

APRIL 2024
COVER BY LOULIA JAAFARI

THE LIGHTHOUSES MARCH



Speaker's Corner Spotlight:
Check Out **National English
Honor Society's** New Feature!

A student magazine by
International College Ras
Beirut Secondary School
(ICRBSS) **National English
Honor Society (NEHS).**

Lights, Camera,
Review! **Food,**
Film, Fashion, and
Book Critiques
Galore

Delve into Our March
Issue: **Diverse Voices,**
Engaging Insights,
Recent Events, and
Challenges You Can
Take for Rewards!

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"Launching this magazine was a long creative process and we are very proud of the final product. I cannot stress how impressed I am with the effort, dedication, and coordination, showcased by our team. This magazine is a passion project for all of us, and we hope that readers will find joy in engaging with its various segments."

— Nour Bsat, Co-founder

"We have the pleasure of introducing 'The Lighthouse', a canvas for untold stories, diverse voices, and innovative ideas. As Editors-in-Chief, we invite you to join us in celebrating the unique narratives at IC. Let our journey of inspiration begin!"

— Hiba Nourreddine, Editor-in-Chief

"Greetings to our beloved readers. Welcome to 'The Light House'! As editors-in-chief we invite you to embark with us on a journey where words dance, ideas flourish, and creativity knows no bounds, weaving together compelling stories, insightful perspectives, and captivating visuals. Welcome to the beginning of an enriching literary and visual voyage!"

— Fatima Slim, Editor-in-Chief

"This student magazine is the result of so many months of hard work and dedication by the student members of the National English Honors Society, IC branch. Even though the task seemed daunting at first, the students were unwavering in their commitment to recreating the tradition of student magazines at IC. Propelled by their creative energies, whether as writers, photographers, graphic designers, interviewers, or reporters, the students got together week after week over the past five months: discussing, arguing, brainstorming, and learning the art of negotiation and compromise. Guided by their excellent magazine advisor and editorial team, they produced a student magazine that they can all be proud of and that the IC community will hopefully find enjoyable, entertaining, and informative. To many more issues to come..."

— Samar Barakat, Co-founder

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SPEAKER'S CORNER

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How Well Do You Know Your School?

1 In what year did the IC Ain Aar campus open its doors to students?

2 How many students now attend International College?

3 When did the IC campus in Turkiye (in the city of Smyrna, now Izmir) shut down?

4 When did IC establish a new campus in Mechref, south of Beirut?

5 When were girls first admitted to IC as students?

6 How many teachers now teach at IC, Secondary School?

7 Which IC alumna is now the editor-in-chief of The Financial Times?

8 When was the Ali Ghandour Center for Leadership and Diversity established?

9 IC athletics teams have an interesting mascot. What is it?

10 IC students used to have a beloved confectionary seller who stood outside the IC gate (near Sage Hall) selling sweets and newspapers. What was his name?



WHO AM I?



#1

I enjoy life in general despite my hot temper. As a matter of fact, I get easily triggered but I calm down just as easily with one nice word. I am an animal lover and love to explore the world any chance I have.



#2

I'm someone who enjoys photography, reading, and sports, but I steer clear of cooking and gardening. Art is not my strong suit but I like to collect art especially from other countries. Who am I?

#3

I am a person of contrasts. I love paintings but dislike sculpture. I love fashion but dislike brands. *Service* drivers in Beirut consider me "ajabiye" while in London drivers ask me "where are you from originally?" I love Turkey but dislike Turkish TV series.. Who am I?

Introducing the English Department:
Can you guess who the English teachers are through these riddles?

#4

I am the essence of warmth, a wanderer of pages, In lands far and near, my journey engages. With three little ones, my hands are kept full, Yet my spirit's alive, never dull. Raised in a land near but far, I call home, Connecting with minds, wherever I roam. In the realm of learning, I find my true art, A mother, a traveler, I'm creative at heart. Who am I?

#5

I enjoy exploring the world, but not with a pen in hand, I climb up hills, but treadmills I withstand. I love hot chocolate on a cold winter day or an ice cream if you may. Who am I?

#6

I am a paradox: shy and bold, insane and wise, funny and serious, sociable and I like my own company. I have a love-hate relationship with my PT. My taste in music is eclectic. Michael Jackson, Pink Floyd, System of a Down, Chopin, Mozart, Beethoven, and many more are my soul balms and the metronome that spurs me on in my swimming workouts. The beach is my happy place.

#7

If I were a color I would be pink and if I were a season I would be Spring! I see myself in characters like Amy March and Katniss Everdeen. I enjoy watching films and I enjoy discussing them even more!

#8

I am an antithesis to convention, A Bohemian rhapsody, A tropical fruit. Sociable yet not without hesitation, While being serious and steady. Not your typical cute!

SUBMISSION FORM
Scan for prize details!



#9

I am a person who enjoys all kinds of sports and loves singing as well as dancing. I appreciate music, historical and artistic places together with opera. Who am I?



SPEAKER'S CORNER

by Layla Beydoun and Mahmoud Staitieh



LIDIJA LIEGIS

November's Speaker Corner welcomed Lidija Liegis, a freelance investigative journalist and ghostwriter who worked with BBC, Forbes, Al Jazeera, and other companies. She visited IC to discuss journalism with students, teachers, and faculty members. In her presentation, Lidija introduced and covered journalism in 2023, different career paths, and how to get there to students interested in pursuing this career. She shared insightful tips on writing like proofreading your work, reinventing yourself, growing your skill-set, and widening your horizons. At the end of the session, the journalist answered numerous questions from students and teachers, sharing both her personal stories and the challenges faced, as well as valuable insights on the evolving landscape of journalism. Overall, she left a positive impact on all those who attended and a long-term influence on the students considering journalism as a career. Her advice to aspiring journalists is to consider internships and blogs as your next step.

DR. FARID TALIH

February's Speaker's Corner welcomed the renowned psychiatrist **Dr. Farid Talih** to discuss the psychological and social effects of the patriarchal system. Dr Talih began by discussing the origins of patriarchy in anthropology. He also commented on how founding psychologists ingrained patriarchy into the modern mental health system. He explained how patriarchy internalizes inferiority in women and leads to many issues on the physical, psychological, and emotional levels for men and women alike. He referenced novels such as *The Great Gatsby* and *Persepolis* among others and demonstrated how each portrayed a different aspect of control: economic, political, religious, sexual, and social. To promote equality and inclusion, he promoted teaching children, both boys and girls, by example from the earliest age possible.



GUESS THE TEACHER

INTERVIEWED BY: SIRINE SHEHAB

SUBMIT YOUR
ANSWERS HERE



GUESS
FIRST FOR
THE PRIZE!

What is your favorite swimming team?

Al Jazira.

What is the last country you visited?

Italy.

What is your favorite animal, and what is the name of your dog?

Dogs, Ray.

What is your favorite lunch?

Salad.

How many children do you have?

Two kids.

Cristiano Ronaldo or Lionel Messi?

Cristiano.



FOOD REVIEW

MAHMOUD CHATILA

Eggcellent Fusion: A Review of Eggs Over French Fries

Nestled in comfort food heaven, the combination of eggs over French fries is a delightful revelation that transcends traditional boundaries. This seemingly bizarre yet ingenious pairing evokes a symphony of flavors and textures.

Each bite is a journey from the satisfying crunch of the fries to the velvety texture of the eggs. The contrast elevates the experience to a level unknown to man.

In the world of comfort food, eggs over French fries stand out for its textures and harmonious flavors. It is greatly recommended to add toppings like cheese or truffle oil.



JANA YOUNIS & YASMINA BOU ALIA

CAFETERIA REVIEW

MANKOUSHEH

No matter what flavor you get, the cafeteria mankousheh always leaves you satisfied. The dough is not too thick, but it's not thin either. You could enjoy the flavors of cheese, zaatar, or cocktail sandwiched within a fresh layer of dough, without one overpowering the other. The dough is so good that you can actually ask for it plain. Trust us, this is not an exaggeration! So, make sure to get your mankoushe by first break, when it's still warm and fresh!



IZZY'S COOKIES

One of the newest additions to the IC cafeteria are the famous Izzy's cookies. Every day, an array of flavors, including chocolate chip cookies, smarties, lotus, s'mores, and double chocolate, are delivered to IC. Our personal favorites are the classic chocolate chip and the double chocolate. Their edges are crisp but their interior is soft, thick, chewy and delicious. You *must* taste all the flavors the cookies have to offer! Only high quality ingredients are used and the packaging is so cute!



ICED COFFEE

Personally, my favorite item at the cafeteria is the vanilla iced coffee. It is a perfect blend between bitter and sweet, and it really gives you a taste of both worlds. It's a perfect treat to wake you up a little after sleeping a little too late but is not so caffeinated that it disrupts your sleep schedule. The cafeteria also offers a caramel iced coffee, which is sweeter but also delicious. Depending on your caffeine needs, you can change the number of espresso shots in your coffee. I enjoy a perfectly balanced blend of sweet and bitter, and this coffee encapsulates that experience perfectly. Don't forget your straw!





THE HUNGER GAMES
THE BALLAD OF
SONGBIRDS & SNAKES

DUAL REVIEW

FATIMA SLIM & MS. NOUR BSAT

FILM REVIEW

FATIMA SLIM

The Hunger Games season is back and stronger than ever! Fans are thrilled to see the new movie "*The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*" which is a prequel to Suzanne Collins' original "Hunger Games" trilogy. Set in the dystopian world of Panem, the story follows a young Coriolanus Snow, who later becomes the oppressive President Snow. The novel explores the 10th Hunger Games and Snow's role as a mentor to the tribute Lucy Gray Baird to whom he gets attached and cheats to get her out alive. The fans are commenting: "The



Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes is the perfect masterpiece haunting origin tale showing the downfall of president snow. What a masterful job at taking the book and adapting it to the screen." As the Games unfold, Snow's ambition and cunning nature come to the forefront revealing the origins of his ruthless character. The movie includes many symbols, references, and parallelisms that connect to and foreshadow the events of the 74th Hunger Games.

THE TWO LOVERS: LIKE HATNISS AND PEETA?

Coriolanus is interested in his tribute, Lucy Gray, who catches his attention when she sings in the reaping ceremony. Her stunning performance makes Coriolanus the object of envy of all of his fellow students. During the Games, Coriolanus cheats to help Lucy to win. His punishment is to become a peacekeeper in District 12. The two lovers reunite in District 12 and Snow discovers the beauty of life there with Lucy and the Covey (her friends and family). Events unfold and, his paranoia takes over, causing him to betray his lover. One of the most famous quotes from the book is: "She could fly around District 12 all she liked, but she and her mockingjays could never harm him again." I see Lucy Gray's mockingjay is coming soon to get you, Snow...

“ The Hunger Games: The Ballad Of Songbirds & Snakes is the perfect masterpiece haunting origin tale showing the downfall of president Snow. What a masterful job at taking the book and adapting it to the screen. ”

The narrative delves into the moral complexities of survival, power, love, and the manipulative nature of the Capitol, providing a deeper understanding of the events that shaped the Hunger Games universe. We are all still shocked with the emotional roller coaster that this movie has brought us. This is hands-down one of the best book to movie adaptations produced in recent years!

HAPPY HUNGER GAMES,
and may the odds be ever in your favor.



BOOK REVIEW

MS. NOUR BSAT

The Hunger Games (THG) renaissance is upon us and people are rediscovering the Young Adult (YA) genre! Whether it's the book series or the genre itself, a revival of sorts is happening at the moment. With the release of the film adaptation of the prequel, *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes (TBOSAS)*, there seems to be a growing fan-base dedicated to Coriolanus Snow owing much to his portrayal by the charismatic, up-and-coming Tom Blyth. However, upon reading the book, one can see how Suzanne Collins' choice of narrative voice allows readers to maintain an objective perception of Snow and to see him for who he is: a manipulative, power-hungry, entitled young man with an ambition so extreme that not even love can obstruct it.

I've always been inclined to favor books written in the first-person narrative voice; this authorial choice allows me to not only connect with the main character, but to truly understand and sympathize with their choices due to the intimate lens through which I am viewing their actions. This is precisely why I felt very connected with Katniss Everdeen, the protagonist of the original *THG* trilogy. When I first started reading *TBOSAS*, I was excited to view the events from Snow's perspective and through his own voice, and a part of me was let down when I realized that the book is written in the third-person narrative voice. This medium, the narrator, placed between myself and Snow caused a bit of a disconnect, but one could argue that this is exactly what Suzanne Collins had intended.

Collins is not interested in drawing Snow as a sympathetic character with a backstory that excuses his descent into villainy and tyranny. She places some distance between Snow and the readers precisely because Snow is a manipulative character who knows how to get people on his side. At the end of the day, he did win over Dr. Volumnia Gaul time and again, through his words nonetheless. Snow's outstanding written assignment, Snow's satisfactory answers to her increasingly morally questionable queries, and Snow's letter addressed to her in the final act of the story are all factors that allowed Snow to stand out from among his peers and to eventually gain

Dr. Gaul as a mentor; and they are all examples of ways in which the use of language is depicted as a tool that helped Snow rise to power. Therefore, one could argue that the narrative distance imposed by Collins through her use of the third-person narrative voice in *TBOSAS* reinforces the possibility that Snow's manipulative nature, perpetuated through his masterful use of language, could extend to the readers, causing readers to eventually side with Snow and sympathize with him.

Had the book been written in the first-person narrative voice from Snow's perspective, the readers' objectivity might have been inhibited, and Snow would have been perceived favorably and sympathetically. This is absolutely what Collins wants to prevent. Thus, on the one hand, this choice of narrative voice allows Collins to highlight the use of language as one of Snow's fortes and tools of manipulation, thereby stylistically reinforcing one of Snow's core character traits - his manipulative nature. On the other hand, resorting to the third-person narrative voice ensures that despite the objective challenges that Snow faces over the course of the book, he is received by the readers as an unsympathetic character because readers are protected from being subject to Snow's manipulation through his use of language.

So, while I felt a slight disappointment upon picking up *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* for the first time, I did eventually see the significance of the authorial choice of narrative voice. The third-person narrative voice carries a loaded significance in the depiction of Snow as a character and in the portrayal of central themes like manipulation and betrayal. *TBOSAS* not only provides essential world-building and background information on *THG* universe, but also offers profound commentary on the nature of human beings, social and class divide, the illusion of love, and the fallacy of friendship. If you have not read *TBOSAS* yet, be sure to add it to your reading list!





OP-ED

EMBRACING CHAOS

“One must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star.” – Nietzsche

BY HIBA NOURREDDINE

In a world that often glorifies order and predictability, I propose a radical idea: let us embrace chaos. What if chaos is not the villain we've painted it to be? What if, instead of fearing the unpredictable, we embraced it as a catalyst for creativity and innovation? Think of your life as a canvas, and chaos as the paint that turns a blank space into a masterpiece. Consider the most memorable stories and the most groundbreaking inventions and discoveries throughout history. Did they emerge from meticulously planned and controlled environments, or did they arise from the chaos of experimentation and unpredictability?

But embracing chaos doesn't mean advocating for anarchy. It's about balancing between order and disorder, allowing room for spontaneity while maintaining some control. This is where creativity blossoms, and where the most exciting chapters of our lives are written. In a world that fears the unknown, why not be the one who dances in the storm of chaos and emerges stronger, wiser, and more alive than ever before?

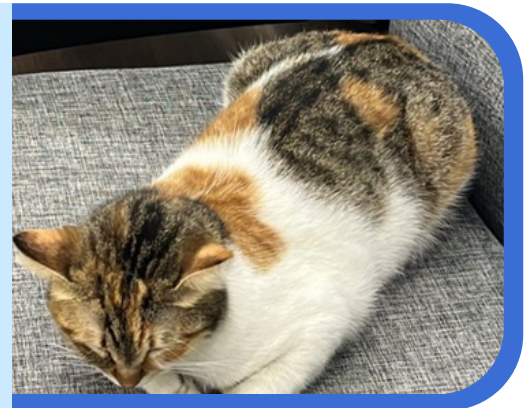
After all, the most beautiful symphonies are often composed amidst chaos.

George Orwell: The Cat, Not the Author

The cat that roams the halls of IC and has recently set up camp in the teacher's lounge in Rockefeller hall. Named after one of the most important writers of the 20th Century, George Orwell (nicknamed Gigi) is a sweet, affectionate, and cuddly cat who's always on the lookout for a warm lap to curl up on.

So, if you see a chubby calico cat on your way to class, it's probably George Orwell the cat! Make sure to pet her and to tell her how cute she is!

by Julia Toramanian



ADVICE TO THOSE JOINING THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SOON: INVEST IN A SECRET SNACK STASH BECAUSE HUNGER STRIKES WHEN YOU LEAST EXPECT IT, AND CAFETERIA LINES CAN RESEMBLE A SURVIVAL REALITY SHOW!

— YASMIN HAIDAR

Science Corner

FEEDING THE RED PIONEERS: THE GASTRONOMIC FRONTIERS OF MARS

Layla Beydoun
lbeydoun25@ic.edu.lb



CHRISTMAS EVENT: FUNDRAISER

As a part of the **Civic Commitment and Service Learning Program**, in collaboration with the Steam Lab, the Crochet Club, and the Physical Plant, Grade 10 students invited the Secondary School community to a Christmas fundraiser event for various community support projects on 12/15 and 12/16.

We all know NASA's planning a mission to Mars... but what will the astronauts eat if it's a three-year mission? It appears that there are a lot of suggestions. It's estimated that a 6% crew would require 10,000 kg of food. That is nearly twice the mass of an elephant! Some advise launching a separate rocket carrying food and supplies for the journey home, but it won't work because some essential micronutrients degrade over months. Now enter scientist Robert Jinkerson, whose concept is to grow plants in space without light. You most likely already know that plants need light for everything.

However, Jinkerson is reinventing the metabolic processes responsible for seed germination and orienting the plants to focus the majority of their energy on producing the edible part (not starch), such as the fruit on a tomato plant.

This is made possible through the use of a gene-editing approach known as "artificial photosynthesis." Additionally, he is feeding the plants with nutrients by using CO₂ and water, both of which could eventually come from the exhaled breath of astronauts. The scientist has already accomplished that with mushrooms growing in the dark. Although it is just one idea, it has the potential to be quite significant since it may redefine both what can be grown in space and what is needed to grow things on Earth.

What are your suggestions? I'd love to hear them!



Photographer: Christy Shwayri



FASHION CORNER



Shoes! Shoes! Shoes! Have we failed to mention shoes? Footwear has taken the fashion world by storm as well as our beloved campus. As students, teachers, and even faculty members make their way around the school,

they carry themselves to their desired destination while expressing their sense of style through every step. IC students are known for their sometimes questionable yet trendy and daring outfits, particularly regarding what they choose to wear on their feet.

It is no surprise that students make decisions based on how long their day might be, if they are in a rush, or simply if they want to make a bold fashion statement. On the school premises, one can easily catch students roaming around in all types of footwear. Usually, students tend to go for a more casual and relaxed look, completing their outfits with trainers from Nike, Adidas, Puma, etc... When running late, Birkenstocks and Crocs paired with funky socks are the go-to options for students.

On the other hand, teachers often go for more comfortable and formal choices of footwear. Most of the time, teachers reach for what will offer them the most support and cushion their feet for the long days of teaching and moving around ahead. We can typically spot teachers in chic loafers, boots, tennis shoes, ballerina slippers, and many other practical options.

As of this winter, we have picked up on the latest footwear trends that have swarmed the school amongst the female body of students. There has been a growing trend and common sightings of Ugg slippers with warm fur to keep warm and stylish during the chilly winter. Likely, this latest buzz will only continue to rise in popularity as more colors, patterns, and designs become available to the market.

What are your thoughts on the "IT" shoe of the season?!



JV FOOTBALL TEAM CAPTAIN CYRINE KHATIB



How do you and your teammates prepare for your matches?

We usually participate in friendly games against other IC teams, such as Varsity or JJV, to gain a sense of what our upcoming matches will entail and to identify areas that require improvement. Prior to each game, we gather together and provide motivating and inspiring pep talks to remind the players of our goal to perform at our best while having fun.

As a captain, what do you believe it takes to lead your team?

I believe that being a captain requires a strong personality. The role of a captain demands a robust personality, encompassing leadership, motivation, and morale-building skills, especially in tough situations. Captains inspire their team by demonstrating resilience, positivity, and serving as role models. They provide support, guidance, and encouragement to teammates, fostering a cohesive and determined group dynamic.

What are some major events that have occurred with the team recently?

The team recently triumphed in the Beirut tournament organized by the Ministry of Education, beating CIS and Louis Wegman to claim the championship. Eager to extend their success, they aim to continue their winning streak against various districts in Lebanon. Additionally, they participated in the NESAC tournaments in Qatar, despite not winning, the experience provided invaluable lessons in sportsmanship, tactics, and form.



How was your experience at NESAC?

The trip to NESAC was an enriching experience for the group, providing opportunities to explore a new country, meet people from different teams, and form lasting friendships. It fostered cultural awareness and teamwork through shared activities and extended time together. When it came to playing football, we observed how rival teams played and their strategies. We also improved our skills a lot, as we played and participated in 2-3 matches every day.

How would you describe the overall atmosphere of the football team?

As an all-girls team, we are incredibly supportive of one another both on and off the field. Our team atmosphere is one of comfort, laughter, and friendship. Not only do we play and hone our skills, but we also genuinely enjoy spending time together. We are always there for each other, and ready to support one another whenever any of us face challenges, be it sports-related or not.

What do you hope to achieve in the future and what are your aspirations for the team?

The team is actively participating in tournaments, including a tough match against ACS where they narrowly lost their first game. Despite this, they're optimistic about winning the remaining matches and achieving success in both tournaments. Their primary aim is to inspire teammates to excel and enjoy the experience, emphasizing the importance of sports in skill development, creating memories, and building friendships.

POETRY COMPETITION

EMPATHY & THE CHILD

NOVEMBER 23, 2023



It was the night of our very first poetry contest, an evening dedicated to the child's empathy through our voices in the medium of poetry, where all the poets resonated their words in the language they preferred. And memorable it was! As the evening unfolded, it became clear that this was not just a contest but an ode to the children in Palestine. As the evening commenced, the dim lights cast a warm glow over the faces of the audience; and at the heart of this transformation was the grand piano, sitting majestically on the stage. Each poet took to the stage, their voices trembling not just with nerves but with the weight of their message. They spoke of empathy, of seeing the world through the eyes of a child, of understanding and compassion, of dreams untouched, and of hope's quiet fading like the last ember in a dying fire, reaching out for something to reignite its spark. The audience was hanging onto every word and

every metaphor that spoke of a world where empathy reigned supreme. The emotional depth of the poetry was matched by the soul-stirring melodies that flowed from the piano. Between readings, the pianist played. As the evening drew to a close, there was a collective sense of having shared something profound. The applause that filled the auditorium was not just in appreciation of the talent on display but in recognition of the emotional journey we had all undertaken. As we left the auditorium that night, it was clear that something special had taken place. It was a night when everything was perfect, a night that our school, and everyone who was a part of it, loved deeply and would hold in their hearts forever. And as the world sleeps, our souls utter a silent prayer to the lands that have never known peace and to the innocent whispers that have never found their voices in the daylight.

YASMIN HAIDAR

EMBRACING

TRANSITION

EVA YEHYA

As we navigate through the twists and turns of our lives, it's easy to become engrossed in the things and distractions that occupy our thoughts and energy.

Let's take a moment to transport ourselves into the future not a few years or decades but a full century ahead—where our existence will be nothing more than a faint memory in the hallways of time. In 2123 those homes we've built, those expensive cars we've cherished and all our prized possessions won't belong to us anymore. They will pass into the hands of strangers while what remains of our legacy will be reduced to artifacts in their possession. It can be truly humbling to acknowledge that in the tapestry of history we are merely fragments. As time marches forward our names and legacies may fade from memory leaving generations to piece fragments of who we were. How many among us can even recount the journey undertaken by their great grandfathers? The truth is that as time goes by our vibrant stories will lose their luster and become nothing but faded portraits on someone's wall. Reflecting upon this inevitability prompts us to reassess the worries that consume us day after day. The deadlines that keep approaching, the conflicts and the minor grievances

we encounter on a daily basis seem insignificant when compared to the passage of time in over a hundred years. Imagine if we could take a moment amidst the chaos of our lives to recognize how fleeting our time here truly is. Wouldn't this understanding change our perspective on things? The frailty with which our lives exist is a reason why we should be ourselves, experience love unreservedly and enjoy every moment that makes up our "being". Remember that our stay on earth is temporary, as we search for relevance and meaning. Time makes the things that bother us daily into nothingness as compared to the main events. As we confront challenges of our time, may we strive to view things at a larger perspective – one where the time being and the frivolous are not so close. The truth is that in this life's passage, we will vanish. Let's push forward for positive transformation with this awareness. Accepting transience in life makes us unbind with irrelevant concerns. While each person's legacy will only last for a little bit of time compared to the duration of time, let us try to make our life's songs filled with good love and happiness. One can say that "if it won't matter in five years; it is not worth spending more than five minutes being upset." Let's keep the thought that these turbulent periods come and go in mind.

**ADVICE TO THOSE JOINING
THE SECONDARY SCHOOL
SOON:
MASTER THE ART OF NINJA
HALLWAY NAVIGATION TO
AVOID AWKWARD
COLLISIONS. BONUS POINTS
IF YOU CAN DO IT WHILE
MAINTAINING EYE CONTACT!**

—*Yasmin Haider*

Growth Mindset



A few years ago, lived in Paris a certain old man, originally from China, named Mr. Li. He was known for his green thumbs. He planted, in fact, one of the most beautiful gardens this city could know. A garden of awakening and harmony, between reality and imagination, where all the oriental perfumes come together, including kumquat, vegetable jasmine, peony...

Mr. Li, according to his Chinese habits, gets up early in the morning, and enjoys his morning by sipping a cup of tea, and admiring the beautiful view offered by his orchard. His tea cups, moreover, have always fascinated me. The twigs, leaves, well drawn on his mug, sprout through the grids, checkerboards and chevrons to form another imaginary garden. It's Mr. Li who painted them; it turned out to me that he was a very clever man. He lets his pencil slide, inspired by his garden, a place where shapes and colors grow, a place made for the imaginary, the abstract, the figurative, beautiful in its studied disorder.

Alas, there came a terrible day, which put an end to Mr. Li. Since then, no one has taken care of his garden. This splendid and magnificent green space in Paris became, in less than a month, the most awful and ugliest one. It's as if these few square meters of greenery were part of Mr. Li. I felt, sometimes, that the garden was speaking to me, asking me to help it. Was I guilty?

One evening, as I was returning from a long day at work, I suddenly heard the jasmines in the garden say, "Mister, please help us, we are about to die...". The next dawn, I rushed to the garden and watered all the plants... I repeated this for a week. The garden's situation improved... But, the jasmines yet again told me: "Sir, please help us". I then bought vitamins for the plants, and I distributed them over these thirty square meters of greenery. Exhausted from this routine, I woke up in the morning and rushed to the garden. This time, it was the peonies who spoke to me: "Mr, help us; we are all sick." Irritated, I left the garden to call my friend, a landscape architect. Suddenly, the plants all cried out together:

"Sir, water alone is insufficient,
Vitamins alone are insufficient,
O gentle hands, touch us,
O magnificent eyes, admire us,
O attentive ears, hear us,
We want your love... your attention... your emotions... We want you..."

Touched by these words, I made the right decision to settle in Mr. Li's house. I took care of this wonderful garden, which once again became the most magical in Paris.



Fatima Slim 2024 GRAMMYS

CELINE DION SURPRISES THE WORLD WITH A SPECIAL APPEARANCE

Producer Ben Winston told the audience before the GRAMMYS started that they would be in for a special surprise because there will be an unexpected presenter for the night's last prize, Album of the Year.

It was none other than Celine Dion, who had stayed away from the spotlight since being diagnosed with stiff person syndrome.

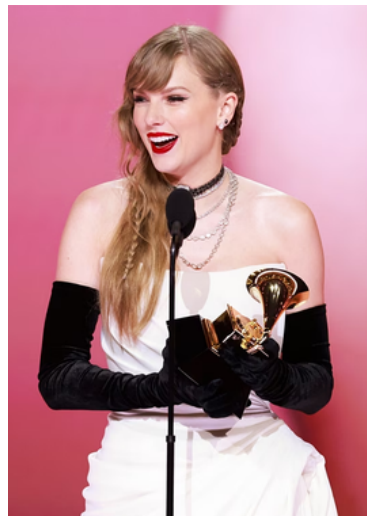
She stated, "When I say that I'm happy to be here, I really mean it with my heart," Dion said. "It gives me great joy to present a GRAMMY award that two legends, Diana Ross and Sting, presented to me 27 years ago."

She presented the award to none other than Taylor Swift.

TAYLOR SWIFT BREAKING THE RECORD

For Taylor Swift, it was a momentous evening in many ways.

She started the evening off by taking home the Best Pop Vocal Album GRAMMY for *Midnights*, her 13th overall (13 being her lucky number). Even though fans were waiting impatiently for her to announce *Reputation (Taylor's Version)* in the GRAMMYS, Swift surprised them with something better: a new album! *The Tortured Poets Department*, her eleventh studio album, would be out on April 19 to celebrate the achievement.



"I would love to tell you this is the best moment of my life, but I feel this happy when I finish a song or crack the code to a bridge that I love or when I'm shot listing a music video or when I'm rehearsing with my dancers or my band or getting ready to go to Tokyo to play a show," she said. "The award is the work. All I want to do is keep being able to do this."

With her highly anticipated fourth Album of the Year victory, for *Midnights*, to round off the evening, Swift broke the record for the first GRAMMY artist with the most AOTY nominations ever, winning it 4 times: in 2009 for *Fearless*, again in 2015 for *1989*, then most recently in 2020 for *Folklore*.



SZA

SZA amazed the audience with her performance at the 2024 GRAMMYS. SZA, who has already won a Grammy Award, has the most nominations for an artist at the awards ceremony this year. Among her nine nominations are:

Album of the Year and Best Progressive R&B Album for *SOS*

Record of the Year, Song of the Year, and Best R&B Performance for "Kill Bill"

Best R&B Song for "Snooze"

Best Traditional R&B Performance for "Love Language"

Best Melodic Rap Performance for "Low"

Best Pop Duo/Group Performance for "Ghost in the Machine" with Phoebe Bridgers.



WINTER'S SOLACE

by Yasmin Haidar

As I lay upon the windowsill, the glass becomes a portal to a realm adorned in ethereal white. I watch strangers walk through the park. Winter whispers its presence into the air and digs its freezing fingers into the earth, but still, people roam the frosted trails. Lovers, families, friends... Companionship is a warm tapestry of emotions. How lovely it must be to have someone to not mind the cold with. My heart shatters down to where you left your permanent mark as you faded, never to be put back together by any other crumbled piece. Having your heart on your sleeve feels like holding your breath underwater, and it feels like I'll never reach the surface. It feels like you're always waiting for the next shoe to drop. It feels like no matter how hard you try to erase our glimpses together, they always come back with vengeance. It feels like the tears are rushing in. It feels like a wave of nostalgia that hits you in earnest. It feels like mourning. It feels so impossible. You're my Roman empire, and I hate myself for letting us crash and burn. I watched as we went up in flames and I walked away without leaving

a trace. I hate myself for letting us slip through the cracks of time and space. I hate myself for not knowing what I had before I got lost. I should've known that forever is so futile, there's only the present, nothing is infinite and the longing of beginnings is beautiful because it will eventually die. In the midst of winter, I found within me an invincible summer. Nothing makes sense anymore, the ocean is red and the sky is green; it's the overflow of your blood that feels so pure, that white color spilling from your youth.

***“How lovely it must be
to have someone not to
mind the cold with.”***

Almost reborn but now with another, both blossoming into one flower and being showered by the same rain. Unfortunately for me, things have started to make sense again, the sky and ocean are back to being blue. As for the sun, well, it's the most saddening golden yellow. In the wreckage of what was, the pain is not a mere ache but a relentless storm, tearing through the tender fabric of what we once called "us". After pain and longing, I held tight to my hope which says you and I... yet I was the only one breathing. Perhaps this is what you call hurt, perhaps this is what you feel when your heart shatters. There's no sound, no noise. Plain and ugly silence, just the loud beatings of your heart and the void you lie in. Staring at the wall, I wonder if perhaps this is love; perhaps love is nothing but hurt.

QUALITIES OF GOOD LEADERS

“Time Well Spent” by Georgio Hanna

A grandfather learned one day that his grandson had abstained from reading, and even wanted to burn his library. He found his life with his friends where he spends his time playing cards, or in front of his computer.

The grandfather, therefore, called his grandson and told him, “I want you to build me a **house of cards**.” The grandson was ecstatic to fulfill his grandfather’s desire, and as a result, he spent the entire day building the castle with care and precision.

Once the construction was finished, the grandson admired the beauty of his work before calling his grandfather. The grandfather came, and suddenly, he crushed the castle, and destroyed it with a single blow. This provoked **anger** in the child; he turned as red as a tomato...

Irritated, he asked his grandfather, “Why did

you destroy my castle? I hate you!” The grandfather, calm and wise, replied, “Oh, my darling, you told me that you had built this castle for me, according to my request and my desire. I then have the right to dispose of it as I wish...” The grandson, however, continued to cry and cry...

A few minutes later, the child gasped, out of breath, “How can I see all my efforts, wasted on building this castle, disappear in the blink of an eye?!” The grandfather continued in a sharp tone: “Are you really sad that your efforts were in vain? Wouldn’t we all be sad and suffering if we wasted our time? Isn’t time a wealth?” The grandfather, thus, said, addressing his grandson: “All the greatness of this world is not worth our precious time, nevertheless, we waste it in fun and games...”





THE END.

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