Dear Students, Parents and Teachers,

We have an exceptionally hectic five weeks ahead of us, beginning with the VCE Exams, World Teachers day, Yr 12 Graduation Night, End of Year Ceremony, and last but not least, the year 7-11 exams.

Our year 12 students, and teachers alike, are preparing hastily for the VCE exams which begin this Friday. We wish our year 12 students all the best and hope that they get through the exams with utmost ease. Family members who are interested in attending the Yr 12 Graduation Night will need to purchase tickets from our VCE Coordinator, Ms. Hatice Mohamed, asap.

Another important upcoming event is the 2008 End of Year Ceremony. This will take place on the evening of Tuesday, 25 November at the Plenty Range Arts and Convention Centre. Students who'll partake in the performances will be approached by their teachers. Families will also be informed about the event very soon.

Regards,

Ms. Nazan POLAT

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**Strange Wages**

Dennis does odd jobs for Mr. Gamble after school. Mr. Gamble, true to his name, pays Dennis in an unconventional way. Each week on Friday he places bills into 6 envelopes:

- Two envelopes get $1 bills.
- Two envelopes get $5 bills.
- One envelope gets a $10 bill.
- One envelope gets a $20 bill.

For his week's wages, Dennis gets to choose two envelopes at random. (So, the least he can receive is $2 and the most is $30.)

To earn your wages this week, your task is to determine the average amount Dennis will earn each week if he continues in Mr. Gamble's employ for a long time.

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**What goes up . . .**

Suppose a ball is shot upwards into the air. It will eventually return to the ground. If you were to plot the height of the ball as a function of time (as in the picture below), you would see a familiar mathematical shape -- a parabola.

Now as you may know, parabolas are the graphs of quadratic functions, so if the plot of our ball's height is a parabola, the formula for its height (as a function of time \( t \)) must be something like

\[
h(t) = At^2 + Bt + C
\]

where \( A, B, \) and \( C \) are constants.

Suppose now that the ball is shot from ground level and that after 1 second it has reached a height of 200 feet and after 2 seconds has reached a height of 368 feet. At what time will the ball hit ground?

Answers to Mr Okan ALKIN
That’s how it began: the journey into truth.

My name is Michael. I was a journalist. Am-was-am-I am. I really don’t know anymore. I worked for the most domineering, insolent, truth-twisting, mind-corrupting newspaper in the industry, if not in the world. And, no doubt, I reflected some of its qualities. I had a vast supply of money; I had fame; I had power. Yet I was deprived of life’s pleasures; I was deprived of happiness and love.

One day, as the newspaper’s head journalist, I was sent to Africa to write an article about their lives; an article revealing the misery they endured. In short, I was sent to make people sympathetic towards the Africans. I could do it; I’ve done it before; I could manipulate people’s feelings whenever I desired. I preferred not to use my talent too hastily, if people got accustomed to it, it would become very “normal”. I could make people cry, but I lacked the ability to express emotions. I have never observed a scene which touched me. I can always expose others when they exaggerate whilst giving complaints regarding their ‘oppressive’ lives; when they rush mourning to me. I can always see the director of a movie editing a good scene. I can read between the lines, see the author hunt for the dictionary for emotional vocabulary. I have a talent for being able to see behind the scenes; therefore, never have I wept for anything. I have never expressed any emotions towards anything. I just merely laughed at the ignorance of people, at the imperfection of their work. I sympathized with them; they didn’t possess “talent”.

So, I was sent to Africa to write an emotional article, with emphasis on the word ‘emotional’. This was going to be a breakthrough. Once, I compelled the newspaper’s readers to cry about a child whose mere doll was stolen; I included details that corrupted the image, distorted the truth and portrayed the world as a wild jungle. In the end, the demonstration succeeded, and I stole my editor’s chair. This journey to Africa was going to provide me with yet another opportunity to seize another golden chair; the CEO’s.

What I didn’t comprehend was the other side of this journey; I was entranced by the materialistic perspective of the story that I didn’t see it coming. I didn’t see the truth approaching. I was blinded to the fact that it was a journey into the truth and veracity, an escape from negligence and illusions; I was too caught up. I couldn’t see happiness coming towards me and devising to devour me with its captivating scent. I couldn’t see the ability to love creeping from behind me and redefining my life. This was a journey which altered my life, manipulated my existence: interrogated it. This was a journey from which I hope never to find a route back.

My first-class private jet landed in the centre of a so-called town. It was basically a few wood piles assembled harmoniously in a compact landscape. I snickered at them; they weren’t even humans. They lived like animals. But if this is what it took to get that chair, this is what will happen. I observed them, they were all weather-beaten and starved; they greeted us with neither a ceremony nor music, they didn’t even share a smile. I was astonished. We were better than them: we were superior, yet they elected to show us inerpetence.

I looked at one of them; he had a particular atmosphere about him. He differed from the rest. I knew he was willing to talk to me; he appeared as though he had something good to say. And with a little twisting that “good” could become “excellent”. He resided in a small corner of the “town”, in a place where the trees stretched in to the sky, intruding upon its inhabitants; they carried their leaves with them, like a heavy load. They shook as the wind interrupted their stillness; they shook violently and without guidance like a person facing a calamity. We stepped in between those trees: this was his home. All Africans dwelled in homes like these, whereas we inhabited colossal mansions.

“What would you like?”

“I would like you to explain the hardships you have endured throughout your life, the misery…”

“As you can see, I don’t live in a penthouse, nor do I drive a Ferrari. But do you know something? I’m happy. content. My home is cold in winter, and hot in summer. It provides neither shelter nor privacy; nonetheless, it is my home. It is where I find happiness” He murmured innocently.

I looked at him again; I couldn’t believe it; I couldn’t piece the puzzle in my mind. Silence conquered the face of the Earth. I wasn’t content, how could he be? A man in the middle of a desert can’t be content, he has to want more. Why doesn’t he want a life like ours, a life of luxury, a life of joy and purpose? Do we have joy and purpose? I had an optimal life, yet I wasn’t content; how could he be?

“We don’t want your sympathy, why’d you come?” he asked.

“I came here to write a story about you, so that people may realize that…”

“We don’t want your sympathy. We may not be able to afford to learn trigonometry, physics nor biology, but we possess knowledge you will never be able to attain. We know how to love, how to be selfless, how to give. You will never be able to gain that knowledge; you won’t learn it with your schools or universities; you can only learn it with a heart, and you’ve sold that to the paper in the banks. We sympathize with you; you are trapped in illusions, captivated by a dream. We pray for you, we pray that you’ll find the answer before its too late, that you’ll escape the darkness, walk into the light. We pray that you may be able to see the truth before the angel of death knocks on your door. I hope that you regain your sight; see the truth. I like you; I’ll pray for you: you seem like a nice person.”

With those words, he unveiled the truth to me. We were the ones who deserved help; we were the ones who required sympathy; we were deprived of all life’s pleasures. We don’t even know the definition of those words; we think our cars and mansions are life’s ultimate pleasures. No, that was incorrect. Life’s pleasures were happiness and love, joy and purpose, pride and contentment. The poor were immersed in life’s pleasures, but we have never seen them.

I realized that a chair wasn’t going to bring me joy; it would not immerse me in life’s pleasures. That’s when the tears began to escape. I have lived a lie. I lived in a world of technology, in a world of civilization: in a world of lies, illusions and misconceptions. I lived in a world where our words were lies, where our looks were venomous, where our contact was isolation. We contacted our acquaintances only to avoid the “anti-social” nickname; we communicated with our parents only to improve our public image; we always let others down: hurt them, the only exception was when they sat on a more comfortable chair than ours. We weren’t human.

I sympathized with myself; I sympathized with the entire non-human race. I sympathize with you. Change your life, you will never find happiness. How can you see light when you are blind? How can you express emotions when you are heartless?

I lived in lies, I found the truth. You still reside in a globe of lies, could you ever find the truth?

Massad Alfayadh, 9C