

2021 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Youth Category – Honorable Mention]

WHAT MAKES UP YOUR WORLD

(Original)

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His family is not present around his bed. They are barred from being with him. The sole person near him is a nurse whose face he has never seen. In full personal protective equipment - complete with mask, gloves and face shield - the *patient* has never seen her face. The nurse struggles to subside her personal grief at losing another patient as she listens to his last wishes. She relays their shared articles of faith to him. Not long after, the electrocardiogram flatlines and the *man* breathes his last.

He was once the apple of his parents' eyes. Although they lamented their impoverished lives, they worked day and night to make their *son's* future better. When the *boy* ran from the foamy waves, away from the sea that looked like glass, and inward, onto the white carpet of sand, his laugh echoed through the salty air. The toddy tapper and the mat weaver smiled seeing this moment, despite their hardships. The *son* had always remembered his hard-working parents and the sand that stuck to his feet as he ran from the waves.

With their hard-earned money, the parents sent him to school. Even the strictest teacher could not help praising the *adolescent's* intellect. The *teenager* could do large sums in his head and spoke articulately in Dhivehi, Arabic and even, the ever so complicated English language. The smartest man on the island, the shopkeeper at the corner store, observed the *young man* and suggested that he become the clerk at the island office. Instead, he became the well-loved school *principal*, several years later. His students respected him greatly and vouched for his brilliance.

Not soon after, he became a *married man*. His wife was the jewel of his life. In her prime, he could reminisce that there was no one as beautiful as her. She was a faithful and

hardworking wife; the calluses on her hand offering themselves as proof of this. She became a mother and he a *father*. She bore him three children: two girls and a boy. His daughters were pretty and smart just like their mother when she was a teacher. His only son was energetic and ran around everywhere. These children of his, brought the smiles of his parents, to his own face. They grew up and became successful in their fields and also, made him a *grandfather*. He was proud of them.

Every Wednesday evening, the *elderly man* who now needed a cane to aid him, played chess at the island's café. He and his chess mates would move the pieces on the ever-familiar chessboard, and try to beat each other as their mugs of black tea lost their warmth. Those who frequented the café knew very well that this *old man* had a kind heart accentuated by a contagious smile. When the *mature friend* told you a joke, you could not help but laugh. On his way back home, he would always stop by to stroke the head of the same black cat. The hostile cat allowed no one but this man to stroke the fur it tried to keep well groomed.

When he entered his house, the prayer mat with indents to show where his forehead, hands, knees and toes had prostrated to his lord for long hours, would be next to his numerous books. The *learned elder* was, moreover, a *religious man*. He then watered the plants that once belonged to and were cared to by his wife.

Nevertheless, he was no more. His links to the world could not stop his passing. The nurse let his family know of his wishes.

Life is the *interconnectedness to the ordinary things in life*. To the living things, like the plants and the cat. To the people, like your parents and spouse, your friends and children. To the intangible memories of the sand in the crevices of your feet, your education and religion. The connections which are severed the moment you depart to the next world.

Hence, it is with paramount evidence from the fictional life of one man, based on the lives of many, that I must conclude that life is *the interconnection between you and what makes up your world*.