

## Creative Writing: Senior School

### The Trouble with Prince Charming

The trouble with Prince Charming is that he didn't turn out a bit how I expected. I'll set the scene:

"25 years ago, I'm sweeping the floor quite happily in my little old step-mother's kitchen. I could have gone to the Ball, but tickets were a bit pricey, so I thought, "Why bother?" Suddenly, this woman calling herself 'The Fairy Godmother' appears on a patch that I've just cleaned! As you can imagine, I'm not best pleased, but that's life, so I ask her what she wants. She tells me she could give me a free ticket to the Ball, and some snazzy gear, so I accept. 20 minutes, a flash, and a lot of smoke later, I'm at the Ball and this gorgeous looking bloke is asking me to dance! We dance until 12.00 when the stupid 'Fairy Godmother' tells me I should go home because the 'magic' will wear off."

As you can tell, I'd had a strange evening already, but the next day I discovered that I'd lost a shoe. Since they were free, I decided not to worry, but just after lunch, Prince Charming appeared at the door with my shoe. He told me that whoever the shoe fitted would marry him. I tried the shoe on, and of course, it fitted. I married the prince the next day, and he was crowned king a week after that. He was all nice and caring before he became king, but he totally changed after his coronation. It was France this and Africa that, don't forget lunch with J F Kennedy tomorrow, sorry dear, I can't have dinner with you, I'm meeting Beethoven! It all got too much for me in the end, so I asked for a divorce. As you can imagine, it was all over the papers. I received millions of letters telling me how stupid I was, how lucky and so on.

After the divorce, I was a bit depressed, but I had loads of money that the prince had given me, so I bought a house in South France (Nice) and decided to take VERY early retirement! After I'd lived there for about 6 years, I met a man called Peter Lovejoy. We got on well, as we both loved animals, and I helped him to invest in a zoo. We have gradually built up the zoo, and we now own over 300 animals, from termites and a flea circus, to elephants and hippopotamuses. These days life is busy, but enjoyable.

The other day, I had an unexpected visit from a strange man that at first sight looked like an old tramp. After close inspection, I discovered he had familiar eyes. Then I realised, it was Prince Charming! He tells me that when we got divorced, women surrounded the castle, so he had to be rescued by helicopter, and taken to Germany. He has spent the last 20 years touring Europe in various disguises with various identities. I invited him to live with us, and he is going to help out in the zoo. All this just goes to show, things aren't always going to turn out how you expect!

*Sarah Cockett, 40*

### Welcome to the Class of 2000

Here are my tips of the future

Don't just have one friend, have loads  
Make sure you love your brothers and sisters  
at least once in your life  
for your parents' sake  
if no-one else

Sleep in till four one day just for the fun of it.

But on the other hand wake up at 3am as well

Work at school or you'll regret it when you leave

Go for your choice of career and don't let anyone tell you,  
you won't

When you're old and wrinkly don't worry  
and do something out of the ordinary  
just once.

One day of your life spend the whole day  
sitting on the sofa  
while stuffing yourself with chocolate

Trust me, you'll feel wonderful afterwards

The day after do as much exercise as you possibly can and  
then it won't have made a difference.

Now listen to these tips and your life will be one great trip

Trust me, listen and observe

*Natasha Conn, IIM2*

## A Day in the Life of a Farmer's Wife – Normandy

Today I wake up with the thought of summer as my favourite time of year has come around again. As I get up I know I have a busy day ahead as my husband has the 'flu'.

First I must feed the chickens and let them run about outside the house which I am in the middle of doing up. Next I must get the children out of bed and get them ready to take them to the church so the school bus can pick them up as we live so far away from the village.

On the way back I must pop into the market to get some fruit and vegetables as tonight I am going to cook some wonderful soup with fresh home made bread which I must bake when I get home. After I have made bread I must start the farm's accounts as the tax man will be coming around soon, then I think I will walk down to our little vineyard to check our crop of grapes to see if the grapes are ready for harvesting. We make both red and white wine and we sell it in the fair in the village. It is very popular and we always get orders for more.

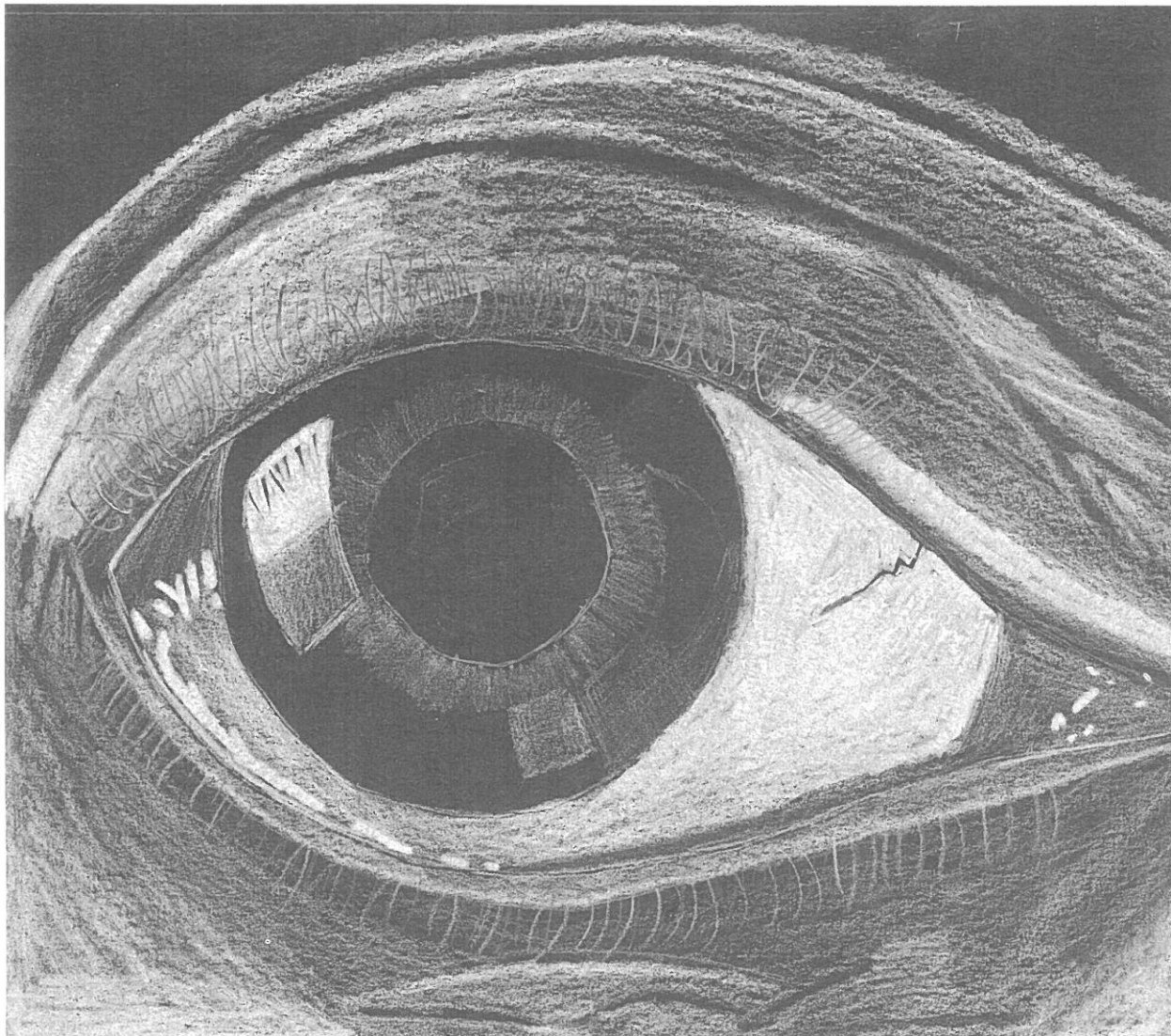
On the way back from the vineyard I shall walk through the fields and pick some wonderful wild flowers for the

house. I love flowers as they make me feel so happy and the wonderful colours they have. Once I have picked the flowers I think I will walk through the cow fields and see if my favourite cow "Daisy" is ready to be milked. She is so lovely with her dark fur and wonderful blue eyes which show so much feeling. Once she is milked I shall turn her wonderful creamy milk into cheese and butter for the bread I shall make to go with dinner.

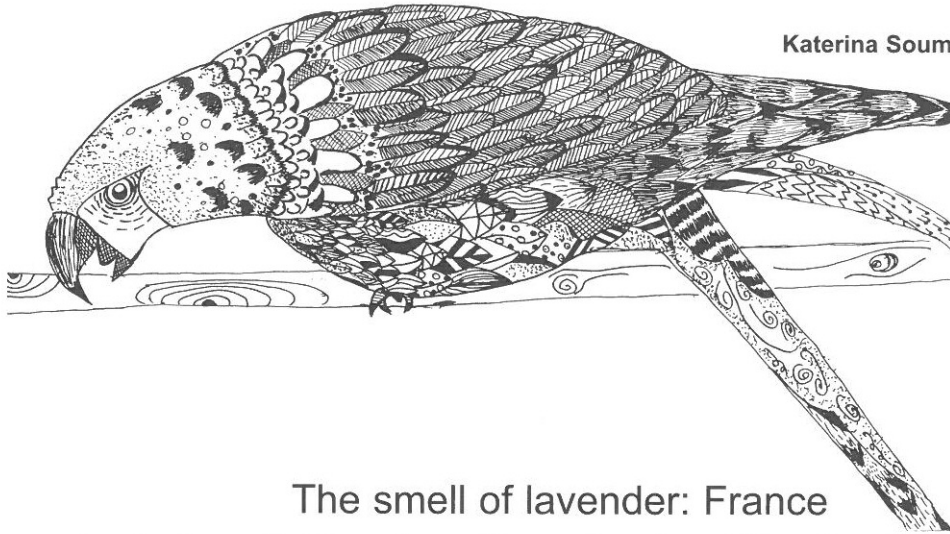
Next I have to walk the dogs which are old and still lovely and cuddly. Then at about four I have to pick the children up and ask how their day was. I bet they will answer it was alright and it was okay or sometimes even they say it was boring. On the way home I have to pick up my husband's pills.

When we arrive home the children go up to their rooms and start their homework. While they are doing their homework I will start the dinner and lay the table. Where shall we eat? Inside or outside, I do not know. It depends how the weather is. Once dinner is over I will sit in the garden and read the paper until the sun goes down behind the hills. Then I will go down to the house and put the children to bed.

*Laura Gibbons, 3M2*



**Fiona  
Hunt,  
3rd form**



Katerina Soumilova, Transition

## The smell of lavender: France

I woke this morning to the smell of lavender, wafting from the freshly changed linen on my bed. Pierre was already up and gone, and the sun from the window cast its pattern on the already made side of his bed. I was not surprised as this was a regular occurrence, although I was normally disturbed by his waking.

I got up and pulled aside the light floral curtain and spent a moment or two looking over the farm at the distant poppies dancing in the crisp morning air. Down below the sound of the farmyard reminded me of my morning duties. For I had to tend to the cows who were mooing expectantly. Louise, my youngest down below struggled to move the heavy metal pan of chicken feed across the yard. Her muddy Wellies four sizes too big, under her cleanly pressed school dress, immediately made me groan. More washing!!

Once downstairs I laid the table for breakfast, hot steamy coffee and croissants. One by one the children came and joined me, their cheeks already glowing in the early morning heat. As usual I left with a trail of muddy boots and coats along the hall, but I did not complain, I was not in the mood. Complaining was always a bad start to the day.

Once I had packed them off to school and walked them down to the bus at the end of the road, I could relax, well to a certain extent. When I returned to the kitchen Pierre was at the table half a croissant balanced precariously on the side of his reheated coffee, his head buried in yesterday's newspaper. We always seemed to be a day behind with the world's goings on! I joined him for a few moments while I finished my now cold coffee! "Waste not want not," my mother used to remind me every meal time as a girl. I then cleared up around him while he read out any news that might chance to be of interest to me. However, this morning I found it all particularly boring and nothing he read interested me in the slightest, as I was keen to get on with my early morning chores. I flicked briefly through the generally blank diary (we are not particularly sociable people), and it was a good job I did as I had forgotten to expect Julie for elevenses, and to collect her weekly supply of eggs, milk and butter. I groaned silently to myself as I knew her coming would not

be a short affair and was likely to interrupt the whole of the day's well scheduled activities. I chose not to see my whole life as a dull monotonous cycle, although it sometimes felt that way but more as a well planned and developed weekly time table.

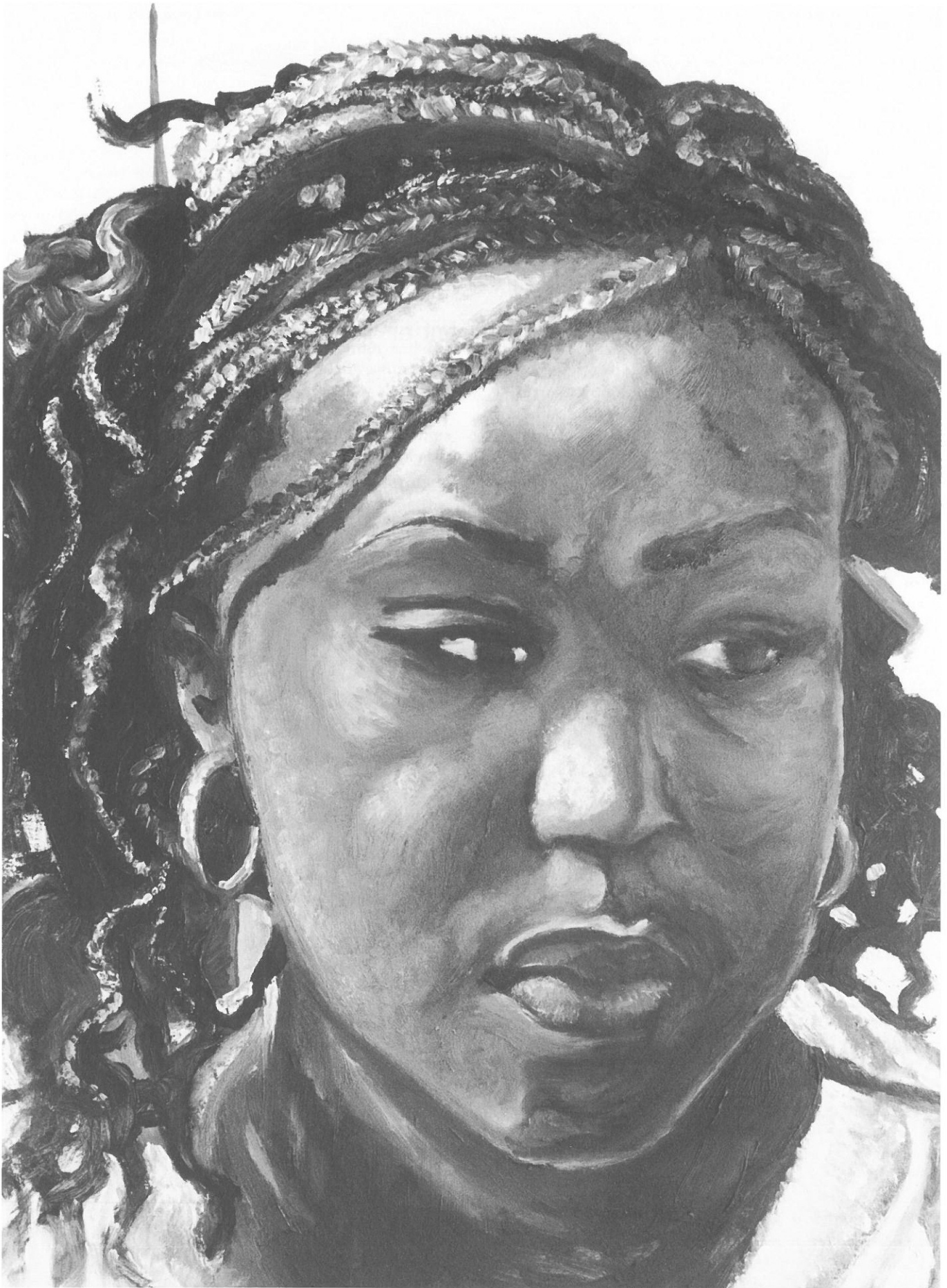
Stepping outside the air was surprisingly fresh and there was a pleasant breeze, which made a change to the normally humid haze. I was extremely surprised to see that the cows were already in the barn hungrily chewing on the cud, waiting to be milked. The milk this morning was creamy and frothed around the inside of the cold metal churn. It was a pleasant comfort to sit with my neck leaning against the warm heaving side of our brown diary cows as they breathed heavily in the morning air. Moving the full and creamy churn of creamy milk a hundred yards from the barn to the dairy was this morning to prove unusually difficult. However, I treated this as a good sign, the more butter the better.

Once in the dairy having walked the churn across the yard and lifted it up the shallow worn step onto the cold tiled floor of the dairy, I set to work churning the milk. The more I could get done before Julie's arrival the better. I was just at the critical stage of separating the curds from the whey, when Julie's plump rosy face appeared around the door. Wiping my hands down my apron, I got up and unlatched the door, and she came in and plonked herself on a stool in the corner.

I apologised for my lack of hospitality and continued to pat the butter in the two large creamy yellow blocks, which I lined upon the side, while she spoke. As usual she came bearing goods for the kids, and she placed a basket of her finest home made cakes and biscuits in a pile in the corner. I smiled gratefully, glancing up momentarily from my work.

After about three minutes Julie was restless and bored and insisted on helping stamp the fresh pats of butter with the family crest, which was done in a particularly brutal manner, which was noticed by the kids at supper, that evening, as they gasped horrified at the deep irregular ruts in the butter's surface. I laughed.

*Ellen Grist, IIM2*



Oil painting by Laura Muzzall, UVI

## Fly on the Wall

It was Monday morning, the sun shone brightly over the rolling hills and mountains. Trees dotted over the grassy fields and bushes sprung up across the hot earth. Welcome to Knossos, home of the great palace – and Anthony the fly!

Anthony, or Ant as he liked to be known, shared the home of some of the most aristocratic people in history. Today he invited his new fly friend round – Cleopatra. This is their story:

Anthony waited on a pillar in the light shaft. The sun was warm and made him sleepy. He was waiting for his friend Cleopatra. He took in the bright orange and green murals on the walls and the strange figure 8 shaped shields that lined them. Finally she arrived. “So Ant, where’s lunch?” she asked her eyes gleaming with the thought of the chicken and fish he had promised her. “Not quite yet,” he said enjoying the attention. “I thought that I could give you a tour of my home.” Cleopatra grumbled. She noticed the shields. “What a stupid shape, why didn’t they have normal decorations. What are they supposed to be anyway?” “Oh they’re shields.” He replied matter-of-factly “It prevents moving the shield away to stab your opponent. See where your arms go?” “Yes I can see, when’s lunch?” Cleo was getting bored, and extremely hungry. “I have a couple more things to show you Cleo!” Reluctantly she flew after him. They flew through beautiful corridors. “I’ve noticed that there are many pictures and statuettes of bulls, Anthony, and what are those people doing to them?” Anthony turned into a grand room and settled on a painting on one of the walls. “You mean one like this?” Cleopatra nodded. “It’s fantastic isn’t it?” Anthony began “It’s the art of bull leaping, this man on the left is about to be tossed into the air by the bull, holding his horns then land in the middle to be caught by the catcher on the right. It proved manhood. People worship bulls.”

Three men walked into the room. Two of them had extremely small waists and long, black hair that fell below their hips. “What room is this?” Cleopatra asked. “I’m not quite sure, I must confess, but I suspect it to be the king’s hall. See all those double headed axes and shields? He’d probably want to show-off all his weaponry.” “You know, I’m actually quite enjoying this tour Ant. What’s the next room?” Cleopatra took a last look at the walls and the weapons on them and followed her friend through some fold-away doors to a bright room full of pictures of bare-breasted women. “This, Cleopatra, my friend is the queen’s hall!” What’s a hall? “oh it’s just a silly modern term for a Megaron.” “Oh.” Cleopatra thought that Ant could be wrong and this wasn’t the queen’s room. How could it be? What kind of woman would have pictures of

women in her bedroom – half naked women and there was also a very small division between this and the king’s room. Where I come from, thought Cleo, men never associated with women. As if reading her mind Anthony said “Men and women are a lot closer in Knossos. They can be friends and they are not modest. “See the young lady approaching?, she, like all women here exposes her chests, it’s just normal to them.” Cleopatra wanted to know more about these people. “I suppose you’ll be telling me next that they don’t hide when having a bath.” Anthony looked surprised. “Of course they don’t. There isn’t even a solid door.” Anthony took her and showed her. “Look at the amazing marble patterns on the walls and this painting on this bath tub shows a dragon pulling a cart, isn’t it wonderful?” Cleopatra rested on a handle and asked why it had handles. “Because it can be moved, filled and buried.” “Buried, why?” “Because they double up as coffins – cool isn’t it!” Cleopatra shuddered. “Humans – who would have them?” She muttered. “Can we go somewhere else, I don’t think I like this room any more.” The couple raced through the courtyard up the grand staircase. Cleopatra puzzled over why the top of the pillars were thicker than the bottoms and even more puzzled when Anthony said that it was so that the trees didn’t take root. Where’s the logic in that? Finally they got to where they wanted to get to. “This” Anthony announced proudly “is the shrine.” Cleopatra took note of the libations and the giant pithoi pots. Also close by was the throne room which had paintings of thin waisted priests and griffins for protection either side of the throne. Anthony explained that the seat had been made to fit the king’s body perfectly. Cleopatra admired the deep reds and pastel-minty greens.

“Lunch is soon. Before that I’ll show you the main store rooms.” When they got there Cleopatra was spellbound by the size of the pots in the magazines. Anthony was spellbound by the women with kohl eyes, big lashes, big ringlet hair, white skin and soft red lips. “So why are there so many handles on the pots?” asked Cleopatra. “Oh it is to make carrying and pouring easier. Notice the decorations of bulls and fighters on these pots.” “It’s only sea-life over here. They’re so beautiful. It must be near impossible to make.” Anthony rested next to Cleopatra on the ground. “Yes, sea-life is another passion of theirs. Which reminds me – octopus is on the menu today. Let’s go and have lunch.”

With that a servant girl plonked a heavy, wine filled pithos on top of them and that was the end of Anthony and Cleopatra.

*Philippa de Boissiere, IIM2*



'Rebecca Doble':  
Antonia Edwards, 5th form

## Imagine you are a consultant of the oracle and describe your visit

### Porcha and Bounos – a Greek myth:

Porcha, the wife of a rich soldier lives on the Isle of Ithaca. Her husband is at war and so she is alone in her house, bar her children and slaves. One of these slaves is named Bounos and he is desperately in love with the beautiful Porcha. Porcha, however, is faithful to her husband and can love no other man until she knows for certain that her husband is not returning. But, she has been waiting a long time and so will send Bounos to ask the question at the oracle (as all women must do this through an intermediary).

And so the story begins ....

Bounos left his home on the 6th day of Bysios for the 7th was the day of consultation (and Apollo's birthday.) He headed towards the port to catch a local merchant ship on which he had agreed to travel there, and back the next day. He was armed with enough money for food and a sacrificial goat.

They sailed for the day and night (for the wind was low) and arrived on the morning of the 7th. They touched the shores of mainland Greece at the Port of Itea and Bounos began his walk to Delphi. He walked by way of the Acropolis towards the greatest and most famous oracle of Greece – Apollo Pythios. Upon his arrival at Delphi, Bounos paid his pelanos (a fee to consult the oracle) and brought a goat from the local market as the intended sacrifice to Apollo. Proceeding to the altar where the blood sacrifices were performed he glanced around at some of the other pilgrims who were using alternative methods – a simple luck procedure. The consultant asked his question and delved into a bag of pebbles, which had been marked to resemble yes, and no. How could they fall for it!

When it was his turn for his goat to be sacrificed he lead her along the path to the altar. The sharp bits of grain stung his bare feet but he knew the grain was necessary for if the goat was reluctant to be led it was a bad omen and he may never get to consult the Pythia. Before his goat was despatched the Hosioi (Priest of Apollo) sprinkled the goat with cold water. She tensed with shock and then began to tremble, Bounos breathed a sigh of relief for this meant the oracle was functioning and they would bring the Pythia down to the temple.

The Pythia was a woman of no special background or qualifications, only that she had to abandon her husband and children and become The Gods Bride and fit an age criteria of over 50. Before consultation she would visit the Kastalian Spring at dawn, cleanse herself and burn laurel leaves on the sacred hearth so that she could immerse herself in the smoke.

After Bounos had also purified himself in the Kastalian Spring he found himself ushered into the Chresmographeion which was a sort of office built against the retaining wall on the north side of the temple, to draw his lot to consult. After the Delphinians with the *promanteia* (priority ticket) had been and gone, which

Bounos had watched intently – some came out with happy, sad or angry expressions and some looked just confused!

When Bounos drew his lot to consult and came 3rd he knew he had been lucky when he noticed some of the dark faces around him, some may not even get to consult the oracle after paying their pelanos and sacrificing their goat!

When the Pythia had carried out her ritual ablutions at the Kastalian Spring (after the second consultation) a train of priests accompanied her back to the temple. They walked through the *pronaos* (vestibule) and the *cella* (central building) to the altar of Poseidon and the Pythia proceeded into the subterranean chamber from which she pronounced the true oracles of Apollo. Sat on a tripod roughly a meter below the temple floor and having inhaled the *pneuma* (divine vapour) the Pythia was ready to hear Bounos's question.

As Bounos parted his lips to announce Porcha's question he stopped dead. He realised this may be the only time he would visit the oracle so it would serve him better to ask a question of his own.

No! He could never be so disloyal to Porcha. But, what if he was to rephrase the question so it served both purposes?

"Will Porcha's husband return?" Could become:

"Which man shall have Porcha?"

Bounos drew a deep breath and pronounced the latter in a loud voice to the *prophetes* who delivered it to the Pythia. Under the inspiration of Apollo the Pythia delivered the prophecy to the *prophetes* present who recorded it in hexameter verse. When Bounos received the written version it read:

"Porcha will be with the one who loves her most."

Bounos stared at it contentedly for he knew no man could love Porcha as much as he did. As he made his way home on the merchant ship he dreamed of the future Apollo had foretold. After another day of sailing he neared the shores of Ithaca and tried to assume a solemn face to break the news to Porcha that as he interpreted it, her husband was not returning. He reached the shore and rapidly paid the sailor and hurried back to his house.

Before he was half way, however, a breathless slave boy who he recognised met him.

"Bounos?" The slave boy enquired.

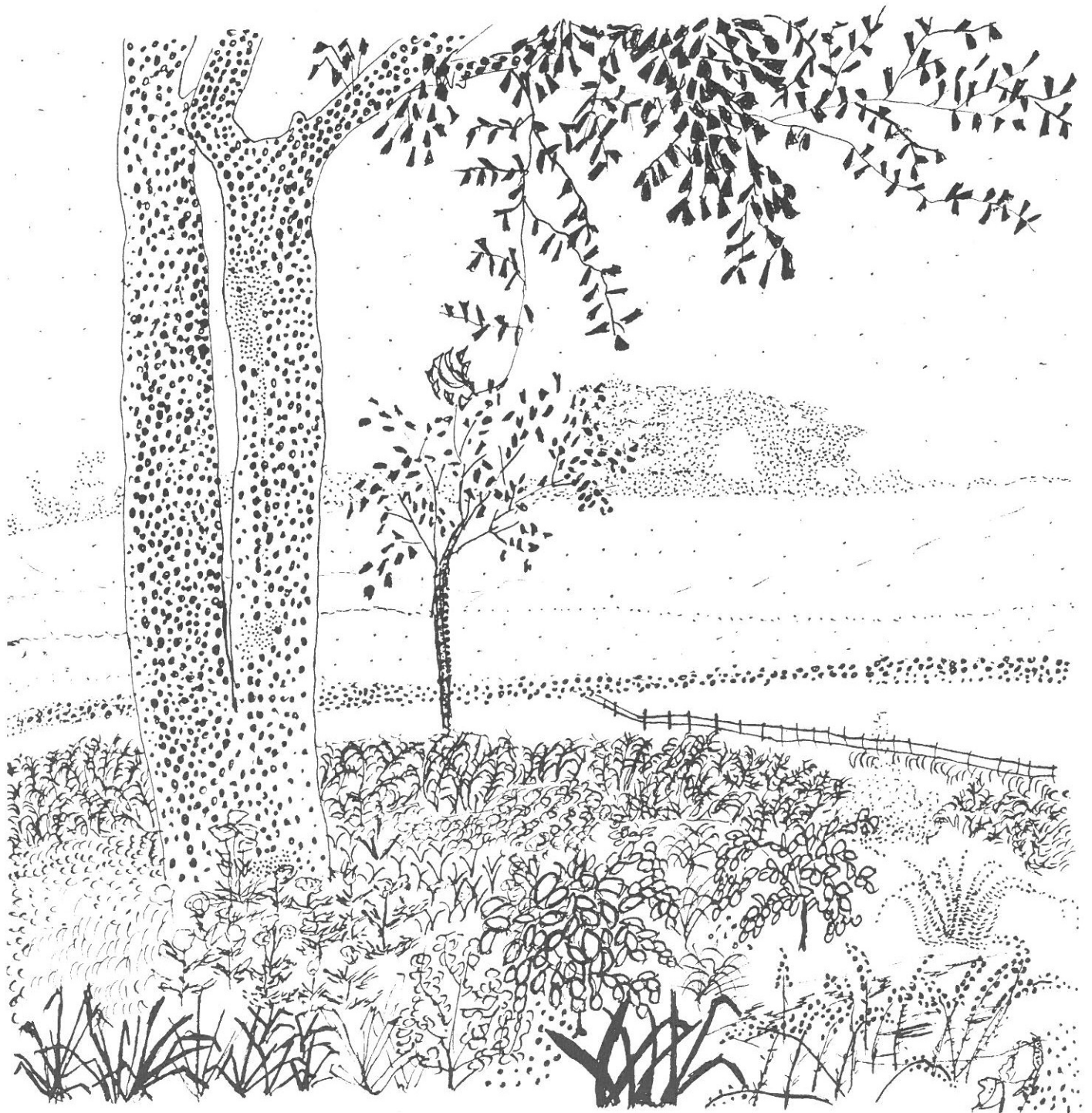
"Yes" Bounos confirmed suspiciously for such a welcoming was hardly customary.... maybe Apollo was working his charms already?

"Our mistress is dead" He spluttered, "Struck down by a fatal illness!"

With a disbelieving moan Bounos fell to his knees,

"It can not be true" he uttered but yet it was, for it was Apollo himself that loved fair Porcha the most.

Rebecca Rowland, IVP



Chrissie Byard, 2nd form



## The consultation of the Pythia

My name is Katrekea; I am a politician from the great city of Athens. I am travelling to Delphi to ask Apollo's advice on my political career. My boat leaves from the port of Pireaus, I cross the Isthimus on foot and then I go by boat again along Sinus Corinacus to Itea – a journey of ten days. As I enter the port I can see the fields of vines and the steep road leading upwards. There are lots of boats and lots of people crowding the port and the road and the agora is full of people trying to get provisions for the journey upwards. My friends and I try to make our way through to get what we need. The sun is hot and the streets are smelly.

At last we are able to start up the climbing road, the sun is still hot but at least the air is fresher. The road climbs in a long zigzag upwards and soon we can see the view of the land below and Delphi up ahead under towering Parnassus wreathed in cloud. To the east, on the right is the gymnasium, where the athlete's train for the Pythian Games and the stadium is up the mountainside on the northwest. When we get inside the Temenos we go up the Sacred Way lined with the treasuries of all the cities and the memorials. The Treasury of Athens is in the form of a small Doric Temple with two columns standing between pilasters. We Athenians also built the stoa under the terrace wall, which is a lovely place for us to rest in the shade and admire the view. Some of the other treasuries are very good with Siphnos' very rich, full of gold from their mines, and the Leshne of the Cnidians with painting by Polygnotus.

At last we reach the Great Temple of Apollo and I am immersed in its splendour. We must find the priest to pay our pelanos so that we can go to the sacrifice next day. We are not considered important enough to have the privilege of the promanteia, but maybe some day I will be.

The next day we prepare for the sacrifice by going down to the Castalian spring. The Pythia has already had her ritual bath, but we have to wait while the Prophetia and the Hosioi and delegates from the township of Delphi cleanse themselves, then it is the turn of those who want to consult the Oracle.

Now it is the time of the sacrifice and I hope that this is a day when Apollo will answer our questions. A female goat garlanded with flowers is led up to the altar and sprinkled with water. She trembles all over so that we know this is the day. Hair is cut from the goat and burned on the altar, the animal is stunned and the throat cut and the blood collected in the bowl is poured on the altar.

The meat is then cut up and the Gods portion is burnt on the altar, the rest of the meat will be cooked for us to eat.

The Pythia is led to the Temple and we join the prophetes and priests who accompany her. I can see her clearly, she is about fifty years old but she is dressed as a young girl. Before entering the temple she pays homage to Earth, Themis and Phoebe who were here before the place became dedicated to Pythian Apollo. I am awed and a bit scared. I hope that I will understand the answer for I know people who have taken the wrong action through misunderstanding.

We congregate in the chresmogapheion and draw lots to see who will go first. I am fifth in my group. She has already burnt the laurel leaves on the altar and now she is going down to the underground room where she will sit on her tripod and ask our questions. I follow into the Adyton and it is now my turn to ask my question:

"Will I become a successful politician".

I shout my question down into the underground room. There is a pause and then the Pythia gives the reply. I cannot understand a word of it and I will have to wait for the written reply from the prophete but this is a great day for me. I have heard the voice of Apollo speaking through the Pythia.

The prophete comes out with my answer written on a scroll. With trembling fingers I unroll it and read it carefully as I know that Apollo often speaks double. I have heard of his oracle to Philanthos which he did not understand. It said 'As soon as he felt rain from a clear sky, he was to seize the country and the town' He did not understand it until his wife Aithra (clear sky) began to weep.

My answer was

After the burning of Athena's olive tree  
When the battle seems lost and won

I did not understand this and it made me fearful as Athena's olive tree would only burn if Athens was burnt. This must mean a defeat and the destruction of my city. But how could this be for Athens is too great and Athena would never allow it so perhaps it will never happen, perhaps I will consult a Mantis when I get back to Athens. After all Apollo is called Loxias 'the Oblique One'.

*Valerie Furnham, IVP*

## The Loch Ness Monster

I had read many interesting things about the Loch Ness Monster and its surroundings. Before hand I read many reports and articles regarding Nessie and so being a person of the “seeing is believing type” decided to check the loch out for myself.

I lived only two and a half hours away and so I decided that a weekend of monster hunting would be enough. I packed many useful things such as binoculars and my fast acting camera on the off-chance that I should see anything. Also I took waterproof clothing, as it would be better to be safe than sorry. I packed everything into my car and then I set off.

On arriving in a small village or what used to be a small village which was now very commercial, I booked myself into an inn for two nights. There were not many people as it was not really the season for watching out for Nessie in the rain.

I decided that before I went out searching for this prehistoric creature I had better acquire some booklets and brochures on the best sites and see what this story was really all about. There was no problem in finding a shop that sold Nessie souvenirs and books on the mystery animal. There was such a selection of books and leaflets on the marine reptile. The shop assistant was watching me like a hawk, it was as though I was a never before seen creature. Then I knew what Nessie felt like. In the end I bought three books entitled,

‘Know your Nessie’

‘Facts and photos of the sea creature that lurks in the depths!’

and ‘Understand aquatic life’

I wanted as much information as I could get.

That night after dinner I went up to my room and I sat on my bed with all of the newspaper and magazine articles that I had collected and of course my books. I wanted to figure out what the creature was like, what it thought and how it reacted. I spent hours reading and trying to put it all together in my head.

The next morning I woke up at about 6 o’clock and so I decided to go and check the lake/Loch out early as to avoid excited tourists pointing and staring at things. I got dressed and I took my backpack as I intended to spend all

day at the Loch.

It was just getting light as I reached the Loch and it was magnificent, with the soft mist floating across the calm but dangerous water. I went down to the water’s edge and just sat there for about fifteen minutes as the soft ripples just rolled up to my feet. The mist was just clearing and the entire loch was almost visible. Since the usual sites to spot Nessie would probably soon have people occupying them I decided to wander along the bank and find a quiet secluded spot to sit and try to spy Nessie. Gradually I found that the place seemed perfect for me and I settled down and relaxed. There was not a soul for miles.

Several hours later I heard a slight splashing and breaking of the water, I was half asleep at the time and I thought I was dreaming. As I slowly lifted my head up I saw a long slender neck and a small head appear from the water. I thought that I was crazy and that I was seeing things but as I rubbed my eyes and then opened them the shape was still there, as life like as ever. My heart skipped a beat, so it really was true. The creature gradually revealed more and behind the unmistakable neck and small head lay a rounded bulge which was I suppose its body. It had large soft eyes and a what seemed to be a king expression on its face. It looked so gentle. Its skin shone in the morning sun and it seemed to be smooth and untorn or unscarred. It had to be clever to escape people for this long. I couldn’t do anything for a full ten minutes.

After I acquired my motor skills again I scabbled in my bag for my camera, people would have to believe this picture! As I was about to take this enormously incredible scene I thought that if I told everyone the exact place I went and showed them the picture then this rare and (what seemed to be) peaceful creature might be captured and then put on show for everyone to ooh and aah at all day. That was cruel, or maybe the film in my camera got stuck and so the camera wasn’t able to work, either way I put my camera away. I just sat calmly and peacefully and watched as this beautiful creature enjoyed the solitude and peace of his or her surroundings.

I knew that no-one would believe me and surprisingly I didn’t really care. I knew that I had seen it and that not many were blessed with the scenes that I saw of the not so mysterious Loch Ness Monster.

*Elizabeth Reed, HIMI*

## My Chariot Race

It was the first time I'd been to the Circus Maximus in Rome; they said it held 250,000 a quarter of Rome's population, in fact it was my first real chariot race. The stadium was packed; all I could hear were the few and varied shouts of encouragement, hail Caesar and the babbling soothing words of my trainer. Each side of me were my opponents, rich and powerful men who would go to any lengths to guarantee success. I felt sick, my stomach churned, as a boy I'd felt the thrill as I watched, but too many times I'd seen men carted off never to return. Was this what I really wanted? Well too late now I thought, I have to blunder blindly on to death or victory, whichever shall have me.

A deathly silence fell over the stadium as the sacrifice at the Temple of Jupiter took place; the Emperor stood to introduce the commencing of the games. His words were lost on me as I looked down at my opponent's wheels; they had sharp spikes, which looked ready to tear any ones chariot to bits, if they got too close.

The four teams shone proudly in the glinting sun: red, white, blue and green. For the first time I felt like an object, as I realised the companies that owned the horses and who made the chariots had no care for us we were just the people who did the difficult bit, risked our lives to bring glory and new business. I had four gleaming white horses, beautiful beasts, I leant forward and ruffled their ears, I knew that we had a mutual friendship, a bond, as I respected them and they respected me, well no-one else did.

We were the third race today so the crowds were reasonably well behaved, not yet restless and rowdy. The Sponsor shouted 'Hail Caesar' and the crowd mimicked him, we had not time for such formalities, and we were being ushered into place. The horses bucking and rearing

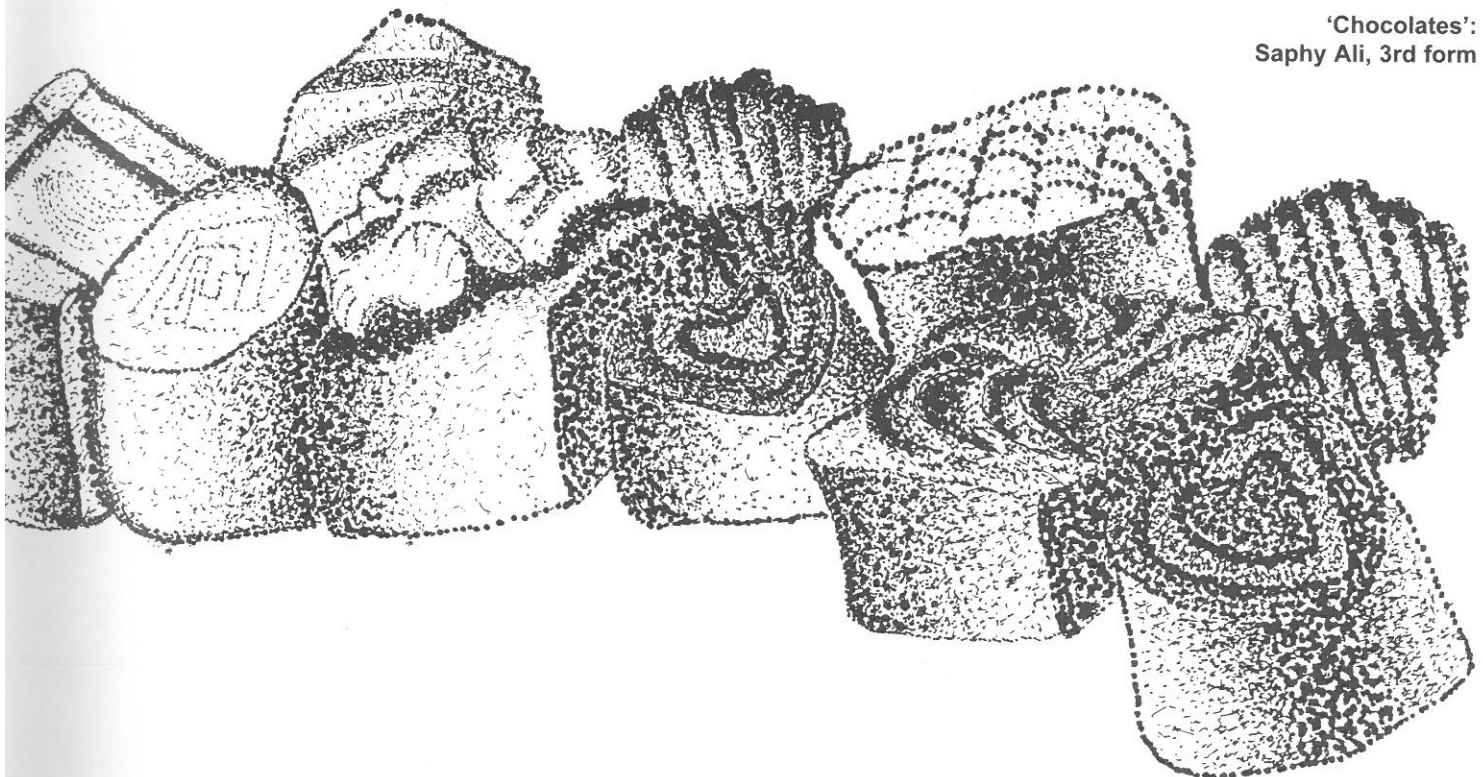
in the excitement. We sat and watched for the mappa to be dropped. We were in the starting boxes now, the carraers, the silence was making me uneasy, I new it had and would last seconds, but to me it was hours, the longest slowest seconds of my life. The mappa was dropped, I put my head down as the flying grit and sand was blinding me the man in green was being especially violent; crushing, cornering, overturning and running off the track anything that got in his way. He had a whip in his hand and was urging his horses on, cursing when they stumbled. I drew level with him and he turned to look at me, a look of pure hatred came over his face, I equalled it with a look of determination. He drove the spikes on his wheels into my chariot, I veered away and drove at him from behind just knocking him of balance and I watched his helmet come off and him being run over by the chariot behind. My head was spinning and my heart was pounding, I looked up at the fish to see that we had two more laps to complete.

I was in the lead and the spectators were deafeningly loud. Suddenly a rush of hooves sounded behind me and I looked up to see, a man of great stature and build, brandishing a whip, he pulled it back and with all his strength he aimed it at me. The impact was so great that I was thrown from my chariot, but some how I clung on and pulled myself back onto the platform. We rode neck and neck but with one final burst of energy my horses sprinted on to victory.

I was shaking as I rode my victory lap, my arm was gushing with blood and I was surprised I didn't lose consciousness. The Emperor looked down on me as he placed the crown of laurels on my head. I knew one thing I never wanted to do this again.

*Anna Mojab, I1J*

**'Chocolates':**  
Saphy Ali, 3rd form



'Chocolates and Ribbon':  
Rokhsana Saddighzadeh, 3rd form

