

HOPEWORK

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STUDENT NEWSLETTER OF FILIX SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



Empowering Rural Talent : Filix Joins Hands with East Bengal

Filix School of Education celebrated a proud and memorable milestone with the inauguration of the East Bengal Football School of Excellence. This special collaboration with the prestigious East Bengal Club opens a new chapter for young players in the region, especially rural students who now have the opportunity to train under professional guidance. The initiative aims to bring out hidden sporting talents from villages and small towns, providing them a platform to shine. The inauguration ceremony was graced by East Bengal's General Secretary Mr. Rupak Saha and Ramakrishna Mission's General Secretary Swami Suvirananda Maharaj, along with Mr. Falguni Dutta, former East Bengal captain, and Mr. Bikash Panji, ex-India footballer and East Bengal legend. The event also saw the presence of coaches and guests who applauded Filix School's continuous efforts to balance sports and academics, nurturing both discipline and dreams.

To make the day even more memorable, the school organised an inter-class football tournament for students of Classes 7, 8, 9, and 10. Teams were chosen through a ballot draw, adding a fun twist that filled the air with excitement and anticipation.



The field came alive with laughter, cheers, and determination as every student got a chance to be part of something special. In the girls' category, Class 9 claimed victory over Class 10 in an intense final. Syeda Eiram Rowshan was awarded Player of the Tournament for her consistent brilliance, while Shirfa Ashrafi earned the title Player of the Match for her sharp play and focus in the final game.

In the boys' category, Class 10 triumphed over Class 9 after a thrilling match. Bishnudas Dey of Grade IX received the Player of the Tournament award for his remarkable consistency, while Ranjan Kumar Mahato of Grade X was named Player of the Match for his powerful performance. Classes 7 and 8 also displayed impressive enthusiasm and teamwork, turning the day into a celebration of effort, unity, and sportsmanship.

The collaboration between Filix School and East Bengal Club promises structured training by professional coaches, helping students build confidence, discipline, and a deep love for the sport.

The event concluded with students proudly lifting the red and yellow jerseys of East Bengal, marking the beginning of a new journey rooted in joy, passion, and pride. With Filix's vision and East Bengal's expertise, this partnership stands as a symbol of hope for countless young dreamers, proving that the spirit of football can unite talent and opportunity and turn even the most modest playgrounds into fields of possibility.

Maestro of the Month

Stephen King

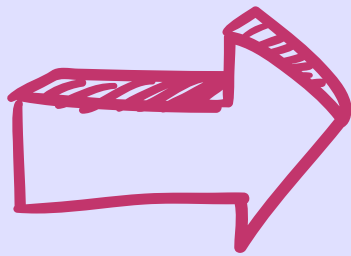
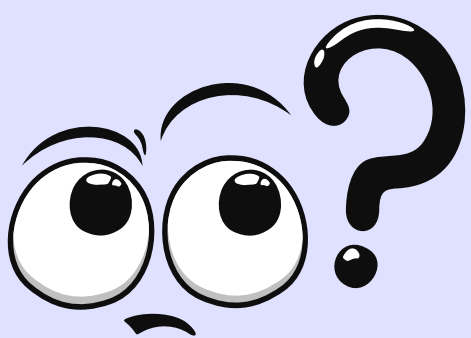


Illustrated by Ayansh Deogharia, IV

Stephen King does not just write horror, he writes life, only with the lights dimmed a little. His stories are full of ghosts, yes, but they are also full of people trying to love, to heal, and to make sense of the strange world around them. Behind every haunted hotel and every whispering clown, there is always something achingly human, a boy growing up, a mother protecting her child, or a friend standing by another when it matters most.

King often says he writes not to scare people, but to understand them. He calls writing his *"daily magic trick,"* one that turns ordinary fears into extraordinary stories. He works every day, rain, shine, or holiday, because, as he once put it, *"Amateurs sit and wait for inspiration; the rest of us just get up and go to work."* That is what makes Stephen King so fascinating, not the monsters he creates, but the compassion behind them. His stories remind us that courage is not the absence of fear, but the choice to walk through it. And that is the real kind of magic, the kind that lingers long after you close the book.

Did You Know?



1 . Stephen King famously fears the number 13. He never stops writing on page 13 and even merges the last two steps of his back staircase just to skip it !

2 . King loves making cameo appearances in adaptations of his own books, popping up like a playful ghost to surprise attentive fans.

3 . Some of Stephen King's most haunting scenes sprang from his dreams, with nightmares shaping his eeriest moments.

The Eerie Enigma



A murderer is sentenced to death. He has to choose between three rooms : one with fire, one with assassins, and one with lions that haven't eaten in three years. Which should he choose?

RIDDLES RESOLVED :

1. COFFIN
2. TURN ON THE FIRST SWITCH FOR A WHILE, THEN TURN IT OFF; TURN ON THE SECOND SWITCH, ENTER THE ROOM. THE LIT BULB IS THE SECOND SWITCH, THE WARM BULB IS THE FIRST, AND THE COLD, UNLIT BULB IS THE THIRD.
3. THEY ARE TRIPLETS.

Creative Corner



Written and Illustrated by Ayushi Banerjee, VI

THE LOBBY

THE LIGHTS GO OUT, THE WORLD FEELS COLD
THE SILENCE SPEAKS THE TRUTH UNTOLD,
WHISPERS FLOAT IN MY EAR
A VOICE NOBODY CAN HEAR.

I WALKED IN THE LOBBY, DIM AND WIDE
THE AIR GREW THICKER, STOPPING THE LIGHT.
THE WALLS WERE CLOSING, SLOW YET TIGHT.

A DEEP, HAUNTING LAUGH NEAR MY EAR.
A SHADOW CRAWLING, A NIGHTMARE.
A BIG, SKINNY MAN APPEARS
HIS SMILE WAS CREEPY, COLD, AND WIDE
A SMELL OF ROTTING, A SCENT OF FEAR,
WAS VERY CLEAR.

HE TILTED HIS HEAD, "AFRAID OF THE DARK?? "

HE OPENED HIS WIDE MOUTH, AND I COULD SEE
HIS BLOODY, SHARP, NEEDLE -LIKE TEETH.
EACH DROP OF BLOOD WAS ALIVE,
JUST LIKE HUNGER WAITING FOR ITS PREY.
MY BREATH GONE, HE STEPPED FORWARD.

THEN SUDDENLY, A SOUND TORN THE VISION.
I WOKE UP GASPING, MY HEART WAS RACING.
SWEAT ALL OVER. CUT MARKS ON MY FACE.

KNOCK BOTH HEAVY AND SLOW.
I TURNED THE KNOB
THE LOBBY, DIM AND WIDE
AND A WIDE, WHITE SMILE I COULD SEE
IN THE BLOOD BLACK NIGHT



THE FORGOTTEN PATH



Illustrated by Bristi Gorai, IX

Banaras breathed its ancient rhythm that evening. The Ganga shimmered like molten silver under the setting sun, and the ghats echoed with chants, laughter, and the distant toll of temple bells. We had come as a family for joy, curiosity, and devotion. My maternal grandfather, fragile since his brain hemorrhage in 2008, walked beside us, his eyes reflecting wonder and devotion, though memory often betrayed him.

We forgot the simplest precaution — placing our hotel's address in his pocket. In the city of winding alleys and endless ghats, that small oversight became the spark for fear. It happened suddenly. One moment he was beside us, marveling at a floating diya, and the next, he had vanished into the night. Panic gripped my father and uncle. Our voices, once playful, became urgent calls: 'Dada! Dada, where are you?'

Banaras, sacred and timeless, now seemed a labyrinth. Shadows stretched unnaturally across the ghats, and every flickering lamp whispered possibility and threat. We moved from ghat to ghat, calling his name. The night wrapped the city in silence, broken only by our frantic steps and prayers.

At one ghat, leaning against worn stone steps, my father met a yogi, serene and luminous under the moonlight. His eyes reflected eternity. 'Every one of you,' he said softly, 'is searching for something. Not all searches are for what you see.' The words puzzled my father, yet they lingered like incense smoke. We pressed on, tracing the winding alleys and silent ghats, aided by compassionate locals, the police, and the auto union, all becoming instruments in the city's quiet plan. Hours passed, the city still and expectant. And then, in the tender haze of dawn, we found him — seated calmly at the railway station, clutching a small bundle of offerings he must have collected from temples along the way. Confused but safe, he looked up at us as if seeing not just family but the convergence of fate itself. Relief and gratitude surged like the

river behind him. As we returned him to our hotel, I realized that Banaras had orchestrated the reunion — every ghatsman, every auto, every whispered chant of Baba Vishwanath, a thread weaving us back together. Even the yogi's words rang true: in searching for him, we had glimpsed more than fear. We had glimpsed ourselves — our devotion, our vulnerability, our humanity. Banaras teaches in silence and shadow. That night, each ghat felt alive, each step a dialogue between time and memory. In losing him, we were reminded that life is fragile, that love is active, and that faith — sometimes unseen, sometimes unexpected — guides the lost toward safety.

Even now, when I close my eyes, I see the ghats in the silver light of dawn. I hear the faint chants of Baba Vishwanath and feel the city's pulse in my veins. The yogi's words return to me often: each of us searches for something — peace, redemption, or understanding. Sometimes, it is the search that illuminates the path, not the finding.

And in that realization, the night of fear became a story of devotion, courage, and the quiet, miraculous wisdom of Banaras. For in every loss, every fear, the city whispers a truth: what is lost often leads you to discover what you were seeking all along.

Pratyusha Mukherjee, X



FEAR AND NIGHTMARE

I WAS ALONE
IN THE DARKNESS IN MY ZONE .
I WAS SO SCARED ,
AS IF IT WAS A BIG DARE .
I HEARD A NOISE NEAR ME
AND SAW SOMEONE COMING TOWARDS ME .
SCARED AS HELL ,
I JUST FELL .
I WOKE UP AGAIN FULL OF FEAR ,
AND STARTED SEARCHING IN THE STAIRS .
IT WAS A NIGHTMARE OR A DREAM ?
“SOMEONE HELP ME” I JUST SCREAMED .
SCARED AND FEARED ,
IT'S A NIGHTMARE .
SUDDENLY I WOKE UP AND BREATH OUT,
AND SAW THE MORNING LIGHT OUT .

Aaradhya Chakraborty , VI

THE CURSE OF POTER DURGA



Illustrated by Ahana Dey, VI

In a quiet village called Hatsherandi, there was a family that made a clay Durga idol every year. One day, a thin crack appeared on the idol's forehead. The very next morning, the master of the house was found dead, his eyes fixed on the goddess. After this terrifying event, the family stopped making clay idols altogether. Instead, they began worshipping a painted scroll of the goddess Durga.

Years later, a man named Shivam returned home from the city to stay for the festival. The villagers urgently warned him: *"Do not stay there at night."* Shivam simply smiled, insisting he didn't believe in old curses. He wanted to prove there was nothing to fear.

That evening, he cleaned the small shrine and lit a lamp before the scroll. The painted eyes looked bright in the flame. He laughed to himself and went to bed.

At midnight, a dry cracking sound pulled him awake. The room smelled strongly of wet earth and burning incense. A thin line appeared across the goddess's painted forehead. Shivam reached for the lamp, but the flame would not go out. Goosebumps rose along his arms. The priest had told him to leave at dawn, but he hadn't listened. The house felt different now, nothing like it had been in the morning. The lamps burned higher, their shadows grew heavier, and the scroll seemed to move like a living thing.

The painted face was no longer flat. A small hand of red clay pushed out from the scroll and gripped the edge of the altar.

Shivam laughed at first, then froze. The clay hand closed around his ankle.

He kicked it away, but more hands emerged, crawling out and wrapping around his legs and waist. They were warm and heavy, smelling of wet river clay. Shivam tried to scream, but the sound hit the walls and came back small and muffled. The hands dragged him closer. The goddess's voice rose, soft yet sharp : *"You called me?"*

Shivam clawed at the floor, his nails tearing into the wood. One clay hand gripped his shoulder and squeezed until something inside him cracked. His ribs broke. Shivam struggled wildly. The clay hands tore his shirt and skin as easily as cloth. His blood mixed with red dust, running in thin streaks down the scroll like fresh paint. By morning, the villagers found the house silent. The door was open, and the air smelled foul. Shivam's body lay before the painted goddess. The goddess in the scroll looked new and cruel, her eyes sharp and full of hunger.

(Inspired by the legend of Hatsherandi, Birbhum)

Written by Syeda Eshal Kowser, VI

Learning the Finnish Way : In Conversation with Ms. Lena Gaerkman



There is a calm strength about Ms. Lena Gaerkman , the kind that comes from a lifetime spent listening, learning, and teaching with heart. A Finnish Education Expert and Curriculum Innovator with over twenty-five years of experience, she brings to every classroom a rare blend of reflection, empathy, and quiet conviction.

Armed with Master's degrees in Pedagogy and Economics, and qualifications in Headship and Communications, Ms. Gaerkman has been at the forefront of phenomenon-based learning, authentic assessment, and inclusive education in both Finland and India. Her Master's research on supporting children with intellectual impairments continues to shape her belief that every learner deserves to be seen, understood, and valued.

Beyond the classroom, she is a passionate linguist, fluent in Finnish, Swedish, English, German, and French, with a strong grasp of Spanish and Portuguese, and even conversational in Norwegian and Danish. She is currently learning Italian, adding yet another thread to her lifelong love of languages and culture.

Today, Ms. Gaerkman serves as a Specialised Educator in Clinical and Therapeutic Settings in Helsinki, while continuing her collaboration with Filix School of Education. Her approach, equal parts rigorous and compassionate, reminds us that education, at its heart, is a deeply human art.

1. Could you tell us how you first came into connection with Filix and what brought you here for the first time?

Ms. Lena Gaerkman: It actually began with Filix coming to Finland! Ms. Ranjana Sengupta and Ms. Bharati Bakshi visited the school where I was teaching at the time, they wanted to learn more about the Finnish education system. I was teaching Math to my sixth graders then, and the children were solving problems in groups. They were quite intrigued by the way the class was being conducted and said, "Oh, you teach Maths like this!" We began talking, and when I heard about Filix, I thought, I would love to visit one day! I had just completed a course called Teachers Without Borders, a bit like Doctors Without Borders, and was preparing to volunteer in countries like Kenya or Myanmar. But then I wondered, why not India?

Months later, I wrote to them: "Hi, do you still remember me?" (laughs). They replied warmly, "Of course! You're always welcome." So, during my three-week Christmas break, I came to Filix, planning only to observe classes quietly and take notes. But guess what happened? From the very first day, I was teaching, everything from Kindergarten to Indian History! I studied hard before each class and loved every minute of it.

Before the pandemic, I visited Filix three times. Afterwards, the war in Ukraine began, and since Russia borders Finland, it felt a bit too close to home. But here I am again and it feels wonderful to be back.

2. Finland's education system is admired around the world. What values lie at the heart of Finnish schooling that make it so effective?

Ms. Lena Gaerkman: At its heart, Finnish education is student-centred. Of course, the teacher plays an important role, but the focus is on helping children build essential life skills, not just accumulate knowledge. .

We want students to take ownership of their learning, to question, explore, and collaborate. Teachers no longer just stand behind a desk and lecture; they step aside so that students can think critically, work in groups, and find answers on their own. The world is changing fast, and our aim is to help children think deeply and adapt wisely

3. There's a belief that Finnish schools have little homework and almost no standardised testing, yet learning outcomes remain high. How does that shape ideas of success?

Ms. Lena Gaerkman: That's actually a bit of a myth, we do give homework, just not too much. Homework shouldn't feel endless or exhausting; it's meant to help students reflect on what they've learned. I often told my students, "You don't do homework for me, you do it for yourself."

As for tests, we prefer the word *assessment*. Students are evaluated in many ways, through projects, essays, discussions, or explaining ideas to peers. Explaining something, in fact, is one of the best ways to learn. Our goal is not perfection but progress; if you do your best, that's enough.

4. In Finland, play and rest are seen as part of learning. What message would you give to Indian parents who worry that their children are not studying "enough"?

Ms. Lena Gaerkman: It's not about studying more, but studying better. We learn the same things, just differently. When students are mentally active and curious, learning becomes lasting and meaningful. It doesn't fade after exams; it stays and grows. Of course, good grades matter, but they aren't everything. What counts is progress, each child climbing a little higher on their own ladder, with gentle guidance and encouragement along the way.

5. If you could bring one Finnish classroom tradition or idea into every Indian school, what would it be?

Ms. Lena Gaerkman: I would bring what we call the activation of students. It's about giving them ownership of their learning. The teacher is still very much present, guiding, observing, and supporting but takes a small step back to let children explore, discuss, and discover. I walk around, listen, give small tips, and encourage them to find their own answers. Those little moments of guidance often go a very long way.

6. Having spent time at Filix, what do you feel makes it truly special?

Ms. Lena Gaerkman: Its remarkable sense of belonging! There is a genuine spirit of togetherness here, something I don't often see in every school. It's what I call the *Filix spirit*, and it has always stayed with me.

7. If you had to describe Filix in one Finnish word, what would it be?

Ms. Lena Gaerkman: I would say *Erityinen*. It means special or unique. Filix truly has something distinctive, something that sets it apart.

8. Finally, what message would you like to leave with our school community, students, teachers, and parents alike, as we continue learning from the Finnish model?

Ms. Lena Gaerkman: Have the courage to try, and the patience to understand that children today may be learning in different ways than before. Our goal is still the same, we would never put your future at risk. On the contrary, we want to give you all the life skills and knowledge you need, while also adapting to your systems of learning and assessment. Even if it feels a little strange in the beginning, just believe, it will be okay.



Visit us
www.filixschool.com



Contact us
+91 98313 17376



E-mail us
filixschoolofeducation@gmail.com