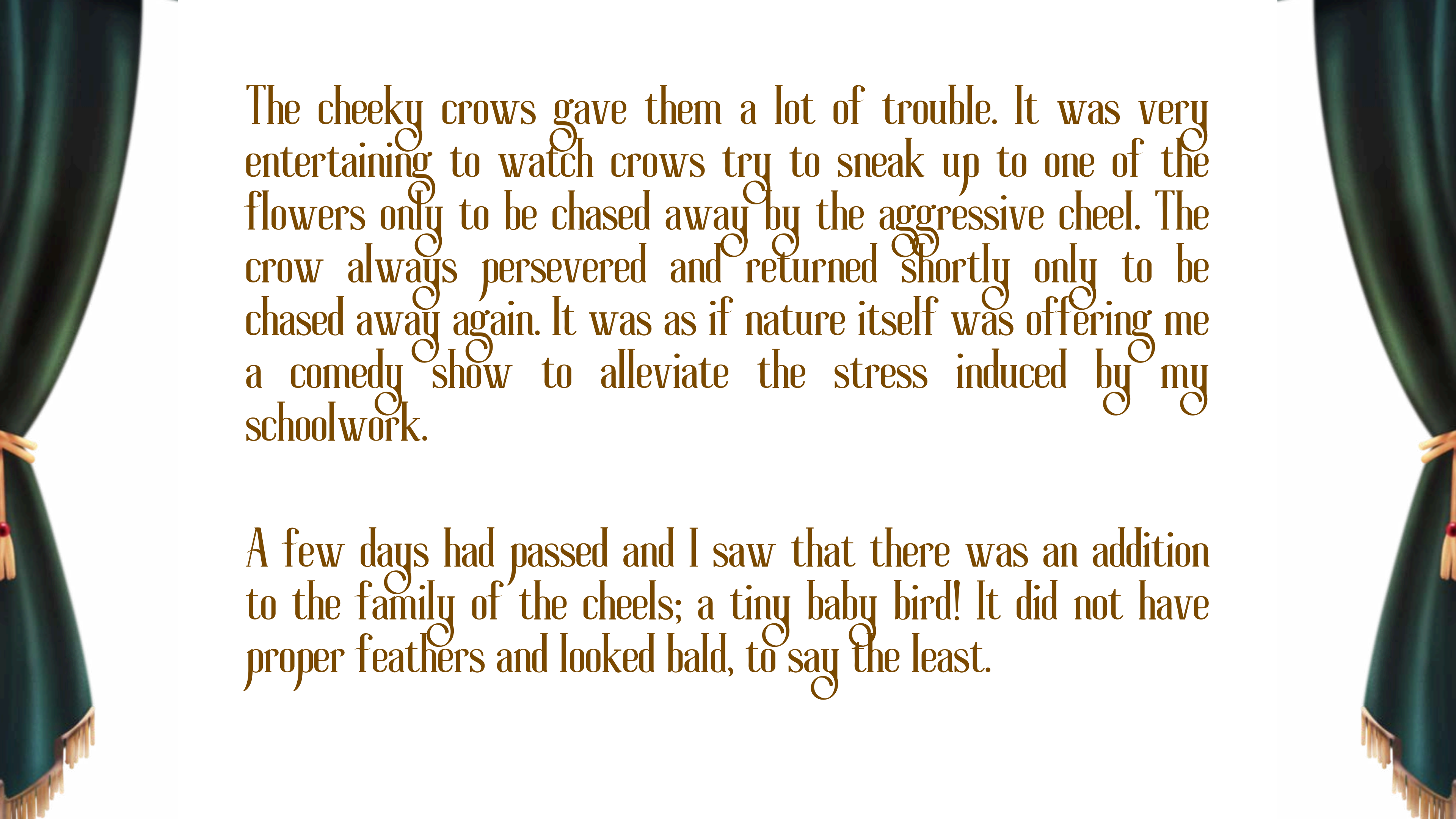


Gradually, the tree shed all its leaves, how glum it looked now! Without its leaves, I could see all the branches, bare and reaching out to the sky; I was surprised to see a huge nest on one of the higher branches!

I continued observing the nest closely. My patience was rewarded when I noticed that a cheel (black kite) flew to the nest and sat on what I assumed to be her eggs. The cheel parents never left the nest alone for a long time.

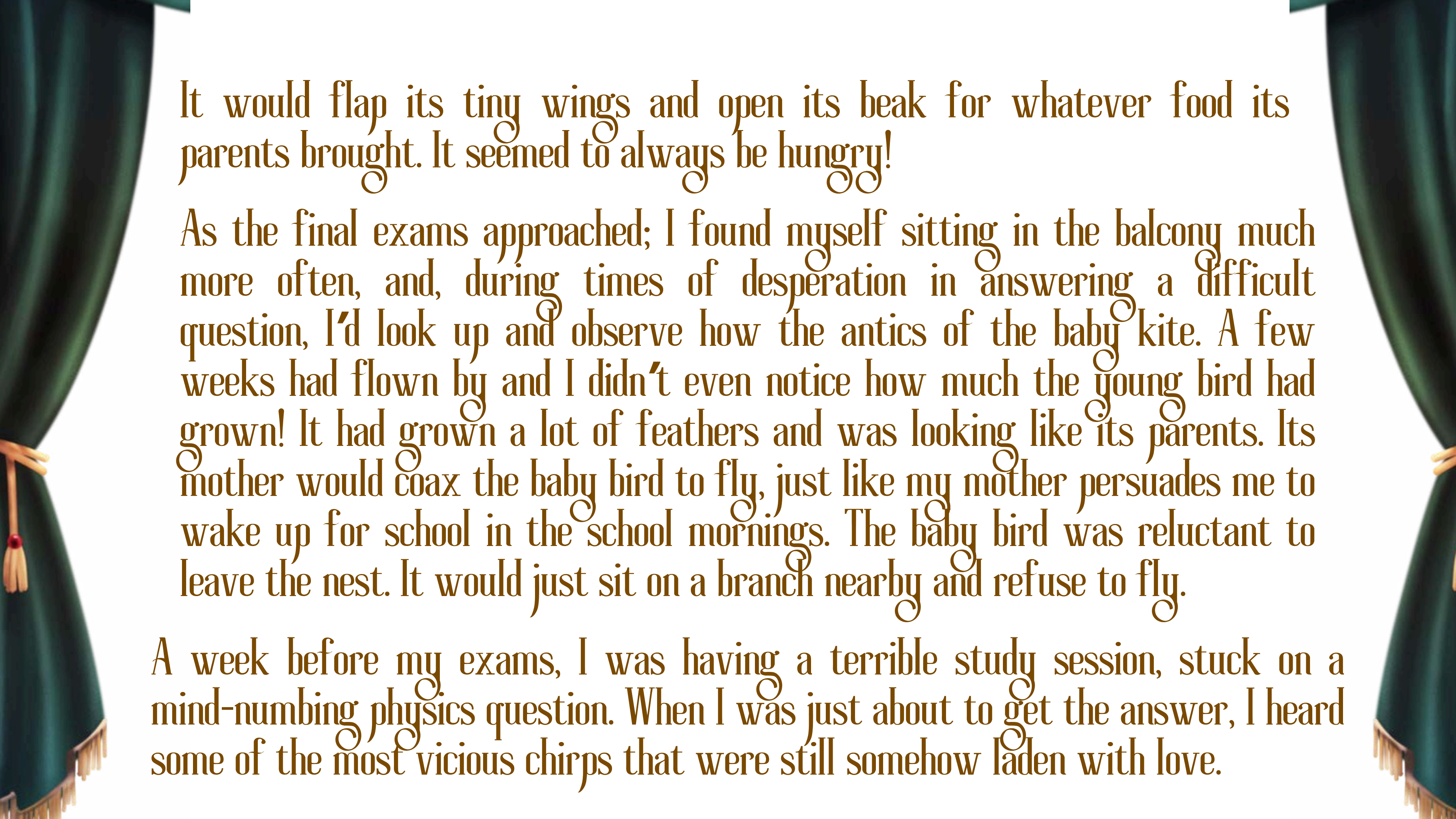
Meanwhile, huge red flowers had bloomed in the silk cotton tree. They were beautiful! It was mesmerizing to see just red flowers without any leaves on the huge tree. A lot of birds wanted to eat from the flowers. However, the cheel parents would scare off any predators that dared to disturb the tranquil ambience near the nest.





The cheeky crows gave them a lot of trouble. It was very entertaining to watch crows try to sneak up to one of the flowers only to be chased away by the aggressive cheel. The crow always persevered and returned shortly only to be chased away again. It was as if nature itself was offering me a comedy show to alleviate the stress induced by my schoolwork.

A few days had passed and I saw that there was an addition to the family of the cheels; a tiny baby bird! It did not have proper feathers and looked bald, to say the least.



It would flap its tiny wings and open its beak for whatever food its parents brought. It seemed to always be hungry!

As the final exams approached; I found myself sitting in the balcony much more often, and, during times of desperation in answering a difficult question, I'd look up and observe how the antics of the baby kite. A few weeks had flown by and I didn't even notice how much the young bird had grown! It had grown a lot of feathers and was looking like its parents. Its mother would coax the baby bird to fly, just like my mother persuades me to wake up for school in the school mornings. The baby bird was reluctant to leave the nest. It would just sit on a branch nearby and refuse to fly.

A week before my exams, I was having a terrible study session, stuck on a mind-numbing physics question. When I was just about to get the answer, I heard some of the most vicious chirps that were still somehow laden with love.

I looked up to see none other than the mother bird relentlessly scolding the young bird. Upon further inspection, I noticed that the young bird slowly tip-toed towards the end of the branch, but would immediately retreat before being able to take a leap of faith.

I felt a mixture of sadness and amusement, perhaps sadness isn't the right word but rather introspection. Earlier, just looking at a tricky physics question was enough to make me stray away from it, but now I could face it and if I was lucky, solve it correctly in one try! I felt amused, not just because of how funny the bird looked, but because I knew that it would inevitably be able to fly if not soar. This encouraged me to tackle my problems with determination, and gave me inspiration to try my best in my upcoming exams

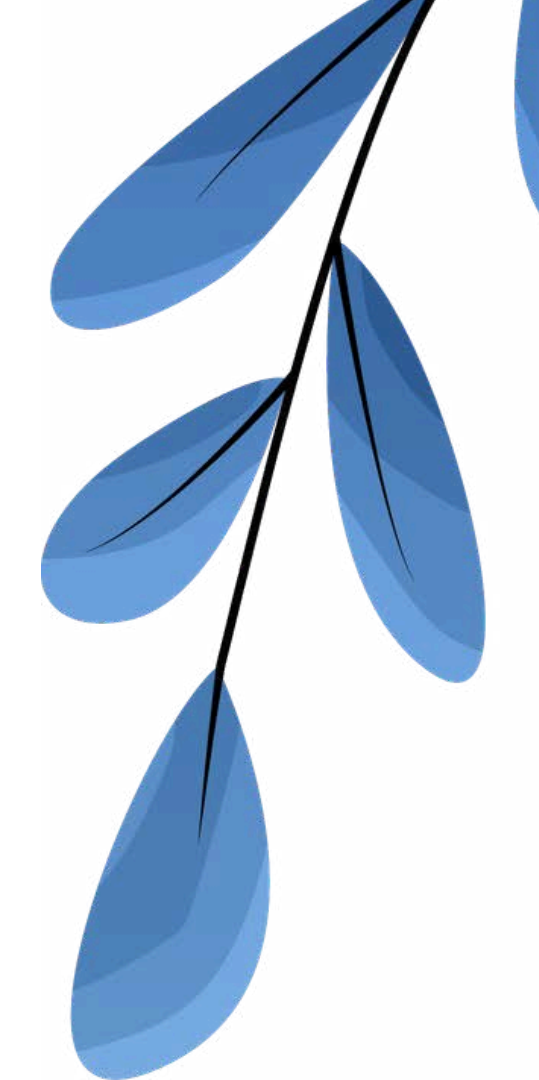


Eventually, after hours of hearing its parents nag, relentless practicing and presumably a lot of snacks as rewards, it began to fly short distances. After many more days of toiling and persisting, the bird had achieved the ability to soar high in the sky! Simply like how it was meant to be

Often times, unlocking one's potential takes strenuous effort, plentiful time and resources. But perseverance will never fail, even if you don't end up soaring, at least you'll be able to fly freely, with confidence and newfound ambition to keep on trying to attain greater heights.



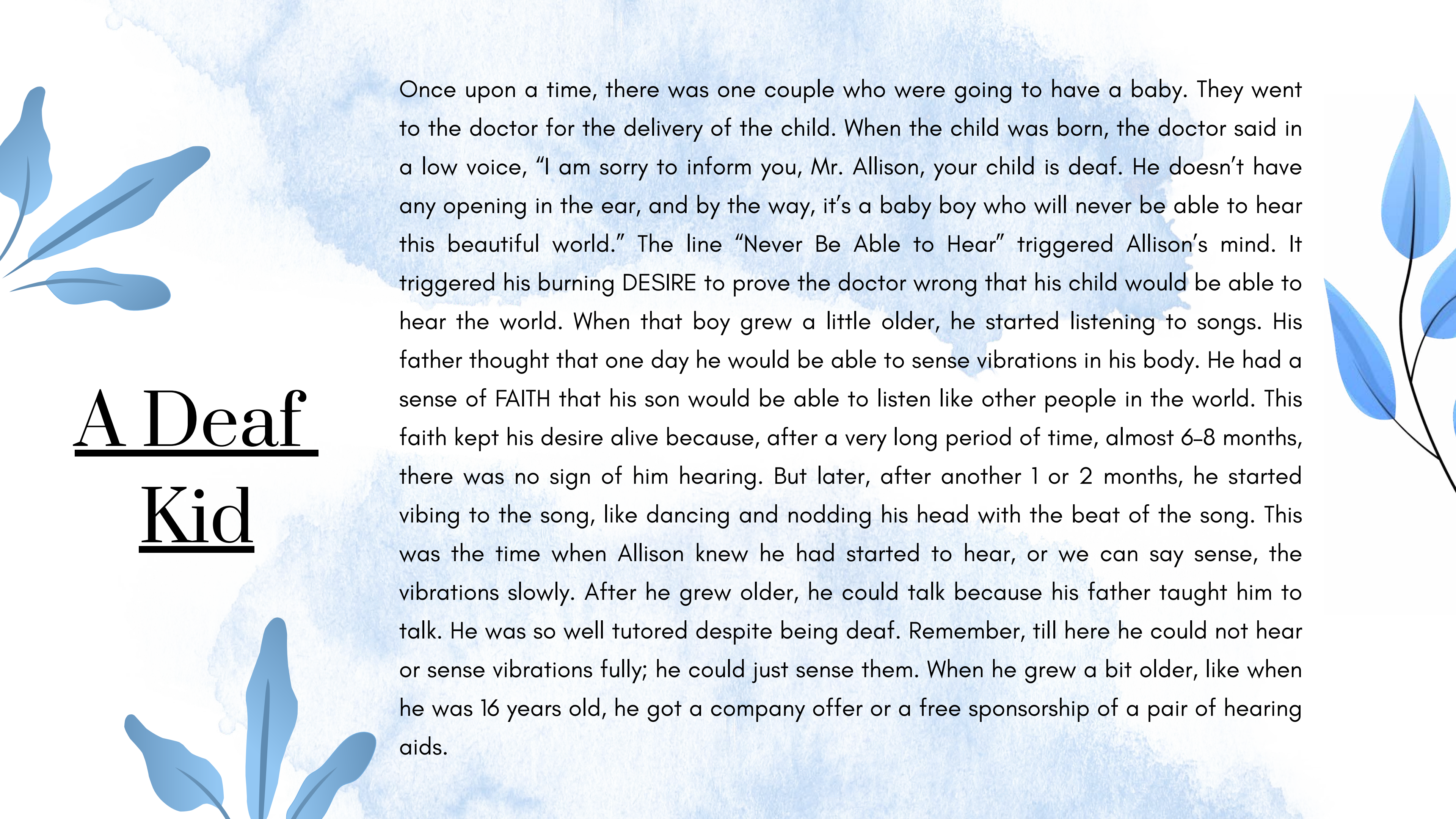
Soon enough, the results of my final exams were published; my parents were proud of the exponential improvement in my marks. As I cleared up the table in my balcony, I noticed the family of cheels flying away. This marked a new beginning for the birds and as for me, I had advanced to a new class. I bade the birds adieu and wished them luck on the new adventures they would go on. I was humbled and awestruck to have witnessed this mesmerizing event. I was deeply grateful to mother nature for giving me the opportunity to see the growth of an egg to a fledgling to a full fledged majestic cheel. I also received the privilege to introspect and extract pivotal lessons that I will carry with me throughout my life. I can only hope that I witness many more such happenings.



DESIRE BACKED

BY FAITH

By: Shivansh Singh



A Deaf Kid

Once upon a time, there was one couple who were going to have a baby. They went to the doctor for the delivery of the child. When the child was born, the doctor said in a low voice, "I am sorry to inform you, Mr. Allison, your child is deaf. He doesn't have any opening in the ear, and by the way, it's a baby boy who will never be able to hear this beautiful world." The line "Never Be Able to Hear" triggered Allison's mind. It triggered his burning DESIRE to prove the doctor wrong that his child would be able to hear the world. When that boy grew a little older, he started listening to songs. His father thought that one day he would be able to sense vibrations in his body. He had a sense of FAITH that his son would be able to listen like other people in the world. This faith kept his desire alive because, after a very long period of time, almost 6-8 months, there was no sign of him hearing. But later, after another 1 or 2 months, he started vibing to the song, like dancing and nodding his head with the beat of the song. This was the time when Allison knew he had started to hear, or we can say sense, the vibrations slowly. After he grew older, he could talk because his father taught him to talk. He was so well tutored despite being deaf. Remember, till here he could not hear or sense vibrations fully; he could just sense them. When he grew a bit older, like when he was 16 years old, he got a company offer or a free sponsorship of a pair of hearing aids.



When he wore them, he got so happy to HEAR everything—his parents' voices, nature's voice, etc. He was way too happy. After that, his father never let him use them again. After some more time, he thought, why shouldn't we make a startup and teach deaf people how to hear and talk? He started doing research on that idea. After 1 year, he started his company of teaching deaf people how to hear and talk. In the first lecture, he also invited his father. His father thought that it would be a waste of time, but at the end, he went. He saw there his son teaching with the same technique as his father had used when he taught his son. So, with this one story, we can see that DESIRE BACKED BY FAITH can help a person accomplish anything he or she wishes. There are many examples and stories in the world that can teach us this lesson, but this is one of the best stories that can teach us this lesson.

Let's hear another story that is associated with this topic and lesson.

A Seemed to be Impossible Dream

In a small village, there lived a boy named Darsh. His greatest desire was to become a pilot, but everyone mocked him and said, "Pilots come from wealthy families. Forget your dream about becoming a pilot; instead, lend a hand in ploughing the field." After hearing this, his morale completely broke down because he knew that his family was poor and could not afford his pilot studies. But then his grandfather came and gave him a seed and said, "This seed also wants to grow, but it cannot see its future yet it grows because it has faith. If the seed can believe in itself, then why can't you?" His grandfather's words motivated him, and he started working hard for it, taking scholarships, giving exams that felt endless, borrowing books instead of buying them because of his financial problems, and working hard. Years later, Darsh stepped into the cockpit, not as a passenger but as a pilot. As he looked down at the village, he smiled.

Every person has dreams. Some dream of becoming a doctor, some want to represent their country in sports, while others wish to become artists, entrepreneurs, or scientists. However, having a dream alone is not enough. A desire becomes meaningful only when it is supported by faith—the belief that the dream can become a reality.

Faith is not simply hoping that everything will work out. It is the confidence that encourages us to keep moving forward even when the results are not visible. It gives us the courage to continue after failures, to learn from mistakes, and to trust that our efforts will eventually bear fruit.

Many people give up because they lose faith before they reach success. Those who succeed are often the ones who continue working even when circumstances are difficult. Desire provides the direction, but faith provides the strength to stay on the journey.

What Does “Desire Backed by Faith” Really Mean?



Why Faith Is More Powerful Than Luck?

People often say that successful individuals are lucky. While luck may create opportunities, it cannot replace determination. History is filled with examples of people who achieved greatness because they believed in themselves long before anyone else believed in them. Faith changes the way a person thinks and acts. Instead of focusing on problems, a person with faith looks for solutions. Instead of seeing failure as the end, they treat it as another lesson. This mindset allows ordinary people to achieve extraordinary things. Even when progress seems slow, faith reminds us that every small effort counts. Success is rarely instant. It is usually the result of many small steps taken consistently over time.



Desire without action remains only a wish. Faith without action becomes empty belief. True success comes when all three work together.

Imagine a student who dreams of scoring the highest marks in an examination. If the student only wishes for success but never studies, the dream will never come true. On the other hand, if the student studies every day with confidence and determination, the chances of success increase greatly.

This principle applies to every area of life. Whether someone wants to become an athlete, a musician, or an entrepreneur, success depends on the combination of desire, faith, and consistent effort.

The Relationship Between Desire, Faith, and Action?

How Students Can Apply This Principle?

Students experience many situations where desire backed by faith can make a difference. Preparing for examinations, participating in competitions, learning new skills, or overcoming fear of public speaking all require confidence and persistence.

When students believe in their abilities, they become more willing to work hard and improve themselves. They understand that making mistakes is a natural part of learning. Instead of comparing themselves with others, they focus on becoming better than they were yesterday.

This positive attitude not only improves academic performance but also builds character, resilience, and self-confidence.

Lessons We Can Learn

The idea of desire backed by faith teaches several valuable lessons:

- Believe in your dreams even when others doubt them.
- Accept failure as a stepping stone, not as the end.
- Work consistently instead of waiting for perfect opportunities.
- Stay patient because meaningful success takes time.
- Never underestimate the power of self-belief and perseverance.

THE RUBY AND REDS

NAME: SARASA SAINI
CLASS :X K
ADMISSION.NO: 2015/0371

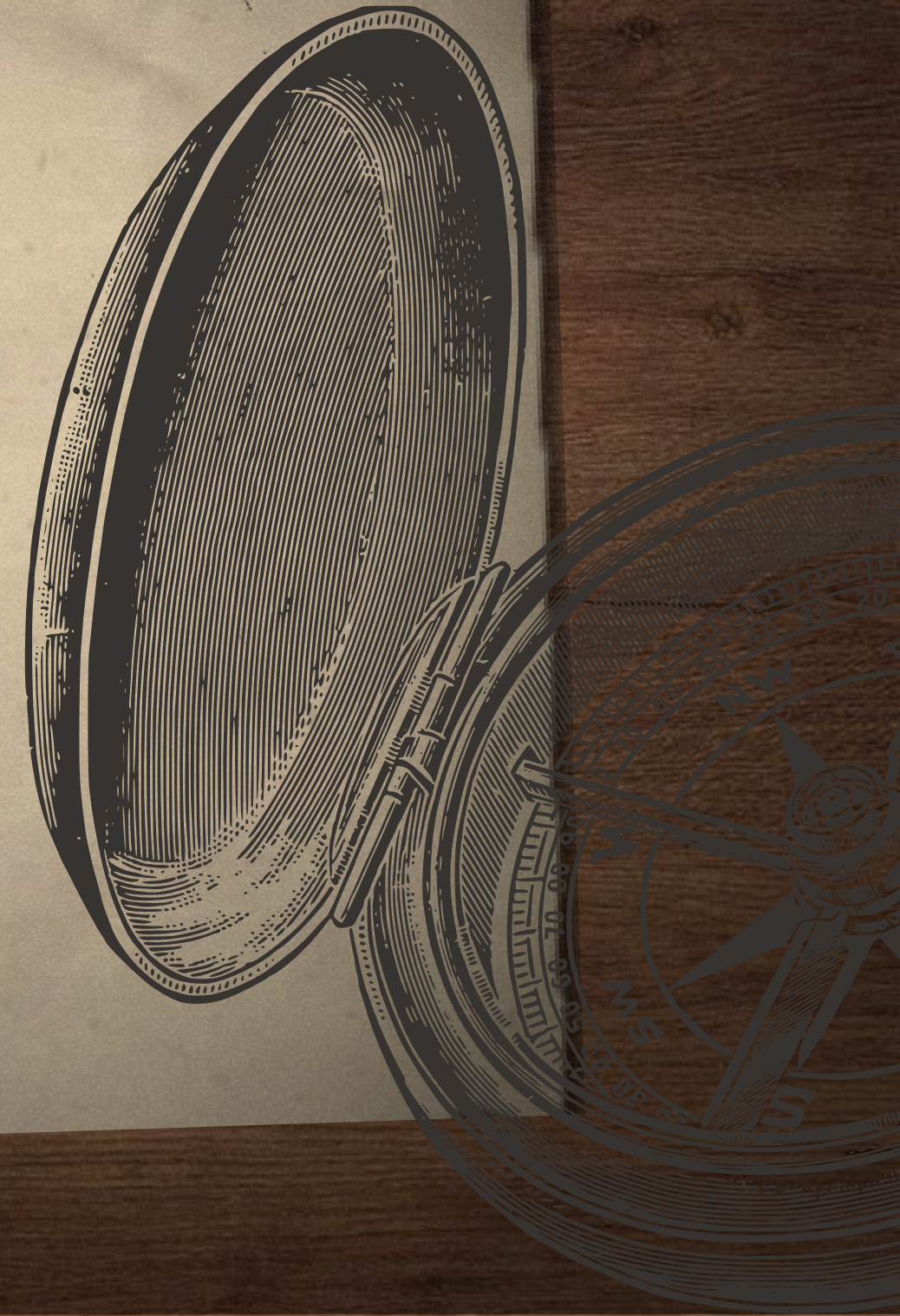


“Want another roti, Anuj?” his own mouth filled with chewed up food.

“no, no I am good sir, I’ll eat the sabji with the spoon”

“Aaah....here, have it, I’ll take another one” Then Mr. Hemant proceeded to give half a roti to Anuj from his own plate. Anuj expressed a warm closed lip smile in gratitude.

In the family of Mr. Thakur (Hemant) lived his wife, Mrs. Thakur, his 9-year-old son Siddharth and his secretary, Anuj Datta.



THEY LIVED IN GUJRAT IN GANDHI NAGAR IN A TWO-STORY HOUSE THAT WAS RICHLY DECORATED WITH FLOWERS AND BIRD NESTS. A BEAUTIFUL HOUSE IT WAS. AND SINCE IT WAS NAVARATRI, THE HOUSE LOOKED EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL WITH SOME DIYAS AND LIGHTING.

HOWEVER, JUST A DAY BEFORE NAVARATRI, HEMANT RECEIVED A LETTER IN HIS MAIL BOX WHICH ANUJ LEFT IT AT HIS DESK TABLE TO READ. HEMANT RARELY GOT ANY PHYSICAL LETTERS, ONLY EMAILS AND IN THIS ERA, NO ONE WOULD EVEN BOTHER TO WRITE A LETTER. HE THOUGHT; FOR HE WAS A FINANCIAL CONSULTANT. HE OPENED THE LETTER CONFUSED AND THEN A CHILL RAN DOWN HIS SPINE. THE LETTER READ:





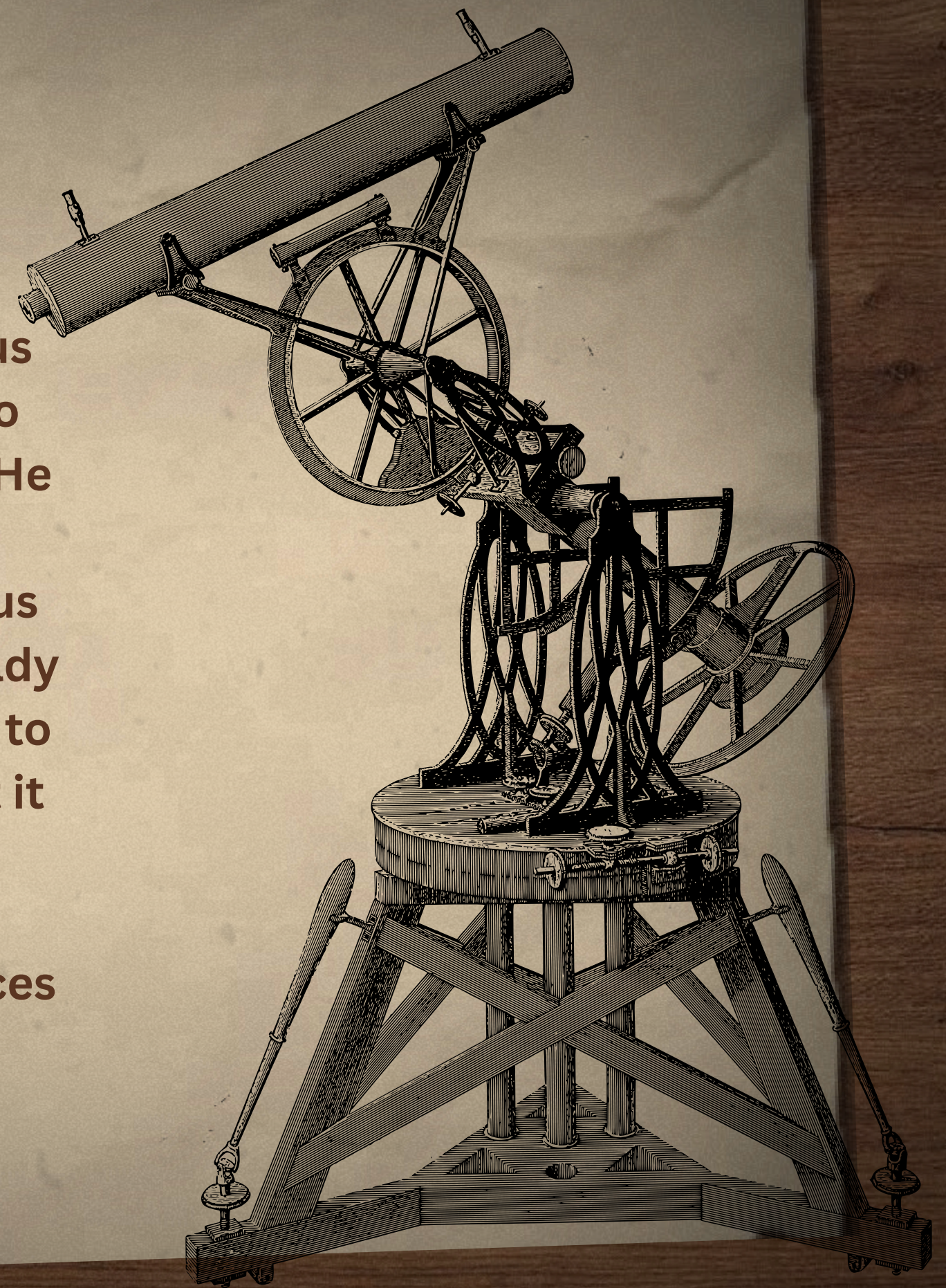
A senryu about the heart,
True resplendent of the human
glory,
The heavy knife that killed raj,
A red Bengalian ruby.....

We know it Hemant, everyone
does and we have some
unfinished business with you,

Hemant was almost quivering with fear, he was anxious and now alarmed. He immediately checked his safe to assure the ruby was there, and it was, red and bloody. He knew its history.

The next 8 days were hell for him; he was extra cautious always looking for spies and undercovers who were ready to pound on him. He told Anuj to appoint more guards to keep the house safe. He still hadn't told his wife about it because he felt there was no need to scare them.

Moreover, he could handle this; he was just being provoked, he told himself but he knew the consequences if the truth came out.....



ON THE NINTH DAY, THE LAST DAY OF NAVARATRI, HE TOOK THE KEYS FROM THE BACK OF HIS CLOSET TO OPEN THE SAFE. AND WHEN HE DID SO, WHAT HE SAW NEXT LEFT HIM GASPING FOR AIR, HIS EYES ALMOST ROLLED BACK, HIS EYEBROWS WRINKLED WITH SUCH A DRAMATIC EXPRESSION IT WAS AS IF HE WAS PERFORMING MACBETH, (THE SHAKESPEAREAN PLAY). THE RUBY. GONE. HE STUMBLED BACK AND CRASHED INTO A FORTUNE WORTH OF AN ANTIQUE PIECE THAT HE WON IN AN AUCTION. MILLIONS WORTH OF ASSET NOW IN TITTERS AND BITTERS ON THE MARBLE FLOOR.



WITHOUT ANY EXPLANATION TO HIS FAMILY OR ANYONE, HE GRABBED HIS CAR KEYS AND RUSHED TO THE GARAGE. HE ACTED ON IMPULSE; HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HE WAS DOING, HE WAS HORRIFIED AND SCARED, "WHAT IN THE DEVIL ARE YOU DOING HERE?.....ANUJ." HIS VOICE RASPY, FILLED WITH ANGUISH AND DISBELIEF. HIS VEINS THROBBING VISIBLY AT HIS TEMPLES. "DOING SOMETHING I SHOULD'VE DONE YEARS AGO..." SAID ANUJ IN THE SAME TONE AS HEMANT.

GRIM.

"IS THIS A TRICK TO GET HIGHER RAISE? CAUSE ITS WORKING WELL YOU KNOW. TELL YOU WHAT ANUJ, I'LL GIVE YOU PLENTY OF MINTS RIGHT NOW IF YOU FREE ME FROM THESE HARSH ITCHY ROPES" HE SAID ALMOST SARCASTICALLY YET STRUGGLING WITH THE ROPES.



“YOU KILLED MY FATHER”

“ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR DAMNED MIND!!?”

“I KNOW IT ALL AND I KNOW YOU DO TOO, YOUR FATHER AND MY APPA WERE CLOSE FRIENDS, THEY WERE MINERS. AND SINCE YOU COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT YOUR OWN FATHER, LET ME TELL YOU...”

HEMANT LOOKED UP AT HIM, INTRIGUED AND IMPRESSED THAT SOMEONE LIKE ANUJ COULD PULL THIS OFF AND NOW WAS PARAMOUNT TO HIM IN THE SITUATION. HE LOOKED AT HIM WITH ALL SERIOUSNESS HIS EYEBROWS KNITTING A BLANKET OF FRUSTRATION; AS THE ROPES, THE INSECTS AT HIS FEET, NEAR HIS EARS AND THE MOIST AND GREASY SMELL WAS ALL TOO OVERWHELMING FOR HIM BUT STILL HE WAS CURIOUS TO CHECK HIS OWN KNOWLEDGE, TO KNOW HOW MUCH HE KNEW WAS THE TRUTH.



ANUJ PAUSED UPON SEEING HEMANT SILENTLY
STRUGGLING, (ENJOYING THE VISION) HE
CONTINUED,

“IT ALL DATES BACK TO 1988, YOUR FATHER AND MY
APPA WERE GOOD FRIENDS, THEY WERE COLLEAGUES
AND BY PROFESSION, MINERS. THEY WERE MINING
AT THE ODISHAN MINING SITE IN JEONHR. IT WAS A
ONE OF THE NEWEST SITES DISCOVERED AND WAS
EXPECTINGLY WORTH A GAZILLION WORTH OF
STONES, SUCH AS DOLOMITE, RUBY, GOLD, QUARTZ,
SAPPHIRE, IT WAS A WHOLE BOUNTY. DURING THE
MINE, YOUR FATHER FOUND A LITTLE STONE OF
SAPPHIRE WHICH HE KEPT TO HIMSELF BUT, A ROGUE
OF A MAN HE WAS, HE WANTED MORE! AND NOW
COMES THE RUBY , OUR FAMILY HEIRLOOM WHICH
HAS BEEN PASSED DOWN FROM GENERATIONS. IT
WAS BEING LOOTED BY THAKUR (REFERRING TO
HEMANT’S FATHER) BUT MY FATHER SAW IT AT ONCE.
HE TRIED TO FIGHT BACK THE RUBY AND THAT’S
WHERE YOU CAME, A LITTLE 12-YEAR OLD BOY”



ANUJ PAUSED TO LOOK AT HEMANT STEADILY IN THE EYE, EXHALED LOUD BREATH FROM HIS NOSTRILS AND CONTINUED, WHILE HEMANT WAS STILL LOOKING AT HIM IN AWE. HE ONLY KNEW A PART OF IT BUT NOT THE WHOLE STORY AND HE WAS STILL SURPRISED TO DISCOVERED THAT THE MAN HE KILLED AT 12 YEARS WAS ANUJ'S FATHER!

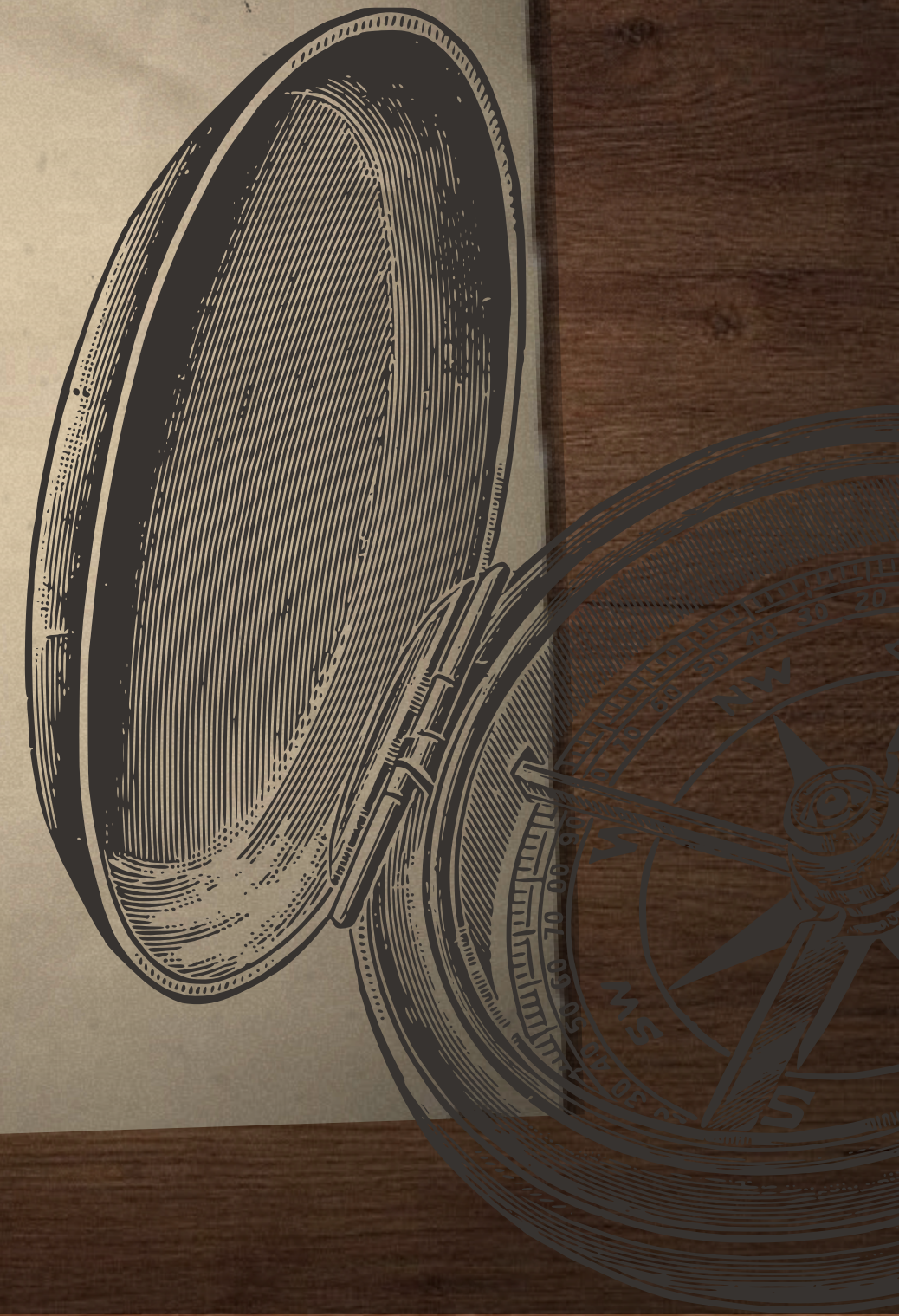
“YOU SAW YOUR PATHETIC FATHER STRUGGLING, SO YOU GRABBED A KNIFE LYING ON THE FLOOR AND STABBED MY FATHER IN THE SPINE. AND THEN BOTH YOU COWARDS RAN AWAY, WITH THE RUBY.

WHEN I CAME, I WAS OBVIOUSLY HORRIFIED BUT TO MY LUCK I SAW A CARD THAT MUST'VE FALLEN FROM YOUR FATHER'S COAT. IT WAS THE CARD OF A GOLD DEALER. AND SINCE THEN, I'VE BEEN TRACING YOUR EVERY ST-”



“So, what do you want now?” a casual, sarcastic yet genuinely confused.

“Want my sympathy? want me to kiss your forehead and tame you like a little squirrel? You want to keep the ruby? keep it. I don’t give a damn because everyone’s on my side. Name one person who is going to believe your bookish little sob story. You have no evidence! and how are you going to explain a death caused by a 12-year old? Looks like maturity didn’t hit you hard enough.” a proud with a cunning smile on his face, as if he had solved a mathematics equation.



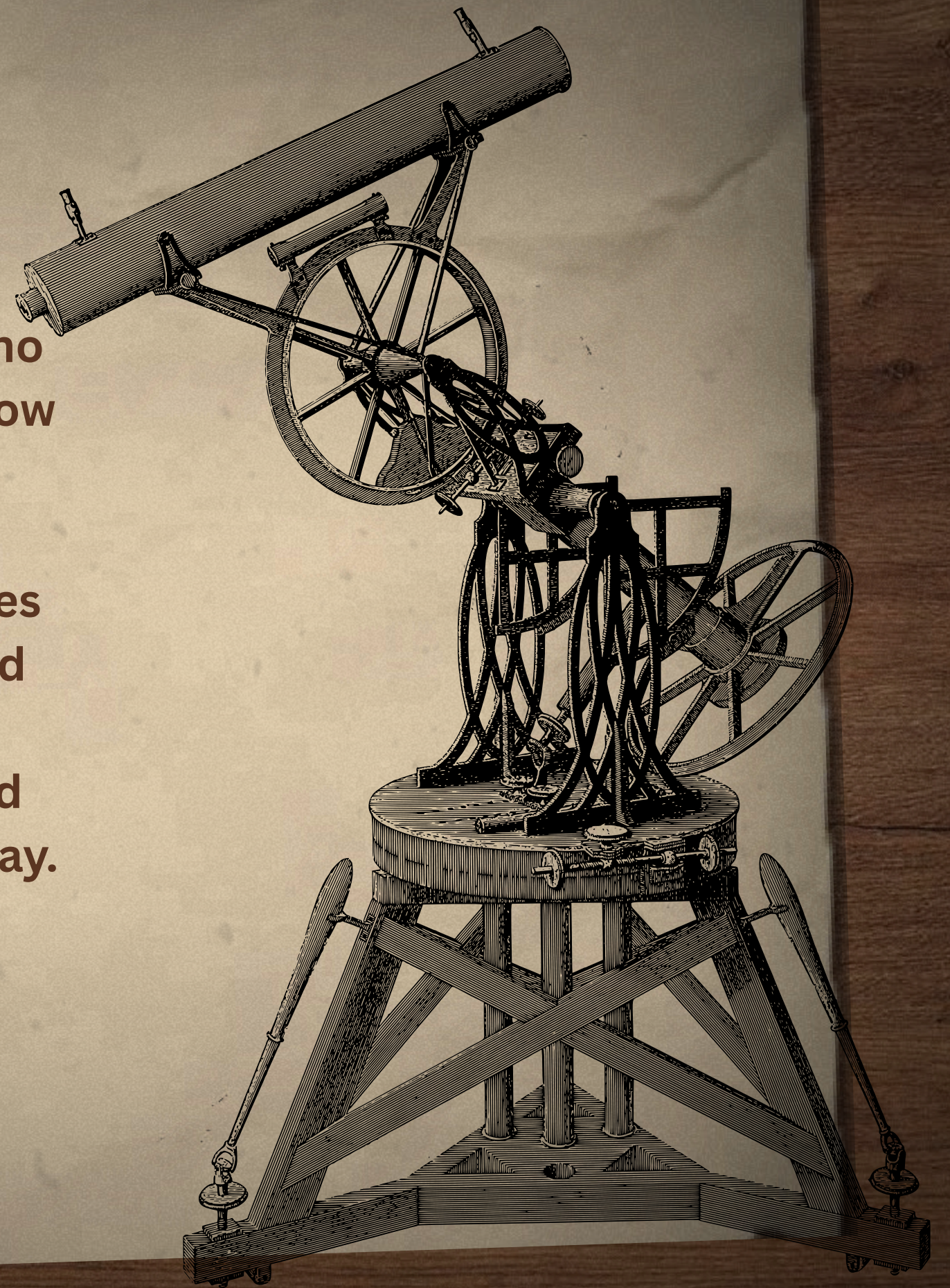
“I HAVE IT HEMANT, I HAVE THE RECORDS OF NOT JUST YOUR FIRST KILL BUT MORE! I’VE BEEN WORKING UNDER YOU REMEMBER?” HE SAID ALMOST GRINNING, PRAISING HIS OWN STRATEGY IN HIS MIND.

“OKAY, I’VE GIVEN YOU ENOUGH TIME, BOTH OF ARE COMING WITH ME NOW MR. HEMANT AND MR. ANUJ ” SAID A DIFFERENT VOICE, A THIRD PERSON. HE WAS SAGARESH BHASKAR , A TALL, WISE MAN WHO WORKED AS A DETECTIVE AND HE WAS PRETTY FAMOUS FOR HIS WORK. AND BEHIND HIM WERE 12 OR MORE POLICE OFFICERS WITH GUNS WEARING STEADY EXPRESSIONS ON THEIR FACES AND BEHIND THEM ANUJ’S MEN WERE LYING ON THE FLOOR UNCONSCIOUS BARELY BREATHING. HIS MEN BURST INTO THE CLOSED GATED ROOM AND SURROUNDED HEMANT WITH THEIR GUNS WHILE SAGARESH TOOK CARE OF ANUJ BY HIMSELF.



“What? I am not coming sir, I have proof! I committed no felony since you’ve heard everything now you must know that its Hemant, he has killed multiple people I have proof sir, trust me”

Anuj was basically pleading, in front of Bhaskar, his eyes glistening with desperation. He looked behind him and saw that Hemant was.....sleeping? Upon seeing the confusion in his eyes, Bhaskar explained that they had injected Hemant with a drug so they could take him away.



HOWEVER, ANUJ STILL HAD TO SPEND THE NIGHT IN JAIL. THE NEXT DAY BHASKAR CAME AND INTERROGATED BOTH OF THEM AND UPON REFERRING TO ANUJ'S REPORTS, ALL OF IT MADE SENSE. HEMANT'S PREVIOUS MURDERS AND THEFTS. HE WAS BIG CRIMINAL AND ALREADY HAD A LOT OF CASES PENDING ON HIM BUT THEY WERE ALL COVERED AS HE HAD BRIBED THE JUDGES AND OFFICIALS. THE CASE WENT ON FOR ABOUT 7 MONTHS. HEMANT WAS PLEADED GUILTY AND WAS GOING TO SPEND HIS NEXT 15 YEARS IN JAIL AND DOING COMMUNITY WORK.



ANUJ HAD COMPLETED HIS JOB. HE THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT HE WAS GOING TO DO NOW. HE REALIZED HOW HE HAD MADE GETTING REVENGE FOR HIS FATHER FROM HEMANT HIS LIFE MISSION AND WAS LAUGHING TO HIMSELF THINKING HOW HE WAS ORIGINALLY PLANNING TO KILL HEMANT BY HIMSELF. AFTER THE DECLARATION OF HIS JUDICIAL WIN, THE NEXT DAY HE PACKED UP HIS BAGS AND LEFT FOR DELHI.

IT'S BEEN 11 YEARS SINCE THAT CASE AND NOW ANUJ IS RUNNING HIS OWN DETECTIVE AGENCY, IT'S NOT QUITE SUCCESSFUL BUT HE ENJOYS IT.

HE LIVES WITH BHASKAR, THE DETECTIVE. BHASKAR OFFERED ANUJ A POST AT THE DELHI POLICE AND HE ACCEPTED IT WITH GRATITUDE BUT HE OFTEN SAW HIMSELF WORKING BETTER AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND THUS HE LEFT HIS POST AND BECAME A PROFESSIONAL DETECTIVE.



buzzing with life

ROSES ARE 'RED'

NAME: PRISHA KRISHNA
CATEGORY: STUDENT



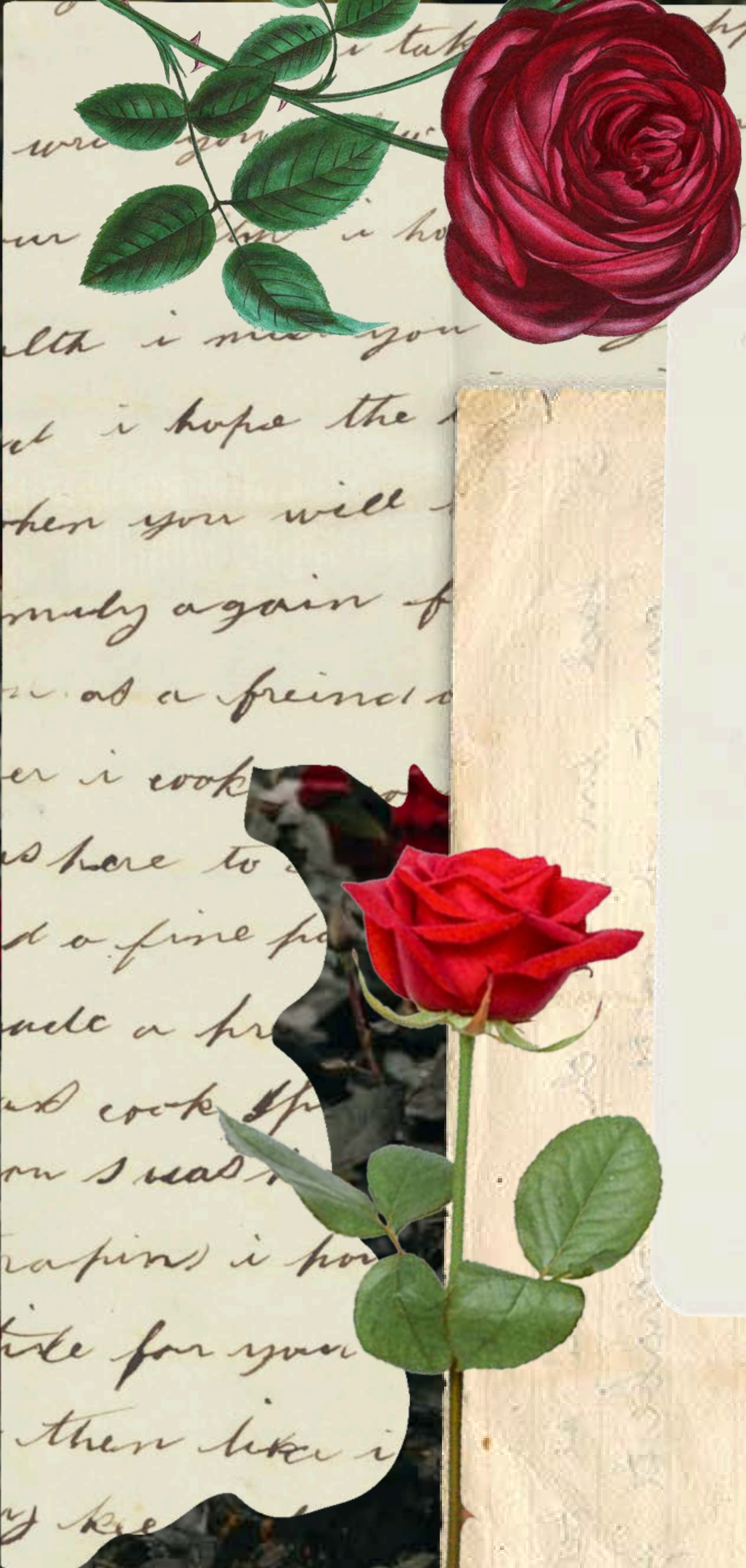
The rose began to weep when the gardener left, wounded and suffocated. The poor flower had no idea why this happened in the first place. That night it didnt sleep again, just looked at the stars wondering what did it do wrong to deserve this.

The cries of the newly bloomed rose echoed while the other red roses just looked at it with guilt and sorrow, it wasnt new to them.

A few days later, a piece of the paint chipped and the blush pink stood out once again, the rose finally could breathe properly, looking at the blush pink underneath made the rose feel warm as if a part of it was finally reclaimed, the cool air finally hitting the petals felt like heaven after many long, painful days. But only a few hours later, the gardener saw the chipped paint and sucked its teeth and he

covered the rose with another layer of red paint, now weighing it down. The rose felt defeated, feeling there is no escape to this.





"It is called the 'sky' my little one", the leaves explained one day. "The white patches are called clouds, and they give us water and cool the earth down, and those black things are called birds, they look small but up close, theyre absolutely beautiful... you should really look forward to them when you bloom, they sing every morning."

"You should feel honoured knowing youre blooming in the royal garden." The little bud would get excited and wait for the day it blooms, although it never understood what a 'royal garden' meant. All it knew was the bud wasnt alone, there were several roses adorning the garden and letting out an enchanting scent, it was sweet with a hint of earthy tones along with a fresh leafy smell.



The sepals began to loosen day after day. now the bud could see the earth covered with grass and small bushes growing on the sides. when it rained. it would cause the dirt to get damp and a deep. earthy scent would envelope the soft petals. Something which stayed with that bud for its entire life. But the ground would make its head spin and so it would spend most of its time looking at the sky. and learn how those clouds would rain and cool the earth down. "So. the white clouds would get big and grey and then water would fall. after the rain they would go away." The bud told the leaves once and they listened. feeling proud of their little bud now about to bloom.



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A few days before it bloomed, a few rays of light entered the bud's blanket and saw its colour for the very first time. The bud's petals were a soft, blush, pinkish colour which made it exclaim, "Oh my god! I'm pink! I'm pink! Can you see that?" the bud looked at the leaves and they were happy, but something was off... They sounded happy but there was something else, it felt like a sense that it wasn't supposed to happen but they were too scared to tell the little one.

That feeling when something has gone wrong but it's not told to keep the peace or in this situation... hope for the world outside. The leaves knew it would happen. But knowing it would happen, and seeing it happen feels entirely different and no one is truly ready when it's the reality in the end.



"Is everything okay?" The bud asked with a hint of fear not understanding why is everyone reacting this way. but that poor bud couldnt even explain what was wrong. everything felt alright. but something still felt off.

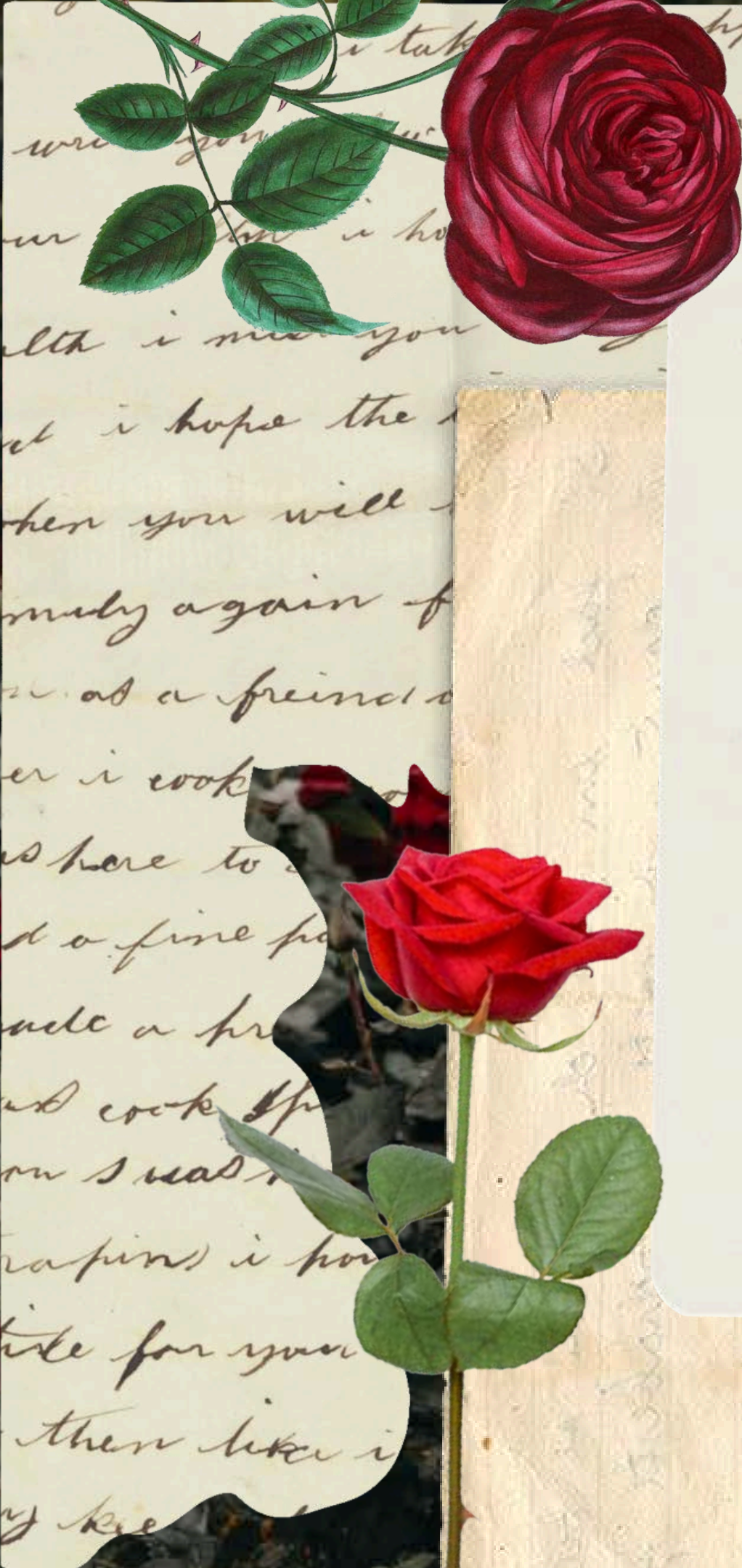
As days passed. the bud quickly grew and stood tall in the garden. the wind swaying it around now and it was enjoying the moment but it was now far from the leaves which once raised it with so much love and care. It was bittersweet but growing apart was inevitable. Everything had changed. the once steady and warm environment now became turbulent and colder than before. it was scary but the bud felt secure knowing the leaves will hold it up and support it till the end.

The elevated view let the bud sneak a few glances outside and saw roses. hundreds of roses. arranged in neat rows and columns with trees spread across the area but something was strange. All the roses were red. and not just any red. a deep. strong crimson everywhere. The blush pink bud felt like an outsider among those enchanting crimson flowers.



The night before blooming, the bud could not sleep, it was nervous of the new life ahead and silently mourned the life it once had, the bud was now on its own. It felt like being pulled away from your mother knowing you're alone in this world. It was in a liminal space of new beginnings and old times and the bud didn't know where it now belonged. What was it supposed to do after leaving that warm blanket and the soft embrace?

The sun rose in the horizon and the bud finally bloomed into a rose, it was large and young, looking around the world clearly for the very first time.



The sky it once saw only between those sepals and leaves was now fully visible. and it was huge. it covered everything around it. The sun was so bright and warm. the light finally hit the flower and it felt relaxing in the cold breeze of morning. There were small things around it that made a buzzing sound and one of them sat on its petals before taking some of the roses nectar and flying away into a nearby tree. It felt strange to it but it was such a new experience for the flower. The sky wasn't always blue. in the morning when the sun rose. the sky had a hint of pink around the sun with a deep blue on the other end. it then turned blue during noon and the sun got hotter. it even burned sometimes but the rose knew it had to get used to it. When the sun started to set. the blue sky turned red and orange with the same deep blue on the end where the sunrise happened earlier.



i take this opportunity

write you a few lines to inquire

our health & hope

lth i miss you

et i hope the

then you will

only again -

as a friend.

er i cook

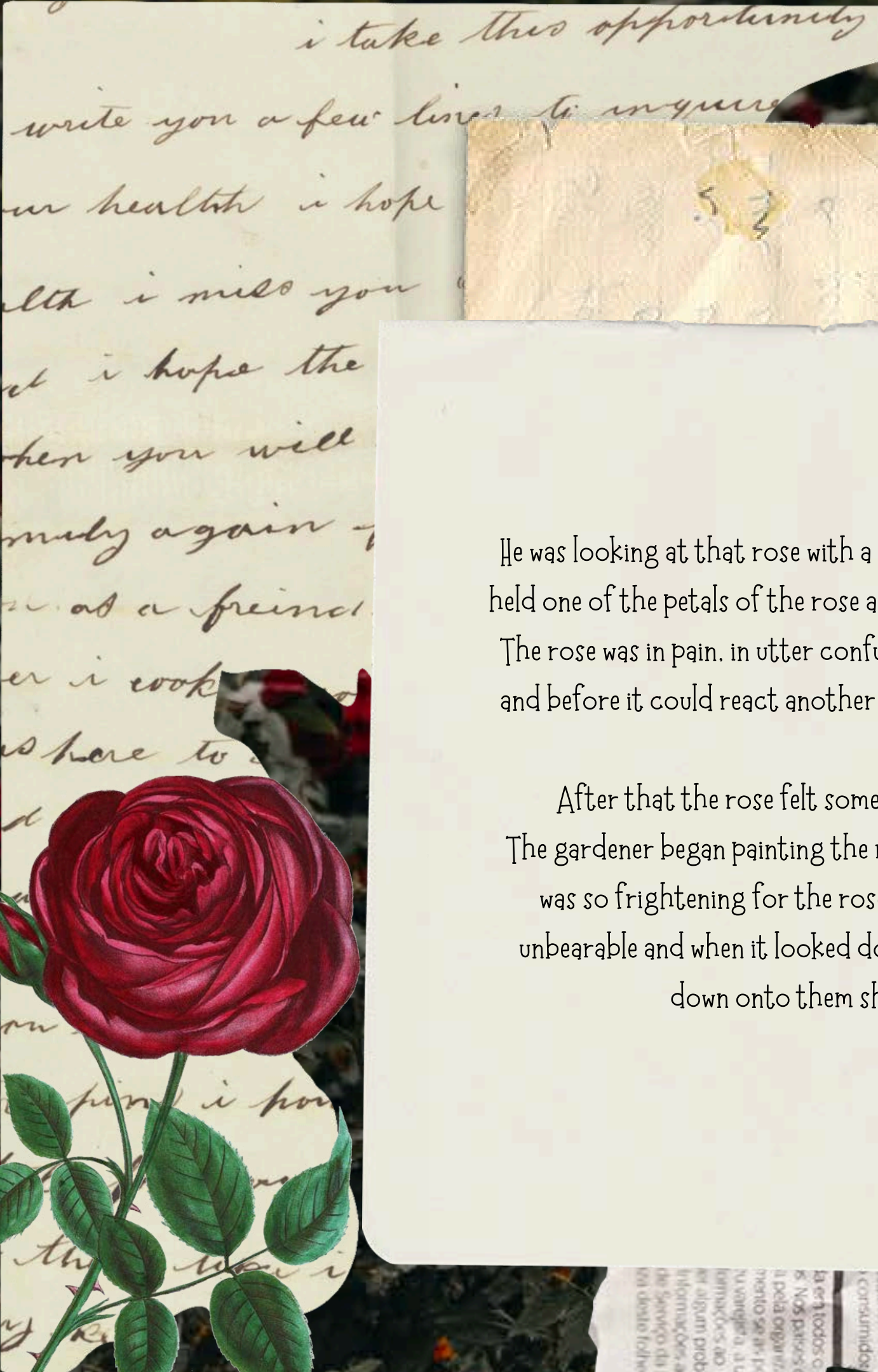
is here to



The rose had also looked around itself. the red roses were absolutely majestic. the way they carried themselves. they looked distinguished and proper unlike its large. asymmetrical pink look. One red rose near it complimented the pink rose saying. "you look majestic dear. the way your petals are so beautifully spread." the pink rose smiled and agreed but inside it felt insecure knowing its the odd one out.

The next morning after it bloomed, the rose was listening to the birds resting on a weeping willow tree. when it saw a clump of sticks and three yellow, sharp triangles were poking out of it repeatedly and the bird was putting small worms in those triangles. the rose wanted to know what the triangles were but couldn't really see because of the dense foliage of that large tree. When all of a sudden the rose heard a sigh of disappointment. It was the gardener which looked like a card. his name was seven.





He was looking at that rose with a hint of pity but it was later masked by the sense of duty as he held one of the petals of the rose and pulled it apart saying. "It's not supposed to be this wide!". The rose was in pain. in utter confusion it looked at that empty space where the petal used to be and before it could react another petal was plucked. then another before the rose had the same width as the other roses.

After that the rose felt something dripping on its remaining petals. paint... red paint. The gardener began painting the rose red until no one could see the pink colour underneath. it was so frightening for the rose to the point that it couldn't react properly. The pain was unbearable and when it looked down at the leaves. they were helpless. some paint even dripped down onto them showing their failure to protect their little bud.



This story is meant to be read twice, to be read gently and understanding the true meaning of each line. This story is inspired by the fairytale, 'Alice in Wonderland', more specifically, The Queen of Hearts and the royal garden.

The small bud was wrapped in a warm blanket of green leaves and sepals, getting ready to bloom for the first time in its life...

For the longest time, that little bud was always covered, never exposed to the outside world, kept within the reach of the leaves which raised it, heard stories about the world outside from their perspective and from small glimpses it stole when the leaves weren't looking. But all that it saw was something bright and blue, sometimes had white patches and small black things used to glide over and sing occasionally.

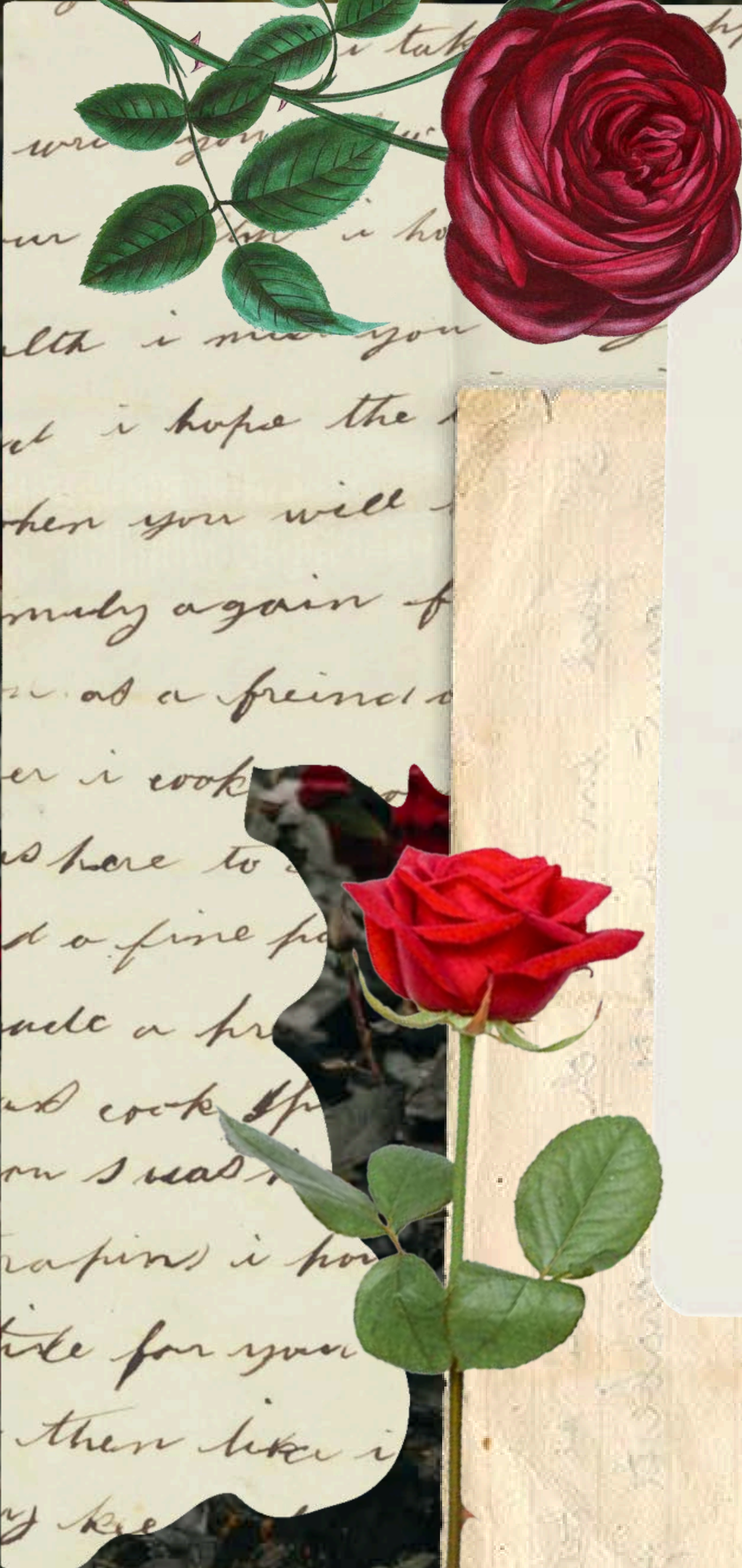


It felt like getting some food after days of starvation only for it to get snatched away from you before you even took your first bite. the rose felt the same helplessness.

That night, while talking to the red rose beside it, the red rose told the story of how its life once was...

"I was yellow in colour, as bright as the sun. When they painted me I felt like you too... I thought I did something wrong but the truth is, no one here is wrong, we were just not accepted."

From that point on, the days followed were painful, the weight of the paint weighed it down, forcing it to look at the frightening earth which was the final resting place for all wilted roses. it feared its end. The only thing it looked forward to was the sky, the birds and the fuzzy things which once used to land on it.



As days passed, new flowers bloomed. Some were yellow, some were white, some were orange.
The night after, the cries of the new roses echoed. By that time the rose was used to it... it
didn't
affect it much.

That dawn, the Queen of Hearts was in the royal garden and the three gardeners- two, five
and
seven were frantically trying to fix everything, another layer of paint here, another petal
plucked
there until it looked uniform.

The Queen was walking around and for a while the rose thought that now it matched Her
Majesty's standards, sure it would at least get seen... maybe that pain and suffocation
was worth
it in the end. But, it never got seen, the Queen discussed her royal duties and passed by as if
the rose never existed.

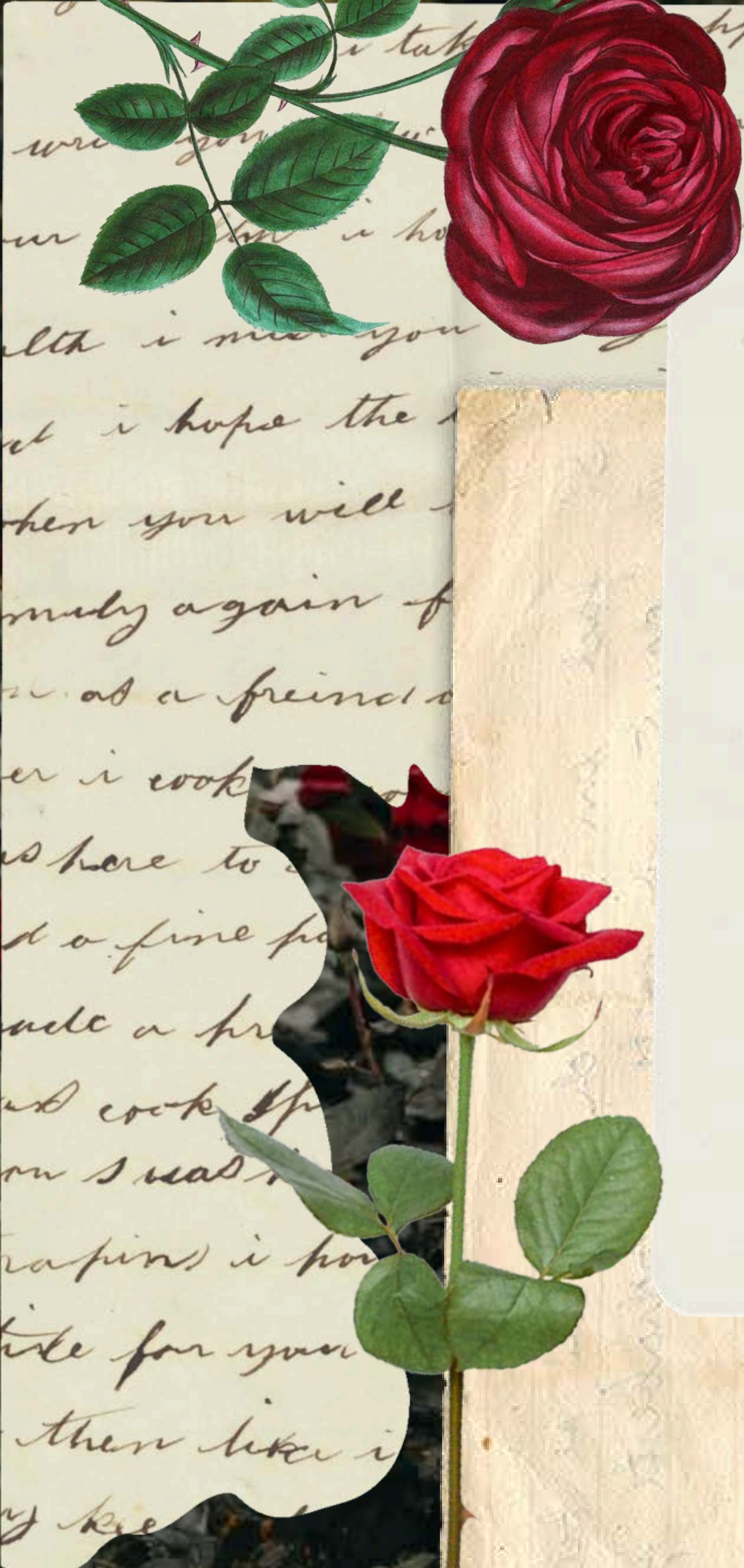


Thats when its expectations shattered. and the rose got a brutal reality check... no
one cared for
it. for the people in the palace... it was just a flower.
Whats the point? Why was it plucked and painted and suffocated if the Queen never
even cared
for a single second? Why? Why did it have to go through all this? The question
remained
unanswered as the rose mourned the happy days it once spent with those leaves. It
looked down
and once again. sorrow and grief was visible on the leaves. They failed to protect their
baby.
The rose began to explain to the newer ones how everything works and in the middle
of that the
rose grew numb...



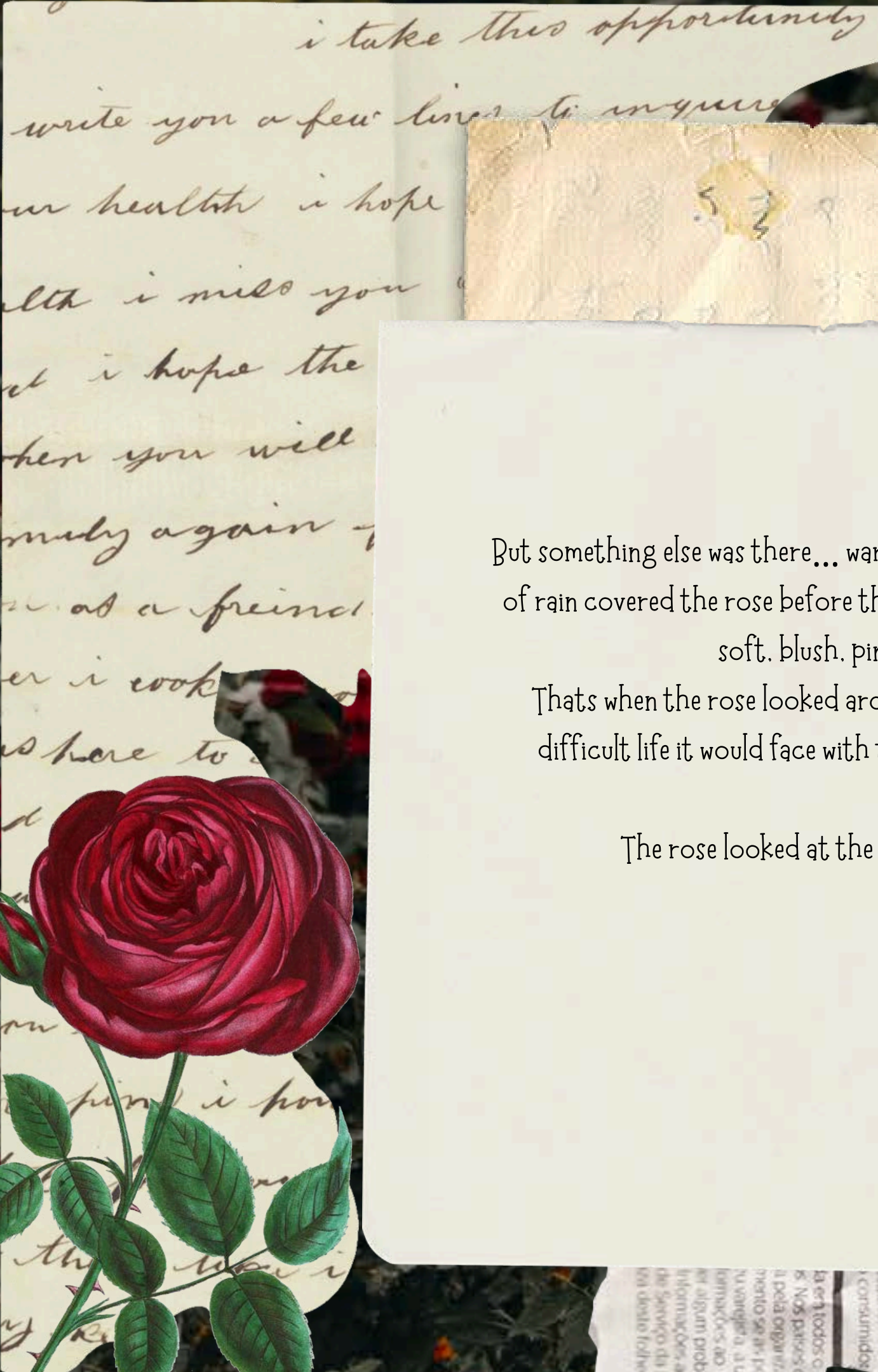
Now it didnt even remember its own original colour. was it yellow? Was it white? The rose had no idea. it even stopped looking at the sky. The older rose which was once its companion and mentor was gone. the gardeners clipped it one day and just like that lay a small stalk supporting nothing. Everything the rose cared for was gone. the leaves were far away. it was slowly suffocating as almost every day. the gardeners painted more layers. but the rose continued looking down and took a long look at the earth underneath. accepting that its end was near. It was a gloomy day. the clouds were dark and the air was thick and warm when a part of the rose began to crack because of its paint. The gardener looked and put another layer of red paint. by that time. the rose was drooping down low and the ground was fully visible. Soon the paint dried and the weight got painful. when it suddenly started raining and the water got inside the cracks of the paint which werent fixed.





The cold water splashed inside the dried paint and added more weight. the stalk was under stress.
the rose was frightened as the ground got closer and just then-
The rose finally snapped...
It took half of the stalk before falling into the bush full of leaves... the same leaves that once
raised it. now devastated to see their kid in so much despair.
More water poured inside before the rose rolled down into the grass. The rose believed that if it
ever touched the ground. it would be scary and painful and. it was... the fear was evident. the
rainwater felt like ice shards.



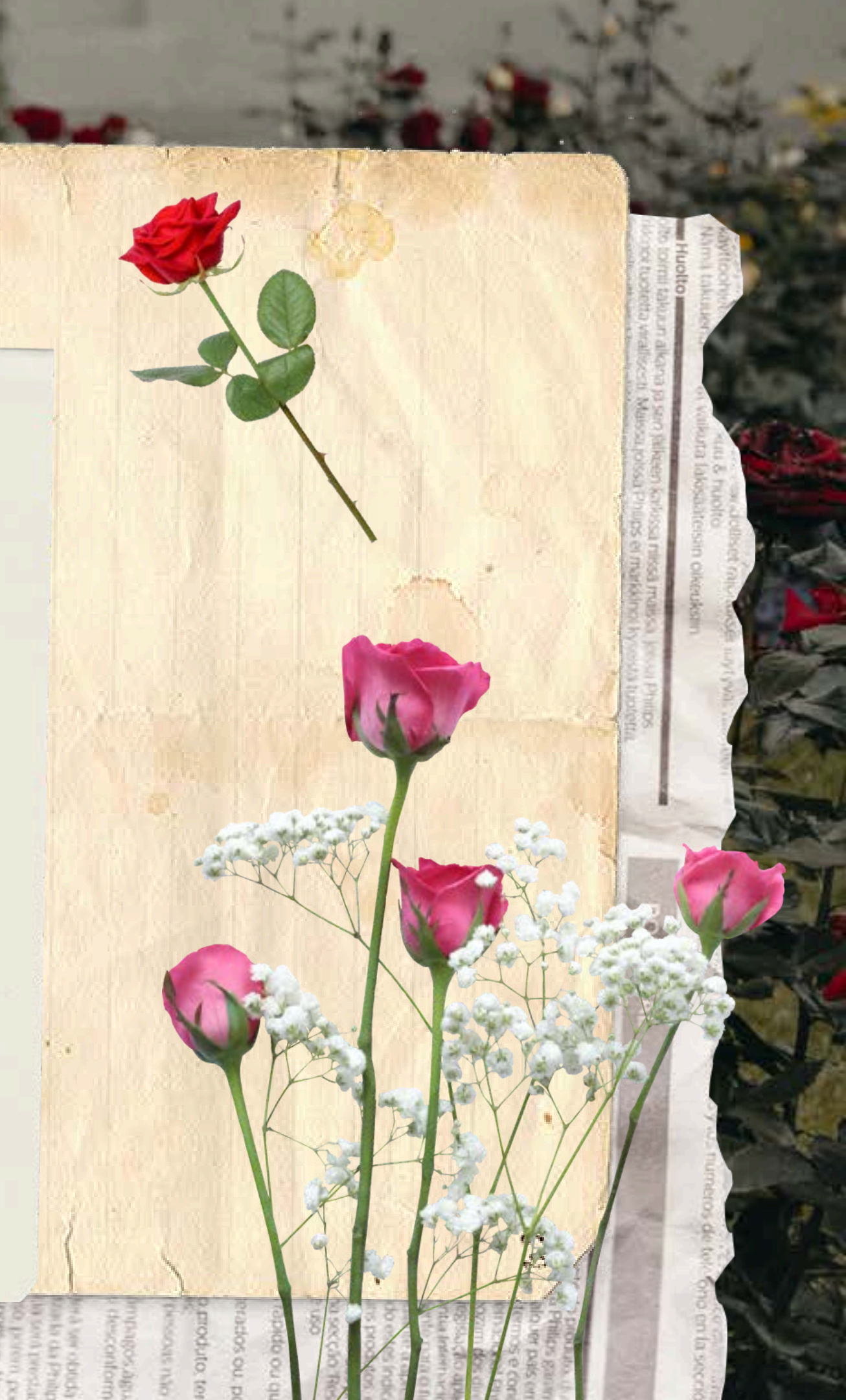


But something else was there... warmth, the warmth of the ground beneath, and the earthy smell of rain covered the rose before the paint chipped and revealed the actual colour of the rose. A

soft, blush, pinkish colour, not red... it was never red...

Thats when the rose looked around and saw another rose, white... pure, unknowing of the difficult life it would face with the expectations of those who never really cared about it.

The rose looked at the white one with pity knowing the cycle continues...



THE GOLDEN *Quill*



DELHI PUBLIC SCHOOL
— RANIPUR —

Thank You!
UNTIL THE NEXT CHAPTER...



DPS
RANIPUR
ESTD. 2013