

愛、傳、城

Love Is All Around

得獎作品集 全港中英文徵文比賽 第二屆

The 2nd Hong Kong
Chinese & English
Essay-Writing Competition

A COLLECTION OF
AWARD-WINNING WORKS



主辦機構
Organized by



贊助機構
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啟悟慈善基金
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前言 PROLOGUE

為了給本港中小學生、青年人以及寫作愛好者提供一個展示平台，培養寫作興趣及提高語文水準，由香港新聞工作者聯會主辦、啟悟慈善基金贊助的「愛、傳、城 Love Is All Around」第二屆全港中英文徵文比賽，已完滿舉行，活動繼續得到教育局、民政事務局、中聯辦宣傳文體部、教育科技部、本港多間大學的支持。

今屆比賽以芬蘭導演 Laura Neuvonen 的動畫短片《最後的編織 THE LAST KNIT》為引子，片長約 6 分鐘卻道出了人生的哲理，網上有超過千萬人觀看。參加者須先觀看短片，然後撰寫觀後感或為故事延續下去。比賽分中英文組，分別有小學組、中學組、公開組。參賽者反應踴躍，共收到逾 4000 份參賽作品。

“Love is All Around” The 2nd Hong Kong Chinese & English Essay-Writing Competition, organized by the Hong Kong Federation of Journalists and sponsored by the Lu and Marisa Charitable Foundation, provide a platform to showcase the talent of budding writers among primary and secondary school students, and young people in Hong Kong. It also aims to promote interest in writing and improve language standards in the city.

The competition this year challenges participants to write a response to “The Last Knit”, a 6-minute-online animation with over 10 million views by Finnish director Laura Neuvonen. It is separated into Chinese and English division and the Primary, Secondary and Open section. We have received an overwhelming response with over 4,000 entries in total.

架構 STRUCTURE

主辦機構 香港新聞工作者聯會
Organized by Hong Kong Federation of Journalists

支持機構 香港特別行政區政府教育局
Supported by Education Bureau, the Government of the HKSAR
香港特別行政區政府民政事務局
Home Affairs Bureau, the Government of the HKSAR
中央政府駐港聯絡辦宣傳文體部
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Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR
中央政府駐港聯絡辦教育科技部
Department of Educational, Scientific and Technological Affairs,
Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR
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The Chinese University of Hong Kong
香港浸會大學
Hong Kong Baptist University
香港理工大學
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
嶺南大學
Lingnan University
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The Education University of Hong Kong

協辦機構 新福港集團
Co-organized by Sun Fook Kong Group
香港各界文化促進會
Hong Kong Culture Association
香港傳媒藝術文化交流協會
The Hong Kong Media Art and Cultural Exchange Association
NOW 財經台
NOW BNC
中國日報香港版
China Daily Hong Kong Edition
星島日報
Sing Tao Daily
青年議會
Youth Council
中央電視台亞太中心記者站
CCTV Asia Pacific

贊助機構 啟悟慈善基金
Sponsored by Lu and Marisa Charitable Foundation

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Conductor, Educator

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(All the above in no particular order)

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Guests

活力之星
STAR OF VITALITY



黃祥興先生
Mr. Stefan Wong

表演嘉賓
GUEST PERFORMER



黃筠兒小姐
Ms. Chloe Wong

香港新聞工作者聯會簡介

Introduction of The Hong Kong Federation of Journalists

香港新聞工作者聯會（以下簡稱「本會」）成立於 1996 年，至今逾 20 年。本會會員來自 30 多家媒體，包括平面媒體、電子媒體、網站、傳媒教育院校，以及大企業傳訊部門主管等，人數近 1000 人，現已成為本港會員涵蓋面最廣和人數最多的新聞團體之一。

本會六項宗旨：

1. 維護言論自由和新聞自由，承擔社會責任；
2. 維護新聞從業人員權益及尊嚴；
3. 維護香港繁榮穩定；
4. 推動香港新聞同業與內地、台灣、澳門及國際新聞同業交流合作；
5. 加強與本港新聞團體、同業機構溝通、交流和合作；
6. 提升專業水平和操守，加強業界培訓工作。

20 多年來，本會遵循上述宗旨，著重開展香港業界培訓工作，先後與北京大學、清華大學、國家行政學院、復旦大學、浦東幹部學院、廣州暨南大學、汕頭大學合辦國情班和業務培訓班，組織本港新聞界中高層人士參加，迄今參加人數累計已達 900 多人。20 多年來，共舉行國情研修班 15 次。同時，本會組織本港傳媒到內地採訪，報道內地社會和經濟最新發展，深獲業界和社會好評。數年來，本會共組織香港媒體前往內地參觀訪問共 50 多次，所到省市區，包括北京市、上海市、天津市、重慶市、黑龍江省、遼寧省、廣東省、湖南省、山東省、山西省、河北省、青海省、陝西省、寧夏回族自治區、內蒙古自治區，以及澳門、橫琴、前海等，足跡遍大江南北，長城內外。

The Hong Kong Federation of Journalists (The Federation) was established in 1996 - over two decades ago. The Federation has members from over 30 media organizations, including print and digital media, websites, media schools and communications managers from esteemed corporates. With close to 1000 members, The Federation is one of the largest news organizations with a strong reach.

The six founding objectives of The Federation are:

1. To defend speech and press freedom and fulfill social responsibility;
2. To defend the rights and dignity of media professionals;
3. To preserve the well-being of Hong Kong;
4. To facilitate exchange and collaboration between Hong Kong media professionals and their mainland, Taiwan, Macau and international counterparts;
5. To promote communications, exchange and collaboration within local media organizations and practitioners;
6. To improve training for practitioners, thereby enhancing the industry's professional standards and level of work ethics.

In the past 20 years, The Federation has followed the above objectives and has focused on providing training for Hong Kong media practitioners. It has organized national training classes and business training courses with Peking University, Tsinghua University, National School of Administration, Fudan University, Pudong Cadre College, Jinan University, and Shantou University. Senior members of Hong Kong media organizations have been encouraged to participate in the classes, totally more than 900 participants over the years. In the past 20 years, a total of 15 national seminars have been held. At the same time, The Federation facilitated local media to conduct journalistic visits to the mainland, covering their latest social and economic developments. These initiatives were well received by the industry and the society. In the past two years, the Federation has organized more than 50 visits to the Mainland for Hong Kong media practitioners. At the provincial and municipal levels, destinations include Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Chongqing, Heilongjiang, Liaopi, Guangdong, Hunan, Shandong Province, Shanxi Province, Hebei Province, Qinghai Province, Shaanxi Province, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, as well as Macao, Hengqin, Qianhai, etc.. The group was well travelled across China.

小學組
(中文組)

**Primary School
(Chinese Division)**

小學組 (中文組) 冠軍

姓名：鄭紫蕊 學校：軒尼詩道官立小學（銅鑼灣） 班級：六年級普班

她在懸崖邊專注於編織頸巾，長長的、美麗的頸巾多次令她捨不得收手，甚至不惜把自己的頭髮也織入正墜入懸崖的頸巾，幸虧她及時扯斷了頭髮，才保住性命。望著深不可測的懸崖，她扔了織針，拿起那把久違了的剪刀……

往回走時，她沿路留意到許多可愛的花草樹木和小動物，原來除了頸巾，這世界還有很多東西值得去愛和珍惜。「唧唧、唧唧……」，路邊的草叢傳來一隻小鳥微弱的叫聲。她俯下身，看見草叢裡有一隻翅膀受傷的小鳥在掙扎著，很可憐的樣子。於是，她小心翼翼地捧著小鳥，帶回家悉心照料。

小鳥一天天好起來，漸漸成了她的精神依託。大家對小鳥的可愛和她的愛心讚不絕口。小鳥好了，在籠子裡撲打著翅膀，好像想飛出去，可她卻捨不得。

直到有一天，她無意間又想到那把剪刀。那次因為捨不得剪斷頸巾，她幾乎沒命；這次小鳥會不會因她的不捨而……於是，她帶著鳥籠又來到了懸崖邊，小鳥在籠子裡卻顯得異常興奮。她若有所思地望著小鳥，輕輕地嘆了一口氣，緩緩地打開籠子的門。小鳥拍打著翅膀，自由地衝向藍天，在空中轉了兩個圈，就飛得無影無蹤，只隱約聽到牠愉悅的歌聲。她失去了最愛的心，雖然很不捨，但心裡感覺很踏實，因為她知道了：愛，要懂得珍惜，更要學會適時放手。



小學組 (中文組) 亞軍

姓名：黎心怡 學校：順德聯誼總會何日東小學 班級：2B

我拿著剪刀，心裡卻還在想著我那條長長的圍巾。這時，有一個聲音響起：「小姐姐，你能幫我修剪一下頭髮嗎？」我低頭一看，原來是小草。我連忙回答說：「當然可以，小草妹妹，你為甚麼要剪頭髮呀？」小草說：「太長的話比較容易枯萎呢！我以前請你幫忙，你總是沒聽到哦！」我不好意思地笑了笑說：「我以前忙著編織圍巾，從來沒有留意過身邊的一切呢！」我細心地修剪好小草的頭髮，小草變得十分清爽。小草開心地抖動著身軀向我道謝，空氣中瀰漫著一股清香，我也很開心，原來幫助別人是這麼快樂！我決定離開這裡去幫助更多的人們。

我帶著剪刀走進了森林。我幫小綿羊修剪羊毛，我幫小猴子剪摘果子，我幫葡萄修剪藤條，我幫迷路的人們刻劃指南針……我每天都很充實，渾身充滿了力量。我認識了很多好朋友，大家都非常愛我。

一天，天邊飛來了一千隻鳥，牠們用嘴叼著我那條失去的圍巾，好似一道彩虹。一隻孔雀開口說道：「看！你的漂亮長圍巾，我們幫你找回來啦！」我非常激動，卻又覺得自己已經不再需要它了。我請鳥兒們把它送去給寒冷地區的人們，小鳥們叼起圍巾飛向遠方。小動物們都鼓起了掌，我們都開心地笑了起來……



小學組 (中文組) 季軍

姓名：白承熹 學校：培僑小學 班級：5A

經過三次幾乎掉到懸崖深淵，編織大姐決心把那曾經帶給她極大成就感的冷針掉到懸崖去……然後，她深深地呼了一口氣，明白了其實世上還有很多事情自己未做過。突然，她感到自己的人生好像變得不一樣。

突然，地上的一把剪刀跟大姐說：「你好！我叫『魔法剪刀』，我可以為你的村子創造驚喜啊！」大姐感到難以置信，但又忍不住想親身試試這把剪刀有何威力。大姐跑回村子後，遇上一個在街上哭泣的流浪兒，大姐立刻問剪刀：「請問我可以與你一起合作，為這個可憐的孩子剪一些有趣的東西嗎？」「你剪甚麼也可以啊。」剪刀回答。於是，大姐靈機一動，剪了一個栩栩如生的小狗玩具，小孩收到小狗後如獲至寶，連忙答謝大姐。

然後，大姐沿途又看見另一個披頭散髮、雙手殘廢的小乞丐，大姐問他為甚麼哭，他說：「因為人人都取笑我的頭髮又髒又亂。」於是大姐用剪刀剪呀剪，不消幾分鐘，魔法剪刀就剪出一個有型有款的髮型了。乞丐高興極了，他說：「謝謝你，我很滿意這個新髮型啊！」

由於村民一傳十，十傳百，所以很多人都來找編織大姐，建議她在叢林前剪一個大迷宮給大家玩。村民們還提議裏面剪一些動物的造型，令這個迷宮變得又可愛又好玩。

編織大姐為了實現大家的願望，於是她剪呀剪，靠著自己的堅毅，終於花了七天七夜，大迷宮就完成了。雖然她累得要死，但看見村民既興奮又驚訝的表情，大姐的疲累也被興奮掩蓋了。

最後，編織大姐將這個平淡的村子變成一條精彩的村子，也為村民帶來無限的歡樂。

小學組 (中文組) 優異獎

姓名：張竣傑 學校：浸信宣道會呂明才小學 班級：六愛

女主角繼續一邊用剪刀修剪她的指甲，一邊構思可用她的剪刀做些什麼。當她修妥她的指甲時，已經是烈日當空的下午了，烈日照得她大汗淋漓，突然她想起了自己來到懸崖前經過的森林，便回頭拿起椅子走回森林乘涼。

當女主角走進森林時，起伏不一的樹木湊成一片綠油油的畫面，有很多在城市裏看不到的昆蟲和動物，有的動物全身毛絨絨，有的動物尾巴很長，有的動物狼牙利爪 各有特色。牠們都紛紛從草叢和樹林裏爬出來，看看那個擅闖禁地的陌生人，當女主角意欲走近動物們，牠們卻紛紛狼狽不堪地跑回自己的領地。

女主角只好孤零零地坐在樹蔭下，她斜眼看到還有一隻毛絨絨的猴子沒有逃跑。他的尾巴和其他猴子的不一樣，仔細一看，原來他的尾巴被獵人設下的陷阱困住了，女主角使用她的剪刀為那隻可憐的猴子脫離陷阱。之後，其他的小動物也放下戒心來到女主角面前向她示好。女主角逐一為小動物修剪毛髮和指甲，牠們都非常滿意。

黃昏，女主角在回家路上來到海邊，享受着海景和海風。她突然感覺到腳下好像有塊石頭撞上似的，女主角往下看，原來有一隻被魚網纏著的海龜，牠被海浪沖到海邊。女主角隨即拿起剪刀將魚網剪斷，並將海龜送回大海裏。

自此以後，她便開始習慣拿著剪刀到處走，尋找有需要幫忙的小動物或人類，將她的點點力量傳播到整個城市中。

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小學組 (中文組) 優異獎

姓名：嚴卓然 學校：聖方濟各英文小學 班級：4C

很久以前，有一個國家，它由兩個民族組成；一個是巨人族，另一個是小人族。兩個民族的族人從不來往，因為巨人族認為小人族身型細小，做不了大事，對社會沒貢獻。巨人們平日在路上遇到小人，也不會跟他們打招呼。而且，巨人身型比小人高大，他們覺得自己地位比小人高一等。只有他們才有資格住在風光明媚的懸崖上，而小人們卻只准住在懸崖下陰暗的山谷。

有一年的冬天特別寒冷，一個女巨人便想為自己編織一條長長的頸巾保暖。於是她便拿著毛冷，在屋前的懸崖邊坐下來，一邊欣賞風景，一邊編織頸巾。由於她認為這條頸巾非常漂亮，不想它被吹走，所以她把自己的頭髮用作毛冷，將長長的頸巾連到頭上去。心想：「這樣一定不會遺失這至愛的頸巾。」呼呼！一輪大風突然颳起，頸巾被大風吹起，飄到天上，女巨人連人帶頸巾被吹下懸崖。長長的頸巾被一棵大樹的樹枝鉤住，高高的掛在樹上。由於她把頸巾跟她的頭髮編織在一起，所以女巨人被困著動彈不得。她大叫：「救命呀！救命呀！」叫了半天，太陽下山了也沒有人理會她，她就睡了。她突然聽到有人說話。於是滿心歡喜地睜開眼睛，以為有同伴來救她，卻發現原來只是兩個小人。女巨人就想：唉！算了吧，小人都不會幫得上忙。

過了一會兒，兩個小人帶著一班小人們拿著剪刀回來。女巨人以為他們要襲擊自己，所以她就大叫：「你們想怎樣？不要傷害我，否則我的同伴會壓扁你們！」怎知，小人們沒有傷害她，還為她剪斷跟毛冷編織在一起的頭髮，讓她重獲自由。為了答謝小人們，女巨人決定把那條長長頸巾送給小人們，因為小人們說在冬天時他們很冷。女人離開前為他們的村莊蓋上頸巾，還答應了他們，她會在春天天氣回暖的時候回來移開頸巾。

經過今次的經歷，女人發現小人也真的不簡單，她從此不會小看小人族。因為很多時候小人都能起到大作用。我們應該互相幫助，把關愛和溫暖傳送給城市每一個角落。

小學組 (中文組) 優異獎

姓名：徐奇豐 學校：聖方濟各英文小學 班級：6D

喀嚓喀嚓的剪刀聲，突然讓我如夢初醒，原來人生有太多不必要的纏累，需要斷然的剪去，才能重生。我慢慢的坐下來，環顧四周，才發現，原來天地廣博！一定是我剛才太專注手裡的編織，未曾留意！於是，我向懸崖的另一面走去，繼續探索我的人生。

我一直走著走著，在沙沙的風聲的帶領下，發現了一條小徑，兩旁高大挺拔的大樹，還有色彩繽紛的花朵，在綠油油的青草上，忽然聽見隱約的汪汪叫聲……噢！原來是一頭長著金黃色的毛，拖著一條長長尾巴的小狗，牠對我說：「你好！我們一起探索這條美麗的小徑吧！」我說：「好啊！」

於是，我們沿著小徑一路直走，突然看見一個很大的地洞，跨過地洞便是椰林樹影，水清沙幼的風景。小狗無法抗拒這麼美麗的風景，想盡辦法，希望能繼續進發。可是牠求勝心切，一不小心便跌進了地洞去。小狗在地洞裡拼命地呼叫著，求救著。

此時此刻，我頓然從小狗身上看見自己的影子，我跟現時的小狗一樣，為了達到目的，忘記了初心。原來我們一直所追求，是豁然開朗的心境，可當我們有了慾望，便會迷失自己。這時，我便隨手在附近找到藤蔓，築成繩子，設法幫小狗爬上地面。最後，我終於成功為小狗脫險，我倆擁抱在一起，流下開心的眼淚。

今天的經歷猶如過了半個世紀，但我領悟了很多，明白到要懂得放棄，才能夠獲得重生，別忘記初心。

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小學組 (中文組) 優異獎

姓名：陳可澄 學校：元朗寶覺小學 班級：小五

老婆婆坐在椅子上，一臉茫然。頃刻之間，天上出現了一道強光，強光慢慢延伸至整片荒漠。

原來是天上的神明被她感動了，神明就對老婆婆說：「人達到了某個極限，就應該要懂得放手，不要為了一時的執着而喪失現在所擁有的。」故事中，婆婆理應在事情還能挽救的情況下，手執剪刀，快、狠、準地與所有負累「絕交」，這樣才能得以重生。老婆婆面紅耳赤，一時說不出話來。神明繼續說：「假若時光可以倒流，你還會執着嗎？」老婆婆急不及待地回答：「不會！這次我一定要……」話還沒說完，強光再一次籠罩大地。

老婆婆睜開雙眼，她發現自己的頭髮完好無缺，地上的毛線球也同樣原封不動。此刻，她清楚明白到自己已經回到過去。這次，她明確地訂立了目標，那就是編織一條頸巾。不一會兒，目標已達成了。這時，婆婆毫不猶豫地放下編織針，從地上拾起剪刀，將連接於頸巾與毛線球之間的毛線「一刀兩斷」。老婆婆頓時豁然開朗，心中的鬱悶得到了排解，並對着自己的製成品微笑。

故事結局不完美，我們可以重新改寫；但人生不完美，我們是沒能力將時光倒流。我希望這個故事，讓各位讀者明白到，人達到了某個極限，就應該要懂得放手。

小學組 (中文組) 優異獎

姓名：李泓海 學校：北角官立小學 (英皇道) 班級：4A

圍巾沒有了，我拿著手中的剪刀，心裡有點茫然。呼呼的風聲像在不斷地嘲笑我。我大聲地喊了一聲：「啊……」抒發一下內心的鬱悶。

「你在叫甚麼呢？」我回頭一看，原來是一位留著長鬍子的老人。他赫然站在我的身後，背著一個脹鼓鼓的背包。我就把之前發生的事情一五一十地告訴他。

他想了想，接著又問：「為什麼你會跑到這山崖上來織圍巾呢？」我回答道：「這要從我母親說起。她有一雙靈巧的手，能編織出很多漂亮的圍巾。在我小時候，她說要給我織一條世界上最漂亮又完美的圍巾。可是，後來她因為一次意外，弄傷了手，再也不能織圍巾了。她感到很不開心，經常帶著我來到這山崖上，滿懷心事地看著遠方。因此，我從小就下定決心，一定要完成她的心願。在母親的悉心指導下，我每日用心地練習。到了今天，我終於可以在這裡編織一條完美的圍巾獻給她。可是，織著織著，與母親以往生活的片段就不斷在我腦海中湧現。我不想停，希望圍巾能延綿不斷地織下去……」說到這裏，我不禁掉下了眼淚。

老人聽了很感動，說：「不要緊，剛好我帶了很多毛線，可以給你一半。你再織一條吧！」他從背包裡拿出很多毛線和兩根織針交給我。臨走的時候，他忽然不經意地問：「你覺得你的媽媽現在是想見到你還是想見到一條完美的圍巾呢？」我深深地吸了一口氣，就匆忙向他道謝，拿著那些毛線和織針飛快地向山下跑去。

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小學組 (中文組) 優異獎

姓名：周子晴 學校：佛山羅格實驗學校實驗部 班級：G5

女人玩著剪刀，突然放下剪刀。她想，我要離開這裡。她站起身，轉頭想要往回走。

1. 重生

女人一直往回走，她走啊走，卻怎麼都找不到回去的路，正在她絕望之際，一股強大的吸力把她吸進了一個漩渦，在漩渦裡，她感到腦子一陣劇痛，然後她就發現自己來到了一個透明的世界，她看到前面有一個門，於是她就推門進去了。

她看見一個老婆婆在裡面聊天，婆婆聽見開門聲說：「進來吧。」女人走到裡面，老婆婆說：「我已經等你很久了，現在你有兩個選擇，一是離開這裡回家，二是重生在另一個世界開始新的生活。」女人猶豫了一會兒說：「我需要選擇重生。」老婆婆說：「可以，我會把你的記憶裝在一個瓶子裡，你可以放在我這裡保管，你也可以帶走，但是如果瓶子爛了或者壞了，那麼你就會失去記憶。」女人說：「我重生就是為了打破以前的執著，做新的自己。」說著她毫不猶豫地打爛了瓶子，就這樣她來到了另外一個世界。

2. 新生活

女人在另一個世界誕生了，她的名字叫「黛雅」。黛雅從小長相甜美，學習很好，每次考試都考第一、第二名。因此她倍受父母的寵愛，這也使她有一個快樂美好的童年。

雖然黛雅失去了記憶，但每當她看見有人執著於一些東西的時候，她就情不自禁的想起自己，仿佛也有這樣的過去，她為自己的過去悄然落淚。有時她的哭泣被人發現，經常會遭到嘲笑，但她十分自信開朗，所以這並不對她造成甚麼心理傷害。

3. 再遇老婆婆

後來在她上初中時，無意中再次來到老婆婆那裡。黛雅說：「在那個世界太無聊了，如果實在太無聊的話。我會反覆以前的執著的」。老婆婆說：「你感到無聊，是因為你沒有用心去感受世界的美好，只有你用心去感受世界，你就會知道世界是多麼的廣闊，有多少值得你去探究的東西，忘掉執著吧！孩子，要活在當下！」

4. 活在當下！

黛雅回去之後反反覆覆的思考老婆婆的這幾句話，直到十多年後，她才真正明白老婆婆的話是甚麼意思。

現在黛雅已經 32 歲了，她已經是一個非常著名的人物呢。黛雅就像明星一樣，長得好看，而且還精通各國語言，在才藝和學歷方面有萬人之上的能力。可是最終她選擇了周遊世界，去了解各國的文化歷史、民俗風情。

在此時她才真正明白了老婆婆的話，執著於一些東西是沒有意義的，不要把時間浪費在無意義的事情上面，要去探索那些值得你探究的東西，世界上還有很多你不知道的東西等著你去探究。

後來黛雅和一個名叫維西的男子結婚，他們在臨海的地方買了一間小房子，路過的人經常能看到在放著幾束小花的窗前寫著幾句話：「放下執著，面朝大海，嚮往明天」！

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小學組 (中文組) 優異獎

姓名：廖哲希 學校：保良局香港道教聯合會圓玄小學 班級：6B

一剪所長

失去長髮的婦人凝視手上的剪刀，心想：「若我當初善用你，我便不會犯錯。」她有所領悟，便從懸崖回到自己的鄉村去。

身穿殘破衣服的流浪漢正在大樹下熟睡。婦人看見他很骯髒，便悄悄拿起剪刀，「嗖」數下，把流浪漢骯髒的長髮剪掉大半，然後笑著離開，她為著自己可以一展所長而心滿意足。

在銀行門口，一名劫匪正在點燃炸藥幹壞事。恰巧婦人路過見狀，毅然跑上前去，「嗖」的一聲，把藥引剪掉，劫匪驚訝不已。剛好這時警察趕到，迅速拘捕了劫匪。婦人笑著離開，為著自己可以一展所長而心滿意足。

一位女士把小狗和女兒最愛的氣球一同捆在商店外，然後抱著女兒入店購物。婦人又經過那兒，覺得小狗好像很可憐，於是走上前「嗖」的一聲，把繩子剪斷，放走了小狗，氣球也升到半空去。婦人笑著離開，為著自己可以一展所長而心滿意足。

東村和西村常常有爭執，兩村村民後來決定以拔河方式來解決爭端。這時，婦人拿著剪刀，經過村口，看見雙方正在拔河，婦人不忍心看見兩幫人面紅耳熱，便索性走上前去，「嗖」一聲把大繩剪掉了。她這麼一剪，雙方村民紛紛倒地受傷。一些受輕傷的人，大為憤怒，拿起棍棒喊著要打婦人。

婦人驚慌起來，拔足狂奔，心裡在想：「我明明為人做好事，幹麼他們這樣恨我？」走著走著，她竟又回到懸崖邊。

最後，她把剪刀扔下崖底，然後失望地說：「原來你也是錯！」

小學組 (中文組) 優異獎

姓名：張揚 學校：大埔德萃小學 班級：6B

一對編織棒，一團團毛線球，一心的執念，這一切險些把我拽下深淵。我以我的求生本能，咬斷了自己的頭髮，氣喘吁吁地爬上懸崖，驚魂未定，逃過一劫。

我坐在椅子上，喘着氣，目光順着低垂的手看到了那把曾經觸手可得的剪刀，我又慣性彎下腰，拿起剪刀。「咔嚓咔嚓」的聲音讓我著迷，我不停地剪指甲。突然，一陣刺痛傳來，我低頭一看，指甲已經被我剪禿了，滲出血來。我頓時覺得自己不可以再這樣下去了。遠遠望去一個又一個的山崖上也有許多像我一樣的人，我是否可以幫助他們呢？我下定決心拿起這把剪刀走下山。

我在路上偶遇一位園丁，她看上去十分苦惱，原來她的玫瑰花園被病毒感染，但她又不捨得剪去受感染的花枝，可這樣的結局是整個玫瑰花園大面積受感染，全然枯萎。我果斷拿起我的剪刀，幫她修剪掉全部受感染的花枝。雖然玫瑰花少了，但是它們至少健康了。

接着，我再向前邁進，看到了一位漁夫，他的船無法動彈，原來他的漁網纏在了船的引擎，引擎已經開始冒煙了，但他卻不捨得剪斷，進退兩難。我二話不說，直接就把漁網給剪掉了，船也恢復了動力。他為了感謝，便送了一袋炸蝦，我謝過他便繼續上路了。

走着，走着，前面有一位披著長髮的少女，她的脖子向上仰着，原來她的頭髮特別長，太重了。她的脖子根本無法承受，她卻不捨得剪去美麗的長髮。這一刻，在山崖上那個畫面和那沉重的痛楚和眼前的畫面重疊起來。她的脖子快斷了！我立刻衝了上去，剪掉了她的「累贅」。她頓時覺得輕鬆了很多，看看我手上的剪刀。我擁抱她一下，輕聲說道：「你很快也會發現短髮這樣也是一種美。」

我走過許多許多地方，用手上的剪刀幫助過許多許多的人。但轉身一看，還有許多像曾經的我一樣在懸崖上執迷不悟，又有多少人能拿起剪刀「斷捨離」減去那一份執念呢？也許改變，就從我們拿起這把「剪刀」的旅程開始。

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小學組 (中文組) 優異獎

姓名：李朗晴 學校：鳳溪創新小學 班級：6D

她回過神來，低頭看着自己無意識舞動剪刀的右手，一陣巨大的恐懼湧上心頭。剛剛險些掉下懸崖的情況還歷歷在目，瀕死的感覺還沒有消退，手難以抑制地顫抖，剪刀向下掉落，刺中了腳趾頭。腳趾頭傳來的痛感才讓她如夢初醒，才讓她感受到自己仍活着。

活着，真好！

她呼吸着山頂清新的空氣，眺望藍色天空，世界那般廣闊，萬物那般美好，她從前為何沒有注意到？

是啊，是為了編織那條頸巾。她為什麼要在懸崖邊不顧一切地編織頸巾？她苦苦思考，才想起頸巾是為了送給母親的生日禮物。

她失落地倒坐在椅子上，她把初衷忘得一乾二淨。原本，她是想一邊欣賞山上的風景，一邊為母親編織頸巾。沒想到她一直埋頭苦幹，把「織一條頸巾」的心願漸漸地轉換成「織最漂亮的頸巾」，結果變成以「織一條世上獨一無二的頸巾」為目標，一直廢寢忘食地編織，差點連小命也賠上。

她不禁慶幸自己能當機立斷把頭髮咬斷，慶幸自己能從懸崖邊爬上來，慶幸自己能保住小命，可以回去見最愛的母親！

她跌跌撞撞地往山下走，腳步越來越快，她來不及感歎春去秋來的景物，也來不及處理摔跤的傷口，她只想盡快趕回家，看看老邁的母親。

看到冒着冷風，站在家門前的母親，她的淚流了下來。她緊緊地抱住母親，哭得像個小孩。

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小學組 (中文組) 優異獎

姓名：李曉林 學校：保良局馮晴紀念小學 班級：五年級

當她拿起那一把教她脫離險境的剪刀，聽到它「喀嚓喀嚓」的聲音，才恍然大悟過來。她發現原來自己一直過於執著編織更多，最後卻得不償失，差點賠上了性命。因此，她決定砍掉重練，並透過述說她自己的經歷來幫助其他同樣迷失自己的人。

於是，她開始遊遍世界各地。途中，她遇上一個正在蓋房子的伯伯，伯伯拼命地把房子建得愈來愈高，盼望有一天他能夠觸碰天空，但當他站得愈高，風便愈強。他無法抵擋強風，最後不能站穩腳步，被強風吹倒。她見狀，立刻拿起毛線開始編織，編織成一張軟綿綿的墊。這時，伯伯在屋子上掉下來，掉在她的墊上，墊子保護伯伯，使他安然無恙。

伯伯非常感激她的幫忙，並希望加以報答。她卻對伯伯述說自己的經歷，希望伯伯能夠醒悟。伯伯如夢初醒，她會心微笑。

她笑了是因為她找到自己人生的方向。她明白自己編織不是為了打造所謂的更多或編織得多快，而是為了編織的意義。同樣，人生並不是盲目地追求成就，而是尋找自己人生的方向和意義。

她找到了，你找到了嗎？

中學組
(中文組)

**Secondary School
(Chinese Division)**

放棄，也是擁有的一種方式

風起時，看庭前花開花落，寵辱不驚；看天邊雲卷雲舒，去留無意，閑庭信步、拾階而上的人生，離不開放棄的智慧。

——題記

在生命面前，一切的榮耀顯得如此微不足道。《最後的編織》裡的編織者為了活下去，不惜咬斷心愛的秀髮和毛線，捨棄了最滿意的藝術品。

放棄並不可怕，你所失去的，都會以另一種方式來彌補。

「人似秋鴻來有信，事如春夢了無痕。」人生如夢，滔滔江水向東流，一去不復返。烏台詩案，宦海浮沉，蘇東坡放下了官場權勢，寄情山水，才有「一蓑煙雨任平生」的豁然開朗。而垓下受困，四面楚歌的項羽正因為放不下失敗，無顏面對江東父老，才有烏江自刎的淒涼下場。而在懸崖邊，編織者不顧一切地編織，最終差點失去寶貴的生命。

一切沒有如果，如果沒有過多的欲望和貪戀，適時剪斷，就能留下成果。編織者本著求生的本能，最終把她從死亡的邊緣拉了回來，過濾了她的欲望和貪戀，留下了反思。

放不下，整個世界都會成為你的敵人；放下了，整個世界都會成為你的一部分。成功是主觀的臆斷，失敗也是。即使失敗，我們也能看到自己不足之處，那不就是一種成功嗎？發現過錯，改之，也是一種成功；因為距離成功又近了一步。編織者不也是成功了嗎？學會了選擇和放下，適時放棄。

正如汪國真所說：「太深的流連是一種羈絆，絆住的不只有雙腳，還有未來。」利慾薰心，得到太多，想要的更多，貪戀在人們的心中只會愈演愈烈。歸根結底，都是因為欲望和貪婪，人們迷失在匆忙的繁華裡，根本不知道自己想要什麼。

於是，困頓的內心盛滿了疲憊，卻忘了在身後留一片晴空給自己。只有選擇斷捨離，我們才能擁有更美好的世界，開闢新航線。

明智的人是懂得捨棄的，陶淵明不也是學會了放棄了嗎？年少氣盛的他，懷揣著希望，努力考取功名，希望能報效祖國。可是，等他真正到了官場才發現，腐敗的官場並不是他所想像的。他無力改變這種現狀，毅然地放棄了官場的富貴名利，甘願隱居，自耕自食。即使沒有能力改變，也不願同流合污，最後擁有「問君何能爾？心遠地自偏」的心境。坦然面對生活，笑對人生，對酒當歌，吟詩作對，以此了餘此生。而適時的放棄，才讓今天的我們才能體會到「採菊東籬下，悠然見南山」的怡然自得。

放棄雖然是生命中痛苦的抉擇，但適時的放下是心靈的洗滌，更是人格的昇華。懂得放下的人生，才有輕重之分，才能走得更遠。人生如高低錯落的棋盤，有智慧的深遠佈局，有取捨的淡定從容。看盡了花開花落，見慣了人事紛擾，才發覺放棄是一種大智慧。

中學組 (中文組) 亞軍

姓名：葉津茗 學校：瑪利諾修院學校 (中學部) 班級：中五

「滴答、滴答……」編針交織的聲音彷彿時針在跳動，時間一點一點地流逝，女子全神貫注地編織，一條美麗的圍巾躍入眼簾。

起初，女子可以自由控制圍巾，她曾想拿起腳邊的剪刀為自己的作品畫上完美的句號，但轉念一想，她又拿起一旁的毛線繼續編織，不願停下。漸長的圍巾一步步滑入了深淵，女子發現圍巾越來越不受控，她更被拖拽至懸崖邊，她不得不加快編織與下滑的圍巾賽跑，在用盡所有的毛線後，她仍不服輸，不惜用自己的頭髮來繼續，卻沒想到，圍巾越長越往下墜，拉扯她的力量越大，最後用盡自己頭髮後，女子與圍巾一起跌下了懸崖。

在這 6 分 44 秒影片中，沒有一句對白，沒有一個字，卻緊湊、震撼、精彩，其中蘊含的道理，深遠而又耐人尋味。

「人生天地間，忽如遠行客。」在這匆匆的旅途中，你背負了多少無用的行囊，以致阻擋了你的腳步？為了成為人生舞台上的主角，我們從未停止腳步，也沒想過回頭，更看不見前面的萬丈深淵，我們是否會漸漸忘了自己的初衷，不知道自己正走向何處？

莊子曾夢見與骷髏談話。骷髏道，死後沒有君臣，沒有四時變化的人事，能從容自在地與天地共長存，比當君王還要快樂，即使有機會復活、重生，也不願意，因不想去承受人世間的勞苦。這段對話其實包含了莊子對人生的思考，他看見芸芸眾生勞頓困苦而不知所歸，生為物役、心為形役而不知所適。人如果一心只陷於虛榮與慾望、執念與誘惑，便會迷失自我而不自知。慾望如毒蛇，最終吞噬的將會是自己。在得到與不滿足之間無止境的循環中，給自己無形的枷鎖，不自覺地被扯向深淵，「心為形役，塵世馬牛；身被名牽，樊籠雞鶩。」

在影片的結尾，女子弄斷了自己的頭髮，捨棄了編織品，奮力爬了上來。劫後重生的她看著手中的編織棒才幡然醒悟，並毫不猶豫地把它們丟下了懸崖，她重拾起一旁的剪刀，「咔嚓、咔嚓……」似乎意味著對某些事物的割捨……

諾貝爾文學獎獲得者莫言在《貧富與慾望》的漫談中說：「放下，是一種智慧。」人生蕪雜，處事需要開懷釋負，舉重若輕，得之坦然，失之泰然。心靈的自由，才是真正的自由。

活在當下，摒除功名利祿，忘卻榮辱貴賤，「寵辱不驚，閒看庭前花開花落；去留無意，漫隨天外雲卷雲舒。」影片中鏡頭下的女子一直埋首於手中的編織，以致聚焦的山野背景亦乏善可陳。倘若她能抬頭看一下周遭的景色，或許便能看到不一樣的風景，或望遠黛蒼茫、天高地闊，或見雲霧繚繞、空谷幽蘭，或聽鳥鳴啁啾、微風拂過，胸懷豁然開朗，重負頓然卸下，讓身心得到恬靜休憩。靜下心來，你便會發現，其實還有許多東西比手中的編織更值得你去關注。

眼睛，裝得下大山，裝得下大海，裝得下全世界，為何卻只裝著眼前？放下，是另一種獲得。



中學組 (中文組) 季軍

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社會中的每個人，都在忙碌著編織自己多彩華麗的人生，就如同片中人物一樣，機械式地不斷工作，編織出一條漂亮的圍巾。然而，在這條圍巾已經足夠長，足夠美時，並不是所有人都會拿起剪刀，為其畫上完美的句號，就像片中的主角，不惜賭上僅剩的生命，也不願意放下，最終被自己編織的成果拉入深淵。

學會放下，才能欣賞。李白在長安三年，執著於對名利的追求，費心費力討好唐玄宗和各位大臣，換來的只有懷才不遇的鬱悶。受到權貴排擠的李白，並沒有執著於對名利地位的追求，而是學會放下，寫下「安能摧眉折腰事權貴，使我不得開心顏」。離開了繁華的長安，李白開始到處遊山賞水，曉行夜宿，才見識到了「兩岸青山相對出，孤帆一片日邊來」的天門山，才欣賞到了「飛流直下三千尺，疑是銀河落九天」的廬山瀑布。

學會放下，回歸初心。馬雲有著成為教師，桃李滿天下的夢，卻誤打誤撞進入了商界，也應機緣巧合和個人本領，飛黃騰達成了世界首富。而得到了如此之多的馬雲，並沒有執著於自己的成就、地位、財富與身份，反而放下阿里巴巴主席身份，在教師節發公開信辭職，做回自己最喜歡的職業——老師。馬雲放下身份地位，將精力投放在教育事業上，回歸了初心，達至了童年的夢。他親手編織出來的這些成果，也使他興奮與幸福。

列夫托爾斯泰在《一個人需要多少土地？》中講述了一個農民的故事。本是農民的帕霍姆偶然得到了一片土地，但是他並不滿足，不停地擴充他的土地。一次領主對他說，一天之內你能走過多少土地，你就能擁有多少，貪得無厭的帕霍姆，最終在用腳丈量土地時吐血而死。他的僕人發現，帕霍姆最後需要的土地只有從頭到腳六英尺那麼一小塊。許多人就像帕霍姆一樣，明明許多時候都能選擇放下，去拿到屬於自己的成果，卻總是不願如此，想追求更多，結果無法自拔，也一無所有。

當你緊握雙手，裡面甚麼也沒有；當你打開雙手，世界就在你手中。在人生的不同階段，我們都各自執著於編織自己的作品，它可能是金錢，可能是家庭，可能是事業的成功，也可能是對夢想的追逐。但當作品成型時，卻不願拿起剪刀剪斷纏累，不願放下自己的慾望，最終被自己所約束。不斷編織圍巾的我們，到底需不需要那麼長的圍巾呢？緊抓玫瑰，只會被荊棘刺傷，懂得放下，才能聞到玫瑰的芳香。

當圍巾足夠長時，是時候拿起剪刀，為自己的成果留下一個完美的句號。



中學組 (中文組) 優異獎

姓名：鄧浩賢 學校：基督教正生書院 班級：中五

人生如夢，有時候我們會站到人生的最高峰，但有不少人在自己建立的高峰上跌倒。在影片中看到主角用棉線織出她的頸巾，在現實中，棉線是我們的青春、時間和心血，我們運用自己的青春、心血和時間去打造事業，有些人甚至把家庭、友情和愛情都白白押上，到最後才悔之已晚。

其實，人類是不會滿足於現狀的，只會想盡辦法去不斷爭取，為求滿足自己或親愛的人。我曾經看過一個故事，是講述一位神仙賜給勤奮者一份大禮，條件只要他能夠走回起點，他所走過的地方都是他的。他走了很遠很遠，回頭看了看說夠了，但他想起自己的女兒和太太，他再走得更遠，再想未來女兒的兒女，再走得更更更遠，最後他無力地伏在地上，眼看自己原本可以走回起點，但現在卻再也回不到了。結果神仙最後甚麼也沒有給他，他甚麼也沒有得到，但他的家人卻失去了他。

有時我們只是執著地去爭取我們所謂的夢想和慾望，但卻沒有仔細想想我們實際擁有的；我們不懂得滿足於現狀，忘記了我們從前是如何的純真！

在影片中，主角織了很長的頸巾，卻被自己所作的成果拉垮了，她甚至用自己的頭髮來再織更長，但原來隨手可得的剪刀卻已經拿不到了——這好比現實中我們為了建立更高的成就，竟連自己最寶貴的性命也出賣了。她把自己的秀髮混和頸巾織在一起，身體卻被地心引力拉了下去，當你把自己的性命押上賭注，但連賭本也賠光時，你卻輸不起。在現實的新聞中常常看到，很多人因為事業、工作、學業和愛情失敗而自殺。

片中女主角執著於自己的理想和名利，放不開內心的慾望和成就，在中段她利用加速編織來幫助自己脫離懸崖，但卻過份自信，以為不會被自己所編織的頸巾所束縛，更不甘心捨棄已經得到的名利，便捨棄了隨手可得的剪刀，最後卻被自己所加速編織的頸巾所累垮。幸好最後她終於覺醒，鼓起勇氣扔掉那操控著她心靈的織針，拿起剪刀開始反思。

回望過去，我們又能否拿起在自己身邊隨手可得的剪刀去剪去我們心靈中的貪婪？

我看完這段短片後，反思到自己正正和這女主角一樣，一直在追求名利，總要得到別人的認同，希望自己得到的機會比別人更多，凡事都想趕在別人的前頭。但我用我的精力、出賣友誼和利用與別人的關係去編織自己的頸巾，最後我失去了別人對我的信任，斷送自己一手建立的信譽和友誼。我今年 19 歲，在基督教正生書院就讀中五，我是因為吸毒問題而入讀的。我在外面的時候，為了得到別人的認同，做了很多傷天害理的事，如果我有機會，真的很想和被我不會傷害過的人說聲：「對不起」。我曾經運毒、傷人、搶劫——這些都可以為我帶來金錢和朋友的認同，我甚至吸毒去換取別人的信任，更加入了黑社會，這好像女主角把自己的秀髮編織在她的頸巾上；我雖然在懸崖邊挽救了自己的性命，但我入讀正生書院後，又不能自控地拿回織針，再次用差一點殺死自己的手去編織我的頸巾，我再次本能地踢開堆積在我面前的編織，從而挪出更多的空間，我想再次爬上我人生舞台的高峰，但最終因為不誠實，我再次令對我有信心的家人和導師傷心。我再次跌落懸崖，今次卻比上一次跌得更傷。那把本來隨手可得的剪刀，再次離我而去，正確地說是我忽略了那隨手可得的剪刀。我又一次被貪婪控制了自己，然而幸運地我又再次從懸崖邊得救。我雖然不知道自己還會不會再次跌下懸崖，但可以肯定我不會再捨棄在我身邊隨手可得的剪刀——生命裡正確的選擇。

如今，我在正生書院已經居住了四年的時間，我也重新開始踏回我的人生舞台，小心一步一步地走著，不時察看在自己身邊的剪刀及我心靈上的傷痕。

在人生的大舞台上，我相信每個人都會在這個人生交叉點上作出選擇，究竟是推開腳前的編織還是拿起身邊的剪刀去完成作品？人性貪婪和不易捨棄的弱點，讓人一次又一次作出錯誤的決定。

人生的快樂不是建基於你所擁有的資產和成就。你的名利和成就，不是自己的生命。人生是困難的、複雜的，也不是自己可以控制得到的，只要心存謙卑、知足常樂地享受自己努力經營的成果，不夜郎自大，你就準能在苦難中挺過來。

輕裝遠行

沉重的包袱讓你步履蹣跚，將你壓垮，一直飛翔的鳥兒精疲力竭後，終會墜落。放下執著，捨棄慾望，你會走得更遠，更輕鬆。何不輕裝遠行，讓心著陸？

我們如短片中的主角一樣，在人生旅程中努力編織著屬於自己的美妙理想。但殘酷的社會刺激著人們的內心，不斷給人們施加壓力。亂花漸欲迷人眼，處處的寵辱之爭讓人們不甘歸於庸常。多少躊躇滿志者在名利場中徘徊，多少時代的弄潮兒在紙醉金迷中沉淪，我們對慾望的執念也變得越來越強。

主角那美麗的織品越來越長，她卻始終不願拿起剪刀剪斷毛線，完成織品，停止她的追求。沒有最多，只有更多。多少人何嘗不是如此執拗地追求慾望？沉重的織品差點把主角拖入懸崖，但即使毛線已經用完，即使她曾因慾望命懸一線，她仍不惜用盡身上的所有——她的頭髮，繼續她無止境的追求。當她因自己引以為傲的作品被懸崖吞噬，又拼盡全力逃離危險後，她終於醒悟，丟掉了手中的織針。她頓時倍感輕鬆，也得到了除編織以外的充實。「咔嚓、咔嚓……」剪刀的聲音在告訴主角和我們：紛繁的慾望應毅然剪去。

許多人如片段中的主角一樣，一心沉溺於慾望中。如果整日囿於為自己套上的桎梏中，便會舉步維艱，甚至萬劫不復。在慾望的血盆大口前，有多少人能像主角一樣僥倖逃脫，又有多少人在前往深淵的路上能迷途知返呢？

往事越千年。古人云：「心為形役，塵世馬牛；身被名牽，樊籠雞鶩。」為慾望而活，便失去了自由的心性，最終也是作繭自縛。拿破崙的一生與戰爭緊緊聯繫，他對權利的迷戀和執著，令他身敗名裂。反觀，在世俗中跋涉半世的蘇東坡，放下對宦海的執念，終悟出「寄蜉蝣於天地，渺滄海之一粟」，超脫世俗。陶淵明看清塵世的紛擾，放下名利，最終釋然，吟出「採菊東籬下，悠然見南山」的名句。放下和捨棄也許伴隨著艱難和痛苦，但並不只代表失去，也給予我們新生的機會。

於事業、愛情、學業等各方面，人往往有無止境的慾望和目標，但人的精力是有限的，不懂得捨棄和放下，終會被欲望拖累。捨棄紛繁的慾望，才可獲得內心的充實；放下沉重的執念，方能得到心靈的平靜。當我們做了數十年歲月的過客，驀然回首，細細翻閱自己的人生，便會發現自己曾苦苦追求的慾望，也不過只是一抹終會隨風消散的煙塵。

「知足不辱，知止不殆，可以長久」。辨清事物的利弊，選取所需而不受其擾，才能使人生舒展而自由，使生活輕鬆而篤定。何不放下執念，捨棄慾望，讓自己輕裝上路，讓心靈著陸？當你洗盡鉛華，浮躁消失，心將歸於淡泊和寧靜。

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曾聽說過一個故事：少年時期的克林頓立志要做總統。古往今來，凡是能當上總統的人都必定曾在華盛頓政壇有一席之地，而克林頓在當選總統前，卻放棄了三次前往華盛頓從政的機會。回首往事，他只是說：「決定人生的並不是你選擇了甚麼，而是你選擇放棄了甚麼。」

熱愛是人生不斷奮鬥的源動力，愛因斯坦因為對物理的熱愛，才發明了物理史上一系列偉大的理論。但是未必每個人的愛好都能成為事業，因而放棄你的愛好，或許有時是更聰明的決定。正如《最後的編織》影片中的主角，她對編織的熱愛毋庸置疑，但是當她的愛好不但沒有為她帶來快樂，反而慢慢變成了她的負擔，她為了保住自己的一番心血，最後卻落得兩敗俱傷。著名作家畢淑敏十分喜愛心理學，但當即將拿到心理學博士學位時，她卻放棄了寫畢業論文，全因她不希望為了寫心理學畢業論文，打亂了自己的小說創作和思維。可見我們的生活中不只有熱愛，放棄可能是我們痛定思痛後的一個選擇，細心一想，當愛好遠未能為你養家糊口作出貢獻，甚至成為了負擔，賠上時間和金錢換取少頃的歡樂，到頭來兩手空空，甚至乎像是影片的主角中失去了一頭秀髮，才驚覺自己的興趣早已成為自己的負擔。不如學會放棄，珍惜尚剩下的光陰，試想如果主角能早一點放棄自己編織的布，她不但沒有失去自己的頭髮，更能保住剩下的一大球織線，倒不至於因小失大。

能夠學會放棄不單在於自己的興趣，也可以學會放棄損友。「管寧割席」的故事早耳熟能詳，華歆當然未算得上是好功好利，但他的行為於管寧而言卻是不可接受的。同樣地，當我們的朋友慫恿我們做一些難以接受，甚至違反自己道德底線的事時，我們應該放棄盲從，勸告朋友回頭是岸。若果朋友不聽勸告，放棄可能是更明智的選擇，即使朋友曾經創造快樂的回憶，「道不同不相為謀」，何況朋友不能為我們帶來正確的價值觀時，「近朱者赤，近墨者黑」，捨棄損友只不過是對自己更負責任的選擇。生活最重要的不是在乎一時的得失，而是在乎挽留自己所需而放棄不需的。

放棄更加是一種生活的態度。人生在世，追求的事各有不同，努力是追求成功的必須，但成功卻不是努力的必然結果。機遇和緣分更難以掌控，以至於有時太過重視結果，反而落得一場空，有的人更從此一蹶不振。當然追求的態度是需要的，但不是強求。正如對於成績的追求，不是一步登天的事豈能有立竿見影的成果？縱然最後未如理想，但過程中的學習也足以令人自豪。在追求一個遠大目標的時候，何不學會放棄對目標的強求，轉而享受過程中的收穫，這倒是另一種的獲得。

學會放棄便是一種得著。皚皚白雪放棄了聳入雲霄的高，才得到隨江河奔向大海的自由，放棄了落日，才再得到初升的太陽。學會放棄也是一種快樂，一種清醒與智慧的快樂。

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人人都想依靠自己的雙手編織出最美麗的人生，當我們看到自己所做出的努力有了一點實質的回報之後，便得到了滿足感，有了繼續下去的慾望。於是，我們過度專注於自己所做的事，卻忽略了現實中周圍的一切，忽略旁人勸告的聲音，甚至連危險都無法察覺。我們會發現自己所做的事越來越困難，肩膀越來越不堪重負。即便抬頭看見前方是深不可測的深淵，我們也不願意放棄自己來之不易的成果，仍懷著執念一意孤行，試圖與不可逆轉的命運做頑強抵抗。直到我們發現自己掛在懸崖邊上，才幡然醒悟，發現自己的努力錯了方向。而此時卻再也來不及回頭，因為我們傾盡了所有力氣，把自己的整个人生作為賭注，輸得一敗塗地。

而在我們的日常生活裡，我們又何嘗不是在放手與不放手之間苦苦掙扎呢？放手，我們又不甘止於眼前；不放手，又很容易給自己帶來禍害。但是，有時候我們也要學會去獨立思考，認清自己所堅持的東西是否是正確的。一旦發現自己的努力方向錯了，應當秉持「斷捨離」的態度果斷停止。這在生活中處處能夠體現。當我們在學習的過程裡，一旦發現一直以來的學習方法錯誤，便應當機立斷稍停片刻，等找到適合自己的方法，重新開始；當我們背負太多行李而在旅途中勞累不堪，應毫不猶豫地棄置不需要的東西，減輕負擔，輕鬆上陣；當我們陷入一段糾纏不清的愛戀時，應該抽出身來冷靜思考，並要捨得放棄注定是錯誤的愛情；當我們在生意中失敗後，應該及時止損，不應一時的不甘心而失去更多

生活就是這樣，很多時候我們失敗的原因，就是因為我們沒有擁有「斷捨離」的勇氣。生活中的那把「剪刀」，就像朋友的勸告，家人的提醒，幫助我們清除生活裡那些不必要的累贅。起初，這把剪刀就在我們身邊，讓我們能夠安心地去嘗試任何東西，因為只要你想，任何時候都可以停止。但當我們漸行漸遠，被所傾心的事物牽著鼻子走，卻再也夠不著那把剪刀，也不再容易說放就放，因為我們彼時已付出了太多的時間和精力，也丟失了自己。

正如白岩松所說：「方向是比速度更重要的追求。」當我們發現自己努力的方向錯了，有時候需要的便是輕輕一放。人生一世，草生一春。來如風雨，去似微塵。在這個偌大的世間裡，如同微塵般存在的我們，即便耗盡力氣，又能囊括世間多少東西呢？何不珍惜自己所擁有的一切，只朝理智的方向盡己所能去努力。在努力過後，何不在冬天裡披上這條柔軟溫暖的圍巾，泡一壺熱茶，看庭前花開花落，觀天外雲卷雲舒。因為不管我們怎樣奮鬥，我們總需要有一處角落讓自己的心休息片刻。

唯有放下

生活中有很多「甜蜜的羈絆」，讓我們為之瘋狂，以為那就是人生的真諦，卻不料追逐得久了，就迷失方向。《最後的編織》用簡單的場景，平凡的人物，忙碌的編織，環繞著忽快忽慢的旋律，啟迪著我們重新思考生命的意義。編織婦人被內心的慾望所驅使，她堅定著內心，執著地編織，荒涼的環境未能阻擋她內心的炙熱，精美的圍巾卻並非她心儀的成果。她內心渴望的是那線針互相碰撞的編織聲，直至最後，用完了所有毛線，地心引力開始把她拖下懸崖，在這威脅著她的生命的場景，她不捨得放棄，又不得不放棄。於是，她想了一個「聰明」的辦法：用她的頭髮繼續編織。黃色的頭髮穿插在粉色的毛線，形成了世界上最「獨特」的圍巾。可頭髮不可能無限長，總有用完的一刻。編織婦人卻仍然執迷不悟，用她最後力氣跑步贏回來寶貴的幾秒鐘在地上尋找剩餘的毛線。當她終於明白要放下圍巾的時候，為時已晚。她雙手無力地抓著空氣，全身卻禁不住，墮下了懸崖峭壁。可能這畢竟是一部動畫作品吧，編織婦人頂著一頭剛被粗暴斷過的短髮爬回高原。可是在我們的一生中，又有多少次重來的機會呢？

理智的放棄，遠勝過盲目的執著。飛蛾執著於火的溫熱，化為灰燼才肯罷休。精衛執著於海的仇恨，至死未能將海填滿。這種執著，如編織婦人心中的慾望一般，環繞著精衛和飛蛾，也環繞著我們每一個人。每個人一出生都會有一隻口袋，隨著年齡的增長，我們輕鬆地將親情、友情、愛情、事業等裝進來，卻吝嗇地不捨拿出分毫。有些人過得很累，因為他們拿得起放不下；有的人則過得很輕鬆，因為他們拿得起放得下。

世事茫茫，光陰有限。正如一首歌所唱：「人們總是追求表面答案，結果錯失無可取代的寶物。」在影片的最後，編織夫人恍然大悟，選擇拿起了剪刀。我們也要靜下心來，思考清楚人生追求，才不會辜負青春美好時光。生命是漫天棲息的絢爛星辰，是悄然怒放的花朵，是蒼翠欲滴的青松，也是永不磨滅、代代傳承的靈魂。生命的多姿多樣，需要我們懂得放棄，拋卻執念，才可看得到，看得清。浮沉障目，看清流常為濁水，看藍天常為陰霾，眺綠野常似荒漠。對蠅營狗苟過分在意，便會被遮了眼，堵了耳，任皎月沉沉，泣星墜落。恰如楊絳先生所言：「世間好物不堅牢，彩雲易散琉璃脆。」

如何自在，唯有放下。一生漫長，長到我們難以虛度，一生短促，短到我們還完不成一個計劃。我們不能在這除去睡眠的一萬多天裏歷經別人的每一生，但我們可以在這千千萬萬億億裏活出不同。不沉湎於過去，不牽掛於未來。拿得起，放得下，自在地享受

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我曾經在一本人物傳記裏，看到這句話：「人生應有目的，否則你的努力將屬徒然；生活而無目標，猶如航海之無指南針。」欣賞過短片後，這幾句說話再一次在我腦海中浮現。漫無目的地去做一件事，不是白白地浪費了自己的時間嗎？為了一件小事而堅持，換來的卻是犧牲了自己的生命，值得嗎？

首先，片中的婆婆從一開始就沒有目的去做編織毛衣，不停地編織，她將人生寶貴的時間投資在眼前的工作上，卻從不回頭反思。現時有不少學生，在學校的操練薰陶下，只懂埋頭苦幹地做練習，既沒有目的，也沒有策略。難道你們不曾聽過，走得最慢的人，只要他不喪失目標，就比漫無目的地徘徊的人走得快嗎？

第二，故事中的婆婆執著地編織毛衣，無論如何，也要繼續編織下去，甚至將自己的生命與眼前的編織繫成一線，你可以說是「破釜沉舟」，也可以說是「自掘墳墓」。科學家愛迪生每在實驗中失敗了一次，就會另覓方法，而不會一直在失敗的方法中踱步。

曾經有人說過：「懂得放棄，才能有更美好的未來；人生最難的不是如何去擁有，而是該怎樣學會放棄。」影片中的婆婆若能在形勢未惡化前，及早鬆開手上的編織針，把毛衣棄掉，就不會面臨「死神」的呼喚。賽斯·高汀曾叮囑世人：「當你遇到懸崖或是死胡同時，最好立刻放棄，因為是死路一條，你不僅不會得到任何成就或報酬，甚至可能粉身碎骨。」這段片讓我明白到適時的放棄是前進的第一步。

常言道：「堅毅不屈是通向成功的鑰匙。」但堅毅不屈地向著一些沒有意義的事，又或是用錯誤的方法做事，不但弄巧成拙，更白白地錯失了機會。不妨退一步看，將煩惱放下，希望自然不知不覺地呈現在眼前。故事中的婆婆越是堅持，越是與自然的力量對抗，失敗自然是理所當然。

這短短六分鐘的故事，道理看似顯而易見，但不難發現，每多看一次，又有所不同。我反覆看了幾遍，每次亦會有新的領會。直至第五次時，我才毅然執筆，寫下這篇文章。人生不但要有踏實的夢想，而且要有策略，從成功與失敗中，從堅持與放棄之間，尋找適合自己的人生路！

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執念的喜與悲

執念，喜悲之泉源。擇善固執者，樂也；執迷不悟者，悲也。人生在世，好風光萬千，若苦於執著，忽見之，則生活褪色。取捨有道，看清迷霧，逍遙自在也。

光陰荏苒，我們可曾在人生的旅途上有過執念？對追求進德修業、真摯的友誼、和睦的家庭生活、美滿的愛情、幸福的婚姻和改變社會上的不公義等。這些執念是我們前進的動力。

我們都知道執念不是強求就能滿足的。可當我們放不下那些難以滿足的執念時，我們將一步步墜落深淵。小說《令人討厭的松子的一生》中的女主角，她想法天真，有著堅信愛人就能被愛的執念。可她每一次試著愛他人時，得到的卻是不領情。她曾為了求得愛情而失去理智，愛上了一位有婦之夫。她未曾放下執念，不為自己而活。最終在經歷一次又一次的失望後被一幫不良少年打死了。假如她能及時放下那執念，不再只為了別人而活，想必也不會淪落至此。

在我看來，執念不論令人是喜是悲，我們都不能對他人的執念加以批判。人與人之間的三觀有異，三觀無分對錯。所謂「彼之砒霜，吾之蜜糖」。不用學會欣賞，學會尊重就夠了。

總有些執念是會令我們鬱鬱寡歡，更有甚者使我失去生命，可即使這樣依然有人不會放下。諸葛亮有著復興漢室的強烈執念，在出兵前寫下《出師表》給後主，是因為他有著不能辜負劉備對他的信任，希望後主自強。這樣的執念令他鬱鬱寡歡終老。對於他的這種執念，有人認為他愚蠢，被執念困住，活得不夠灑脫。有人認為他重視忠義，是忠臣，值得被讚賞。對此，眾說紛紜。上戰場陷陣殺敵的士兵們，都有著保家衛國的執念。他們何嘗不知這個執念會置他們於死地，但為了給百姓安穩的生活，他們願意承擔重責。你能說這些人愚蠢嗎？他們是受到人民尊重的勇士，這是人生之喜。

在懸崖上的女士，她懷著一顆編織美麗絲巾的心，不斷織布。她發現手上的作品很精緻，於是著了魔似的繼續織布。最後為了給作品畫上句號，她用自己的頭髮繼續編織，結果最後差點墮下懸崖，她只能扯斷自己的頭髮換回性命。缺乏理性的執念是大悲，它能毀掉我們。

人生總有需要執著的時候，亦有需要放下的時候，學懂取捨，是一種人生哲學。有人會在執著中受苦，卻依然堅持。對此。我們不應給予批判。我們倒不如嘗試站在別人的角度思考，這是成熟的表現。

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中學組 (中文組) 優異獎

姓名：葉泳彤 學校：東華三院黃笏南中學 班級：3B

你可曾孤獨地登上不同線路的客船，尋找一個適合自己的歸岸？如片中女主角，她在漏殘銀箭之際，找到認為適合自己的歸岸，於是展開屬於她的絢麗編織。她想織的是一條帶給人溫暖的圍巾嗎？抑或是讓人讚不絕口的編織物？我無從知曉——但我深信那不會是將人拖入萬丈深淵的罪惡源頭，可我錯了。

愈加長的玫紅色圍巾抵達崖邊，欲墜還休，恍如一條致命的繩索。

螢幕前的我倒吸一口氣：毛線球已經全為她所用，長髮是她最後的救命稻草。玫紅色的圍巾染上稻草的金黃色——我看到一道無形的枷鎖捆綁著她，好似也捆著我，窒息的感覺撲面而來——長期以來的累積，她終是無法負載。幸甚，她仍堅持尋找生存的可能。

數米開外，就是她絕處求生的希望——剪刀。剪刀，剪斷她長期的累積；剪刀，剪斷她的所有幻想；剪刀，剪斷她的一切枷鎖。思至此，她明白了，唯一能救自己的是「捨棄」。她不遺餘力地向剪刀跑去，但為時已晚，我只能凝望著她墜下懸崖——必死無疑，我想。

歲月流轉，十歲經年，我一邊想荒誕，一邊要好學，可二者無法相容。憶父親常訓：「樹捨燦爛夏花，得華實秋果；鳴蟬捨棄外殼，得自由高歌；壁虎臨危棄尾，得生命保全——而你，捨逍遙自樂，得成績斐然。」他還告訴我人要有捨，才有得。我不懂他的大道理，只知道要是我再不舉筆苦讀，就要被父親責罰——但見圍巾於墜崖之際，好像一恍然，都懂了。

畫面定格在她掉落的一瞬，腦中閃過伊索的一句話：「有些人因為貪婪，想得到更多的東西，卻把現在所有的都失去了。」我按下了繼續播放的空白鍵——結果在意料之外，只見女子爬上了岸，可頭髮、圍巾卻無一倖免。她果斷將手中的針扔掉，卻隱藏不了眼裡那一絲不捨。浴火重生的她走到椅子旁邊，獨坐在椅子上把弄著剪刀，她笑了，我也笑了。

人生如寄，寄於薄弱的光陰；塵慮縈心，心終是難以割捨。其實我們不都是片中的編織者嗎？我們編織著屬於自己的驕傲，走著屬於自己的道路，譜著屬於自己的曲調。編織的物品形形色色，名利、地位、錢財等，我們都會有自己的理想，但當其超越自己的能力和承受範圍，便會令我們得不償失，我們要量力而為，不要讓自己竹籃打水——一場空。

我們知道自己要甚麼，不要甚麼，這是幸福的；但不知道如何適當地捨棄，越陷越深，這是

痛苦的。得失方寸間，放棄不是代表失去，正確的放棄往往是一個全新的轉折點，一個脫胎換骨的再生過程。

歲序匆忙，這裡並沒有雲山蒼蒼，亦沒有江水泱泱，更沒有人言籍籍，有的只是在斜陽陌上時，背著行囊，踽踽獨行的你和我——而獨處，就是讓心騰出足夠位置，自己把自己捉回來，放在心裡。

經過了六分多鐘的洗滌後，我長吁一口氣並緩緩睜眼，驀然看見屏幕上閃爍著幾個赫然大字——《最後的編織》。

最後你和我，一起完成的編織。

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中學組 (中文組) 優異獎

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斟茶入盞，過滿則溢。有欲固然能使君主勵精圖治，學生勤學好問，百姓刻苦耐勞，但不曾想或卻能成夢魘的萌芽溫床。

《最後的編織》講述的正是如此之事。一位姑娘在陡峭懸壁上編織著圍巾，圍巾愈織愈長，從她的腳旁延伸至峭壁邊繼而漸漸垂下，但她不肯罷手，隨著沉下的圍巾緩緩步向懸崖邊，甚至用髮絲來代替耗盡的絲線。直至髮絲已盡，她才驚覺當初不顧一切，辛苦編織的圍巾已然成為一副枷鎖將她扯下無底深淵。最後她只能了結她操勞造就的美麗，挽回性命。

欲望的膨脹顯然是她墜下懸崖的罪魁禍首，當她已經編織出一段尺寸合適的圍巾，卻不願拾起身畔的剪刀為其裁下終章，反而繼續無窮無盡地編織下去。圍巾或是為了美觀，或是為了取暖，這位姑娘全然忘卻了編織圍巾的初衷，貪戀於編織的快感當中，不願結束，迷失了自我。從古至今一直不乏迷失本心之人。清朝和珅為官初期公正廉明，精明強幹，更娶得乾隆之女為妻，如日中天；但他變得不知饜足，開始結黨營私，謀財害命，他的豺狼野心已成桎梏，最後將他繩之以法，遭世人唾棄。和珅初時的那顆堅貞的心已經變得渾濁不堪，一如那條五彩斑斕的圍巾在誘惑中化身伊甸園中的毒蛇，讓他走向深淵的罪惡。

一段破碎的感情，一位話不投機的朋友，一個未實現的願望，一種被背棄的承諾，當我們所盼望的一切踏入了窮途末路，放手是必然難以抉擇的。也許初始的一切都是神聖而美好，但頑固的執著只會讓我們更加痛苦失落。許多年輕男女在一段山窮水盡的戀情中仍然痴心妄想，渴望對方能夠回頭留戀，卻忽視了身邊更需要珍惜的家人朋友。影片中的女子必然知曉這是一盤勢必不會開花結果的死局，卻仍然渴望奇跡的發生，不願醒悟，直至萬劫不復。原本純真聖潔的愛情化成煉獄的鐐銬，將多少男男女女鎖在了痛苦的牢籠中。

欲望是一條綿延江河，從食物、金錢、社交、地位，再到兩性。隨著成長，欲望會從叮咚小溪匯聚成一片湖海，只增不減，能做到無欲無求的人更是罕見，即使是遁入空門之士也有對佛道的追求。欲望是了無止境的，故對欲望的克制及釋然是人人需常懷的心態。

影片將盡，姑娘蹣跚走回椅凳旁，拾起最初唾手可得，但最後卻遙不可及的剪刀，幡然醒悟。知足者常樂。欲望是人類的本性，並無善惡之分，但我們卻不能被欲望肆意擺佈，要懂得抉擇與收斂，並且要堅守底線，不可讓罪惡滲透我們的心。

當我們珍惜的人、情、物已然變質，再如何赴力彌補挽救，終究只是徒勞無功；倒不如適時放手，退一步海闊天空。一時的失去，許會換來更璀璨的得到。天生我材必有用，千金散盡還復來。既然連古人都懷有天涯何處無芳草的灑脫，我們又為何一定要糾纏不休。但願我們能在物欲橫流的塵世中堅守赤子之心，釋懷於消散的物質與感情，方能地久天長。

中學組 (中文組) 優異獎

姓名：謝弘希 學校：保良局莊啟程預科書院 班級：5A

「一開始，上癮使人歡愉，可是這些快感就會逐漸消失。最後上癮只是為了避免痛苦。」——法蘭克·塔利斯

在短片《最後的編織》中，主角編織着圍巾。不消一會兒，圍巾已織至有二三米長，並開始垂掛在懸崖邊。由於重量的關係，圍巾愈往愈前靠，她亦只是把圍巾扯近自己，但圍巾就是不爭氣地往前拉，經過幾次拉扯後，主角終究是不夠力，從椅子上撲了下來。

而主角終於可算是察覺到有古怪，便動身走向懸崖邊觀察，她仍在樂此不疲地編織，但卻目睹著圍巾高速的從懸崖墜落。她眉頭一皺，就被圍巾從懸崖邊拉了下來，不幸中之大幸，她的鞋跟剛好勾住懸崖邊，她才不至於跌下去。

可是主角在及至如斯田地後非但沒有放棄，她更加快自己編織的速度。但她帶來的數卷線球亦被她用得清光。圍巾又再次肆意地滑下，任主角不斷猛扯，圍巾也只是在不斷地墜落。

正當她要被拉入懸崖下之際，她看見那條剛垂在她額頭的頭髮，忽然心生一計——將自己的那道長頭髮當作毛線。再長的頭髮亦都有用完的一刻，在沒有多餘的線段之下，圍巾便急速被拉下，主角亦順勢被扯落。但她看到在一開始那張椅子旁邊的那把剪刀，她就用她那雙編織針充作冰刀，插在地下慢慢爬到椅子附近。

在她伸手拿下剪刀的一瞬間，冷不防編織針突然斷裂，圍巾毫不留情的往下墮。任憑她再拼盡全力，下墮的圍巾也沒為她停下腳步，她終究還是掉進了懸崖。

她從懸崖下，憑藉編織針的力量，艱辛地一步一步爬上來。而她的長髮已不復存在。她站起來往懸崖下方一瞅後，竟慣性地將編織針在空氣中一針復一針的編織著。然而，垂下頭緊盯著編織針，就使勁地往懸崖扔，編織針隨著風的吹拂消失了。

她便走向椅子的旁邊，將剛才的救命稻草撿起來。

生活上很多不必要的煩惱，來自於不捨得割捨、不願意放過自己，以致泥足深陷，無法自拔。

在人生的舞台，每個人都在追逐屬於自己的天空，盼望能在萬千世界中閃爍不停。於是奮不顧身地以一針一線，交織成夢想追隨著。

然而，夢魘卻降臨了。我們期盼更上一層樓、十全十美。殊不知原來已經走到懸崖峭壁，甚至到最後付上自己的身體、性命來保存這條「圍巾」。不甘心放手，不願意將心血毀於一旦，因而付上更多更多的籌碼；結果越陷越深，越來越不情願鬆開雙手。反之，更加不顧一切的放手一搏。我們熱烈地追求，到最後卻演變成沉迷、成癮，將一切都本末倒置。

箇中原因，莫過於我們都太清楚皆化為灰燼的滋味，繼而千方百計逃避現實，一拖再拖。驀然回首，才驚覺已空無一物，甚至連自己也賠上了。

人類皆為血肉之軀，我們皆有懦弱、不理智一面。人生總會有瘋癲放盪的一刻，但當警號響起，快將要掉下懸崖深淵之時，就要懂得懸崖勒馬，否則只會粉身碎骨，留下的只有滿滿的遺憾。

放下，才能得到救贖。

公開組
(中文組)

**Open Section
(Chinese Division)**

公開組（中文組）冠軍

姓名：文秉懿

細嚼動畫六分鐘，體悟人生二十年。

「最後的編織」這齣動畫，旨在提醒大家，盲目執著只會辜負自己，惟有在適當的時候放手，才不致糟蹋生命。

它以編織貫穿全劇，單線發展，並沒有扣人心弦的劇情。惟一的角色連姓名也欠奉，她可以是妳，也可以是我。她始終沉默，這樣，作品就突破語言阻礙，正好暗示，這般人和事，跨越地域與文化，滲透每一個角落，不死不滅。

對我來說，這是一次驚心動魄的觀賞經歷，因為它展示的，正是我的生命段落。

那個年代的大學畢業生，在燦爛陽光下散發一股神氣，我卻為了堂堂正正的離開家庭，急匆匆結婚。之後二十年，近乎自我虐待的持守，令我幾乎粉身碎骨。

前夫深信男人一定要做生意，才算得上一個人物。我中了舊文學作品的毒，甚麼公子落難，小姐贈金，窮酸餓措高中狀元，背後的女人以後人生錦繡。女人，總得支持自己的男人，這是恆古不易的定理。定下人生方向後，我跟動畫中的女人一樣，自信覓得一方安全之地坐下來，興奮地掏出毛線，為他編織色彩繽紛的頸巾。他為了做大商家而沉迷遊戲，我為了支撐他而消耗人生。我勤奮積極，有一秒鐘空閒是罪過，多花一分錢是作孽。

我把一切資源投注在他身上，只要他成功，我就勝利。我見他雄心壯志，不禁沾沾自喜，預備為自己眼光準確慶祝。可惜，他總是失敗。我只好不斷給他編織，手動得越來越快，編織針錚錚作響。

動畫中的女人漸漸感到壓力，她的傑作沉重得把她拖下懸崖。本來她可以抓起剪刀，剪斷頸巾，這樣，她就可以得到解脫。她偏偏就是放不下執著，不肯動手。

我陷入了這個危機。

他不斷向我索取金錢，叫我身心俱疲，那兩根編織針，是扎手的荊棘。我跟他說，我身體開始出毛病，要停下來。他只是淡淡地回答：「你十分健康，可以繼續工作。」我還是受困於腐敗的思想，男人，是自己選的，除了為他賣命，為他卑微地自困於拮据的精神世界，還可以做什麼？

朋友給我送上剪刀，用半命令的口吻，指示我到她為我安排的律師事務所，割斷執念。

十年修得同船渡，百年修得共枕眠。

一句老話，把我鎖緊。

我還是拿起編織針，為他編織。

終於，我倒下來了。

我在精神科病房呆了個把月，被迫放下毛線。期間我不斷計算停止工作的經濟損失，擔心他能否挺住。醫生以惋惜的語氣批評我，總是推開人家的手，自己死命賴在地上，在泥巴中翻滾。

出院以後，為了補償損失，我更加瘋狂工作。我編著似乎永遠無法完成的頸巾，毛線耗盡，就用自己的頭髮頂替。頸巾越發沉重，把我拉向懸崖。

不久，我又給關進精神科病房。

我在病房認識了兩個朋友。一個因為丈夫好嫖，多次自殺，手腕上留下多道疤痕。五十步笑百步，我勸告她，這種男人，不要也罷。她就是堅持愛這個人，不肯拿起剪刀，割斷牽絆。我不知道她後來怎麼了。另一個朋友的下場，我倒清楚。

她只有一個女兒，女兒恥於有患病的母親，把母親視作怪物。這位女士堅持要女兒接受她，跟她親密，結果母女倆關係越來越差。大家都開解她，這道難題需要時間解答；就是解決不來，也是無可奈何。結果，她出院之後第二天，從天台跳下，掉落懸崖，永不翻身。

我彷彿聽到骨頭碎裂的聲音，血一點一滴濺到我臉上。

她的女兒會憐憫她嗎？

這幕悲劇像一根鐵棒，往我頭上猛擊。我一陣眩暈，我醒悟到，我早已經有大半個身體掛在險境。

我抓起剪刀，咬緊牙關，把一切剪斷。對於離婚，他的態度模稜兩可，只是向我拿了一筆錢才離開。

我站在懸崖上，短髮迎風躍動。在開闊的天空下，我看到遠山。陣陣清爽，我感受到久違了二十年的舒坦。

人總得懷有信念，堅毅持守，不然就是懶散過日子。可是過猶不及，「最後的編織」如暮鼓晨鐘，告誡我們不要讓自己為固執所累。我把這作品儲存心中，作為警惕，以免重蹈覆轍。

那位時常割腕自殺的朋友現在的情況怎樣？我希望向她推薦這齣動畫。

共勉之。



公開組 (中文組) 亞軍

姓名：潘海怡

影片結束，眼眶濕潤了，女人的熱情、美及真實觸動我心。當滑至評論區，卻是一片謾罵批評——成癮、盲目、偏執……起初，倍感詫異。轉念一想，或許在他人眼中，我才是怪人。這正是藝術的妙趣，並非提供答案，而是呈現生命中某個經驗切片，剪掉敘事空間，擷取一個獨立的畫面。每個人投射進去，可以覺得自己說對了，也可以說錯了。因為對的只有一個，就是畫面本身。這就是文藝創作的意義——引起不同，喚醒寬容。

欣賞影片時，我心生疑惑——為什麼她這樣做？所謂「勇者無懼」，她的一腔孤勇，比起武斷與批評，更值得尊重與思索。我不禁猜想原因，她是為了自己或是他人？

若為了個人興趣，她對理想的狂熱實為匠心——立一長技，貞靜自守。人生，八個字足以概括——擇其所愛，愛其所擇，首句是前半生，後句便是餘生。萬物皆如此——花朵渴望盛放、樹木不懈生長、人類追求進步……無一不是有所執著並傾力追求。李商隱寫道「春蠶到死絲方盡，蠟炬成灰淚始乾」，死亡雖然可悲，但「春蠶」、「蠟炬」應是快樂的，它們實現自我，為此不斷灌注熱情。哪怕最後失敗，或向現實妥協，或如影片中斷然放下，畢竟曾追求過，無怨無悔。雖不是每棵樹都會開花，但果實自有一種圓滿。如果生命沒有熱情，不曾燃燒，只是枯坐廟中，沒有沉澱與積累，不僅無所完成，還很冰冷。人要問自己——活着有沒有熱情，有沒有執着的事？

換種說法，她是為別人付出，那又會是誰呢？親人？或許她是一位母親，身懷絕症，決心生前編織足夠孩子一生使用的圍巾。人人可能都愛過一個人、一份工作，愛到這種程度。曾看一則新聞：女孩正值青春，卻出車禍，成了植物人，父母照顧了她三十年，不離不棄。別人都說他們三十年來擦拭着一副紋絲不動的身體，為她付出那麼多，犧牲那麼多……值得嗎？其實不重要，人自愛而後愛人，能在生命中找到一個對象無私付出，而非囿於自我，是幸福的。在付出中，生命會因獲得意義而飽滿，如果一生都找不到付出對象，不是一種悲哀嗎？這讓我想起王爾德筆下的夜鶯，為愛情化心血為玫瑰；或是為世人赴死的耶穌；或是宣揚仁道的孔子；或是為世人修行的釋迦牟尼……他們將私情，擴至天下萬物。相信在當時，他們近似偏執的行為，同樣遭受白眼、唾棄、質疑。長沮、桀溺就曾揶揄孔子何不亂世歸隱，孔子沒有動容。若非如此，我們不會沐浴在仁義禮智中幾千年。如今，我們享受着前人的思想碩果，固不會指罵他們，而是讚頌其堅毅不屈。因為人往往着眼結果，而非過程。反觀當下，我們是否如當初的長沮、桀溺般，嘲弄影片中的她不智呢？我們是否忘記忍受孤獨、不理解、唾罵是通向偉大的必經之路呢？

世間萬物無一不是隱喻。咀嚼箇中滋味如飲茶，回甘需時，草草飲盡，只得苦澀之味。我們之所以批評影片中的她，源於旁觀者心態，站在上帝視角，結論下得急促、武斷，來不及將心比己。若試着進入角色，為了家人、伴侶及理想，人或都有過類似的經歷和狀態，亦曾因此遭指責說泥足深陷。每個人都有自己的故事，記得一齣電影曾說：「現在人類雖可乘坐飛船登月，卻無法探索別人內心的宇宙」。人不一定要有信仰，可不妨有一顆慈悲之心，由此生愛，愛惜自己，包容他人。比起聰明，這個世界更需要善良和美麗，不然生活便成為一場暴力。

素來人敬仰聖賢、神明，以其為表率，砥礪自己。但無須貶低自身，生而為人並不可恥，從人到聖同樣經歷過七情六慾的洗禮。成聖誠然是最高目標，然而須先成真——回歸自己，接納自我。若拋棄自我，一味效仿，不過是模仿表面行徑罷了，而非領悟真諦。試着放下批判，接納自身的美麗與醜陋，高尚與卑微，光明與黑暗。人性立體，善惡本難黑白分明，而是相互摻雜。正因如此，才孕育出許多扣人心弦的故事。我們應該感恩活在這最美與最醜的人間，更應包容這最善與罪惡的人間。

文藝創作其中一個重要的意義，是為人生每個狀態提出一個價值，引發思考。這個作品給觀者留下很大的想像空間，每次演繹都迸發新的故事與想像。或許無需執着她為什麼這樣做，這樣做到底是對是錯？很多時候，人總以為有謎底，其實謎題便是謎底本身了。生命沒有最好與最壞，每個階段都可以是好的。因為回首過去，曾經的種種引領自己，走到了現在。

公開組 (中文組) 季軍

姓名：彭淑芬

對於華人觀眾而言，故事的懸崖令人聯想起大家熟悉的一位古代哲者——莊子。

周莊一句「吾生也有涯，而知也無涯，以有涯隨無涯，殆已」，被芬蘭女導演用具象化的方式呈現：崖與椅的距離是壽命，織巾的行為便是「有涯隨無涯」的體現。人對生命的短促往往不自知，正如女主角直到後來頸巾開始往深淵掉下，才後知後覺地探頭觀察，留意到懸崖下的峽谷，加上片尾的剪刀，難怪不少人會直接一錘定音，認為電影反映人生營役短暫的本質，和斷捨慾望的必要。

但我認為這並非短片的終極詰問。我們可以從這層表象出發，更深入探討背後引發的一連串問題。

首先，女主角究竟為誰編織？動機是甚麼？一位哲人說過：「別讓工作上的勤勞，掩蓋思想上的懶惰。」「編織」是一個空白的符號，可以代入任何一種勞動身份，它對於女主角開始時建立社會身份認同上有良性作用，後來卻慢慢變質，成為德國哲學家馬克思所提出的「勞動異化」。我們見到女主角編織時的神情呆滯，與其說她是一位充滿激情和愛的藝術家，倒不如說更像一部沒有反思能力的機器人。整個製作過程中，女主角重視量多於質，既沒有思考過頸巾的花紋，也沒有考慮顏色的配搭。她只懂一股腦兒地不停編織，哪怕頸巾的長度早已長得不合理。回頭看看我們社會，不也常常見到行屍走肉的上班一族，或者為結婚拍拖而結婚拍拖的男女，從不思考那究竟是自己的意願，還是為了符合他人的期望？

動畫中寸草不生的平原，象徵當今人類精神的荒蕪和焦慮。英國著名作家艾倫·狄波頓曾經分析，現代人身份焦慮的主因是來自高度的社會流動性。在中古封建時代，一個人可以輕易地把自己的失敗和懷才不遇歸咎於不幸的命運和卑賤的階級出身。但在現代精英主義社會中，失敗只能是因為個人未夠努力，未夠優秀。也許正是出於這種社會身份價值喪失的恐懼，女主角才會發了瘋似的不停手工作。

此外，最困擾觀眾的謎題，莫過於為何她明知危險，還不停手，繼續織巾，甚至變本加厲，妄想以加快編織速度以戰勝地心吸力下滑的速度？這令我想起小時候對「盡力」這個詞語曾經的困惑。字面上，「盡力」解作「竭盡全力」，但究竟付出到甚麼程度才算是盡力？何時應盡力？有一次，我們一家在年宵市場走散了，爸爸和我在維園市場逛了兩圈仍然找不到母親，電話也打不通。爸爸無奈地說無辦法，我們盡力了。我當時有點生氣，一邊心裏疑惑：沒有叫大會開廣播尋人，沒有留守深夜，這也算是盡力嗎？長大後回想，自然啞然失笑。

曾經聽過一個笑話：未來人類發明了一部非常聰明的人工智能機器，然後問它：生存的意義是甚麼？於是人工智能在往後數千年間耗盡了全地球所有能量，把大自然的資源通通消耗掉，把人類也餓死了，為的只是用盡全力解答主人這條問題。

片名早已暗示另一種解讀方向。Knit 除可譯成名詞「編織」，也解作「落針」的名詞。因此，更準確的譯法應為《最後一針》。甚麼時候應完結，甚麼時機該了斷？人之所以為人，是因為我們有智慧。智慧跟聰明不同，前者懂得利用經驗去判斷甚麼時候，該做甚麼事，懂得因應形勢而變通，分輕重緩急，當中也包括堅持和放下的時機。這也是智慧和成熟的一種體現。

《最後的編織》如同一則現代寓言，象徵風味濃厚，引來各種解讀。故事沒有運用文字或對白去點出中心意涵，觀眾需要透過觀察短片種種蛛絲馬跡，嘗試拼湊出最合理、最有說服力的說法，這亦符合契訶夫提出的創作觀：要呈現，不要說明！但別被這部看似無聲的動畫騙到，細心的觀眾應該留意到，片中有一把聲音無時無刻貫徹始終，繚繞不去——那是啲嗒啲嗒的針織聲，象徵慣性的力量，擁有催眠力量的咒語一樣，把人綁死在自我設限的身份上。片尾，當她終於看似擺脫了「編織」的枷鎖，剪刀新的、利索的、誘人的聲音，彷彿預示著另一種無明依戀悄然上演……

公開組 (中文組) 優異獎

姓名：陳思穎

我曾是一名二胡演奏家。我到過全國各地巡迴演出，也曾獲得全國中樂演奏比賽的金獎。

我短短的二十六年人生中，有接近二十年的時光，都像《最後的編織》裏的女士一樣，手裏緊握著細長的工具，默默耕耘，不敢怠倦。

獎座、掌聲和讚賞，就是我手邊一直編織的圍巾；櫃子排列的獎座、一頁一頁掀過的曲目，就是在我眼前不斷伸延的圍巾。

「乖女，奏一曲給我聽聽！」

「乖孫，奏一首《萬馬奔騰》給我賀壽吧！」

「真厲害！真厲害！」

「果然是你師父的得意門生……」

回味著悅耳的讚許說話，我逕自把椅子挪到懸崖，擺脫所有繁瑣的人情事務，只為一心一意投入練習。

經年累月，我從肩膀到手指，每一節關節、每一塊肌肉都嚴重磨損。風雨前夕，我總會像我那得了風濕病的婆婆一樣，徹夜難眠。我卻不敢把緊握著這細長棍子的手鬆開。

我沒有靈活的腦筋，沒有漂亮的臉蛋；我只有在演奏二胡的時候，才能獲得大家的青睞。我強忍肩膀的痛楚，努力練習，參與了大大小小的學校、商場演出，參與過各項賽事，獲得不俗的成績。過去二十載，彷彿生命中沒有其他事情值得我瞥眼一看。

直至兩年前，我被職業治療師極力阻止我繼續演奏和練習，因為我已有嚴重的肩頸肌筋膜炎，無法負荷職業演奏家的工作量了。我才被迫放下長弓，思考未來的路。

在母親和朋友的鼓勵下，我選擇了攻讀人類學的碩士課程。學習之餘，我能花時間陪伴母親、照顧寵物；也能約會朋友，歡度假日，比以往忍受默默痛楚、埋首練習的日子快活了許多。

因為是次比賽，我才第一次觀看《最後的編織》這條影片，卻馬上被它深深震攝。除了是因為其荒誕不經的表現手法，更因為它映照了我過去狹隘的目光和單調的人生。

我禁不住質問以前的自己：「既然已攀上高山，何不放下手上的毛線和針織棒，悠然細味廣闊無垠的風景呢？」

公開組 (中文組) 優異獎

姓名：王碧蔚

這時候，太陽還在地平線下沉默，天空呈現一種朦朧的橘白色。她攜著椅子、織針和毛線步向懸崖。她轉頭一看，身後是大片稻黃色的荒漠，沒有山或水，只有寂靜和荒蕪無盡地延伸。她坐下來開始編織，織針搖晃，噠噠噠噠噠……

千萬人看同一段影片，必然生出千萬種不同的感受，我看《最後的編織》，不止看到慾望、沉溺或勞碌的生命——我還聽見它宣揚愛的聲音。

動畫起始，金髮女子緩慢地編織圍巾，隨著動作加快，她的眼神變得迷亂癡狂，腳邊的毛線球從一顆暴增至十顆，最後她被圍巾拖累墜落懸崖，九死一生。此中寓意十分明顯：女子沉淪在自己打造的慾望世界中，如涉足泥潭，愈陷愈深。她沉迷慾求，營營役役——可有誰注意到嗎？她的慾其實起於孤獨。

試想在一個要套上毛衣的蕭瑟冬日，女子身處荒地，四周杳無人煙，她迫切地渴望溫暖，尋找風以外的聲音。她搓揉凍僵的手開始編織，銀針互相擊打的噠噠聲迴蕩在她空蕩蕩的軀殼內，她藉此得到滿足，再也無法停抑。毛織品是愛與關懷的旗幟。女子身穿毛衣，可見並非渴求體感溫暖，而是求情感上的暖，以陪伴自己度過森冷的清晨，所以無論圍巾多長，都無法撫慰她內在的冰冷，導致她逐步接近深淵。

故事結局，女子看似完全擺脫了慾望，她咬斷頭髮、丟棄織針，鬆了一口氣。然而最後一幕，她坐在椅子上擺弄剪刀時，卻滿臉迷茫、悵然若失。噠噠噠噠噠，熟悉的編織音效響起，她若有所思，好像還在思念那些編織的瞬間。面對廣袤無垠的荒涼景色，她迫切地想敲響孤寂的心靈世界，所以她執起了剪刀，咔嚓咔嚓咔嚓……此刻，她的慾望不再是對外的「製造」，而是把刀尖指向自己，陷入對內「破壞」的慾海中。由此可知，拋開織針並非解決辦法，只是苦痛輪迴的其中一環。那麼，女子該如何抽身自救？

自救、自救，事實上個體的力量是如此微弱，以至於人難以徹底拯救自己。我們都過於輕盈，不得不依靠身後攙扶、支撐的人，作為一股後扯的牽引力。牽絆、愛和關懷有如一根繩纏繞人們的手腕，使人與人得以共同負荷織物下垂的重量，使編織者時常回頭、微笑，減慢編織的速度。金髮女子需要的，可能不是一把斷情去慾的剪刀，不是一口鋒利的牙齒，而是一雙手與她分擔重量；一把溫柔的嗓音喚她停下來、歇息片刻。

再者，其實編織從來不是貶義詞。記得我幼年時經常站在祖母身後，看她如何勾織圍巾。她把毛線一圈一圈密密地捆在織針上，手指飛快地勾撩毛線像彈撥琴弦，織針交錯又分開，交錯又分開，發出溫柔的敲擊聲。她從來不織給自己：「一邊想著你們一邊織才有意思」。當她編織的時候，背後總站著她愛的人，她轉身，把快織好的圍巾一圈一圈圍在我脖子上，「夠長了嗎？」她這樣問。

隨時轉身詢問、對談，隨時停止。這是祖母對待編織的態度。從她身上我看見編織的美麗。每個人人生來皆有追求，有其渴望經營的物事，像祖母編織關心和愛，父母親編織生計事業。只是我們必須在編織的搖搖板上取得平衡，站在正中央，要知道慾望使人前進，愛使人駐足。

編織，仿如航海，可遠行但需繞過礁區。無論身在何處，要時常順著無形的牽絆回望，那兒的港口永遠有光、有燈塔等待。

此刻，太陽已升至半空。溫藹的晨曦包裹荒漠上每根晃動的野草，遍地金色的細碎閃光。男人遞給金髮女子一對織針，站在她身後，凝視她慢慢編織的手。「要編織一個家——」「這是最後，也是最悠長的編織。」在織針的交錯聲外，談話聲、心臟咚咚的跳動聲充盈女子體內，那雙扶在肩上的手，讓她感到腳踏實地，充滿穩妥的重量。

公開組 (中文組) 優異獎

姓名：姚燕婷

最後的編織用短短七分鐘，以無聲、單一場景帶出人生哲理。每一次的觀看都有不一樣的感受和體會，的確是一部優秀的作品。

第一次觀看這段影片時，我體會到珍惜生命的道理。片中的主角拿了椅子，在自以為安全的地方坐著，並進行編織，沒想到在圍巾越編越長時，竟然隨著重量墜崖了，而主角只能夠編織得越來越快以追趕墜崖的速度，最後更因毛線不足，故用上自己的頭髮與之對抗，因而差點喪命。於我而言，以頭髮去救一堆毛線而險些失去生命，實在太過愚蠢和不值得。一想便知，編織是不可能快於圍巾墜落的速度，更何況主角有多次機會免於危險，她可以選擇把圍巾拉上來再進行編織，或者拿起剪刀剪斷毛線，而她偏要選擇抗衡，走上一條不歸路。其實只要放棄自己所編織的圍巾，任由它掉落懸崖，就不至於賠上自己的頭髮，也能免去面臨死亡的危機。失去編織了很長的圍巾，是為小事；失去可貴的生命，是為大事，所以我學會了要權衡輕重，珍惜生命。雖然自己的心血固然重要，但是不應因小失大，為一堆毛線而置自己於危險之中，甚至賠上性命，以免追悔莫及。

但是，第二次觀看時，我又有不同的體會。一開始我認為這部短片是在醜化努力的代價。主角很努力地編着一卷又一卷的毛線，她付出了時間、心力、頭髮，可是她的努力沒換來她想要的收穫，甚至毛線都墜下懸崖不復返。我很困惑。從前的寓言故事，不都告訴我們種瓜會得瓜的道理嗎？歷代皇朝的交替之戰，不都告訴我只要付出便能迎來收穫的嗎？為什麼這部短片會帶出付出不會得到收穫，甚至會帶來危險的道理呢？後來，我在思考着付出與收穫的相互關係，發現是要有正確方向的付出才能得到應有的收穫。漢高祖劉邦在攻秦時，坐大自己的實力的同時，也關心當前項羽的威望和勢力，不是一味地為自己所努力的事而努力，仍然密切留意身邊的環境。可想而知，片中的主角一開始的付出便是有問題的。她不應該為了自己編織而編織，隨處放下椅子便開始編織，身在懸崖邊上而不自知，當圍巾全數墜下懸崖時，更想着與之抗衡，站在懸崖邊上繼續編織，即使知道危險，也不當機立斷，捨棄毛線，讓自己一直處於危險之中。所以，這部短片啟發我要朝正確的方向而努力，不能一味地不在乎成敗，也要留意身邊的危險，時時刻刻清楚自己的處境如何，這才能得到應有的收穫。即使努力也可能某些特殊因素而付諸東流，我們也要認清和分析形勢，懂得捨棄。

在第三次觀看影片時，我有更深刻的體會。我發現影片中的人，做的每件事和用的物件都分別象徵着人生道路上我們所遇到的事。主角就是在世界裏浮浮沉沉的普通人，編織着的毛線就代表人生路上走過的每一步。短片由始至終都沒有告訴觀眾，為什麼主角要一直編織。我認為這是想告訴在人生路上，我們會遇到很多不想放下的事，會為其而執着，如同主角不斷在編織着，甚至掉下懸崖亦不想放手。其實退一步看這些毛線是否非常重要？不。從主角曾經想拿起剪刀的舉動，可見她也想剪斷執念，不過最終也被執念所困，到接近死亡之前才醒覺。因此，片中的主角教會我們不應為無謂或不知從何而來的執念，而擾亂自己的心神。退一步看，其實我們都可以放下執念，歸於平靜，不必等到生命即逝之時才突然醒覺。

三次的觀看，加深了我對生命的體會。生命貴於短暫，我們不應為了單單的執念而放棄背後的好風光，或許退一步便海闊天空，這對自己更有益處。在這世界浮沉的人，我們一起加油吧，用平常心看待世界，在努力得到自己想要的同時，也不要被得失心所蒙蔽，不負初心。

捨得

故事伊始，黎明時分，在一個懸崖旁，來了一位提著小凳子，抱著編織針線的女士。她左右觀望片刻，最後坐了下來，開始著手編織她的圍巾。時間一點點地過去，陽光逐漸擁抱大地，只見女士已織了長長一條桃紅圍巾，翻捲著堆在她的腳旁。

圍巾越編越長，女士腳下已無空間，她俯身欲執起剪刀，猶豫半秒便決定拿起剪刀旁的毛線球，用腳推開圍巾挪出空間，選擇繼續完成她的「完美之作」。

此時，圍巾的另一端已經懸在崖邊，然而她只沉醉在自己的作品中。慢慢地，圍巾越墜越下，拉扯那位女士的力量也越發巨大。她被圍巾的另一頭往懸崖峭壁下拖拉，仍不願停下手中的動作，她奮力對抗著，手中的毛線用光了，她使用自己的頭髮編織，頭髮也用光了，剪刀卻已不再觸手可及，最後險些斷送自己的性命。

鬼門關外走一趟，從崖邊爬回來的她心有餘悸，回頭探向那片深淵，手持著兩根編織針，還是不自覺地空織。她忽然頓悟，是那份魔怔的執念，使她與死神擦肩而過。她扔掉了手上的編織針，回到椅子上坐著，她拿起那把曾經近在咫尺又遙不可及的剪刀，開始尋找可以剪掉的東西，臉上是一派輕鬆。

事實上，每個人都在編織著自己的「圍巾」，「圍巾」可能是工作上對自己的期許，可能是一些小眾興趣的成就，可能是對某種事物的沉迷。

影片中的懸崖映射人類慾望的無底洞，我們終此一生，都不可能填滿這無休止的追逐與渴求。因此，學會如何與貪念相處，是人類的必修課。

每當我們開始「編織圍巾」時，便已經坐在懸崖邊了。影片中的女士，她與一直向下拉扯的力量較勁，她不服輸，她想編織更長更厲害的圍巾，這呈現了人們被執念支配下的一種瘋魔狀態。

什麼是瘋魔？影片隱晦地告訴了我們，當女士命懸一線時，她沒有選擇丟掉手上的編織針，而是把主意打到自己的頭髮上。頭髮是我們身體的一部分，女士將自己的頭髮都編進圍巾的做法，暗示著人們極端的執著，使我們不惜把身體健康，甚至生命搭進慾望的深淵裡去——這便是瘋魔。

人們常說不輕言放棄是美德，但又說放下是自我救贖，那如何拿捏這把尺就是問題所在。影片雖然出自芬蘭導演，我們卻可以從它表達的核心價值中對照到佛家的概念。金剛經云：「一切有為法，如夢幻泡影，如露亦如電，應作如是觀。」只有放下，才能獲得更多。捨，不獨指丟棄物質的動作，更多的是捨下過分的執念；得，又不只指物質上的得，更多的是得到心靈的富足和慰藉。故事前半段其實展現了一個真正步向「不能自拔」的過程。影片中的剪刀，象徵的是割捨的抉擇。若那位女士在那把剪刀仍觸手可及的時候便拿起來剪掉毛線，便會得到一條漂亮的桃紅色圍巾。但她不捨得放棄，而且後來被拖拉到懸崖旁的她也再難拿起那把解脫一切的剪刀，沒有在適當的時候抽身而退的她，只有被自己執念淹沒的結果。最後，她只得到兩根壞掉的編織針和一頭雜亂的短髮。

影片中呈現人們的根性看起來無可救藥，但其實在描摹了人們於慾望中沉淪的模樣外，這個故事也傾注了導演對人類的美好祝願。這位臨崖勒馬的女士在最後丟棄編織針，停止空織的舉動，是現實中很多人都做不到的一步。回到椅子上的女士，重新審視自己的周圍，舉起剪刀從自己的指甲開始修剪。導演也希望看完影片的我們，與自己進行一場對話。他希望我們看到自己身處在甚麼處境，期盼在懸崖邊的人可以及時醒覺，學會放手，實現自救。

《最後的編織》用六分鐘傳遞畢生受用的哲理，聲畫的相互配合簡潔有遞進，影片核心價值發人深思。看完這部影片後，讀者可以嘗試檢視自己的人生，看看四周是否「懸崖峭壁」；看看自己有沒有在「空織」；看看自己有沒有捨與得的勇氣。

公開組 (中文組) 優異獎

姓名：郭芷均

茫茫飄泊於人生的汪洋，偶爾發現心之所向的朽木，拼命抱緊，努力把憧憬化成現實，把這份慾念推至極限之際，卻忘記上岸的初衷，縱使綠洲在旁亦不放手地與木糾纏一生。

在《最後的編織》一片中，金髮女子在懸崖全神貫注地編織圍巾，圍巾長得垂至崖下，她仍不止息，眼神呆滯地不斷編，不斷織，甚至被圍巾多次拉扯至崖邊。她一次又一次地掙扎卻仍堅持著，直至毛線盡缺。然而，女子此時尚未生放棄之意，決斷地將一把秀髮當作毛線，把最後的籌碼放在賭桌上。

這份瘋狂的堅持讓她獲得滿足感，同時令她邁向滅亡。一生總有些人或事叫我們撐下去，即使現實條件不容許我們繼續，但因擔心這刻的放棄會埋下未來後悔的種子，因而仍咬緊牙關走下去。這份堅持轉化成執拗，把原本為了快樂而開始的事成為指向自己的矛。「愚公移山」的精神不論古今，皆不能適用於所有處境。

「詩仙」李白嗜酒如命，酒精一下肚，詩興隨即前來，杜甫因而寫下「李白斗酒詩百篇，長安市上酒家眠」的名句。他的詩風格夢幻浪漫，行文流暢，酒無疑地成為他創作路上的好伙伴。然而水能載舟，亦能覆舟。有傳李白是因為醉酒撈月而溺斃，而根據《李翰林詩》所記載的「竟遭腐瘡疾，醉魄歸八極」，李白是因醉成疾而死的。能教你欲仙的，便能讓你欲死。

現代人認為淺嚐酒類能鬆弛神經，但大量飲用則使人亂性。酗酒的人往往因酒精帶給他的輕鬆無休之感而過份倚賴它，久而久之成為一個因難以割捨而自甘墮落的人。凡事總有兩面；毛線為女子解下煩憂，同時成了勒住自己的繩索。不管實際狀況，且毫不節制地向目標奔赴，這不叫堅毅，而是愚勇。

影片播放至中段，我不禁心裡打顫，影片的配樂節奏緊湊，襯托著織針不停碰撞發出的琤琮聲響，女子的眼神著了魔似的，視身邊的一切如無物。終於，長長的秀髮也編至盡頭，女子失去了重心，墜至崖下

金髮女子這時才想起她需要剪刀，她必須作下了斷。世上沒什麼永垂不朽，再幸福的愛情有終結的可能，再光輝的歲月有消逝的一瞬。醉在已經破碎的關係中，久未釋懷，不斷把這段回憶獨自編織。溺於早已過去的回憶裡，不敢面對現實。我們也是金髮女子，盲目地執著一些美好的追求，忽略了眼前所渴望擁有的變質了沒有。

然而，求生是人天生的能力，女子一口一口地咬斷自己的頭髮，用盡力爬上懸崖。

哪裡有清醒，哪裡便有開始。頭髮咬斷了並不可怕，它們會重生成黃金秀髮。關係結束了也不怯慌，這段經歷曾留下快樂的痕跡。有些事是注定須割捨的，只要我們仍然安好，只需我們願意接受一切歸零的結局。然而，我們並非一無所有，皆因在過程中學懂了適時的灑脫，這是比圍巾更珍貴的禮物。

女子最後把織針扔下深淵，她眼睜睜地看著曾經不容放手的寶物跟圍巾接受同樣的下場。她如夢初醒，寶物其實不是寶物，只是織針而已。這些日子，她是被蒙蔽雙眼的編織者，無目的地編著，讓自己畫地自囚。常言道：「退一步海闊天空。」女子從崖邊退回安全的地方，她的心終於不再束縛於隱形的監獄。

人生的一扇門關閉了，我們不用拼命撬開它，而是重整旗鼓，堅韌地振作，因道路上必然有一扇窗迎接著你。女子拿著剪刀，咔嚓咔嚓，象徵著重生，她終在沉溺的海洋中獲救。

織圍巾曾是女子生命中最快樂的事，但這份戰利品沉重得叫她差點喪命。佛經曰：「捨得，捨得，有捨才有得。」圍巾不是不織，而是適當地編織，適時而清醒地不挽留。

公開組 (中文組) 優異獎

姓名：蔣宗耀

這夜，一如往常，加班後放工回家，家人都早已入睡了。夜闌人靜，我拖著疲憊的軀殼，一邊等待沖泡的杯麵，一邊開啟平板電腦，打算在睡前放空一下被工作轟炸了一整天的腦袋，於是隨意點擊了一套幾分鐘的動畫短片《最後的編織》來看。

影片是一部沒有對白，只有聲效的動畫。片中只有一位金髮女子，她獨自坐在高聳的懸崖邊，四顧無人，全神貫注地埋首編織圍巾。當略有小成時，她心中充滿了亢奮，於是越編越快，越編越長。曾經有一剎那，圍巾或許已經達到她心中滿意的程度，她想提起腳下的剪刀，完成製品。但渾然不覺沉浸在編織中的她，開始執迷不悟，不能自拔，選擇繼續編織。當毛線用盡了，她不但沒有停下來，更以自己的頭髮把圍巾連在一起，由最初的享受變成死拼的爭鬥，直至圍巾變得越來越沉重，把她拖向無底深淵，在面臨死亡邊緣時，她才猛然醒覺。她拼盡力氣，以九牛二虎之力把連著圍巾的頭髮逐吋逐吋咬掉，艱辛地爬回崖頂，默然片刻，她拋下手中一雙織針，安詳的坐下來，用曾經捨棄不用的剪刀悠然地修剪自己的指甲。

看畢這部短片，清淡的杯麵彷彿浸泡了一窩濃濃雞湯，一口嚥下，百感交集的思緒頓時直湧心頭。我緩緩站起來，遠眺窗外，凝視對面小山崗上暗黃的路燈，乍然看到金髮女子孤單的身形，正與我遙相對望。別人可能最先看到的是她失智的執著，我卻感受到她那份孤苦伶仃的無助感。對，形單隻影的人最容易迷失。當一個人為追求心中所想，選擇了離群自處，無視別人，所求之物會逐漸成為心中的唯一，在不知不覺墮入深淵的過程中，他所欠缺的就是身邊人的一聲叫喊，一雙援手……假如金髮女子不是把自己置身於高不可攀的境地，家人朋友陪伴左右，看到她失控瘋狂的行為，難道不會萬分緊張地勸言阻止她嗎？看到她要跌入無底深谷，難道不會死命相救嗎？

人生的發展中，自身的努力固然重要，但身邊周遭的人也是不可或缺的。家人的無比關顧，朋友的相互支持或導師的無私指點往往都能給予將要誤入歧途的人一記當頭棒喝。很多人自以為超然，選擇忽視家人朋友，以為這樣就離開了包袱，捨棄了枷鎖，唯我獨尊地站在自己的高地上，以為能憑一己之力，拼命爭取心中的名利物慾，卻不知道寂寥的心是那麼的脆弱，那麼的不堪一擊。孑然一身，換來的卻是得不償失，那又何苦呢？

我坐回沙發，想起小時候，父母教導我們做人必定要有理想，一旦鎖定目標，便以堅毅不屈的精神、義無反顧的努力、專心致志的態度去實現它，這樣成功的花朵才會在前方等著你，原來這個道理只說了一半。成功路上的前方隱隱然藏了貪婪的魔鬼。貪，佛家學說中五毒之一，佛門主張世人應該修行戒除；而天主教、基督教等西方宗教也告誡信徒莫貪婪，可見中西方都明白到無盡的貪念，會徹底控制人心，最終釀成惡果。為甚麼父母沒有把事情說得清楚呢？因為他們深信孩子一路走來，家人好友都是堅實的守護人和支持者，所以他們比較擔心孩子因懶惰而迷失多於因貪念而不知返。明於此，我們在追逐夢想時，既要感恩他們沿途相伴的重要，也要明白物極必反的道理，不要因為過份沉迷變成沉淪。所謂知足常樂，儒家的中庸之道主張不偏不倚，適度的態度可說是人生至理。假如金髮女子取得成果後，能及時收成，她肯定已包著圍巾，早早與家人享受著涼風的溫暖。

此刻，看著熟睡的家人，我審視現有的人生，一連串的提問如暴風雨般撲面而來。究竟我是否孤芳自賞，忽視了身邊的人？自己是否如金髮女子般被無止境的慾望吞噬了？每天加班到通宵達旦，所得到的物質生活，和失去的時間相比，哪些才算是最珍貴？我是否不自覺地戴上了無形的枷鎖低頭苦行著而糟蹋了沿路的秀麗風光？

當我收拾吃完的杯麵，看著那雙木筷子，回想起片中被丟下深淵的兩支織針，滿腦子的問題立時一掃而空，我再次走到窗前，和山崗的金髮女子相視而笑。她揮一揮手，徐徐地消失於叢林間。那夜，我在失陷邊緣中被她拉回來。在抱擁家人的甜夢中，我安然入睡，直至天明。

公開組 (中文組) 優異獎

姓名：曾梓辰

看過這段短片，心中的激動之情不自覺高昂起來，只因故事講述的，跟現實的自己不謀而合，實在感同身受。在公開試考到不俗的成績，本來想著申請文學院修讀英文系，追隨自己心中理想，他日成為教師春風化雨。決定毫不意外地遭到家人反對，訴說我應該修讀醫科，在出路和成就上皆遠超一個教師能達到的高度。曾經的我打算勸服父母，盼能夠讓我走一條屬於自己的道路。可惜，隨著時間的流逝，反對的聲音也隨之壯響。最後自己還是遵從父母之命，修讀醫學。

與主角無異的是，我同樣追求著一樣作品——就是父母的期望，執著於社會的準則，追求著膚淺的物質，我不希望我行我素，不遵從父母之命而讓他們失望，他們希望自己成為一個醫者，我無法漠視他們對我的期望，因此我選擇繼續「編織」；社會崇尚的精英主義，認為所謂的專業人士更為高尚，不斷傳授青少年一些錯誤的觀念，認為自己的前途應該是由錢來衡量，在金錢與夢想下，毫不猶豫地驅使青少年選擇前者，過於著重與一件事的價錢，我無法抽離其中，我選擇了隨波逐流，而捨棄了能剪斷執著的剪刀；我過於在意他人的眼光，別人的意見已經成為我決定事情的指標，我無法擺脫他人對自己的評價，別人的一言一語，便是我將來的一言一行，我只希望成為他人眼中一個滿意的自己，而我卻因為這樣，掉下了懸崖。

這樣的過程就如主角的不斷編織，不懂得放手，也因此導致我的身心漸感疲倦，壓力有如泰山之重，父母、朋友、甚至社會風氣皆讓我喘不過氣來。直至修讀一年醫科後，我才在墮落的過程中醒覺，我才知道自己過於看重他人對自己的感覺的弊端，更加明白到，這個根本不是自己，不是真正希望成為的自己。我決心從懸崖中爬回正軌，懸崖勒馬，重拾真我。

與其盲目地追隨社會敗壞的風氣，與其執著於成為他人眼中的自己，倒不如尋回這個時候自己手中最珍貴的東西——年輕，趁著年輕，應該是循著自己的夢想道路走去，我們不是一個機器人，最重要的，是追求自己心中的自己，所謂「人不輕狂枉少年」，可能另一條路上並非如醫生般光明康莊，但我丟下那一雙「編針」的一刻，就不會後悔。如果今天的我還是一如既往頑固地執著編織，反而明天的自己或會後悔不已。

我毅然決然放棄了大學學位，放下了那不應該執著的東西，轉而追隨於自己的理想，成為老師春風化雨傳授他人，成為一個自己認為有意義的人，不只是一個過於在意他人言語的跟隨者，不是一個被困於社會規範中的小人物，更不是以金錢來衡量事物的機器人，只因人是該有仁心，更讓我聯想起作家白先勇——本被家人安排成為工程師，發現不感興趣後便轉讀文學系，成為文學家，不僅讓我感到敬佩，能夠放下社會風氣的推誘，更成為了我的借鑑，追求著真正內心下的自己。

如今看著影片再度憶起舊日的煎熬，內心的掙扎毫不容易解決，感嘆的是自己最後有確實如主角般，放下了手中的執著，拿起了剪刀，成就了自己理想中的人生，無可否認地，我曾經如主角般，想看看編織到最後能夠得到甚麼，幻想著自己沒放棄而繼續走著的生活，但也是一笑置之，只因我相信，現在自己走著的道路，定是在繁多選擇中最意義的一個，不需要有很大的價錢，也同樣能夠擁有很高的價值，如同英國詩人貝雷克所說的「手中掌握無限，一霎那便是永恆」，社會上並不缺乏為了金錢和物質衝昏了頭腦的人，但我深信，社會需要的，是那些捨棄了這些看似重要的東西，而去成就他人，或許有人覺得淺白而無價值，或許有人認為濟人利物非吾之事，可是，這些所謂「淺白」的東西，才是我們一生中所應該追求的東西啊！只有做到以生命影響生命，我們的一生，才算白白度過。華枝春滿，天心月圓，我心寧靜如故，便成剎那。願短片中的啟示與上述淺見，能伴諸君在理想的航行中乘風破浪。

公開組 (中文組) 優異獎

姓名：麥嘉聰

《最後的編織 THE LAST KNIT》是芬蘭導演 Laura Neuvonen 的作品，片長約 6 分鐘卻道出了人生的哲理，網上有超過千萬人觀看。片中人物坐在懸崖邊不顧一切不停地編織頸巾，最後卻被心血反噬，丟了圍巾，斷了頭髮……

香港這都市，一直予人一種壓抑：生活被壓在一套框架下，重重複複的時間表、沉沉悶悶的課業、長輩或多或少的嘮叨，人沒有發夢的空間閒暇。甚麼是夢想，甚麼是負擔？簡單短片，令我腦內不斷迴蕩這道問題。

夢想給予活下去的希望，活下去卻要棄掉夢想。影片中的大命題是捨割，圍巾代表夢想、針織代表堅持。世上有兩種人，一種認為自己可以用堅持蓋過勞累，放棄一切，織出最沉穩的夢想；另一種認為自己可以掌控大局，在有閒情之時追逐夢想，變成負擔之際斷捨離。

沙堡

當我與烈日並肩
當我區別不清汗與浪
當身軀烙下背心的痕跡
當人潮的重量壓下來
當我倔強地
守著那脆弱的沙堡
等待它被海水
滋潤
成長
堅固
期待
它的明日便成為了我的家
直到潮浪到來
告訴我：
你的支柱，也是你的軟肋
直到它踏平沙堡
直到熱鬧刺殺落寞
直到發現
諸多堡壘
不缺你一個堆沙者
轉身離去
原來我也不缺一堆沙

然而我們或多或少都錯估了自己靈魂的韌性：也許自覺堅強的人，在夢想成為負擔之際，也曾想伸手拿起剪刀，一刀了斷一切；也許自覺能狠下心頭的人，也會在窮途末路之際，連自己的髮絲也賭上。只是未到最後，我們終究看不到結局。

放棄還是繼續？短片給予一個悲中帶喜的結局。努力之際，心血不斷累積，慢慢看見一絲一線交織而來的成果，甚至獻出所有，以髮為線。只是以為賺得許多，建立許多，卻能在一剎那破滅，甚至險些將自己拖進懸崖深淵。不過熬過絕境，歸回原點，即使孑然一身，那又如何？

是堅持還是捨割，人總不可下一個確切的答案，堆沙者或能預視水淹沙倒的一幕，但一日不堆沙，就一日不見華美沙堡。也許人發夢、人沉迷、人執迷，最終也只能迎來徒勞，但未曾嘗試，誰又能畫定結局？城市之中，也許被石屎填滿，滿得連一縫間隙也難以施捨。既然無人施捨，那就自己爭取，爭取得來，那就好好堅持。

城市之中，或許缺空間，但從不乏氧氣。給予自己的藉口與恐懼，在執念面前，也只會一一粉碎。

「最初」的編織

起初，你首先看到的，是她全神貫注的神情；接著是兩枝不斷發出響聲的鐵針，規律的聲音配合她不斷游走的指尖，節奏感十足，使你不由得目不轉睛，追蹤事情的發展。她停了下來，看一看你，微微一笑，又重新做起那純熟的動作。你看出籐籃中的球體愈縮愈小，她手中的長形條子則愈伸愈長。

「寶貝，要不要試一下？」你眼裡放光，往目標直奔。其實你早已躍躍欲試了。

你用手比一比，那球比你的手掌還要大，雙手各持一枝鐵棒高舉起來，像指揮。你小心翼翼，對準空隙穿來圈去，棉繩交叉糾纏繞成一團，你看看她，發現她也在看你，你伸一伸舌頭，卡卡笑了出來。

「寶貝，不要緊，手放鬆一點，慢慢來吧！」

其實，你已很久沒再想起那次最初的編織了。不知從何時開始，你為自己編織的速度而心煩，為所織無人賞識而沮喪，你看著身旁的同學，他們目不轉睛，瞬間織出不同花紋不同圖案，人人都有驕人成「織」。你呢？你不禁看著手中的織針唸唸有詞，嘀咕著「我呢？」

頹喪地走出學院，你來到更混雜的「織」場，舉目觀看，你卻發現沒人在看你，他們如機器般迅速有序地編織著名為「事業」、「愛情」、「名聲」、「金錢」的東西，然而，他們有些似笑非笑，有些木無表情。只有幾個人，只有幾個人臉上帶著勝利的笑容，你被他們編織的技術和速度所震懾，他們的織物一直延伸，幾乎看不見盡頭。就在那刻，你心裡起誓：「我必須像那幾個人一樣，在這『織』場上爭一席位！」

你開始關掉不必要的通訊，杜絕一切不必要的聚會與關係，你決定了，除那幾個值得仿效的對象外，一概人等休想佔據你一分半秒。「我煲了湯，回家喝一碗好嗎？」眼睛挪移到手機半秒，唉！又拖慢了編織的進度，你開始想：在「織」場大道上，即便至親，同樣礙手礙腳！

人一定要增值，否則人有甚麼價值？你這樣想著，又看看手中愈伸愈長的織物，就安心

了一點。然而，看看遠處那人爐火純青的手藝，又開始有點不安，於是你知道必須不帶包袱，甚至要六親不認了，一於找個無人之境，編織偉大成就。

頭頂不知何時長出幾根白髮，眼睛有點昏花，腿有點軟，需要一張椅子……都無礙，你依舊金睛火眼分秒必爭，長久一段日子，你的眼神貫徹而堅定，日以繼夜緊盯著織針，專注不挪移。織物愈來愈長，一直伸往那名為「寶藏」的地洞深處；織物愈來愈重，一直拖你移向那地洞深處……「很重，一定很壯觀！」這樣想著，你決定全然奉獻，把身體髮膚都一一織進寶藏裡去。

這不是故事。

你我的人生都在編織著一點甚麼，有時六親不認，甚至不顧性命。而人又總是這樣，總是在生命受威脅時，或到了生命的最後時刻，才懂得定一定神，擦一擦眼睛，看清前面的地洞寶藏，原是無垠深淵；才懂得環視四周，發現至親良朋都已零落可數；才懂得驚訝，自己日夜編織的，竟是一場虛空……而就在那省悟的一剎，火眼金睛才得以恢復一絲柔和與寬容。多少人，到了生關死劫之時，才掙來這片刻的省悟。

你提起鉸剪，對著空氣剪了一下，那清脆利落的「唰唰」聲，明明晝夜聽見，卻不如此刻般叫你聽得入神。終於記起了，是起初的聲音，鉸剪發出的、織針交疊發出的、還有媽媽的叫嚷：「手放鬆點，不用緊握織針……」、「寶貝你指甲太長，織東西不方便，媽媽幫你修一下……」、「不要緊，手放鬆一點，慢慢來吧！」、「哈哈……」

你記起了，那久違了的笑聲。原來，生命中最重要的記憶，不是光榮不是成就，是人。哪些人，在你編織自己的康莊大道時遺落了？哪些人，你願意不顧面子不怕彆扭仍要給他一個擁抱？哪些人，已來不及說聲多謝就離你而去了？又有哪些人，你始終欠他一聲對不起？

你再次提起鉸剪，看著鋒利而堅硬的指尖，對準指甲上日久失修的棱角，逐一修剪起來。你不禁笑了，想起媽媽溫柔的手，以及那次熱鬧的、充滿笑聲的、最初的編織，和愛。

公開組 (中文組) 優異獎

姓名：鄭靜

織織復織織，她在這裡已經不知織了多少歲月。

她已經甚麼都有了，家庭、財富。開始時，只是因為手上有東西，而且為了打發無聊的歲月，於是她才開始織起來，一織，更把自己織進一個黑色的網。

隨著織物越織越長，身邊可織的逐漸消失，她未有停下來，不論淋著雨、踏著泥，或是披著星、戴上月。每一次都誓言完成手上的就停止，結果每一次都被藉口擊敗。最後她放棄一切，好像一個癮君子、一個酒鬼，帶著剩下的，來到這個妙處——懸崖。這裡不但值春也值冬，不但值雨也值雪，就算跌下去也只有自己知道。

她已經沉淪了。如果你喝酒，你就會知道，一個人若已喝到七八分酒意時，要他停下來，實在要比餓貓不偷魚吃，公雞早上不啼更難。現在她的沉淪已經深到麻痺了她的感覺，就好像魚在水中而不自知。

再一次，她在想，當風不再吹，雨止了，就停下吧。

織著織著，風還是沒有停，雨更像離人的愁緒一樣，割也割不斷的。

「心癮」本就是件奇怪的東西，就像一個多情的少年，愛上的往往會是他最不該愛的人。一旦愛上更甘願付出一切，沒有人能全身而退。就如她手上的織品，到了織完的時候，她不惜牽上自己的一頭長髮去代替，就如飲鳩止渴，終將自己推向面前的無底深淵，縱然能爬上來，亦必定體無完膚。她自己心裡也已能明白，怎奈「癮」已糾纏入骨，化也化不除了。

要走出來，只能靠自己，不但要狠下心，揮慧劍，更要有當初為「心癮」捨棄一切的決心，有捨才有得；有毀滅才有建立。只要你發覺，像「心癮」這個東西，確實不是自己能對付，這個世界上確實有些任何人都無能為力、也無可奈何的事。有時當壞事發生時，是因為有很好的理由。也不要騙自己，說謊的目的如果不是為了要別人好時，就是要保護自己，但如果連自己都騙上，那就人生還剩下甚麼呢？

微風依然輕拂，就好像情人的笑臉，雨卻已停了。事情就是這樣子的，很多事都是這樣子的。無論是壞事還是好事，每每當你能捨棄，對自己老實的時候，人就會澄明清澈起來，會到達另一個未知的未來。你若盛開，清風自來。

小學組
(英文組)

**Primary School
(English Division)**

Primary School (English Division) Champion

Name: Michael Robert-David Kai Fung Yeh School: Diocesan Boys' School Primary Division Grade: Primary 5

Holding the scissors in her tight grip, she opened and closed the blades repeatedly snipping thin air. The lady thought, "What should I cut next?" She gazed around her, and spotted the tufts of grass on the rocky ground. Within minutes, the ground was bare, once each blade of grass had encountered the blade of the metal tool. In her newfound obsession, she started to snip her own clothing, because there was nothing left in her surroundings to cut. In the same way that she was willing to sacrifice her hair, she gave away her clothes to her ambition.

Naked and cold, she started to shiver, but all she could think of was cutting. Her grim determination made her desperate to find something more to cut. Suddenly she remembered the pile of scarf that she had knitted, had fallen to the bottom of the cliff, so she started to climb down to retrieve it.

In frantic anticipation to find her scarf, she couldn't hold back on cutting. On her way down, she cut her toenails, her remaining hair, her eyebrows and her eyelashes. When she reached the bottom, she spotted the scarf pile. She was so cold. She ran over and wrapped herself in the scarf instinctively. By the time her whole body was wrapped up snugly, the scissors (seemingly on autopilot), started chomping again, and her scarf was soon shredded to pieces along with the hair that she knitted to it. Once again, she was cold and shivering.

She started looking around for shelter, wandering for hours and hours, but never ceasing to cut through the air with her scissors. The sound of the scissors gave her comfort just like the knitting needles once had. One addiction replaced another.

As she walked, she saw her own knitting needles lying on the ground. She looked at them, paused, and then tucked one behind each ear. She continued walking until she saw a river. She was extremely thirsty and sprinted to the river-bank to drink water. It was only then that she saw her reflection and how awful she looked. She realized her ambition was an escape from her loneliness and this ambition had driven her to obsession.

She started walking again, but now, she was not snipping the air with her scissors anymore. An hour later she came across an abandoned tent and thought of cutting it into thin, uniform strips, not for her ambition, but for her well-being. Then, with her perfect knitting skills, she used all the materials that she cut, and took the knitting needles from behind her ears, and knitted herself some clothes.

She stood by the river admiring the reflection of the new clothes she had created for herself. She tossed the scissors and needles into the river, and took a deep breath of the fresh cold air. Now a new woman, in her new clothes, she decided to find her family and friends that she hadn't seen for years.

Primary School (English Division) 1st Runner-up

Name: Tse Wang Chak Daryl School: St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School Class: 6D

Martha sighed heavily. What was she supposed to do now? She picked up her scissors and began to snip her fingernails, realising they hadn't been cut for a very long time.

She'd been too busy to notice it.

Suddenly, a small blue nightingale, flew overhead. Martha dropped her scissors and gazed at its delicate, little feathers and heard its elegant, melodious song. Had there always been birds here?

She'd been too busy to notice it.

Under her feet, Martha became aware of something cool and soft. Wiggling her toes, she looked down and saw a carpet of fresh green grass. Had there always been grass here?

She'd been too busy to notice it.

An aromatic, sweet fragrance filled the air and Martha looked around to see where it was coming from. Behind her, there were several magnificent flower beds full of red roses, purple and pink orchids, yellow and white lilies and pale blue irises. They were gorgeous, beautiful and all in full bloom. Had there always been flowers in this garden?

Martha had been too busy to notice it.

The nightingale had landed on a branch of a small fruit tree. Martha saw that the tree was full of ripe peaches. Rising from her chair, she walked over to the tree and plucked one of them. It smelt delicious. Sinking her teeth into the flesh of the fruit, Martha's mouth was filled with the rich, sweet, succulent taste of the peach. When was the last time she appreciated the taste of nature's gifts?

She'd been too busy to notice it.

As Martha slowly wandered around the garden, the sun came out from behind the clouds. Rays of warm sunlight kissed Martha's skin and she lifted her face up to the sun drinking in its warmth. A cool, gentle breeze wafted through her hair. When was the last time she enjoyed the weather?

She'd been too busy to notice it.

Martha walked slowly back to her chair and sat down to think long and hard. A whole garden had sprung up around her. She could see, hear, smell, touch, and taste all the beauty and the wonders of nature. But in Martha's busy life, she hadn't noticed any of the gifts that life had offered her. She realised that this garden hadn't just 'sprung up'... It had been there the whole time! She had knitted and knitted and worked and worked to achieve what? Maybe she had gained fame, money, and power... but they were all lying at the bottom of a cliff! And yet, she felt richer now than she'd been in years.

"It's never too late to notice and appreciate what life has to offer," Martha said to herself.

Primary School (English Division) 2nd Runner-up

Name: Lea Baczowski School: Po On Commercial Association Wan Ho Kan Primary School Class: 5B

The Woman and the Tiger

Melissa held the large shears in her hands, still exhausted from the frantic knitting. She felt relieved to finish the intense knitting. Melissa looked at the shears, and felt the same rush of that intense feeling of determination. She found herself precisely snipping at her fingernails.

Melissa stopped, and thought, “The tips of my fingernails are still here.”

She snipped again, and she studied her shortened fingernails.

“Too long,” she thought. She snipped at her nails again.

Clip, clip, clip, went her shears. Chip, chip, chip, they went again.

She looked at her feet. “Huh, fingernails look like dry grass, thinking of which...”

She looked around, and saw uneven grass. “I hate messy grass,” she thought. She got off her chair, and started snipping until the grass was no more. She felt happy, but didn't feel content.

She found longer, and more uneven grass. She snipped and snipped. She kept snipping until the bottomless cliff was out of sight. The taller grass grew browner and longer. Melissa heard a sad growl. She looked to the noise's direction and saw a sad and hungry tiger in a net that was hanging in a tree. The tiger had eyes as black as ebony, and claws as sharp as titanium. Her teeth were ivory-white. She had dark, silver stripes and reddish-gold fur.

Melissa saw a pile of fat, dead rabbits underneath the net. She figured that it was the gold and silver tiger's breakfast and felt sorry for her. She decided to help her.

Melissa said to her (for she was able to speak to animals), “Sup girl, what's your name and what happened?” to which the tiger said, “Oh hey gal, my name's Ashley. Some hunters trapped me and interrupted my breakfast. Could you help cut me out of this net? It's getting uncomfortable.”

Melissa said, “Sure, I can, if you let me use the rabbits and help me gather spices to make some breakfast.”

“Okay, maybe we can work together.”

Melissa cut Ashley out of the net and made a fire with dried spices. Ashley used her claws to skin the rabbit fur and Melissa cooked the rabbits over the fire. It smelled delicious. Ashley and Melissa had a really good tuck-in.

Melissa thought it was wasteful to just leave good-quality rabbit fur, so she found some thin elephant tusks and used them and her hair to sew together the rabbit skins and made a light and comfortable cape-hoodie. Ashley said it was beautiful.

Melissa said to Ashley, “I think we should stick together, since we don't know what's out there.” Then Ashley said, “I think you should disconnect your shears, twist both in the opposite direction, then use some vines to connect them to a large tree branch.” Melissa did that and they continued on their adventure. Soon they reached a big well and Melissa gave Ashley some water and drank some water herself.

It was nearly nightfall. They watched the beautiful sunset for a bit, then Melissa gathered some thick leaves and made a teepee with a small fire inside and they went in for the night. In the morning, Melissa folded the teepee like an umbrella and tied it onto Ashley's back, put on her cape and set off for breakfast.

This was the beginning of an amazing friendship and adventure for Melissa and Ashley.

Swan Song

When she didn't know what to cut, she decided to climb down the mountain. She broke the scissors in half and used the blades like climbing picks. The fog was thick and she couldn't see the ground. Suddenly, she lodged the blade into a rock and it was stuck.

She pulled with all of her might, but her hand was slippery with sweat and she fell. She closed her eyes tightly.

When she opened one eye, she saw that looking over her were five silhouetted faces. Then looking carefully, she saw that they each had beady eyes, double chins and flabby bellies. They were all on snapping pictures of her on their phones.

One of them shouted at her:

“I lost my game because of you! I'm going to lose so many subs!”

The boys all turned their backs and returned to their phones.

“Sorry about your submarines.” She said “My name is -”

“Quiet!” Snapped one of the boys, “A new match is starting!”

The boys all ignored her. Soon she was bored again. She started to look for something to do. She saw that her scissors were out of her reach. But as she looked up, she saw something else: her old knitting needles. They were embedded into a rock at the bottom of the mountain. As she approached them she felt as if she were approaching Excalibur.

She dried her hands against her dress and told herself I won't give up this time.

Gripping the needles as if her life depended on it, she gave the needles a great, big yank...

But like King Arthur pulling the sword from the stone, the needles slid out effortlessly - like plucking a pair of feathers - and she tumbled backwards...

Again, she crashed into the ground. The boys kept focusing on their game.

She couldn't stop her hands from making little circles. Before she knew it, she was tugging grass from the ground and knitting it into a giant green scarf.

One of the boys looked at her for a second, but sighed and shook his head.

Then the black clouds came and smothered the sun. Suddenly one of the boys put on the face of an angry baby and said :

W-w-w-w-... ...wifi!

Another of the boys pointed and laughed at him, but then realised that he didn't have wifi either! A few seconds later, they each dropped their phone to the ground and began crying with fountains of tears.

Then they saw the knitting woman and they dried their eyes.

They were inspired by her determination. They decided to join her. Some of them went to collect grass, while the others found food to survive.

Soon, they all watched as the scarf reached into the sky like a giant dragon. It sliced the clouds in half and the sunlight returned like a spotlight upon them.

Helicopters were coming to rescue them.

The woman saw her scarf, waving in the wind.

And finally she said:

“That's enough.”

.....

Primary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Lee Hok Lam School: St. Joseph's Anglo-Chinese Primary School Class: 6A

Once I get on my selected life-cliff,

Trying hard to write my life path's stories and myths.

Finally, knowing to pick up the scissors to stop.

Feeling the breeze and the sound of the scissors on the top.

Realizing that even I have nothing left,

But feeling extraordinarily happy and giving it a rest.

Just when the sunlight gleams on a rock,

I hear, below the cliff comes a knock!

It is a man knitting like me in the past,

I again realize nothing we own at last.

He says he's my father's soul, “Let it go!”

It seems you've known what I've noticed, too.

When time comes, you'll have to cut it away.

The soul speaks, “Help the ones who still suffocate.”

Just in a blast, a rainbow appears.

My eyes are filled with tears.

Before my father's soul disappears in the dew,

I utter, “Father, I know what to do.”

Primary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Katherine Liaw School: Singapore International School Hong Kong Grade: Primary 2

Lovey hopped onto her rainbow-coloured bicycle and headed home. There, she grabbed the colourful paper inside her secret box and cycled back to the cliff. She moved her scissors expertly, and cut the paper into heart shapes.

“SNIP! SNIP! SNIP!” her fingers went until all the hearts were finished.

Lovey thought and thought, and soon got on her bicycle to go back home again. She searched her home and stuffed all her torn clothes and bedsheets into her huge backpack, and returned to the cliff. Lovey looked at the materials and started cutting them into more heart shapes.

“SNIP! SNIP! SNIP!” In no time, they were all cut up.

A wealthy-looking man named Andrew was walking past, and he peered at all the heart shapes made of the old materials. Staring at Lovey, he said, “Why make worthless hearts?”. He added, “Nobody wants them.”. Lovey kept silent, and ignored the arrogant man.

Lovey was puzzled. “Hmm...what else can I use...?” She felt despondent as she had used up all her materials. She began to twiddle her thumbs. Suddenly, a powerful gale blew and forced Lovey to go backwards. She was pushed towards a forest, until she sat down.

When Lovey looked up, she couldn't believe her eyes. She burst out screaming, “Hurray!” Her loud voice echoed throughout the forest, shaking all the Yellow Birch, Black Cherry, Scarlet Oak and White Spruce trees, causing the colourful leaves to fall to the ground.

“YAY!” She had a spectacular idea. She dashed off to get her large scissors.

In Lovey's skilful hands, the scissors moved hurriedly, “SWOOSH, SWOOSH...”.

Looking at all the millions of leaves scattered on the ground, Lovey took a deep breath. “Ready, set, ... go!” Lovey started cutting the multi-coloured leaves into heart shapes.

Lovey then lovingly bundled all the heart-shaped leaves in an old sack found in the forest, and carried them to the cliff.

This time, a little girl named Amanda passed by, looking excited. She went up to Lovey, saying, “Those hearts are so beautiful - like little diamonds.”. Lovey smiled, handing the girl some of her wonderful hearts. Lovey said to her, “These hearts look different outside, but they are the same inside.”. The girl nodded in agreement.

Without warning, a strong wind blew Lovey's scarf up. She tugged and tugged, until she got the whole long scarf back. After mixing all the heart creations and putting them into the enormous canvas bag, she sat down on the scarf. “Hurray!”, she screamed.

Lovey's loud voice echoed across the hills, blowing the scarf which then carried Lovey and her enormous bag of hearts into the sky, where she soared endlessly. Lovey tossed the hearts all over the world to every country, large and small. People smiled with their own hearts warmed.

Soon, Lovey's bag was empty, and she flew back to the forest.

Lovey took a deep breath, picked up the scissors and looked at all the fallen leaves.

“SNIP! SNIP! SNIP!”

Love never ends.

Primary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Chan Nor Vien Bella School: S.K.H. Tsing Yi Estate Ho Chak Wan Primary School Class: 4B

Holding a pair of scissors, Emma was confused and had complicated feelings. She started walking towards the jungle. She saw two clumsy bears holding many apples in their arms and kept dropping them. Instinctively, Emma cut some blades of grass and started weaving a basket. It was certainly a good and fast attempt at a basket. Emma quickly put the basket in front of the bears while they were picking up the apples and then she hid behind a tree. When the bears raised their heads, they were surprised to see the basket.

Emma then walked to a rice field which was right next to the village she lived. A buffalo was working alone in the field. After the sunset, it stopped working and lay down under a tree.

"I am so tired, hungry and lonely." The buffalo said.

"Are you talking to me?" She asked in a quavering voice, as if unable to believe her ears.

"Yes. I used to have a treat after a day of hard work. I miss it." Emma rushed home and cut some berries in her backyard. She made a berry pie and ran back. The buffalo was delighted with Emma's return and the pie. They shared the pie and chatted under the starry sky.

On her way home, she saw two baby birds.

"Mummy is away to find food," the birds whimpered. "Our nest was smashed up by naughty monkeys." Emma was not shocked anymore by talking birds. She cut some weeds and dry sticks to build a new nest. The birds jumped in the nest joyfully. Emma told them bedtime stories until they fell asleep.

The following day started out as a sunny and cheerful morning. Emma met a hairy dog.

"My hair is too long," The dog grumbled. "It is blocking my sight."

"Would you like a haircut?" Emma asked.

"Sure!" The dog answered.

In a few minutes, a lovely haircut was done. The dog was happy and energetic. "I am going to a party in the jungle. Would you like to join me?" The dog asked.

Soon they were at a picnic site. There Emma saw the animals that she had met. There were lots of party food and drinks. Emma took a drink next to a card saying "forgotten lemonade". She took a sip and her vision became blurry immediately. She rubbed her eyes and could not believe what she saw. The bears became her parents. The buffalo became her husband. The birds became her children and the dog became the homeless man whom she often met. Suddenly, everything became clear in her mind. Emma realized that although there was nothing wrong to work hard, she had forgotten to stop at times to care for others. She looked up and saw a banner stating "Love is all around" which was the theme of the party. Everyone was celebrating love with joy and laughter.

Primary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Annette Che School: Diocesan Girls' Junior School Grade: Primary 5

One day, Gertrude found herself a homeless street person in the middle of the cold and blustery winter. She felt very guilty and regretful, because she had lost everything that was important to her, including her family, her job, her health, her physical appearance and her friends. While searching for food, she found a pair of scissors on the ground that reminded her of the knitting scissors that were instrumental in saving her life. She was in a somber mood that day, reflecting on everything she once had and had lost. She pondered: How was my life spiraled out of control? After that, she picked up the scissors from the ground and the thought of committing suicide crossed her mind. She held her scissors up and was about to put them through her heart. At that moment, a young man, named Romeo took the scissors out of her hand and told her that God would give her another chance to do what she loved doing and at the same time be able to know when to stop and let go. The man took her to his small but cozy home so that she could warm up and have some hot soup.

One day, the man told her that his school was in need of a knitting teacher, and he said that she was the most suitable person that he could find. She did not know how to politely decline, so she reluctantly agreed.

The next day, she went to the school and taught knitting. Students loved her because she had a lot of experience in knitting, and she made people interested in knitting. She felt very content, because after that day, she found out that teaching knitting, passing on her tips and teaching to the younger generation was very fun and meaningful.

Besides teaching, she also knitted a lot of scarves and socks for the people in need. She became the best knitter in town, even the best knitter in the country! She flew to lots of cities and countries to help people and to teach others about knitting. She also did loads of T.V. interviews. She became very famous because of her eccentric knitting pieces! Her PR assistant, Susie Shears had to give out more than one hundred of her best-selling designs and scarves to stop the paparazzi from getting into Gertrude's way.

She had everything she had lost before, and even more! She was a lot of people's idol. Gertrude was very busy at all times doing interviews and knitting the scarves she needed to make. Although, she had a lot of work, she was still very grateful because when she was about to commit suicide, Romeo came to save her, and she wanted to make it up to him. Then, she started to sell all of her scarves, socks and clothes to earn money and give half of it to charity and the other half to him.

Years and years passed by, she became old. Gertrude knew that she should not be greedy or selfish. Before she died, she passed on her passion of knitting and all her special knitting skills to Romeo. When she passed away, Romeo continued her passion and became the best male knitter in the world.

Stop and Smell the Flowers

The lady slumped on her chair as she picked up her scissors.

Snip, snip, snip.

She hummed, as she gazed around for things to cut. Her wandering eyes slowly landed onto her fingernails.

Snip, snip, snip.

The lady paused and looked at her nail. Feeling satisfied, she continued.

As she placed her scissors on her lap, she hurriedly glanced around. Her fingers were too itchy to snip. Her eyes continued to search as she saw nothing but a cliff edge and brown plains.

The lady's heart started to beat faster as she couldn't find anything that would satisfy her.

She started to cut at the hem of her skirt. She started to add more force as she couldn't cut past the tough fabric. Her frustration grew. She started to force the scissors.

Snap, snap sn-

The scissors had snapped in half!

Her blood began to boil. Rage quickly clouded the lady's mind, so she stood up, and threw her chair to the ground. She picked it up again and threw it with more power – it still refused to break.

As quickly as it came, the rage was replaced with sadness. She came to the realization that she was getting nowhere.

The lady slumped to the floor in defeat.

She looked up wearily, and saw a flower.

The lady approached it with caution as she tried to get a closer look. She felt the sudden urge to sniff it.

A sweet, sugary scent filled her nose.

Suddenly, the lady felt calm, and relaxed.

She felt her shoulders start to droop as she laid down on the ground.

“Stop and smell the flowers...” a voice whispered, as her eyes slowly closed, as she drifted off into a deep, deep slumber.

Primary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Audrey Ngai Ching School: Diocesan Girls' Junior School Grade: Primary 4

The thin, tall woman, Famille, with beautiful spiked golden short hair, started to walk home, mountain after mountain. Famille held the pair of scissors dangerously close to her face, snapping it loudly. The scissors started to make a beat. As she followed to dance along the beat, she didn't realize she was walking away from home. Having been hiking over a mountain, she continued to snap the pair of scissors, the imaginary music she created kept going, keeping her company.

Next, she found herself at a cliff's edge with one foot over the cliff, then her mind stopped, "Gosh, why am I nearly falling over the cliff again?" she stopped snapping the scissors and turned backward, she saw nothing but mountains, "I'll just walk my way back home, mountain after mountain." she thought. But before she knew it, she was snapping the scissors to the rhythm again and got so blindly overtaken by the imaginary music that got her lost again.

A person must have thought Famille was weird because someone had poked her with a finger, she opened her eyes, her mind snapped back to the present.

Famille turned around to see a man looking at her.

"May I help you ma'am?" the man asked Famille, "You look..." he hesitated to justify the right word, "lost."

"I...I...I'm not..." Famille looked around, surprised to see a man in the middle of the hills, but the dialogue seemed like a bucket of water pouring over her and had awakened her. She said, finally admitting to herself, "I mean..... I AM lost."

"Where do you live?" the man asked.

"In the North-East edge of HorseTail Valley."

"Oh! Then, just over two more hills and you should be home." the man replied.

"Thank you," said Famille gratefully, and she whispered to herself, "Famille, it's time to go home".

After hiking over a hill, she started to feel tired, she found a nice patch of fern underneath a thick leafed tree to shelter her. She thought it was a perfect place to sleep, so there she slept.

In the morning, she woke up. Sunlight shone through the tree that sheltered Famille and dappled the patch of fern. Famille got up and cleaned herself. Then she looked around for her scissors, "Where are they?" she thought.

She knew she had to go home as she was starving. Then she gave up on her scissors and started to hike along the next hill. She was bored, without the scissors in her hand. She felt empty, and her fingers started to fidget, as if there wasn't any way to make her happy again. The loneliness was unbearable.

But gazing at the sky, Famille realized it was time to let go of her obsessions. A voice told her, "Look for a meaningful purpose in life." A refreshing breeze blew away her worries and gave her strength. Before dusk, she arrived home. A new chapter was about to open for her.

Primary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Brogan Archer School: Hong Kong Adventist Academy Grade: Primary 6

Iris grabbed her scissors and cut off the chair legs of her wooden chair. "It's a great day for sledding, isn't it?" She hopped on the seat of her 'broken' chair. Holding up her scissors high, she gave the chair a slight push on the ground and went sliding down the cliff. Iris landed on the ground with a loud crash. Opening her eyes and gazing around the junkyard, "I wonder if my scarf is around this area." Iris started wandering around, dragging the rest of the chair behind her. She ripped out every piece of garbage from the floor and displayed it in front of her face then cut it up into pieces. 'No! I can't find it!' A gleam caught Iris's eye. She shuffled over to the gleam and picked it up. 'Finally!' Iris stuffed her needles in her pocket and began looking for her scarf. She spotted a tree with something red stuck in one of its branches. Iris walked slowly toward the scarf and wrapped it around her neck. Suddenly, a wave of sand knocked Iris out cold.

Iris woke up in a big oak tree. "Where am I?" She stood up and turned around. Little elves surrounded her. 'All right, this is creepy.' Iris stared at one little elf, in particular, what she had thought was the elf leader. "YOU HAVE BEEN FOUND, DEAR PRISONER!" A deep voice bellowed in Iris's head. In fear, Iris pointed at the elves with her scissors. The little elves stood still, not moving a muscle. "Right, who dare to come into my head?" A little elf to the right tapped his foot on the wood below them and looked at his friend. Soon, the elves were all tapping their feet with linked arms. Iris became confused and snipped her scissors in their faces. "LOOK AT US! LOOK AT OUR DANCE!" Iris covered her ears as a brilliant idea fell into place. She grinned to herself and brought out her scarf and needles. Magically, a ball of yarn appeared in front of Iris. She began sewing and sewing. The elves became wrapped up in a huge scarf. "LET US OUT, FOOLISH GIRL!" Iris brought out her scissors again and cut the scarf. "Let's just hope they behave now." Iris shot a challenging look at the elves and folded her arms being pleased. Iris made the elves line up and practice their marching. While the elves practiced, Iris began to use a copy machine in the corner to duplicate the yarn, scarf, and needles. When she had done it, Iris clapped her hands, ordering her slaves to line up.

A few days later, everything was ready! Iris nodded at her workers and one little elf pressed the button. The sewing machines turned on and the little elves bended their backs. The whole room was silent, busy with sewing elves. "The Iris Scarf is open!" Another bunch of elves collected the scarves and organized them in fancy boxes. Trucks drove away, carrying the scarves.

Primary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Max, Arron Dingwell School: German Swiss International School Grade: Primary 4

As soon as the lady figured out that she could also use the pair of scissors to continue to work, she looked around in search for something to cut. However, there was barely anything around her. She melancholy decided to walk back to her house, quietly cutting some of her short blonde hair that was left till she fell into sleep in her cinnamon-colored rocking chair.

The following morning when the sun rose, a weird and unfamiliar sound was heard. Without finishing her breakfast, she walked outside with huge curiosity with her pair of scissors. Following the sound, she led herself to a new route where she had never been before. After walking several miles, she looked up and glanced at the end of the mountain cliff where she had dropped all her knitting materials and knit balls. Suddenly, she saw something blew her mind. It was a small village downhill from far away. She was hysterical and took a big leap off the side of the hill, rolling herself down and landing in a humongous pile of hay. Her pair of scissors fell out of her hand. She picked them up struggling to find a way out of the hay. She eventually found her way out with the help of her scissors.

She continued walking and then reached somewhere made her mind go bonkers. It was a town full of people! It wasn't just an ordinary town. It was a town where there were many more houses and people. It was like her own house and herself being duplicated an infinite number of times but with many more colors. Since everyone looked like her, nobody had noticed she had arrived. She was also too shy to talk to the people who had similar looks but quite different personalities – very cheerful and contented. She searched for a while until

something caught her attention. Grass. She had never seen anything so green and smooth in her life. She tested her scissors on the grass to see if the grass was able to be cut, and it worked! From that day, she started cutting little piles of grass to entire fields of grass. She could move with her body quickly on the ground like a worm. Crawling, cutting, crawling, cutting...

Everyone living in the village liked the way she was cutting the grass. There were various knit-like patterns. She was so addicted to cutting, that without warning, she cut open a new dimension under the grass and stumbled into it straight away. But this time, she found herself stuck in a pile of knit balls and the knit she made. She was so amazed and curled the knit around her cold body. Without knowing, she became as gleeful and gratified as the other people in town. While she was enjoying her moment, snowflakes sprinkled through the air. Winter had arrived!

She picked up some knit and went back home blissfully. She would never forget about this place ever.

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Primary School (English Division) Merit Prize
Name: Ma Oi Kiu Chelsi School: Malvern College Hong Kong

After a long period of climbing up the curved and rocky cliff, I tiredly pulled myself up and started knitting again. Knitting made me feel happy and relieved and it also reminded me of my grandma, who used to teach me how to knit clothes and scarves, while my mother was drinking and smoking at bars. My mother wasn't a loving person at all. As soon as she gave birth to me, she felt ashamed of me because I always cried a lot and took a lot of her spare time which she used to hang out with her friends or stay at the bar. So, she firmly decided to give up on me and put me up for adoption. As she was filling in some forms, my grandma suddenly walked into her room and saw me crying. Grandma claimed that she heard some miserable baby screams and walked wherever the mysterious crying lead to. She said that she was very surprised to see me because my mother had never mentioned anything about me. My grandma saw how miserable I was and decided to raise me instead of letting my mom give me to a random stranger. She happily carried me in her arms. She even claimed that it felt like she was carrying my mother again when she was a baby. My grandma was getting older and older, and at last she retired from her part-time job as a teacher. She was very sad and wanted to continue teaching children.

I finally turned five and was able to do everything properly. Every day, when I came back from school, my grandma would sit next to me and teach me new ways of knitting. At first, I thought of knitting as a fun hobby, but after years and years, it gradually became an addiction – knitting CONNECTED me to my grandma forever. Memories flashed and flashed until I realized that I was knitting thin air, I was so focused that I couldn't even think of anything else but knitting. I slowly looked at my needles and I knew it was the time for my addiction to go. Without thinking too much, I threw away my grandma's precious needles down into the cliff. Instantly, I felt regretful and wanted to catch my grandma's precious needles before it was too late. But I stopped myself and stood still miserably wishing that the needles would rise. At that moment I felt truly regretful and gloomy, but I knew it was the right thing to do. After a period of silence, I dreadfully walked to the wooden chair which belonged to my pure-hearted aunt who took care of me after the death of my beloved grandmother. After sitting down for a while, I looked around my chair and saw the pair of scissors that could have saved my life if I could be SEPERATED from the scarf. I picked it up and started snapping my nails. I would become a word famous nail artist.

中學組
(英文組)

**Secondary School
(English Division)**

Reflections on Passion and Dedication

Before I watched the Last Knit, I believed passion and dedication were what we needed to succeed. However, the animation raised a question: what are “passion” and “dedication”? No doubt I could look up the words in the dictionary, but the animation invited me to explore these qualities. Now I understand better.

Before sunrise, a woman walked quietly towards a cliff. She selected a lofty vantage point facing the cliff, set up a chair and spread out her knitting yarn. Feeling satisfied, she smiled and started to create her scarf. As the sun rose, the knitter had created a long scarf. She reached down to a pair of scissors on the ground, getting ready to cut the yarn. However, she hesitated and decided to keep knitting. The faster her passionate and skillful fingers moved, the longer her masterpiece grew. The scarf piled up and hung off the edge of the cliff, and the growing weight started to pull the scarf and the knitter towards the edge of the cliff. The knitter realised there was a problem as she was battling to pull the scarf away from the cliff and keep herself from falling. At this decisive moment, she either could have pulled out her knitting needles and let go of her scarf, or she could have simply let the whole thing go. However, she did not. Instead, she decided to knit even faster, adding length to her scarf in order to counteract the speed of the scarf falling down the cliff. She knitted feverishly. To her amazement, the scarf flew up in the sky. She stared defiantly at it as if she was taming a wild beast. She might have thought that she was a victorious gladiator. Her passion was turned into obsession while her dedication was turned into compulsion.

Passion and dedication have long been considered as great qualities of successful people. Steve Jobs once said, “You have to be burning with an idea. If you're not passionate enough from the start, you'll never stick it out.” Vincent Van Gogh also claimed, “I would rather die of passion than of boredom.” George Hegel, a German philosopher, even suggested, “Nothing great in the world has ever been accomplished without passion.” It is universally true to say that passion is important when it comes to achieving dreams. When someone identifies his or her passion and aligns it with whatever he or she is doing, a magical synergy appears and effortlessly carries him or her to rarefied heights. Work or labour becomes joyful and pleasurable. Hours fly by, unnoticed. It is the same as the case of the knitter. Tiredness and fatigue took a back seat as she powered her way to greater achievement.

I was impressed by her perseverance empowered by her passion. She might be thinking those who succeed owe their success to perseverance or persistence and no one succeeds without making an effort. She was right at that point but did she hear what Helen Keller said, “We can do anything we want to do if we stick at it long enough?” Did she know the word “enough”? Perseverance can be turned into compulsion when we cannot tell enough is enough. After watching the video, I would rather believe that knowing when to let go is key to success. Successful people can distinguish the signs which tell them to stop. They do not reckon that letting go equals to giving up. She did not give up since she was taught giving-up is a negative, passive characteristic whereas perseverance is a positive, active virtue.

While the knitter was relentlessly knitting, the words, “Never, never, never give up” remarked by Winston Churchill probably echoed in her mind. She might also practise what Thomas Edison thought, “Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.” The heroine is blinded by her misuse of passion and dedication and fails to notice that it is time to stop, without a thought of pausing. From her experience, I learnt what Walter Elliott believed, “Perseverance is not a long race; it is many short races one after another.” With this I agree very much. In search of dreams, success or perfection, we have to pause and take a break to reflect on and evaluate what we have achieved so far.

When we were young, we were taught whenever we encounter troubles, we must be sensible but not be blinded by emotions and personal feelings. We must have courage to face difficulties and accept what life brings to us. When there was a shortage of yarn, the heroine had fortitude to face up to the fact and thought of using her

hair to solve the problem. She tided herself over her difficulty by providing determination to continue knitting. Nevertheless, the animation tells us that this is by no means a wise way to solve a problem. It is a shock to me when a person with high adversity quotient cannot overcome an obstacle and almost kills herself with her determination to solve problems. I am confused about the situation. Although her solution is not the best, why is it like committing suicide? Society emphasises emotional quotient and adversity quotient nowadays apart from intelligence quotient. People in modern society are often accused of lacking the ability to adjust emotions to adapt to environments or achieve their goals, or the ability to deal with adversities. Why does a person as resilient as the knitter eventually put herself in a worse situation? From this we should note that what we call passion and determination can lead to disastrous consequences, as a result of excessive pursuit of perfection.

Moderation is the best strategy. It is of prominent importance to know when we should reflect what we have achieved, and when we should let go or stop. There is a saying, "Moderation in all things." The knitter did not work in moderation. She should have avoided any excess or extremes.

Secondary School (English Division) 1st Runner-up

Name: Tsui Ching Tung Rachel School: St. Paul's Co-educational College Class: 6G

A popular oriental belief that bears the principles of Buddhist philosophy opposes the attachment to any earthly possessions, be it fame, wealth or materialistic gains; it also encourages one to be mindful and present in the moment, and to appreciate one's surroundings and loved ones. However, I have always struggled to come to terms with such a seemingly impractical way of life; growing up in a family that constantly encourages me to pursue the best and most, while learning under a highly competitive education system in Hong Kong, I have always been taught to strive for the most achievements and build the most decorated curriculum vitae to contend for the optimal opportunities at renowned institutions. Much like the protagonist in 'The Last Knit', whose incessant knitting develops into a compulsive obsession that eventually endangers her life; to some degree, I could identify with her desperation to pursue more even when it cost her greatly. Opening in a bleak setting of a barren cliff and a wooden chair, the director effectively creates an ominous atmosphere of isolation, while also alluding to the simplicity of the most primitive question of humanity that challenges many: to let go or to hold on?

The protagonist embarks on an anguished frenzy to knit a scarf, from the decisive kick of the scarf from under her feet, the descent of the scarf beyond the cliff symbolises the initiation of an obsession that subsequently becomes uncontrollable. As the music quickens its pace, the woman's frantic hands increase in speed to knit more and it reaches a climax as the scarf drags the woman towards a dangerous proximity to the cliff. Yet, the woman peers over the cliff and decides to continue with her quest, as the music and rhythmic 'ticks' of the needles sound again. A similar theatrical pinnacle is reached as the woman realises that she is out of yarn, she once again carries on knitting, this time however, utilizing her own hair as material for the garment. The repetition of the rising and falling action of the background music and rhythm creates a nerve-wracking anticipation for the audience as the tension builds; more importantly, it symbolises the cyclical and damaging nature of obsession: growing interest and attachment to an object or the process, the temporary hesitation when contemplating whether to continue, then finally the determination to carry on.

As the scarf falls and begins to drag her in tow, the woman is unaware of, or even neglects the detrimental consequences of allowing herself to continue into the harmful plummet of compulsion. While it is open to interpretation for what the motif of the scarf can represent, I comprehended the scarf as an achievement that the one desperately grapples to complete, while the never-ending extension of the scarf parallels the reality that there seems to be an inexhaustible limit on how much one can possibly achieve. While one can be temporarily consumed by the boundless pursuit of success, one can also find themselves caught in circumstances that are subconsciously harmful. Likewise, I sometimes find myself inextricably confined to the pursuit of academic excellence, engrossed by the process of achieving the most, yet unknowingly overlooking the injurious consequences on my health, or even the deteriorating relationships between my family and me.

The ambiguity of the denouement poses the question of whether or not the woman was able to detach herself from addiction. In realisation that her empty needles continue the actions of knitting without thread, she adopts a decisive stance and tosses the needles over the cliff. The video comes to an end as the woman returns to her wooden chair, picks up the scissors and snipes at her fingernails. Her itch to pick up another object points to the possibility of initiating a new obsession, while the action that could potentially inflict physical harm signifies an escalation of danger. The chair can be interpreted as a symbol of the core values that ground us; the directorial choice of a plain wooden chair rather than an embezzled throne, is an embodiment of how one's most important principles should represent the bare and genuineness of humanity, instead of the decorated titles that one strives to achieve.

This video elucidates the harmful effects of becoming overly attached through the story of a woman who harms herself in the obsessive process of reaching her goal; yet I believe that the director does not want to offer complete criticism towards the protagonist's actions, as it is only realistic for one to grow fond of possessions and develop an aggression to pursue something to its finality. Therefore, I believe it provides insight into both perspectives in consideration of pursuing an objective; on one hand, it is beneficial to define targets for one to achieve, on the other hand, the devoted yet blind pursuit may impose physical and psychological shackles upon

oneself to uphold. The art of non-attachment is indeed challenging to master, after all, we do live in a society that is driven by a capitalistic imperative, while I was a youngster, am still unfledged in the vast experiences of the world. I now understand that over the inexorable progression of time, one's materialistic possessions and achievements bear little to no significance on the grand scheme of events, therefore one should learn to strike a balance between pursuing success and examining the true value of such accomplishments.

To conclude, although we are situated in a society that advocates the survival of the fittest, and it is inevitable for one to lose hold on one's priorities and proportions when consumed by the addictive attainment of any goals. Hence, we should always return to our own simple 'wooden chair', to remind ourselves of the most primitive values that ground us. Though I have always found the saying of 'carpe diem' overused and extremely cliché, it is admittedly a respectable way of life that encourages one to seize the day and devote ourselves to the present and the loved ones around us.

Secondary School (English Division) 2nd Runner-up

Name: Stephanie Webb School: Harrow International School Hong Kong

Closer. And closer. And closer. The winding train of scarf inches towards the edge of the cliff. It is slowly making its way towards the inevitable fall. Like a snake slithering along the ground, it approaches the brink.

This is a result of hours and hours of obsessive knitting by the protagonist.

At the break of dawn, the knitter set her chair down on the edge of a cliff and worked away at the balls of wool placed before her. However, as the scarf became longer and longer, it began to trickle down over the edge, pulling her with it. Being unable to give up her precious creation, she resorted to knitting her own hair in, thinking it would buy her time. Unfortunately, as the scarf gained momentum, this physical attachment led to pull her into the abyss as well.

She eventually crawled her way back up, with her hair torn and dishevelled.

That's when her scissors caught her eye. She began clipping her nails with it, and then looking around for something else to cut. Hence her next obsession began.

This meaningful short film can be open to many interpretations, but I believe that it is essentially about having an addiction that takes control over you.

The knitter's obsession is manifested in her being unable to let go of her creation. There are three key instances when she could have parted ways with it, but she didn't.

The first chance she had was when she reached down for her scissors. In a swift motion, she extended her right hand, swooping down to pick them up, preparing to cut off her creation. However, her fingers only barely managed to skim the cool, hard surface of the scissors blade before she hesitated. Instead of picking up the scissors, she ended up grabbing another ball of wool, determined to continue.

The second chance she had was after she gave the scarf a gentle kick, and the long scarf began tumbling down the cliff. As its weight was pulling her down, she should have known that she was putting herself in danger by continuing knitting. She stared, almost in surprise, at the scarf gradually trailing down the cliff. However, the pace of her knitting not only didn't slow - it increased! It was as if her mind couldn't control her hands, she was unable to put the needles down. She was unable to stop.

Her third and possibly final chance before irreversible damage would be done was when she ran out of yarn. Then and there, she should have stopped. However, she did not. She was so determined and so obsessed that she decided to resort to the last thing she could - to using her hair as raw material.

The video could be a cautionary tale about drug addiction. The setting is of arid and empty span of land, atop a mountain cliff. This symbolises the isolation in the protagonist's life due to her addiction, as well as the danger she is subjecting herself to. The time it is set is also significant. She began knitting at dawn, when the sky was still dark. As time passed, so did the length of the scarf. This echoes the growth of her addiction. Her knitting her hair into the scarf symbolises her addiction became so bad that it began affecting her health. However, she still couldn't stop. It wasn't until she was on the verge of falling off the cliff, symbolising death, that she started struggling to reach for the scissors to end knitting the scarf, metaphorically ending her addiction. Later, she returned with her hair torn and shredded, reflecting the permanent damage of drugs. Despite this, she still continued a knitting motion, almost involuntarily, with the needles in her hands. This symbolises the urges addicts get after quitting. That's when she picked the scissors up and began her next addiction. Moreover, "needles" and "scissors" are slangs in drug use.

The film could also be interpreted as depicting work addiction. The scarf represents success, whether that be monetary success or fame or power. The knitter worked away, nearly leading to her own demise, in order to

increase the length of the scarf. Again, the arid land represents the protagonist's isolated life, reflecting how she closed herself off from the rest of the world. The chair represents her initial balanced life. The further she strayed from the chair, the more obsessed she became with knitting, reflecting her growing addiction to work. In this interpretation, while it is acceptable to work hard to some extent, it is vital to keep a balanced life. The knitter was fine initially, creating a beautiful, long scarf while she stayed in her chair (representing balance). However, she did not know when to stop. She just kept on working to the point of no return.

This philosophy of “moderation in all things” is a common teaching in various religions and philosophies. Moderation is one of the “three jewels” or virtues in Taoism. The founder of Taoism, Lao Tzu, repeatedly emphasised the significance of moderation. He said “those who know when it is enough will not perish”. This virtue is equally emphasised in Ancient Greece. Aristotle once said, “virtue is the golden mean between two vices, the one of excess and the other of deficiency”. This means people should learn to balance between two extremes in order to find true happiness. In Buddhism, Buddha teaches “the middle way”, a path between self-denial and materialistic self-indulgence. In Christianity, self-control is one of the nine “fruits of the Holy Spirit” which Christians should strive to attain.

In conclusion, I agree with this philosophy of moderation. I think that the key to leading a happy yet successful life is being able to strike a balance. The knitter in the video was not able to moderate her work, leading to physical and possibly mental damage. This is why we should learn how to live in moderation, never leaning too much towards one end of the spectrum.

Secondary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Chloe Wong School: Chinese International School Class: YR9

The short film “The Last Knit” shows the destructive power and consequences of addiction through this fable about a gaunt, blonde-haired woman who becomes addicted to knitting a scarf that gets so long that it nearly kills her. Addiction comes in many forms. All forms of addiction are dangerous, even though they might not seem so at first. “The Last Knit” tells the story of a woman addicted to knitting, which is symbolic of our tendency to become obsessed with things that ultimately bring no real meaning to our lives. Addiction in its different shapes and forms is widely prevalent in modern society, often trapping us into a bubble.

The story starts out with a woman who seemingly enjoys knitting. The accompanying music starts off with a tranquil tone. We then realize that she is sitting in a barren landscape, surrounded by balls and balls of yarn. The music began getting darker and more frantic, and the tone of the story switched. The woman kept getting dragged down into an abyss by the weight of her scarf. However, she didn't seem bothered by it and kept on knitting. The constant clicking of the sticks had a rhythm to it, like a drum, which blended with the dark undertones of the music.

I became entranced with the clicking of the sticks, and I didn't even notice that the yarn was running out until she started getting closer and closer to the precipice. Even in the face of hypothetical death, she still could not stop. She used her hair as a last-ditch effort to keep knitting, but even that wasn't enough. The closer she got to the edge, the more frantic her knitting became. She could've stopped there, but she didn't. When she eventually ran out of material, she desperately reached out to the scissors. While she tried to get the scissors to cut her hair away from the yarn, she broke one of her knitting sticks in the process; the sticks led her to start knitting. She couldn't reach the scissors, and despite her desperate attempts to stay anchored, she plunged down the cliff. After the screen goes dark, we see that she climbed back up with chunks of her hair missing, and the scarf finally gone. She had finally let go. She threw her knitting needles off the cliff, and here we see her relief. She finally let go, or overcame her addiction. She turned around and picked up the scissors. Interestingly, the ending is open to interpretation as it is possible that she ends up developing another addiction with the scissors, or she truly has turned a new leaf and decided to experience other things in life that will give her joy.

The theme of addiction is the most prevalent in this short film. The causes and effects of addiction are metaphorically implied in this film with the start of the addiction being almost unnoticeable. The same happens in real life, where something new turns into a hobby, then turns into an obsession and finally emerges as an addiction.

The barren landscape shows the loneliness seen from the outside perspective when someone is suffering from an addiction. The lady looked perfectly content as she sat knitting by herself, but from the outside looking in, we see that she is completely alone, stuck in a desolate desert. People suffering from addiction usually feel alone, stuck in a bubble. Addiction can range from drugs to social media to gambling and to self-harm. These are the things that might offer short-lived happiness but ultimately offer little meaning. Through this, they lose touch with the world around them. Isolating themselves because they know their peers will jeer at them, fearing the judgement of their parents if they admit that they are struggling with an addiction - all of this prevents them from seeking help, and drives them to addiction.

Being addicted reflects the pressure that society gives to every single person to climb to the top. We all are pressured to earn as much money as possible, to achieve the highest social status, to compare ourselves to our peers and achieve more than them in life. But by chasing what others define as “life” you miss out on everything else that this world provides - the crunching of leaves under your boots, connecting with a stranger, or simply having a good laugh. It is impossible to conform to all societal standards, and the more we try, the more we fall down the rabbit hole, and get dragged down, because we feel that we will never be good enough. Many people develop habits to cope with the feeling of emptiness or imperfection that they feel, which again leads to addictions.

Millions of people struggle with their mental health. From anxiety to depression to being bipolar and many more. Any form of addiction will negatively affect one's mental health. In the short film, the knitter knows that she's falling, but refuses to cut herself off. Just like in real life, there are ways to get help for addiction, but we may fail to make that choice. At the end of the film, we see the woman start to cut things with the scissors.

There are two ways we could interpret this. This could be the start of self-harm, starting with the cutting of fingernails, or a new addiction. Some might still be completely alone and turn to another form of addiction to cope. The lack of support and love in the world spirals some people into depression and addiction, but there are always people out there who will help you.

This short film effectively communicates the importance of dealing and identifying addiction before it's too late. The negative effects of addiction are shown throughout the film and can also be found in real life. We shouldn't shun people suffering from addiction and instead embrace them with love to help them live life to the fullest.

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Secondary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Kwok Valerie Tin Wing School: St Paul's Co-educational College Class: 1G

As Mason Cooley once said, "Lust and greed are more gullible than innocence." When one is greedy, they are so blinded by their ambitions that reality and lies are no longer distinguishable. The short animated film directed by Laura Neuvonen, *The Last Knit*, focuses on a woman who is addicted to knitting. The whole film concentrates on her inability to stop knitting, a fitting metaphor for humans' ceaseless pursuits in life.

The themes in the short film are portrayed through the protagonist of the film who mirrors modern human beings' constant thirst for achievements. In the film, she knits feverishly, but we cannot see a clear reason. Who is she knitting for? Why is she knitting? Does she enjoy knitting? Despite having used up all her yarn, she does not appear to be satisfied, drawing parallels to humans' inaptitude to be satisfied with what one has achieved. By portraying the main character's obsession with knitting, Neuvonen successfully shows our incessant need to gain more in life. Ironically, although the scarf is the protagonist's achievement, it is precisely her scarf that drags her down. Literally, she is dragged down by her scarf; figuratively, her knitting restricts her from enjoying life. She shows no joy or pride upon her work. In fact, she doesn't even look at how much she has done, but only knows to keep working and working. In other words, humans' greed will lead to their doom.

The obstacles she encounters are also metaphors of what we encounter nowadays. Her lack of yarn reflects our lack of resources. Her action in the short film, where she refuses to leave her chair even if her scarf is dragging her down, is similar to how people desperately want to produce results in a mindless manner while staying in their comfort zones. She is only able to see things from her perspective, absolutely unaware of the dangers that lie ahead. The protagonist's attempt to use her own hair to continue knitting underscores our tendency to accomplish a task regardless of the means. This brings up the question of whether the end justifies the means, as the process to achieve is one that is tedious and painful. We rush our way through life, determined to do everything we can, to cram every 24 hours with activities. But we never stop to think, whether what we are doing is necessary. Because we don't stop and check the map carefully, we need to exert a lot of effort to reach a destination, despite there being an easier route that would take us to the same point in minutes. Is it worth it? Are we able to feel fulfilled once we accomplish what we have set out to do?

In *The Last Knit*, music is used to further emphasize the dullness of life. The music is a repetitive clicking noise, in rhythm to the character's knitting which signifies the monotonous routines of our lives. The viewers are drawn to the rhythm, but beneath the comfortable facade, we are aware of the inescapable routines of life. This is further conveyed through the scarf's colors; her scarf is very bland, with the same patterns and colours. She makes no effort to knit something special. As Vincent Van Gogh said, "Normality is a paved road: it's comfortable to walk, but no flowers grow on it." Humans just want everything to be easy, comfortable and simple. Like the protagonist, we do not welcome change. Humans do not waste time to consider alternative choices. We do not think of ways to better ourselves.

When the short animation comes to an end, even though her knitting needles are gone, she still fidgets with her scissors. The repetitive music which stopped earlier has started again, meaning her need to do something has been aroused. We can see that, despite almost falling off a cliff and plummeting to her death, the character calmly sheers off to her nails. As long as she has something to entertain herself, she will be fine. It symbolises once again, our thirst for action, which, in some case, is extraneous.

In conclusion, the main character is an accurate mirror of our society and beliefs: keep looking for more, work hard and do everything you can. More achievement means you are better than everyone else. It raises the question of whether or not we are content with our achievements despite all our efforts. This film brings us a warning : stop looking for more than you need, or you will pay more than a scarf and hair.

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Secondary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Hailey Chow Hang Hei School: Sacred Heart Canossian College Class: 2F

Knitting, Knitting, there my master dwelling

Here I dance in your arms
Beneath the yellow sky
There I sing under your palms
Beneath the golden sky

Here I dwell yearslong
Beneath the shimmering sky
Looking up wishing for throng
Beneath the gilt sky

Tick tac, say the ringing days
Beneath the unchanging sky
I look at your troubled face
Beneath the cloudless sky

Doubtful you are, and puzzled
Above the sandy ground
You seem transfixed but work as hustled
Above the flat and dull ground

Oh dear, now I do worry
Above the misty ground
I see in your face odd fury
Above the evening ground

Stop! I cry aloud. Halt!
Above the desert ground
Yet you seem not to notice your faults
Above the rocky ground

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Tears rolling, ringing, rocking  
Face angered, anguished, agonized  
Yet you continue, with care, concerned  
Determined, dedicated, oh don't you fret

Battling, I bet, with your bold self  
Resisting, I reckon, and rushed you on  
What endless work will win you over?  
When shall your scattered soul be recollected?

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Once upon a year
You still held that fear
Trying to put down the act
Which then, is now a fact

I can no longer warn you
In tears, I see your will, what you do
Still dancing I am, and I am weak
In your arms, a weeping antique

Hear me now, for one last time
My words, at your ears there chime
Sorrowful this is, my friend
Yet this mournful addiction is hard to amend

Secondary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Cheng Pearl Tsoi Wun School: Diocesan Girls' School

As the woman knits her way through her spools of yarn, I sit there too, knitting my brow, first in confusion, and after that, a horror which is unending and tugs at my fingertips quietly, just like the woman's scarf.

What is so unnerving about *The Last Knit*? This can be attributed to its ambiguity, woven deep into the video through uncanny silences and a desolate setting. The woman knits atop a bare, empty cliff, where there is nothing except for the yellow rock and soil. The camera shot only offers a worm's eye view, and so we only see the cliff walls from below, but never how high the cliff itself is. There is no dialogue, and almost no sound, save for the quiet, diegetic clicking of the knitting needles and the occasional “whoosh” as the scarf slides off the cliff. Who is the woman? Why is she knitting? Where is this place? The vacuum left by mystery is filled with uneasiness, exacerbated by the clicking from the needles, which grows in intensity as the woman knits with whatever she can find until finally, the pitch turns into a frantic staccato sound that suggests urgency and borderline madness.

There is also the inhuman madness that the woman displays. At first, she seems normal enough. She is just an average woman who decides to find a quiet place to do her knitting, yet with the small kick of her foot, everything goes downhill. As the scarf slips down and starts to pull the woman with it, there is at first a spark of hesitation and surprise, and she tries to pull it back up to continue. But as she tries to stop it from sliding prove increasingly futile, a close-up shot reveals a furrowed brow and wide determined eyes, and the pace of knitting quickens. It is as if she had accepted a challenge: to stop the scarf from sliding off completely by knitting at a higher pace than which it slides. She goes over the edge, quite literally, in order to meet the challenge imposed. But when the yarn runs out, the woman turns to her hair. The scene turns to a horizontal, medium close-up shot as the woman struggles to reach the scissors. The strain of the weight of the scarf knitted with her hair is clearly seen as it occupies half the screen. The organic imagery from the shot alone generates unimaginable pain, yet the woman does not seem concerned at all. And as the video progresses and the woman turns to her fingers with the scissors, the same lack of concern is shown. As the woman picks up the pair of scissors and tentatively snips at her fingernails with it, her expression is not one of pain, but judging from the wide eyes and inquisitive look, curiosity and intrigue. As the video ends, not only do we question the woman's sanity in her relentless knitting, we are also unnerved by her apparent inability to react to the most basic of human feelings: pain.

But perhaps most vividly, the video is a reflection of ourselves. As the woman knits her scarf compulsively, obsessively, we too knit the fabric of our lives relentlessly and sometimes blindly. At a young age, we pick up the first threads of our dreams and become the tailors of our own fate. “I want good grades!” Aspirations and wants form the yarn of our lives, weaving itself into a beautiful piece of tapestry. Much like the scarf, a delicate shade of pink and mauve, a life with dreams and desires are a beauty to behold.

However, at some point down the road, our feet kicks the fabric. A few dazzling patterns on the tapestry makes us want even prettier, nicer ones, and this insatiable desire becomes the driving force behind our ever-furious knitting. So, as we gradually become more focused on creating the scarf of our lives, it skids down the precipice, generating a pull that only becomes stronger and stronger as the weight increases, slowly dragging us out of our chair. “I want good grades!” evolves into “I want to get into a good university!” It is because we believe that we can get more and more. Never satisfied, we become the slaves to the products of our imagination, letting it consume us in our relentless and blind pursuit.

But to what end? Tellingly, the video ends as the woman starts cutting her fingernails. Here comes another round of compulsiveness, and there is no knowing what happens to her after that. There is no end to her obsessive habits, and similarly, there is no end for relentless and blind pursuit, as our inability to be satisfied is a spiral that just goes down and down and down. But if there is to be an ultimate end to relentless and blind pursuit, that is at the cost of ourselves. From her previous frenzied knitting and delighted grin at snipping her fingernails, we can guess that she turns her scissors to other parts of her body afterwards, possibly injuring herself. Unwittingly, we are told in this video, we can start off knitting our lives with shimmering gossamer but end up with nothing but torn-up rags. That, perhaps, is the most unsettling horror of them all.

And I think for a moment about what would happen if the woman had stopped knitting. What if she stopped right after kicking the scarf aside with her foot off the cliff's edge? Would she have begun her descent into this madness?

Ultimately, there aren't any more "what ifs" for the woman, but there are certainly "what nexts" for all of us with two silver knitting needles in our hands. We are all there, sitting on our own precipice and weaving our own dreams and desires into amazing patterns, and it is for us to decide whether this will be our last knit, or a sustainable cycle of many, many more to come.

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Secondary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Reva Rajesh Shetty School: King George V School Class: Year 9

This almost 7-minute video by Laura Neuvonen with no dialogues captures the very problems and difficulties of life, conveying a very crucial message. How can a short film like this illustrate something so significant, you might ask? Well, let me tell you how I feel. This represents and teaches all of us a lesson, guiding viewers on the need to live a balanced life.

I personally believe that this film is about the life of a troubled being, who has lost something, or simply someone who has got caught up in something over the limits. I think that the knitting thread depicts a hobby, job or a scenario that we build a strong connection with overtime. People get so caught up in certain situations, because they are not content with their end products, or that they didn't get the joy that they should have received. Usually it is because something might be bothering them, they may tend to get caught up in short-term activity that is able to distract them from their actual problems. The chair represents our life, and how once we were distracted by something. It may pull us away from the important people who can help us. Instead we close ourselves even more, breaking away from the people which may give our life that essence that someone may long for. The cliff is the path that a person takes which leads one's life to go downhill, making it worse than their current situation. The knitter's hair portrays a solution to fix our problems as quickly as possible. What we don't realise, is that time is usually the best way to heal scars. This is why when the knitter attempts to fix the problem and keep her knitting going with some fast thinking. It backfires and drags her into an even bigger problem. The scissors, lastly are the real solution to our problems. Though it might be right to us, we don't see it as we are clouded with other doubts or boundaries. The end to our problems is the realisation that the solution is usually within our own hands.

This has taught me that we need to learn to accept changes and let go. This was shown when the knitter had the chance to cut the yarn and end her piece, but she continued making her scarf. This simple decision depicts the idea that sometimes people aren't ready to move on and do something else with life, as they think that they might not be able to cope with the new problems that a change will bring. It also can make us lose our sense of security and certainty as it may bring an influential change to our lives, which can feel very unknown to people. I think that as the knitter felt her work wasn't up to the standard she wanted, she continued to knit. Later we find that this action leads her into dealing with the big problem of the possibility of losing her piece and the possibility to die or get severely injured. This shows that sticking to our old life or habits may not go well for us, as it may throw problems at us due to the fact that we cannot always adapt to our old lifestyle. It also shows us that change is always for the better, and can be seen as a way for people to grow.

Another meaning that this film could be presenting is the idea of someone dealing with some type of addiction. Addictions are usually fueled by strong emotions, such as sadness, anger, stress, insecurity, hopelessness, etc. As these addictions link to both physical and mental reasons, it is very hard to battle these strong feelings inside one's mind. There are also certain objects that depict this message as well. The very setting of this film shows the idea of isolation and loneliness, which can happen when an addiction takes over and cuts you off from your usual life. At the end of the film, we see that the knitters' hair is cut, and that she no longer has the beautiful looks she had before. This represents how the addiction affects your life even after you have put an end to it.

This teaches us that there is a limit for everything, no matter what it is. When the knitter continues to knit and knit, she doesn't realise that she should stop, nor does she realise how long it actually becomes. Her harmless action of kicking the scarf forward led to a huge problem, which was the weight of the scarf pulling her down the hill. This shows us that no matter how healthy, or good something might be for us, it can lead to our downfall. One simple example of this is water. It is essential for humans, but having too much of it may lead to death.

The third and final lesson that I learnt from this animated film was that we need to learn to have self control. The knitter here has no sense of this valuable quality, as it is shown in her knitting. She never stopped until her very life is at stake. If we are not able to have self control in life, we will never be able to accomplish our goals, let alone thinking about anything else other than the object, job, etc we put in such high regard. As she had no self control regarding her passion, she never understood when to stop, and that solely led her to lose her work. This shows us that we need to stop being obsessed with matters before it is too late so we don't regret our decisions.

To sum this up, The Last Knit presents an unusual tale of circumstances getting out of control and enlightens us why it is crucial to set a boundary on our actions or decisions.

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Secondary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Choi Lok Yin School: St. Paul's Convent School (Secondary Section) Class: 5P

“The Last Knit” is a powerful animation that encapsulates universal experiences, habits, and the importance of letting go. Through this is a short yet impactful video, the cycle of getting caught up in repetitive daily tasks towards achieving an inexplicable goal is presented prominently, leaving a long-lasting afterimage in the viewer's mind.

The most eye-catching element of the animation is its sole character: an unnamed woman knitting alone by the edge of a cliff. This allows her to represent any given person, even the viewer. Obviously an avid knitter, she crafts a scarf with impeccable skill. The colour of the yarn is used to make the scarf a stark red contrast against the otherwise neutral and rather bleak background. In fact, the only bright colours are that of the scarf and the woman's dress. Red has connotations of passion, enthusiasm and youthful zest, conveying the woman's intense liking for knitting as she seems to engage in the activity fervently. Besides, with knitting being a stereotypically mindless and relaxing pastime, this may explain why the woman is so interested in it, possibly revelling in the monotony of each purl and knit as an escape from daily preoccupations. To add to this, the setting of the entire video is relatively vacant and open, symbolising the headspace that the woman is in while she is knitting. She is relaxed, carefree, and focused solely on the task at hand – knitting her scarf. Knitting, as an activity, requires relentless effort and concentration so as not to forget the number of each stitch. It stands for one's dreams, be it career-wise, an achievement, or even just completing a project. The barren, desolate clifftop represents the isolated and unsung dedication needed to achieve success. Hence, the woman actively chooses to knit on the edge of the cliff, bringing her yarn balls and wooden chair to an uninhabited location so she can knit in solitude, as suggested by the animation being completely void of dialogue.

However, this healthy interest quickly spirals out of control and into obsession. The woman contemplates finishing up her product, reaching for the scissors, but perfectionism and overambition overtake her and she picks up another ball of yarn instead, continuing with her project. With a small kick, the end of the scarf is sent dangling over the edge of the cliff. This creates a domino effect: the weight of the scarf pulls itself down into the abyss, dragging the woman, who refuses to let her work go, along with it. It is not until she is physically pulled out her chair, which symbolises a safe, controlled platform in which she is able to develop her talent, that she realises the extent of her problem, but she continues to knit anyway in hopes that she can out-knit the speed at which the scarf is falling. She becomes frantic and compulsive, knitting even more feverishly than before to prevent her hard work from slipping into the bottomless pit. To a certain extent, this works, but not before she runs out of yarn and resorts to using her hair as an extension. This is the embodiment of, quite literally, tethering oneself to their accomplishments to the point that neither are separable from the other. Due to her manic devotion for her scarf, she is in even more danger as she can no longer free herself when the scarf

drags her over the edge. As a result, she uses her knitting needles, the reliable instruments that have enabled her to create her masterpiece, as the pick to stop herself from slipping. Ironically enough, they snap when she needs them the most, and she is sent tumbling over the edge. This shows that faith and complete trust cannot be placed on any single object alone; backup plans and careful consideration must be present in any scenario to prevent total devastation. The woman's fate shows exactly the converse.

Fortunately, the woman eventually climbs back up the cliff with choppy hair, suggesting that she has bitten it off by the lock of hair still in her mouth when she re-emerges. This is a vivid contrast between before she falls off, when she stows her knitting needles in her mouth in an attempt to grab the out-of-reach scissors, showing that she has learnt to let go of the scarf, and subsequently everything that has been burdening her despite her achievements, allowing her another chance at life. As she looks over the edge, she finds her hands subconsciously waving the knitting needles about, and, to prevent knitting from taking hold of her ever again, she throws them off the cliff, and they fall in slow motion into the white nothingness. This deliberate act of letting go is the long-awaited riddance of her responsibilities stemming originally from interest, and though there is a lingering stare as the needles fall, she lets out a sigh of relief.

Yet, as the animation draws to a close, the woman picks up the scissors and seems to want to snip at her fingers. This highlights her potentially addictive personality, being particularly susceptible to developing obsessive tendencies. Both the needles and the scissors are symbolically sharp and dangerous objects, inferring that if the woman remains in this secluded mindset as portrayed by the cliff, she may establish a fixation with yet another activity. It is up to her, and in turn the viewer, to identify this possibly vicious cycle of obsession and downfalls within oneself to break free and regain a sense of self.

To conclude, “The Last Knit” tells a cautionary tale of the dangers of being possessed by indecipherable *idée fixes* paired with an inability of recognising them and stepping back to see the bigger picture. It is the effort of acknowledging these compulsions, of accepting them and letting them go, and not material gains or superficial fulfilment, that is the ultimate act of self-love, and it is the only valid measure of one's self worth.

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Secondary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Lee Tsz Pui Gordon School: Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School Class: 11D

Have you ever thought to yourself: why am I doing this job that I don't like? Why am I constantly gaming even though I don't want to? These questions constantly float in our minds, yet often times, we yield. We say to ourselves, “No, you can do it.”, or “Get it out of your mind, you'll be fine.” We often attempt to confront ourselves with the issues that we encounter, the inner struggles that we experience, yet we constantly succumb towards the simple numbing phrase of “I'm okay”, that we forget that these issues are really there. Until we find these problems too big to grasp, or too much to ponder, that we realise that letting go is the best way. And that precisely is the essence of the Last Knit, to have freedom and autonomy over your own life.

The Last Knit, although seemingly simple and straightforward, holds a greatly significant and impactful message. Alike any other individual, the woman in the video has her own problems and issues to face in life. In the animation, she is shown to be knitting a scarf that is constantly lengthened and slowly approaches a cliff. In the process, as she continues to knit and runs out of yarn, she hesitates slightly, initially wants to pick up her scissors but later decides to take another ball of yarn, continuing to knit her scarf. As she continues to knit, she experiences increased difficulty trying to control the scarf as it becomes longer and extends down the cliff, almost falling down the cliff several times but trying her best to climb back up to her chair. She eventually knits her hair into her scarf, but inevitably falls down the cliff. Climbing back up, she decides to throw her needles down the cliff and picks up her scissors, her face full of relief.

In the animation, the scarf symbolizes the issues and burdens that we have in life, which unnoticeably exacerbates as time passes. We often become fully aware of the problem early on alike the woman as her scarf becomes longer, but we decide to cope with it, convincing ourselves that we can stand it for a longer time, that it will solve itself. Yet as we continue forcing our way through these problems, we unconsciously become controlled by these issues and “coping” becomes a routine. We become used to living with our issues and

become the ones infinitely knitting scarves, constantly trying to bypass or escape from our issues. We put in all we can to evade the problem, our hands knitting non-stop; right until it becomes too late, where we suddenly fall into an abyss, our immense problems dragging us into a place of misery and frustration. It is only at this point, that we realise that our problems are the ones thoroughly governing our own lives.

As we try to recover from our failures, we often become tempted to fall back into our previous routines, as we still feel mentally obliged to cope with our previous problems. However, once we realise that the burdens that we once had are no longer there, that there is no scarf to knit, we become empowered. Empowered to throw our past behind us, to truly pursue things that we desire, to be the leaders over our own lives. We become braver to confront ourselves, to tell ourselves what is right for us, to hurl the needles of our hearts down the cliff. And when we truly free ourselves from the chains that once shackled us, the issues that once controlled us, we realize truly how free and limitless we are. Without thoughts clouding our minds and expectations to be fulfilled, we no longer need to evade our problems. We are given the power to actively solve them, to put an end to what we think is wrong, and to move on towards something that we truly want to pursue and achieve. We are given full access towards our “scissors”, allowing us to actively tackle our own problems and correct our wrongdoings before consequences become imminent, enabling us to truly be the one in charge of ourselves. We should be the true owner of our own lives, not our problems.

We look back down at the cliff, recalling the petrifying moments as we plunged down the chasm, recalling all that we have lost and left behind. We look at ourselves, injured and bruised by the issues that once haunted us, and we wonder by ourselves: what if we didn't have to fall down the cliff? What if we could grasp onto our scissors, to cut our problems and struggles away from our lives in the first place, to decisively toss our needles away? We might wonder, can we truly eradicate a problem without experiencing its troubles? Fortunately, the answer is a definite yes. We can.

We as humans, are gifted with a special power - a power allowing us to consciously deal with our problems, to truly care, for yourself and one another. We are given the full potential and ability to uproot a problem, right when it is planted. However, whether you uproot the issue, is solely your choice. You are the one to decide for yourself; whether you want to live a life of freedom, dedicate your life towards escaping your problems or fall down a cliff too hard to climb back up on. You are the one to decide when, where and why the scarf is cut, or whether it exists at all. The power is yours.

So next time when a new problem sprouts in your life, remember that you have the power to eliminate it. Don't convince yourself that it's alright, learn to say no. Learn to say that you're not fine, that you need a change, that the problem has to be solved. And once you let go of all the problems in your hands and make changes for the better, you slowly realise, that life is a lot more than just knitting.

Secondary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Catherine Lam School: Maryknoll Convent School (Secondary Section) Class: 5B

The Last Knit is a thought-provoking animation directed by Laura Neuvonen. Although it is only about 6-minute long and without any dialogue, the plot is readily comprehensible. It commences with the protagonist knitting a scarf on a chair atop the cliff. Soon, the scarf became perfectly gorgeous and of a suitable length. Being aware of it, she dithered yet chose to continue knitting. Inadvertently, she gave a slight kick to the scarf and part of the scarf was hanging over the cliff edge. Meanwhile, she knitted faster in a bid to compete with the pace of falling. She even made use of her own yellowish hair when all yarn had been used up. As the suspending scarf became bulkier, the protagonist, adhered to the scarf, fell from the cliff reluctantly. In the end, the protagonist climbed up the cliff with her hair cut and she settled on the chair leisurely.

This story mainly illustrates the greediness of human beings. The protagonist bent to grab the scissors and thought of finishing the scarf when the length was just right. Unfortunately, her covetous thought prevailed, and she got another yarn instead. There are always endless wants since new wishes arise when the old ones are fulfilled. We never seem to realize what we have and are seldom satisfied with them. It is ubiquitous that we want to ameliorate the quality of our lives, and to make our lives more convenient and comfortable. Considering this, we earn more and more money and look for fame and power in the meantime. Nonetheless, all these will erode our minds and gradually suffocate us. At times, we may be preoccupied and forget about things around us. For instance, the protagonist gave a gentle kick and part of the scarf fell from the cliff. This is a signal of hazard to remind us though we fail to notice the perilous circumstances when being too obsessed. Consequently, we cannot get out of it in time. On the contrary, if we cherish what we own and halt asking unceasingly for more, we will indeed see the bright side of the current situation and be contented with it.

Another pivotal idea brought up by the storyline is to let go of things wisely. Herman Hesse once said, 'Some of us think holding on makes us strong, but sometimes it is letting go.' The protagonist did not consider relinquishing her grip on the scarf notwithstanding the possibility of falling down the cliff. If she chose to let the scarf go at the beginning when she noticed that it was slipping, she could well preserve the rest of her precious yarn. On the other hand, if she chose to let the scarf go before she used her hair as knitting supplies, she could have rescued herself from the lethal situation at bay. While I was watching the film, I found the protagonist obstinate and quite absurd. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that when we are in a similar situation, we tend to behave the same as she did. We are often stuck in the past unpleasant experiences and can neither recover nor get over them. Or sometimes we may put so much effort into things that we can hardly give up, yet it turns out worse and we may lose even more eventually. It is of paramount importance that we learn to let go and move on with the other business.

I personally think that the animation demonstrated the entire life of a person. We are born with nothing, neither knowledge nor accomplishment. The protagonist endeavored to knit the scarf from zero. The scarf may symbolize the things we hope to take possession of, while the knitting action represents the way we approach them. Most people work laboriously to fight for materialistic life. However, at the end of the day, we bring nothing with us when we leave the world. Like the protagonist, she had lost her scarf, yet she enjoyed her simple life. Watching the sunset from the vantage point and cutting her nails added spices to her life. Sometimes, less is more.

I am deeply inspired by The Last Knit. It is not only the plot that matters but also the messages behind it. I would recommend it to all people who feel lost about the meaning of life, as well as those who are stuck in some impasse. Overall, it is a film worth seeing.

Secondary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Kaur Shruti School: YMCA of Hong Kong Christian College Tung Chung Class: 3A

Nowadays in this swift and speedy world, gobs of us are convinced by the mainstream media that money makes the world go around. Owning the latest equipment, receiving an enormous paycheck, and living in a luxurious house may seem the key to happiness. However, *The Last Knit* written by Laura Neuvonen taught us that the excessive attachment to an ambition could lead to a person's own quietus. This short animation has truly left an amelioration on millions of viewers.

Laura Neuvonen uses no dialogues in this short animation and captures more than 12 million views. In my view, short animations have a language of its own, thus not requiring any dialogues. Moreover, it can allow the viewers to feel more connected to the characters, by making relevance to their own lives. Due to her creation of a groundbreaking character, she was nominated for the Annecy International Animated Film Festival (2005).

The Last Knit conveys the avant-garde plot of a fanatical knitter who clandestinely slunk towards a precipitous cliff before daybreak. After delicately placed her chair in a good vantage and she began her masterpiece. As the sun rose midst the pulpy clouds, she began to shift into high gear, causing herself to produce an exquisite, red-coloured scarf. She hunched down to grab a pair of scissors to complete her masterpiece, yet she swithered and proceeded. The quicker her hands moved, the longer her scarf grew, all bundled up together. Hence, she gave it a benign kick to make room for her fabrication to extend, resulting it to fall off the cliff (unbeknownst to the knitter).

Being obstinate and adamant, she chose to thwart the speed and weight of the scarf, albeit struggling. Nevertheless, she ran out of yarn. She realized that she was far from her chair ergo, she couldn't reach the scissors. She was at a moment full of hopelessness and despair, completely blank. She thereupon added her long blonde hair into her wonderful creation since she thought she'd have enough time to pull her entire masterpiece from the cliff. Still she could do nothing. The cliff was drawing closer. She was in a mess and couldn't even let go of her own creation...

In my opinion, this is a cautionary tale about passion, balance and release. It's crucial to understand that there is a fine line between dedication and obsession and between loyalty and compulsion. However, in this short animation, the knitter became compulsive and obsessive. Due to the time and effort she spent, she became more skilful (the swift movements of her hands). As time passed, the more she effectuated, the more ambitious she became. She could have used the scissors to cut the thread when it was "good enough", but her desire and fondness for her creation pushed her to pursue, leading to her own decease.

As a viewer, I believe the central theme is the depiction of our whole lifetime. In this animation, we can see that for the sake of making an exemplary future ahead of her, she can't stop knitting. Despite knowing the consequences of falling into the "abyss", she wants to continue. Imagine if the woman is replaced from "knitting" to "working" in labour; the chair would represent her real self; the scarf would represent power, fame, control, wealth and achievements; the scissors would represent the perception for "adequate-ness". We may work overtime and race against time every single day in order to gain money at our workplace; while the others may submerge themselves in academic to bring honour to their family. In contemplation of our future, we sway our sweat, and strive head. As there are reprisals from reality that makes us out of breath, we don't realize the "abyss" ahead.

I truly enjoyed every part of this short animation, especially the character. This distraught, practically lunatic woman caused me to sit on the edge of my seat as I awaited the unexpected twists and turns to come. The sparse setting and the dramatic facial expressions are the impeccable combination for this obsessive hobby.

I also appreciate the moral that we can learn from the ending. As viewers, we know that the knitter was addicted to knitting (her ambition). Towards the end, we could see that she lost a part of herself, and her addiction to 'knitting'. By picking up the scissors she realized that she would prevent all her losses if she snipped the thread. She learnt to appreciate the scissors and how there should be an end to everything. We, as viewers, can learn that we should let some things go for good. Simply put, we should keep a balance between our professional life as well as our personal life.

However, after putting on my critique lens, I wished that the writer could have changed the ending slightly. Playing with the scissors at the end, which may lead the viewers to think that the obstinate woman has a new mania for scissors. Therefore, I would suggest a flashback showing her hesitation to pick up the scissors previously with her “now” realization for not using the scissors.

To conclude, I would recommend this to everyone -- elders, adults, young adults, teenagers, and children. I think it's vital for them to realize that they may immerse themselves in their work or studies too much, thus neglecting the other important factors of their lives such as family, friends, travel, etc. To me, there's nothing more powerful and permanent than this short animation. I believe that this is an issue that should definitely be addressed, and this animation is the best medium to make an awareness. Therefore, I would rate this film 10 out of 10.

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Secondary School (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Chang Hiu Ching, Charmaine School: Shatin Tsung Tsin Secondary School Class: 5B

In the wooden chair she sits, her fingers move fast in an exact routine. A burgundy scarf, a pile of soft yarn extends from her knitting needles. The intricate latticework woven by the threads of (vanity and ambitions stoked with fervor and passion. And it was that blameless, tender kick which created room for her piling creation, and created the irrevocably dominated impacts that sealed her fate.

We, humans, have a propensity to run after our ambitions, and driven by enthusiasm, chase after an 'ideal life'. Most of us, have a ruled-by-the-clock lifestyle, we put work at first and work overtime for the sake of our life and dream. As students, hardly can we release the grip on ourselves amid the cut-throat competition and the much-sought-after flying colors in the public exam. We all hold a deep-rooted belief that only by keeping on pursuing and only when we never give up will success wave to us ahead.

But when she " weaves our hair in" to make up for the dearth of yarn, when we sacrifice a part of ourselves just to quench the unquenchable thirst, have we all considered our masterpieces might just vanish into the bottomless abyss ahead?

Addiction, a de facto perseverance, is when we failed to draw the proverbial line in the sand. It only leads to one ultimate destination- the last of our crowning point. During the decade prior to the 1930s, the stock market was booming, money was accumulated; the multicolored scarf was ever so long and gorgeous. It was in human nature to take advantage of these good times. However, in 1929, the once rich became poor overnight. Even when the prices of shares were escalating speedily, people still wished for the price to reach the 'pinnacle' and tried to maximize their return. When the Wall Street Crash swept by, prices of shares collapsed into the unfathomable abyss and shareholders who invested heavily were confronted with bankruptcy and a total loss.

They could always pick up the scissors and snip the yarn when the prices were still sky-high. But instead, they continued knitting. Eyeing too much on money, ambition or even a dream, they distanced themselves from 'hope' to retrieve their masterpieces -the scissor and from their grounded center- the chair.

I do not mean to discourage people from striving for their dreams or their sheer passion. But how could we strike a balance between passion and obsession? Whether passion is a driver or a destroyer of humanity hinges on the determination to snip the thread. Though passion makes work desirable, and this seems to enable us to achieve more, we may lose much more than what we can gain: our physical health, our emotional investment, and all other aspects of our lives often become only of peripheral importance. Perhaps before gently kicking the pile of yarn and continued knitting, we should ask ourselves, am I getting drawn into my passion too deeply once again? After all, we sacrifice health for wealth now, but we will have to lose wealth to restore health later on.

Now let's look at the bigger picture-the world, the human race. Aren't we the same as the woman who desires to make it bigger, better and even perfect? Over the past century, technology has inevitably advanced at a tremendous rate. You've probably noticed: atomic bombs, robotics, stem cell research, etc. have been shaping

our world. However, where stakes fly high, have we ever reckoned at the cultural lag, the climate change and the consequences, which tag along in plenty? Will this masterpiece be the last that we knit?

Take the current breakthrough in gene therapy as an instance. While it is a wonderful new to the cancer patients, does it not ring a bell to those of us who keep an eye on scientific development? At the bottom of the abyss is the possibility of another fatal virus spreading out after dealing with cancer, not to mention the major concern about the technology boom, climate change, hurricanes, droughts, wildfires... Thanks to our shameless, ruthless exploitation of natural resources, in fact, we are already witnessing Mother Nature's wrath.

And what did we do to pull the masterpiece away from the cliff, to save the human race and the world? We knitted faster. We knitted like our lives depended on it and we remained stubborn and strong-willed. We knitted so feverishly that the scarf flew up in the sky and there was no way to halt, until the day we run out of yarn, and there is no pulling back.

Yes, technology is helping the society, the world is to progress and is helping us to reach the constellation. However, a balance must be struck to keep pushing technology forward and keeping Mother Earth and society intact. Otherwise, humanity's masterpiece will be the creation of its irreversible downfall.

Bertrand Russell, the Nobel Laureate has three passions governing his life, i.e. the longing for love and the search for knowledge, which led him up toward the heavens, but the unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind brought him down to earth. Perhaps a passion is not all about knitting, she can always look around and discover the sun-kissed alpine sky, the feeble rustle of grass and the streaks of scarlet sift through the broken cloud. Apart from learning to appreciate the beauty of the scissors, most importantly, we have to stop and look around. Food suppression, the artificial shortage of essential resources, the world in demise... There is so much to do for the world with so little time and manpower.

So, may the advances in technology, spring from the benefit of the entire species in the spirit of cooperation and love. May the pursuit of our passion and ambition, rest on kindness and compassion. May we continue knitting in the right direction, as opposed to the abyss, but towards a world of compassion and humanity.

公開組
(英文組)

**Open Section
(English Division)**

Open Section (English Division) Champion

Name: Lee Ho Cheung

Cocoon

I

This is all you have left.

A wooden chair, a pair of aluminum needles,
several yarn balls, a pair of scissors, an old
knitted dress covering your gaunt shape, a huge
knot of hair that keeps your scalp warm
against the sarcastic words blowing
from the abyss below.

A final check of your past,
you put down the chair and
rub your rough palms together for
the metallic sticks sitting on your laps.

They cling and clang – the song
that has enriched your long walk
as a soundtrack to a silent film.

You have made up your mind before arrival.

You will knit the finest and longest scarf.

Long enough to wrap yourself into
a cocoon.

You believe in metamorphosis.

It will be a success this time, you tell yourself,
pulling a string of yarn
into the circular motions of the needles
to sing a familiar rhythmic tune
underneath the mysterious voice of the harp.

Listen,
the sun is obscured
as the clock starts.

II

A scarlet snake of scarf lies across
the barren ground. Lifeless.
Yet it grows in length as the yarn balls
vanish one after another. These hairy
eggs seem to jointly hatch to
deliver a single presence.

You stop your batons for the first time
and stroke its coarse scales.

It rattles.

It hisses.

You wish that it would coil around you.

Lifeless still. You push it with a foot.

The newborn crawls over to the edge
and succumbs to the requests of the mist
two thousand feet below.

III

It comes alive.

The very piece of fabric that you have been
weaving so hard becomes deviant like a juvenile.
It moves away from its creator and there's little
that you can do about it. It goes over the cliff
and sinks lower
and lower.

This tug of war is eventless
(if it's necessary at all),
and you are pulled off your chair.
Your first fall.

The clock doesn't stop.
You approach the edge
to see what you cannot do.

The clock doesn't stop.
You have decided to continue
to bleed.

IV

You are pulled over the cliff this morning.
Your second fall.

Is it not expected? You hang from the edge
upside-down with the needles in hands
attached to the work that you have been
crafting. Letting go has never been part of you –
a part of you keeps on telling you
to continue at all cost;
another part of you doesn't exist.

You speed up,
your hands are powered by motors
and ambition and obsession
and a vision.

And then, there is the part against all odds –
you manage to climb back up to the surface,
head-down, using feet only.

It's the Time Stone at work,
rewinding the motion of
how you got dragged down.
Miraculous things happen
for the determined minds. Yes.

You don't see it every day.
You don't even see it as a miracle.
There leaves only one thing in your heart –
the beat.

V

Death appears in the form
of the piercing gust.
The anaconda takes flight
and outlines the shape of Hades.
You look up
but not impressed.
Neither does he seem to acknowledge
your effort or skills though you are
expecting words of appreciation,
or at least,
a low-pitched "Well done".
After all, you have cheated him.

The last yarn ball is weaved into
the veins of the floating god.
You fail to find any more materials
for your craft, nor does the flying entity
find any words to wake you.

The wind ceases.
The crimson work drops
to start another fight.

VI

The very silk you produce for
your protective casing goes on to
escape from you. Or, is there somebody
wanting to take it so badly that they
lure it down the bottomless space?

Transformation is a luxury, especially
when you cannot even manipulate the
material that builds your chrysalis.

Caterpillars are designed to transform.
Within the amorphous mess in their
pupa stage, several imaginal discs are
left undigested to grow into the
distinctive body parts of a butterfly.

You believe that you are engineered
as well with these groups of cells inside you
to be unlocked when the time comes.

You are ready to melt yourself with
enzymes you release. All you need is
the escaping skin that fails you,
like you are solving a
problem with a solution which
grows into a problem itself.

I've got this.
I've got this.
You start to dissolve anyway.

VII

Here is your logic:
You will build the cocoon at all cost,
even at the expense of the components
you save for your future limbs and organs.

It is like killing yourself to show
how much you miss your partner;
it is like breaking the laws
to show that you are civilized;
it is like weaving your hair into
the scarf which is to keep your body warm,
to keep yourself together.

People don't care about possessions
when their time is about to end. They say.
Not quite the case in real life.
They do care. You do.

You packed your gear for the cliff
after the funeral while you still had control.

VIII

Your third fall doesn't make you sacred
(Jesus's three falls while carrying the
cross were not at all biblically scripted);
your mouth's carrying a cross doesn't either;
your fighting a snake doesn't either.
Your pilgrimage leads only to
your being conjoint with that which
has turned against you.

You crawl back for the tool you save
for your rebirth after the process.
The scissors sit still to watch you in pain.

You take the cross apart and
move forward by sticking the needles
into the ground and pulling against
the force from the other end.

You do know why you need the scissors.
It is obvious.
You will grab them and fall with
the scarf so that the cocoon can
be formed at the bottom of the abyss.
And then, you will break the case open
to see the sky which is no longer
measured by its colour or capacity.

An inch away, a needle snaps and
you follow your elongated body
into the black hole.

You still make no sound –
that's the most sacred part.

IX

Many years later, it was reported that
she climbed to the cliff after her cat
died the night before. She equipped herself
and arrived when the sun barely rose.
You told her that a long red scarf
freshly knitted could fish the dead
up from the abyss.

But you know the true story.
It was you who snapped the yarn
and dropped the strangled cat down the hill
and you convinced yourself that it was
all that you could do.

I

This is all you have left.
A wooden chair, a pair of scissors,
a new mirage of yourself having
returned from the edge
after losing a debate.
You have kept your willpower throughout
in spite of the changed destiny.
The scissors you save are the key
to the treasure box that no longer exists.
They ching and chang – the song
accompanies your final chapter
as the music someone chooses
for your funeral – you are not invited
and thus not consulted.
You have made up your mind before arrival
and now you have altered that mind.
You start to question about that finest and longest scarf
which has promised to change you.
Cocoons come in all shapes and textures.
What you believe in is metamorphosis,
not the process of it.
The metallic tool sings and urges
the clock to restart.

Again,
your desire for a new shell
camouflages the existing one.

On the Threads of a Rainbow

In the popular animation Last Knit, a woman stands alone on a mountain feverishly knitting a never-ending scarf - to the point at which it grows so long that its weight begins to pull her over the cliffside. It's a bit like Captain Ahab being dragged to his death in Moby Dick - the scarf becomes immaterial; At this point, she is dragged not only by the scarf but by obsession.

My first viewings were uncomfortable. I felt a great deal of sympathy for our lone knitter; Her story was more tragic and disturbing to me than the Greek legend of Sisyphus - who was punished by the gods to push a rock up a hill for all eternity - because unlike Sisyphus, she is a slave to some manic impulse that comes from within her nature. In this way, Last Knit said more to me about the futility of our compulsions than it does about art.

So when I ventured down into the comment section and saw that people were calling Last Knit 'Inspiring', I couldn't get my head around what they meant. But I know now that I was missing a part of the picture and that's what I'd like to share with you now - How I learned to take inspiration from Last Knit and why I now feel that the image of this lone knitter might hold an important lesson for those of us in Hong Kong.

It started with a single thread that I couldn't resist pulling upon -
It was a line from an article. It referred to Last Knit as:

'A metaphor for the life of the artist.'

That sentence frustrated me. I just couldn't let go of it. Not only because it's so cliché and grandiose, but because it wrongly implies that there is only one true model of art, whilst in reality, another 'art' exists and is also entirely valid - but this other art is hiding in the shadows of Last Knit - in its negative space.

Firstly, let's refer to the art of our manic knitter as *nomadic art*. By this, I mean that it is an art that is created purely for the satisfaction of the artist making it. It is art created for the intrinsic joy of the creative process, rather than any particular outcome. Consider the fact that the scarf being knitted cannot possibly be worn; not only because of its infinite length but because *no other human beings seem to exist in this world*. In this way, she is like Van Gogh, working away slavishly but never selling a painting, or William Wordsworth finding sublimity in the isolation of his famous boat voyage.

It is the art Oscar Wilde might have had in mind when he declared that: *All art is quite useless*.

Then there is the form of art absent from Last Knit - Let's call it *Practical art*. This is the art that can be delivered as a product - within a society - to an audience, to customers and consumers. It is visible, valuable, shareable. It is perhaps even useful.

This form of art, frankly, gets a bad rap and I'd like to be clear that my point here is not that it is inferior or somehow less artistic. This is art that entertains and sustains people. It generates conversation. Shakespeare wrote plays to win audience. The fact that he was celebrated in his time and did not wallow away in poverty does not detract from his work. We should also remember that even the greatest artists were human beings who lived with many of the same economic pressures and responsibilities as we face now.

So, my argument is not as simple as saying that practical art is not real art. The problem is that, in modern times, because practical art is easier to sort and deliver to the public, nomadic art is increasingly neglected and even smothered. I worry that because of this, the sublimity and colour of art will fade and that the way we think about art will become warped and narrow.

Before getting into it, I'd like to retell a joke (of sorts)

The devil and a friend of his were walking down the street when they saw ahead of them a man stoop down and pick up a piece of *pure truth*.

The friend turned to the devil,

“That man just picked up some truth! Aren't you going to stop him?”

“No.” the devil replied, “He will destroy it himself by *organizing it*.”

In the same way, it is the organization and delivery of art that I worry about; because the only things that come to our attention are those that have been sorted by Google, Facebook, and Youtube. Within these algorithms, art is deemed successful only if it sustains attention, en masse and over time. This system does not benefit from challenging you, educating you or stimulating you - In some ways, it's the exact opposite: The algorithms are designed to keep you in a loop. To do this, they provide you with what is familiar, safe and undemanding.

And then there's some *sleight of hand*: We are led to believe that the clumsy metrics of the system - view counts, watch times, likes - are evidence of a work's *quality*.

This is why I say that our views towards art will inevitably become warped; you only need to look at the incentives offered to artists. It is no longer viable for an artist to dedicate themselves wholly to the cultivation and discovery of beauty. Nowadays, in order to survive, an artist must also be tactical - Not only as a personality outside their work, but the work they produce must be burdened and diluted with a certain cynicism; They must become part of the system and speak its language, rather than the language of their own heart.

An artist like our knitter, who is struck by an intense *calling from within*, but is unconcerned with metrics and appearance, becomes a tree falling in a forest with nobody around to hear it. But perhaps this is what people have found ‘inspiring’ about *Last Knit*. Many of us in the developed world - and particularly those of us in Hong Kong - feel a sort of *cultural malnutrition*. This feels odd to say because, on the one hand, we are practically drowning in media; but is this media ‘culture’? Or is it merely ‘content’?

Media have become active and accessible, but my feeling is that art that is truly pertinent or fresh - Art that pierces our defences, electrifies us and reaches us on a profoundly human level - is becoming increasingly distant. This is because Spontaneity and sublimity are doomed with any system. They are *an anomaly* - They are *noise*.

Let's pretend that there was a food delivery system, which could provide you with a steady influx of empty calories - But that was fundamentally incapable of providing us with some crucial nutrients. Although satisfied at first, we would gradually become deficient and weak. In the same sense, I worry that over years of unchallenging media, our imaginations will grow weak and colourless - and the tragedy is that the change is coming at a rate too gradual for us to defend against.

It makes me think of Charlie Chaplin's speech in *The Great Dictator* -

“We have developed speed, but we have shut ourselves in.

Machinery that gives us abundance has left us in want.

Our knowledge has made us cynical.

Our cleverness, hard and unkind.

We think too much, and feel too little.

More than machinery, we need *humanity*.”

Chaplin warned against ‘*Machine men with machine minds and machine hearts*’; yet as our lives become a matter of appeasing *systems* rather than directly reaching out to humans, there's a risk that we too will become machine-hearted.

And that's the message I'd like to leave you with.

Sublime and spontaneous art, like that shown in Last Knit, has a danger of slipping through the cracks of society and going completely unrewarded. If you find an artist who reaches you on that profound level - *please* - pause to consider how rare and special this is and also understand that this artist might have found themselves in a very bad position - not because of a lack of talent - but because their talent goes off the radar of our clumsy sorting systems.

Ask yourself -

What is the human cost of this art?

What has this person sacrificed to lay it before me?

If they reach you as an individual, consider supporting them *as an individual*. Directly, financially, emotionally.

Support that spirit when you see it because it is tender, human.

Support it because it's where we will find excitement, nourishment...

And above all

colour.

Congruence and Contradiction

A glimpse into human nature through The Last Knit

*A congruent silhouette yet with contradicting substance;
An invitation to one yet with an injunction to another;
A mark of success yet with a message of succumbence;
A right at present yet with a wrong thereafter;
And this is my perception of perception galore.*

To say that perception works wonders would probably be an understatement – it is what helps some justify the unjustifiable for others; rationalises the irrational for others; and makes the possible impossible of others. And this fascinating realm of human conscience could not have been more prominent in *The Last Knit*, where the protagonist pushes the envelope as to how far our views of the world could bring us.

“There she is, sitting on the edge of the cliff in solitude, carefully nursing her beloved creation: a scarf. Quite remarkable it is, with intricately-woven strands of linen, carefully conjured criss-crosses, and seemingly interminable length. Some dub it the story of destiny, while some name it a narrative of disillusion.”

We have always been programmed, as a legacy of education and social ethos, amongst other factors, to devote ourselves to our hearts' desires. And this is perhaps what gives rise to our interests, goals and passions. We have all experienced moments when something intrinsically seduces us into what turns out to be an endless pursuit: a pursuit of what we deem to be our true calling. To some, this equates to destiny. And this path which we are conceived to trek in turn translates into success in many cases – look at the Wright Brothers, who converted their lifelong passion for flight into the invention of the first plane; look at Steven Hawking, who turned his love for Physics into some of the most ground-breaking theories to underpin the subject; and look no further than your parents, peers, or even yourself, who have managed to shape devotions into beacons that direct us in life. So powerful is destiny is that it can propel us into pursuing what outsiders would deem irrational, insane, impossible, no matter what it takes.

However, it is also this relentless craving for self-recognition and psychological contentment that often pushes us to no-man's land – cliffs that would drag us down the leagues of the unknown that we are too absorbed in our own bubble to be aware of. Negligence of our loved ones, disregard for sincere but harsh opinions, superfluous thoughts of success which would never eventually be realised are all pitfalls that have claimed raging flames of passion. It is not difficult to see from *The Last Knit* that what we believe to be our most sincere companions on life's journey could ultimately place us in grave danger should we not have the sanity to break ourselves free from the entanglement of the voluptuous. The way destiny can without a trace morph into disillusion is simple - a fine thread is what separates affection from addiction.

“As the scarf elongated, so did it grow deeper into the canyon that belies it. But she did not cease, for what could only be seen were the balls of yarn still waiting. Her knitting increased in intensity, and along with the choreography in crescendo, her footsteps brought her unprecedentedly close to the periphery of the cliff. Until it brought her down. So overwhelming was the weight of the scarf that despite her best efforts, she was left helpless by her own conjuring. It was then did she realise the pair of scissors that were only a few inches away were now no longer within grasp. Some proclaim it as the story of determination, while others dismiss it as a narrative of desperation.”

“Never give up”, in my humble opinion, is a cliché plagued by its overuse. And by this I am not belittling the value of perseverance - an unwavering spirit is a prerequisite for attaining any sort of achievement. What I am trying to argue is that sometimes we simply have to bow to the insurmountable. Of course, one may in turn

point out that it is often the reluctance to surrender that has given rise to the anecdotes of the much admired. Albert Einstein for instance, had to rebuild his laboratory from scratch after a devastating fire rendered all but the tiniest morsels of his work to ashes. What comes thereafter, they say, is history. And then there is Jack Ma, the founder of internet heavyweight Alibaba, who grew up in humble beginnings where he could not even utter a coherent sentence in English. And then there are many other stories that can be used to refute my seemingly ignorant statement.

However, we have to be mindful that when all seems lost, there is the case where it really is all a nightmare, and that it can still be salvaged; and then there is the case where all really is lost. To put it in the most extreme of words, no one, for example, has escaped from the ever-conquering Grim Reaper. It is often the mentality of “this won't happen to me” that pushes us to the brink of collapse. We, by nature, are hard-wired to maximise returns, no matter what it takes, and to make no compromises in relinquishing what we perceive to be within our fingertips. We often do not admit defeat until the grave consequences comes hauntingly. And this is, in defence of all those who have valiantly failed in the battle against the inevitable, more than understandable – who would want to retreat when the chequered flag is within striking distance? Yet, it is frequently ignorance, over-optimism and reluctance to let go of the past and achievements that bring us to the precarious situation like that depicted in *The Last Knit*.

If I had taken anything from my high school economics classes, it would have to be the concept of sunken cost: a concept which states that events of the past should not affect the decision-making of the present.

“With all her might, she managed to claw herself back onto terra firma, albeit minus her possession. It was then did it dawn upon her that it was her very knitting needles that had rendered all her labour fruitless. Out of melancholy, she tossed them into the depths that lay beneath her feet. It was only then did she finally had a sense of relief. Some call it a story of defeat, while others dub it a narrative of defiance.”

Succumbing to defeat is never easy. We all loathe the indignation and disdain when we have to hoist the white flag. It is experiences like this that bestow upon us the chains of helplessness, dejection and worthlessness. And this is probably what she feels too: hours of spinning and weaving eventually leading to bare hands is never an easy pill to swallow. However, to me, everything is a matter of perspective, and defeat is of no exception. Think of it this way – by surrendering, you are plucking up the courage to own up to your shortcomings. And more crucially, you are also announcing your defiance to all that that had defined your failure. While it may seem ludicrous to put your hands in the air when all is not yet done and dusted, bear in mind that the term “pyrrhic victory” was coined for a reason. And it probably has to go with the many who have sacrificed so much that the tannins of the wine they had incubated would only be at its finest after their last breath.

Besides, defeat is something that has and will always play a significant part in our travels. Whatever our perspectives, it is irrefutable that no athlete, no matter how talented, fortunate, or invincible he may be, can outrun the likes of time and fate. Setbacks are something that all of us have to face as we indulge in our game with the spectres of the sundial. And it is not like all is lost when admitting defeat. Surely, you may be ridiculed by the likes of agony and regret, but it is also through pains do you reap the fruits of experience and courage. “Still I rise” are the words emblazoned on the helmet of five-time Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton, and it is this quote that sums up neatly the aforementioned – go onward and upward in life's earnest battle, and eventually you will rise.

Life is never easy, nor should it be. But it is also a journey that ought to be cherished. And if there was one thing that *The Last Knit* taught us travellers, it would be this: strive to be remembered for the legacy of our knitting, rather than for our last knit.

*Life is like fire, when flames of passion and desire ignite,
Life is like ice, when avalanches of fate and damnation befall,
Embrace the symphonies of serenity and success,
Engrave the roars of pain and prejudice,
And this is my perception of *The Last Knit* galore.*

Open Section (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Xu Lok Yi Joyce

“Let it go, let it go
When I rise like the break of dawn
Let it go, let it go
That perfect girl is gone
Here I stand in the light of day
Let the storm rage on
The cold never bothered me anyway”

The catchy lyrics of “Let it Go” above, from the Disney movie “Frozen”, have reverberated in my mind since I watched the short animated film “The Last Knit”. The film depicts a thought-provoking fable that imparts wisdom and hard truth, using the scarf as the prominent motif. Echoing to the liberation of Elsa from “Frozen”, a character who dared to free herself by letting go of her past struggles and embracing her destiny as a powerful queen, the protagonist of “The Last Knit” took the bold step of letting go of her obsession i.e. a long scarf that she had been frantically knitting day and night. My heart was captured by the scene toward the end, in which the headstrong knitter bit off her own hair, which she had been using as yarn when her wool was depleted, before casting the needles over the edge of the cliff. With this act, she set herself free from the physical and emotional shackles that had been constraining her. Her bleak stare, followed by a sigh of relief, marked the opening of a new chapter in her life. Drawing on the film's lessons, I can glean some pearls of wisdom, which help us gain a deeper understanding of our own lives.

Pause for a moment. What are you hankering for the most in your life? Getting good grades? A top job? A luxurious mansion? Social status? The latest gadgets? Incredible wealth? Sometimes, we think we know what we want, but deep down, we are at a loss as to what we truly need to make us happy. The protagonist's scarf is a metaphor for obsession and widely accepted markers of success e.g. money, power, prestige, and beauty, that we, as human beings, often long for in this consumption-driven era, especially in Hong Kong, which is best known for its long working hours. One in five employees work an average of 55 hours per week according to a study by the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions. This illustrates a bitter truth: rest is a luxury while stress is the norm. In the process of pursuing these shallow pleasures and material possessions, we tend to stop at nothing to get what we want. Tormented by temptation and avarice, we become emotionally crippled with feelings of desperation, anguish, bitterness, and fear. The endless competition within a monotonous routine leads to self-destruction; burnt out and dehumanized by our own obsessions, we lose sight of our own identities and damage our relationships, eventually falling into the abyss – just like the protagonist, dragged down the cliff by the increased weight of her ever-growing scarf.

Notably, numerous empirical studies have shown a negative correlation between materialism and well-being. Preoccupied with the relentless pursuit of desires, you can never be satisfied, just as water cannot be held in a sieve. As we attain more possessions, wealth and status, we are deceived by an illusion of contentment; however, in turn we simply become more ambitious, anxious of losing what we have gained, which causes us to become greedier and more competitive until things spiral out of control. We then come to realize that the joy derived from these material items is transient, fuelling further possession, finding ourselves longing for something else and falling into the cycle of the Hedonic Treadmill. This phenomenon mirrors the dramatic scene whereby the protagonist lost control and was entangled in the scarf. This dragged her further toward the edge of the cliff, until she was forced to use part of herself – her own hair – as the yarn to save herself. This act reflects real-world human behavior, whereby we abandon our health, well-being and relationships, and even risk our own lives, to obtain the possessions or goals we crave.

The Bible says, “For what profits a man if he gains the whole world but loses his own soul?” Buddhism also teaches us that a fixation on desire will, in the end, create more pain and suffering. The art of “letting go”, as conveyed in the film, is often easier said than done. This is starkly demonstrated through the crushing ending of the critically acclaimed play “Death of a Salesman”, whereby Willy paid the tragic price of his life for being an obsessive workaholic. Instead, let's learn to find value in the process and pay attention to things around us that enrich our lives and make them worth living. In an infinite pool of possibilities, life is an ongoing cycle

of changes and decisions. As life is limited and precious, we should challenge our enslavement to superficial wants and desires, maintaining a balance between our needs and wants. Just like the protagonist, you can choose to stop, preventing yourself from being dragged over the edge.

The memorable scene in which the protagonist continued her scarf-making instead of snipping off the fabric with the scissors resembles those moments when we are so preoccupied with our pleasures and burdens – the weight of the “wools” – that we tend to grow confused between our own needs and wants. We should however learn to let go of slave consciousness and regain our appreciation for the invaluable things around us that money cannot buy, such as family life, health, friendships and spiritual development. If grasping your hand tightly, you will keep what you caught, but if you are willing to spread your hand and share, you can gain so much more. If things don't work out the first time, take another shot. In doing so, you can experience the true joy and freedom of life. In my work in the philanthropy field, I am fortunate to have met a number of people who follow their inner calling to pursue the greater good, making impactful influences on different noble causes. For example, I met a secondary school principal who gave up his million-dollar annual salary to offer free one-on-one tutorial services to underprivileged students, and also a former Wall Street banker who quit his high-flying job to support thousands of children affected by Aids in Mainland China. These shining individuals forwent opulent lives and materialistic riches to follow their hearts and contribute real value in their lives.

Another lesson that I drew from the film is the importance of listening to our own inner voice and following our own drumbeat instead of being blinded by temptations and giving in to peer pressure and society's expectations of us. After all, we each understand who we are at the core of our being. We should take charge of our own happiness, embrace our emotions, and be conscious of the things we truly need rather than allowing our immediate wants and desires to dominate us. The protagonist's scissors symbolize our competing desire to cut ourselves off from the rat race to focus on our loved ones and personal wellbeing. It tells us to put down our own ego and open our hearts and minds to the beauty of what we have, enjoying the good times with things we truly love and people we love. Otherwise, we risk thrusting ourselves into the abyss, dragging our irreversible regrets and misfortunes with us. When the protagonist chose to grab for the scissors in the end, she replenished her spirit and embarked on a more fulfilling life, escaping the abyss.

Life is a beautiful gift, and we are each in charge of our destinies. We can escape the dangers of the cliff and break our chains, so that we are open to opportunities and enjoy life's precious moments as they unfold. The essence of life is not measured by wealth and material possessions, but by love and joy and those whose lives you touch and help. It is neither about the length nor beauty of the “scarf” we knit; but it is about our self-awareness and the quality of our unique relationships, which ensures we gain positive things in our lives and live it to the fullest. I would like to conclude with the famous quote from Winston Churchill, “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

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Open Section (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Will Mcveigh

The Last Knit and an Unravelling Society

The English language is a unique tapestry which has taken at liberty from the likes of French, Greek, Latin, and German. Within this language we find awkward, clumsy words like ‘lackadaisical’; beautiful words including ‘logolepsy’; complex words such as ‘eccedentesiast’; and words that simply feel wonderful to utter, like the term ‘zeitgeist’.

The zeitgeist is explained as the spirit or nature of a particular epoch - a certain climate which sets an era apart from all others preceding it. Laura Neuvonen's ‘The Last Knit’ is an allegory for a dissatisfied society. It's a depiction of our very own zeitgeist and our sacrifice of communication and relationships in the pursuit of ambitions and aspirations.

Picture this. The sun begins to rise, slowly creating an orange canopy. A woman moves confidently towards a cliff's edge. With her she carries the necessary tools of her trade - yarn, knitting needles, scissors, and a chair.

As the sun slowly creeps across the sky to reveal its full might, the knitter already has much to be proud of for she has created a wonderfully intricate scarf. She works with an assuredness. A dexterity. A skillfulness born from practice and repetition. She pauses as she encounters her first quandary - should she be content with what she has and use the scissors to cut the scarf, or should she continue and create something more, something greater? She dismisses this fleeting hesitation and continues to knit with vigour. After all, why be content with what you have when a little more hard work can reap greater rewards?

The sun now reaches its zenith and the knitter's hard work appears to have paid off as she has created a magnificently long scarf - so long, in fact, that its length is now hindering her productivity. She needs space to work so fastidiously, so she carelessly flicks at the scarf with her foot. Unbeknownst to the knitter at the time, this action proves to be a harbinger of disaster. As is the case with many great ventures which meet with failure, the knitter's tunnel-vision and fixation on her goal hinder her ability to see the bigger picture and the ramifications that her actions will bring.

To the knitter, this nudge is the smallest of movements and immaterial in her quest for knitted magnificence. Yet, this nudge pushes the scarf off the edge of the cliff and ever so slowly begins to drag the knitter down with it. The knitter soon finds herself in a Frankenstein-esque battle with her own creation and she realises that, firstly, she cannot halt the scarf pulling her down, and, secondly, she has been dragged too far away from the scissors - she is no longer in control. Her pursuit for more results in the endeavour itself becoming the master of their relationship.

As her creation cruelly drags her ever-closer towards the edge she encounters another significant problem, that being that she has reached the end of her last ball of yarn. In a frantic effort to continue knitting (and not to plunge off of the edge of the cliff) she sacrifices part of herself for her success and begins to knit her auburn hair into the scarf. Her pace increases and she manically knits and knits - seemingly oblivious to the fact that her work is the very thing that is pulling her over the edge. The scarf, now boisterously flailing in the wind, takes on a life of its own. For so long she believed she was in control of the scarf, yet now the scarf is the thing that controls her. The knitter's final strands of hair are intertwined within the scarf. She has become part of her own creation and she has no way to sever the link. Now helpless, the woman is at the mercy of her scarf, the weight of which is too much to bear. She tumbles off the edge, lacking the power or stability to continue. Her obsession for more took her to the point of no return, before dragging her into the abyss.

The Last Knit is a fantastic portrayal of twenty-first century society, and, in particular, our inability to differentiate between obsession and ambition. At the beginning of the story we encounter a sane woman setting out in her pursuit of a passion of hers - knitting. As her successfulness increases, her persona changes. She becomes rash in her decision-making. She begins to struggle to keep control. Helpless and without anyone to turn to, she wrestles with a situation entirely of her own creation, yet by this point entirely out of her control. Fast forward further still, and we see the woman maniacal in her determination to keep going, to succeed, to make bigger and better. Even when the cost of the project becomes the physical and mental wellbeing of the woman, the task itself trumps all. Can we with clear-conscience say that we are not guilty of this? Think back, is there a time when school-work, deadlines, or self-imposed targets have meant the sacrifice of a dinner, a date, or the blissful freedom to do exactly what you want? Assuredly, the answer to this question is yes.

We can see this process, and the traits seen in the knitter, on a daily basis. From teachers, to lawyers, to restaurateurs, each individual has quantified their version of success and they fervently work towards their goals. Long hours, low pay, or few holidays are not enough to thwart those sufficiently driven to attain the success they perceive they need. The Last Knit paints a picture of a society which is reaching the point of no return, and, as with our knitter, we are at the edge of a proverbial cliff. We have not fallen yet, but we are in danger of falling off as we continually stretch to grab success.

Whilst successfulness is subjective, the scarf itself is a motif for success, be it power, riches, or respect. The scarf initially is quite manageable, yet it soon turns to dominate the woman and absorbs all her attention and effort. Instead of being satisfied with her scarf, she fervidly knits and knits as she wants to extend her creation. The idea of the scarf can be replaced by any number of aspects within our society - school grades, money, a promotion - and we do not have to look far to see how these too can become the scarf which pulls us off a cliff. The more she achieves, the greater her determination to achieve more, and the further away from the ability to halt her endeavours (the scissors) she becomes.

The idea of the fixation with maximising success is not avante-garde in itself, yet no other era has ever been so willing to sacrifice health and sanity in order to do so. It is ingrained in us at a young age that success is paramount to happiness, even if the road to success is miserable and self-destructive. It is becoming increasingly rare for us to step back and figure out ‘why’ we are doing something or the effects our actions may have, and that is the message we can take from *The Last Knit*.

As we grimly set upon our paths to success, it becomes increasingly easy to sacrifice relationships, be they familial, work-related, or romantic, as we aim to attain our self-defined version of successfulness. The absence of dialogue in *The Last Knit* is indicative of the world we find ourselves in. There was no scope for the woman to engage in discourse with another, nor did she vocalize her ever-increasing helplessness within the situation she had created. Goals, dreams, and targets drive us. Drive society. Competitiveness and success have become innate for many, and our protagonist is not free of the pressures of success and the desire for more. Satisfaction, along with relationships, are sacrificed in the hunt for the proverbial golden goose and the knitter suffers in miserable silence.

The film ends with the knitter reappearing, short patchy hair jutting out at obtuse angles taking the place of her once flowing, russet locks. She tentatively lifts the scissors, the one item that could have prevented her earlier failure, and begins to fixate on the process of opening and closing them. She looks around, before gingerly clipping her nails once, then twice. The repetitive motion of the scissors replaces that of her knitting needles. As the audience we wonder, has she learned her lesson? Or will our knitter meet a similar fate at the hands of the tool which could have once saved her?

The answer we will never know, yet if there is one thing history can tell us, it is that we exist in an era which places personal well-being behind success. Our zeitgeist is defined by the obsessive pursuit for success and reward, regardless of the effect on our bodies or minds or relationships. We are a society of flagellants. We are the knitters, and we keep going back for more.

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Open Section (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Jonathan Lo

What is it that ultimately gives life meaning and purpose? To what do we give the privilege of occupying our time? What is it that we love? Is it our work, a hobby, or some other obsession? Finnish auteur Laura Neuvonen's award-winning animation *The Last Knit* explores this probing question with an uncanny story about a woman with an irresistible urge to knit. The setting is a flat, barren, and monochrome landscape, unremarkable in every way save the fact that it is located atop a cliff that overlooks a seemingly endless chasm. The protagonist, a woman wearing her auburn hair tied up in a bun comes to the edge of the cliff and brings with her a chair and some knitting supplies—needles for knitting, balls of yarn, and a pair of scissors. The plot is simple yet mesmerizing and profound. The woman begins to knit what first looks to be a scarf, but the audience soon realizes that it does not matter what she is knitting or for whom she is knitting, only that she is knitting.

The woman is knitting for the sake of knitting. She is singularly focused on her task—her mind is determined, her brow is furrowed in concentration, her hands move quickly and skillfully, her eyes transfixed on the work at hand. It is difficult to tell whether she is knitting out of interest, enjoyment or necessity (maybe all three?); what is clear is that she cannot stop. Knitting has become an addiction for her, an obsession—compulsive prison made of yarn. The scissors that have the power to break her habit are always within reach, but the temptation to keep knitting is just too strong—the rhythmic clickity-clack of the pair of metallic needles making contact, the monotonous yet comforting movement of her hands in familiar and graceful motion, the pleasure of seeing balls of yarn weaved into patterns of her own design—the sheer satisfaction of it all. In the words of T. S. Eliot's magi at the end of their journey: “Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.”

The woman continues working even though her scarf is of such a considerable length that it unfurls into the abyss and dangles over the cliff—still attached to her ever-knitting hands that will not let go. When the last ball of yarn is used up, the woman concocts an ingenious but desperate plan to keep knitting at any cost: she unties her long hair, which is the same colour as the yarn, and weaves it into the monstrosity that her growing scarf

was gradually becoming. But the transformation is now complete—the woman is truly and fully immersed in her knitting; the hobby, such as it was, had become a dangerous, full-blown obsession. She is now part of her scarf, and the scarf part of her. She is one with her creature, which has taken on a life of its own and is now threatening to take her life as well, dragging her over the cliff and into the chasm. The woman, who resorted to sacrificing her own hair so she could continue knitting, comes face to face with the harrowing consequences of indulging, rather than restraining, her addiction: She was no longer in control of her life.

The story ends with the woman unexpectedly climbing back up the cliff to the safety of the plateau. She has finally let go of her precious scarf and along with it her long hair, both of which are now lost in the abyss; she now has a head of short red hair. The woman seems to experience symptoms of withdrawal at first, but at a moment of courage and with a flash of determination, she tosses what remains her needles over the cliff, finally overcoming her deadly addiction. She has finished her last knit. In the final scene of the animation, the woman is back in her chair overlooking the cliff, but all she has left are a pair of scissors. As the woman trims her nails, she is drawn to the way the scissors feel in her hand, as well as the rather pleasing sounds they make as her hands make the familiar cutting motions: snip, snip, snip, snip. The woman looks around mischievously for other objects to trim as the music plays and the credits start to roll. Could this be the start of a brand new obsession?

The Last Knit is about an odd-ball character in a bizarre plot set in a strange world, but there is something in the story that is unsettling in its familiarity—we have all been here before. We have all experienced, at some time or other, the joy of discovering a new activity we enjoy, the rush that comes from feeding our addictions with reckless abandon, and the cravings and the longings that eat us until we can indulge once again. Neuvonen's quirky animation is a cautionary tale about the power of addiction and the danger of allowing our obsessions to overtake our better judgment. In the story, the protagonist's habit seems fairly innocuous at first; how much harm can a little knitting cause after all? How much damage can a little bit drinking, or gambling, or drugs, or online gaming, or [INSERT YOUR FAVOURITE OBSESSION HERE!] do? As it turns out, a great deal. When the woman's hobby becomes an addiction, she loses her self-control and is willing to do anything to keep her habit alive, regardless of how irrational or self-destructive her actions might be. There is little logic or self-reflection in the realm of obsession; it is difficult to make good choices when our minds are clouded by the pangs of addiction. Left unchecked, our unbridled obsessions have the power to consume us and take us over the cliff. Although the story ends with the woman surviving the ordeal with her scarf and triumphant over her addiction, the ambivalent tone of the final sequence suggests that she may not have learned her lesson. She cannot sit still. She must do something to amuse herself.

In his book, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (Penguin, 1985), Neil Postman suggests that what threatened modern society most was not the Orwellian nightmare of a tyrannical power that threatened to deprive people of their freedoms, but Aldous Huxley's vision of a Brave New World, where human beings are reduced to a culture of triviality and narcissism. While George Orwell warned against the day that the truth would be hidden from the people, Huxley feared the day that truth simply did not matter to people anymore, a(the) people preoccupied with self-love and the pursuit of pleasure. In *Brave New World Revisited* (Harper & Brothers, 1958), Huxley quips that in the West, people who were most concerned with democracy and the fight against tyranny “failed to take into account man's almost infinite appetite for distractions.” (31) The woman in *The Last Knit* is certainly a victim to her knitting, a past-time that demands her undivided attention and consumes her resources; it distracts her from living her life, and threatens to amuse herself to death. Postman laments that “[w]hen a population becomes distracted by trivia, when cultural life is redefined as a perpetual round of entertainments, when serious public conversation becomes a form of baby-talk... then a nation finds itself at risk; culture-death is a clear possibility.” (158) When a population becomes addicted to entertainment and the desperate need to fill in the empty spaces with endless distractions, amusement becomes detriment to society and a hindrance to progress. In this regard, Neuvonen's film is also a perhaps a warning to relegate amusement and entertainment back to its rightful place and to restore a healthy balance to our lives for the sake of the greater good before it is too late.

What is it that ultimately gives life meaning and purpose? To what do we give the privilege of occupying our time? What is it that we love? *The Last Knit* is an inspirational film because it transports audience to the barren landscape of the woman, allowing us to identify with her feelings of existential ennui. It also places the viewer in her chair, inviting us to reconsider our own life choices and the things we depend on to fill the void. Sometimes the things we love end up hurting us; sometimes we are trapped because we are too stubborn to let go. Sometimes it is when things are hanging by a thread that true happiness is found by cutting ourselves free.

Open Section (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Stephanie Studzinski

Being Knitwise, or the Art of Untinking

Being knitwise is the act of preparing for the next stitch as if you would continue stitching endlessly. So it is with knitting and life; we must commit to the future—to carrying on and being prepared to make the next stitch even if at times we question the design or lose the pattern and can't see what our project will become—what we will become. Still, we continue to create the fabric of our lives with each successive action—each interlaced stitch becomes a signifier of whom we are as individuals and where our passions lead.

The Last Knit directed by Laura Neuvonen is a testament to persistence, the importance of passion and creative processes in our lives, and the power of shifting our perspectives. In it, a lone figure in a desert-like abyss chooses to knit on the edge of a precipice. The background is noticeably desolate and stretches endlessly from horizon to horizon, focusing our attention on the protagonist. It seems odd to choose a cliff to knit by. And why alone? How did she get there? None of these questions are answered, however, the landscape also calls to mind the poetry of John Donne: “No man is an island / Entire of itself / Every man is a piece of the continent / A part of the main.” Here, we find a woman who has staked out a piece of the continent for herself. She has chosen this isolated spot to pursue her passion, however, her focus is so narrow and intense that she could just as easily be sitting in a busy airport terminal and her experience would remain the same. She becomes fully immersed in her passion: knitting. When she starts knitting, the music begins and the atmosphere and pace of the film abruptly changes. A certain *joie de vivre* can be sensed along with a new awakening of purpose in the protagonist.

The fabric of our personal lives becomes richer and more varied the more time we spend immersing in our passions and creative practices. In these singular worlds, the life of the mind and our inner selves intertwine revealing and enhancing our true selves. This is easiest at the quiet moments spent alone—on mental precipices—when we are engaged in a creative activity and we can lose ourselves as the protagonist does in the rhythms of creation. The rhythmic clicking of her knitting needles signifies the steady ticking of a clock and the passage of time, however, the knitter remains oblivious to everything other than the act of knitting itself. Her eyes stare fixedly at the section of the scarf she actively knits.

For her, there is no atmosphere or background; there are only the essentials: knitting needles, balls of yarn, scissors, and her chair. The needles have what appear to be inlaid red rubies. Red is typically taken to symbolize fiery, intense passion, and rubies are rare and precious stones, making the needles all the more likely to be treasured possessions. It is also probably not a coincidence that her hair and the scarf she knits passionately are red. If we look at her even closer, we notice that she is wearing a knitted dress confirming that she has a history of knitting. In fact, knitting is clearly an important activity to her. She has invested a lot of time in it, and it holds a significant place in her life. But alas, this is her last knit as the title boldly declares.

At one point the knitter thinks the scarf may be complete, and she begins to grab the scissors, but reconsiders. She mulls it over, and we can feel the tension of the moment—between the creator and the created. This is a pivotal choice. However, she realizes the scarf is not yet finished so she picks up the pace, making the knitting fly over the cliff's edge. She so completely loses herself in the immersive process of creation that she is surprised to find that the raw materials have run out. As she sits thinking, her hair comes untucked, and which inspires her to use it. She even knits her own hair, revealing how much she is willing to give to her passion and how powerful the need to create can be. Much as Rapunzel allowed a suitor to climb up her hair in order to escape confinement in her tower, the knitter uses her hair to give her creation more life. Is this a rational choice? No. Certainly not. It is a choice informed by passion, dedication, self-sacrifice, and impulse.

Often our creations—our children—have lives of their own. Just as her previous knitting now has a new life as a dress that can be worn by herself and others and perhaps, even passed on as a family heirloom. Even as the knitter's scarf twists, overlaps, folds and is pulled away from her, it remains connected to her. Our creations can surprise us, and we in turn are often willing to make sacrifices because of our dedication to them. However, this film is also a reminder that while the things we create and the passions we possess can take on meaningful lives of their own, they can also devour us. The need to create can quickly transform a fulfilling hobby into an intense obsession. In the film, the knitter feels compelled to create and to continue creating regardless of the

personal cost. In fact, her knitting pulls her over the literal edge, making one wonder: Are we our own worst enemies? Can the need to create be a destructive force?

We all drop a stitch from time to time, however, her knitting physically drags her off a cliff. She disappears. Gone. Yet, she emerges sometime later spitting out hair, implying that she chewed through it to save her own life. Here is a woman defined by determination. She almost sacrificed her life so that her knitting could become what she felt it had the potential to be. However, she fought against her creative passion and the consequences of it by using her knitting needles as rock climbing picks. They act as tools bringing destruction and rebirth to her life as she successfully crawls and drags herself back toward her chair, breaking a needle along the way.

She has saved herself, yet, she feels loss. Staring blankly off the cliff, she mimes the act of knitting with one whole needle, one broken needle and no yarn. Suddenly, as if woken up, she considers what she is doing doesn't make any sense. She throws the needles off the cliff—ready to redefine who she is and what she can create. However, she is not certain how to move forward. It is not long before she notices and picks up the scissors. The music begins again, and the film ends with the protagonist cutting her nails, and presumably, obsessively looking for other things to cut. It is hard not to be worried about her—if the last outburst of creative passion is anything to go by: It almost killed her. Now, all she has are scissors, reminding one of the old adage that 'to a man with a hammer, everything is a nail'. This is the principle of cognitive bias which means that when we are accustomed to using certain tools, we see the world as defined by them. This is not limited to physical implements, but it is a more visual way of showing that our lives are defined by the ways in which we see them, which is in turn shaped by what is perceived around us. Much of this is beyond our control, but then we can always choose to knit our hair or not. We can learn to see the significance of the patterns we follow in our lives and in ourselves.

If there is a lesson here, it is that we must be knitwise—prepared but flexible. Ready to learn about ourselves through the act of creation and self-exploration but be weary of the dangers of obsession and fixed perspectives. And perhaps most of all, we must be ready to 'tink' as knitters do. Tinking is the act of undoing your work to correct an irregularity in the pattern which you previously inserted by mistake. In life, we cannot return to our old stitches and alter them. But we have other options. We can reweave the very fabric of our being, change our own design and determine to shape ourselves into our better selves. This is the ultimate act of self-love: A commitment to becoming the best you that you can be. Only in this way can you knit a better tomorrow for yourself and others—because just as no one is an island, we are never one thread. We are knitted together.

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Open Section (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Chan Lok Yan

'Tik tok,tik tok' I look up from the sketch book that I have been working on this whole day and take a glance at my watch which shows the time '9:00 p.m.' 'Oh, it has been this(so) late already!' I grimace and stretch myself with a yawn. Appreciating my work like a proud mother, I feel as contented and ambitious as ever about doing the work that I'm passionate about, just like how the protagonist felt in the noted short film 'The Last Knit' as she was knitting her gorgeous scarf.

Packed with profound lessons and surprising plot twists, the animation was a mind-blowing film about passion, balance and letting go. Chronicling the story of a knitter who was creating her masterpiece, the film went on as we viewers witnessed how the knitter slowly lost herself and sanity, how she played a gamble on her life for greater achievements, how she stumbled and struggled on the verge of death and finally lost part of herself in order to be free, leaving an indelible imprint on my mind.

Of course, unarguably, passion is an exceptional motivation which drives us forward and prompts us to try harder and hurdle all the barriers we encounter. Without which, we would only be walking corpses with hollow eyes and grieving expressions as our tremendous burden from work, jobs and life slowly weighs us down until our world is covered in a mist of unhappiness and hopelessness. As the famous writer Pearl S. Buck has once said, 'To find the joy in work is to discover the fountain of youth.', we can chase after greatness with passion. Hey, just take a look at the scarf made by the knitter in the film, long, multicoloured and absolutely stunning.

You will know that passion is what enables us to make our dreams come true. Then, passion must always be good...or is it?

There is only a fine line separating passion from obsession, devotion from compulsion. Being like an incandescent fire burning in the combustion engine in a diesel train, while passion can drive us forward in full speed; on the other hand, if we can't pull the trigger in time, it will propel us to the very edge and push us down the cliff to our damnation. In the film, the passion for knitting of the protagonist turned into ambition, followed by obsession and addiction. Watching the scene in which she hesitated to pick up the scissors and decided to continue knitting as she was consumed by her desire really did hit me hard as I was like seeing the reflection of my past self.

Being an architectural student who is so passionate about buildings, sketching, model building and 3D drawing pretty much occupied my entire mind. My passion was further fuelled after my assignment was chosen by the tutors as the second best one in class. It was a tipping point that I was slowly blinded by the boastful feeling of success and my ambition grew larger and larger. First, I wanted to have a good grade, then I wanted to be the best in class, afterwards, I wanted to win a competition... My desire was never gratified and I was always hungry for more. I remembered staying up till midnight in the studio. I remembered skipping meals to squeeze more time out of my day for work. I remembered cancelling dates with my family and friends and solely 'hanging out' with my schoolwork rather than my fellows. Every time when I wanted to take a break, a quiet whisper would echo in my mind, 'Just hold on and you can grasp more' 'You have been so hard all this time, you are just kidding about taking a step back, right?' 'Look at the enchanting future of accomplishments ahead of you, there is no excuse for you to relax.'

At one moment, I was like on the top of a mountain, standing on tiptoe with my hands stretched out far, the stars dancing around my finger tips, almost in my palm. The next moment, I took a leap and just as I thought I could finally grasp what I wanted, the stars slipped through my fingers as I misjudged my location and...I..I fell. In 2018, I was found unconscious lying on my desk in the studio. I was diagnosed with extreme fatigue after being sent to the hospital.

Throughout the week I spent in the sickbed for recovery, I just thought about all my gains and losses, all my achievements and costs and I suddenly realised that my accomplishments could never compensate for my losses. Is it worth sacrificing your relationship, time and even your health for more prosperous fulfilment? No, it isn't. It is never worthwhile to knit your hair into your scarf even though your lovely creation is tumbling down the cliff. We have to distinguish passion from obsession. Most importantly, we should learn to be contented with the things we have instead of craving for more endlessly, feeding our desires and sitting on the sidelines while our greed transform into hungry beasts. We are never defined by our success and victories and the endless quest for attainments would only seal our fate into the reincarnation of pain and misery. The former British Prime Minister William E. Gladstone has once said, 'Be happy with what you have and are, be generous with both, and you won't have to hunt for happiness.' We should all learn to appreciate our possessions and understand that sometimes, the milestones we reached are already good enough for us. Let's imagine that if the knitter in the film picked up the scissors to cut the yarn instead of carrying on knitting, she could have owned that beautiful scarf without putting herself into that dangerous situation.

Apart from learning to be satisfied with our current position, another important lesson that we should bear in mind is the art of letting go. It is very hard to gain something but it is definitely one hundred times more complicated to let go of something that you have been working on so hard. While the society glorifies the value of perseverance and it seems that quitters are nothing but cowards, it is perfectly okay to give up on things that are holding us back and dragging us down. Although it is absolutely painful to give up on our creation, it is sometimes necessary to do so. Giving up doesn't make you weak. Instead, it means that you are mature and courageous enough not to cling to a lost cause like the scarf falling gradually down the cliff and that you are intelligent and analytical enough to cut your losses instead of being blinded by emotion.

In economics, our devotion and efforts paid in the past are called 'sunk cost' which should not be considered at the current moment of decision making. What really matters is the cost that we are going to bear now or in the future. Emphasising on the value of today that can still be seized by us instead of indulging in the irrevocable cost we bore yesterday, I find this way of decision making very rational. The well-known physicist Michael Faraday definitely understood this. During his invention process, he once abandoned an idea that he had been developing for years as he finally realized that it was not working. After letting go of his original plan and

starting everything over again, he finally invented the world-changing creation: transformer, reinforcing the importance of letting go.

Furthermore, letting go isn't necessarily equal to losses. You could only leave space for more after disposing the old. After biting off her hair which was attached to the scarf, the knitter finally climbed back onto the cliff. Looking around, she eventually figured out that there were more beautiful things in her life which deserved her attention apart from that scarf. It's not about what you are giving up but is instead about what you are inviting into your life. If you could not give up on your heavy bundle, how could you carry on and reach up?

'Tik tok,tik tok' The ticking sound of my watch yanks me out of my ocean of thoughts and memories, reminding me that it's 9:15 already. Just as I am about to dive into my sketches again, I take a look at the window beside me and see that the sky is a silky fabric smeared in black, being illuminated by the city underneath which is dusted with small splashes of gold glitters like an artist has decided to improvise and pour out a jar of glitters as far as his eyes could see. It's breath-taking. It really is. The world is huge and there are more in my life apart from my work: my family, my friends, things I have never tried before... Thinking of this, I slowly close my book, put my stuff back into my backpack and finally leave for family dinner.

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Open Section (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Yuen Sik Yin Stephen

A Modern Fable of Identity Alienation

This is a fable about obsession, and a journey in which the protagonist seeks meaning and redemption.

As the film director of this animation, Laura Neuvonen first presents us an existential opening which imbues a symbolic scene of Genesis. A desolated plateau neither man nor woman yet exists, and thus a world of oblivion – an absence of predestination. This represents a situation many of us are now facing in the modern society.

What is our ultimate goal in life?

Soon after the movie introduces us a lady – the only person we would see throughout the animation, who acts as a personification of our struggling self-image. Walking towards the cliff with her barely discernible silhouette at dawn, she brings with her only three things – a chair, a pair of knitting needles, and a ball of yarn. At last she finds herself a place to settle down. These three objects all have their respective connotations: the psychological desire to secure one's social identity and position, the sociocultural desire to produce self-value through labour, and the limited resources one can employ, for instance time and energy.

Although it might sound unimpressive, to “settle down” is a humble but reassuring idea for human-being. Despite working only as insignificant cogs in a gigantic and complex machinery we call “society”, we cannot help wanting to be useful, valuable, and above all, to be needed and loved by the others. But very often we are not quite sure how to get there, and what position and role we should play so as to better contribute to our desire for recognition. This unsettling urge brings us anxiety of proving we are indeed worthy. As sunlight rests gently on her face, this “lucky” lady seemingly finds her own position and resolves that “knitting” is the job, if not her providence, she could do best.

Her “life” begins as she labours.

In fact, “knitting” serves merely as a blank sheet for which one can substitute anything. It could be any goal or role you deem important – being a good mother, a perfect girlfriend, a powerful husband, a successful manager, a professional butler, a lovable son, or something much more lofty and ambitious such as saving a country, or even the planet Earth. It does not matter what your personal “knitting” is, because once we manage to create our stand and purpose of living, all adversities and hardships followed would be nothing but meaningful and legitimate. No longer do we conceive ourselves as wanderers loitering aimlessly in this vast and lonely world.

This is the beginning of hope. At the same time, it lies the danger of cognitive blindness.

With no doubt, hard-work and patience are two most fundamental qualities to success. They are widely considered equivalent not just to virtue per se, but also to the guarantee of fruitful rewards. This age-old notion is so deep-rooted in our mind that we don't even query. We run into the danger of being mistaken by this oversimplified relation, that the degree of toil and suffer, must and should, have a direct proportion with the outcome. As in the film, the lady's hands are so occupied that they have never stopped for even one second, as though for fear that "slackness" would diminish her identity. If she had lived in our real world, I bet she would have won the "best employee award".

Her pathological persistence reveals a sense of irrationality and addiction. Meanwhile, the bud of obsession is clearly growing in her heart.

I can still remember vividly, around three years ago, when my mum had just retired, she vented her frustration on me one day, telling me what sort of embarrassing questions she had been asked by some of her friends and ex-colleagues, "So now you stay at home all day long doing nothing ah? Wouldn't that bother you mei? What else can you do if not going to work and earning for yourself a bit ah?" It reminded me of G. Bernard Shaw. The Nobel Prize winning writer once stated in his famous essay "Socialism and Marriage" – "If a woman has been accustomed to go in chains all her life and to see other women doing the same, a proposal to take her chains off will horrify her. She will feel naked without them." The ironic resonance here shines.

Having an identity may give a positive spin on our life, but we should always keep it in mind that we are not prisoners of any single identity, and it never defines and dictates who we are, and what we can achieve. This philosophy is not only applicable to workaholics but many mothers as well, especially those in Chinese society. It is a common belief that the lengthier a mum nags, the more expensive toys she is willing to buy, the more extra-curricular activities she assigns for her kids- only the deeper love and care she expresses. In this case, the identity of "mother" overrides other identities. They fail to understand that being a mother is hardly their sole living purpose. By the same token, their sons and daughters have multiple identities too than just being their children. There is always a delicate balance to strike.

Back to the story, our protagonist is made to believe "the more, the better". Even though the length of her scarf has long been to excess for any practical use, the lady fails to appreciate it is high time to stop.

She keeps on knitting. She knits for the sake of knitting.

Whilst she is still submerging in her self-deluded bubble, feeling fairly satisfied, and the progress seems so promising to her, what she has overlooked is that her effort is leading her off-track to the abyss, as one end of the scarf is spreading out too far away and inevitably dangling at the fringe. That is a typical case study of lacking "Situation Awareness". In some special occupations such as sea captain and aircraft pilot, this concept is constantly being emphasised. In short, it is the ability to know what is going on around you, and not to be deceived by scanty information and, most importantly, preconception.

Take it to a wider picture, we should also stop for a trifle from time to time, lift our eyes from our work, make full appraisal of our life, reflect on several fundamental questions such as "what I'm doing", "why I'm doing this" and "where I'm headed for", to see if there are something we have surprisingly overlooked or ignored. What would a normal person do when he finds out the dangling scarf at the cliff is slowly dragging him down into the deep valley? The answer seems blindingly obvious, but not quite.

Professor Barbara Oakley argues that when we try to solve a problem, there are two modes for us to choose: "focused mode" and "diffused mode". Most of us tend to over-use the former. But "being too focused" may jeopardise judgment, consolidate flawed presumption, confine our ability to think out of the box, and in worst case scenario, lead us to a totally wrong direction. Being in her "focused mode", the lady is evidently way too obsessed with her work. Even after she has briefly glimpsed the falling scarf, the only possible solution she could think of is still very much framed within her mental loop, namely everything related to "knitting" and "knitting" alone. Subsequently, she wrongly believes that the problem arises because she has not done her job "well" and "fast" enough, that is why she decides to hasten her speed rather than pause and examine the problem thoroughly. When she finishes all her available yarn balls at hand, finding that the scarf is still falling, she goes so far as to risk her own life by knitting with her long hair. By then, she has tragically prioritised social identity

before life, even though I still mildly suspect that the truth has already dawned on her and she probably knows she might have made some misjudgements. Perhaps due to self-defence mechanism, the lady cannot swallow her pride. And the decision eventually drags her down to the cliff.

Some reckon the ending is a rather optimistic and liberating one, as the scissor symbolises “letting go” and the lady finally regains her freedom from knitting. But I beg to differ as, I am afraid, the lady does not choose it with her own free will. She is in fact emancipated in quite a reluctant manner only because one of the needles is accidentally broken. Her body is freed, but by no means her soul. When I see her picking up the scissor, gazing at it with her hollow eyes, looking around, toying with it the same way she did with her needles at the start, it sends chills down my spine.

The sound of clipping seems eerily familiar, as if an ever-haunting spell to our protagonist. The lady is about to go from one extreme to another.

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Open Section (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Janice Getzlaf

Too Much Love of What We Love

A woman named after her great-grandmother on her father’s side, Loviisa, stands alone on a cliff top, already feeling a sense of triumph even before starting her pursuit. She is by herself, and to be perfectly frank, does not want any annoying distraction. She can indulge in her true passion in life – manipulating wool by alternating the knit and purl stitches using a pair of aluminum knitting needles.

Loviisa sits down on her simple chair to begin her complex mission. Very soon, an irrepressible sensation takes over, and she becomes mesmerized by the silky softness of the yarn, the rhythmic clicking of the size 8 needles, and the sheer deftness of her fingers. Her pursed lips show no movement, instead the words drifting determinedly through her mind:

“Loop yarn over right needle. Wrap yarn from front to back. Hold yarn taut. Loop around the needle. Pull loop through left needle. ... Loop. Wrap. Hold. Loop. Wrap. Hold. ... Now at the end. Slip off the needle. Hold scarf in left hand. Empty needle in right. AGAIN!”

The persistent Loviisa continues on this trajectory until, eventually, the scarf becomes so excruciatingly heavy that it begins its slow slippery descent over the raw edge of the cliff. In fact, Loviisa seems blissfully unaware that the scarf, a practical application in the art of knitting, no longer has any actual real value as it is simply now too cumbersome to wrap around any wearer’s neck. The scarf slides away, dragging the woman off her secure perch, and away to her impending death ...

Mercifully, the wool eventually runs out, affording Loviisa an opportunity to cease the incessant habit that has – and how onlookers would regard as senselessly - overtaken her soul, yanking her unceremoniously from a normal, routine life that should be filled with hugs, laughter, friends, peace, happy memories, and the love of a family.

But Loviisa’s passion, coupled with ingenuity, has fortuitously allowed her to hastily devise a plan for her obsession: She will begin incorporating her very own golden tresses into her magnificent scarf!

The cold, mechanical knitting machine whirrs on in poor Laviisa’s head: “Loop. Wrap. Hold. Loop. Wrap. Hold”, as she guides her lovely locks onto the needles. Her compulsion is so great, so powerful, and so all-encompassing that she faces her own demise once again and – to make a long story of a long scarf short – the poor woman tumbles over the edge of the severe cliff.

But Lady Luck is smiling down on Loviisa from behind a gentle, low-hanging cloud, and the gods, too, their eyes a-twinkle with benevolence, ensure she successfully claws her way safely back up and with no yarn to knit, she finally decides to toss them away, thus allowing her obsession to abate.

It would have been prudent for Loviisa to stop, and consider herself fortunate – even blessed – to have had the sheer willpower to throw her needles to a dark abyss, never to be handled again. She must have mustered immeasurable resolve to release the precious tools that contributed to the intoxicating pleasure of knitting a scarf.

However, so great is her need to keep her mind and hands active that Loviisa picks up a pair of scissors, and in no time, her innate need to do something – anything – takes over, leaving the viewers feeling uneasy about where this will now take the hapless Loviisa.

In her short animation, Finnish director Laura Neuvonen proves that she understands human nature all too well. She displays an uncanny insight into the all-too-prevalent issue of compulsive-obsessive behaviour that, in our real, un-animated version of the world – can come with horrendous consequences.

Why is it inherent in us human beings, - and there is seemingly no differentiation between young and old, men and women, wealthy and impoverished – to obsess, leaving us consumed, tormented and hounded by anything that could be described from significant to inconsequential? The answer certainly requires rigorous exploration by experts in the fields of psychology, neurology and cognitive behaviour therapy in systematic research and investigation. Nevertheless, the facts when dealing with obsessive behaviour point in the same direction: There are far too many incidents of obsessive, addictive behaviour that leave onlookers and loved ones alike – those keeping a watchful eye on the periphery – cringing in nail-biting anticipation of where it will all eventually lead.

The scourge of addiction and its fallout permeates our lives in numerous, unique ways. As in the case of Loviisa's benign activity of knitting, there are similar seemingly innocuous activities that can become the focal point of one's obsession. Those who bare witness to the small snippet of unrelenting compulsion in others might not ever conceive of how dangerously deep the preoccupation can run. They simply cannot fathom how far the lurking monster with its powerful tentacles can contort and writhe, incessantly driving away the gentle voice of reason.

Episodes of dogged obsessive can be witnessed daily – one need look no further than the newspaper to see how all-consuming tendencies wriggle their way into normal, everyday lives. These noteworthy tales of tragedy – in our vicinity and abroad - have drawn the attention of editors and journalists who trot out dramatic headlines to elicit shock and awe from readers. These stories can cause other less-obsessive-type observers to shake their heads in dismay, muttering to themselves 'How could this have happened?'

Here in Hong Kong, one evening, Mr Yu, 67, who secures a livelihood as a barber, ambles onto a double-decker bus, and finds a seat on the upper floor. In the middle of the ride, perplexed fellow passengers are shocked when Mr Yu takes out a gleaming pair of shears, and lops off the bounteous ponytail of the female passenger in the seat in front of him. The defenseless woman, visibly wracked with horror, musters the courage to ask Mr Yu why he would do such a thing. "Your hair was getting in my way." was the retort from a man who could not stop himself. Mr Yu's shears are later confiscated by police, who are worried that Mr Yu may not be able to restrain himself. The misdeed was not planned, and Mr Yu, himself, cannot quite comprehend what overtook over him that night, except that he 'likes cutting hair'.

Another article announces that the average price of concert tickets worldwide is much higher than the previous figure. The writer explains that the increase in price has not deterred at least one avid fan. In the past year alone, Londoner Beth Paulie, has shelled out an extraordinary amount of money to watch the popular American singer Pink perform a total of twelve times. This ardent fan spent five years feverishly saving for the privilege of attending Pink's concerts, all of which took place over the span of a single year. Pink's upcoming 'Beautiful Trauma' tour to Europe begins in June next year, setting Paulie into a fundraising frenzy involving procuring money from less-than-enthusiastic family members and disenchanted friends. Taking an extra job as a cocktail waitress at 'Satin's Whiskers' has helped make Paulie's dream of being entertained by Pink live on stage more of a reality, regardless of the ten-fold price hike for one single adult ticket.

It is earlier this year, in April, in a small snow-swept, picturesque hamlet - a place where the flat, mid-western plains meet the Rocky Mountain Range in Canada, a trio of world-renowned mountaineers are making preparations for their momentous ascent. These three have travelled across the world to climb a route that is known to be formidably challenging, with parts that are the most technically demanding in the world. With the spring conditions at the time rated as 'variable danger low to high', the three set off early Tuesday, reach

the summit, take pictures, and start their ascent in the early afternoon. It is then that Parks Canada estimates that the three celebrated climbers are swept away by an avalanche deemed powerful enough to destroy a small building. The bereaved family and friends of the three adventurers later agree that each man lived for mountain climbing, and they lost their lives doing what they craved – scaling perilous peaks of a rocky ridge. All three climbers possessed the confidence, ability and stamina, built from countless missions throughout their lives. Ultimately, however, the driving desire to scale the formidable peak was irresistibly all encompassing, and the risk – although surely managed considerably – was not enough to stop the tragic final climb.

In her short animation, Laura Neuvonen has created a personality in Lovissa that viewers will appreciate, having possibly come across friends and loved ones who possess the similar trait of single-minded obsessiveness. The imaginative tale allows viewers to give pause, consider the proliferation of compulsive behavior around us, ponder over the deleterious effects it produces, and then ask the simple question: ‘Why?’

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Open Section (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Lisa Baczkowski

It's never the last anything

“The Last Knit”. How do I describe it? Bizarre. Mesmerizing. Anticlimactic. I sat there with my kids, as the credits rolled and wondered along with them: What had we just watched? It was unlike any short films we had seen. The conclusion was totally unexpected. My 9-year old felt cheated out of a happy ending, or any type of ending that made sense. “Well how would you have liked it to end?” I asked.

“Maybe there were some orphans or helpless creatures in need at the bottom of the cliff that she helped with her knitting?” my daughter suggested.

Of course. A fairy-tale ending where problems are solved and everyone is happy. But that's not how it works in the real world, is it? Although my daughter was not exactly looking for a fairy-tale ending, she did expect the film to relay a moral of sorts, such as the value of helping others or selflessness.

But “The Last Knit” had just one character who interacted with no one but herself. She was truly self-absorbed in her task. It dominated her whole being. She appeared to live – and nearly die – for her knitting.

Who does that? What kind of person could be so passionate about knitting – except for, maybe, old grannies – as to allow it to become a nearly fatal obsession? Is the film really about knitting? Or is the act of knitting merely symbolic of anything that becomes an obsession in one's life?

Come to think of it, I could totally relate to allowing something to encompass my every waking moment and spare thought to the point that I would ignore daily duties and responsibilities: reading. Reading was my escape from the mundane. Books opened doors to worlds I hadn't even imagined existed.

The first time my mother took us to a public library, we thought we were in heaven. Mom merely saw it as a safe place to leave us for a few hours while she was shopping at the wet market. I still have my first library card. I know the serial number by heart. Library cards are no longer issued these days; we use our HKIDs to borrow and reserve books instead. My kids are fascinated by my old, plastic, green-and-white card (the colours of rural resident card-holders) as if it were some sort of relic. To me, it was the key to a treasure trove of books. Books which shaped my mind and helped create a number of memories.

Like the time I forgot to pick up my little sister from kindergarten in the next village. I was so absorbed in the book I was reading, I lost track of the time. Until Mom reminded me. I leaped out of my chair and rushed to the bus stop, book still in hand. Even though I knew it was because I had been reading that I forgot about my sister, I was still reading as the bus took me to the next village. Running to the school, I saw that my little sister was not sitting in her usual spot outside the gate which was now closed. I was over an hour late picking her up. All the students had gone. Including my sister.

Recruiting some friends, I scoured the village, calling my sister's name. No response. A light rain steadily drizzled down. I kept my book under my shirt to keep it from getting wet. After an hour and a half of fruitlessly shouting my sister's, my friends received a call from home. No mobile phones in those days, unless you were a rich triad boss. Having waited an hour for me to show up, my 5-year-old sister had decided that she had had enough of it, got up, and walked 2.5km through the rain, all the way back home.

If I had bothered to look out the bus window on my way to pick her up, instead of reading, I probably would've seen her small figure, lugging her heavy school bag, trudging in the rain on the road home. Whenever we recall this story, my family always comment on my “absent-mindedness” and my sister's “dogged determination”. Neither description is entirely accurate. I simply allowed reading to dominate my life. And my sister just got fed up with waiting for me and decided to go home herself.

The experience did not drastically change my life or make me suddenly realize the negative side-effects of my devotion to reading. According to Alice Lin's 2012 review¹ of *The Last Knit*, the film was about “letting go” in order to “free ourselves from bondage and restriction”. Lin's interpretation of the scissors was as a meaningful tool which allowed the protagonist to “wisely... cut off and let go of greed [so that] she can have a new and better life.”

I do not share Lin's take on the ending. From experience, being free of habits or dispositions is not that simple or straightforward. Personally, I see the scissors as the protagonists' next obsession. Did she really use the scissors to free herself of negative traits? Not from my perspective. The way she wielded those scissors and started trimming grass and fingernails, looking for other things to use her scissors on, it appeared that her new “project” was downsizing. Maria Kondo-style.

Similarly, my addiction to reading didn't just stop because of a conscious effort on my part. Rather, it was sidelined by a new interest: online communication. First ICQ. Then a HK-based communication platform known as IceRed. When IceRed was dismantled, I felt lost. Like a kite gone adrift when its string has been cut. Funnily enough, Lin compares letting go with “a kite that flies high into the sky once it is released.” For me, it is more like being anchorless. When Facebook was introduced, I became re-attached.

My interest, however, started to evolve. Remember Gameboy? How did a summer holiday that may have originally started as a past-time become an obsession with many kids of the 90s and early 2000s? I was one of those kids caught up in that craze. Books momentarily were forgotten as I worked to get over the gaming itch. Helping Mario to finally beat the Big Boss and save Princess Peach put the gaming fever into hibernation; and I promptly returned to my books.

With the introduction of social media games on Facebook and my first childbirth confinement, however, the gaming fever awoke with a vengeance. I was on Pet Society, Restaurant City and Happy Farm. As were the rest of my family members. Smartphones increased the intensity of our dedication to build up our Pets' status, our Restaurants' size and popularity, and our Farms' productivity.

And then there were Angry Birds and Candy Crush. Knowing my predilection for such mindless games, I managed to avoid getting into either for a whole year. Once started though, it was hard to stop. And the levels were endless. Getting over Angry Birds was easier than Candy Crush. I dominated Candy Crush, always waiting for the next levels under construction to be opened. My mom and sisters complained that they would never catch up with me. They were even more upset when I promptly deleted my account; no fun beating me when I was already out of the game.

And that is how I interpret *The Last Knit*. Letting go of an addiction or a part of your life that encompasses your whole being does not necessarily lead to peace and tranquility. Somehow, you are compelled to fill the void that has been left. What you choose as a filler and how you manage it determine the outcome, if there is one at all.

Laura Neuvonen's *The Last Knit* is only the beginning of *The Next Obsession*.

Open Section (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Chloe Sum Pui Wong

THIS IS HOW

Have you ever had the feeling of being trapped in an obsession where there seemed to be no way out, even when you realised that you had been harming yourself along the way? Or have you ever met someone who was preoccupied with a thought that no matter how hard you tried to talk them out of their situation, they remained immersed in their own cycle of 'naïve' perseverance?

I have had these experiences, and in a way, I believed that everybody – young or old, immature or experienced, would have at least, that one-thing that they dearly hold onto; whether that is something tangible: an object, like a 'scarf', designer goods, fortune etc.; or something intangible, like one's virtue, fame, recognition etc.; these obsessions would be toxic and detrimental when they begin to harm oneself.

Being immersed and 'trapped' in this 'knitting' cycle – this vicious cycle of obsession; the threads are like the continuous excuses we make, intertwining, connecting and building on as the 'platform' for our obsession. Where the needles are like the tools we use, measuring the time, effort and hard-work that we placed on the process. However, the more thread we use, the closer we are towards the edge of the cliff; and when we run out of excuses, we harm ourselves in return: just as the lady in the film did, using her hair as threads to continue her 'senseless' knitting project.

Interestingly, is this 'knitting' process always a nonsensical obsession?

People who view from the outside picture would look at this lady and perhaps say, 'don't go near her, she must be crazy... what a lunatic, why is she doing this... that is totally unreasonable and idiotic'; while some sympathetic ones might go, 'excuse me, would you please stop, you are hurting yourself'. Yet in both cases, to the lady or many of us, when the obsession became life, all we have in mind would most probably be, 'I have to do this, nothing would stop me.' And when others start to evaluate the situation and attempt to talk us through, we get rather defensive and would exclaim, 'please mind your own business if you do not understand...'

However, if we could be more open and empathetic in understanding the life-course or past experiences of each individual and the reasons why they got attached to such obsessions, the outcome and the level of acceptance might differ. For instance, if the lady was knitting as a sign of respect and tribute to her grandmother; or if she was knitting as a means to relieve her pain and distract herself from her recent chronic diagnosis that she was suffering from. The whole story line would be different and surely changed our responses and approaches: perhaps, from a skeptical and labelling perspective to a more understanding and supportive attitude.

Yet, having said so, even with a more holistic societal understanding of why one might become obsessed with certain things or events, it is essential that we love and value ourselves in the first place. This is easier said than done, but this is not as challenging as it seems. Sometimes we just have to stop and think. As human beings we are always trying to find something to do, to occupy our time: even after losing her 'knitting' project, her hair, her time etc., she sat down and soon after, she started to fidget with her fingers and scissors all over again.

I had fought my battles!

Being negatively absorbed in trying to get the 'perfect' hand-writing throughout my school years, I had spent hours writing the same piece of assignment, perfecting the circles and strokes when the focus should be in getting the correct answers as fast as you can. I struggled along the way: growing up listening to discouraging and mean comments from teachers and friends. There were times when I solely wanted to prove them wrong, that I pushed myself too hard which then, became a health threat. Thanks to my parents, I was able to positively take cues from my surroundings and take baby steps to let go of my 'harmful' perseverance.

Only by recognising that we are living with an 'obsession', would we be able to witness the ultimate moment of self-awakening. By allowing ourselves to 'freeze' at that very moment, stand by the cliff and take the moment of silence to reflect; could we then, distinguish what is best for ourselves and cut the threads before it starts to harm us even further and onto a no-return path.

Learning from my experiences, I would wisely position myself to overcome my future obsessions and assist others in conquering theirs; and this is how:

I believed that every individual is their own star. We, ourselves are the drivers of motivation! No matter where one is on their 'knitting' journey, along this path, everyone needs support, as I once needed it too. Positioning oneself in a prime position, instead of blaming the person and viewing the person as some 'crazy' lunatic; by having the inner capacity and patience to listen to their stories and reasons why the obsession was developed; we could then assist people of different life-courses to stay on the same page and be more understanding and empathetic.

People come and go in our lives; there would always be positive, negative and neutral energies around us. Slowly realising that we 'create' the problems with our own hands, we 'enter' or 'leave' our obsessions by our own desire; until the time, when we could manage to be our own positive drivers, it would then be time to develop and expand our capacity to offer a helping hand to those around us. By being the 'good' supporter – allowing time and space, with encouragement and understanding, for open and non-judgmental discussions.

Is this really the last knit?

At the end of the day, having something that we are obsessed with is almost as common as finding oxygen in air; as this is something that marks us as human beings in this time and age.

No one could ever let go of all obsessions in one go. After getting rid of an addiction, we naturally place our attention to a new interest and before we know it, we might start a new 'knitting' project. Knowing that everyone has 'something' that they hold onto, with which that 'something', that 'obsession' could be the very reason that push them towards the end of the cliff. This is how we should be empathetic to ourselves, and this is how we could position ourselves to assist the others and walk with them along their 'knitting' journey when time comes.

As a result, whether you are the person who is going on this 'knitting' journey or as someone who is living with this person with 'obsession', having empathy is the key.

We have to first love ourselves: Before we fall deep into the cliff, have a moment to ourselves, allow time for ourselves to think it through. Yet, fear not, if you are already on this 'knitting' journey, never force yourself to hit the brake, but at times, do stop and think, gently ask yourself if this is really what you should be doing. After all, you cannot stop yourself all of a sudden from your obsession, your addiction – simply give yourself the time to think it through, remember that there are clues along your journey, where supportive family or friends are just within your reach, to pull you out.

This is how, we value love, support and accompany throughout our life-course; This is how, we should have, or we should be the persons with empathy and patience; This is how, we should love, trust and value ourselves; This is how, our society could be a more understanding and supportive platform if we slow down and listen.

And this is how...

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Open Section (English Division) Merit Prize

Name: Denise Richardson

I watched the Finnish animation *The Last Knit* several times. The first time, I shook my head and let out a silent, "Phew!" I puckered my lips, twisted my mouth, and raised my eyes. I had hoped to find an explanation written out on the ceiling. I found the fact that it didn't have any dialogue but rather irritating sound effects and edgy music, slightly off-putting. I watched it more intently the second and third times. The intended message started to reveal itself. When I finally had that, "aha" moment, the hidden message became crystal clear to me. This seven-minute animation is about greed and addiction.

When a person engages in repetitive pleasurable behaviors that they cannot stop doing, they are addicted to a substance or behavior.

When one thinks of addictions, one tends to think primarily of substance abuse, such as tobacco, drug, alcohol, and food addictions. Addictive behaviors such as gambling, online gambling, pornography, overeating, and addictions to dangerous adrenaline sports are equally as catastrophic.

Addictions provide opportunities for immediate reward or satisfaction. When a person sits down to have a drug and alcohol-fuelled binge, the brain registers satisfaction from a powerful surge of dopamine. Typically, tolerance increases. The person wants and needs more and more. They continue engaging in the behaviors despite the physical or psychological harm it causes them and their loved ones. This pursuit of pleasure dominates the individual's activities. They neglect other life goals, which creates harmful consequences. Addicts find themselves in a free fall situation jeopardizing work, school, and family relationships as well as careers, finances, and not the least, mental and physical health. Greed has set its ugly feet in cement.

What have we done as a collective society to exacerbate the problem of greed and addictions?
There is an adage that money is the root of all evil. Well, I tend to agree.

We have idealized rich people and the perks of rich, lavish lifestyles for centuries. We have brainwashed younger generations into believing that money equates to beauty, high fashion, expensive jewelry, fast cars, luxury yachts, and Hollywood mansions. Easy money, in the form of credit cards and loans, has added fuel to the epidemic. Forget saving up for a special purchase. "I want it, and I want it now!" is the mantra of today's generation. People want more and more. Enough is never enough!

The internet itself has done much to promote the agenda of the 'instant gratification' generation. Access to almost everything is available online. Online gambling, shopping, pornography, drugs, and food. On and on the list goes. Consumerism, in general, has done little to placate the white elephant in the room.

A woman or man may think that they will attract a better partner if they have just one more plastic surgery. A food addict will struggle with but will give in to just one more, sinfully, calorie-laden dessert. The inability to say "No" is the inner struggle of addicts. Sex tourism in countries such as The Netherlands and many southeast Asian countries promotes quick, inexpensive sexual encounters that sometimes lead to sex addiction and the dark abyss of child pornography. Behind destinations promoting their unique tourism product is the almighty dollar- money, and greed.

Every day in every corner of the Earth, people struggle with being able to admit to themselves when enough is enough. The real question is, can they stop their addictive behaviors or addictions to substances before it is too late?

If you walk into any casino in any country, you will see signs plastered all over the casinos notifying patrons that help is just one toll-free call away. What you won't see is the agony that the addict is feeling as he relentlessly slaps down, chip after chip, on the blackjack table slowing bleeding the money from his pocket and rendering him or her more and more incapable of taking care of his or her financial obligations. After all, money does not grow on trees. But perhaps in the eyes of a gambling addict, there is an imaginary forest of money trees out there somewhere.

Why are some members of society more susceptible than others of falling prey to addictions?

Some say family genes can cause addictions. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree scenario. Research has proven that certain individuals do not possess the necessary enzymes in their liver to metabolize alcohol, as seen in the Native American Native population where alcoholism is a ravaging demon wreaking havoc in every facet of their society.

Males also experience a higher rate of addiction, but it is not an exclusive club.

Sadly, the outward addiction is often the tip of the iceberg. Sometimes, through therapies such as the world-renowned faith-based, twelve-step program, the addict will be able to say out loud, "I have a problem, and I need help. Enough is enough!"

Addicts must often confront unpleasant emotions, situations, and people instead of avoiding them. There is no get-out-of-jail free card. It takes work, lots of work, and lots of commitment, and dare I say divine intervention.

Eventually, if intervention is not successful, addictions induce a sense of hopelessness, feelings of failure, and suicidal thoughts and tendencies take deep root in the psyche of the addict. If intervention is not successful, a dangerous downward cycle begins. The worst-case scenario is, a person sees no end and cannot fathom having the ability to stop the dangerous cycle themselves. They believe suicide is the only answer.

We all know someone who has sadly lost their battles with addictions, if not personally, though pop culture. The King of Pop, Michael Jackson's death, due to substance abuse, had a profound effect on the world. Amy Winehouse, a British singer, at the height of her career, often sang about her addictions and wanting to go to rehab before her death. Whitney Houston's death came as another shock to the world. Her daughter Christina's death eerily mirrored her mother just three years later. Both found in bathtubs, dying from overdoses. Recently, the Hollywood blockbuster, *Bohemian Rhapsody*, chronicles the unfortunate story and demise of Freddy Mercury, a talented individual who contributed much to the world pop and music scene but who lost his struggle with his addictions.

The character in *The Last Knit* desperately, in a last-ditch effort, incorporated her long, golden hair as she feverishly tried everything in her grasp to save herself before falling off the cliff.

During the last minute or so of the *Last Knit*, I was sitting on the edge of my seat, wondering, will the character be given a second chance to live a life free from the shackles of greed? Will she reach out and ask God for help when her body jolts to the ground, or will she lose her battle with her addiction?

She was able to muster one last morsel of inner strength to stumble up the jagged cliff to her chair, where she collapsed in an exhaustive pile. She looked at the shiny knitting needles that shackled her and kept her bound and tied to what began as a simple pleasure, then became greed and eventually turned into an addiction and tossed them over the cliff. Then she wiped her hands clean, in a good riddance gesture, signifying her willingness and readiness to enter into recovery.

She lost her physical beauty. Her gorgeous hair sat entwined in a tangled heap at the bottom of the cliff. Moments later, she glanced down and saw her sparkly scissors sitting beside her. She slowly picked them up and stared at them. I'm sure the question that flashed through her mind was, "Why didn't I pick these scissors up and use them long before I lost almost everything?"

Well, she didn't lose everything, but she damn near did. There is no denying that she was centimeters away from death. The character was able to save herself by chewing off her golden locks, the very locks that bound her, and tied her to her addiction in the end.

I can't help but wonder, what was the underlying cause for her addiction? Was she a victim of abuse? Had she experienced some trauma? Did she struggle with a mental disorder such as Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder? Did her mother or father also suffer from addictions? Had she attempted to get in control of her addiction in the past? Had she made several sincere attempts and experienced relapses? One thing for sure is her uncanny Pinocchio-like nose reminded me of the deceit that no doubt becomes a fabric of and a by-product of her addiction.

It is my personal wish that anyone who is fighting with the demons of addiction, like the character in *The Last Knit*, can find the inner strength to ask for divine intervention so that they will find the necessary strength to climb up over any proverbial cliff, with the wisdom to know when, and the ability to say, "enough is enough!"

(在不影響原作內容的前提下，以上所有文章已進行校對及修正。)

(All entries have been proofread and edited without alterations to the author's original meanings.)



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