



Pen Chart



In this Issue

FOR IT MUST BE READ

The Picture of Dorian Gray
Hidden Pictures
The Magic Strings of Frankie Presto
The Cheerleader
The Poppy War

TAKE A LOOK ITS IN A BOOK

The Bell Jar
My Friends
The Room on the Roof
Animal Farm

SONGS THAT WERE SUNG

Eternal Flame
Made in Japan

FOR THE GOOD TIMES

Enola Holmes - A Movie Review

PERSPECTIVE

Experience is the Best Teacher

LYRICAL

Was All This Even True
Not Every Flower is the Same
The One who Outshone the Stars

ECLECTIC



For it must be read

Set in the hedonistic world of Victorian London, Oscar Wilde's 'The Picture Of Dorian Gray' is a haunting masterpiece of Gothic literature that portrays and examines the thin line between high society and moral decay. Here, Gray is a young man of flawless grace and extraordinary beauty, whose life was forever altered by a painted tribute to his own beautiful exterior, rotten to the core. The narrative unfolds through a trio of complex characters. Basil Hallward, the idealistic artist, creates the portrait as an expression of his artistic devotion. However, the cynical Lord Henry Wotton acts as a tempter, a 'mephistopheles' figure who corrupts Dorian with witty, dangerous epigrams, seducing him into a decadent lifestyle where sensory pleasure is the only goal. While he remains anatomically pretty and unaged, his portrait, a hidden mirror of his conscience, turns hideous with every sin he commits. Wilde uses this miraculous metamorphosis to highlight a society that appreciates 'seeming' over 'being'. The downfall of those around Dorian show that when beauty loses its authentic character and becomes detached from morality it becomes a hollow mask of nothingness.

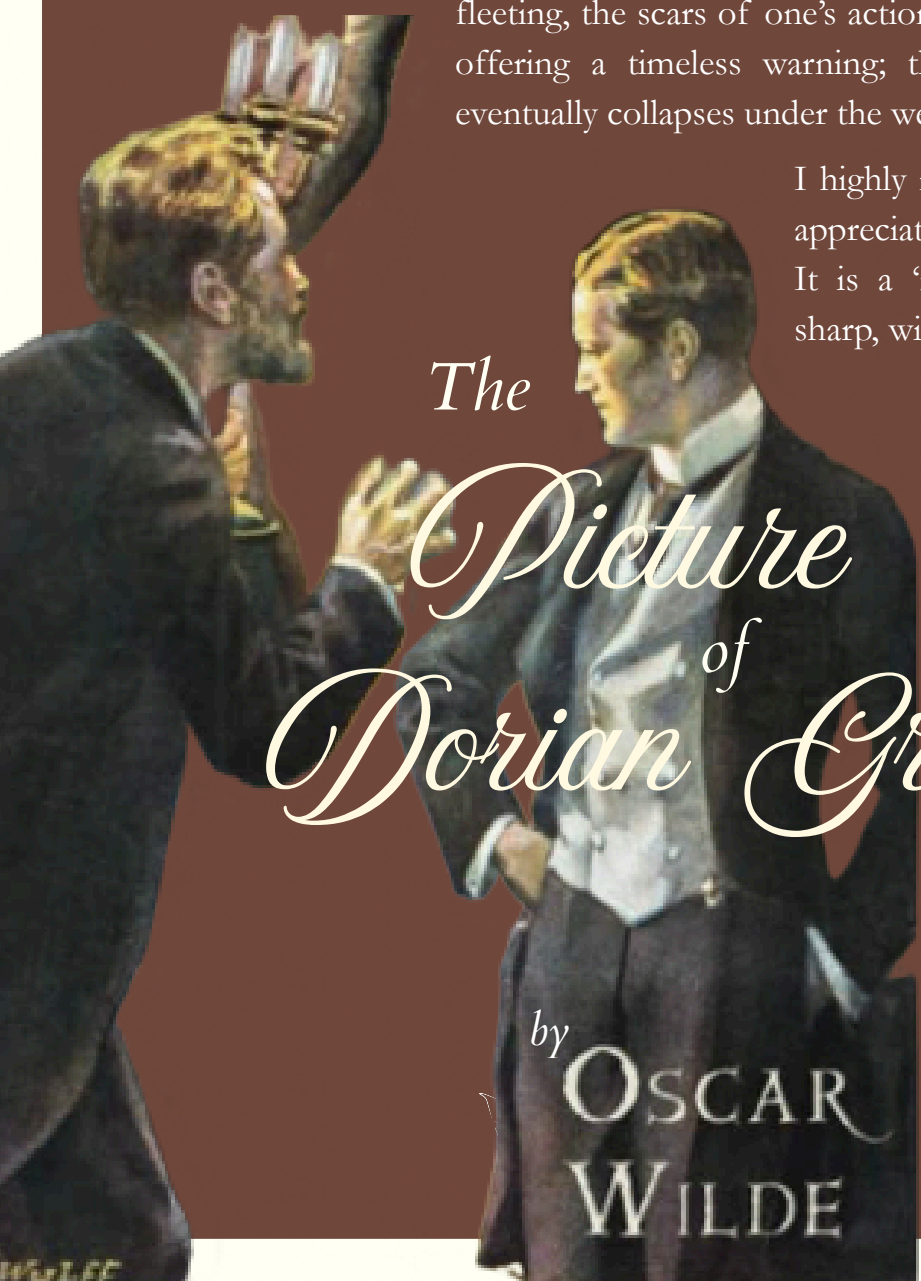
When all is said and done, the novel is a profound psychological study of the human condition of self-obsession. It concludes that while youth is fleeting, the scars of one's actions are permanent, with Dorian's downfall offering a timeless warning; that a life lived purely for the surface eventually collapses under the weight of its own corruption.

I highly recommend this book to any reader who appreciates Gothic fiction or philosophical drama. It is a 'must-read' because it perfectly balances sharp, witty dialogue with a dark, suspenseful plot.

Beyond its literary prestige, it provides a fascinating look at how internal choices shape our character, making it deeply relevant to the modern world.

~ Indapher Gisele

XII HA

An illustration showing Basil Hallward on the left, wearing a dark suit and a crown, painting a portrait of Dorian Gray on the right. Dorian is also in a dark suit, looking towards the artist. The background is a dark, textured brown.

The Picture of Dorian Gray

by
OSCAR
WILDE



Hidden PICTURES

For it must be read

A NOVEL

by

Jason
Rekulak

It is a story filled with past mistakes and trauma. It starts with Mallory, the protagonist who is looking for a second chance and comes across a job for being a live-in nanny. She wants to start afresh after having a life filled with chaos and other things, but little does he know what awaits her at the doors of the Maxwell family consisting of Ted and Caroline Maxwell and their five-year-old son, Teddy, a shy boy who loves to draw. Teddy's sketches are eerie and suggest a supernatural presence. She informs the authorities after much suspicion but gets accused of imagining things due to her past.

What makes the book interesting is Mallory's resilience. Rekulak masterfully crafts a powerful metaphor with Mallory being a long distance runner for her journey.



She pushes her body to the limit to stay grounded, reminding us that "we don't know how much our bodies can endure until we make cruel demands of them." The novel explores the dark side of being a perfectionist and the theme of Class and Power.

As we come to the end, the author makes a shift from a traditional supernatural "ghost" mystery into a dark, grounded psychological thriller. For many readers, the shift from "supernatural" to "human horror" is not their cup of tea. However, I loved the suspenseful atmosphere and the twists as the story unfolded.

~ Trisha Jaiswal

IX D



For it must be read

The Magic Strings of Frankie Presto

by
Mitch Albom



*B*orn during the beginning of the Spanish civil war, Frankie Presto was destined for greater things. With a very tough start to life, Frankie eventually found himself in the care of a great, yet very tortured musician, El Maestro.

Although he was blind, he was a master of his art, a guitarist, virtuoso and through some very troubled years. He passed on his knowledge to young Francesco and sent him out to the world, as Frankie Presto.

The author beautifully portrays Frankie Presto and his journey as he leaves Spain tucked away in a boat with his guitar and, unbeknownst to him, some very special guitar strings. His love for music and his talent lead him on a voyage that spans many years, countries, bands and people.

Like most musicians, he faces hardships and various challenges but his love and dedication to music had immense power to change and save lives.



One of the other characters is Aurora York – he chances upon her in his childhood as she hangs from a tree and, for Frankie, she is the first and only woman from then on. All things considered, *The Magic Strings of Frankie Presto* is testament to Mitch's love for music. With Music as the narrator, the story is filled with musical references and metaphors. This is a unique approach as it is one of the few books written from not the protagonist or third person point of view but music itself. Many people may describe music as a selfless gift or like medicine. Whoever makes it, does so for someone else to appreciate but as a musician, I disagree because I think music is very selfish. Even though we share our talent and art with the world, we mostly do it for ourselves and use it as a form of expression.

~ Zoya Kharchandy

X D



For it must be read

THE Cheerleaders

by Kara Thomas



The Cheerleader is an extremely powerful story of a teenager Monica, and her journey of discovering the murder of her sister and four other cheerleaders in her town. Driven by her unique style of writing, Kara Thomas flips back and forth between Monica's investigation and her sister, Jennifer's point of view during the month where all four cheerleaders passed. Though the police shut the case five years ago along with their family's intimacy, the young girl weaves through her hardships because of her determination and her longing for the truth.

It shows the daily struggles of a teenager's mind, along with thoughts that seem too mature to share with her friends. With Monica's family breaking apart, her friends distancing themselves, and her living a double sided life, she finds a girl Ginny who seems different from the others.

The story develops as both friends indulge into the murders, uncovering a series of truths too shocking for families to accept, as the teenagers fight both their minds and against the society's set ruling of her sister's death being a "suicide".

Young adults who enjoy true crime or thriller will not stop flipping through the pages as the action and climax builds on.



~ Aanavi Ghosh



X D

The poppy war by R.F. Kuang, is a historical fantasy novel published in 2018 by Harper Voyage and runs into 545 pages with the story being set in the 'Nikara Empire', a fictionalised world heavily inspired by 20th-century China and the Second Sino-Japanese War

The story revolves around Fang Runin, shortened to Rin. She is a child surrounded by poverty who is determined to escape her arranged marriage by studying rigorously to pass the Keju exam, which she does, and enrolls into the Sineward Academy. In Sineward, Rin discovers her shamanic powers, particularly her connection to the Phoenix, and learns to train them under the guidance of Master Jiang. Rin's powers are crucial to the plot of the story as they act as the leverage

THE POPPY WAR

against winning the war created by the rising tension between her country and the Federation of Mugen.

I highly recommend this story which shortens the narratives of the Opium Wars and the second Sino-Japanese wars into a highly enthralling fantasy series following themes of colonialism and identity. The book totally captivated me with the author's vivid imagery of the historical event with an essence of fantasy, blending the two with great expertise.

~ Ashwika Mahanta



X



The Bell Jar, is the only novel written by American writer and poet, Sylvia Plath, published in 1963 with 244 pages, under the pseudonym "Victoria Lucas". The novel is supposedly a semi-autobiography with names of places and people changed. The book revolves around the protagonist, Ester Greenwood, an undergraduate college student and her descent into mental illness, running parallel to Plath's own experiences.

Ester Greenwood is a talented college student who suffers a mental breakdown during a prestigious summer internship at New York. During her time there, Ester seems neither stimulated nor excited about the 'big-city' lifestyle and activities that her peers seem to adore and put on a pedestal. She is seen often reminiscing about her time back home, and is usually anxious, detached and disillusioned by her glamorous lifestyle as well as the choices she makes. Upon returning home, she is faced with extreme career disappointment and eventually attempts to end her life following which she is admitted into a mental institution where she finally finds her will to live and gives her career a second chance.

The book has a special place in my heart and is a must read classic for teenagers as themes of mental illness and feminism are discussed with great detail. Many readers, including myself have connected with Greenwood's character, who is unlike usual protagonists' in most novels, thus creating a more relatable environment for all.

THE BELL JAR



by Sylvia Plath



My Friends

by
Fredrick Backman



My Friends by Fredrik Backman, a New York Times Bestseller is a heartfelt novel that explores what the true meaning of friendship, belonging, and emotional connection is. The story focuses on a group of people whose lives become deeply connected through shared experiences, struggles, and moments of understanding. Through their relationships, the novel shows how friendship can help people face difficult situations and find hope. Backman's ability to create realistic and relatable characters is truly remarkable. Each character

has their own personality, fears, and dreams, which makes them feel human. As the story continues, readers slowly learn about the characters' pasts and the reasons behind their actions. This slow build up helps build emotional depth and keeps the reader engaged into the story.

Backman combines humor, sadness, and warmth in a way that makes the story feel touching and enjoyable. The author often reflects on human emotions and relationships, making readers think about the importance of empathy, loyalty, and understanding.

Another important theme in the novel is how people who feel lonely or misunderstood can find comfort through friendship. The characters support each other through their challenges, showing that true friends stand by one another even during difficult times.

Overall, My Friends is a moving and thoughtful novel about the strength of human relationships. Fredrik Backman successfully reminds readers that friendship can be one of the most powerful forces in life.



Take a look it's in a book



The *Room on the Roof*

by
Ruskin Bond

The story is set in Dehradun (referred to as Dehra) in the Himalayan foothills of Uttarakhand, India, during the post-independence era of the 1950s. It is a coming-of-age story about Rusty, a 16-year-old orphaned Anglo-Indian boy. The setting highlights the theme of a young boy's search for identity and personal freedom in a post-colonial Indian landscape.

The story was one that left an impact on me. Rusty lives in a very disciplined, lonely household in Dehradun with his strict guardian, Mr. Harrison. The turning point of the book is when Rusty finally rebels, runs away, and starts discovering the "real" India with the help of some local friends he meets in the bazaar.

What I liked most was how relatable Rusty felt. Even though the book was written a long time ago, that feeling of wanting independence and trying to figure out where you belong is something everyone goes through. When he moves into the tiny room on the roof, you can almost feel the heat of the summer and the excitement he feels being on his own for the first time.

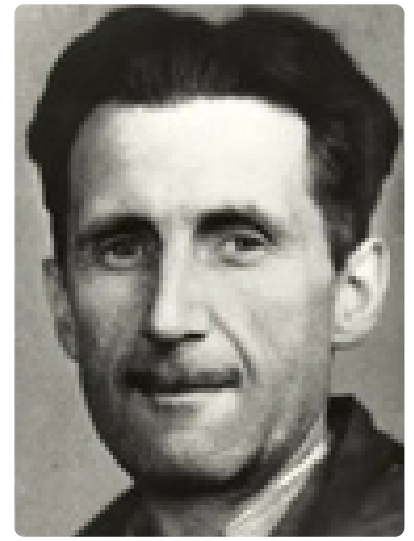
Bond's writing style is very simple and easy to follow, but he is great at describing small details. He makes things like eating spicy chaat or watching the rain feel vivid. The friendships between Rusty, Somi, and Ranbir felt very strong. They didn't ponder much about his background; and accepted him for who he was. The ending is bittersweet because Rusty must face growing up and the reality of life, but it leaves you feeling hopeful about his future. I would suggest it because Bond's writing is not too fancy or complicated; he just focuses on the small, beautiful details of life.

~ Aastha Potsangbam 

X C

Take a look it's in a book

ANIMAL FARM



by George Orwell

*A*nimal Farm by George Orwell is a short yet impactful political allegory that examines power, corruption, and inequality. The story revolves around a group of farm animals who rebel against their human owner, hoping to create a society based on equality and justice. Initially, their dream seems achievable, but over time, the pigs, who assume leadership, begin to exploit their power, ultimately becoming as oppressive as the humans they replaced.

Orwell uses simple language making the novel easy to understand while conveying deeper political meanings.

The book is widely regarded as an allegory of the Russian Revolution and the rise of authoritarian rule under Joseph Stalin. Each character represents different social and political groups, allowing readers to connect the story with real historical events.

One of the novel's greatest strengths is its timeless relevance. It highlights how ideals can be manipulated and how those in power can distort truth to maintain control.

~ Jael M. Konyak
XII H'A'

The gradual change in the commandments, especially the line, "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others," reflects the hypocrisy that develops within the system.


In conclusion, Animal Farm is a compelling and thought-provoking novel that combines simplicity with deep political insight. Orwell effectively warns readers about the dangers of unchecked power, making it a must-read for anyone interested in literature and politics.






Eternal Flame

Eternal flame, released in 1989, is a soft ballad by the all girls American pop-rock band, The Bangles, which became a number-one hit in nine countries, including Australia, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The title of the song symbolises the eternal flame at Elvis Presley's gravesite at Graceland. The song, with its tender melody and lush harmony, borders on melancholy and tugs at your heart. The opening soft piano notes and Hoffs' crystal clear vocals with a trembling vulnerability make the song one in a million. The tempo is moderate, in quadruple time, performed in G major and the bridge modulation at "Say my name/ Sun shines through the rain." leads to the crescendo with the layering of voices soaring to an orchestral style finish. The song's intense focus on Hoffs and its production contributed to the band's tensions leading to their temporary break up. However, this song is highly recommended for old souls who appreciate lyrical metaphors and soulful melodies.

~ Abigail R. Pudaite
XII S'A' 

Made in Japan

Made in Japan, a 1972 single by Buck Owens, marks his last number one on the country chart as a solo artist.

~ Badapbiang Kshiar
XII H'A' 

The track exemplifies the Bakersfield Sound, seamlessly integrating traditional country with innovative elements. Its distinctive melody, based on a major pentatonic scale, introduces an "Eastern" quality that feels fresh without veering into exaggeration. Enhanced by Don Rich's remarkable guitar work, the song transcends its simple three-chord structure, creating a catchy, memorable tune. Lyrically, it diverges from typical themes of fleeting romances, instead depicting a poignant story of a man yearning for a woman bound to another, infused with a sense of nostalgic longing. Initially, the song incited some controversy due to post-WWII sentiments surrounding cross-cultural romance. However, over time, critics have recognized its genuine honesty and ability to capture a multicultural love story amidst heartbreak. Ultimately, "Made in Japan" epitomizes Owens' artistry, blending his characteristic country style with universal themes of love and longing that resonate across cultural boundaries, capturing emotional truths that continue to resonate with listeners today.

For the Good times

ENOLA HOLMES 2

Enola Holmes 2, released in 2022, is a mystery film and a sequel to the first Enolma Holmes movie released in 2020, both of which star Milly Bobby Brown as the title character, the teenage sister of the already famous, Sherlock Holmes. The film is directed by Harry Bardbeer.

The movie follows a series of mysteries and twists. Enola Holmes opens her own detective agency, but is not taken seriously unlike her famous detective brother Sherlock Holmes, and struggles to find clients, only to be hired by a factory girl to find her missing sister, Sarah Chapman. Bessie takes Enola to the match factory, which at the moment, is experiencing a deadly disease match factory strike, eventually teaming up with her brother Sherlock and Lord Tewkesbury to expose the truth and stop the true culprit. Enola thus begins solving the codes hidden in the poem, leading to hurdling adventures where Enola encounters multiple obstacles leading to an eventual arrest.

This movie, based on Nancy Springer's book 'The Enola Holmes Mysteries' is all about feminism and how Enola proved herself without the help of her brother. She is the youngest of all her siblings and shows to be the most courageous and a great detective, Enola and Sherlock help each other with cases and Enola's detective agency is soon full of people who trust her.

I epecially enjoyed the movie because of the exciting plots with a whimsical and feminist essence to it. I feel the movie revolves around a unique idea, and would definetly recommend it to young adults who are intrigued by themes of mystery.



Lyrical



The **One** that **OUTSHONE** the *Stars*




Chimes of broken tunes
fall across a solemn blue,
bones ache in hollow rhythm,
My mind's own sacred algorithm.

Lilacs bloom in silent grace,
Still chasing your fading trace.
I walked for miles, far from the start,
searching for a path drawn in my heart.


But it was only when I looked above
I found you— in the stars I love.
The brightest light was not in the skies
but in the gleam within your eyes.

My heart now blooms for fields in spring,
but none outshine the warmth you bring.

~ Tenzin Choening
XII H'A' 

NOT *Every* **FLOWER** *same*
is the

Not every flower is the same
It is phantom-like, paradoxical -- as rare as blue
real as it seems, it remains a fantasy until
you are awakened.
you remember; it was luminous,
but lost in the shadows it had created.
It looked easy to grasp, it was unattainable.
ventures like those are truly rewarding.

~ Rudrakshi Bharadwaj 

X D



Was All This Even True?

The sunlight in those days felt like a gold leaf,
But now I wonder if it was just a trick of dust.

Those days when we promised each other,
That we would never go quiet,
Never forget those memories we spent
together
Which were both memorable and painful.

The more I look back at how it was,
The more it feels like an unknown part of my
life.

Why did we leave each other?
Life surely had other plans for us.
Each one of us took different turns
And left for our journey of life.


The memories we spend together were
Quickly vanished behind a screen turned
black
When I look back, I ask myself
Was all this even true?





Experience *best* is the teacher

P
ERS
PEC
TIV
E



As someone who has always felt the need to question the most basic of understandings, the statement “nature is the best teacher.” always felt off. To be a teacher is to educate a person. Learning can happen at any age, there is never an end to it. And though there may be a lot of ‘good’ teaching elements, nature is not the best of them. Allow me to tell you what is-- experience. Experience isn’t when you have lived to be a hundred years old, but rather the roots of what you do daily. Even the smallest of things, be it subconsciously or consciously, stems from the experience of an individual.

If you take the instance of a toddler, when she waddles for the first time and falls back, the trees aren’t the ones helping the child, but experience is; by teaching her how to balance. Our life may seem very long, but think of the moments that led you to where you are standing today, and you will find a thousand things you could do differently.

The thousand things affect your tomorrow without you even realising how powerful your errors were. Think about the first time your friend wronged you, the first time you stepped on stage, the first time you won a medal; all of these are experiences; the only true element allowing evolution of an individual. You may have talent and potential, but without experience, you are like a bud that is covered by sepals-- you are inutile.

True, nature does teach you tranquility, peace, calmness amidst violent storms, but only an individual who learns from their journey would know how to imply these teachings into their lives. It is essential to understand that your journey, or shared experience is the parent of learning from which sub roots like nature may emerge. However, to take nature as the ultimate teacher is a fallacy and disrespect to the cruciality of the lessons our journey teaches us.

~ Anavi Ghosh



X D

E C L E T I C

IF PUNCTUATION COULD TALK...

PERIOD / FULL STOP



"I'm done. That's the end of the thought."

EXCLAMATION MARK



"This is exciting! Surprising! Urgent!"

QUESTION MARK



"I'm curious. Can you explain that?"

COMMA



"Hang on — I'm just catching my breath."

SEMICOLON



"We're still connected — but it's a new idea."

COLON



"Let me show you what I mean: here's the list."

QUOTATION MARKS



"I'm just repeating what someone said."

APOSTROPHE



"That belongs to someone — or it's a contraction."

BRACKETS



"Let me add a little something on the side."

PARENTHESES



"Here's a quiet extra thought."

DASH



I'm jumping in with emphasis.

ELLIPSIS



...and there's more I'm not saying."



Types of Imagery in Literature

1. Visual Imagery

Appeals to the sense of sight.

- e.g.: "The sky glowed with streaks of orange and pink."

2. Auditory Imagery

Appeals to the sense of hearing.

- e.g.: "Waves crashed loudly against the rocks."

3. Tactile Imagery

Appeals to the sense of touch.

- e.g.: "Her sweater felt soft and warm."

4. Olfactory Imagery

Appeals to the sense of smell.

- e.g.: "The room smelled of fresh lemons."

5. Gustatory Imagery

Appeals to the sense of taste.

- e.g.: "The soup tasted rich and salty."

6. Kinesthetic Imagery

Appeals to movement or physical action.

- e.g.: "His legs trembled as he ran uphill."

7. Organic Imagery

Appeals to internal sensations.

- e.g.: "A heavy sadness settled in her chest."

8. Symbolic Imagery

Uses images that represent deeper meanings.

- e.g.: "A rising sun symbolized new beginnings."

The Odyssey

Homer, 8th Century BCE

Summary

The hero Odysseus is shipwrecked on his way home from the Trojan War. While he has been away at war, his home was overtaken by raiders intent on marrying his wife, Penelope, and who ravage his home and lands. To stall the suitors, Penelope weaves a tapestry, which she undoes every night. Finishing the tapestry would mean she must choose a suitor, and she believes her husband is still alive.

Odysseus encounters many trials on his way home. Freed from Calypso's island and aided by Athena, he passes through the island of the Lotus eaters and Cyclops's island, defeats Polyphemus the Cyclops, goes through the land of the dead and past the Sun god's island.

When he finally returns home, he and his son Telemachus defeat the suitors, and Odysseus reclaims his position and his family in Ithaca.



Allies



Enemies



Themes & Motifs



Breaking the rules of **HOSPITALITY** bring misfortune and the anger of the gods.



Odysseus struggles with his men's **LOYALTIES** on their journey, but his wife is forever loyal.



Odysseus's **WIT AND CUNNING** is his greatest asset in escaping his trials, not his strength.



There are many **TESTS** on the journey from Troy to Ithaca.

Editor - in - Chief : *Tenzin Choeing*

Editor - in - Design : *Vidhi Chopra*

Mistress - in - Charge: *Ms. Tammana Seth*

Patron : The Headmaster, The Assam Valley School

Publisher : The Assam Valley School

Balipara

Asom -784101

Disclaimer :

The opinions and views expressed by the writers are their own
and not necessarily endorsed
by The Assam Valley School

** Images courtesy Google

Penchant

An English Publication