



Room number 13

Illustration: Aishwarya Miho B, AIS VKC Lko, VI A



Storywala

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Thirteen. The old rickety staircase groaned under his weight as he cautiously made his way down the stairs. After what seemed like ages, he found himself in the ever-familiar dark passage. Pacing faster, he finally reached the rooms at the edge of the passage, when his eyes fell on the gold-embossed numerals on each door. Upon reaching room number seven, he slowed down his pace. “Just a few more to go,” he assured himself...

Jayden woke up. Beads of cold perspiration trickled down his forehead. Gasping for air, he sat up, mentally preparing for a new day. But there wasn't anything

new about this day. Life at school was dull, for being exceptionally quiet had its own drawbacks.

But what could be done, to whom could he complain? Jayden had no family, and the people at the orphanage couldn't care any less. But this wasn't the end of his troubles. For Jayden had trouble sleeping; the recurring dream about the doors would wake him up every night.

“Time flies,” he thought as he recalled how, a fortnight ago, the entire History Club was elated at the announcement of their trip to the ruins near the Macaulay Mansion. As dusk fell, the bus came to a halt and all disembarked. The dilapidated, yet majestic mansion echoed with the sounds of footsteps and bags being unloaded as everyone made their way into the



hall. But with every step Jayden took, feelings of homecoming engulfed him, feelings that were unknown to him. And as he glanced at the rooms at the edge of the passage, he was transfixed.

A strong impulse to rush towards the edge gripped him. Finally succumbing to it, he made his way towards the rooms. Room number five, six, seven, eight, on one side, and nine, ten, eleven and twelve, on the other. But then he realised something and his heart dropped. There was a void between room number twelve and room number fourteen. “W-wait! How?” he said to himself. “Hey! Lost soul! Our rooms are on the first floor,” the teacher's voice snapped him out of his trance. As she grabbed

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his arm and led him away, he kept wondering whether he had been there before.

He couldn't sleep that night, for his brain was filled with questions. At last, he managed to close his eyelids. But, alas! His rest was short lived. He was soon ensnared by the nightmare, once again traversing the oft-trodden staircase. But a sharp, piercing screech of an owl in close vicinity interrupted the nightmare this time and woke him up. With that, Jayden got up from the bed, got dressed and left his room as if he knew precisely what to do.

As he walked outside, the street lights flickered and then went off. The creaking of his footsteps on every step of the staircase now echoed in the pitch-black night. But slowly, he made his way down the passage, walking on the same path he had walked for so long, the path he always wanted to walk on. Upon reaching the edge of the hallway, he saw what made his heart leap with joy, and his dry lips curve into a smile- a hungry smile. He saw his fate. He saw what he had been waiting for all his life. He reached out his hand to it. Finally, it was there - room number thirteen.  



Jeans organiser

Tannya Pasricha, AIS Gur 43, XI

Material required

- Old jeans pockets-6
- Old jeans (for back frame)-1
- Sewing machine
- Needle (suitable for denim)
- Scissors
- Thread
- Cloth hanger
- Decorative material

Method

■ Take scissors and cut out the back pockets from your old pair of jeans. Cut out a total of 6 pockets as such.

■ Take these cut-out pockets and arrange them over another jeans (the one kept for the back frame) in any pattern of preference and style.

■ Use the sewing machine to

sew the pockets in each row as per the arrangement.

■ Now, join the waist part of the jeans to the cloth hanger using colourful ribbons.

■ Lastly, decorate the organiser with beads, pearls, artificial flowers and buttons, and enjoy your first step into an organised lifestyle!

WORDS VERSE

The Soldier

Ravina Rastogi

AIS Saket, X

I was 12
When I decided to join Army
I wished to serve the nation
That I proudly called mine
To salute my country's flag
That stood tall and proud
To wear the august uniform
And let it shine under sunlight

I was 19
When my dream came true
I recall my mother crying
As she watched me leave
My dad had a confident smile
With unshed tears in his eyes
I recall my sister shouting how

She would take my room now



I was 23
When I became the Lieutenant
The ceremony was sumptuous
I could see my family
Sitting in the front row proud
The light gave that metal
To the world it did show
A prepossessing dauntless glow

I was 25
When I became the Captain
I saw tears streaming down
The rosy cheeks of my wife
The clean-cut diamond ring
Adorned her thin ring finger
She threw her arms around me
Crying tears of sheer happiness

I am 29
And am finally a Major now
Fighting in a ceaseless war
Oh, I've waited for this day
I don't know when or if
I'll get to go home again
So, to my companions I say
To splash some colour onto grey

Nay, I must not
But if I die, promise me
You'll put me in a coffin
And take me back home
Back to where my heart belongs
Tell my mother not to cry
She should hold her head high
Tell my father to know pride

Say, you must say
He has been my hero
And he's always going to be
Tell my sister to be merry
Tell her that I'm sorry
Sorry for not being there
Even when she needed me
Lastly, tell my wife, my love

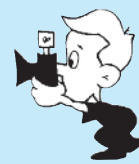
Pray, we must pray
For us this one lifetime
It could never be enough
Ours was a match for heavens
Tell my country not to mourn
Not to weep if I die
I have seized immortality
So, please don't ever cry.  



CAMERA CAPERS

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A race to conquer the waters



A tide to wash away all your fears



A flight to the majestic heights of heaven