

RESULTS



VERSION 2

WRITE 
A SHORT
STORY



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1-	Nehal Faisal	Jury	Karachi
2-	Rsnia Zubair	Jury	Lahore
3-	Rania Wattoo	Jury	Islamabad
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WINNERS:

Break of Dawn

Dear Diary,

The last two months have been traumatic. Wait not two months it feels like a year! There is no sign of life on the street. Islamabad is under a partial lockdown. The paramedics are risking their lives to save ours. My day starts at 9:00 am every day. I remember the old memories and say to myself "now I would have been in school if this fatal virus wasn't here. Now I would have been going home from school if this fatal virus wasn't here. Now my days would have been better if this fatal virus wasn't here" but life isn't always like rainbows and we should never stop hoping for the best. Staying home and helping your parents isn't a loss of liberty, it's a voluntary sacrifice which we are making for our community because that is the only way we can stop the spread of COVID-19. We should donate to health care and appreciate the work of our medical workers.

Our future which we don't know is in the hands of All-Knowing, Allah. This virus is sent as a test to all from Allah and He will never leave us alone in burden as He is the Most Merciful and Forgiving. Belief in Allah makes you feel safe as you know He is always with you and He is the Creator and Master of the Universe.

After this pandemic says good-bye to the Earth forever, I would finally be able to go to school and meet my old friends and teachers. We would come back to our daily life and routine. The world would be colorful again and there would be love and peace everywhere. We will have to focus more on our studies as a lot of studies were left.

After the pandemic, the world will not be at ease. It will be hard for people to find good jobs, our economy rate will decrease, export will decrease and unemployment will increase. It will be hard to settle but as time changes everything will get better.

Life is never the same. COVID-19 has pushed us all on a different path. Our lives after this pandemic will surely change. I will surely reduce the number of handshakes and hugs. I will try not to attend community events. I will keep distance among people e.g. if an elevator is full of people I will not use that to save my time but will use

stairs instead. Now I can't forget SHOPPING!!! As it's a tradition in Pakistan that whenever there is a sale people rush to the stores and there is a crowd of people in the shop. Online shopping would be preferred because you can find all the products at one place and don't have to search for them from shop to shop. The same thing goes for home delivery of food products. I will accomplish these acts because COVID-19 isn't the first and the last virus. We should always be prepared for the worst because prevention is better than cure.

We have to create the silver lining and for that, we have to stop wanting to go back to our old lives and make our present a better place.

Diary I am writing this so the future generations know the sacrifices we made and how much we struggled during hard times but never lost hope.

Love,

Eshal Kundi

Prompt Submitted By

Name:Eshal Kundi

Age:13

City:Islamabad

Darkness in Dies

On the 25th of April, Maria heard a news, "Young and middle aged people barely sick with COVID19 are dying of strokes". Suddenly Mr. Adam, father of Maria entered into the room and asked Maria, "hey Maria what's going on" Maria was laughing so much. Maria dear why are you laughing? Wow ! Dad you have to laugh, now government requests us to shut down ourselves in bloody dark houses so that it may not be possible. After a while, somebody knocked at room who's there? Maria asked, Maria I'm your brother here, may I come in? Oh of course Ahmed you can come here. Dad what's going on ? "You guys hang out of home during lockdown like the rest of the country" but Maria still laughed and saw the face of her dad and asked excuse me dad! if I have no chronic condition I am feeling fine then how I can lock down myself? "what are you doing Maria". Are you in your senses?

Suddenly grandma shouted at Adam and Maria came and sat with me "you don't know what's the meaning of laughing on those

patients who are fighting against chronic disease" Now listen, "the man was among several recent strokes patient in their 30s to 40s who were all infected with the coronavirus" these strokes can be catastrophic". Please Stop"spreading panic, grandma said Maria, this virus is just like influenza or like a small disease. Mr. Adam saw Maria's face and said, do you know Maria the reality behind coronavirus is that " Our ALLAH(SWT) is angry with us that's why corona pandemic is a punishment from ALLAH(SWT) "evil begets evil" if I continue in my evil ways I will shortly be overtaken by evil. So we all have decided to change ourselves. Maria started weeping, what we did dad? She asked. Dad told Maria, "In the whole world there is no more equality ,justice and people do bad to others so every individual has to change himself and pray to ALLAH (SWT) for forgiveness .We all have to stay at home and sanitize ourselves. We should pray daily and cry for our sins in front of ALLAH. We cannot fight with corona because everything is under the control of ALLAH (SWT)", dad and grandma went away from room convinced that" cycle of deeds always gives us back what we give to others" then Maria said ,yes dad !I remembered saying of ALLAH(SWT) in Quran ." And Ayyub A.S when He called to his Lord "saying, "Haram has inflicted me and YOU are the most merciful". This is the reality which grandma told me today, Maria thought herself "every disease is like exams for us so we have to have faith in ALLAH(SWT)", when asked to adopt precautionary measures react insensibly saying that we are Muslims having full faith in ALLAH(SWT), then virus will not affect us".

Prompt Submitted By
Name:Eshal Shaukat
Age:9.7
City:Faisalabad

The Lessons of Covid-19

(My topic is COVID-19) I had been taught that life is unpredictable terrain and every curve, every turn, every step I take will bring new challenges and storms. Some will give me pleasant lessons and others will make me realize harsh truths of life. I have experienced these lessons first hand and with guidance and help of my family and friends they felt like a breeze. Through their unwavering support I was able to come out of every storm without a scratch, each

time learning something new. I thought I was prepared for every storm life could muster. However, I was wrong. I was not at all prepared for this storm I currently find myself in the middle of. Even the word sends chills down my spine. "COVID-19"

My life was normal, I had loving parents, amazing friend's, A+ in all subjects, free to explore the world and rebel. I was very close to my parents, especially my Dad. To me he was the greatest man to ever walk the earth. He was a police Captain "Captain West" and the best in the area. The greatest thing about him is that he always made time for family and always gave great life advice. Unfortunately, all good things come to an end.

A few months ago, we heard news about an outbreak of a lethal pandemic called COVID-19 spreading like wildfire and leaving a trail of bodies in its wake. This is the point where my life turned upside down. As this disease was highly contagious, I stopped seeing Dad. He had to continue his job and got overly burdened by it. Come hell or high water he always managed to call everyday. My school shutdown and we were all put under lockdown. Groceries were washed before use, I became a prisoner in my own house.

Mom was always pushing me to eat healthy, to keep washing my hands and giving me long lectures on how to keep myself safe. This was a huge change from the carefree happy spirit I once called mom. Now all I saw was an overprotective mother always worried for the safety and health of her husband and child.

I barely got to talk to my friends. Whenever I tried to talk to them, they always seemed depressed and downhearted. We were all craving human interaction.

The worst part for me was the news I received from mom. She got a call from the hospital telling her that Dad had been infected with COVID-19. I breathed a sigh of relief when she told me that it was mild but I was still worried. We got to talk to him occasionally but even that was becoming rare. Slowly my worst nightmares were coming true. Dad had gotten worse and was now on a ventilator.

About 2 weeks ago we got a call from the police department. Hoping for some good news I picked it up but what I heard crushed my soul into tiny fragments. My hand was shaking from shock and disbelief. Mom saw me and asked what was wrong. I turned to her and broke down. I hugged her and my tears slowly soaked her shoulder. When I calmed down a bit, she asked again and I repeated the words the officer told me, my voice still shaking. "Hello, this is Sergeant Smith speaking. I am sorry to inform you that Captain West has fallen prey to COVID-19 and has passed from

this world. I am sorry for your loss"

The news had shaken me to the core. I could not believe that my father, the most loving and caring person in the world had died. They did not hand over his body and we could not even give him a proper burial. Mom tried to be strong for the both of us but I could tell that even she was not taking it very well.

A few days later, we received a letter from the police department. They said that the letter was for us from Dad. Mom and I sat on the couch and I started to tear the envelope. The letter read:

"To my amazing family,

It has been a tradition in my family to pass on some words of wisdom before one passes. And I would like the both of you to instill this message in your minds.

Experiencing loss is a part of life, some people lose the harmony in their relationship, some lose hope, others lose patience, some lose their certainties and some have nothing to lose. Good things come to everyone. Expect the unexpected and embrace it. When we grow, we lose things often but fortunately we also win some. Each first time is an adventure and who knows how far these adventures will take us. Yes, the road can sometimes be winding, you might even get lost along the way but with the help of the right people you will always find your destination. As we grow old, we realize that life does not always give us the gifts we hoped for. I would have loved to tell you both of all this in person but if you are reading this then it means I have already lost the battle of life. But you mustn't be scared and you mustn't be sad. As I was telling you at the beginning of this letter experiencing loss is a part of life but it does not define it because what really matters is not whether you win or lose it's the ability to accept change in ourselves, its accepting that even if life doesn't give us all the gifts we hoped it would, the real gift is life itself."

I could not help the tears that flowed down my cheeks but I smiled nevertheless. My mom hugged me silently reassuring me that Dad will always live on inside our hearts. Outside the sunset marked the end of the day but we all know that after every night there will always be light.

Prompt Submitted By

Name: Iman Omar Khan

Age: 13

City: Lahore

Jury Selected Stories

Sometime, prison is good place

On 24th April, At Night

.Jason was playing games in his Ipad like always, his Father shouted from there Sitting room, "Jason Jason come and give me a glass of water, I am doing my work, "I am playing my games dad, Please you take it from anyone else" Jason replied. His Father said, "You know nah that your mother is gone for shopping, come" Jason says sadly, "Ahh OK" When Jason went toward the kitchen anyone knocked the door. His Father shouted, "Jason Check the door!!?" Jason said "Why always i have to do the work of this house!!!!!!!!!!" Quietly. When he opened the door Jason's mother came in with empty hands and went in there sitting room with tension on her face. Father asked Jason, s mom "Why didn't you bring anything anything???" Mom replied, " You didn't watched the news, The patients of Covid-19 are so increased that the government has putted a strict lock down and that why all the markets, shop and parks are closed," Jason said, " Huh, I am saying that tomorrow is Sunday and we will go to a park, I don't care about lock down or broke down" Father said sadly, " Sorry Jason we cant do anything lock down means that we cannot go outside of our houses and well all the parks are closed" Yes he is right" Mom Supported Jason's father. Jason was quiet for a while and then he started laughing so loudly, " HAHHAHAHAHA" Dad and Mom were surprised and then his mother asked Jason, " Why are you laughing sweet heart???? Jason replied, " I am laughing because dad said That we have to stay in this house, this Prison, Really what a joke, Still I will go outside tomorrow, no one will stop me" And then he went to his room and slept.

Next day,

Jason was just teasing his parents that I have to go to park, but they were not listening.

After some time, Jason,s Father shouted on him, " Jason Its Enough go to your room or I will!!! GO!!!" After his fathers one line he went

crying in his room. Jason was bored that is why he took his Ipad and he opened Google,
And what did he saw All the stories that comes from google were only about Covid-19 he was shocked,
All he was thinking that the Pakistan lied about Covid-19, He searched the countries affected from Covid-19 and how many people are dead from Covid - 19.

After Reading this all he went to his parents and said them," Sorry mom and Dad I was wrong. We should stay at home because of Covid-19.

His Mom said," Now you understood that
PRISON IS ALSO GOOD SOMETIMES

THE END

Prompt Submitted By

Name:Nehal Faisal

Age:7

City:Karachi

میری کہانی میری زبانی۔

ماں تو ماں ہوتی ہے۔ کچھ سال پہلے کی بات ہے جب میں پانچ سال کی تھی۔ ہم سب ڈاکٹر کے کلینک پر بیٹھے ہوئے تھے۔ میرے چھوٹے بھائی خضر کی طبیعت خراب تھی۔ ہم اپنی باری کا انتظار کر رہے تھے۔ اچانک میری نظر ایک پانچ روپے کے سکے پر پڑی۔ میں نے وہ سکہ اٹھا لیا اور اس کے ساتھ کھیلنے لگی۔ امی نے مجھے آواز دی رانیہ سکہ واپس رکھ دو۔ مگر میں نے واپس نہ رکھا۔ پتہ نہیں کب کھیلنے کھیلنے وہ سکہ میرے گلے میں پھنس گیا۔ میں نے امی ابو کو بتایا۔ میں بہت رو رہی تھی۔ ابو نے مجھے الٹا کیا مگر سکہ باہر نہ نکلا۔ امی بہت پریشان ہو گئیں۔ ایک طرف بھائی بیمار اور دوسری طرف میں ڈر اور درد کی وجہ سے رو رہی تھی۔ ہم نے جلدی سے ڈاکٹر کو دیکھایا۔ ڈاکٹر نے کہا آپ اس کو لے کر جائیں اور ایکسری کروائیں۔ خضر کا بس گلہ خراب تھا۔ ابو نے خضر کو نانو کے گھر چھوڑا اور مجھے لے کر ہسپتال گئے۔ ایکسری سے پتہ چلا کہ سکہ کھانے کی نالی میں پھنس گیا ہے۔ امی نے مجھے ایک منٹ کے لیے بھی ابو کو نہیں پکڑایا۔ وہ کچھ پڑھ کر مجھ پر پھونک رہی تھیں۔ ڈاکٹر نے امی سے کہا کہ اس کو کچھ نرم چیز کھانے کو دیں۔ ام نے مجھے نان اور کیلا کھیلنے کی کوشش کی مگر مجھے الٹی آ جاتی تھی۔

امی بہت زیادہ پریشان تھیں۔ امی ابو کو بار بار کہہ رہی تھیں کسی اور ہسپتال دیکھا دیں۔ ہم اس رات تین بجے تک ہسپتالوں کے چکر لگاتے رہے۔ سب نے کہا کہ رات گزار لیں۔ ہم صبح نکال دیں گے۔ ڈاکٹر نے بس ایک احتیاط کا کہا کہ جب بھی میں کھانسی کروں تو خیال کریں کہ کہیں سکہ سانس کی نالی میں نہ چلا جائے۔ یہ سن کر امی اور زیادہ پریشان ہو گئیں۔ جب مے روتی امی بھی رونے لگتیں۔ ہم نانو کے گھر آ گئے۔ ساری رات امی مجھے گود میں لے کر بیٹھی رہیں۔ میں بہت چھوٹی تھی مگر مجھے یاد ہے کہ امی پوری رات جاگتی رہیں اور میرے لیے دعا کرتی رہیں۔ صبح صبح ہم ہسپتال گئے۔ ڈاکٹر کو دیکھایا اس نے کہا آپریشن کرنا پڑے گا۔ ڈاکٹر نے امی سے کہا کہ آپ کی لا پرواہی کی وجہ سے یہ ہوا ہے۔ امی کو بہت غصہ آیا۔ امی رونے لگ گئیں۔ تھوڑی دیر میں ڈاکٹر مجھے لے کر گئے۔ جب مجھے ہوش آیا تو امی میرا ہاتھ پکڑ کر بیٹھی ہوئی تھیں۔ میرے گلے میں درد تھا۔ ایک

دن بعد ہمیں چھٹی ہو گئی۔ ہم گھر آگے۔ امی نے مجھے پیار سے سمجھایا کہ آئندہ ایسا نہ کرنا۔ میری امی میری جان ہیں۔ میں ان سے بہت پیار کرتی ہوں۔ اگر کبھی ان کی طبیعت خراب ہوتی ہے تو میں ان کا خیال رکھتی ہوں۔ ان کی ہر کام میں مدد کریں ہوں۔ ان کی ہر بات مانتی ہوں۔ ماں تو ماں ہوتی ہے۔

Prompt Submitted By

Name: Rania Zubair

Age: 8

City: Lahore

My Covid-19 Updates

31 December 2019

Dear Diary,

I just overheard mom and dad talking about something and there were a lot of pneumonia cases. Apparently, these cases were in China, and now there is a 'novel coronavirus' identified. All I know is that it is a disease. I hope nothing bad happens. I honestly feel bad for the people. Like last, last Social Studies class I learned about the 'Black Death'. What if it's just like that? Or maybe even worse? I think this is WAY too early for me to die. I don't wanna die. Anyways, I'm just gonna ignore it. I don't want to get too stressed out.

4 January 2020

Dear Diary,

Yay! It's a brand new year! But off with a bad start. WHO (World Health Organization) even reported on Twitter about a lot of pneumonia cases, but thankfully, no deaths. Oh my god, I'm thinking of the worst scenario cases! What if this is the start of the end of the world? What if... I die?! Oh, God. But no, I'm gonna stay at home all day and watch Netflix. Anyways, my little brother wants to play hide and seek. I love that cutie!

5 January 2020

Dear Diary,

Oh no. WHO just published the first Disease Outbreak News about the virus. I don't even know what to say. This is getting scarier and scarier. The government is telling us to stay calm but, how can we stay calm?! I mean there is a new disease slowly spreading around the world and we should stay calm?! Anyways, I have to eat dinner now, it's nihari and biryani! My favorite!

10 January 2020

Dear Diary,
Today Li Wenliang, Chinese ophthalmologist and coronavirus whistleblower, started having symptoms of a dry cough. Poor guy. I'll update if he turns out okay or not. By now, Google is FILLED with Coronavirus this, COVID-19 that. I mean, I think that we should stop hearing this virus's name for a while; too bad that's not going to happen. I'm going to go and relax. For some reason, my hands have started hurting because of writing so much.

12 January 2020

Dear Diary,
China just shared the genetic sequence of the COVID-19. I got that off the WHO website. I think this will help us during this disease-spreading thing happening. Thank God it hasn't spread anywhere except China. Unfortunately, China and Pakistan are very close to each other. Does that mean it could spread here too?!

13 January 2020

Dear Diary,
OMG! There is a confirmed case of the COVID-19 case in Thailand, which is the first recorded case that took place outside of China. Now it's really spreading. It's getting worse and worse. What if it turns out to be a Global Pandemic? I guess we'll have to find out. But I don't want to find out. Why is this so scary?!

23 April 2020

Dear Diary,
WOW. It has been a while since I've written something down. The Covid-19 is now a Pandemic. There are millions of cases around the world, and most of the cities, including Lahore in lockdown. There is an online school, which is much, much easier. I hope I can survive this. It is more and more serious day by day. A four-month-old baby was also diagnosed with COVID-19. Millions are also dying. May God be with us.

Prompt Submitted By

Name: Rania Wattoo

Age: 11

City: Islamabad

Dear Diary,
Today Li Wenliang, Chinese ophthalmologist and coronavirus whistleblower, started having symptoms of a dry cough. Poor guy. I'll update if he turns out okay or not. By now, Google is FILLED with Coronavirus this, COVID-19 that. I mean, I think that we should stop hearing this virus's name for a while; too bad that's not going to happen. I'm going to go and relax. For some reason, my hands have started hurting because of writing so much.

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Prompt Submitted By

Name: Rania Wattoo

Age: 11

City: Islamabad

Nature Rejoices

It was the time of the year when her children would depart to seek life. In the gold and green of the renewed world, they would soon be swept away by the wind and rain upon the Earth, carried along by their fluffy parachutes, small and almost invisible. And then the ones who were fortunate would lightly, without ceremony, land on the soil, and would turn into something magnificent, if the conditions were right. The rest would bid their time until the world was right for them. That, or they would just die.

The willow tree had had a long life. She had spent it-apart from the usual business of sustaining life- observing the primates who lived near her. They were the tall, hairless kind. The kind that sometimes killed willows. But our willow wasn't scared of being killed, she had learned that they tended not to kill the willows living in their gardens.

This year our willow noticed that many of the humans (this was what the hairless primates called themselves) had vanished. There were some of them around, and these covered their faces.

The willow, of course, was a tree, so she did not understand that catastrophe had befallen the humans. That all of humanity, all of the self-proclaimed apex of creation, was meekly hidden away from a predator rather smaller than a thousandth of a grain of salt. That the beings who were able to map out the infinitude of the cosmos were faced with their naked finitude. The willow did not know that everything was postponed until further notice. And if we are honest, the willow couldn't care less. For the willow, it was business as usual.

And so our willow rejoiced as her offspring flew into the world. She rejoiced at her new delicate leaves. The newborn life shimmered gaily with gold and lively emerald. The small, restless sparrows welcomed spring with spritely song. And the green claimed the dusty ground, one blade of grass at a time.

And so our willow rejoiced at yet another birth of the world, indifferent to the one that fell apart.

Indifferent, to the sorrow of humanity at the serene apathy of Mother Nature.

Prompt Submitted By

Name:Hania Khan

Age:15

City:Quetta

You Can Be What You Want

//You can be sunshine //
You can be a revolution
People must be waiting for
You can be sunshine
Darkness mingles with
You can be a firefly
Travelers search for
You can be the shore
Waves are striking for
You can be a conflict
In the political matters
You can be a poem
People relate to
You can be a leaf
Withered unnoticed
You are a time bomb
Can explode any time
You are a warrior
Fighting with the silent cries
You can be
What you want
What you struggle for
And What your fate opt-out.

Prompt Submitted By
Name:Aafia Muhammad Amin
Age:19
City:Hyderabad

Saving the Planet

The day has arrived and the responsibility for saving the planet is mine. Today I will be travelling into the Covid-19 bacteria and finding a way to cure this virus. It was a soothing day in Tampa and the weather was refreshing. The sun was rising and I received a call

from FBI agent Kovolski.

Kovolski: "We are sending a car over at your house, please be at the agency by 20 minutes."

Peter: "I'll make sure to be there."

I ate breakfast and got ready to go to the agency. After getting in the car, I felt immense pressure on my shoulders, however, I tried my best to stay calm and collected. I was going to minimise my size by a million times and enter the bacteria causing the CoronaVirus, it isn't something that can be taken lightly. I was on the way to the agency and upon entering I saw everyone wearing hazmat suits, increasing the fear in me. I managed to push through and made my way to the lab. Kovolski was holding a red and blue gun glazed with metal and the job of this gun was to shrink me down to the size of an atom. Kovolski shot the gun at me and I felt like I was being reborn. My bones began to shrink and my mass decreased second by second. I went from being the size of an average adult to the size of an atom.

It felt weird being so small. My perspective of the world changed and ants that would seem rather tedious to me began to seem like giants. Kovolski picked me up and placed me into the sample of the CoronaVirus.

Upon entering the virus, it resembled the looks of a mansion made out of viruses, bacteria and other nasty stuff. Everything around me was very gooey and I could barely walk. I pushed forward and made my way to the center of the virus, where I would need to extract a sample of the Virus' RNA and take it out with me. I did not have any difficulties reaching the center. Once I was there, I collected the RNA sample and headed back out, however, the opening of the virus that I was supposed to use to enter and exit began to close out. I started getting anxious and nervous, and slowly my palms started to sweat. So small yet such a big task handed to me. I ran as fast as I could, screaming to Kovolski to do something.

Peter: "Kovolski is closing, find a way to open it up."

Kovolski: I am sorry Peter but you won't be able to make it, just throw the sample through the opening, there is no other option."

I ran further and I was 10 seconds away from the opening, but the opening was 5 seconds close to shutting down. I had no other option but to sacrifice myself and throw the RNA sample through the opening. I ran and ran till the last second, however, I could not make it and the opening was about to close. Using all the strength I had left in my body, I threw the sample and it made it through, however, I was now trapped inside a bacteria of Covid-19. There was no

way out, I had a few days to live, trapped in a bacteria while being the size of an atom. I had no problem dying a slow painful death because in the back of my head I knew that I saved the world from a devastating pandemic.

Prompt Submitted By

Name:Abubakar Gulzar

Age:14

City:Lahore

"SATURDAYS: How it used to be."

Looking out of the window to see the vibrantly coloured birds chirping and playing in the light of the gleaming sun, does not include in my routine. Instead, I used to witness a scene similar to a battlefield, as I stood looking out of the window over one of the heavily trafficked roads in one of the world's largest cities.

On a typical Saturday, while my family snored in their bed wrapped up in warm blankets, I wandered around, feeling the cold tiled floor under my bare feet. I liked to walk towards the open window, that used to let the strong winds into the room. I layed my back on the wall beside the windows, feeling it smooth and cold, while my fingers stayed wrapped around the mug of the freshly brewed, warm coffee; to sense its warmth.

Outside the windows, there could be seen vehicles lined up in seemingly endless lanes. The cars, varying in sizes and colours screamed at each other and increased the chaotic energy of the rush hour. Every single person acted to be in a hurry as they ignored the fact that it was them who left the house late. There were trucks parked near the dairy shops in a wrong direction, jamming the traffic and motorcycles that had insane drivers, that fantasized themselves in an adventure film as they tried to squeeze between cars. Along with the sights, there could be seen agitated people trying to go to their work. I saw some yelling faces of drivers in their soundproof cars, together with some who had jumped out of their cars to yell at the truck drivers so the traffic may resolve.

However, these angry faces could be avoided, and one could have witness much liveliness by glancing towards a view of adorable children in neat uniforms that walked with blooming smiles; like

blossoming flowers in a garden; towards the local public school situated at the end of the road.

My loose hair were dancing dandelions in the wind as strong breeze blew over my face while my ears rung because of the annoying honks and the shouts of distressed people. The smell of brewed coffee escaped my nose and was replaced by smell of the polluted air filled with diesel and petrol fumes.

Alas! The traffic police dismissed the congestion and the vehicles lined up, smoothly sailed off to their destinations, often, just by the time of my last sip of the delicious coffee. Therefore, I shut the window and move to the next task of that day.

But these were the days when we enjoyed the freedom of living our lives outside our homes. Before, we complained about the difficulty of handling our daily endeavors but now even remembering how I used to stare outside on Saturdays that showed the usual life amuses me. So much has changed over the last few months, the roads once covered in loud and chaotic traffic have become calm and peaceful. However, this silence now is much more uncomfortable than what use to be the usual bustling city. I just hope we recover from this too and become much grateful of even the small experiences that were felt of nominal importance before. We should always remember that:

"Hard times come not to stay but to PASS, and it will become BETTER!"

Prompt Submitted By

Name:Arshia Fatima Shaikh

Age:14

City:Karachi

Topic: Silver Lining

If anyone had told Michael five years ago that he would find himself in such a dreary situation due to a pandemic, confining him within the walls of his house for a month, he would laugh it off and not think twice. Life was so different for him before April started, Mike had friends around him, teachers to support him, and freedom to be wherever he wished to be.

Mike was stuck indoors, bored out of his mind, looking at blank walls 12 hours a day. Being just 8 years old, he was rather a curious

child who loved running in the crisp, summer grass, submerged in the warmth of the beautiful, bright sun. He loved playing in the woods near his cottage house in Kansas, but now John was forced to stay inside as his parents were cautious and wanted to protect their darling son from the deadly and contagious disease.

Mike could swear that the glass door in his kitchen was calling his name, asking him to return once more to the woods and play inside the fort that his dad built for him when he was seven years old. Oh, how he longed to leave, but he resisted his desire. He walked towards the door, feeling the sunlight that he so very craved with each step he took fourth. He put his hand on the handle, tempted to open it, but then he heard some rattling and returned to the plushy, ivory white sofa.

Mike heard his mother come through the door, who was wearing a white coat with plastic gloves, along with a mask covering her mouth and nose. "Hey, Mikey what have you been up to?" asked his Mom with genuine excitement. "Mom!" cried Michael, before jumping cheerfully into her arms. "Let's play a board game," she said and Mike quickly nodded his head with delight, running to where the board games were kept. "Can I play too?", asked James, Mike's younger brother. "Yeah sure", said Mike. After he had selected one he went to his mother and brother and they calmly played together.

It was the little things that made Mike such a happy child and he loved being with his family. Soon, Mike's father, Liam, had too, returned home. He had also taken precautions, wearing plastic gloves and a mask covering his eyes and mouth. Michael ran and jumped on his father's back. "Give me a piggyback ride," squealed Mike with excitement. His dad made him feel like the most special child in the world. "Anything interesting happen today?" asked Liam. "I beat Mom in monopoly!" yelled Mike and his dad giggled. Mike thought to himself that even though he was not allowed to see people or go to his fort, time would still pass and things would change, so he decided to make the most of this situation and stay positive. He learned to value the little things about life, the importance of family, and how his parents loved and cherished him. Life goes on, so there is no reason for there to be blank in our memories, when we too, can make the most of these moments. He realized that happiness really was in the small things, in the stupid jokes, in old memories, in his younger brothers smile, and the feeling of nostalgic uncertainty about both the past and the future. Michael thought to himself, "Our planet just needs a little break,

some time to breathe and start all over again. It is vital that people must think positively, we must keep going and never let go of hope. We must not allow ourselves to fall into darkness, we must not let negativity win, we must keep going. It is time that we share our resources, share our happiness, share our privileges with the ones that are not so unfortunate. I feel fine, I have a home, I have food, I have access to water and so many necessities. If anything, this lockdown has reminded me of the things I had taken for granted. It has made me more thankful but most importantly it has sparked the need to help those around me".

Prompt Submitted By

Name:Manal Shahryar

Age:15

City:Lahore

The Friendship Bond

My cousin and I have the best friendship bond anybody could ever have. Whenever we are together, we always find a way to make each other laugh at all times and never get bored with one another. Our relationship took off when my family was planning a trip to South Africa. Later, unknown to us all, our grandmother decided to come along and brought my elder cousin with her. The trip became an entire family picnic and we all enjoyed it immensely. The entire family was divided into three groups, the grown-ups which consisted of my parents, aunts, and uncles, and my grandmother, my elder siblings, and cousins, and then the pun pack that included me and my similarly aged cousins.

The elders used to go shopping in the evenings while we stayed back and played in the pool under the supervision of the older cousins or the hotel management. I remember the pool being crowded with all the other guests and so my cousin and I made new friends. The best thing on the entire resort had to be the hot chocolate which was served with marshmallows. My cousin and I managed to drink at least 6 cups of hot chocolate a day without the grownups knowing we drank that much.

Every morning, my grandma woke up to the howls of the hyenas and kept telling my dad, "kill those wild dogs. They are just dogs but bigger than usual." My dad's response was always the same,"

Mama, it is an African wild dog and as you said, IT'S BIGGER IN SIZE." We all used to laugh at their arguing and how grandmother used to tease my dad every 2 seconds and brought back things from the past and made him feel embarrassed once again after decades.

The high point of this entire trip was a safari jeep ride that the resort had planned for us In the afternoon. This trip was going to take us out into the African savannah and show us the amazing wildlife that roamed these plains. The driver took us on a ride and we were all very excited to be heading out into the wild. For the first time, we were going amidst the wild animals and this thought sent a chill of fear and anticipation down my spine. The first place where he drove us to was the riverside. Over there he stopped the vehicle on a high rise above the river. Down below us, there was a pod of hippos bathing in the riverbed, and on the river banks, a large number of crocodiles were laying down sunbathing. The hippo bulls were grunting with an open mouth, the guide told us that this was a display of aggression towards the other hippos. The most frightening part of this trip was when the driver took us near a pride of lions.

My cousin, Sana, exclaimed, " Oh my God! Please take us away or the lions will attack us." this was true because the lions were really near our safari car.

"Do not worry," our driver reassured us, "as long as you are in the car you are safe. Enjoy the wildlife."

It was at this point that my mother who was holding her phone out of the window to take a picture of the lions dropped her phone outside the car.

She exclaimed, " Oh! I have dropped my phone."

She was about to open the door and pick up her phone when the driver told her tersely, "Please do not move, if you open the door you are going to be stepping inside the lions' comfort zone and they might attack."

This statement halted her in her tracks and we waited for around half an hour before the lions moved off. Even then the driver himself got out of the car very cautiously and then picked up the phone and was back in a flash.

"Please be more careful next time," he advised as he handed the phone back to my mother." I had never seen my mom so scared in my life! This was a highlight of the trip to remember and the thrill got our grandparents to never stop talking about it.

There was always a difference of opinion between the younger and

the elder cousins. The younger cousins always wanted to go to the theme park and enjoy the rides whereas the older cousins were more interested in adventure activities such as nature walks in the African bush and driving around on the ATVs. When we asked them to accompany us they used to say, "Really, is that what you want to do here, if the rides were all you wanted we could have stayed home." They told us that we should rather enjoy activities such as wildlife and the beautiful outdoor scenery. Every day they would force us to go on nature walks or make us go on the driven safaris in the African wilderness. I and my age fellows wanted to enjoy the theme parks and the water pools and were always in a sour mood when our elder siblings forced us to join them. We complained to our parents about our dilemma and they told our elder siblings and cousins to listen to us as well. In the end, we resolved this issue by going to the theme park on alternate days and in between enjoying the outdoors and the wildlife.

All too soon, this fabulous trip came to an end. It seemed that two weeks had just flown by. Now it was time for us to pack our bags and head back home with nothing more than fond memories of this place. This was a trip that will remain in my memory for as long as I live.

Prompt Submitted By

Name: Mohid Ahmed

Age: 14

City: Lahore

The House

There was a house far from town at a place of darkness and creepiness. It was drenched in dust and dirt and so its windows stayed black without the rippling effect of light. In this house lived a girl, Emily with her aunt, Stacey. Emily's parents were a forest officer, they lived in the forest camp-far from their house, as it was the requirement of their job. They handed Emily's responsibility to her aunt. But they didn't know was that her aunt was a person with zero empathy. She took perverted joy in watching Emily in pain. Once Emily heard her aunt on the phone talking to sell Emily. Listening to her aunt, Emily couldn't stop herself from crying. Tears welled from deep inside and coursed down her cheeks. She went to

her room, looked at the stars shining and wished that her family was here. She thought to escape out of this mess when her aunt would fall asleep. Emily tip-toe stepped outside the house. She ran as far as she could. She got many cuts and wounds in her feet as it was a road with thorns and stones. Everything began to blur as she raced down. Suddenly Emily heard a car heading towards her. As she was unconscious and injured she came in front of the car. That car was of her parents who were coming to meet Emily. When Emily opened her eyes she heard, "Oh my child, I am sorry to leave you alone." Emily saw her parents that gave her a feeling of elation. She murmured, "Mom and Dad please don't leave me now." Tears split over and flowed down like a river escaping a dam. The bitter truth came in front of her parents and they decided not to leave Emily alone. They lived together as a family with peace and harmony. Years later, Emily wrote a book, "My Family my Treasure." In this book she channeled her emotions and experiences into writing which led to a career change. Her book become the best seller, navigating the full spectrum of emotions from heartbreak to joy. Famous lines from her book were "Family is a treasure, value it, all are not blessed to have it. Life experiences test and trials but family is the one to be there in your every struggle." She also mentioned in her book, "when world says, "Give up" Hope whispers, "Don't give up because your family is with you."

Prompt Submitted By
Name: Fatima Maqbool
Age: 16
City: Karachi

CREATE!