Kaleidoscope
Hey readers! We have a lot of different things in this issue. At first, we wanted to keep the theme as light because of Diwali but we also added some things related to writing. We also have a restaurant review because we wanted to try something new.

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Credits:
Editors - Megha and Isha
Cover - Megha and Isha
Fope's opinion

“What makes a good story?”

A good story is something that the readers want to read without getting bored, but I personally like stories that are boring. What I mean by that is that most stories that I have read are stories that have things happening all the time and there is a lot of action, but I like stories about a person's life like it is on normal days. Many times, at the end of the story, I wish there was a part that shows how life is when things are back to normal after all the adventures. I don't know if other people feel the same because I don't think I have a unique feeling but if other people also feel the same, then why don't they make those kinds of stories? Maybe there are already those kinds of stories, and I just haven't come across them.

-Isha

What makes a good story? A good story has to grab your attention from the beginning. It should be interesting and with an interesting plot. There should be cool characters that you can relate with and find interesting, and in a good story there should be a problem or a mystery to solve, if there is no problem there is no fun, the reader is gonna be bored. Also in the story you should not know what’s gonna happen next. The last is the setting, it should be describe in such a way that makes it relevant to the characters. And it should have a good ending.

-Vihaan
To make a good story, one of the most important parts is having realistic characters. That doesn’t mean your characters can’t have powers, it means they have realistic traits. They need to have good things about them like honesty, patience, and they need to have bad things about them like anger issues, dishonesty. Having your protagonist be a perfect person with no flaws or weaknesses or a villain who is pure evil with absolutely no good things about them makes for a boring story.

-Megha

A good story is like a rollercoaster ride for your feelings, with twists and turns that would keep you engaged with the story. Next should be the characters, the characters are very important, they have to feel real, like you should feel happy when he’s on the right track or even disappointed when they are in a mess.

And my favourite, a plot twist! The plot twist should be very unexpected, but when you find out about it, it should make sense.

-Abhimanyu
What makes a good story? I think a good story should be about the characters and not what's actually going on in the story like the plot and the action. The most important thing in any story should be the characters, their emotions, feelings, desires and fears, the plot, a backdrop if you will, or setting, can simply be used to bring out these fears or desires. You could choose to curate these backdrops in certain ways that could make something happen to your character, that would in turn lead to them reflecting and processing it.
I find in movies, series or books that I watch or read that the only actual thing I end up caring about is the characters and their emotions. Yes the setting and plot can accompany it or help it come to life in better or worse ways but the only real thing that matters is the characters!

A good story should have surprises, suspense and twists pretty much no matter the genre.
There should be a climax, where the battle is at its height and it doesn't always have to be a physical battle. And even if it is, remember that the battle within your character’s is much more interesting and compelling. It should be original, something the world has never seen. It should be just your ideas. You can get inspiration and all that but what’s the point in writing something that has already been written?
It should also have a good ending I think. An ending that makes you feel satisfied with the entire story and makes you understand that it’s over. I think there shouldn’t be a cliffhanger if there is no sequel. And finally, I shouldn’t have to say this but accurate punctuation and good spelling goes a long way, if not your reader can get confused and it can be frustrating. I’m also finding it tough to know where to put the quotation marks in the NaNoWriMo I’m doing.

-Oli

If you want a good story, you need to have unique characters and good settings so that the reader is interested in the beginning of the story and will continue to read. One of the most important parts of the story is the climax, that’s when the story is at its peak. When all of a sudden the twists and turns happen or something unexpected happens. The ending is also important, you have to make an interesting ending so the reader will want to read the next book.

-Meet
A good story depends on the person reading it. As they say, one man's trash is another man's treasure. In this way, everyone has different tastes. Some people could like nonfiction, some could like fantasy. Some could like mystery, some could enjoy romance. Some people need a plot twist at every corner, luring them in. But some people enjoy reading about the lives of others on their off day, a simple, yet to some, a boring, read. Of course, a baby won't like a novel, but an adult can love a children's book, full to the brim with memories. A story is a good story to someone, and you just need to enjoy it for it to become just that.

-Atisha

A good story is probably a story that keeps you engaged. A story that doesn't jumble a lot. I personally like graphic novels.. So naturally I like stories which let you imagine the characters by describing them a lot. A story that has a lot of plot twists and one that keeps the story flowing at the same pace throughout makes it a good story. Also a good story lets the reader feel relevant or significant while also having verified information about something. The characters and the voice also help in playing an important role. A good story can also be made if the writer unites the essential parts of the story without just writing useless stuff that can bore the reader.

-Aaryan

To make a good story, should have it’s own creations, like in Harry Potter for example they have made so many creatures and they have also created foods and drinks like butterbeer. I'm not saying you have to make your own type of food in your story I'm just saying have something of your creation. And for non-fiction, I love plot twists and climax. If the story is just talking for like half the book I would probably give up after ten chapters. I just don’t have a very long attention span so I need something interesting every five chapters, but that’s just what I like. If you like long stories, that’s great too! All story should have something interesting so that even if the reader gets bored they would not want to stop reading because it’s just too interesting to leave half-way.

-Aarohi
What is Epistolary writing?

The word “Epistolary” comes from the latin word “Epistola” which means letters. Epistolary is a form of writing where you tell a story through letters.

We were asked by Bhakti to write our own letters to someone or something. The following pages consist of our class

Dear jellies,

Thank you for being my inspiration. One day when I grow up I want to be you. The things and values you have taught me are truly irreplaceable, and I could never have learned them from another. 
You don't know who I am, and I would freak out if I saw one of you guys, but you're really amazing. 
Once, in an aquarium, I saw some of you. It was so cool! The way you moved, and stayed still, and everything you did was just so perfect. No one can be like you.

I was on a cruise ship another time, and I saw a bunch of you, in bright yellow. I thought you were plastic bags at first but let's not talk about that :0.

The fact that you have no brain and still survive inspires hope in myself everyday. You are also amazing to draw and very pretty. The fact that you have eyes kinda freaks me out tho like what are you looking at? You don't even have a brain? But that's for a different letter. This one is about finding my truth, and becoming my inner jellyfish.

One day I will be just like you. Still brainless, but when I bump into someone, I fight them on instinct. I can't wait.

-Atisha
Dear Deepanam,

I can’t imagine where I would be without you. What friends I would have without you, what memories — I truly can’t picture it. If I never joined this school, I would still be in a CBSE school in Pondicherry, stuck with a crappy curriculum where all I do is memorise. I’d be in 8th grade learning algebra and linear equations.

Though now I’m happy I joined this school, there are times I wish I never left that Pondy school. Back then, there was no drama. While here, at Deepanam, that’s all there is. When I first joined Deepanam, I tried too hard to fit in and make friends. I became someone I wasn’t. And now, I feel like I’ve lost a bit of myself. I still vividly remember the memories of me crying on the swings because I was so sad that no one wanted to play badminton with me, or crying myself to sleep because I felt so lonely. I remember the few friends I had telling me about how much they used to hate me and about how they used to talk about me behind my back. I remember not knowing what true friendship was.

Though the way we learn in Deepanam is better than CBSE, I don’t feel smart talking to kids outside of Auroville. They know so much more than I do and I have this fear that I overestimate my intelligence. I’m scared that when I go to college, I’ll face reality — that I’m nowhere near as smart as I anticipated. Being in Deepanam has also reduced my motivation to study. In Grace group I always understood the material so I never studied. Now in Faith, I struggle to complete my homework — not because it’s difficult, but due to me no longer being able to muster the tiniest amount of motivation. And even though I’m anxious about the fact that I don’t study, I’m never able to figure out how to — and that scares me.

Despite all the challenges I’ve faced so far, I know that without Deepanam and Auroville, I wouldn’t have the friends I have today and I wouldn’t be the person I am without them: Aarohi, because her humour rubs off on me; Chaaru, because she always keeps me updated on the latest news; Isha, for always letting me copy her notes. And last but not least, Vegaa, for always playing roblox games with me — no matter how pointless they seem. Though there are many things I didn’t enjoy about my experience, If I had to go through everything again, I would. Because the conflicts I went through built my character, and I’m proud of who I’ve become.

From yours truly,
Megha
Dear Auroville,

I am so glad I shifted here for good. Life has been great and even better due to you. I’ve been going to school and have made friends. I did not like the idea of moving here. But I just went with the plan.

I was so clueless and naive when I first came here. I did not know how auroville worked. I soon explored around and met with different kinds of people. I loved the concepts of cycle paths and I must’ve explored most of them. I kind of try to rate them on how fun they are and try to see how fast I can go on them. Some were just football fanatics and some were musical geniuses. But no matter the kind of people there were there was just a tingly feeling inside. It was hard to move from Mumbai. Living there for 13 years of my life I had to leave the dearest friends and family behind. But I’m quite glad I could get away from my ICSE school in Mumbai. It was torturous. Sitting in one place for 8 hours a day wasn’t the best. But going for tuitions the other hours was just plain monotonous. I felt like a robot and the weekends were the only times that I could breathe. And I couldn’t even do that properly due to the air pollution. Talk about a healthy life. But after coming to Auroville I have realised there is way more. I now have time to discover my passion and hobbies.

I have the energy to wake up everyday and go to school. I can finally wake up to birds chirping and not car horns or factory sirens. Coming to Deepanam is really fun and I love the hours I spend there. I don’t think I’m learning as much as at my previous school but I don’t really think it matters. At least the things I’m learning are engraved in my brain by the various exercises our teachers use. In school I’ve met many people from around the world. It’s quite fun listening to their stories and cultures. One major drawback of coming here though must be the electricity and wifi. Looking back I just feel I took everything for granted. Waking up at 4am isn’t ideal to fill a water tank on a school day.

But overall I think the initiative of moving to Auroville was a good plan. Living in a community and sharing things with others just makes sense. Also I must’ve tasted way more cuisines coming here and the food is way better than Mumbai!

I am very thankful for coming here and I hope I can meet more people.

Best Regards,

Aaryan
Dear Cristiano Ronaldo

I respect you for your incredible talent, dedication, and hard work on and off the football field. Your passion for the game and your excellence have been a true inspiration for me. Your skill, energy and fixed determination makes you one of the greatest footballers of all time the "GOAT"!, and your impact on the sport is really certain. Your legendary goal against juventus at the Allianz stadium back in 2018 was amazing!

How did you jump 2 meters high? When I tried to do the bicycle kick I failed and hurt my back.

If I had the time to talk to you in person, I would love to ask how you started your career and your life struggles and how you overcame it. and I am grateful for the example you set for aspiring me and for everyone.

Thank you for your inspiration and your talent and character. I wish I had the character, mindset and discipline.

-Vihaan

Magnus chase book review

Magnus chase is another series written by Rick Riordan and the first book introduces most of our main characters including of course Magnus. Diving again into an ancient mythology Rick this time selects Norse myths to bring to life. Magnus is living a homeless life on the street with only two friends having no idea that there are actually eight different worlds. He finds his way into the Viking afterlife, Valhalla, where he discovers that he and his friends are not who he thought they were. He is challenged with a dangerous quest to stop a horrible monster from escaping its bonds and is sent back to the mortal realm, Midgard, to complete this challenge. They travel through three more worlds meeting many interesting characters along the way, many of which are gods, for example, Mimir, Ran, Freya, Thor and a few others including at the end of the book Magnus's own father.

One thing that you might miss in the title of the book (I know I did) is Magnus's last name is the same as a character from the original Percy Jackson series (Annabeth). We find out later that Magnus and Annabeth are actually cousins but haven't seen each other in years and for this reason they never found out that they both had godly parents just simply from two different mythologies.

-Sitara
Fairytale Book Review

Fairytale is the newest book by Stephen King and the first book by him I've read. Even though the name doesn't draw your mind to much else other than some short story about heroes, magic and of course fairies maybe somewhat inspired by a fable, the actual book which is around 600 pages (360,000 words according to Google, but maybe 180,000) and does actually have quite a few elements from a fairytale is definitely not for the average eight year old at least.

The book was a little boring at the beginning which I can normally tolerate but since around the first 200 pages were uninteresting, that definitely tested my patience, causing me to put the book down for a week or two. The upside of all that time before anything fun happens is you get to really know the characters and you start to feel attached to them.

The main character Charlie Reade goes into a well because he was told it has a portal into another world which contains a sundial that reverses ageing. Charlie is now in possession of a dying dog whom he has grown to love so he is willing to do whatever it takes to save her. It says how the place he goes to is a mix of so many stories like Rumplestiltskin, Jack and the Beanstalk and those classics, except it brings out the more grotesque and evil things in those stories making it more interesting.

I also really like the ending as it closes the entire story very nicely, with Charlie having done his part and the people of Empis rebuilding their kingdom, making the reader feel quite satisfied with the book. This book's pretty good and I definitely want to read it again sometime in the future. I'd give it a solid four stars.

-Oli
This is a brief of the podcast of Aaryan and Abhi. It was our first podcast. We were nervous obviously and excited. We were interviewing Debo. He started Kinisi in Auroville. In fact he was also mentoring us during our internship in Kinisi. The podcast started smoothly with him introducing himself to us. He told us how he graduated from the Ashram School in Pondicherry and went to Mumbai to work for some years. But then came back to Auroville to start Kinisi. He told us the various challenges he faced starting Kinisi. He told us how the name was derived from a Latin word known as Kinisis which stands for kinetic energy.

We were quite comfortable in the podcast through the halfway point. He told us how he wanted to reduce the use of bikes with internal combustion engines and make Auroville run with only electric vehicles. He was really hand in hand with sustainability. We discussed about the Ashram education and how he wishes to go back if he could. It's apparently the best time of his life. He was a bit hesitant and the podcast wasn't that long. It was an interesting experience and we are thankful that he could take out time off of his schedule and be a part of our podcast.
Okkarai Recipe

Okkarai is a sweet dish made on Deepavali by some communities in Tamil Nadu. I grew up eating this on Deepavali and it’s the first time I am making it. I learnt this recipe from my grandmother and it was quite fun. It’s not that difficult but it does require a bit of patience.

Ingredients

1 cup Bengal gram
¾ cup ball jaggery, smashed
15 cashews, broken
1 tbsp ghee
¼ cup grated, dry coconut
½ tsp powdered cardamom

Rinse the Bengal gram and soak it in water for two hours. Drain the water and grind the soaked Bengal gram (without adding any extra water) in a blender into a coarse paste. Steam the paste for 20 minutes. After 20 minutes, let it cool down and use your hands to crumble it. Mix the coconut and cardamom powder into this. In a thick-bottomed pan, take half a cup of water and bring it to a boil. Add the jaggery and keep stirring till the jaggery dissolves and the liquid thickens into a syrup. Add the mixture to the syrup and mix well with a spatula. Make sure it stays crumbly. Roast the cashews in the ghee until brown and add it to the rest of the ingredients. The Okkarai is now ready.

If you hold it together it should briefly hold together like a laddoo and fall apart in crumbles. That is the right consistency.

Serves four people

-Isha
Growing up, I used to go to my grandmother’s house for Deepavali every year. Of course, she made a lot of sweets, and they were all delicious, but my favourite was this delicious sweet called kaju katli. If you buy it in a shop it comes with edible silver foil, and in perfect diamonds, but I feel like my grandmother’s food is just... better? I’m sure everyone thinks that of their own grandma though.

The sweet is cashew flavoured, but if you don’t like those, worry not! They taste nothing like cashew (I speak from personal experience, for I am a certified cashew hater.) It just tastes like sugar. Sugar is great! Um, but if you do like cashews I never said anything. Anyway, I’ll get to the actual recipe now! :D

Kaju Katli Recipe

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**Kaju katli ingredients**
Ingredients:
- 2 cups cashew
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ water
- 1 tsp cardamom powder
- 1 tbsp ghee
- 2 greased butter papers

**Method**
Crush the cashew until a powder forms, sieve it, and place to the side. Make a sugar syrup using sugar, water, and cardamom powder. Wait until the consistency is like syrupy I guess? Keep it on low heat and stir in the cashew powder. Mix, then add ghee. Continue mixing until it thickens into dough. If you can make a soft ball, it's ready to eat! The end! Jk. Um. Anyway! Be careful during this step because the dough may be hot. Once you’re finished burning your fingers, pour the dough out onto your greased cookie sheets. Fold it with a spoon till it is warm and actually touchable. Now, start to knead it like a cat making biscuits. When it reaches room temperature, place it between two of your delicious cookie sheets. With a rolling pin, flatten it to a thickness you think you would enjoy putting in your mouth. When you're done deciding, remove the top cookie sheet, and, using a knife, cut it diagonally into diamonds.

Now you have your very own kaju katli! I don’t have to make it myself though, because I have my grandma. So I win! >:)

-Atisha
Dear Tara,

When I first met you, I had no idea you were gonna be such a big and important part of my life. First day of school, we went to Matrimandir and you invited me to stay with you, and I am so happy you did because we might have not become friends, and I wouldn't have had the amazing Tara experience. The first time I came to your house, I felt like I was free to do anything. I've never felt not invited to your house, I've always felt like I was at home and you were like a sister to me. Even though we had a lot of differences, we always used to say how much we just clicked when we were together. We used to say, “we are such a good duo, and I feel like we’re just never bored when we’re together”.

You were an amazing and beautiful person, it is seriously indescribable. I am forever grateful to have had that incredible, fun, risky, loving and adventurous experience with you. You were truly a loyal best friend to me, and I am so lucky I got to know you and have you in my life. Tara, I still have all our crazy and special unforgettable memories, we all do. I remember in Kodaikanal all the wild and exciting things we did, and I am so happy we got to experience going to summer camp once, together. A quarter of my personality, humour and creativity is made by you. You’ve taught me so many incredible and useful things that I will need in my life in Auroville, even though I still don’t know how I’m supposed to live that life in Auroville, without you.

Your generosity has always shocked me. Our last time together, we were planning on watching Friends and we wanted to have snacks together, but I had no snacks, so you shared literally all your snacks with me and smiled at me. You are the only friend who has ever done that to me. I’m gonna miss your smile so much, your caring personality, your voice, your laugh and I’m just gonna miss you so much Tara, I still can’t believe it. You’re the stars in the sky, the sand at the beach, the flowers in the field, the breeze in the air, and lastly, you’re the friend that I needed.

I love you Tara.

-Luce
Dear Tara,

The next few weeks will be some of the hardest in my whole life. Even when I write this, my brain and heart have still refused to accept the fact that I won't see you anymore. Even though we had our ups and downs, I certainly have not always felt the kindest emotions towards you, but in the end, you were and will always be my sister, whether I like it or not.

We have known each other for so long, and have been like family since. It is so hard for me to accept that you won't greet me in school tomorrow or any other day. There is so much you dreamed of being, and so much you could have been. If I could take your place, I would. You had such a bright future ahead of you, filled with things I could never accomplish. I have so many amazing memories of our time together. Some that I will take to the grave, as I hope you have.

Even though we have drifted apart in the past few years, and we have had our fair amount of fights, in the end we always stayed friends. I don't know if there is a heaven and hell, or an underworld, but if there is, you deserve only the brightest, most beautiful afterlife. You have one of the purest souls I have ever seen. And I will always carry your memory with me.

Thank you for being the most amazing person. I love you Tara, with all my heart.

Love,

Sitara.

Your sister forever and always.

-Sitara
Restaurant review ★★★★★

We went to a new restaurant next to Naturellement called “The Sprout”. It’s a vegetarian restaurant which serves a variety of food all the way from drinks to food to baked goods. Here’s what we bought, spending only about 500 each.

I (Megha) bought a tomato soup and a cold chocolate. The tomato soup was delicious and they gave me free bread which made me happy. It was nice and warm and the seeds on top added an extra crunch. Though I did feel it was a bit sweet. I’d say the tomato soup was a 4 / 5. My cold chocolate was kind of pricey but it was so good! It stayed cold the entire time we were there even though we were sitting right next to the window while the sun was shining through. It also wasn’t overly sweet but I wish it was just a tiny bit sweeter. My cold chocolate is also 4 / 5.

I (Aarohi) ordered the eastern salad, a cold coffee and a chocolate cookie. The salad had a bunch of stuff. I really liked it because every time I took a bite it just burst with different flavors and with the dressing on top it’s so good. The cold coffee was also amazing. I had mine with sugar and it had the perfect amount of sweetness and bitterness, and the glass was also very pretty. Last but not least the chocolate chip cookie, you can choose if you want it heated up or not so I love that and the cookie was amazing it was so nice and sweet it’s the best cookie i ever had! I give all my food a 5/5! I'm not saying it’s that cheap but it’s worth it!
Shradanjali Interview

We interviewed 5 people who work in Shradanjali and Abha, and we made each of their answers into paragraphs.

Worker’s Interview

Kalaiselvi lives in a village a bit after Acciampet. She has been working in Shradhanjali for 18 years. She joined after seeing an advertisement in her local newspaper. Her favorite job is supervising and she is very happy working here.

Theinmozhi lives in Bommayapalayam. She has been working in Shradhanjali for 35 years. She joined because she was 15 and looking for a job. Her favorite job is flower pasting and she is happy here because now her daughter can go to college.

Pooromi lives in Alankuppam. She has been working in Shradhanjali for 29 years. She joined because her dad worked here. She started working after tenth grade. Her favorite job is flower pasting and she is very happy.

Rajeswari lives in Thuruvai. She has been working here for 19 years. She joined after someone told her about this place. Her favorite job is flower pasting and is very happy here because she doesn't fit in other jobs.

Punitha lives in Edayanchavadi. She has been working here for 25 years. She joined because her neighbor was working here. Her favorite job is book binding and she is happy working here.

Abha’s Interview

Abha has 3 siblings, Uma, Deepti and Shuba. She was born in Punjab. 43 years ago, she and one more person created Shradhanjali because she loved doing work with her hands and Auroville needed income. She does not own Shradanjali she is just the trustee. Her favorite flowers are Miracle and Ipomoea. She doesn't plan on expanding the company. One of the biggest challenges was covid because people couldn’t come to work. She deals with rude people by just ignoring them. She is very happy she created Shradanjali because she can make beautiful products and also make job opportunities for many people.

- Megha & Lea
Interviewer: Hi Aarohi and Isha! We're thrilled to have you with us for this special interview. Let's dive right in. Could you both tell us how you first heard about the internship opportunities at Maroma?

Aarohi: Of course! I found out about these internships through my teacher at Deepanam School, Mr. Mahavir. He offered us various internship options at the beginning of the school year. I've also liked Maroma, I can't say exactly why, but I do, so it was the obvious choice for me.

Interviewer: So you both had different paths that lead you to Maroma. Isha, could you share what motivated you to choose Maroma for your internship?

Isha: Sure. What drew me to Maroma was their commitment to creating products from scratch, starting with raw materials. It's not just assembly line work; it's about understanding the entire process from first principles. Maroma's way of making soap, perfumes, and other products fascinated me. I wanted to learn how they create the products I love and use in my daily life.

Interviewer: Aarohi, what about you? Why did you choose Maroma for your internship?

Aarohi: I was really interested in Maroma's mission to make the world a better place. I love how they refuse to use palm oil, which can be destructive to habitats and wildlife. Maroma cares about the environment and animals, and that resonates with me.
Interviewer: And what would you both like to do in the future?

Aarohi: My dream is to travel the world and learn new languages. I’d love to become a pilot or a flight attendant. If I could travel right now, I’d go to UAE and Japan.

Isha: I share Aarohi’s love of travel. I’d like to visit Dubai and explore other big cities as well. And as a career, I’m interested in math and data science. In my spare time, I also enjoy singing Indian classical and pop music.

Interviewer: And do either of you have any messages for other young interns or students who might be considering interning at Maroma or elsewhere?

Aarohi: I would highly recommend interning, especially when you’re young. It provides you with real-world experience and insight into what it’s like to work in a job. It’s a really valuable learning experience.

Isha: One thing I’ve noticed here at Maroma is that people don’t have one specific job. They tend to switch roles and tasks every week, which I found really interesting. It’s not just about doing one thing repeatedly; you get to explore and learn various aspects. Plus, I’ve observed that people here are treated well, and they’re not afraid to make mistakes, which creates a supportive and inclusive work environment.

Interviewer: Thank you, Aarohi and Isha, for sharing your experiences and thoughts with us. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours!