

An epistolary havoc

A Letter That Has Changed The Course Of History

**Kaavya Verma, XI E &
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Setting: Auction house

Passerby (looking at a framed letter):

A dusty old manuscript; nothing else!

"A dusty old manuscript. Me? The whisperer of knowledge and the harbinger of change? Young man, you might not believe it, but I am the parchment upon which ink rolled to alter the course of history; the missive that launched the infamous arms race. I am none other than the Einstein-Szilard letter! Oh, how I wish the likes of you knew more of my origins and worth. Actually, it was 1939. I remember whispers concerning a storm approaching spread like wildfire. Though I tried deciphering the sudden chatter, all I, nothing but a piece of paper, could capture was that some German scientists, Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassmann, had discovered fission. Why did this alarm all? I had no clue, until the famous trio of Hungarian physicists Leo Szilard, Edward Teller, and Eugene Wigner, all fearful that Germany might develop an atomic bomb before US, approached me to settle everything.

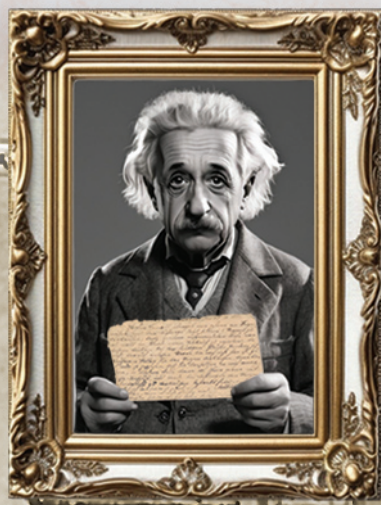
Szilard, in particular, chose me to be the lens, looking through which the US

would get a chance to choose the right card to play in the international arms race. Since those impactful get heard more, he approached Einstein to inform President Roosevelt about the findings and potential results.

August 2, 1939 – that's exactly when they drafted me in reference to the missive (my predecessor in short) they sent out to the Belgian Ambassador to the US against selling any uranium to Germany. I still remember how Einstein carved "A single bomb of this type...exploded in a port might very well destroy the whole port together with some of the surrounding territory" onto me. I prompted the government to act quickly to beat the German minds. Secret nuclear knowledge, consequently, became as American as apple pie. Courtesy – Yours Truly. Howbeit, I pondered over this for long, fighting my thoughts on whether this was for the good of my nation or not. For President Roosevelt relied on my words to such an extent that he instantly established an advisory Uranium Committee. The S-1 Committee, established in 1941, marked the beginning of the Manhattan Project. Led by

J Robert Oppenheimer, the troop of scientists started working on the first atomic bomb in 1942, giving birth to Little Man and Fat Boy, the two most hazardous inventions in history. As these were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the results were catastrophic – nearly 200,000 were killed and hundreds of thousands more got wounded. And I bled with them; my ink turned red that day and it still does not fail to give me chills.

Subsequently, Einstein regretted giving birth to me. "Had I known that the Germans would not succeed in producing an atomic bomb, I would have never lifted a finger," for the Nazi nuclear programme was far behind what US physicists imagined. Perhaps if I never existed, the realms of science and international relations would have been varied from where they stand today, perhaps for the better, but then who would have taught the world the lesson it needed to learn? That words must never be underestimated and that a small stroke of ink is as mighty as a nuclear bomb. The only difference is that one holds the potential to obliterate human bodies, and the other can destroy human minds or both.



For Auction >

Graphic: Diya Arora, AIS Saket, XI D



Karam presents an AeroInk artwork to CP

Carbon on the canvas

From Soot To Colours

Stuti Kalra, GT Network

Not everyone can become a great artist but a great artist can come from anywhere. So was taught to us by the movie Ratatouille and is exemplified by **Karam Sapra, a Class XII student at AIS Saket**. From being featured in The Times Of India to being an admirer of all things innovative, this artist and scientist has quite the tale to tell.

The spark: Sapra was very young when he noticed that kajal could be made from soot. This observation ignited the fire of innovation in him, and he started mixing vehicular soot with oil to make painting material which could be used by artists, giving birth to his project AeroInk.

The process: And so Karam designed an attachable prototype, made of mixed alloys, that captures soot from vehicles. The soot is heated and filtered to remove impurities. Specific oils and chemicals are then added to make different inks like marker ink, printer ink, paint etc. Sapra has already filed three patents for this project.

The accolades: Karam's AeroInk has already had research papers published on it, including in international journals like the Research Archive of Rising Scholars and the Questioz International Journal. Being the top finalist for the KVRSS Spark Innovation Awards, AeroInk has been endorsed by eminent personalities like Amitabh Kant, India's G20 Sherpa and Clay Stranger, MD, Rocky Mountain Institute. Sapra has collaborated with artists from Shantiniketan and Narrative Movements to create art pieces using this paint. One such artwork was the portrait of Dr (Mrs) Amita Chauhan, Chairperson, Amity Group of Schools and RBEF.

The compassion: Epitomising the virtues of compassion Sapra has learnt from the Amity family, he has donated the entire proceedings from another project to Amitasha, an initiative of Chairperson for less privileged girl-child.