



DENSON

HOUSE WRITING



HAPPINESS



2023

## Editors' Welcome

Welcome inside the Denson magazine where, behind the cover created by Denson's resident artiste Hafeezur, amid 24 pages of softly flowing hues, lies the answer to happiness.

Well, not quite, but as close as a QPR fan can get, being realistic.

We have, we hope, curated a collection of illuminating approaches to the theme that hark back to the glory days of repeated House Writing successes under Mr Streat in years past. The similarities are there: in 2018, as this year, we witnessed footballing disappointment. In 2018, as now, we were fighting for victory in the Watson Trophy. In 2018, like today, Ridley were maintaining their iron grip on 6th place finishes...

Ok, maybe we're reaching slightly here. A lot has changed. Coronavirus disrupted all our lives, the spicy chicken burger has nearly doubled in price, and most importantly Mr Walker has emerged as our new leader. Some fallow years have followed - not Mr Walker's fault, we must add (Head Boy of House applications are soon) - but it is time to return to the top. It is time to evade the malevolent spirits which have surely contributed to our downfall. It is time to return to the days when House Writing was *our* event, when all else faded in the face of our creativity and ingenuity.

This is Denson House. We are your editors. And please, join us as we traverse through the imagination of our house and witness the flourishing and growing of happiness through brighter and brighter pages.

Welcome to the evolution of happiness.

Isaac & Alex

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## **Imprisonment**

### **Alfie D9**

Trapped like a man behind bars  
In a world that belongs to us, our world.  
Beaten by the overwhelming pain of life;  
Will I ever be freed from this torment?  
To run away from who I have become,  
Free to live without numbness in my bones,  
Without sorrow, without grief;  
To feel glad I lived through the night  
No longer dreading what was to come in the day  
Or praying on my knees the thoughts away.  
If only this could happen, my pain could pass,  
But life is a prison and it is bound to last.

## **In the Pursuit of Happiness I: 50 % Off**

### **Boris D13**

Do you ever feel low? Do your favourite hobbies no longer bring you joy? Here at Ambrosia Inc., we know that sadness has no place in your life. That's why you should try our new and improved Ambrosia™ to experience our clinically-approved promise of happiness. Call us today at 020 7946 0348 to receive our skilled service, easy terms & affordable prices. So come in for a demonstration and a consultation with our professional staff, and our courteous and knowledgeable sales representatives will help you select what's just right for you, and just right for your budget.

Some restrictions may apply. We accept no blame for any injury, addiction or death caused by our products or surgeries. Billing starts at £10,000 per 30 doses.

## They're Sewing a Pall

### Isaac D12

They're sewing a pall of black fog and mire,  
With thimble-less fingers that never seem to tire,  
With sweatless brows that never seem to crease,  
With needle and thread and piece upon piece.

The pall is a patchwork of wrinkles and silk batches;  
It has a section of struggles with nothing but scratches;  
It has a square of blood with the splatterings of war;  
It has a patch of nothing stolen from the poor.

The pall is a blanket of truth and it's miserable;  
It's brutal and garish and silent and formidable.  
It's fitted with a smile - a grin with good cheer -  
As we all ignore the end of the things we hold dear.

Finally, as the last stitch is sewn  
With a twinkle in the eye and a sardonic sort of groan,  
Be happy, for once, because there's nothing more to do,  
There's nothing more to fight for - you've lost and it's through.

The pall is spread wide and twirls as it's cast;  
It lands on the coffin, polished and brassed.  
The coffin realises that it is free and happy  
As the coffin looks up at where the stars used to be.

# The Sails of Emotion

## Adam D7

The night was cold; Sadness was at full sail. The vast blue sheets, decorated with stains from wear, creased and rippled as they battled with the wind. This was a fight they couldn't win. The tempestuous waves threatened to leap onto the deck, drenching the onboard sailors. The crew: Disadvantage, Loss, Despair, Grief, Helplessness, Disappointment, and Sorrow, all cowered, as the night began to swallow them. Helplessness was indulged in a feeble attempt to bail out the water that engulfed the deck and Sorrow, as the self-proclaimed captain, was duly barking orders from his perch next to the helm. Grief was listlessly spinning the wheel and sending the ship on a zigzagging course. Sadness' crew were failing: now they surely couldn't recover.

That's when it appeared. The unmistakable curtains, like boiling blood, billowed in the dim light. Light glistened off the menacing cannons that stood unevenly in the wind—those faces, riddled with a rage that seemed to radiate pure violence.

Anger had arrived.

The scarlet keel paced the ocean, seeking out the bounty that was Happiness. Instead, it revealed a barge of immense Sadness. The bitter mob that was Anger's crew: Jealousy, Hurt, Fear, Anxiety, Shame, and Worry, all scrambled around searching for anything that they could throw, brandish, or shout at Sadness.

Then the cannons shot.

Sadness rocked, the waves were crashing now. The residual gashes left by the leaden balls were gulping down water. A fatigued sadness launched a few faint volleys, almost entirely missing, but one found its mark on Anger's mast.

As the huge wooden pole splintered and toppled, both boats were enveloped in a thick fog. Without its sail, Anger was rapidly veering towards Sadness, but the drained crew were too exhausted to change their course. The two boats, locked in mortal combat, clashed, unaware as they neared an underwater-reef. Suddenly there was a great jerk and a rending of timbers. The two boats needed to find land. Fast.

As the fates would have it, they did find land. Slowly the fog cleared, to reveal a sun dappled beach, dotted with palm trees and shrubs. The crippled crowd exited their crafts and threw themselves on the sand, exhausted. They woke up hours later and sat on the quiet beach viewing their surroundings. Some of the men waded into the shallows to catch fish with stones, while others passed around coconuts and drank from the shells. As time passed, they forgot about their quarrels, and decided to stay on the paradise island. They realised that they were less different than they first seemed. The once-ruined men created a community, and that's when they realised that they had finally found Happiness.

## The Happiest Boy, No More

### Sam D12

'Don't go too far-' trailed James's mother, calling in vain: James had already escaped into the glade. Past the thickets and the groves and scrambling behind the bushes, James saw his greatest friend, Alice. Ever gregarious and always ready to relish excitement, Alice dragged him along as they rushed through the tall grass towards their adventure. A stroke of stupor washed over James, and he became bewildered by the fact that he was entirely free, relieved from all restrictions, relieved from all stress; James was totally and completely at peace. He wanted this feeling to last an eternity. The happiest boy.

But happiness cannot last forever.

The woeful beeping and clattering and the haranguing voices of the doctors drained away into distant echoes before deafening silence enveloped the room, falling like a blanket, smothering all emotions. The sterile air and clinical complexion of the walls - stark blue and white - left James empty. He felt as though his surroundings were shouting at him, but he could hear nothing. Disbelief was his only salvation but he could not disbelieve for much longer. His Alice was dead. The happiest boy, no more.

## I, For One, Am Not Sure

### Thomas D8

What is happiness, and where does it come from? I, for one, am not sure.

Is it the way the clouds complement the setting sun;

The feeling you get when that damn assignment is done?

How do I capture that feeling of bliss? Bottle it, stop it from escaping away because I'm not sure if I'll see it again, obtain it, feel that freeing feeling that leaves me so sure that I can make it through the day again.

## Extra-terrestrial Entity #9

### Rafi D9

The so far unnamed creature was first sighted hovering above a forest in Yellowstone National Park in 1969, following a monumental blast of gamma radiation that slammed into its centre. The blast created a miniscule field of radiation - now fenced off - and also left a large crater, about 50 metres wide and 10 metres deep. Those studying the first ever footage that was recorded, about 15 minutes after the blast, state with certainty witnessing the creature soaking up the radiation as if charging itself. All stories and footage relating to the creature have been taken by special intelligence forces from around the world, supposedly for the protection of the public. So far, it does not appear to be doing any harm, instead causing happiness and doing good deeds. Scientists have concluded that further studies are required.

From the limited sightings of the beast, we still know little. Questions like how it feeds remain unanswered, but theories have been produced. The leading theory for its feeding is that it feeds off the radiation in the area it landed in, or other areas with a spike of radiation. This is further backed up by the lack of known areas of excretion, implying it does not eat. Witnesses have been interviewed thoroughly and have come out with a rough wingspan of about 4 metres and a height of about 3 metres.

Scientists only momentarily caught the beast and subdued it for about 30 minutes, in which time they luckily stumbled across its serotonin gland. It appeared to let out serotonin (the chemical that makes happiness) when it caused pain or suffering. This drastically changes its behavioural pattern, as it shines light on the purpose of the entity's actions. The currently accepted theory is that the creature may think we work the same way as it does and do good deeds in order to cause sadness, meaning the creature is trying to cause pain, not happiness. If the theory is correct, it is only a matter of time before it finds out negative actions cause negative feelings. If it does, bad things will start happening.

Neutralisation may be the only solution.

## Butterfly

Jake D12

A young boy lies, his back separated from the grass by only a thin sheet of fabric,  
Feeling the tender score of its blades, soaking in the warm lick of the sun.  
His entire demeanour is one of peace and innocence: truly a part of the garden.

Enjoying the warmth of the welcome sun, the boy casts a glance down the garden,  
Straining his neck, he lays his eyes on a single butterfly, fluttering among flowered bushes.  
What does it get from hopping flower to flower, hour by hour,  
Hoping thirstily for one more suck on some sweet nectar?

But as butterflies flutter in search of sustenance,  
Young boys stand and with nets in hand, begin the hunt;  
As butterflies compete in a lawless life-or-death brawl,  
The young God is done watching...

The net slices the air, returning to the boy's eyes empty, bar a leaf from the bush.  
Now high above the it, the butterfly is forced from its former safe haven:  
Both predator and prey, left empty and lost.

The grass becomes sharper, stabbing into the boy's bare feet;  
The sun becomes hostile, as dark clouds roll into the corner of the sky,  
Secreting the heavens above him.

Far above, the butterfly watches, carried by the light breeze, powerless over its destination.

The pursuit of joy has left only wreckage in its wake.  
The boy and the butterfly are not the same;  
They seek different nectar,  
They fly different paths,

They stand on different grounds:  
The pair have almost no connection, no understanding for one another,  
Yet they are united by their one true goal.

For every butterfly, there is a net.

# In the Pursuit of Happiness II: Forced Smiles

## George D13

*[The beeps of office phones and the hushed murmurs of barely hidden conversations are heard from beyond the stage. On stage is a desk complete with an old computer, office phone, and an old bookshelf, all neatly organised, as well as a wall behind it. Incandescent bulbs illuminate the desk, with only the corners of the stage left in darkness. Norma sits on a chair, with the phone receiver held close, her mature face a manuscript of the good times and the bad. Helga, a younger woman and Norma's assistant, strides on stage and bustles into Norma's office, rifling through her bag. A blue spotlight shines over the front right corner, revealing another figure, curled up into a ball, still barely visible in the darkness. Her muttering is quiet, but ignored.]*

Helga *[with casual irritation]*: Where is it? Is it in here...- damn it, where is it?

Norma *[shuffling to the open doorway, now with a weary smile]*: Ready Helga?

Helga *[Still rifling through her bag]*: - Ah, here it is. The monthly report. Shall we begin then?

Crouched figure *[In a hoarse whisper]*: I need more...

Helga: Well, everything seems to be going well. Compared to March, our satisfaction ratings are up 4%. The volunteers have all integrated nicely, and none of them have been reported or anything like that. Complaints of hopelessness, confusion & depression are down. *[Hesitantly]* Our centre hasn't seen a- you know, since Monday... Norma, how is Serena?

Crouched figure *[through sobs]*: I can't take it anymore. I can't do it. It's too much, too much.

*[The clatter of keyboards quietens down. Shadows of humans appear over the stage, as if listening to the conversation.]*

Norma *[Reassuring]*: She's on a short break to recollect herself. She's getting better.

Crouched figure: I can't take it. The Ambrosia, it's not, not enough..

Helga: That's good to hear...and a relief for everyone else. Some good news wouldn't hurt. Is it okay for me to tell everyone?

Norma: Sure, that's a good idea. Now then why don't you take your break, eh?

Helga: Thank you. *[Exits. The shadows disperse. The rush of the keyboard rises once more.]*

Crouched Figure: I can't, not without it. I need it, I need more.

*[Norma crumples in her seat once more, clearly tired and no longer putting on a brave face. Her despair hides under a thin veneer of clinical detachment.]*

Norma *[Worried]*: Let's see. Four employee of the month awards. An average of 5 hours of overtime. Five canisters of Ambrosia. All so that she could keep on counselling them. That poor girl. Shouldering so many burdens. I was a fool. There isn't enough Ambrosia in the world to save you from that horror.

Crouched Figure *[In a rising crescendo]*: I don't have any more. Oh god! Norma! NORMA! Please I need more! *[Panting, exhausted]* I need... I need...

*[The crouched figure slumps forward on the floor. The blue spotlights cut off. The lightbulbs over Norma's desk dim slowly to black. The curtains close in silence.]*

## Fork in the Road

### Dirushan D8

The roads of happiness are much unlike  
The selfish roads of pleasure-seeking,  
Where people are filled with greed and disgust,  
And no one has the thought for kindly speaking.  
But they're the roads where lovers leave,  
Where wives and husbands stray,  
And children don't know what to say,  
Even if it is right that way.

The roads of happiness are walked upon  
By simple folk and the soft-hearted,  
By the devoted folk who worship God,  
And want to live their days as good people.  
There, kind people stop and talk,  
Regardless of the chase for money or power,  
There, next to each other, the grown-ups walk,  
And every eye you see is confused;  
What path should I walk today?

The roads of happiness are filled,  
Not with the compatriots of the dumb  
and foolish,  
But with loyal friends and kind donors,  
The small actions people do,  
They all impact what path you'll take,  
There, glory comes to all.  
There, all kinds of life flourish,  
Unlike the tyrannic path,  
Where race, power, greed and money  
determine your outcome.

## Let Us Return

### Anant D11

The earth was once sad, with a heart full of pain,  
As humans cut down trees, and polluted the air again.  
But then a change came, with a brand new decree,  
Humans decided to help, and set the earth free.

No more trees were cut, no more air was unclean,  
The earth felt so happy, it could hardly be seen.  
The rivers ran clear, and the skies were so blue,  
Thanks to the humans, who made a promise true.

The animals returned, to roam free once more,  
The earth was alive, like it was in times before.  
The flowers bloomed, in fields far and wide,  
And the earth sang with joy, its beauty inside.

So let us remember, to keep our promise true,  
To care for the earth, and all it can do.  
For a happy earth, is a gift from above,  
A treasure for all, filled with beauty and love.

# Happiness Soup

## Ali D11

### Ingredients

- A Dash of Social Validation
- A Pinch of Material Possessions
- A Teaspoon of False Positivity
- A Cup of Escapism
- A Tablespoon of Ignorance

1. Begin by seeking social validation from others. Post carefully curated images of your life on social media, emphasising only the positive aspects of your experiences. Bask in the likes and comments that you receive, and convince yourself that your online persona is a true reflection of your happiness.

2. Add a pinch of material possessions to the mix. Purchase the latest gadgets, designer clothes, and luxury items, all with the aim of impressing others and proving your worth. Convince yourself that these items will bring you joy and contentment, even though their effects are temporary and fleeting.

3. Next, add a teaspoon of false positivity to the recipe. Adopt a "positive thinking" mindset and push aside any negative emotions or experiences. Tell yourself that happiness is a choice, and that you can simply will yourself to be happy. Ignore any underlying issues or challenges that may be contributing to your feelings of unhappiness.

4. Mix in a cup of escapism. Distract yourself from the realities of your life by engaging in mindless activities such as binge-watching television, scrolling through social media, or indulging in addictive behaviours. Avoid facing any difficult emotions or situations by numbing yourself with temporary pleasures.

5. Finally, add a tablespoon of ignorance. Refuse to acknowledge the fact that happiness is an illusion and that true happiness cannot be achieved through external means. Convince yourself that you are happy, and that anyone who suggests otherwise is simply jealous or negative.

Stir through and season fully for best results.

# Questions

## Dev D10

Emily (or Em for short) was quite the inquisitive child, you might say, and although she was a young, innocent girl, who didn't really know much about the world, she tried to grasp and understand as much of it as possible.

It was a frigid winter night, and Emily was snuggled up in bed. Her mum had just tucked her in and it was a school night, so she had to call it a day. She had her eyes closed and was thinking about her day: her mind sprang from what she'd eaten that morning, to what she'd learnt at school. She recalled her teacher had started off the day with the question: 'What really is happiness?'

Emily smiled to herself, as her friend Darren answered, 'Happiness is to be happy'.

Emily's thoughts spiralled around this question until she finally fell asleep.

The next morning, as she was eating breakfast, she couldn't help but notice that her dad was reading a book, the title reading: 'How to be Happier'. Emily went up to her dad and asked him the puzzling question she'd come across yesterday. He didn't have an answer. Emily, being the curious character she was, searched it up.

No answer.

That day at school she asked all of her teachers but no one had an answer. Some teachers made amusing remarks about happiness but no one really had a definitive response to her query.

Will Emily ever know the answer?

## The Truth

### Craig D12

Within the head resides your entire self, your opinions, your memories and your emotions,  
Caged in by less than a centimetre of bone, your Brain is your life.

Therein lies a constantly varying ratio of chemicals, referred to as neurotransmitters:  
Serotonin, Dopamine, Noradrenaline, Endorphins, Oxytocin among a number of others,  
All of which contribute to the sensation of happiness through action in the Limbic system.  
A highly complex system for an emotion that is itself, far more complex than at face value.

Feelings of happiness vary far more than we often realise;  
The sharp and elated feeling of scoring a goal differs hugely from the satisfied feeling of completing a long task.

Given the role of chemicals in happiness, it is clear that this variety of feelings comes from no more than the nearly limitless combinations of Neurotransmitters.

The varying depths of happiness, therefore arise, simply due to varying concentrations of  
Neurotransmitters released by certain tasks.

Happiness is not so magical, just a piece of flesh submerged in a solution.

Happiness is not such a fantasy, but science.

## Fluorescent Moonlight

Youssef D8

They all sat down on the hill and gazed at the stars. The rays of moonlight shone over them and the calming breeze swayed the grass around them. The stars linked together, shining together in the darkness like tiny pieces of hope forming together in defiance of darkness. They relaxed their muscles and finally, after what seemed like forever, they were finally carefree. Like the immense weight on their shoulders, all the knowledge and power they had just disappeared. At one with the world, they looked at the landscape below them: the contrasting shapes of bushes, trees and animals. Listening intently to the humming of the birds and scurrying of the little creatures around their home, they admired the forest and looked at the fluorescent sky for one, final, time.

## Close Your Eyes

Eshanth D10

Close your eyes,  
Plug your ears,  
Hold your breath,  
Hold your tears,  
Close your mouth,  
Remove all smells,  
Go to a place  
Which only you can tell.

The opposite of hell,  
A bit like heaven,  
Nearly cloud 9,  
Maybe cloud seven.

Azure blue skies  
And a blooming flower;  
A healing ray of sunshine  
Will increase your power

Frolicking in the clouds  
With friends or family  
And in the sky, there is a sun  
Which will make you feel happy.

A travelling lamp as Ross might say,  
Illuminating the sky wherever you go;  
A great golden globe  
Keep reaching higher if you ever feel low.

It removes your worries,  
It removes your stress,  
It provides relief,  
It gives you a feeling of rest,  
It removes your laziness,  
It transforms your wackiness,  
It removes your nastiness,  
It's happiness.



## Inside Out: A Review

### Diyon D10

In the year of 2015, Disney blessed us with a beautiful film about the emotions that run wild in our head.

The main character of the story, in my eyes, is Joy. Right from the start, Joy is represented as a very enthusiastic and energetic character but as the movie progresses her character is influenced by the actions she makes and the consequences of those actions.

What I love about 'Inside Out' is how daring and perceptive the movie is. The movie itself visualises the inner workings of the human mind. While creating the movie, director Pete Docter extensively studied with psychologists about how human emotions affect interpersonal relations. The movie, in particular, shows how memories fade and change as circumstances change, how pain can be just as important to our lives as joy, and how opposing emotions may coexist within us at the same time. It shows how although we all hope to be happy and energetic all the time, sometimes we have to feel all the other emotions that control our mind to make that feeling of joy feel as good as it is. The movie perfectly highlights the importance of all our emotions and how none of them work in isolation.

'Inside Out' is not a perfect movie. In fact, I used to dislike the film. But as I grew older, I began to admire it for its quirkiness and its view on the world we live in. I grew to love the way it portrayed our emotions as little mini-figures of ourselves with their own personalities. But most of all, I grew to love how it accepted that we can't always be happy, and sometimes it's okay to be sad because what makes being happy so great is the fact that we will never always be happy.

# In the Pursuit Of Happiness III: Bill and his Game Dinel D13

31/07/2025

*To me, the most important part of winning is joy. You can win without joy, but winning that's joyless is like eating in a four-star restaurant when you're not hungry.*  
- Bill Russell

Bill Russell passed away 3 years ago today at the age of 88 on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2022, with his loving wife Jeanine by his bedside. His death brought the basketball world to a standstill

To the fans, Bill was basketball's ultimate champion, a record 11 championships in only 13 years. To his teammates, Bill was a pioneer, the first black superstar to dominate basketball and later the first Black coach in NBA history. For Bill, basketball was a game that made him happy.

The sight of a happy Bill Russell was something the world got used to. All those years spent winning trophies ensured that the sight of a smiling, laughing Bill was never forgotten. Even in his autumn years, decades after his retirement, Russell could be seen with front row tickets, laughing and smiling as he watched each new basketball star take to the court.

Russell's impeccable character was forged first in the southern state of Louisiana and then in California, out on the West Coast. It was by learning from the examples of his mother and father, Ann and Charles Russell respectively, that Bill learned what it took to survive through racism and poverty. Bill hero-worshipped his parents, and their memory served as a reminder for him through tough times. Their stubborn refusal to back down in the face of genuine threats to their lives were examples for Bill. Years later when Bill and his black teammates were denied service, he protested. He had front row seats for Dr King's "I Have a Dream" speech. At the age of 83 years old Bill posted his first tweet, kneeling in support of Colin Kaepernick and the BLM Movement,

because even as an octogenarian he understood his responsibility and the influence he still carried.

It was on the streets playing basketball where Bill finally found a place where he could escape from the perils of racism and poverty. Out on the streets of the Golden State, Bill slowly grew, steadily mastering the game he loved. The Boston Celtics would eventually draft Bill in 1956 for his defensive mastery and great leadership. It was whilst playing for the Boston Celtics that Bill made himself a household name in America. Together with "Red" Auerbach, Bill Russell's Hall of Fame coach, the Celtics became a dynasty. Bill's reign brought 11 NBA championships to a team which before had had none.

He was a civil rights icon. A basketball legend. Bill didn't just dominate the game. He conquered it. Bill was a hero to the players that have come after him. Yet for all his success, you would never hear him gloat about it. Instead, he served as a mentor to the up-and-coming basketball stars. He was an example, the standard that every basketball player was held to, both as a player and as a man. The old champion became a confidante to those who came after him. Just as Bill turned to basketball, to escape the hardships of poverty and racism, the players of the present could do the same.

It has been 3 years since Bill's death. And a lot has changed. With the success of Ambrosia, we are seeing more and more players turn to this new drug to help them to shoulder the burdens of increased stress. And in the games, everything seems fine. The ball goes through the hoop. Winners are crowned. But before and after? The players look sick. Their laughs are hollow. You can almost see the weight of expectations pushing them down, their repressed stress crushing them to the floor. What does it say about the game when you need to take a drug to make it fun? For Bill, basketball was fun. A game that made him happy. An escape. But the game has become a sport. Now it's a source of suffering. In a world where every shot must be perfect, where we can vanquish the very thought of sadness from our lives, we seem to have overlooked one key detail.

Basketball is supposed to be fun.

# Give Way to the A413

## Manas D11

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

I invite you all to close your eyes. Let us suppose you were able to dream any dream you wished to dream, every night of your life, and that in each dream you would have the power to dream a lifetime. What would you dream of first? Perhaps, as you commenced the first few dreams you would embark on a journey to fulfil all of your desires. Naturally, you would quench the thirst of every pleasure you could conceive of. Until eventually, maybe months later, you would go to bed thinking “Well, that was fun, but I’m bored. I want a surprise!”.

You loved the surprise.

Now, every dream you dreamed would be more adventurous and more thrilling and more unpredictable than its predecessor – each night you would give up more and more control. I like to think you can experience the most recent of these dreams, ladies and gentlemen, if you open your eyes. This view of existence stems from Hindu philosophy: the notion that the universe is a stage for a cosmic drama where a fundamental consciousness, call it God if you wish, is playing hide and seek with itself. Or in other words, this celestial dreamer has forgotten he is dreaming. Therefore, just like we do with any worthwhile movie, or video game, we get so engrossed in said dream: we forget life is but that.

Firstly, a clarification: happiness is not pleasure; happiness is distinct from pleasure in that it is ethereal – that is to say, it cannot be sought or coerced by doing something pleasurable, such as eating chocolate. Establishing this is pertinent to applying the concept of a cosmic drama in our day-to-day lives in a practical manner, as the fleeting nature of pleasure and thus the onset of pain form the fundamental nature of life. While we should not make many assumptions about the true nature of reality, most agree that pain and pleasure are interrelated – the cessation of one leads to the forming of the other. To put it plainly, life is wiggly; after all a key takeaway from the ‘hide-and-seek’ ideology is that life is axiomatically playful and to strive towards one outcome such as pleasure is to deny the virtue of change, or as we put it earlier, a surprise. In essence, we are ruled by fear of uncertainty and the unknown; attached to a façade of control in an uphill battle to force our will upon life. It’s only when we let go of that control and accept the flow of life that we can truly experience its beauty and find a sense of fulfilment that transcends temporary pleasure.

To illustrate what I mean better, perhaps I can allegorise using the A413, a country road in Buckinghamshire. For those of you who know me well, you will be aware that I am rather fond of this route for no particular reason other than its beauty. Throughout secondary school, my commute consisted of a large section on the A413, which I would spend gazing out the bus window. On one such occasion, I found myself dissatisfied for no obvious reason amidst a golden sunset on a winter’s afternoon. What happens next is deliberately vague – it clicked for me and the point is to convey there is no secret and sometimes the correct concoction of circumstances can deliver that ‘a-ha’ moment. For me, as we turned off the A413 to the B4032, the red ‘GIVE WAY’ sign spoke a million words. Metaphorized as life itself, the A413 was draped over rolling countryside symbolising its unpredictability, driven over by speedy traffic representing the constant change and simple gorgeousness. All I had to do was give way and grin.

Thank you for listening.

# Coffee?

Rishabh D9

Victor walked from the building. The flyer didn't catch his eye at first, but being fired made the pressure of getting a new job immediate. It seemed too good to be true. He wrote down the address and date, and went to his apartment and forgot about it. He made a pot of instant noodles and sat on the sofa. Turning on the TV, as he checked his pockets, he found the paper with the address. He thought it might be his only shot.

Sasha hoped that these flyers would be enough. She had only done about 20, but she was alone. She hadn't talked to Heather since she had gotten her into this scheme. Hopefully someone would show up. For now it was a waiting game.

As Victor walked into the hall, the first thing he noticed was that it was empty. The room had several seats set up, and with dry wash walls, the room seemed cheap and hastily set up. It was quite small, barely 16 square metres. He just went to a corner and sat. After a while, someone else came in who sat at the opposite end of the room to him.

The fact that anyone had arrived at all was surprising. Sasha was glad people had seen her flyers, but she still didn't think she would make much money. She had to give this her best shot, before she ran out of savings. She told the two people that she was willing to employ them, allowing them to make money like they had never seen before. She put on her most motivational act, and prayed that they would be fooled just as much as she had been.

Victor thought about the proposition. To hire people, who hire people. Wouldn't that just be a big corporation? He would become a manager, or regional manager. Half way through, the other guy left, but Victor didn't take notice. At the end, the lady asked if anyone wanted to join, though there was only one person in the crowd.

Of course, he said yes, to Sasha's relief. She was able to give him £20 worth of coffee, and even let him try it. Of course, there wasn't much special about the coffee, but not only had she convinced him to join, she had convinced him to buy the coffee normally. Of course, it was only one person, but he would have to buy more coffee if he actually made sales.

Victor tried to sell the stuff, but he didn't even have friends to sell it to. He tried selling it on the streets, but a selling permit cost him money he didn't have. He needed money to buy equipment to pay people to work below him. It only put him more in debt. He knew it wouldn't work. It had been too good to be true.

# The Fix

## Ruben D11

Depression is a common mental health condition which affects millions of people around the world. It can be a challenging and overwhelming experience to deal with, but there are steps you can take to find happiness and improve your overall well-being. This instruction manual will guide you through some of these steps.

### Step 1: Seek Professional Help

Depression is a complex condition that may require professional treatment. Seeking help from a therapist, psychiatrist, or other mental health professional can provide you with the support and guidance you need to overcome your depression. They can help you identify the underlying causes of your depression and develop a treatment plan that is tailored to your specific needs.

### Step 2: Take Care of Your Physical Health

Your physical health can have a significant impact on your mental well-being. Taking care of yourself by maintaining a healthy diet, exercising regularly, finding a consistent sleep schedule, and avoiding drugs and alcohol can help you feel better physically and mentally. These lifestyle changes can also help reduce symptoms of depression and improve your overall mood.

### Step 3: Practice Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the practice of being present and fully engaged in the moment. It can help you manage stress and anxiety, reduce symptoms of depression, and improve your overall well-being. You can practise mindfulness in many ways, such as through meditation, yoga, or simply taking a few minutes each day to focus on your breath and observe your thoughts.

### Step 4: Cultivate Positive Relationships

Having positive relationships with family and friends can have a significant impact on your mental health. Make an effort to spend time with people who support and encourage you, and avoid those who bring you down. Consider joining a support group or reaching out to a mental health professional for additional support.

### Step 5: Engage in Meaningful Activities

Engaging in activities that bring you joy and a sense of purpose can help improve your mood and overall well-being. Consider pursuing a hobby, volunteering in your community, or finding other ways to engage in activities that are meaningful to you.

### Step 6: Practise Gratitude

Taking time each day to focus on the things you appreciate can help shift your focus from negative thoughts to positive ones. Consider keeping a gratitude journal or simply taking a few minutes each day to reflect on the things that bring you joy and gratitude.

Depression can be a challenging and overwhelming experience, but these steps will help to manage and reduce its effects. Remember to be patient and kind to yourself, and don't hesitate to reach out for help when you need it.

# Patience

## Benji De7

Would the glass break? The incessant pummelling of the rain on the window matched the droning heartbeat of the clock. Since yesterday evening, the rain had not ceased. He loathed this weather; he never knew what to do. His mind wandered to his true passion: football. Football, the beautiful game...

Running down the sideline with the breeze brushing the tips of his hair; cutting infield, boot caressing the ball; then the ball, soaring through the air, into the right hand corner; crashing into the netting, just as the realisation winded him. The test tomorrow 1, Football 0.

He awoke and thought to himself, why am I just sitting here? He went and grabbed his laptop, slumped down at the table and stared out of the window, lost in the dismal drizzle. Then he cracked on with his work.

Hours passed. Later, he got some lunch - some pasta. Whilst stirring it, he stared out of the window watching the sun creep over the garden, bathing it in a warm glow. Then he took it all in! The rain had gone. At last, the rain had really gone!

He gulped down his pasta, before running outside. Reaching his hand into the shed, he pulled out his football and began playing. This was life, he thought to himself. Run shoot score. Run shoot score. Run shoot score. Yes, this was happiness.

Sometimes you just have to wait for the nice weather to come.

## Monday, 8th April

### Vaishnav D7

Dear Diary,

Today has been an incredibly joyous day. From the moment I woke up, I felt a sense of joy that seemed to radiate throughout my body. It's hard to pinpoint exactly what made me so happy, but I think it was a combination of a few things.

Firstly, the weather was absolutely beautiful. The sun was shining and there wasn't a cloud in the sky. I went for a long walk in the park and felt so grateful to be able to bask in the warmth and beauty of nature.

Secondly, I received some wonderful news. A close friend of mine got a job that she's been working towards for months and I couldn't be more proud of her. Her success brought me so much happiness and reminded me of how lucky I am to have such amazing people in my life.

Lastly, I think my own mindset played a big role in my happiness today. I made a conscious effort to focus on the positive things in my life and to let go of any negative thoughts or worries. It's amazing how much of an impact our thoughts can have on our emotions.

Overall, today has been a reminder to cherish the small moments of joy in life and to appreciate the people and things that bring us happiness. I hope to carry this feeling with me and to spread happiness wherever I go.

Until tomorrow,  
Vaishnav

# In the Pursuit of Happiness IV: Doctor's Orders

## Theerhan D13

CARTSTONE HOSPITAL  
PATIENT FILE: SUMMERS, J

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26 SEPTEMBER 2024 / ROOM 116

ASSESSOR: Dr Tobbin

### Patient Details

Name: Jonathan Zachary "Jack" Summers

DOB: 05/03/2003

Sex: Male

Hospital no.: 574 997 1701

### Patient History

- Patient admitted due to suicide attempt after finding himself unable to access more "Ambrosia" (new market "happiness pill" - dangerous, highly addictive and untested chemical)
- Patient thoroughly addicted to "Ambrosia", quickly degenerating when access is lost or revoked
- Patient retains some semblance of coherence, only able to write and speak short utterances

### Advised measures

- The patient must be allowed to remain awake unless they become violent/aggressive
- The patient should be sedated if they become distressed
- The patient should be allotted regular scheduled therapy and rehabilitative sessions
- Patient shows potential to be allowed a diary as part of therapy - consult therapist as sessions progress
- Visitors may be allowed if the patient improves (interest expressed in "Arthur" - find?)

### NOTES

Jack Summers is, in my professional opinion, a very unfortunate young person. It is not difficult to observe that behind the raving, incoherent obsession with this "Ambrosia" is a bright mind. Thankfully, he is beginning to regain the capacity to function without a constant intake of this awful substance. He is having to relearn the ability to process emotions and experience low points, and his constant scribbles are a reflection of that. It is regrettable that such extreme measures have to be taken to preserve his life, but hopefully we will see him through to the end.



## My Budgerigar

Andrew D10

Unaware of the world - you are always happy,  
Whether you are fluttering graciously,  
Or mumbling and chirping, utterly ignorant of what is going on around you.

You share the innocence of a baby, whilst being more judicious than anyone I have ever met,  
The way you rhythmically go about your day,  
In a manner so calm and calculated.

The feeling of happiness you seem to feel every day,  
Is the very way that I felt when I first got you;  
Seeing your perfectly groomed feathers,  
And their wonderful iridescence,  
Made my heart fill with joy at the times we would have together.

When you first came home with me, it was a time of desperation and worry  
For both you and the rest of the world.  
You were confused, startled and worried,  
Not sure what to do, being taken as a pet by someone you had never met.  
You seemed too worried to eat,  
Too shocked even to drink.

This caused immense fears and worries for your well being,  
Yet the panic that I had for you was nothing compared to what was going on outside.

Outside, there was a deadly virus spreading,  
Tearing through the world;  
It caused us to be stuck inside,  
But luckily you were inside with me too,  
This turned sadness and despair into great happiness.

Now as I see you,  
Nearly three years on from when I first met you,  
I see the happiness in you, that is also in me.



## An Ode Avyan D8

Happiness is a ray of sunshine that shines through the gloomy clouds, warms and lightens our hearts, and makes our day.

On a summer night, there is a soft breeze that murmurs through the trees - a sensation that sets our minds at peace and makes everything right.

Happiness is the sound of a child laughing, the love we have that lasts forever, and the memories we cherish.

It's a kind hug from a buddy, a helping hand to reach out with, a shoulder to depend on when we feel totally isolated.

Happiness is a precious gift that we can all embrace. It's something that can uplift, and make the world a better place.

## BOOK NOW: A Breath of Fresh Air! Revon D7

Escape to a winter wonderland this holiday season and discover the magic of the UK!

With bustling cities, picturesque villages, and stunning landscapes, there's no better place to spend the most wonderful time of the year. Stroll through the streets of London, marvel at glittering Christmas lights, or sip on a hot chocolate whilst taking in the breathtaking views of the Scottish Highlands. Take a tour of the charming Christmas markets in Bath or Manchester and pick up some unique gifts for your loved ones.

Looking for something more active? Hit the slopes in the snowy peaks of the Lake District or take a brisk winter hike through the Yorkshire Dales. And for the ultimate homely experience, settle into a charming bed and breakfast or book a stay in a cosy cottage complete with roaring fireplaces and all the holiday trimmings.

Don't let this holiday season pass you by without experiencing the magic of the UK. Book your holiday getaway today and create unforgettable memories that will last a lifetime!

## Hero Akshajaan D12

"If I die, I die happy; if I die, I die a hero".

The distant cries of fear and pain jolted me from my monotonous thoughts. I glanced around, seeing my grief-stricken comrades; comrades that had stuck with me during these grim times. My gaze locked onto the steely-faced sergeant at the front of the room. He was softly muttering to himself, no doubt waiting for the signal. I could feel the fear radiating from every soul in the room: this was the last push, the last push for our country's freedom. I clenched the gun nervously, swallowing down my fear. This was for our people, our country, our happiness.

My thoughts flickered to my daughter, praying her dad would come home, praying that we would win. I winced at the pain in her eyes as they welled up, hearing about my demise, the anguish on my wife's face as my comrades told her the news. My stomach churned from the dark thoughts flowing through my mind.

I snapped back to reality. This was the final attack, there was no use worrying now. The wail of a siren rang through the room: the signal. We all focused on the sergeant, waiting for his command. As we stood in formation, I remembered, I remembered who we were.

This was the sacrifice for our people, our country, our happiness. We were their heroes, dead or alive.

If I die, I die happy; if I die, I die a hero.

## Senses Harry D7

I hear...

The Calmness of an empty beach  
The snoring of my dog  
The popping of the toaster

I feel...

The soft and smooth fur of my dog  
The warmth of the heated blanket  
The love in a hug

I smell...

The freshness of the sheets on my bed  
The frying of salty bacon  
The Christmas candle gently burning

I taste...

The creamy sweetness of chocolate ice cream  
The Icy snowflake on my tongue  
The roast dinner that reminds me of home

This is happiness to me

# Reminiscence

## Hamshithan D9

The people gathered around the large tree, ready and desperate for advice. Through the repeated shouts for help from the bitter crowd, King Euphoria stepped up to the ancient lectern, head bowed down - perhaps in shame, perhaps in humility. He then raised his head, slowly, carefully gazing at the expectant audience.

"Thank you, my subjects, for taking so many risks in getting here. We all know that all of the old country has been annexed by the cruel Queen Melancholia. I see what you have gone through; I see the pain and misery, the destruction of homes, farms, livelihoods; the taking of lives, torn from their loving families. I could not bear to hear it. And when I heard of the plundering of Glee, I... ruthless soldiers... murdering civilians in cold blood... farmland salted... buildings burned... Well, I thought, and thought, and I realised that I had to see what my people had suffered to truly grasp the horrors of this massacre. I had to go to Glee.

"And then I reminisced. As a child, how us Jovians and the Sorrowers, as well as the other Emoticon Kingdoms, lived in peace and harmony, promoting their emotions upon their kingdoms and their kingdoms alone. We were the most prosperous, but now we are all out.

"Every last one of us Jovians have left that place. How? Well, I sent our army in for Operation Recovery, in which they worked vehemently in order to recover kidnapped soldiers and civilians, the bodies of our fallen friends, food stores, numerous abandoned tools, and much more. They convinced the Sorrowan Army that they were fellow Sorrowans clearing out the land for settlement, and the Sorrowans fell for it hook, line and sinker. They even put on Sorrowan uniforms!

"This means that there is nothing more that we need to take.

"After this speech, I wish for all of you to take the remains of your loved ones and bury them under gravestones. Write what you need to write. Pay your respects when the sun is right above us and the shadows are the shortest. And then... well, go mad! Gather resources! Build your homes! Make some farms, and grow some food! We have no need to worry about a famine, for we have carts upon carts of food. Do what you enjoy. Do what makes you happy. Whether that be peacefully tending to your crops, or having a loud dance in the middle of town, do what you want to do! And at long last, the Kingdom of Jovia shall rise again!"

## At the End of the Day

Hamish D8

Happiness.

What is happiness?

Happiness is found on a midsummer's day,  
Happiness is found in a nice, peaceful café,  
Happiness can sometimes be led astray,  
But it will come back at the end of the day.

Happiness is here to stay,  
Whether it left you yesterday,  
Or is leaving you today,  
Happiness will return.

## The Conductor

Arjun D11

Happiness, a feeling that can uplift the soul;  
A warmth that spreads from the heart to the whole.  
But what is it that makes us feel this way?  
Is it just a reaction to what our bodies say?

Like a symphony of hormones playing all with grace,  
Endorphins, dopamine, and serotonin, each in its place;  
Working together in harmony, a perfect blend,  
Bringing smiles and laughter, joy without end.

And last but not least, the cello of serotonin,  
A calming presence, a soothing beat within;  
It balances the mood and brings peace to the mind,  
A harmony that makes happiness easy to find.

So when we feel happy, and life seems bright,  
It's just our hormones, playing their symphony right.  
And though it may be only a chemical show,  
It brings joy to our heart and a lightness to our soul.

Happiness.

What is happiness?

Happiness is playing your favourite sport,  
Happiness is giving your friends support,  
Sometimes happiness can be cut short,  
But usually that is just a dreadful thought,  
As happiness never aborts.  
Happiness will stand up in court,  
For you, your friends, all of that sort,  
And happiness will win.

Happiness.

What is happiness?

Happiness is the tears you cry,  
Happiness is a gentle breeze in July,  
Sometimes happiness will make you lie,  
Happiness might let you down when you rely,  
But happiness will always try,  
As happiness never dies;  
Happiness will never say goodbye.

# In the Pursuit of Happiness V: A Final Entry

Dan D13

Dear Diary,

You're running out of pages, old horse. I hesitate to look back at the past pages. I know the memories contained there like the back of my hand, revisited again and again and again in endless sessions and reviews and discussions, dragged forth from the binding of this book and made to dance for the audience. I used to feel like that, too.

You know, I never did thank Arthur for giving you to me. I suppose it's strange enough that I still write in this, stretching one diary out over four years, but there's no blueprint for how to recover your life. And Arthur is one of the few people who made me think my life might be recoverable at all. I love him. I've never told him that, of course, but I do. It seems strange to read those words, flat on the page, somehow devoid of all meaning and yet brimming with progress and hope.

But I was talking about the past, not about a potential future. I know your pages are old, weathered, torn, stained with tears and blood, but still you remain a bastion of my deepest secrets and darkest moments, preserving and confining them to the pages of a book. Magical. After all this time, all the rehab, writing, therapy, the court cases and the visitation and the relapses and the psychiatric ward, I think finally the way forward is clear. And not like the false starts before, definitely not the damn drugs. I'm not spiralling, I'm not ranting and raving, I'm not going to relapse, because I can finally see. Life means something now, and that something is... beautiful. I'm sorry you don't have the space for me to encapsulate that within you as well, old horse, to brighten up that darkness you hold.

But that darkness is beautiful in itself, I think. Terrifying, absolutely, and I never want to go back there, but there is a touch of macabre artistry in the pain and the blood and the descriptions of that great gnawing void. And there is good there too, a gradual change charted across the years, a sense of healing, though very slow. And a conviction, hidden beneath the surface, to make something more of myself than a statistic in a court case, a footnote on some documents buried in an archive.

That is what you have become, old horse. An archive. Something to carry all of my burdens, so that I don't have to shoulder that darkness any longer. But our ride together is at an end. You're out of pages, and I'm out of pain to fill them with. Ambrosia finally collapsed last year. I wasn't even paying attention when it did. I'd stopped caring, and one of the nurses mentioned it offhandedly. When I mentioned it to Arthur, the look on his face was like nothing else. I could see the hope beaming from his eyes. I need to tell that man I love him. Then, perhaps, with him, and with my sister and my friends, I can finally be happy again, on my own terms. Happy. Such a beautiful word.

Goodbye, old horse.

## Acknowledgements

After perhaps being slightly harsh in our treatment of a Head of House who, whatever we might have you believe, is truly loved by all of Denson, we ought to start with a profuse thank you to Mr Walker, for putting up with us for the last few months and for being such an enthusiastic advocate for our House Writing efforts.

Thanks also go to our Year 12 editing team, consisting of AJ, Balaji, Craig, Griff, Jake, Sam, Sanjit, Lewis and Tom as well as our Year 13 advisors on all things House Writing, Dinel and Dan.

As previously mentioned, the growth of Denson's happiness has been illuminated and illustrated by none other than our formidable Hafeezur in Year 12. Thanks, of course, to the overwhelming number of people who submitted their pieces for the magazine. Your 140 pieces were all exceptional and we enjoyed reading every single one of them. Thank you for your efforts and apologies for not being able to include them all; unfortunately, there's a limit to how much the font can be reduced...

Last but not least, we'd like to thank ourselves, Isaac and Alex, for leading Denson House to a magnificent House Writing victory in 2023...

We hope you're happy.

