



Get the system running let your creative juices flow. This final edit meet is to perfect the brew!

**Dhairya Chaudhary, AIS PV, XII C, Page Editor**

## No Detective Could Trace Where This Confidence Came From. They Called It...

**Roshini Srivastava**  
AIS Pushp Vihar, XI F

Glasses clinked against each other as an eager chatter rose up in the room, roused by the customary quirk to seem abreast with the affair circulating through simpering red lips to self-important booming laughs. The entire room was lit up with indistinguishable laughter and mumbles. Amidst this mess of high flown people, some seemed to flow higher. My eyes instantly traveled to the group of people standing right beside the door. The lady in red captured everyone's eye and seemed like the Sun with little planets orbiting around her. Subtle with her jokes and giving a little laugh at the end, she made everyone else feel like they failed to understand her quirky references and her fine remarks. Her high intellect gleamed brighter than sunlight. The amount of self-assurance around this confident artist crossed all charts. I saw people flocking around her as if she was amongst the biggest names in town. Her confidence was a precondition

which captured my regard and I could not resist listening to her. That was how I lifted the veil off this one. As an avid listener, I figured out how her references were all repeated and misdirected, her remarks were off beam and confidence counterfeit, but then she did grab each spotlight.

Next, my scrutiny shifted to a group of men. The alpha of this pack was evident; he knew when to speak, what to speak and to whom to speak. But alas, this man had a hamartia-hesitation. His heart trembled until the time people absorbed his perfectly structured sentence. On the good side, pondering upon too long to think of another sentence, made his pauses seem accurate. But then the tension of his face, while struggling to think of what to say next was the cause of his fall

## the mystery of Pretention

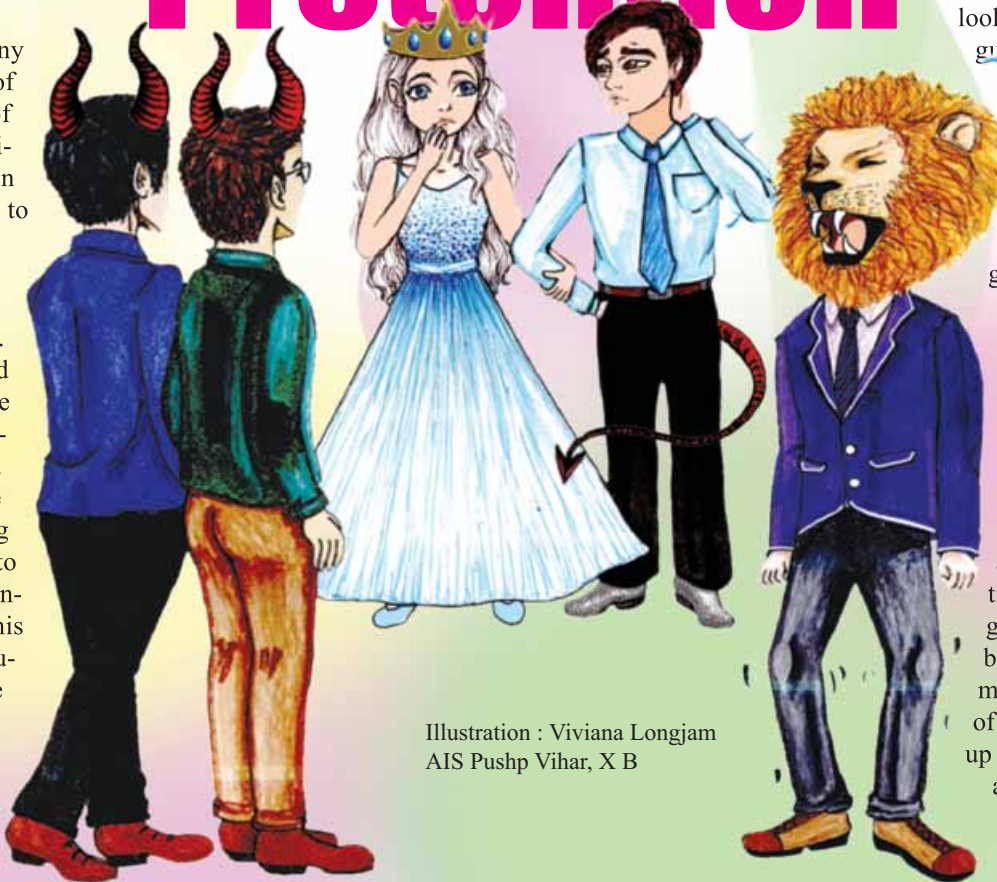
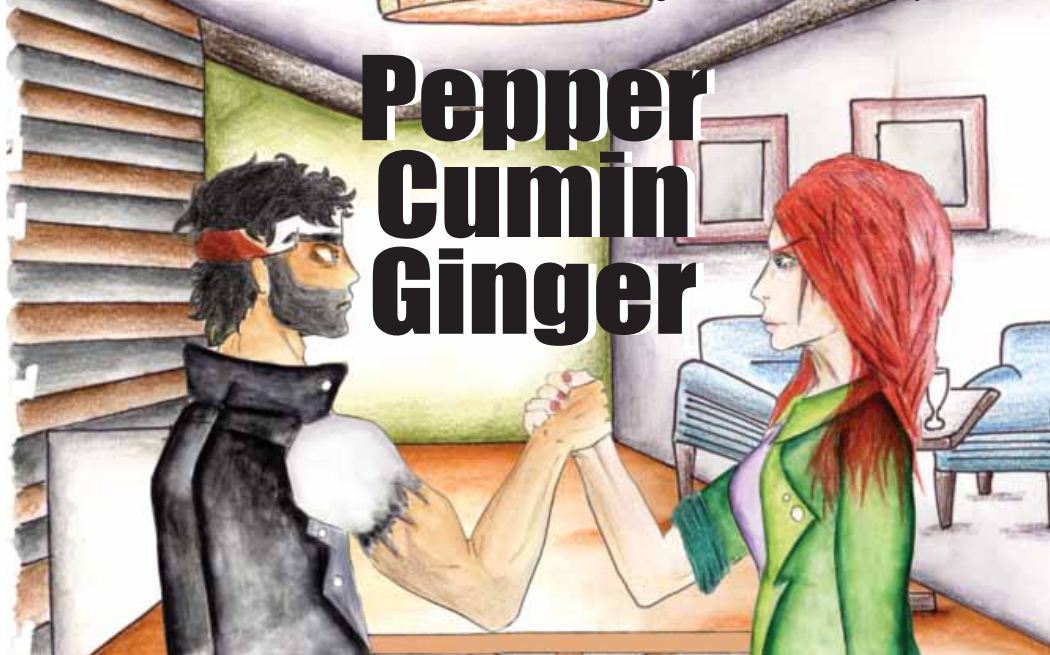


Illustration : Viviana Longjam  
AIS Pushp Vihar, X B

as a confidence artist, also landing him the title of an articulate rhetorician. I made a move to unmask the next character. She looked like a queen standing with her arms linked with her King, looking conscious and gullible. But she was the complete opposite. Those piercing eyes; they stared right into my soul. She successfully gave time to each person in the audience. Everyone was fooled, she thought. "You see, but you do not observe," I said to her in my head. I stopped and asked but one question, she fumbled, grasping her husband's hand even more tightly. Insecure of what she might end up speaking, she gave away the power that she might have carried above

everyone else. Not a queen move, my lady. "I'm the master of my sea," said the host of the party. His deep voice captivated the entire room. He stood in a firm stance, pointing towards his self belief. Another thirty minutes and I figured out his well spun wall of charm and enigma, with bricks of many carefully concocted lies and wicked management skills. The party was still lit up and the room was filled with whispers and giggles. Finally, it was time for me to put my collars up and hat down. I took an exit without getting noticed. After witnessing the fabricated personas of this party, I realised that the art of pretention is elementary, my dear Watson, yet it is something that all cannot master. The next time you're at a party, busting those smart moves, then you must remember that one false move, one slip of the tongue can make you tumble into the radar of all your pretention.

Illustration: Naman Sogani & Vanshika Chaudhary, X C, AIS PV



## We Present To You The Spicy Bicker!

**Aman Singh**  
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The window of the cafe adorned a foggy semblance; the aroma of coffee and freshly baked cakes awakening my senses. Stranded in the cafe, I didn't mind forgetting my umbrella at home, serenity of the cafe coaxing me to stay longer. Before I could delve into the philosophical nature of the sky, the bicker of two strangers right beside my table snapped me back to reality.

"Your table? I'm sorry I don't see any of your belongings here!" A girl with fiery red hair snapped at the man in a biker's leather jacket standing on the other side of the table. Oh no. Here it comes...the Mental Referee, aka me!

**Redhead - 1 Biker Guy - 0**

"I don't see any of your stuff anywhere either." The man raised an eyebrow at her.

This phenomenon is quite common, being the referee, I mean. We all do it without even anticipating it sometimes! Trust me, it is more entertaining than your typical Hindi soap operas - the only downside being that there is no zooming in and slow motion scenes with thunder sounds in the background to overdo it. "That's because you pushed me out of the way just as I was about to put my things down!" She glared at him, gripping her soaked jacket.

"So this isn't technically your table, since you didn't claim it." He grinned, mocking her.

**Redhead - 1 Biker Guy - 1**

"What you're saying is that, I need to recreate the Hunger Games to have a cup of coffee, today?" she said, with sarcasm dripping off of her tongue. "You'd be a pretty lousy Katniss Everdeen if this was the Hunger Games, honestly."

"I would explain to you how good I would be if this was the

Hunger Games, but I don't have the time nor the crayons." She responded, smirking. The whole cafe enjoyed this argument more than they should, making their sneaky glances way too obvious!

**Redhead - 2 Biker Guy - 1**

"You go fetch a pair of crayons while I order a cup of coffee, on my table!"

"Well, I might just do that!"

"I don't see you moving."

And, then the disaster ensued. Slightly screaming, a cup of coffee drenched the girl as the waiter passing by tripped. Imagine the scene in slow motion.

The woman was horrified while the man stay put, looking guilty. I cleared my throat, wanting to point out the obvious. Both of their heads snapped towards me. "Uh, there are two chairs.. Can't you two just take each seat?"

Cue flushed cheeks and a very surprised round of Oh's. This is why they say that it is but human nature, to think wisely and act and behave foolishly!

## TEAming with life

**Dhairya Chaudhary**  
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Sarthak was running late for school. He rushed out of his house like a gust of wind, only catching his breath at the bus stop. Looking back at the balcony of his house, he wondered if he had forgotten something. He then caught sight of his mother on the balcony with a cup of hot tea in her hand; and the serenity on her face struck him. The day ahead was going to be terribly busy for her, but with her cup of tea, she stole a few quiet moments of peace. It brought a smile to Sarthak's face which hadn't quite left when he heard the roar of arrival of the school bus.

As he clambered on, he noticed in the driver's hand, a steaming thermos radiating a sweet warmth. To the bus driver, who mostly shared his journeys with near strangers to whom he was merely a dull character in the background, the thermos of tea was his only constant companion. The young boy felt a pang of guilt for ignoring the presence of another human every day. He waved a

quick hello to the driver and watched his face light up as the bus continued its journey towards the school.

The next stop was close to a tea stall and Sarthak's mind was suddenly lit ablaze by a line of thought.

There stood a sun burnt labourer with prominent ribs, sipping slowly from a plastic cup, this was probably his meal for the day - a way to suppress his appetite and allow him to work without another break. At the same stall stood young men wearing shiny shoes and ties around their stiff collars. The tea was an excuse to make time for friends in their busy schedules. There

were old men with an idle day ahead, gathered together to discuss politics and religion and while away some of their excess time. Monitoring all of them was the shopkeeper, standing behind the huge cauldron of boiling brown tea. To him, the tea was a source of livelihood. Just like the fresh scent of

leaves, it struck him how so many different leaves were bound together by one rich and strong flavour.

Rich or poor, young or old, man or woman, busy or idle - the tea did not care. It provided respite to all in its deep golden brown embrace. Maybe the ones sipping in the respite of this hot beverage did not realize that the tea was dark too, a thing they had held prejudice against for time immemorial. The bus came to a halt and all the thoughts left Sarthak's mind that very second, just like what happens when tea is spilt.

Just like the fresh scent of leaves, it struck him how so many different leaves were bound together by one strong flavour.



Pic: Dakshesh Bharal, AIS PV, X E