



invictus

VOLUME III
sequentis

**BILLABONG HIGH EPS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
THE HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT**

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Letter From A Tragedy

Sociology

Jumana Shahid, 11A

In the wake of the tragic suicide of one of our townfolk, we recovered a letter from the victim. Her last words are as follows:

Children's laughter was a common sound that echoed throughout the streets. At one point of my life, I thought that it such a pleasant sound to hear; I likened it to the sound of wedding bells.

Years had passed since I first moved here, since that thought first came to me. But, as the years passed by and made my body brittle, the thought morphed into something darker.

It didn't start instantly – but, like, happiness, it slowly sneaked in, never noticed until it was too late. That feeling of joy grew bitter over time. What used to bring a smile to my face started bringing frowns and tears instead. The very thing that gave me hope – the very thing I wanted the most but never had – was what was slowly killing me inside. I moved here with my husband, as newly-weds, ready to take on the world together. How wrong I was!

I didn't notice it at first... but I snapped out of my trance, facing the harsh reality

of my life. I could not continue to delude myself to how my husband – who had professed his love to me with such sincerity before – changed. I had been blind, and only now was I seeing the real him.

While I waited in the cold house and kept dinner warm for us, he would return late, smelling of alcohol and various perfumes. While I stayed alone, he sought out other company. While I turned away men offering friendship and help, he left me behind, without a care, to his nightly rendezvouses.

Patient though I was, even I could not keep all my feelings bottled up. But showing my dissatisfaction proved to be a horrible mistake. He lost his temper.

He began with a cold calmness, dismissing my very existence, reducing me – his wife! – to a slave. Then the words grew louder, clearer, the wounds digging deeper. And it escalated to physical violence, leaving my body scarred and bruised.

More than once, I had thought of running away, but I never acted upon it. I foolishly believed this was just a phase.

That he would return to being the man I fell in love with. I waited, and waited, and waited – in vain. And I realised I had to do it. I just couldn't deal with it any more.

At long last, I ran away.

For a whole month I was happy, living without my husband. I made friends. I had an existence separate from his. Yet, all the while, I harboured fear that he would come after me. I hoped that he wouldn't, but the fear remained. I knew, in my heart-of-hearts, that he was too stubborn to lose something he considered to be his possession.

The day it happened was terrifying. I was drifting off to the sound of pattering rain drops on the roof, lulled to the point of dreaming. Just as sleep descended, I was jerked awake by the sound of the wind, and the smashing of wood as someone ripped the door off its hinges.

What happened next is not something I can bear to recall. Suffice it to say that, by the end of it, I gave up completely... I gave up on him,

I gave up on the love we once had, and most of all, I gave up on myself. On life itself.

So I end this letter, with this: all I ever wanted was a happy life as a writer, and a mother, faithful to my husband our child kind and healthy. As it turned out, my existence was a far cry from this dream of mine.

And yet, though I suffered cruelly, I hope someone finds this letter. The picture attached with this letter is—was?—my Love. Please find him, and help him. Help him become a better man.

“
Good-
bye, and
thank
you,
stranger.”

International History Bee and Bowl

History Quiz Competition, Abu Dhabi



The History Bee and Bowl team from BHIS

Day One – 15th March, 2017

On the first day of the trip, we spent our time resting after our journey and studying for the quiz. We had been up early, and arrived at our hotel in Abu Dhabi around 6pm. Everyone was tired, but excited to have arrived and to start preparing.

Billabong High's teams for the International History Bee and Bowl travelled to Abu Dhabi and Dubai in the UAE over the course of five days. Our group consisted of two teams; the Varsity team and the Junior Varsity team. After our arrival in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday, the 15th of March, we participated in the competition on the following Friday, and spent the rest of our trip sight-seeing and celebrating the Junior Varsity team's achievement. It was an incredible excursion.

Day One - 15th March, 2017

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Day Two - 16th March, 2017

Both teams spent the next day the same way. Now that we were fully rested, the group was working hard to make sure we were all set for the competition the next day. Apart from our practicing, the day was uneventful – we stayed in our hotel all day.

Day Three - 17th March, 2017

On Friday, we arrived at the Brighton College of Abu Dhabi at about 9am. Our teams were as excited as we were nervous, though as the competition began and then progressed, our confidence grew. The quiz was incredibly fun and a great learning experience. We met students from schools in Abu Dhabi, explored the vast campus, and even competed between our two teams. To top it all off, we left the competition with a win in second place for the Junior Varsity team.





Day Four - 18th March, 2017
Now that the event was over, the team went on for a tour around Abu Dhabi and Dubai on the bus. We visited the beautiful and massive Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, and went to the top of Burj Khalifa, the tallest building in the world.



Day Five – 19th March, 2017

The next day, we visited a mall to do some shopping before our main activity for the day, which was the desert safari. The safari was an awesome adventure – we drove over sand dunes, rode a camel, enjoyed a barbecue dinner, and watched performances of belly dancing, a fire show, and more.



Day Six – 20th March, 2017

Everyone was sad to be leaving Dubai on the last day, as we had had such a great time on the trip. At the airport, the teams got to explore the duty free section for some time before indulging in a meal from McDonalds and boarding our flight back to Male'.

Ages of Revolution

Senior Arts Fest 2017

Aminath Eema Asim, 11A

Every school has that one feature that is seen to be “striking” which ensures it stands out from the rest of them. It perhaps even gives them an identity. Billabong High’s unique feature and event is undoubtedly the Annual Arts Fest. Since 2015, it has been the single most successful event to be held in the school, and has increased in prominence with every passing year. The idea behind the Arts Fest is to create a “humanities haven” in Billabong where Arts students, as a minority, have a platform to explore the varying and eye-opening strengths of History, Sociology, Travel and Tourism, Global Perspectives, and Geography through a range of activities. This includes small-scale events such as charades, speeches, and quizzes, to the intense debates, poetry recitations, and of course, the iconic rap battle at the very end.

This year’s event was on the theme “Ages of Revolution,” where both students and teachers dressed up as characters from differing revolutionary ages, including the French Revolution, waves of feminism, and even the feudalistic era. After weeks of planning and overcoming tedious obstacles, we began the event with a speech that highlighted the significance

of Humanities, both as individuals and as a school, for refinement of the world. The BHIS Humanities Department was also proud to inaugurate its blog and magazine – the one which you are perusing today – called *Invictus*, meaning unconquered.

This was followed by the quiz and charades, where students from grade 9 to 12 faced questions that were a combination of all Humanities subjects at once. A mix of the simplest and trickiest questions surely held the mood in the school hall, which was magnificently decorated with canvases of historical eras that matched perfectly with the hanging fairy lights and dyed cloth from the ceiling.

A good hour or so of quiz and charades called for a break, during which we lined up to take photos and polaroid pictures of our costumes, as well as to prepare for the more energetic events up ahead. With renewed vigour, we returned to the fest with the next event: poetry recitation, with the topic being “women and labor,” during which students delivered heartfelt poems regarding the hardships women face as laborers. A few tears were spotted in the audience as well! With tough competition, 3 places were

awarded to well-deserving participants, making poetry perhaps the most prized activity of the day. Then, lunch was served at last – a huge thank you to the caterers that filled the void in our tummies!

After this event was the debate, during which our best debaters came up on stage and presented various arguments regarding the statement: “Is Communism practical?” This broad topic displayed several opinions on the popular notion of Communism and Socialism that many of us seem to be sharing memes about. The competitive mood amplified further with the next event, impromptu speaking, which displayed a considerable amount of talent. Students

imitated characters – one participant almost fell off the stage during her impersonation!

The day came to an end with the epic Rap Battle. Now let me state a thing or two about Billabong and rap battles. The infamous rapping came into being in 2015, and since then we have never missed the chance of showing off the “rap god” skills. Thus, as expected, it was a blast with Hitler rapping against Putin, Blackbeard and Maynard hitting off some verses, and Karl Marx and a millennial dissing each other. We surely couldn’t have had a better end to Ages of Revolution, which in turn became a pretty revolutionary day itself.

Ancient Civilisations

Junior Arts Fest 2017

Imaan Suhail, 9A
Zuhura Ismail, 12A

The Junior Arts Fest of 2017 was based on the theme of ancient civilisations; students dressed in costumes based on a civilisation of their choice, like the Greek, Roman, and Chinese civilisations of the past. A few students arrived dressed as pirates, and even as Queen Cleopatra.

Like the senior arts fest held a while before, this fest also consisted of activities like rap battles, quiz events, and charades. The most memorable rap battle took place between Layath and Aya, who were dressed as George Washington and King George the Third, respectively.



Women and Labour

This year's theme for Spoken Word Poetry, Women and Labour, was chosen to highlight the experiences that women have in the workforce, the idea of women working in a professional capacity having come about only within the last 100 years. However, through the poetry written by the students, it becomes clear that the workplace is not the only setting where women are made to do labour.

1st Place: The Quiet Revolution

Sarah and Eafa

A woman's scream fills the air
"One more push!" echoes the doctor
And with a final bellowing cry, the exhausted new mother collapses backwards.
"Congratulations," chimes the nurse, holding a brand new life in her hands, "It's a girl!"
And the woman?
Well, the woman sighs.

The only thing she can truly say, considering the society she lives in, is, "Oh, I'm so sorry, baby girl."
Her baby girl is going to grow up into a world
Where she will be labelled 'lesser'.
Her baby is going to grow up, thrust into a world where she will be pushed

to someone she doesn't recognize.

Her baby girl-her precious baby girl- is going to grow up without knowing who she really is. Without knowing who she really wants to be. What she really wants to do. It's not fair, it really isn't.
But what can she do about it? What can she do to make her life easier?
Nothing. Nothing, but fight. To make things right.

Why? Why, you ask?

Because her daughter could be part of the 65 million girls in the world who aren't in school.
Because her daughter could be part of the 17 million of whom will likely never

go to school in their lifetimes.

Because her daughter could enter the workplace and only earn 83% of what her brother will earn for the same work.

It's inequitable.

She's going to go to hell and back to fight for her daughter's rights, to work and to be. She's going to bang her fists on the doors that keep stopping her from being who she wants, she's going to kick and scream for her daughter to be able to be who she wants to be.

When her daughter's nametag reads 'NOT GOOD ENOUGH', bruised fists blooming red with blood from trying to shatter the glass ceiling-she will fight that barrier that is stopping her, she will fight to get what she rightfully earned, what she deserves and what many other women do. She will fight to make a difference.

Because of this wretched pay gap, this blatant marginalization of women in the workforce, the complete unfairness of it all to the women who work hard to earn, to support.

A century. Since the 1900s, this inequality has been prominent to the women around the world. A century; a century that could have been spent rearing the dragons in our girls' bellies instead of teaching them to extinguish their scorching flames, to manicure their salient claws, to shut up and look pretty.

You can ask why again. Now sit down, and let us tell you.

It is because in the 1940s, it took 16 million men leaving their jobs to fight their wars, for female participation in the workforce to reach the highest it had ever been. It is because through the 1950s to the 1970s, during the roots of the Quiet Revolution, women's education was still belittled. Even though it became more common that women were finally able to go to

college and pursue a higher education, they only did it to get a husband.

Yikes!

They were expected to be tied down to marriage, to home life, along with the expectations of going to work. The so-called MRS degree as in, "missus".

Even if, or when, she finds a husband, has a family, and has a job, her life will become a balancing act; Oakley's Triple Shift comes into play and this means triple the work, triple the shame; trying to juggle the jobs, making an effort to be the perfect wife, to become the flawless mother, to become the 'ideal worker'. She becomes a circus act with the patriarchy as her ring master.

So this poem, this speech, thus calling, us is for the women who handle their wolves, who handle their lions and their fire with unwavering will and defiance. The belladonnas who are not just a Quiet Revolution but a loud one; the ones who speak too much and love too loud. This is for the women who came, who saw, who conquered, with their soft, fierce flowers; bloomed in the face of adversity; resilient rivers as much as they are the ocean, as much as they are the storm.

“
Any society that
fails to harness the
energy and
creativity of its
women is at a huge
disadvantage in
the modern world.

Tian Wei

2nd Place: Her Clock

Ahna, 11A

She gave birth to her firstborn 'cause she walked the aisle, and the hand on her clock stopped as her work of nurture began for her first born child. She just walks into that room, a smile on her face and groceries tucked into her arms, she heads for the kitchen 'cause THAT, THAT is where she belongs. The breadwinner hands her money to buy bread, 'cause he needs her to be well fed, and all she has to do is smile and do her work 'cause that is her duty, and as Meghan Trainor says, all he has to do is tell her she's beautiful so she can get that special lovin'.

She expects no pay for the work she does 'cause isn't that just barbaric? Would you look down on her if she took that money from her husband? For doing housework? Oh well, isn't that tragic. To cook, clean and feed, isn't that her job? I mean, 'cause aren't trophy wives hot?

The look on your face doesn't seem so pleasant, I'm sorry did I anger you? Does it make you resent? If so then listen up. Remember that feeling and take a leap into your verstehen. Imagine yourself in her shoes. 'cause she can't seem to get out of hers, 'cause they're stuck in the kitchen just as her clock that hasn't moved.

She can't move and her lips unable to form words 'cause oppression is right in front of her screaming at her face, maybe once he heard, will he show her grace? She cries for freedom so he gives her freedom to go out for work, but at what cost? At what loss? Equal rights is what he claims as she goes for work. Yes she works, works, works, touching the glass ceiling she still works. Same occupation, but less recognition. At the end of the day she picks up her child from daycare

and drives home only to meet another nightmare. Her clock is stuck, she's still at work. There seems to be no luck, she turns to her parents, they think it's a joke.

Yes she's back to square one, no complaints. She cleans and cleans until there are no stains. She cooks for her husband and child, smiling once again the burdens pile. She's told that her life is a gift, but Anne Oakley screams 'Triple Shift!'.

The sound of the car pulling up and her hand immediately goes for the food, preparing the table neatly for her husband coming back from work. Tired, he sits down and smiles at his wife, telling her the food was good. And she does back to work once again to put a blanket on her sleeping child. Not done with work the clock still stuck. She goes back to wash the dishes in the sink that's piled. She looks are the distorted image of the clock, in which the hand is forever numb, her house holds no comfort as she works till dawn not knowing when to stop.

Once again she gets up within a few hours of sleep to her child's cry, wondering when The Clock's hand will move, no one hears her cry. Her husband wakes to see their child in her arms, sees nothing wrong. Smiling, he shuts off the alarm. The perfect image he sees, she thinks it's distorted but her lips are shut as oppression speaks. Same thing yet again, he eats breakfast cooked by his wife, and she says 'have a good day' but she doesn't need one back 'cause she knows she want to fight.

The clock still stuck her work began, she looks at the hand that hasn't moved much like her work that never ends. A woman she is, declared the society.

To confirm, sparks her anxiety. Her work is insignificant, 'cause she's just a wife and once again society screams, 'it's just your life'.

Her desire to fight earns her no dollars, 'cause in the end oppression fights and her words she swallows. Her story goes unheard, like many others that are sealed, wishing the clock of labour to change and the hand to move, so once again she can feel.

Her desire to end the never ending cycle, for the hand to move once again to escape the reality of a woman's title.

A woman she is, and so as a woman she works. The hours on the clock mean nothing due to the constant labour she performs.

The same reality is faced by other women, labour doesn't stop as their clocks have also seemed to halt.

“

Women are always saying, 'We can do anything that men can do' but men should be saying, 'We can do anything that women can do.'

Gloria Steinem

3rd Place: I May Not Be A Labourer

Imaan Suhail, 9A

I may not be a labourer – but if i could change society, the nation, the world, one word at a time, I would dedicate this to all the women, the female labourers, those who do the chores at home, and those who are doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects – those who spend long working hours, and still manage to keep a balance with their housework...

I dedicate this to my aunt, who is a single mother and has been a nurse for forty years. I dedicate this to my mother who is a wife, a mother, and teacher. I dedicate this to all the women who challenge

society's stereotypes – these women are the ones who move mountains despite being told that they were born fragile.

I may not be a labourer, but I wonder why women are defined by stereotypes that build up like bricks on concrete... Suddenly all your dreams fall down to your feet, the stiffness in your muscles as you stretch become society's expectations, and your plans seem so out of reach.

I dedicate this to every woman who has been told she is too emotional to run for CEO, or that she is too weak to do

physical labour. There are labourers who are called too sensitive, or sentimental. They say, 'Maybe you should consider filling up cups of coffee for those who enter the office instead.'

There are labourers who are separated from the rest by the length of their skirts, or whether there is a veil around her head. It seems that these days respecting a woman comes from whether her dress reaches below her knees. Segregated by a glass ceiling that lies above, this is not just a feeling of isolation – this is the inequality that is displayed from how women's wages are 24% less than men's. Equality enclosed in cages – will we ever see it break free? Tell me, if equal pay is a human right, and every woman – mother, sister, daughter – remains deprived of this right, does that imply that we are not human? I may not be a labourer but I would like to mention that generations of women have fought for the same rights we are still fighting for today.

Women have the power to change a nation, but why are there so few in decision-making levels? Only 22% of parliamentarians globally are female, and 62 million girls worldwide are denied education. And why are there only five female parliamentarians out of eighty five in this country? I may not be a labourer, but there are women battling their way out of the labels they are put under.

Those who are referred to by their gender and not profession – she is every photographer known only as a female photographer; she is every salesgirl, receptionist, secretary. It is as if being a working woman often comes as such a surprise that it places a female under a different category. I would like to question all the people who have doubted the abilities of a woman, simply because the expectations of the community have overshadowed her like a tall tree.

Do the curves on a woman's body really illustrate the extent of her capabilities? Women carry heaps of wet clothes, piles of files filled with documents – and in the end some don't even read it, because 'a woman wrote it.' Women carry stacks of washed plates as a result of hours and hours of unpaid labour that most people forget to appreciate.

I may not be a labourer but someday, I will be. And I hope to grow up with a part of every woman who has fought for rights, against stereotypes, those women who have done it with pride. I hope to grow up with fragments of every woman who has been a president, a revolutionist, a working mother. I hope to grow up to be as independent, influential and inspiring as my mother, Frida Kahlo, Emmeline Pankhurst, Rosa Parks, Sally Ride, Oprah Winfrey, Maya Angelou, Margaret Thatcher, Jane Goodall, and Rosie the Riveter.

“

There is no limit to what we, as women, can accomplish.’

Michelle Obama

Pawns of Today

On 26th April 2017, world-renowned Northern Irish poet Cat Brogan visited BHIS to share her experience with young literary-minded students. After an interactive workshop session of two hours, each student shared the lines they came up with to create one collaborative poem, **Pawns of Today**:

I'm trapped in a circle, running in 360 degrees,
Searching for solutions like the cure to some disease.
Too afraid to go off on a tangent and find a new equation,

I need to have a think and make some revision.
Too much stereotypes kill mentality,
But make a strike and bring back reality.
Give your best and kill anxiety.
Give it a try and do it honestly.

The sun disappeared as if it never existed.
But as time passed it slowly started to break through,
The sun went down, my world plunged into darkness
Because you left, the others but shined brighter:
They offered little comfort, waiting in the darkness
For you to rise again, because even though you're a
million miles away,

You light up my whole world.
Play the game of life like you're playing basketball.
Win at life and you become a champion;
If only life was easier as it in the cartoons.
My dreams were crushed as a building would be
wrecked.

My life is a blank page
That I am too afraid to fill in,
Because once the words come out,
I can't bring them back in.
Who are you?
What makes you believe what you do?
And who are the others, to dictate what you believe
in?

Who are the others, to tell you;
Who you are?

It seems as if the whole universe is living their lives
Around a battery-operated clock; confining ourselves
to
The twelve digits we use in a desperate attempt to
convince ourselves
That we are in order, we are normal, we live like every-
one else.
But why do we glorify uniformity?
What if I don't want to conform to meaningless digits
and live my life through numbers?
People laugh at things that are funny.
Does that include beliefs?
People laugh at things that are funny.
Am I funny?
People laugh at clowns.
Am I one?
To people who create life,
I am their clown:
In the game I play, they laugh.
They say, I am like a clown that plays on the court.
My shots are considered a failed juggle.
Am I a clown? Or is life framing me to be one?
Why am I funny? I just play.
Life gave me its position to entertain.
Why don't I just be boring? Life wouldn't make me a
clown.
It seems that the world is in a state of hypnosis,
Carving us into fragile statues.
No one bats an eyelash at the coldness,
Even if you were as appealing as a sculpted master-
piece,
Sat in a museum, worth the nation treasury.
It seems as though we need a manual for living and a
manual for beauty:
It will tell you the requirements needed to be success-
ful.
Fix your body, they will say,
You don't look right, they will say,
And I'll believe it.
Pretty, gorgeous,
Fabulous, amazing,
Hot, they will say,
As if I'm just some microwave that heats up take out I
have on a Friday night.
Am I a microwave?
No, I am a person,
And that's more than enough for me.
My heart took a leap
And it felt like I jumped off a cliff,
And realized I had wings.
My thoughts are pounding in my head,
Feelings rushing through my veins like blood.
Life is not worth living

If people want to change
Who I am,
Or who I want to be.
Stress is a hand choking you,
Preventing you from breathing the fresh air of free-
dom.

Life is like an exam
You learn new things
You're expected to fail
But I'm going to win
And I will prove everyone wrong
By bringing back full marks.

Living History

History

Zuhura Ismail, 12A

Beneath the stars I sit and dream
Of distant shores beyond the stream,
And wonder when I shall behold
A moment that may be retold
For generations yet to come
When all my days are gone and done.

Consciously Comatose: Desensitisation in the Information Age

Sociology

Lyn Abdul Hameed, 11A

The other day I got a BBC notification on my phone: “at least 68 children among 126 killed in bus bombing.” I didn’t have to read any further to know that this article was about the Syrian Civil War. Unapologetically, I swiped the notification and diverted my attention to ‘more important’ things – my Instagram likes, my email, and who had tagged me in memes on Facebook. You know. The things that actually affect me, and thus the things that actually matter.

Yes, there was an underlying feeling that would have, I suppose, felt guilt if I’d bothered delving into the hollowing pit in my stomach (that seemed to fill itself up in seconds). But I’m also pretty sure that my subconscious decided this matter wasn’t worth mulling over. After all, the war going on in another part of the world has no direct effect on me, right? Life goes on. What bothers me, looking back now, is how nonchalant I was about this despite being the person who used to

constantly read content about the crisis in Syria and share those articles on my social media. Yeah, I’m that person.

Or so I thought.

This phenomenon, as I coincidentally learned in Sociology class a couple of days later, is desensitization. Google defines it as ‘**the diminished emotional responsiveness to a negative, aversive or positive stimulus after repeated exposure to it.**’ It applies to just about everything: war and violence, global warming, the Kardashians, even clickbait like ‘you’ll never believe what happens next!’ or ‘dermatologists hate him!’

And I have to admit that it does make sense. Constantly having the same thing cutting into your newsfeed like a persistent, sharp knife will make you indifferent to it. **Humans, it seems, detest uniformity (even when it comes to modern day genocide).** That is the only

theory I can possibly muster to explain why so many important issues go unrecognized in this day and age. It's an ironic coincidence that the height of purposeful ignorance dares to exist in the so-called 'Information Age' – where one can dig up the most elusive of information at lightning speed.

So why do we continue to do this? Yes, there is the whole psychological aspect of desensitization but what about people who are aware of their own negligence and make no attempt to change this? Is it simply because we lack sympathy? Because we don't relate to or understand the gravity of these situations? I highly doubt it. After all, we are humans and we usually choose to believe that what sets us apart from other animals is that we are empathetic creatures (an ironically primitive concept which, by the way, is slowly being denounced with more scientific discovery of animals having empathy. So much for mankind being the special little snowflakes!).

No, I believe that the reason why we choose to ignore the plight of the Yemeni or the systematic injustice faced by people in other parts of the world, for example, is because we are fatalistic creatures. We think that there is no point in getting involved in things that don't affect us. Most people away from the conflict think that surely, there must be someone else more powerful, wealthy and accessible who can help these people. Pin your guilt onto an unknown entity to make yourself think there's nothing you can do. This is also, by the way, completely normal. The more privileged part of the human race has come to develop a dependency culture, where the bystander effect (**when the presence of others discourages an individual from intervening during emergencies**) runs notoriously. This cycle has been bred over generations and generations of

purposeful ignorance, so it is understandable that a person is conditioned to ignore everything that happens around them.

However, the cycle needs to be broken. As descendants of said Information Age, we need to take it upon ourselves to gain back our empathy and try to make a difference in any way we can. The pen is mightier than the sword, and in this case, our pen is our presence and voices. Our paper? Our social environment. Online platforms like blogs, social media, online petitions. Even the tiniest effort could make a difference, if one is persistent.

It was William Shakespeare who said, "all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." This was sociologically explained by a man called Erving Goffman, who deduced that people are simply acting in accordance with the roles assigned to them: daughter, wife, mother, Instagram meme account owner. What both of these two men have failed to highlight in a more important manner is the roles an actor takes on by themselves. Most of the time, these are not assigned or enforced. A free spirited hippie. A social activist. A cycle-of-desensitization breaker. So watch that video of war footage. 'Angry' react when you see something that enrages you. Share that article that moved you and tell people about it over your coffee dates and family dinners, too.

The world is not going to wait for you, so don't wait for the world.

“
It starts
with you.

The Final Act

Sociology

Zuhura Ismail, 12A

The director pronounces me theatre material;
He means I am a prodigy at telling and living lies,
And I am inclined to agree:
Acting is second nature,
For I live life as I would a play.
How many have I fooled
Into thinking I am like them?
Wear a costume, discard it, pick another;
Slip from role to role with ease;
Speak rehearsed lines for every scene.
I go through the motions
Dictated by false emotions.
None of it is genuine.
I am directed from backstage,
Following every tug and pull
Of the puppeteer's string.
This is someone else's life, not my own—
Sometimes, I have a strange desire
To ruin it completely, rip it apart.
But I don't. The string pulls me away.
Stories are so difficult to build,
Whispers the director chidingly,
It would be a shame to knock them down.
I am detached, impassive,
Yet I seem to breathe life
Into this fictional facade;
Why else do people think I am real?

I am not real. People just don't know it
Sometimes I wish they did, though.
It would save much trouble.
I would be free of the invisible strings
Tugging me this way and that
In movements that displease me.
I want to sing my own song,
Dance my own tune.
Tonight is my final act;
I speak my last lines on this stage.
And after I take a bow, looking out
At the sea of glittering lights and watchful eyes,
I discard the costume one last time,
Shrug out of this imprisoning role,
And write my own lines.
No more capes, no more makeup—
Just my own monstrous visage:
The face of grim reality.
The audience stares at me, aghast,
For they have believed the lies
I fed them for so long.
Their illusion has been shattered;
The fourth wall is broken.
To see me anew is a horror to them—
But what do I care?
This theatre—
Actors, director, audience, and all—
Will one day burn to the ground,
And I the match that would set them
aflake.

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