

# The ANTI-DRUG ESSAY WRITING COMPETITION

# 2010

a COLLECTION of  
WINNING ESSAYS



# PReface



Organised by the National Council Against Drug Abuse and Central Narcotics Bureau, the Anti-Drug Essay Writing Competition 2010 was open to upper primary students. It aimed to encourage students to explore drug-related issues and share their thoughts in writing short-stories.

In the process, we hope that they would internalize the anti-drug message and have a deeper understanding of the consequences of drug abuse.

This essay compilation features a selection of winning entries from the competition. We hope you will enjoy reading the essays and find them meaningful in learning about the perils of drug abuse. Life does not rewind, so cherish your life and stay away from any form of drug abuse that will destroy you!



## Central Narcotics Bureau

– October 2010 –

*Essays featured here have been edited,  
with the original style of the writers retained.*

# ANTI-DRUG ESSAY WRITING COMPETITION 2010

01

## Contents

1 <sup>ST</sup> PRIZE	2 <sup>ND</sup> PRIZE	3 <sup>RD</sup> PRIZE
Lim Jie Ying 02 Yew Tee Primary School	Adam Goh Hong Wei 05 Henry Park Primary School	Shannon Phuan 08 Rosyth School

### SELECTION OF MERIT ENTRIES

Adrian Foo Tze Siang Rosyth School	10
Lim Bo Min Fuchun Primary School	12
Yeong Qian Hui Tao Nan Primary School	14
Natasha Rae Zuzarte Raffles Girls' Primary School	17
Muhammad Faiz Bin Mohd Fajil Henry Park Primary School	19
Loh Jia Yi Raffles Girls' Primary School	22
Shermaine Si Ying Ying Raffles Girls' Primary School	25
Soh Gek Shuen Concord Primary School	28
Ethan Leong Weiming Jurong Primary School	32
Lucas Foo Jun Wei Yangzheng Primary School	34
Aiynna Srihar Concord Primary School	37
Tham Zhe Wei Telok Kurau Primary School	39

## Puppeteer

*It is clichéd, when they say that everyone has two faces. There has always been a balance between light and dark, a tightrope that we balance like an acrobat, always that small degree from crashing onto the ground.*


*Some people seem to dance across life, bright and beautiful, like prima ballerinas, leaping and flying, effortlessly to a joyful tune.*



I had always been jealous of my sister. She was the epitome of perfection: beautiful, confident, and intelligent. The type of girl who would have gotten anything she ever wanted, all without trying. She was always the teachers' favourite, the most popular girl in school, the girl every boy would die to go out with. Everything I had ever done was overshadowed by my sister's perfection.

My jealousy never got in the way of my relationship with her. She was my closest confidante, my best friend.

But one day, everything changed...



I was on *my way home* when I saw *my sister* hanging out with her friends. Squinting, I could see that they were passing around a can of glue.

Unable to control *myself*, I ran towards them and warned *my sister*, “Glue-sniffing is bad, Beatrice! Don’t throw your entire life down the drain!”

She pushed *me* away and stormed away with the other girls. Before *my eyes*, Beatrice had thrown away her life.

Day after day, I tried persuading Beatrice to stop glue-sniffing, but every time I approached her, she would walk away in the opposite direction. Before long, months passed.

Our parents and teachers were shocked at the drastic drop of her self-discipline, work output and school grades. I knew that they were suspicious of her cold, sweaty palms, extreme mood swings and excessive lethargy.

It was hard to see in her *my sister*. In those tired, lifeless eyes, I saw only a grossly distorted marionette.

A puppet, and her strings were the glue that had ensnared her. And every day she became more distant, jerking away to the rhythm of the strange frantic siren that only she could hear. And every day she grew more worn, like a puppet’s threads unraveling, overused, and the scent of the glue would cling to her, and she to it, until they were one and the same: dull, mindless, lost.

Making up my mind, I dialled for the police. Within minutes they arrived and Beatrice was brought away. Looking at her retreating back, a stream of tears trailed down my face. She was the one who chose this path, and she was the one who would pay the price.

*Sometimes even the greatest stars will dim. Even stars will be shot down from the lofty skies, with an explosion of light, brilliant, startling and sad.*

*And the skies will cry for their fallen, for that one more star wreathed in darkness.*



# adam goh HONG wei

HENRY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

2nd Prize

05

## Was It Worth The Trouble?

It is a dark and stormy night.

Cold rainwater somehow finds its way into this gloomy cell. It trickles down the grimy, slimy walls.

Cannabis has landed you, wretched you, in this miserable Drug Rehabilitation Centre.

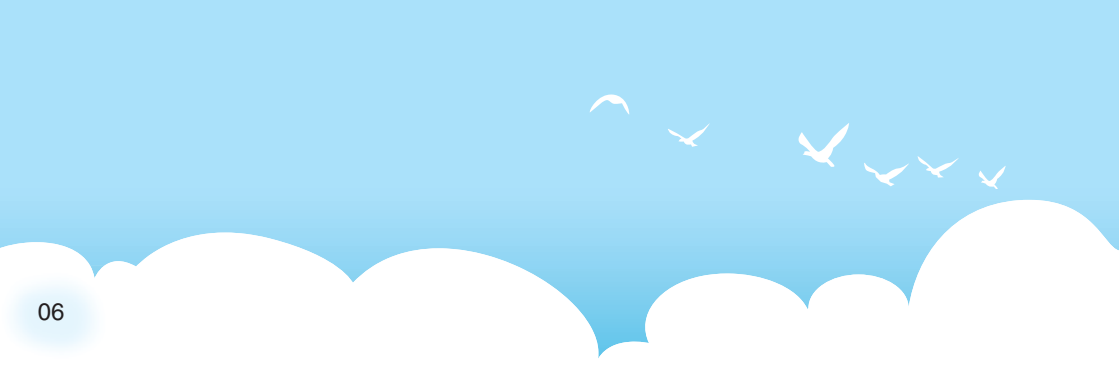
Do you have any hope of recovery? You still have a few weeks to go. You cannot endure this anymore. The tension, anxiety, irritability and moodiness all pent up within you.

You know that you were wrong to take drugs. You know that drugs are bad for you. All these have been drummed into your head since you entered school. And yet, somehow, you still yearn for it.

To think that some dried, shrivelled leaves could land you here...

"Jason!" your mother shrieks at you, tears wetting her face, "Why have your grades been slipping? You used to be a top student. Now you are close to failing every subject, and the 'O' Level Examinations are just six months away! Your teachers say that





*you are not concentrating, and you have suddenly become so naughty and vulgar! Furthermore, your health has been deteriorating, and now, you are so sickly! I am tired of this! I am hurt! I want to know the truth!*

You say nothing, hoping that she won't make the connection.

*"Has it got something to do with the money you have been taking from us to buy 'school supplies'?" she murmurs softly and dangerously. "Jason, bring your bag here at once!"*

You mechanically troop to your bag, lift it, and set it down in front of your mother.

She tips the bag upside down and begins rummaging through it.

Test papers full of mistakes, workbooks overflowing with errors, crumpled pieces of white things which were supposed to be worksheets...

But still she finds nothing. And this is just one of the many times she tries to find the truth. And still she finds nothing.

You continue on this downward spiral, your health being damaged every single time you consume that drug, those dried leaves called cannabis, robbing you of freedom.

Until that day you were arrested. All your "friends" abandoned you, leaving you to face the music.

It is a *dark and stormy* night.

Cold rainwater somehow finds its way into this gloomy cell. It trickles down the grimy, slimy walls.

Your addiction to cannabis has landed you, wretched you, in this miserable Drug Rehabilitation Centre.

Were a few minutes of excitement worth all this agony? Was the thrill worth all the tears? Was it?



# Shannon Phuah

ROSYTH SCHOOL

3rd Prize

08

## Glue-Sniffing Destroys!


Cameron.

The garden is pretty. I can tell that the trees are singing around me, and the dandelions are bobbing in the wind. But there is a hole in something; in my heart, perhaps? There is a scent in the air; possibly one blanketed in your grief, or maybe it is one shivering from my worry. Why? Don't you know that the one who suffers the most isn't just you?

I wait for you, not knowing where you are, wondering if you're okay. It's hard being the one who stays. Each dreaded moment is like an eternity; it is ironic how love is intensified by stalking absence. Why have you gone somewhere I cannot follow?

I can feel myself closing into insanity. I have effectively kept myself busy for the past two days. It helps make time run faster. Maybe that is the difference between you and me—maybe that is why I live through all this stupidity. I don't succumb to the simplicity of shortcuts. You know what I'm talking about. The glue can is in the trash out back, by the way. I don't want to be reminded of it; things are bad enough as they are.





It is infuriating to see the utter perplexity of something so *mundane*. It's like an airborne bird changing its directions after it's almost reaching its destination. Your wings take off, and you swerve to the callous walks of life. You collapse.

I know what you *must* be thinking right now. It's true that I'm being selfish, but so were you when you left me, the kids, and our little life. Have you ever thought about me, and not you for a moment? I just wish things can be like they were before, before this stupid glue sniffing smudged all our relationships. I really want to glue our broken pieces of the puzzle back together. No wait – glue has crumbled enough of our wall. It is tearing me apart.

Yes, tape would be more effective.

Nothing's going to work if you just apologize. I don't think that the bruises from *my* skinned knees will heal, no matter how much care they're under. These emotions (anger, hate, distrust) have overwhelmed me in so many ways I cannot suppress. I don't mean to be rude or childish or immature but this is all your fault.

I would really like to tell you how much we miss you. But I cannot stop thinking about the utter disappointment I feel towards this broken family.

It is raining, now, at our house. The garden still has some quiet strength blazing off in its leaves, flower and trees. I still wish we were just like that.

-- Cara

# ADRIAN FOO TZE SIANG

ROSYTH SCHOOL

Merit Prize

10

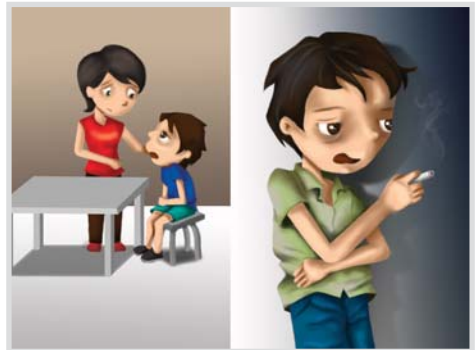
## Please Let Me Remember

I did not realise that the day I started to abuse drugs, I would have to bear with the terrible consequences. I did not realise, the very moment I picked up the packet of cannabis, my family would fall apart. I did not realise there were tears in my children's eyes, when I turned my back on them. Like the tattoo of shame engraved on the very strand of my DNA, I never did realise, until it was too late.

It seemed to happen in a flash, like the brisk life of a mayfly. Yet everything crawls on the hour hand of eternity. The fragmented memory of past recollects itself, like a projection of history, overshadowing the present and enveloping the future in bleak darkness.

"Eh Adrian! Want ganja or not?"

I was in a pub. Perhaps I was drunk. Intoxicated by the few bottles of liquor I had downed, I accepted the offer. I lit its tip delicately and began to puff through it. Initially, I began to choke in irritation, but after a few more puffs, pure ecstasy coursed through my veins. Adrenaline pulsated through my body, sending euphoria at every throb of the heart. I felt as if I had dived into the utopia of my dreams. I took another puff, and another and another.

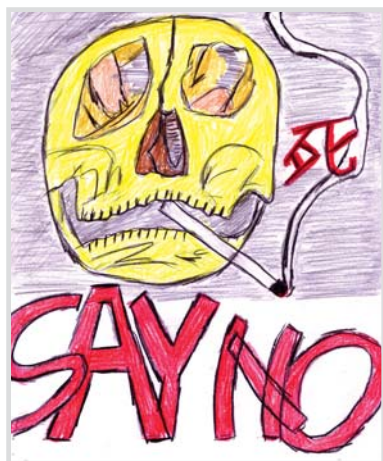


Every day, I would stay huddled up in a corner puffing constantly. I was fired from my job, and fell into bankruptcy. I did not even spare a thought for my family and invested all my savings on drugs. I didn't care that my wife cried herself to sleep every night. I didn't care about my children's groans of hunger. No, none of that mattered. All that mattered was to have enough cannabis.

I began to realize my health was deteriorating like the sands of time in an hourglass, slowly yet painfully trickling out of the glass. I retreated into depression every day and the confusion in my mind made it difficult for me to reason. I was confused. I was paranoid. I was suspicious. I began to lose my memory like the withering petals of a dying tulip.

It was when I ran out of money when I committed the murder. I vaguely remember running the butter-knife across the neck of the cashier. I remember her screams of innocence. I remember grasping the blood-stained notes in my hands as I fled the scene. I remember heading to the nearest drug-dealer. Then the police came. I remember having the cold metal chains cuffed to my hands. I remember the constant flash of blue and red lights. I remember the tear-scarred face of my wife. I remember the whimpering of my children drowned by the siren.

And then I forgot.

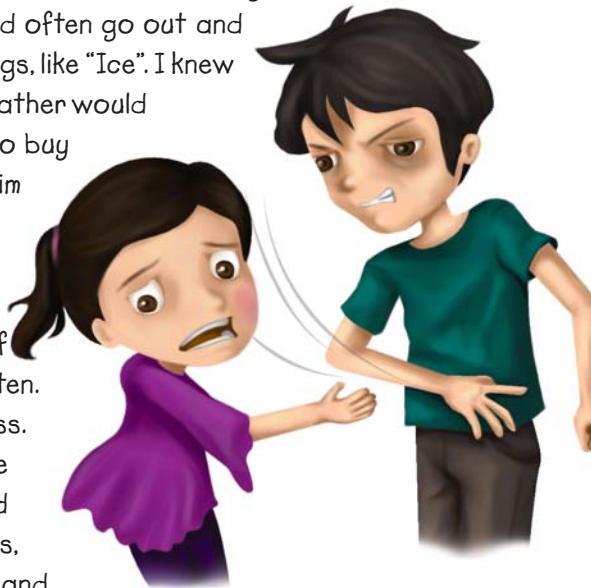


Illustrated by Adrian Foo Tze Siang

## Drugs Destroy Families

"Why won't they leave us alone?" I muttered as tears started brimming in my reddened eyes. My mother hugged me closer as we sat on the cold, hard floor. The constant shouting and banging of the door continued. "Open up! I know you're in there!" I could hear the strangers outside the door shouting. I saw tears flow down my mother's cheek, her neck and onto her dress. It broke my heart to see that. I closed my eyes and my mind ran wild. I knew this all happened because my father. I wished he was arrested and the hurt he gave us would disappear. It happened like this...

My father had a drug addiction. He had been abusing drugs since he was fired. He would often go out and return with a packet filled with drugs, like "Ice". I knew that drugs were expensive and my father would borrow money from loan sharks to buy them. I would always persuade him to stop. "It will only damage your health! If you stop now, you might be able to recover!" I would advise him. Due to the effects of the drugs, my father would not listen. He would feel tired and very restless. He would hallucinate. Sometimes, he would slap my mother. He would also have sudden panic attacks, elevated moods, talkativeness, and



abrupt shifts in his thoughts and speech. Living with him became unbearable and it felt as though I had no freedom.

One day, my mother chased my father out. She broke out into loud, uncontrollable sobs, which escalated to wails. I knew she had pinned all her hopes on him but he had shattered all her dreams. My heart ached. Fighting back tears, I forced a faint smile and patted her lightly on her hand, "You still have me, Mum!" Even though my father had left, the loan sharks always came and banged on the door. Paint was splashed on the door and messages were scrawled on the walls. These irritated the neighbours who disliked our family. My mother had to follow me everywhere as she was afraid that the loan sharks would come after me. I was not allowed to play with others. I often had to skip school when the loan sharks came in the morning. My studies were also affected. I felt miserable. My mother felt horrible. All of this happened because of my father and those drugs. I hated him and the drugs.

I opened my eyes. The shouting and banging stopped. I looked up to my mother's face. The image of my mother crying remained etched in my mind. I whispered, "I'll never take drugs, Mum. I promise..."




## The Happy Pill That Brought Misery



I lay on the concrete floor of my cell at the Drug Rehabilitation Centre. My back felt cool but my face burned from shame and humiliation. I must have been weak, naïve and stupid or else I would not have become addicted to drugs.

“Aiya, April, how can this teeny-weeny pill hurt you? Don’t be so chicken!”  
May’s taunts rang in my ears.



“Yah, you said you don’t want to be a girl-girl, right? Why are you so scared?” June mocked.

My eyes shifted from the pill to my two classmates and back to the pill. I was not unaware of the dangers of drugs. After all, my parents and teachers were constantly reminding me of the consequences of drug abuse. PAIN! POLICE! WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS! My brain echoed so loudly with those words that I thought it would explode. Indeed, the only thing standing between that pill and me was fear.

“But...” I sighed and braced myself, “Okay...”

I surrendered to my ‘dark side’, took the pill and popped it into my mouth as the girls hooted and cheered. I regretted my action almost immediately and wanted to force myself to vomit the pill but it was too late. The effects had already settled in. I steadied myself and asked May what I had taken.

“Ecstasy,” she replied. True to its name, I did feel elated and I wanted more.

“Now you have to pay us!” May and June chanted in unison, “There’s no such thing as a free lunch or free drugs!”

I gave them all the money I had for more pills. Over the weeks, the trade continued; whenever my pocket money ran out, I took what I could find from my parents’ wallets. In my lucid moments, I knew this oscillation of drugged highs and withdrawal lows spelt imminent disaster for my health and sanity but I could not stop.

The disaster arrived when my parents confronted me about their missing money and worse, they demanded to know why I was so emotional, thin and tired. When I roared at them to leave me alone, they had me arrested. They had discovered the truth.

So here I am in my concrete cube mourning my loss of freedom. My time is spent listening as the counselors say, "Drugs kill. But before they do, they damage your health while you hurt those you love. But that's nothing compared to your recovery process, if you're lucky. Otherwise, you die. Why didn't you just say no?"

Why indeed?

'No' is such a small word yet I ignored it. I rolled over and let the tears roll down my cheeks.



# NATASHA RAE ZUZARTE

RAFFLES GIRLS' PRIMARY SCHOOL

Merit Prize

17

## A 'High' Way to Self Destruction

I was meant to be an adhesive, bringing convenience and satisfaction to people by mending and fixing their things. However, for Sam, I brought unhappiness and possibly something worse.

Containing toluene, which has a neurotoxin effect on nerves, I cause damage and brain cells are killed upon sniffing my fumes. Together with other solvents like nail varnish and paint thinner, I give off fumes that have a mind-altering effect. I may also cause hallucination, incoherent speech and the inability to maintain balance and discern things clearly.

And yet in Sam's case, I was always carelessly tossed under his bed, waiting to be used, or rather, abused. Sadly, I am not the only toxic solvent to be abused for a dangerously cheap 'high' by mankind. When inhaled over a long duration, I damage the kidneys, liver, brain and overall nervous systems permanently.

Sam first started abusing me out of boredom and curiosity. He only poured out a little of me at a time into a plastic bag and stashed the rest of me in his secret hiding place. Over time, as he became increasingly addicted to the 'high' he experienced from inhaling me, he would increase the amount of me he inhaled.





He hasn't come for me for the past week or so. I am getting lonely and I have a nagging feeling that something tragic may have happened to my friend. The last time he took me out, he did not look his usual self. He was in a daze and his hands were quivering visibly. He poured almost all of me that was left – almost half a can – into his plastic bag and tossed my practically empty can under the bed.

On many occasions, I wanted to shout out to him instinctively, "STOP! Go and live your life!" Alas, I cannot speak.

I fear he has either been arrested for inhalant abuse or worse – in a state of delirium or hallucination, injured himself and is now in the Intensive Care Unit of a hospital. I shudder to think he may have even killed himself. I am guilt-ridden and remorseful because by allowing him to abuse me, I am left to face the consequences of my friend's misery or demise.

Another two weeks have come and gone – there is still no sign of him. I can feel the untold sadness of his family, especially his parents, who have dedicated time and effort in bringing him up and now he is gone. Regretfully, I spend the rest of my remaining days feeling empty, mourning the loss of my dear friend.

# MUHAMMAD FAIZ BIN MOHD FADIL

HENRY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

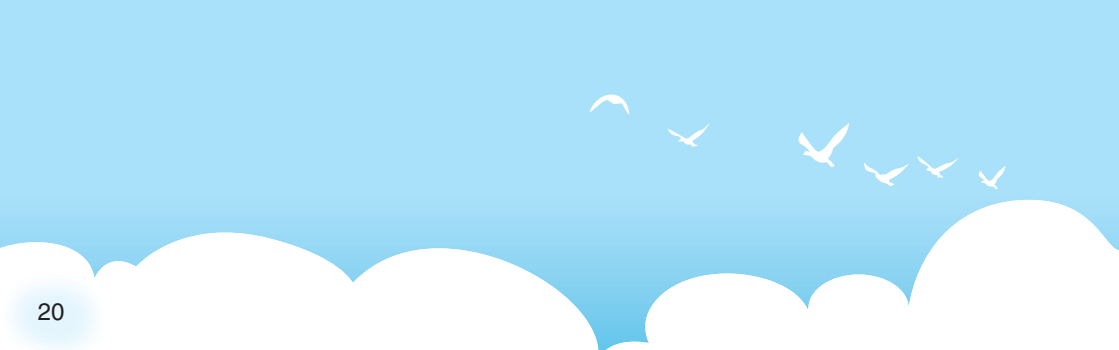
Merit Prize

19

## A New-Found Freedom

I now serve customers at the yong tau foo stall at K.K. Hospital. My tattoos are still there and many times I catch glimpses of customers stealing a glance at those horrid and grotesque-looking tattoos. But I do not care. The tattoos are a constant reminder of a past that I will never ever repeat. This is my new life and I am well on my way to recovery. And this is my new-found freedom and I am not going to give it up. As I stir the hot steaming soup and feel its warmth on my face, my mind flew back to the time when I was still in school and how it all started...





“Come on, let’s skip school. It’s the same boring lessons every day. There’s more excitement out there!” Mark pointed in the direction of Mei Chin Road. He exploded into a wild laughter. The other boys burst into laughter and patted my shoulder.

I felt different suddenly. I felt like I was one of them. I felt accepted by this lot of boys. They were different from my classmates who were extremely competitive and refused to share notes or their success stories with me. I was the last boy in class and everyone seemed to avoid me. I was extremely miserable.

Mark pulled my hand and it was that touch of friendship that made me follow him to that old shack, near an abandoned railway track, where I was initiated into the group. The boys introduced me to many things that would erase my misery in school. Glue sniffing, alcohol, heroin, marijuana became part of my daily diet. I was soon addicted to the fantasy all these addictions brought me. Deserted back lanes, dried up canals and empty buildings became our haunts. School was not important to me anymore.

Over time, the daily dose of the harmful drugs soon deteriorated my health. Drug addiction made me look gaunt – like a living skeleton. My internal organs suffered damage. I grew more and more tired each day. My pocket money and savings were drained buying those drugs. Then one day, a resident in the Mei Chin estate passed by and spotted us. The old man called the police and in no time officers from the Central Narcotics Bureau arrested us. I was thrown into the rehabilitation centre and had to spend my precious growing years there. My parents were hurt but they never gave up on me. Their visits and care made me realise they were two people on this earth who loved me.



no matter what silly mistakes I committed. It was because of them that I resolved to change. I decided to re-take my O-Level examinations and work part-time to earn some money for my education.

“One bowl of Ampang yong tau foo, please,” a customer’s voice brought me back to reality. Her eyes lingered at my tattoos. I smiled and whipped up a delicious hot lunch for her. She smiled back at me and I knew that my days ahead would not look so bad after all...

## Glue Sniffing Destroys

"Oh come on! A little sniff won't do you in okay?" The peer pressure was closing in on Anton and he felt himself caving in. After a few more rounds of relentless teasing, he finally gave in to his gang mates and tried sniffing a little of that white emulsion in the bottle. Little did he know that the innocent-looking liquid was glue and he was hooked on it.



He started whirling around in circles, on a high. The rest of the gang started to join him after sniffing some glue themselves. The leader of the gang, the gruff Jamal, had been addicted to glue for a long time, and his body could barely take it. He could not live with it, nor could he live without it. Soon enough, Anton would join him in that predicament.

After inhaling glue, Anton, Jamal and the rest of the gang were hallucinating, and could not tell fact from fiction. They were stumbling everywhere, shouting at the top of their voices. When they realized where they were, it was almost too late.

Cliff-hanging onto their lives after a truck rumbling in their direction had nearly knocked them down, the pair in front missed death by a mere inch.

The driver leaned out of his window and hollered murder at them while they stumbled around like a bunch of drunkards.

As if one near-death experience was not enough, Jamal led them, groggily, towards the bay. Not one of them suspected the fate that awaited their arrival. People milling around them did not take any notice of the few adolescents stumbling around, and so left them to their own devices.

As Anton's mind finally started to clear a little and could finally understand what was going on, he found himself in the water with the rest of his gang.

His parents' oft warnings floated into his memory, reminding him how dangerous it was for him to be in the water, especially when he was sedated. He immediately started devising a last-minute game plan to get every one onto the shore and back to safety.

Like a bolt from the blue, an idea crept into his head. His quick instincts snapped into action, and he started to try to save the gang.

Try as he might, he could not get the rest of them to return to reality. He was about to drag Jamal and Ben out of the water, planning to come back for Quincy and Mark when disaster struck. A huge wave started rolling towards them and with Jamal and all semi-conscious, there was nothing Anton could do to save himself or the rest.

The last thing Anton knew was the rush of the wave over him, like a shower of sharp icicles onto his skin. Then, he blacked out, never to wake again.



The boys were never seen again after being swept away by the huge wave. The fate that awaited most glue-sniffers, or drug abusers for that matter, was similar.

This time it was Anton. Who will it be next? Will it be you?

# Shermaine Si Ying Ying

Raffles Girls' Primary School

Merit Prize

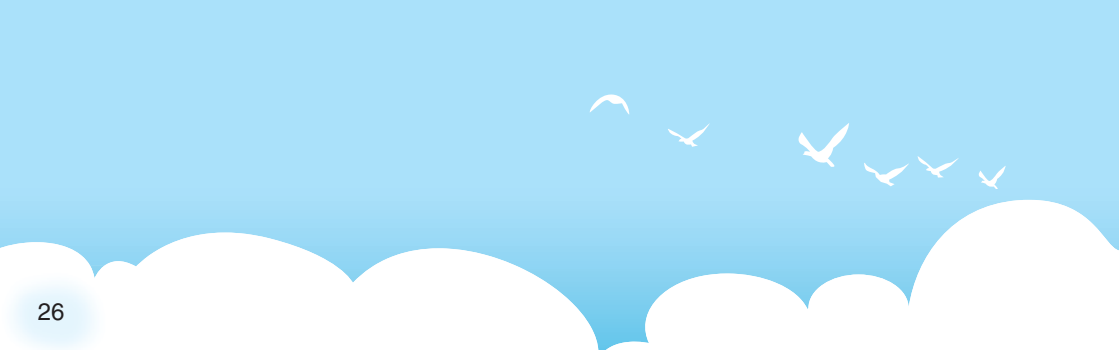
25

## My Father, Me and Drugs

Today, I want to talk about *my* father. People know him as 'Black Jack', the ignominious drug trafficker who abused drugs. Today, I want to tell you a story about a man whom you never really knew; a story about a man, his daughter and the walls between them.

At nineteen, Father tried drugs. His addiction to ketamine was indescribable. The nauseous feeling of the drug was uncomfortable initially, causing him to be irritable. However, he derived pleasure from the floating sensation that engulfed his mind, enveloping his vision in colourful circles.





Father was thirty, unemployed and weighed down with the burden of a family when I was born. He then began trafficking drugs in order to clear off his debts and to purchase new drugs. It was a dangerous life, transporting drugs around.

Father never spoke about his occupation and I never knew about his infamy in the dark society till that day the police showed up at our doorstep. I was six years old then, witnessing Father being arrested and hauled off in handcuffs. I never saw him again until I was eleven when Mother brought me to prison to visit him. Mother then informed me that Father would only be released fourteen years later. I was confounded and saddened to hear that – I would have to spend my maturing years without Father.

When we entered his cell, Father broke the uncomfortable silence. “Sara, I do not blame you if you are disappointed in me.” He then proceeded to tell me about the damage drugs had done to his health and how much he regretted his previous actions. “I have passed the recovery stage, but I know freedom is still a dream. Nevertheless, I still hope that you may forgive me for all the hurt that I have caused you.” With that, he turned away, ending our long-awaited meeting.

I took one last glance at Father. I did not see a drug addict or a criminal. I saw a tired, regretful old man, repentant for all he had done and only too willing to travel back in time to change his destiny. It was only then that I saw the cruelty that drugs had done to me: it had gnawed away every single bit of time Father had for me, every single bit of love and respect a daughter would have for her father, every single bit of joy my family could have had together.



From then on, I never saw drugs as something peripheral. I saw drugs as the knife that sliced through my childhood and every speck of contentment that a young girl could experience with whom she could truly call her Father.

## Drugs Destroy Lives

I stared sadly at the limp body of my neighbor lying lifeless on the ground level of our HDB flat. I felt a wave of sadness wash over me as I had always felt a special bond with my neighbour. He has always been a sensible, strong-willed person, making the best out of life. I found out later that he had been consuming drugs. As I thought about that, I recalled an incident that happened some years ago that had changed my life forever...

My twin brother, Peter, was a bright, curious and fun-loving boy, but everything changed when we were in Primary 6. He started becoming moodier, snapping at anyone who spoke to him. This caused a lot of unhappiness in our family.

One day, I woke Peter up to go to school early as our teacher wanted us to do some revision for an upcoming examination. Upon waking up, he asked me, "Hey Ethan, do you see that hamster crawling up the wall?"



I could not believe *my* ears; we did not have any pets.

“What hamster?” I asked him.

“You really are blind, Ethan,” he replied irritably, which surprised *me*, as he used to be patient. I looked high and low for the “hamster”, but could not find anything. Something fishy was going on.

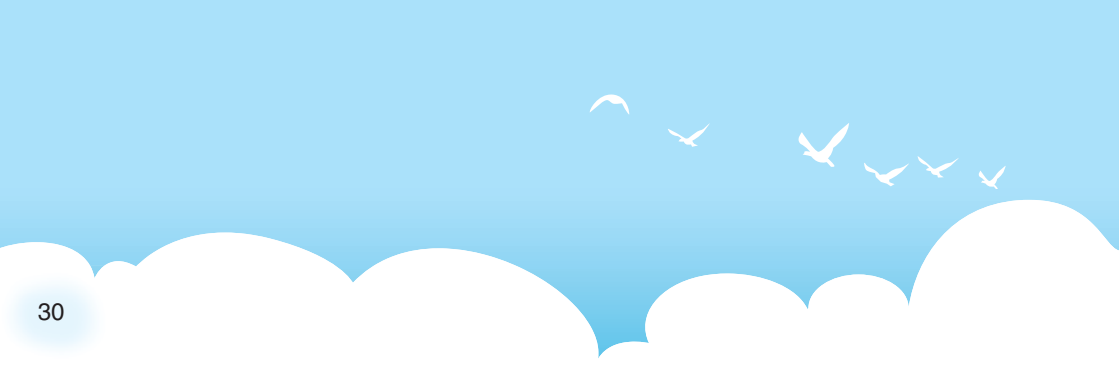
After school, Peter and I walked, silently, home. Gone were the days when we joked all the way.

“Hello, *my* darlings,” *my* mother’s cheerful voice rang out as we reached home. “Let’s go to the newly constructed roof garden at Lot 1. Wouldn’t it be great to have a break?”

I changed *my* clothes excitedly while *my* brother did so half-heartedly, as if he was very tired. That was strange too; he used to love spending time with the family. I finally decided that he was not in a very good mood today.

On the roof garden, Peter asked *me* yet another strange question, “Do you see that bulldog behind the bench?”

“Huh?” I asked, seriously confused. This time, Peter was so frustrated he gave *me* a good clout in *my* right ear. I started suspecting that he was hallucinating.



The next day, I completed my exam paper with ease. Peter, on the other hand, seemed to be struggling to finish it. When Peter and I reached home, I overheard my mother talking anxiously to my father that Peter's teacher had called, telling her that Peter was found squinting at the exam paper and grinding his teeth.

As curiosity washed over me, I decided to investigate. After doing some research on the internet, I suspected that he was sniffing glue and consuming ecstasy.

I was torn between keeping it a secret and telling someone about it. After much thought, however, I decided to tell my mother, for his sake.

Peter was sent for a urine test to confirm if he was taking drugs. To our horror and disappointment, the test results were positive for drugs. Peter was immediately arrested and sent to the rehabilitation centre to overcome his addiction. Luckily, there was no serious damage and he was not hurt badly.

Peter went in as a drug addict and came out with a full recovery and regained his health. He also regained his freedom. Peter decided to turn over a new leaf. He regretted making the wrong choice and choosing drugs. Luckily for him, it was not too late to set things right.

"Do not follow in my footsteps," Peter warned me.

Now I know how close Peter was to death and if I had not informed my



mother, he would not have been here today. I also learnt that I should treasure and cherish all the loved ones around me as they might not be here tomorrow.

## Drugs Ruin Your Life!

"Freeze!" I bellowed as I knocked the drug peddler to the ground with a flying tackle. Around me was a flurry of activities as my colleagues attempted to nab the fleeing youths. The drug peddler was thin and scrawny and was a shade of deathly white; he had undoubtedly taken drugs. Instantly, a sense of disgust made me take a disliking to him. After all, it was this sort of inhumane being which caused my brother to spend four years of his life behind bars and go in and out of rehabilitation centre. Upon taking that deadly pill, my brother lost his freedom to drugs. At that time, I was still too young to comprehend what had happened to my beloved brother,



One day, I saw my elder brother Tom coming back from school late. Looking tired, his face was the same shade of ghastly white like the drug peddler, and he was constantly vomiting in the toilet. I thought he had eaten something wrong that had made him unwell. Little did I know that my beloved elder brother, seven years older than me and an athlete of the house had taken a "sweet" – the sweet that badly hurt and nearly ruined his health, family life and his role-model image in my life.

Barely two days after my brother was punished for playing truant, two blue uniformed men were at our door. Almost immediately, the policemen

arrested Tom. He was suspected to have taken drugs after his friend was caught red-handed the day before. Tom was shocked and struggled in fear but all was in vain. Upon further investigation, it was confirmed he had developed an addiction to cocaine, which had caused his insomnia, lethargy and mood-swings. He was put behind bars.

The rehabilitation journey was extremely painful when Tom had to endure withdrawal symptoms like extreme chills. Thankfully, through rehabilitation, my brother had finally come to his senses. He was determined to not want to experience the same awful feeling of being dependent on drugs; causing damage to his health; and much anxiety and sadness to his loved ones. He finally turned over a new leaf and was on the road to recovery.

Now, he is a changed person and an anti-drug advocate. He volunteers himself as a counsellor to young offenders and has helped in many anti-drug campaigns.

“Are you alright?” a tap on my shoulder brought me back to reality. The drug dealer was in the back of our squad car. I got into the car and stepped on the accelerator.

Let this be a lesson to all – “Drugs Ruin Your Life!”

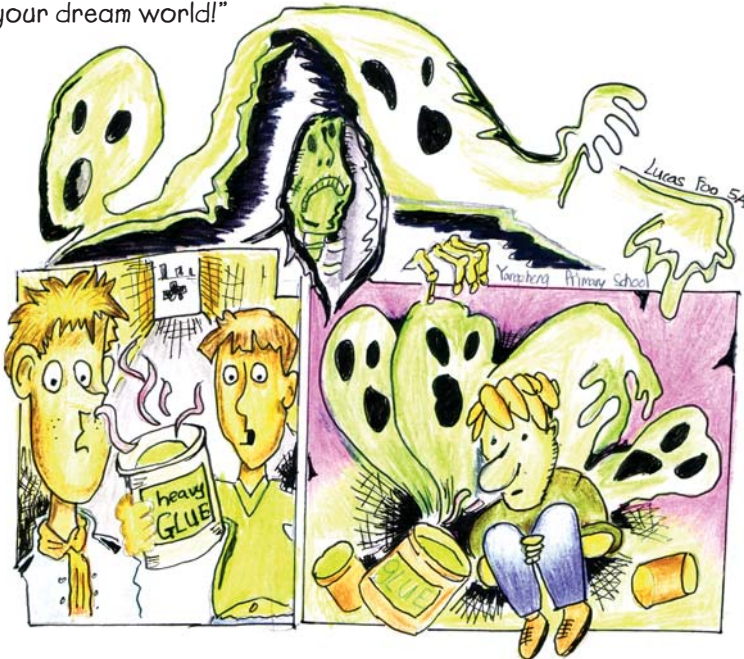


## The “Glued” Monster

Illustrated by Lucas Foo Jun Wei

It was dark and gloomy, with thunder clouds looming overhead, and rain starting to drizzle down onto the ground. This was the day when John was finally released from the rehabilitation centre. Standing at the gates of the centre, John could hear the distant siren of a police car, the same siren that had caught up with him when he was into glue sniffing.

It was on that fateful day that it all started. John was walking happily home after school. Out from nowhere his neighbor Tom came running to him and led him to a small narrow dark alley. Tom whipped out a brown colour can labelled “Heavy Duty Glue”. He said to John, “Have a go at this! It will send you to your dream world!”



Initially John resisted, but after much cajoling and challenging from Tom, John finally gave in to the experimental fun. John took his first sniff and it was awful but slowly the whiff of glue began to engulf him and slowly the “monster” began to work his way into John’s respiratory system.



It took control of his mind and painted an euphoric scene for John to indulge in. He felt light-headed and was in his make-believe world. The “monster” enjoyed watching this new apprentice’s dreamy behavior. Every step that John took was so heavenly to the “monster”.

That was John’s first encounter with inhalants and slowly the sniffing habit was “glued” onto him and he began to lose interest in his studies and his grades began to fall. Often, his frail body showed bruises and pain all over. He was always in a daze and found it extremely difficult to concentrate. His parents found his behavior odd when John started to ask for more allowance.

From the mirror, John could see a bony figure which was like a mere skeleton with deep sunken eyes and hollow cheeks. The eyes were red, bloodshot, his hair was a mess and the teeth were badly stained. The face was unshaven for days. He looked miserable. A voice in his head kept echoing to him to give up the glue sniffing habit but the “monster” within kept dragging him back

further into the pit of self-destruction. He knew he had to give up this drug abuse habit but he was not able to pluck up the courage to do so.

Finally the day arrived when the law caught up with him. John was at his usual dark alley preparing to start his sniffing adventure. A short while later, John saw two policemen walking towards him. He dropped the can of heavy glue and was panic stricken. He stood rooted to the ground, immobilized with fear and completely paralyzed with fright. His hands were trembling and his legs wobbly. Cold chill ran down his spine and he began to shiver. There was no way he could escape the impending doom.

The policemen whipped out a pair of handcuffs. "Click!" it went and John was sent off to the rehabilitation centre. The initial few weeks were like hell to him, minutes seemed like hours and his body had to endure the withdrawal symptoms. John was determined to get over the treatment and recover. The counselling helped to ease his painful recovery. Soon, he began to take back control of his mind and the voice inside him began to overpower and destroy the glue sniffing "monster".

John regretted his glue sniffing habit. He thought that he had found happiness in drugs but he was wrong. They will only destroy his life. He has learnt a valuable lesson - never abuse inhalants and drugs.



## Glued to Hell

He did not walk away when his friend asked him to try sniffing glue. Like all young boys, Tom was curious and thought accepting the offer was the most natural thing to do. But he was unaware that sniffing glue would lead to a dangerous addiction and hence was the most unnatural thing to do.



Plus, he did not realize that sniffing glue would become living hell for him. Or rather, he would be glued to hell. Tom was yet to know that a greedy friend could build the path to his destruction.

During the last December holidays, Tom attended the birthday party of his friend. Towards the end of the party, his friend offered a mysterious bottle of white liquid to everyone. His friend proudly announced that it was not available in any shop, but was specially 'brought in' for his birthday party. Then, he also said that it had a special smell. However, he did not explain the kind of smell the liquid would bring.

Tom, reluctant at first, took two sniffs. It seemed that he floated into a fantastical world. It was all a vivid hallucination, but a very enjoyable ride into fantasy. This was his first step into disaster.

Throughout the next day, Tom was thinking only about the bottle of white liquid. He sniffed it once more. The same thing repeated itself until he finished

the bottle. He went to his friend for another. His friend asked for a high price, hence Tom had to sell his bicycle for a cheap price to buy the bottle of white liquid. He lied to his parents that the bike was stolen at the playground.

Then, he kept sniffing for two more weeks. Tom's conscience told him, "Little boy, this is a route to hell. Stop! Distract yourself." He tried playing computer games, watching 'SpongeBob SquarePants' and 'Tom and Jerry' on television and he also went jogging. Nothing worked. His mind still inevitably went back to the bottle of white liquid.

Again, after two weeks, he went to the void deck to join them. This time, the Central Narcotics Bureau officers swooped in on them. He was arrested. Tom was sent to the Drug Rehabilitation Centre. It was as if there was a devil inside him driving him insane. He resisted strongly.

He groaned and moaned. His mind wanted the white liquid at all costs. When his parents heard the news, they were shattered. Tom erased the terrible glue-sniffing HABIT slowly. The 'H' went away and became 'A BIT'. Then, the 'A' went away and became 'BIT'. After that, the 'B' went but still 'IT' remained. Tom then realized how arduous it was to remove a bad habit. Tom finally erased the habit.

He would not be tricked anymore.



## Glue Sniffing Destroys!

I did not realise that the day I started to abuse drugs, I would have to bear with the terrible consequences.

The day started no differently from a usual day. I had lied to my mother that I had tuition so I could hang out with my best friends Jacob and Patrick. We had fun challenging one another with Pokémon cards at the void deck.



Just when I was about to win the game, I was distracted by a group of trendy teenagers who had arrived. They huddled around in a circle and took out something contained in plastic bags. They appeared to be sniffing something and seemed to be enjoying themselves. Curiosity got the better of me. I abandoned my friends at the card game and walked over to the group.

The teenagers looked up at me and nodded to one another, communicating in a secret language that I could not comprehend. Without saying a word, they passed me a plastic bag and beckoned me to join them. Without hesitation, I took a sniff from the bag.

I did not know what was in the bag. Whatever it was, it was making me giddy and I felt like I was floating away from my body. Was this the feeling of being “high”? I did not think much about it. Before I realised it, I was hooked on glue sniffing.

It was addictive as I would feel uncomfortable without sniffing glue. I was oblivious to the fact that my best friends had drifted away from me. I was spending more time with my new friends.

Initially, it was all exciting, being part of a cool group. However, barely after a week, I was kicked out of the group as I did not have enough money to purchase glue. Desperate to be part of the group again, I resorted to stealing.

Unfortunately, I was caught in the act. The shop owner chased me as I ran out of the store. Terribly afraid that I would be caught, I dashed across the road without checking.

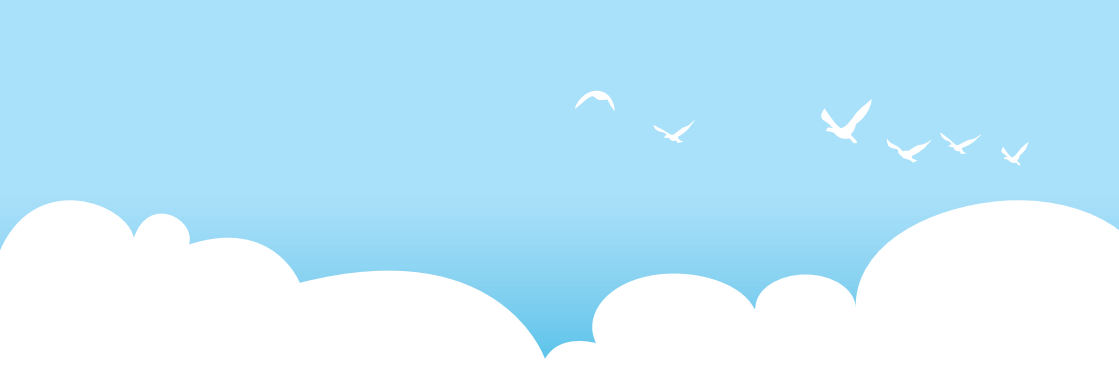
I heard a car horn blasting.  
I saw a car approaching me.  
I felt giddy and dizzy.  
I did not know what to do.  
I just froze and stood still.

I was lying on the road when it all ended for me. My last thoughts were about my friends and my parents...

The last time I saw my parents, my mum was cooking and my dad was reading the papers. The last time I was with my best friends, I was about to win the Pokémon card game. I no longer have another chance to play the game again.

At that time, I was only thirteen...





If you suspect someone is abusing drugs or inhalants, help is just a phone call away.

**Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA)**

Helpline: 1800-733-4444 (Daily: 7.30am – midnight)

**National Family Service Centre**

Helpline: 1800-838-0100 (Mon – Fri: 9.00am – 5.00pm; Sat: 9.00am – 1.00pm)

**Samaritans of Singapore (SOS)**

Helpline: 1800-221-4444 (Daily: 24 hours)

**The Counselling Clinic (Teen Challenge)**

Helpline: 1800-829-2222 (Mon – Fri: 9.00am – 6.00pm)

**Touchline (Touch Youth Services)**

Helpline: 1800-377-2252 (Mon – Sat: 10.00am – 10.00pm)

**National Addictions Management Service (NAMS)**

Helpline: 6732-6837 (Mon – Fri: 8.30am – 6.00pm)

Central Narcotics Bureau

393 New Bridge Road, Singapore 088763

HotLine: 1-800-325-6666

[www.cnb.gov.sg](http://www.cnb.gov.sg)

