

2021 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Children's Category – 1st Prize]

Life is Final

(Original)

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The start of the year 2021 was very bleak. My grandma was struggling with cancer. This time it had attacked her nervous system. I can recall my parents' heart-breaking conversations about her treatment. Their numerous visits to hospitals. Her going for scans and chemotherapy. While we were all worried for grandma, she remained positive. She had beaten cancer twice earlier.



Even in her frail state she insisted on doing chores in house.

There used to be days when she was unable to sit because of pain, still she would get up and take a tour of the balconies. That's where her heart was. I remember her face instantly brightening up when she saw her plants. The way she caressed the plants she so lovingly nurtured. She used to tell me their names. I used to help her in watering them and removing dry leaves.

She never let anyone throw leftover flatbread from dinner. In morning that would be broken into small fragments and fed to birds. Earlier she used to do it all alone but in her now deteriorating state, I accompanied and helped her. The sparrows used to eagerly wait for us to come and feed them. Sometimes if we forgot or got late there used to be a chirping mayhem in the balcony. These sparrows would tweet unceasingly and call on us to come end their hunger pangs.

It all ended abruptly in the beginning of February, my grandma passed away unexpectedly. She was getting better by the day and had gone for her fourth chemo but collapsed after

coming home from hospital. We were all with her. It broke my heart to see her go. I had never experienced so much pain. Ever. I kept asking my mother how to revive her. If some doctor could help, to which my mum explained that we can't bring her back. She said, "death is final". It was the biggest blow.

Is death final? and is life just hanging on a balance so delicate that it can tip off any time? If death is final, what is that we live for? What's the point of ever doing anything if it's our final destination? Such questions befuddled my mind for many days. I felt that life is vain. One day everyone will leave, my parents, my friends and then one day I too will be gone. I felt very lonely and terribly missed my grandma.

We were now at the end of February, I clearly remember that day, it was noon, I was reading in my room and heard shrill chirping from the balcony. I went out and there were a couple of sparrows as usual asking to be fed. I realised that it had been many days since anyone bothered to feed them and the plants, they too were wilting and looked lifeless. I immediately went to get some dry bread for birds and also watered the plants. While tending to plants and birds I felt close to my grandma. I felt, she still lived. She lived through these birds who longed to be fed by her. She lived through the plants who craved her care. She lived through me who would carry on her unfinished tasks. She may not be there in person but her legacy, her love for plants and birds will continue to live on as long as I wished.

I now understand and believe that we live through our actions, our deeds. We live through things we create, our imprints. An artist is remembered long after she is gone, through her paintings. An architect through the building that stands tall, years after he is gone. Mahatma Gandhi continues to live on through his cherished ideas on non- violence and peace. My favourite author Roald Dahl is also living. He lives through his funny characters and brilliant stories.

I feel we should strive to create memories that are ever-lasting. Create things, ideas, art, choreography, poems, films, sculptures, melodies, gardens, buildings, books that are immortal. Create imprints in others minds which are unerasable. That should be the purpose of life. That way we can live forever and say- life is final.