

ISSUE 31

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# Matrix



Journeys



# Editor's Note

What is the difference between a trip and a journey? Whereas a trip involves travelling from one geographical location to another, a journey seems to imply more than that. When going on a journey, a traveler approaches their destination with hope, courage and open-mindedness. Not only do they seek out new experiences, they are also receptive to having their horizons broadened. And even long after their travels have ended, travelers reflect on their journeys, because their journeys of self-transformation have only begun.

In this issue of the *Matrix*, our students progress from feeling wanderlust to cultivating the values and outlook held by travelers. Through their poems, stories and essays, which are bound by nothing more than their imaginations and capacity for introspection, they invite us to come on exciting journeys with them. Dear reader, adventure awaits!

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"From Boundaries to Boundless."





## My Soul-comforting Journey

By Clara Ho 5A (6)

I've been trapped so long in this cage,  
so I grabbed my luggage,  
escaped from the hustle and bustle of the city,  
and embarked on a new journey.

I lay in the shades of trees,  
feeling the gentle hug brought by the breeze.

I walked by the harbour,  
capturing the sunset in the golden hour.

I counted the stars in the sky,  
they created sparkles in my eye.

Traveling sets my heart free.  
I can't wait for my next adventure!

WHERE WILL  
YOU GO?  
FROM: JOB





## A Free Spirit's Song

by Charlotte Lai 5A (7)

Wander far from familiar home  
To anywhere, be it Nice, Geneva or Rome,  
Through the mountains high and valleys low,  
Wherever the winds of adventure blow.

Adventure calls, my spirit soars,  
Wandering on unknown paths and distant shores.  
Climb the Himalayas and jump into the Niagara Falls,  
Break through the wall,  
To discover, to roam and give my all.

In each sunrise and sunset's glow,  
Wanderlust in my heart continues to grow.  
Hoping to satisfy my desire one day,  
Travelling around the world is the only way.



# A Trip to the Death Camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau

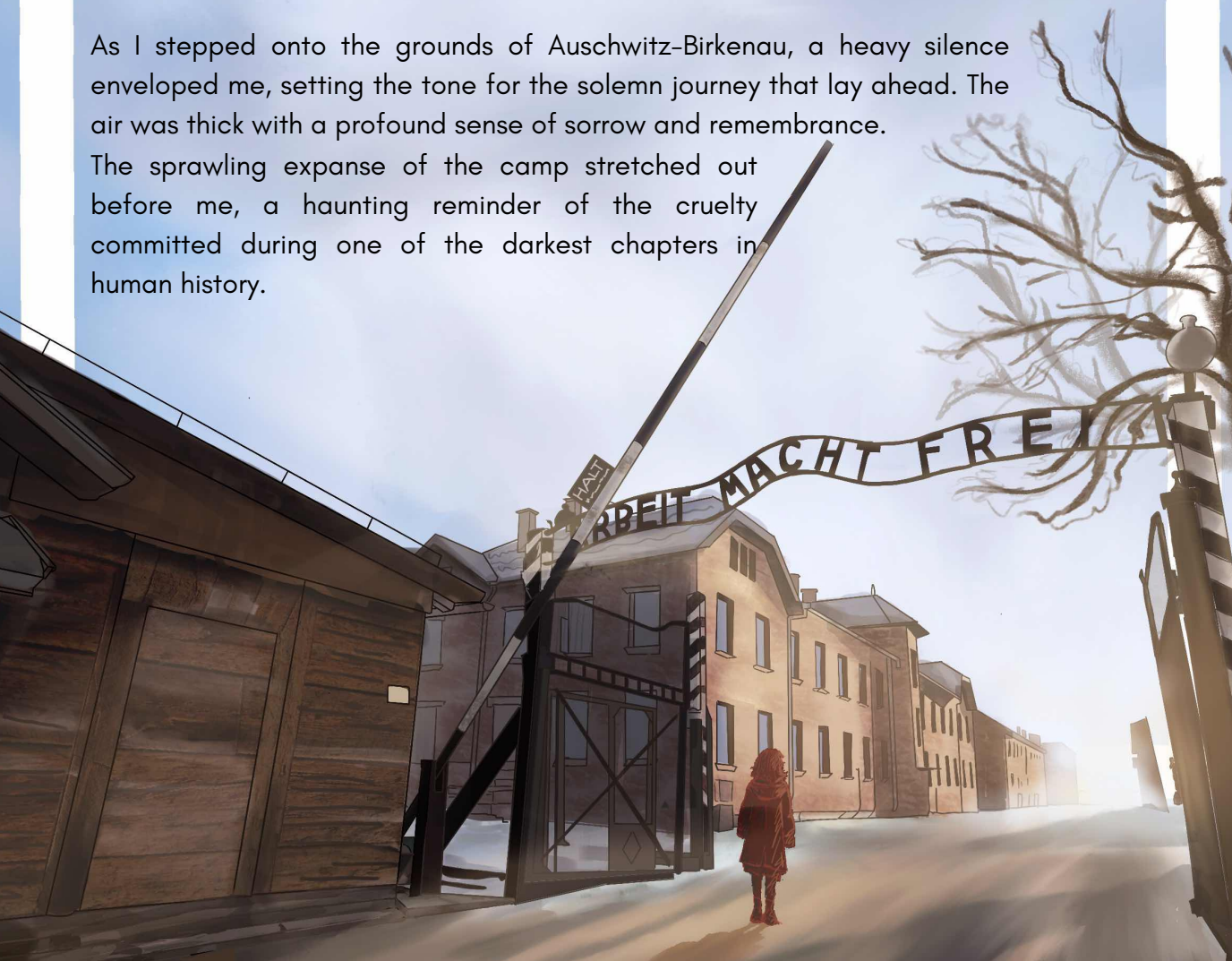
by Augustine Kong 4B (20)

As the ghostly silhouette of Auschwitz-Birkenau vanished into the distance, my mind was overwhelmed with sorrow. With a heavy heart, I reflected on my glimpse into one of the most terrifying atrocities committed in the history of mankind.

Auschwitz-Birkenau was a Nazi concentration and extermination camp during World War II. Located in the Polish city of Oświęcim, it will be forever remembered as the most notorious concentration camp ever created. It was the place where the Nazis murdered vast numbers of Jews using gas chambers and treated them in inhumane ways you can never imagine.

As I stepped onto the grounds of Auschwitz-Birkenau, a heavy silence enveloped me, setting the tone for the solemn journey that lay ahead. The air was thick with a profound sense of sorrow and remembrance.

The sprawling expanse of the camp stretched out before me, a haunting reminder of the cruelty committed during one of the darkest chapters in human history.





The environment in Auschwitz-Birkenau seemed frozen in time, preserving the haunting remnants of a bygone era. The barbed wire fences loomed ominously, casting long shadows over the desolate landscape. The barracks, with their crumbling walls and worn-out roofs, stood as silent witnesses to the suffering endured by the prisoners who once occupied them. Walking through the camp, the gravel beneath my feet echoed with each step, as if the very ground mourned the lives lost within its bounds.

The rooms that had once served as gas chambers and crematoriums stood in stark contrast to the surrounding emptiness. The air inside felt heavy, as if it was still permeated by the anguish of the countless souls who perished there. It was a chilling reminder of the cruelty which reduced human lives to mere numbers on bureaucratic records.

As I explored the camp, the stories of the victims began to unfold before my eyes. The photographs lining the walls of the museum captured moments of joy, love and hope for millions of lives that were tragically cut short. Personal belongings—shoes, glasses, suitcases—piled high in display cases, serving as poignant reminders of the individuals who once possessed them.

The environment in Auschwitz-Birkenau was a stark reminder of the depths of human depravity, but it was also a testament to the resilience of the human spirit. In the face of unimaginable suffering, tales of courage, resilience and solidarity emerged. The stories of those who risked their lives to save others, the act of defiance and small acts of kindness that blossomed in the darkness, served as beacons of hope amidst the overwhelming despair. In an environment where the existence of moral values seemed doubtful, their acts of compassion were highly admirable.





As I reflected on the experience, I was struck by the profound responsibility that comes with bearing witness to such a place. It is a responsibility to remember, to honour the victims, and to ensure that the lessons of the past are not forgotten. It is a responsibility to actively work towards a world that rejects hatred, bigotry, and discrimination in all forms. Visiting Auschwitz-Birkenau was a sobering reminder of the consequences of unchecked prejudice and the dangers of complacency in the face of injustice.

The trip to Auschwitz-Birkenau left an indelible mark on my soul, prompting a deep reflection on the fragility of human rights and the importance of safeguarding them. It also reminded me of the power of education, of sharing the stories of the victims and of challenging the narratives and ideologies that perpetuate hatred and intolerance. What has happened could never be undone, yet plenty can be done to prevent the same from happening once more. Instead of shading away from the past, we should embrace the truth that such terror has existed and learn our lessons.

As I left Auschwitz-Birkenau, I carried with me a renewed sense of purpose—a commitment to stand up against injustice, to advocate for human rights, and to ensure that the voices of the victims continue to be heard. The environment in Auschwitz-Birkenau may have been one of darkness and despair, but it also served as a catalyst for a personal awakening—a reminder of the potential for good that exists within each of us and the imperative to act upon it.



*Lest we forget.*



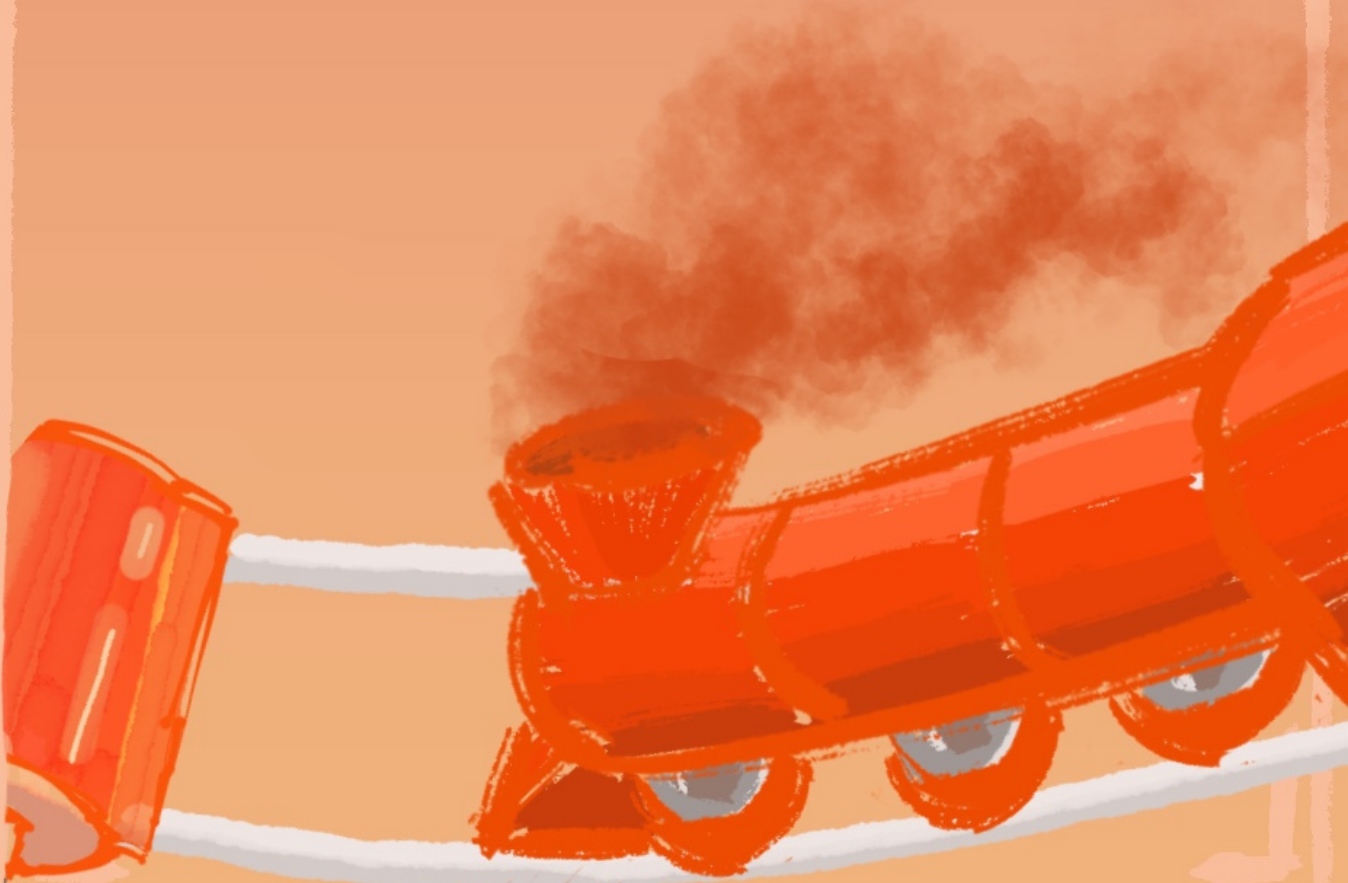
# Friendly Correspondence from Afar

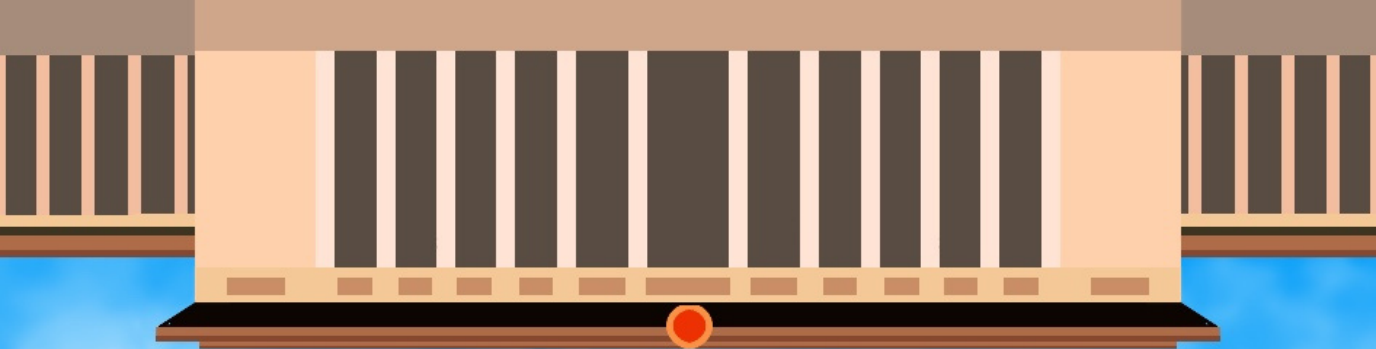
by Annie Chiu 5A (4)

Dear Esther,

Thanks so much for your last email! It's such a pleasure to hear from you about your adventures.

I'm excited to tell you about the trip I went on in summer! It was the 9-day Beijing and Xiamen study tour I had mentioned before. What made it so special was that I got to travel with my friends for the very first time. We shared the same room, had game nights and ordered delicious takeaway. That was when we found out the hotel had a robot to bring our food directly from the lobby to our





room. Groundbreaking technology is always beyond our imagination, isn't it?

As the capital city of China, Beijing truly offers tourists an array of historical monuments, performances and delicate meals that introduce traditional Chinese culture. We visited the Forbidden City, the National Museum of China and Tiananmen Square, which are must-see spots. The architectural style of the Forbidden City is very aesthetic. I can't imagine how relaxing it would be to live there.

Aside from visiting local heritage, we also went shopping and searched for local street food at the famous *Nanluoguxiang*, which is the symbolic alley of Beijing's *hutong*. But that night turned into a total mess when an unexpected storm hit. (Thank goodness I got your souvenirs before it started raining cats and dogs!) Walking





back to the hotel was like wading in a river with a tornado ahead of us. We were completely soaked, and it took me all of the remaining 5 days to dry my shoes. LOL!

When our flight landed in Xiamen, it coincided with the landing of the typhoon Doksuri. The local government predicted that it would be the most destructive typhoon they had ever faced so they implemented many immediate precautions like road closures at 7 p.m. We got only one night to catch a glimpse of the breathtaking view before the typhoon hit. Xiamen has beautiful beaches, and everywhere in Xiamen is within reach of the sea. How can you not love a city that combines modernity and nature?

Although our plan was disrupted by the typhoon, it is never a bad thing to have a staycation with friends. That hotel was AWESOME (it's the one with the room service robots)! We had a buffet breakfast in the morning before going swimming in

the pool with a gorgeous seaview. After lunch, we had a team-building activity, and I won a fountain pen from Xiamen University which is said to contain a blessing to get its owner into any university they want (I wish!). At night, we took turns having some “me-time” in the bathtub and then chilled with snacks and movies. This routine was repeated for 2 days, but we never got bored.

I hope you enjoyed the story of my trip. I’m looking forward to seeing you next Monday and you will find out about the amazing souvenirs I have prepared for you!

Best,  
Annie



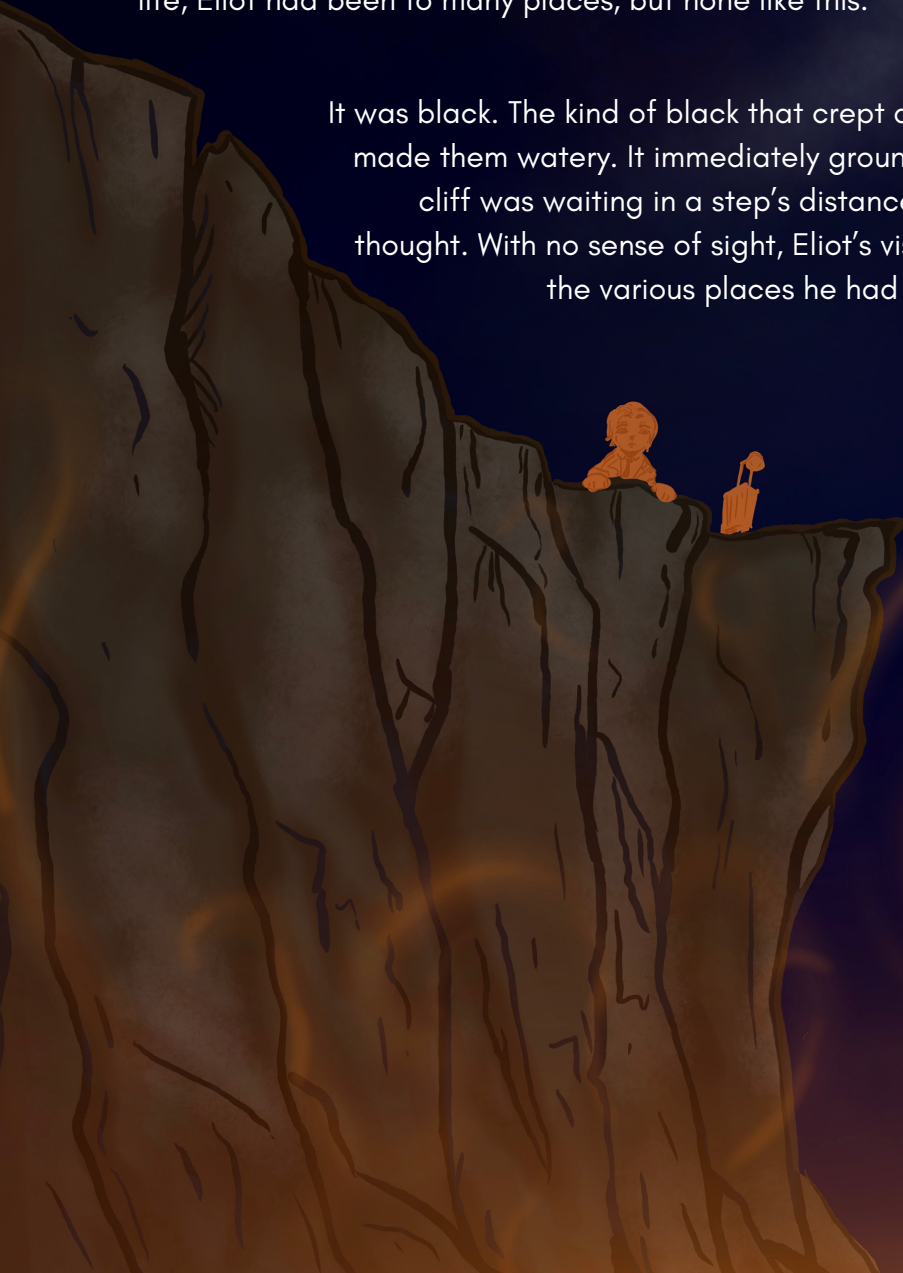


# Black Box

By Doria Ng 5B (12)

When Eliot regained consciousness, he blinked twice and got to his feet. In his life, Eliot had been to many places, but none like this.

It was black. The kind of black that crept around your eyeballs and made them watery. It immediately grounded Eliot. Who knew if a cliff was waiting in a step's distance? *Have I gone blind?* he thought. With no sense of sight, Eliot's vision began to wander to the various places he had travelled to in the past...





Squared trees lined up the avenues of Paris. *How did they trim the branches?* Eliot wondered, hugging his jacket tighter. He marvelled at the mix of mediaeval and modern buildings. *This is the charm of European cities. They don't tear down their architecture.* Once, Eliot had a two-day layover in Italy, so he hopped to Venice and Burano. Colourful blocks sat back-to-back along the canal. There were sculptures which he thought belonged to the world of *Alice in Wonderland*. There was a slanted clock tower as well, another leaning tower in Italy. Eliot reminded himself to travel to Pisa one day. He might have to wait until retirement, though.

A route which kept appearing on his roster was one that passed through Dubai. He never stayed there for long - it was always a three-hour glimpse of the city. He was familiar with Dubai's skyline - sharp skyscrapers ahead of their time blocked the sky, an impossible wall. The Burj Khalifa spiked above them, the UAE's ultimate showcase of wealth and technology. Eliot was not as impressed at it, though, compared to the vast Arabian desert. He had been there once when he was younger, and the infinite layers of sand fascinated him. He ran over dune after dune and slipped down a particularly steep slope. His friend had followed him and said something along the lines of, "You will get lost in the desert!" and Eliot had replied half-jokingly, "I'd love to!"





It would definitely be better than being stuck in the dark.

Eliot couldn't sit anymore. He got up and took a step. Solid ground. He kept walking. The floor was dusty and reminded him of the sandy texture of whitewashed walls. He tried to find a wall, but no matter how far he walked, he couldn't feel any obstacles. He wondered if he was walking in circles. *No, I'm definitely not walking in circles.* He heard his footsteps echoing back to him but couldn't determine how large the area was. Just when he decided that he had lost it, a light penetrated through the darkness.

A hooded figure approached Eliot at a rapid speed. It was neither black nor white, and seemed to absorb all light around it, though there was no light to begin with. It stopped in front of Eliot.

It spoke in an inhuman voice, "Greetings."

"I'm an ambassador between worlds," the entity said. "You may call me Avril."

The ambassador didn't respond.

"You should know," it spoke, its voice almost distant. "Haven't you flown to the top of the sky?"

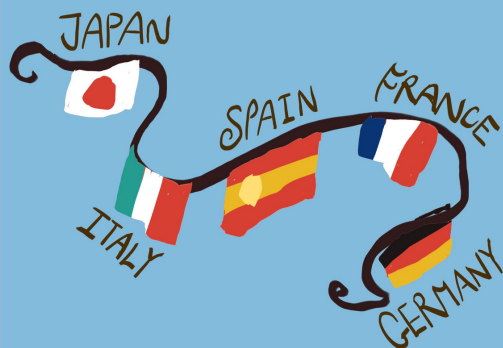
"Uh, hi," muttered Eliot, who knew he had definitely lost it. "Wha-Who are you?"

"Mmm." Eliot nodded, too intimidated to call an "ambassador between worlds" by its name. "Eliot."

Eliot asked the obvious question, "Where am I?"



“Of course I have flown above the cloud layer. I’m a pilot,” Eliot said. Obviously. It fitted his love of travelling. He had dreamed of going around the world all his life. When he was small, he had drawn the flags of all the countries he knew and stuck them all over the house. He soon grew out of it, but when his sister Lyla was born, the 8-year-old found a sudden interest in the game again. He would pretend to go to all those places with her. At first, she went along with the idea quite happily, but soon she liked just staying at home and reading books.



“But Russia is fun,” Eliot said. “You can wear a big coat like an Eskimo.”

“Too cold,” she said. “I like books more.”

He threw the flags in the trash and gave up entertaining the toddler.

When she grew up, Eliot found, to his dismay, that she hated going to new places, and would only stick to familiar ones. “You are boring,” he told her.

“You’ll get lost and fall into a ditch,” she had replied when he decided to go on a study tour abroad. After that, she mostly left Eliot to go on his adventures alone.

Click! went the bedroom door one day. “Wha-?”

“Are you actually going to be a pilot?” Lyla demanded.

Eliot was surprised by the bitterness in her voice. “Yeah, I got into flight school.”

“What about airsickness?” She was prone to airsickness.

“I don’t get airsick.” He laughed. “It’ll be exciting!”

“Are you kidding me? What if there is an accident? What if the plane crashes? The plane will lose an engine one





day, someday..."

"Don't worry," Eliot reassured her as he zipped up his suitcase. "I'll control the plane. I won't crash it. Why do you think flight schools exist?"

"What about the climate? What if you go somewhere really dry?"

Eliot lifted up his suitcase. "I'll adapt. Anyway, we're leaving for the airport. Dad's waiting for us."

Eliot forgot about the trip, but he did remember Lyla's doubtful look when he waved goodbye to his family at the airport. Not the best of goodbyes, but what could he expect?

During his first year, his family came to visit him. Lyla came too, to everyone's surprise. Less surprisingly, she developed severe homesickness and kept suffering from stomach pains. She even vomited after a meal, even though the food was delicious. They sent her home early. Immediately all issues disappeared. It was a bummer, but at least Eliot got to hike with his parents at a country park he had never been to.



"Of course I have flown above the cloud layer. I'm a pilot," Eliot said, "But this isn't a cockpit, and this isn't the sky. So, where am I?"

"Think of this as a black box," the ambassador said. "A black box theatre, perhaps, where actors explore all kinds of places."

"Or the flight recorder," Eliot said. "It travels with the aeroplane and records everything on its way."

*Until it crashes.*

A Boeing 777 was on final approach. The weather was not great. Heavy rain had battered the arrival airport for more than two hours, making the runway wet and slippery. In the cockpit, the Captain was communicating with air traffic control while First Officer Eliot was trying to get the plane down. "Light drizzle, moderate fog, visibility 700 metres" was the weather. The visibility was better than before, but only marginally. The minimum visibility was 800m at their destination.

"You're a little high," said the Captain,

"Yeah," Eliot grumbled and pushed down to regret taking the shortcut that air concentrated on his navigation monitoring.

was communicating with air traffic control trying to get the plane down. 700 metres" was the weather. The only marginally. The minimum

monitoring.

the nose to descend. He was starting traffic control had given them. He display and the upcoming runway.





The aircraft descended. "Minimums," said the Captain.

"I see the runway," said the First Officer. There was the runway light, blurred by fog and misty rain. That's when he realised that they were a tad too high - and travelling at a very high speed.

"Flaps thirty!" shouted the Captain, and Eliot acted accordingly. "500!" The GPWS system went, "100! 50! 40! 30! 10!" as the precious runway passed under the landing gear...

BOOM! The plane landed. The pilots, well-briefed about the slippery runway, promptly did everything to slow the aircraft to a halt.

"It's not stopping!" cried the Captain who was pulling on the brakes together with the First Officer.

"DUAL INPUT," the aeroplane's system boomed.

The plane shot over the runway at an airspeed of 174 knots. There was nothing to stop them. The 777 smashed through the localiser, rolled over the grass, barged through the perimeter wall, crossed the highway and crashed headfirst into a fuel station just opposite to the airport, colliding with a car.

"Well, there goes my career," the Captain sighed. At that very moment, fire brewing up in the car came into contact with oil leaking from the station, and the whole plane, along with the station, caught on fire, immediately engulfing everything in flames, leaving only the black box intact.



Eliot snapped out of his memory. "Why am I here?"

Though eyeless, Avril seemed to be staring at Eliot.

"I'm dead."

"Yes."

"Dude, not cool. I haven't seen the real leaning tower."

The ambassador between worlds did not reply to this.

"Well, I guess I can't go back, can I?" Eliot said after a short moment. "No more adventuring, just eternal darkness."

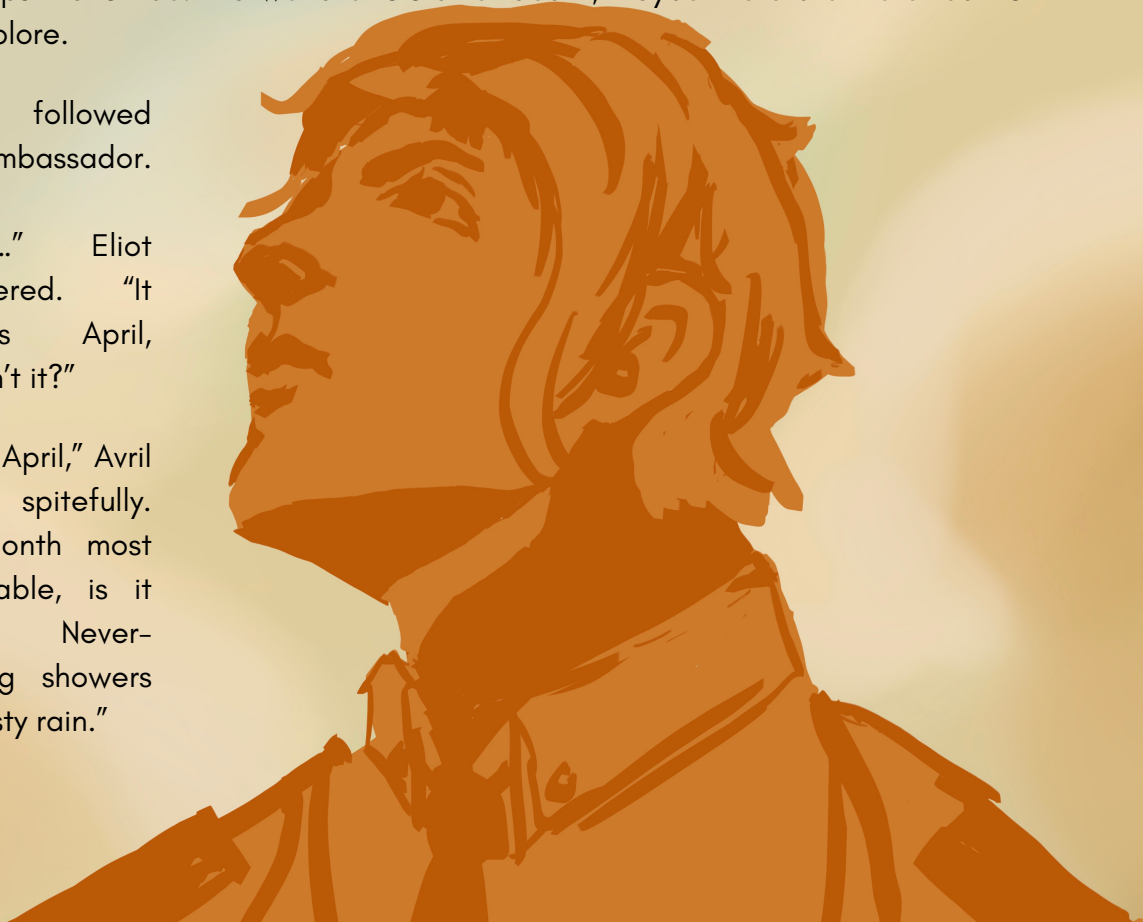
"Wanderlust isn't restricted to your world." Avril turned away and headed in a seemingly random direction.

Perhaps that's true. If a world exists after death, maybe there are more realms to explore.

Eliot followed the ambassador.

"Avril..." Eliot pondered. "It means April, doesn't it?"

"Yes. April," Avril said spitefully. "A month most miserable, is it not? Never-ending showers of misty rain."





# Travel with Your Tongue

By Rianna Cheung 5C (3)

As a typical Hong Kong student and a food enthusiast, I often find it challenging to carve out time from my demanding schedule to explore new cuisines abroad, a constant longing of mine. Instead, during the summer holiday, I embarked on a culinary adventure right at home, trying a plethora of mouthwatering delicacies from around the world. These dishes were imbued with local culture and, to my surprise, many of them left a lasting impression on my tastebuds.



Picture yourself strolling along the shores and wandering through vibrant weekend markets in Sweden, and you might catch a whiff of what some consider a “disgusting” odour. The source? Stinky canned fish. At first glance, you might not be interested, but you’d be missing out on one of the most popular and fantastic snacks among the Swedes—*Surströmming*, Swedish salty canned fish. This fish is herring traditionally fermented in salt, giving it a pungent smell when you crack open the can. However, the most amazing fact is that its taste is vastly different from



the stink. Surprisingly, it's tastier than you could ever imagine and might even become one of your guilty pleasures. So, it's essential not to judge these preserved fish by their stench alone; instead, add it to your bucket list and embark on a unique culinary adventure!

Yet, *Surströmming* alone won't suffice to satisfy your appetite. Let's travel to Korea, where you'll find another food paradise. When you and your friends are pondering dinner options, Korean hotpot, also known as *Budae Jjigae*, is a perfect choice to please everyone's palate. In a massive pot of Korean-style chili soup, a variety of ingredients find their place, including dumplings, rice cakes, fish cakes, vegetables, and instant noodles, among others. A mouthful of fish cake soaked in spicy soup is especially delightful. You can dip anything you like into the soup, and it transforms into a Michelin-worthy dish. Just be cautious—it's really hot, so remember to blow on it before indulging.







To conclude our culinary journey, let's savour Spain's churros. Churros are a type of deep-fried dough often served as a dessert or a daily snack. In Spain, they're even a popular choice for breakfast. The crispy exterior and soft interior will undoubtedly delight your taste buds. Churros have a pleasant sweetness, different from the overwhelming sweetness of most candies. The best pairing is with hot chocolate sauce; dipping churros into chocolate lava is a perfect way to start your winter mornings. Besides the traditional flavours, creative fusion options like caramel sauce, Portuguese egg tart fillings, and even churros with ice cream inside have emerged in recent years. As a churro enthusiast, I've tried them all, and I'm confident you'll be equally excited by these incredible flavours, craving bite after bite after bite.





I hope you're enthusiastic about embarking on a fascinating culinary journey. Trying the dishes mentioned above might turn you into a foodie just like me. Exploring cuisines from around the world has been a healing experience, and I sincerely wish I could escape Hong Kong to travel the globe and discover even more delectable delights. Life can be tough, but food has a miraculous way of healing wounds and brightening your darkest days.



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