

Winning entries from the Oxford University Press  
Story Writing Competition 2026

# HOPE





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Please note that these winning stories have not been edited  
and the ideas expressed are solely of the authors.

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“At Oxford University Press we continue to value our strong partnership with the Emirates Airline Festival of Literature. Our dedication to inspiring students in schools to immerse themselves in the enriching experience of imaginative writing and storytelling remains unwavering, as does our joy in reading the inspiring results of their creativity.”

Oxford University Press

Each year, Education Team at the Emirates Literature Foundation, eagerly awaits reading stories written by students participating in the Oxford University Press Story Writing Competition. Their writing is a profound gift that grants us a unique frame into the vibrant worlds they create. It deepens our understanding and expands our insight.

Hence, dear students, we thank you for trusting us with your stories – we know it is a brave step forward and hope that you will continue to tell stories that make us more human, more alive, more compassionate.

Bravo, to all the winners – your stories are special and make this anthology shine. Please continue to write, the world needs your stories.

Thank you also to the parents, the teachers, the friends, and family who provide crucial encouragement and support to the students. Our competitions work because you passionately champion them on your end.

To make this competition work seamlessly, we rely on our reliable band of very diligent volunteers who read and carefully assess each entry before a shortlist is sent to the judges. We understand it is a challenging task, and thoughtful consideration goes into your selection.

From the Emirates Literature Foundation, we would like to offer a heartfelt thank you to Aleksandra Samonek, Almas Dedanwala, Amrish Kacker, Angela Souter, Anupama Mirle, Aroma Joshi, Chafic Mekkaoui, Denise Moore, Elizabeth Gupta, Elizabeth Jane Hayward, Gunjan Pradhan, Heena Singh, Iram Rizvi, Julia Peters, Linda Dickinson, Malathy Garewal, Na'eemah Mehta, Naira Chaudhry, Namita Mehrotra, Naomi Clarke, Nicole D'Souza, Patricia Mae M. Estenoso, Sharmistha Khobragade, Sherin Mariam John, Smita Jain,

Yvette Judge, and Zarina Khan – please know we could not have done this without your help.

The long-term commitments of our very dedicated judges, April Hardy, Kathy Hoopmann and Kathy Butti, make this competition even more meaningful and valuable for the students. Their sympathetic and careful deliberation of each shortlisted story gives heart and soul to our effort of finding the best and the most original voices. We are honoured to extend another very heartfelt thank you to our judges.

The Emirates Literature Foundation profoundly values the continued support from Oxford University Press for this competition. This exclusive opportunity offers an accessible and celebrated platform for budding writing talent across the GCC to get their work recognised. This positive endorsement from Oxford University Press is vital to our work.

As we leave you with these winning stories, we hope that the readers of this anthology will find the same connection and joy that we feel each year.

### **Education Team**

Emirates Literature Foundation

# Foreword

I love that the theme of this year's anthology is **hope**. Writing a story and putting it in front of judges is a singular act of hope - and courage! It's an act taking place every day as countless writers take a deep breath and send away a manuscript, hoping to find acceptance and the opportunity to share their stories with readers around the world.

The crush of failure is always close at hand and writers, as a rule, are not thick-skinned, so I salute anyone who harnesses hope and takes the risk.

Back in 2025 I was delighted and honoured to help kick off the process of the Oxford University Press Story Writing Competition with a workshop. Getting young writers warmed up and inspired is a great privilege. I've been going into schools and running workshops for nearly two decades now and encountering the spark, joy and spirit of fresh talent never gets old.

For me it's also a full circle thing, because my own act of hope ended in my first book deal, twenty years ago... with Oxford University Press.

The stories in this anthology showcase remarkable talent from a wide selection of young writers who are absorbing a planet which is changing fast. Their stories reflect its many facets, from the real world of rivers and rewilding to the fantastical search for a dragon led by a single scale. From war, illness and devastating flood, to ambitions for education and miracle cures.

The stories play wonderfully with imagery, using folded paper, yarn, candle-driven lanterns, paint, metal, pools of water, leaves, birds and

tempests to pull us in. The result is like wandering through a vividly-coloured, intensely gripping gallery exhibit, all within these pages.

To see your work in print in a *real book* is such a wonderful way to begin a writing career of any kind.

Whether the young creatives who have woven these tales move into careers as authors, editors, scriptwriters, poets or any other role in which written communication is key, this anthology is a foundation stone for that journey. If I had been published in this form before I left school, I would have been beyond thrilled. As it was, *my* first publications were definitely one-offs, in exercise books, accompanied by my own coloured-in drawings and carefully covered in sticky-back plastic.

The 21st century is an amazing time to be a writer, but also a challenging one. The way we write is as unique as our fingerprints. It's a part of who we are, so no writer should feel the pressure to make their voice fit.

Be *you* is the best advice I can offer any writer. Wonderful, imperfect you. Exactly like nobody else.

### **Ali Sparkes**

Multi-award-winning and bestselling author

November 2025



# CONTENTS

## **11 and under**

|                                                     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----|
| <b>The Sage and the Sapling</b> by Saikrsna Srinath | 11 |
| <b>The Tale of Dragon</b> by Kunxi He               | 13 |
| <b>Hope in Stitches</b> by Shazana BIRTH Sha        | 15 |

## **12-14**

|                                                         |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----|
| <b>The Last Light in Room 47</b> by Ahan Punatham Kandy | 20 |
| <b>The Lantern in the Storm</b> by Ethen Netto Jacob    | 25 |
| <b>The Paper Lanterns</b> by Adam Mahmoud Mubarak       | 30 |

## **15-18**

|                                                      |    |
|------------------------------------------------------|----|
| <b>A Lullaby Carried by the Sea</b> by Lyn Mary Liju | 37 |
| <b>The Promise of Flight</b> by Ethan Poh            | 43 |
| <b>The Umbrella Man</b> by Ameera Aal Ghardaqa       | 48 |

# 11 and under

## Judge's Overview

Gosh! The young writers are really keeping us judges on our toes; every year it feels harder and harder to just pick a few from the wonderfully imagined stories you treat us to.

Hope, interpreted in so many ways; love for others, love for nature, healing for both people and the planet, belief that your hope will keep someone safe. Your imaginations are brimming with wonderful stories!

To those of you who didn't make it into the top places, please don't be discouraged. There were so very many stories entered and the standard was exceptionally high; there were nearly twenty stories I wish I could have put in the top ten. It was extremely difficult to pick just a few and some of you were very very close. To me you are all winners!

Thank you so much for entering and please enter again next year; I really do love reading your work!

**April Hardy**

November 2025

# The Sage and the Sapling



First place: Saikrsna Srinath, 11

Jumeirah English Speaking School – Arabian Ranches, Dubai

The forest was quiet after the rain...

Shara crouched beside a young fig tree, wiping mud from its fragile stem. She had planted it three weeks ago, part of her school's rewilding project near the edge of Gombe River. Miraculously, it had survived the storm. She exhaled. Behind her a soft voice said, "You helped it." Shara turned around, surprised.

Jane Goodall stood beneath a wide acacia tree, arms crossed and eyes gentle. Her silver hair was tied back and her boots were encrusted in red soil; as if she had grown from the wilderness itself.

"I tried my best" Shara said shyly as Jane stepped closer, kneeling beside the sapling. She looked up at Shara. "It's strong. Because you gave it a chance" Shara blinked. "I didn't think it would make it." Jane smiled. "Hope isn't about certainty. It's about showing up anyway."

They sat together in the damp clearing, the forest humming around them. Shara had read every book Jane had written and

watched every documentary. But nothing compared to being next to her. “I want to help,” Shara said. “Not just plant trees. I want to help everything” Jane nodded. “Then start with one thing. One tree. One animal. One person. That’s how change begins.”

They walked together through the forest, Jane pointing out nests and stories etched into bark. She spoke of chimpanzees she’d known, of forests she’d watched vanish. Her voice was soft, but every word carried weight of a world known. At a fork in the trail, they found a young chimp alone, watching them from a branch. Jane paused, eyes shining. “He’s curious” she whispered. “Just like you” Shara smiled.

They returned to camp as the sun dipped low. Jane handed Shara a small notebook which was worn, weathered, filled with sketches and quotes. “This was mine” she said. “Now it’s yours.” Shara held it like a priceless artifact.

That night, Shara wrote her first entry: *I planted hope. It survived the storm.* Weeks later, Jane passed peacefully in her sleep. The world mourned. But Shara didn’t cry. She planted another tree. She taught her classmates about chimpanzees. She read Jane’s words aloud in the forest. When someone asked her why she believed the world could still be saved, she smiled and said: “Because I walked with Jane”.

Hope wasn’t loud. It didn’t shout. It whispered through leaves, grew in soil, and passed from hand to hand.

### **Judge’s Comments**

*A beautifully thought out and respectfully written story which is also a tribute to the wonderful Jane Goodall. This was such a clever idea, including in your story someone who instilled hope in people during her lifetime. I think Jane would have been very happy to read this. Very well done and please, do keep writing.*

# The Tale of Dragon



Second place: Kunxi He, 11  
Repton School, Dubai

No dragon had been seen in Moon Kingdom for over a century. Once, they flew like stars across the sky, keepers of balance and bearers of warmth. Their fire lit cities, healed wounds, and kept the world running. But after the War of Ash, they vanished. Some said they were hunted to extinction. Others whispered they left in sorrow, unwilling to watch the world destroying itself.

Without them, Moon Kingdom grew cold. Magic faded. Winters lengthened. People forgot what hope even felt like. But in a small, wind-worn village clinging to the cliffs, a boy named Kay still remembered.

His grandmother, once a Skyguard rider, had flown with a golden dragon named Solara. Her stories had raised him, tales of flight above the clouds, of fire that could melt despair. Most called them fairy tales. Kay called them truth.

When the final winter came and the village fires failed, his grandmother grew sick, too frail to rise from bed. One night, she asked Kay to sit by her side and pressed a dull, cracked scale into

his palm. "It's hers," she whispered. "Solara. She's still out there, just sleeping and waiting. Not for warriors, but for those who still believe in hope." She passed away before sunrise. Grief pressed heavily on Kay's chest, so did the scale. It was warm, faintly pulsing, like a heartbeat.

Kay left with nothing, but the scale wrapped in cloth. He climbed up the frozen ridges of the Windspire Mountains, higher than any map dared to name. Storms tore at his coat. Ice cut his face. The world was begging him to turn back. He did not.

At the summit, hidden beneath a sheet of frost and silence, he found a cavern, still and vast. In its center lay a dragon, curled and sleeping beneath a thick crust of snow. Her wings were tattered. Her light was gone. Kay stepped into the silence and placed the scale gently on her chest.

"I don't know if you can hear me," he whispered. "But I do. I remember you. And we need you." Nothing moved. Then, a breath. A spark.

Golden light flickered beneath her ribs. Two ancient eyes opened, shining as abyss. Solara rose, steam rising from her scales. Her first breath melted the snow. Her wings stretched, cracked but strong. She looked down at Kay, and with a breath burning like fire, said, "You believed."

She flew. Rivers thawed. Magic stirred. The long night ended. Dawn broke over Moon Kingdom for the first time in a hundred years.

Kay returned not as a warrior, but as the first of the new Skyguards. A boy who carried a dying ember of Hope through the darkness and lit the world again.

### **Judge's Comments**

*Excellent! A stirring story of a boy left alone in the world, with nothing but hope and a dragon's scale. As I read this, I could picture it as an animated film. Please keep writing; you have a wonderful imagination. Very well done!*

# Hope in Stitches



Third place: Shazana Bintah Sha, 10  
The Apple International Community School, Dubai

The war had taken almost everything from Grace. The streets where she once played hopscotch were now destroyed, the school where she learned her letters stood in ruins, and the voices of her parents were echoes she would never hear again. At just nine years old, Grace experiences more sorrow in her life than most kids. But she still had her teddy.

Her mother had kept it into her arms on the last night they were together. The ground had been destroyed with the sounds of bombs. Her mother's face had been pale but steady as she whispered, when the world feels dark, hold this teddy bear close, light will find its way back.

That night was the last time Grace saw her parents. By morning, their house was gone, and Grace was left alone with only the teddy in her arms.

The teddy was old, its fur stitched and one button eye missing, but to Grace it was more precious than gold. She clutched it when she slept under broken buildings, whispered to it when she starved,

and held it tightly whenever fear threatened to overwhelm her. To the world, it was just a toy. To Grace, it was her mother's arms, her father's voice, her entire family sewn into one small patchwork of cloth.

Days blurred together. Smoke hung in the air, and silence pressed heavy on the ruins. Grace wandered with the teddy, searching for bits of food, searching for something, anything, that felt alive. Sometimes she almost gave up. Sometimes the sadness was so deep she thought even hope had left her.

One afternoon, Grace found herself standing in what used to be the town square. The fountain was broken, the benches shattered, but the sky above was soft and gold with the setting sun. For the first time in weeks, she noticed the beauty of the colors, the gentle pinks and oranges that painted the sky. She hugged her teddy tighter and whispered, "Look, Mom... the light came back."

Her voice cracked, but her heart stirred with something fragile and alive.

Then she heard it, voices, Real voices. Not the ones she imagined in her loneliness, but strong, clear voices calling out through the ruins. Grace froze at first, fear tightening her chest. But the teddy seemed to give her courage, as if it were urging her forward.

She stood tall, held the teddy high into the air, and shouted with all the strength left in her small body: "I'm here!"

The voices grew closer, then figures appeared, running toward her. Warm hands wrapped around her shoulders, soft words filled her ears. Grace was no longer alone.

The city was broken, her family was gone, but the teddy in her arms still carried hope. Her mother was right, Light had found its way back. Way back to her.

### **Judge's Comments**

*A quietly powerful and very moving account of a nine year old girl, orphaned by war, holding onto the hope represented by the teddy bear her mother had given her. This brought a tear to my eye and a lump to my throat. Please keep writing. Thank you.*

# 12 – 14

## Judge's Overview

Many psychologists believe that hope is one of the most important things a person can have to help them through difficult times. And it's obvious that the writers in this year's competition believe the same. It was refreshing to read so many stories from young people that did not dissolve into misery and despair and hopelessness that is so often seen in social media and news articles. There was hope in poor health, hope in war, hope in drought, hope in death and even hope in a can of baked beans!

I was given the top 33 entries out of thousands of entries to judge and honestly all of them could have made the top ten. The quality was outstanding. I was curious though that identical plots did come up on several occasions even within this small cohort. This could well have been through a brainstorm activity in a classroom from which several entries were submitted. It could be that the concept of hope resonated in similar ways with different people, or it could mean that ideas were AI generated. Whatever the reason, it did mean that completely original, well written stories that were unique to the author were more likely to make the winning entries.

Here are some tips on how to win a writing competition.

### **Do this:**

1. Draw on your own experience. No one else has your life.
2. You have a limited word count, so make every word count.
3. Remember that your reader can only read what is on the page, not what is in your head.

4. Once you have finished your story, leave it alone for a week or two, then when you go back to it, read it aloud. Any corrections you need to make will jump out at you.

**Do not do this:**

1. Do not get AI to write your story for you. AI is not you and will never be as individual and unique as you are.
2. Do not go to AI for ideas. Every person who does, gets the same ideas fed back to them. If the same story plot pops up repeatedly in competition entries, judges get very suspicious.
3. Do not get AI to 'clean up' your story once you have written it. It saps away all individuality and whitewashes creativity.
4. Do not use AI at all. Just don't.

And keep writing!

**Kathy Hoopmann**

November 2025

# The Last Light in Room 47



First place: Ahan Punatham Kandy, 14  
Mayoor Private School, Abu Dhabi

The rain had been falling for three days straight, turning the hospital courtyard into a blur of gray puddles and reflected lights. Room 47, at the far end of St. Mary's Oncology Wing, overlooked that courtyard – though the boy inside it hadn't seen the world beyond the glass in nearly two months.

Eighteen-year-old Arjun Mehta sat propped up against his pillow, a worn sketchbook resting on his knees. His once-steady hands trembled now, but the pencil still moved, tracing the faint outlines of a sunrise.

He had always painted sunrises.

"Another one?" came a voice from the doorway.

Arjun looked up to see Nurse Ananya, her warm eyes glancing toward the sketch. She was one of the few people who didn't speak to him in whispers.

"Yeah," he said softly. "I'm trying to remember what it looks like from my roof. The way the light hits the old neem tree first."

Ananya smiled. "You'll see it again soon."

He didn't answer. They both knew what his silence meant.

Arjun had been diagnosed with osteosarcoma, a bone cancer that had spread faster than the doctors expected. The chemotherapy had taken his hair, his strength, and – lately – his faith.

There had been a time when his dreams had been filled with color – architecture school, traveling, his mother's laughter, and his father's endless lectures about hard work. But now his nights were restless, and the mornings were battles.

What do you dream of when your future has an expiration date?

He thought about that question often.

The door creaked open again. This time it wasn't a nurse.

"Hey, artist boy."

It was Maya, the girl from Room 46. She was fourteen, always wore mismatched socks, and somehow found a way to laugh even when her IV stand followed her like a shadow.

Arjun smiled faintly. "You're supposed to be resting."

"So are you," she said, walking in and sitting on the foot of his bed. "Whatcha drawing?"

He turned the sketchbook toward her. "A sunrise."

"Again? You've drawn like, twenty of them."

He shrugged. "It's my thing."

"Looks more like fire than sunlight," Maya teased, squinting.

Arjun chuckled. "Maybe it's both."

They sat in silence for a while, listening to the rain. Maya pulled out a small paper crane from her pocket and placed it on his bedside table.

"Made you something," she said. "They say if you fold a thousand of these, your wish comes true."

He picked it up carefully. "And what did you wish for?"

"That you'd draw me in your sunrise," she said, grinning.

For the first time in weeks, Arjun laughed. It wasn't a strong laugh – more of a broken sound that cracked through the heaviness of the room – but it was real.

That night, he couldn't sleep. The storm outside was fierce, lightning splintering the sky. He looked at the paper crane under the dim light, its wings casting shadows like open hands.

He took his pencil and began to draw – not the sun this time, but a small girl sitting beneath a glowing sky filled with cranes. Each one carried a sliver of gold, flying toward the horizon.

When the nurse came in for the midnight check, she found him asleep over the sketchbook, smiling faintly.

Morning came pale and cold. Ananya walked in with his breakfast, humming softly. Arjun was awake, his eyes tracing the slow, gray dawn through the window.

“Did you know,” he said quietly, “that the sun still rises, even when you can't see it?”

Ananya looked at him, unsure what to say.

He pointed outside. “Behind those clouds... it's still there. I think hope is like that.”

She nodded, blinking back tears.

A week later, Maya's room was empty. Her bed was neatly made, the IV stand gone. The hallway outside Room 47 felt heavier, quieter.

Arjun didn't ask anyone what happened. He didn't need to. He just opened his sketchbook and began to draw another sunrise – this one brighter, softer, almost alive.

He added a paper crane soaring high above the clouds.

Days passed. Then weeks. His condition worsened. He spoke less, slept more, but his sketches multiplied – hundreds of pages filled with light, wings, and warmth. The nurses began to tape them to the walls, until Room 47 looked less like a hospital chamber and more like a gallery of dawns.

Even the other patients started calling it “the sunrise room.”

One afternoon, Arjun’s parents arrived with something wrapped in brown paper.

“We thought you might like this,” his father said, trying to steady his voice.

Inside was a small canvas, framed and blank.

Arjun touched it carefully. “It’s perfect,” he whispered. “One last one.”

He spent all evening painting – his brush moving slowly, his breath uneven. When he was done, he asked Ananya to hold it up.

The canvas showed a radiant sunrise over a city of silhouettes. In the foreground stood a girl holding a crane, her face turned toward the light.

“It’s beautiful,” Ananya said softly.

Arjun smiled. “It’s called ‘*The Last Light*’.”

That night, the monitors in Room 47 beeped softly, then fell silent.

A year later, a new wing opened at St. Mary’s Hospital – The Arjun Mehta Art Therapy Center. On the wall near the entrance hung a large painting: the same sunrise he had painted on his final day. Beneath it, a plaque read:

*“Even when the night is longest, the sun waits patiently beyond the horizon. Hope is not the absence of darkness – it is the promise of light.”*

– Arjun Mehta (2007-2025)

Inside, children painted, folded cranes, and filled the walls with colors. Among them was a small girl with mismatched socks, holding a brush dipped in gold.

Years later, visitors still talked about the “sunrise boy.” Some said he was a miracle worker who brought joy to the dying. Others said he was simply an artist who saw beauty where others saw pain.

But to those who knew him, to Ananya, to his parents, and to the children who painted under his legacy, Arjun was something more.

He was proof that hope does not need to cure you to keep you alive.

Because sometimes, hope is not about holding on.

It's about letting go – with light in your eyes.

### **Judge's Comments**

*This story brought me to tears. It captures the heartache and cruelty of cancer without dwelling on gory details but rather infusing the reader with the beauty of the human soul that can shine in some people in the hardest of times. Reading this, I wanted to meet Arjun, I wanted to talk to him about life and about death and I definitely wanted one of his sunrise sketches!*

*Congratulations on a beautifully written story. It had a lot of competition this year, but it's 'last light' shone through to win in the end.*

# The Lantern in the Storm



Second place: Ethen Netto Jacob, 12  
Dunes International School, Abu Dhabi

*Aluva, Kerala – 17th August 2018, 4:45 a.m.*

The rain fell as though the heavens themselves had broken, a relentless, drumming lament upon the roofs of Aluva. Rivers of brown water swallowed streets, bridges trembled under the fury of the Periyar, and the wind tore at the trees with claws of despair. In the midst of this, little human lives huddled, hearts thundering, waiting for mercy that might never come.

Inside a pale-blue house on Church Road, Mira Thomas, twelve, pressed her forehead to the cold, trembling glass. She could feel the chill creeping into her bones, yet she dared not move. Her mother lay feverish and weak, shivering beneath a threadbare blanket, and her little brother, Tariq, seven, coughed into the sleeve of his nightshirt, eyes wide with the terror of a world turned to water.

“Mira...” Tariq whispered, his voice fragile as the flutter of a sparrow’s wing. “Will the water come inside?”

Mira's lips parted to speak, yet the truth choked her. She swallowed, tasting the bitter fear she had no right to voice. "It won't... not yet," she murmured, a flicker of courage threading through the tremor in her voice. "We will endure. We will hold fast."

Yet even as she spoke, the water licked hungrily at the carpet.

By 7:10 a.m., darkness claimed the house. Power had surrendered to the storm. Only the wind and rain remained, gnawing at the walls, hammering at her ears, a relentless drum of dread. Mobile signals had vanished. Rescue seemed a far-off dream.

Her hands found an old kerosene lantern, dusty and forgotten, a relic of quieter days. When she struck a match, the tiny flame leapt into life, trembling and golden, a beacon in the all-consuming gloom. It was fragile, yet it was enough.

She could not wait. Not while fear huddled in corners and little lives depended upon her.

Wading through the waist-deep floodwater, lantern held aloft like a talisman, Mira moved door to door. She guided an elderly couple through slippery mud, lifted a baby into her arms, helped a wheelchair-bound man negotiate debris. Slowly, a procession formed, moving toward St. Mary's Parish Hall, the only building on higher ground that might survive the river's wrath.

By 2:30 p.m., nearly thirty souls had gathered inside the hall. The smell of wet earth, fear, and human sweat mingled in the air. The rain hammered on the tin roof, a drumbeat of doom. Children whimpered. Adults muttered prayers.

Despair threatened to root itself in every heart.

"They will forget us," muttered one man, voice cracking like brittle wood.

"They rescue others first... they'll leave us," another said.

"They're rescuing Ernakulam first," muttered another.

Mira felt a cold knot of dread tighten her chest. She drew herself tall, swallowed her fear, and spoke, her voice trembling but

determined: “If they do not come for us, then we will make them see us. We will not surrender. Not tonight. Not while we have breath.”

With trembling hands, she tore a white bedsheet into strips and bound them into a makeshift flag. Climbing the parish roof with two neighbours, rain soaking every thread of their clothes, Mira raised the lantern beside the flag. Hours passed. Arms ached. Muscles screamed. Yet she did not falter. Every flicker of the flame, every wave of the sheet, was a heartbeat of defiance. See us. Remember us. We are still here.

*18th August – 6:55 a.m.*

The river had claimed another half-metre of land. Children clutched parents, parents clutched hope. Then – a sound that cut through the roar of water and wind: the steady, pulsating thrum of helicopter blades.

A Mi-17 rescue helicopter from the Indian Air Force appeared, piercing clouds swollen with rain. Its searchlight caught the flag. Mira’s chest heaved with exhilaration and relief.

“They see us!” came a chorus of voices, trembling and bright as fireflies.

By 10:20 a.m., rescue boats arrived, moving slowly but surely through the brown floodwaters. Elderly first. The sick. Then children. Finally, Mira and Tariq were lifted aboard. As the boat drifted from the hall, she turned back. The lantern still burned in the window, unwavering, a small, golden guardian against the darkness.

*21st August – 5:42 p.m.*

The rains had ceased. Aluva bore the scars of the storm – roads torn, walls cracked, lives shaken. Yet people moved, hands busy, hearts resolute. Children splashed in puddles that had once been rivers; neighbours shared meals with strangers. Mira’s mother had recovered at Rajagiri Hospital, her father returned from Kochi, tears streaming down his face at their reunion.

“They told me of the flag,” her father whispered, his voice thick with emotion. “And the lantern. You saved lives, Mira.”

She shook her head. “No,” she said softly. “We all saved lives. We simply did not stop hoping.”

That night, the lantern hung by the window, its glow steadfast. Once it had been just a tool to pierce the dark. Now, it was a symbol: of courage, resilience, and the eternal pulse of hope.

*28th August – 8:00 a.m.*

Ten days later, Mira returned to the parish hall. Relief trucks lined the streets, volunteers carried supplies, and families cleaned homes and streets. Children laughed, playing barefoot, water dripping from their hair, unbroken in spirit.

On the damp noticeboard outside the hall, a newspaper clipping fluttered:

“The Lantern Girl of Aluva: Teenager’s Courage Saves Dozens During Flood”

Mira smiled faintly. She had not acted for glory, only for the knowledge that in darkness, even the smallest light could guide many home.

She looked at Tariq, now laughing with the other children, and whispered: “Hope is not waiting for the storm to pass. It is the courage to light the dark – and keep it burning.”

### **Judge’s Comments**

*When a devastating flood engulfs her village, Mira realises that help is not coming any time soon. The story follows her fortitude and courage as she goes door to door helping everyone to the safety of a church on a high rise. Then she climbs the roof and stands with a white bedsheet flag until she is seen by a rescue helicopter.*

*It’s a simple plot but told with beautiful description – not just of the flood itself, but of little things, like ‘a kerosene lantern, a relic of quieter*

*days'. All the senses were explored, such as 'the rain hammered on the tin roof, a drumbeat of doom', 'the smell of wet earth, fear and human sweat', and 'swallowing bitter fear.' These all added a rich depth to the story making it an immersive experience to read. Congratulations on a wonderful effort.*

# The Paper Lanterns



Third place: Adam Mahmoud Mubarak, 14  
Al Hikmah Private School, Ajman

The night before the ceremony hit, the village just fell quiet.

Real quiet, like the world held its breath or something.

Lina sat down by the river. Her fingers drew these slow circles in the water. The current grabbed little petals off the trees hanging over. White blossoms, drifting along like stars that wandered off course. Every year her town puts on the Festival of Lights. Families send up paper lanterns into the sky. It's all to remember the ones they've lost along the way.

But this year, Lina wasn't up for it. Not even a little.

Her older brother Sami used to handle their lanterns. He built them every time. And he'd joke around, say his shone the brightest because he packed in extra hope. Nearly a year had passed since he took off for the mountains. He went to help after the earthquake hit hard. He never came back though.

Now folks kept saying it was time to move forward. Lina couldn't though. Celebrating when the person who made the festival feel alive was missing. That just didn't sit right.

She picked up a stone. Tossed it right into the river. The ripples shattered her reflection. Turned it into a thousand tiny bits.

Next morning, the village square was alive with all this noise. Kids darted around between the stalls. They clutched colored paper and bamboo sticks. The air smelled like fresh bread mixed with sweet syrup. Pretty much everywhere you turned.

Lina's mom was at their table. Folding paper with these careful hands. Come help me, habibti, she said soft like always. We'll make one for him together.

Lina paused there. It won't be the same, she said.

Her mom gave this sad kind of smile. Nothing ever is, you know. But that's what makes it count.

Lina sat down anyway. Reluctant, but she did. She folded the paper real slow. Pressed every crease just so. Her hands started shaking when she went for the candle. That was Sami's part, always.

Keep the flame small, her mom reminded her. Too big and it burns out way too quick.

Lina nodded. Her throat felt tight though.

That afternoon, dark clouds rolled in over the mountains. Villagers started worrying the wind might wreck the whole festival. The mayor said they'd do it anyway. Hope isn't scared of a little weather, he told them.

Lina didn't buy that. The storm felt like a warning to her. Like the sky wasn't in the mood for their lanterns this time.

Still, when the sun dipped down, everybody gathered at the riverbank. Hundreds of lanterns sat waiting. They glowed soft, like fireflies taking a break.

Her mom lit theirs with care. Handed it over to Lina. Go on, she whispered.

Lina stepped up to the water. She glanced up. Clouds hung heavy, wind all unsure. The lantern shook in her hands.

What if it drops, she said.

Then we make another one, her mom replied. That's what your brother would've said.

Lina managed a weak smile. He'd probably blame me for folding it all wrong.

Her mom let out a soft laugh. And then he'd jump in to fix it for you. She shut her eyes. Let the lantern go.

It floated up slow. The light flickered against that gray sky. For a second, it looked like it'd drop. But the wind changed then. The flame held steady. Up it went, higher.

All around, other lights joined in. Hundreds of them, these glowing balls drifting skyward. Even with the clouds, they burned brighter than she figured. Turned the whole sky gold in spots.

And right through all those lanterns, Lina spotted something.

A small shape. Half tucked behind the hills. A line of faint lights heading their way. People started murmuring low. Is that the rescue team, somebody whispered.

Minutes later, hikers showed up on the road. Backpacks all beat up, flashlights in hand. Leading them was this face she knew. Thin now, sunburned bad, but grinning.

Sami.

Lina bolted before anybody could grab her. She almost tripped on the rocks. Tears messed up her vision. When she got to him, she wrapped her arms tight around.

He laughed. Voice rough but warm all the same. You didn't figure I'd skip the festival, right.

She pulled away. Stared hard. They told us you were gone.

I nearly was, he said. But I thought of what you said. That you'd wait so we could light them together.

Lina blinked. I said that.

Yeah, he nodded. Kept that in my head every night out there. That was my hope, basically.

Later that night, the family sat by the river again. Sami's hands,

rough from all the mountain work, helped Lina straighten out the lantern that tipped over. They lit a new one together. Small thing, fragile almost. It glowed gentle against the dark up there.

As it lifted, Lina whispered low. You think hope's like this. Just floating off somewhere.

Sami shook his head. Nah. Hope's what gets it up in the air to begin with.

The clouds up top finally parted. Not rain though. Moon came out, pale and big. Lit the river like silver. Lanterns kept rising. Their glow danced on the water, like stars dipped in gold.

Lina leaned on her brother's shoulder. Next year, she said, we'll do two. One for us. One for all the folks still waiting.

Sami nodded. And we'll stuff both full of that extra hope.

That night, villagers talked about how bright the sky got. Brighter than ever, they said. Some even claimed they heard music in the wind. Like the mountains let out a big sigh of relief.

But Lina didn't catch any of that. She watched the last lantern fade into the clouds. One spark, gone into the huge dark.

Deep down though, something warm kicked in again. Not the flame or the lantern or the festival noise. Just this quiet knowing. Hope doesn't quit when the light dies out.

It hangs on. Out of sight but kicking. Waiting for whoever's got the guts to let it lift again.

### **Judge's Comments**

*When Sami, who went into the mountains to help earthquake victims, had not returned after a year, everyone thought him gone forever, except his little sister, Lina. On the night of the Festival of Lights, she felt his absence deeply but still folded the lanterns dutifully with her mother, all the while longing for her brother's return. And return he does.*

*It's a simple plot but poignantly written. The author beautifully captures the agony and heartache of not-knowing, and having to wait*

*and wait, whilst holding on to hope when everyone else has given up. It's a life story for us all.*

*It was interesting that the author decided to write all speech without inverted commas however because it was consistent, it contributed to the flow of the story. It's okay to break grammar rules if you know what you are doing and it's obvious the writer is talented. Congratulations.*

# 15 – 18

## **Judge's Overview**

How many ways are there to envision hope? Is it a strong force that allows us to face life's hardships, or is it a calm resolve that underpins our dreams? Can hope be shared with others, or is it something that people must discover on their own?

Approaching this year's theme of "hope" from all of these perspectives, the writers ages 15 to 18 invited their readers into the lives of a wide range of characters, from families caught up in war zones or natural disasters to young people contemplating their future to individuals confronting life-threatening disease. They also experimented with different genres, offering realistic explorations of everyday problems, epic battles against the elements, and encounters with magic forces and spooky mansions.

The most effective submissions this year demonstrated an assured mastery of the short story form. They focused on only one main conflict within a well-defined time period. The number of characters was small and the settings limited to only a few places. Created within a well-defined framework, the successful stories were able to merge complex characters, vivid sensory descriptions and multilayered plots into well-crafted narratives.

In many stories, the command of structural features and language conventions was impressive. Variety in sentence structure and paragraph length helped to control pacing. Skillfully constructed dialogue established character and advanced the plot. The frequent first-person narrators brought personality and immediacy to the writing.

Although it was very difficult to select only three texts for publication, the choice ultimately came down to the skill with which the writers addressed the theme of hope, sustained the quality of the narrative and created an emotional impact.

**Kathy Butti**

November 2025

# A Lullaby Carried by the Sea



First place: Lyn Mary Liju, 15  
Emirates Future International Academy, Abu Dhabi

The tune started in my chest, a hollow ache humming beneath my ribs. It was her song, my mother's song. It didn't come back as a memory; it felt like a weight pressing down on me. She sang it when the world still felt kind. Her voice rose softly through the summer air, a silver thread weaving through the stillness.

I can still picture her shadow moving across my ceiling, her hand tracing constellations on the glow-in-the-dark stars I had stuck there as a child. That song – God, that song wasn't just music. It was memory woven into sound. Even now, when I close my eyes, I can smell the jasmine she grew in chipped clay pots, its scent heavy in the sun. I can hear the rough slide of my father's charcoal across thick paper as he sketched bridges and skylines late into the night. I can taste honey-soaked dates on a festival morning – sweet and sticky, joy blooming so effortlessly it hurts to remember.

That was home once, a place so full of color that it seemed impossible it could ever fade. But war has a way of destroying everything you love.

Now, at seventeen, home is a word that cuts. Home is this overcrowded boat creaking through the indifferent sea. Home is the sound of quiet sobbing, the slap of waves against a battered hull. It's the smell of salt, sweat, and fear. Around me, people breathe like ghosts trapped in human bodies. Some pray. Some whisper names into the wind as if it might carry them home. But there is no home left to return to. We are all ruins drifting toward something we cannot name.

I hold my father's leather-bound sketchbook to my chest until the edge digs into my skin. It's the only thing I own that still belongs to love. The book is worn, its corners softened by years of use, the pages faintly smelling of graphite and rain. Inside are his dreams – plans for a better world. Towers reaching for light. Bridges crossing impossible distances. He believed that architecture could hold hope, that if you built something strong enough, it could outlive pain. Now his drawings are my inheritance. His handwriting, his legacy, presses against my heart as the boat groans below me.

My mother's lullaby has faded to silence. My sister Lena's laughter is an open wound. I remember the day we ran – sirens ripping through the air, the smell of iron and ash, the sudden absence of birds. My father shouted my name, pushing the sketchbook into my hands. I didn't understand then – not until the ground shook and the sky split apart. One heartbeat we were four voices calling to each other. The next, I was alone in the rubble.

They didn't just die. They became the air I can no longer breathe.

The sea stretches endlessly around us, cruel and gleaming. The sun presses down like a punishment, and thirst tastes like copper on my tongue. Hope isn't a flame anymore; it's a tiny spark buried under my ribs, and I hold it tight like it's the only thing keeping me

alive. At night, the waves glow faintly with plankton, like the stars my mother once traced for me. In that light, I see faces – Zara, the young mother whispering fairytales to the baby in her arms; Hakim, the old man beside me, his eyes gray with loss yet still searching.

One night, he speaks without looking at me.

*“The sea is a thief,”* he says, his voice rough as sand. *“But it also carries what you need.”*

I ask him what he means.

He just shrugs. *“Some things must be taken so others can be found.”*

I don’t understand until the night the sea decides to remind us who we are. The storm comes without warning. The horizon vanishes behind a wall of black. The wind screams. Waves rise like living creatures – furious and endless. The world turns into noise, salt, and panic.

Fear doesn’t reach me anymore; I feel hollow. But then, through the chaos, I see her—Lena. Her face, pale and terrified, looks right at me through the spray. Her mouth opens, but I can’t hear her. Behind her, I hear my mother’s last scream – one final, unfinished note swallowed by the wind. The boat twists. People fall. Someone prays. Someone disappears. My father’s book slips from my hands, spinning across the wet deck. My lungs tear open with a raw, wordless sound as I dive after it. My fingers close around the leather just as a wave slam into me, dragging me into the dark. That book holds the promise of every tomorrow he wanted me to see.

The water feels alive, grabbing at me with a thousand invisible hands. I kick, clawing toward air. When I break the surface, choking, I hold the book like it’s life itself. Something inside me breaks, but at the same time, something starts to rebuild. It isn’t just a book. It’s a promise that I won’t let their lives be erased.

When the storm dies, the sky looks bruised and exhausted. The sea, once furious, lies still—a sorrowful mirror reflecting the stars. I open the soaked book, afraid the pages will be ruined, but the ink

still clings to the paper. My father's handwriting flows between the lines like a heartbeat frozen in graphite. At the back, a folded sheet rests between the pages. I've never seen it before. My hands tremble as I unfold it. The ink has run, but the words remain.

*My dearest Omar,*

*If you are reading this, it means the world we built has fallen. I wish I could have given you safety, my son. I wish I could have stood beside you when the sky turned to fire. But know this — our love did not vanish with the dust. It's written into you, into your hands, your breath, your stubborn will to keep living.*

*I remember you at seven, standing on the roof as your mother sang. You traced your own constellations with chalk, telling me you'd one day build bridges between stars. I laughed then. But now, I see you already have. Every heartbeat that still rises in you is a bridge from our world to the next. I remember the paper city we built on the kitchen table. You cried when the ceiling leaked and it melted apart. But by morning, you started again. "It needs stronger walls," you said. That night, your mother whispered to me, "He has your hands."*

*Omar, grief is the final form of love. Carry it, but don't drown in it. When you hear her song, don't hear loss—hear roots. When you touch this book, don't see endings—see beginnings. Build, even when your hands shake. Build, even when no one is left to see it.*

*The world will break you. Let it. But when it does, rise again — not as what you were, but as what we dreamed you could be. Promise me, when you find land, you'll plant something. Even a seed. Even a memory. That's all it takes to begin again.*

*You were my first foundation, my last design.*

*And even in the ruin, you are the most beautiful thing I ever built.*

*—Baba*

The words blur with my tears. I press the letter to my chest, my body shaking with the weight of all the love I thought I'd lost. Around me, Zara sleeps, her baby's small fist clutching her shirt. Hakim's eyes are open, not on the horizon now, but on the waves as if he's listening to something only, he can hear. We are all carrying ghosts. But maybe, we are also carrying seeds.

When someone shouts, "Land!" it takes me a moment to understand. I look up. There, in the distance, a thin, trembling line of green cuts through the endless gray. It isn't home – not yet. But it's the promise of one.

No one cheers. We just cry. The sound rising from the boat is raw and human—a sound made of exhaustion, disbelief, and aching relief. I stand, clutching the book against the one place in my chest that still feels warm. The wind bites, but it feels almost like a blessing. Ahead of me lies an empty world – a blank blueprint.

I don't know what I'll build. I don't know who I'll become. But I will build. I have to.

And then, without realizing, I start to hum the same salt-stained lullaby my mother once sang. It's cracked and broken, but it carries. It carries across the water, through the silence, across everything we've lost.

It isn't just a song anymore. It's an act of defiance. A bridge. A prayer. A promise – to rebuild, to remember, to live.

And in that trembling tune, for the first time in years, I don't hear grief. **I hear hope.**

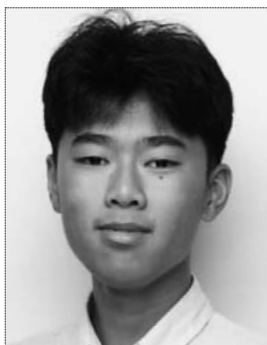
### **Judge's Comments**

*Young Omar finds himself on a broken-down boat filled with refugees. The sole survivor from his family, he clings to a single possession – his father's leather-bound sketchbook. The power of this story lies not only in the writer's evocative depiction of the precarious situation facing Omar and his fellow refugees, from the horrors of war to*

*the perils of the sea, but also in the multiple layers of memory and point of view brought to bear. Memories surface through the writer's effective sensory description of Omar's mother's lullaby, visions of his family during a storm and a newly discovered letter from his father. The first-person point of view, which dominates the story overall, is supplemented by a fellow passenger's philosophical musings and Omar's father's voice in the letter.*

*Overall, this intricately constructed narrative demonstrates how clear plotting, nuanced characterization, expressive imagery and assured use of language can come together to create a moving experience of hope growing out of adversity.*

# The Promise of Flight



Second place: Ethan Poh, 16  
Jumeirah English Speaking School, Dubai

The boy was seven when the doctor leaned close to his ear and whispered, as if confiding a secret meant only for him.

“There’s a cure,” he said. “Not today, not tomorrow, but it is being made. You must hold on until it arrives.”

His mother did not hear. She was turned away, shoulders shaking in her hands. Behind her, the room hummed with the sound of machines that offered mechanical prayers in rhythm with the dying. The doctor straightened his coat, wrote something on his chart – words in the careful, hopeless jargon of medicine – and left without looking back.

But the boy carried the whisper away like treasure.

That night, when the pain came like waves, he imagined the cure as a bird in flight – high above the hospital, circling closer each day. He pictured its wings beating against the wind, its feathers bright as glass. When his chest ached, he whispered to himself, It’s coming. The bird is almost here.

His mother sat beside his bed, her hands wrapped around his. "You have to rest," she said, but her voice trembled.

"I'm waiting for the bird," he murmured, voice thin as a thread of smoke. His gaze drifted somewhere past the ceiling, beyond the reach of her trembling hands.

She smiled through her tears, brushing the damp hair from his forehead. "What bird, love?" she whispered, though her voice wavered.

He didn't answer. His eyes followed something unseen, tracing soft arcs through the air, as though tracking the shadow of a promise only he could still believe in. The fever had carried him far from her, into a world where reason no longer followed. Still, she smiled, because to stop smiling felt like surrender.

Days folded into weeks. The boy grew thinner, his skin pale as linen, but he kept whispering about the bird. Nurses grew used to hearing him murmur to it when they passed his door. "You're getting closer," he would say. "I can feel it."

When treatments failed, when machines ticked through the nights like distant clocks, he still clung to that image. Hope – even false hope – had settled into his bones like a second heartbeat.

The doctor tried not to think about what he'd done. He told himself it had been kindness, nothing more. He had seen too many children fade after being told the truth. But this one... this one had looked at him with such wide, unguarded faith. So, he had lied. And the lie began to haunt him.

Still, every month, the boy's condition held steady. Then, impossibly, it began to improve. Blood tests changed. X-rays cleared. His lungs grew stronger. He started to walk again. When the doctor entered the room one morning, he found the boy standing by the window, watching a flock of birds wheel across the sky.

"You see?" the boy said, his voice light. "It's close now."

The doctor stared at him, and something inside him faltered.

"Maybe it is," he said quietly.

By the time the boy turned sixteen, his name had become ubiquitous in medical journals. "Spontaneous remission," they called it. "Anomalous immune response." The doctor accepted the interviews, though each response felt hollow. He had no answer, no science that could make sense of what had happened.

But in the back of his mind, he kept hearing the whisper he'd spoken years ago. There's a cure. Hold on until it arrives.

He never said those words to another child again.

The boy, now a young man, carried the story of his recovery like a talisman. He worked, studied, fell in love. He did not speak often of his illness, though at night, when the house was quiet, he sometimes dreamed of the bird. It was always flying – never landing, never gone.

When his daughter was born, he watched her small chest rise and fall as she slept and thought of the doctor's face, the tremor in his voice that day in the ward. You must hold on.

By thirty, he had almost stopped wondering. The past had settled into memory, that wondrous yet fickle thing. Yet on certain mornings – in the stillness before dawn – he would wake with a strange awareness, as if part of him were still waiting for wings overhead.

The doctor was old when they met again. His hair had gone white; his hands shook when he signed prescriptions. The hospital seemed gentler now – the hum of machines subdued, the glare of fluorescent lights softened – but the air still held that familiar trace of antiseptic and sorrow. Aaron came alone. His daughter waited outside, reading in the corridor.

"You probably don't remember me," Aaron said.

The doctor looked up, and for a moment, time folded back on itself. He saw the boy in the thin man before him – the same eyes, the same quiet strength.

"I remember," he said. "You were the one who lived."

Aaron smiled. "That's what they say."

There was a pause. The doctor gestured for him to sit. "How have you been?"

"Good," Aaron said. "Healthy. I wanted to thank you."

"For what?"

"For saving me."

The doctor flinched. His gaze drifted toward the window, where the evening light lay pale on the floor. After all these years, the lie still sat between them, unspoken and heavy.

Aaron leaned forward. "Tell me," he said softly. "What was in the cure that saved me?"

The doctor closed his eyes. For a long time, neither spoke. Then, with a tremor that seemed to come from somewhere deep within, he said the words he had avoided for decades.

"There was no cure."

Aaron frowned, not understanding.

"There was no medicine," the doctor continued. "No treatment waiting to be approved. I only told you that so you wouldn't give up. You were too small to face the truth - and I couldn't bear to watch another child stop hoping."

His voice cracked. "I lied to you, Aaron. And I have thought of that lie every single day since."

For a moment, the room was silent except for the eternal buzz of machines in the hallway. Aaron stared at his hands - hands strong and steady, the same hands that had once clutched at bedsheets in pain.

Something inside him shifted.

He thought of the long nights he had endured, whispering to himself that the bird was still flying, still coming closer. He thought of the first breath that hadn't hurt, the first morning he had woken without fever, the years of living that had followed.

When he finally looked up, his eyes shone with something that wasn't quite sorrow, but close.

"You were wrong," he said quietly. "There was a cure. You just didn't know what to call it."

The doctor blinked.

"Hope," Aaron said. "That was the cure. You gave me that, and my body believed it. It believed so hard it learned how to live."

The doctor's eyes filled, and for the first time in many years, he wept without restraint.

Aaron stood, hesitated, then placed a hand on his shoulder. "You didn't lie," he said. "You gave me something real."

Outside, the sky had opened into the pale blue of evening. Aaron stepped into the corridor where his daughter waited, her hair catching the light as she ran toward him. She grabbed his hand, tugging him forward, laughing about something small and ordinary.

As they left the hospital, Aaron looked up. A single bird wheeled high above the roof, cutting across the clouds before vanishing into the horizon.

He smiled. The bird was still circling – it always had been.

But now he understood: it had never been searching for him.

He had been carrying it all along.

### **Judge's Comments**

*In this aptly titled story, a small boy with a terminal illness finds comfort in the words of a doctor, imagining a companion of hope in the form of a bird. The narrative asks readers to consider the power of optimism and imagery in the treatment of illness while also evaluating the more science-based views of the medical establishment and the ways in which patients are informed of their condition. The writer skillfully develops the plot, alternating between different points of view, from those of staff and family in realistic scenes at the hospital to the boy's visions of the healing bird moving ever closer. The balance of dialogue and description as well as careful paragraphing also contributes to the impact of the story.*

# The Umbrella Man



Third place: Ameera Aal Ghardaqa, 16  
Emirates National Schools, Ras Al Khaimah

Rain always hit the hardest at the northbound stop. It blurred the city into streaks of color and shadow, like someone had smeared watercolors across the pavement. Faces came and went, too fast to remember, too wet to matter. That was where I first noticed him. An old man who didn't seem to belong to the rush of buses or the movement of the crowd. He stood under the shelter like any other passenger; except he never boarded. Instead, he carried a battered case and a pile of umbrellas, each one was different. One was striped, another had a wooden handle that looked like it had survived a hundred storms, and one was patched with clear tape. Every time someone stepped into the rain, he handed them an umbrella. No words. No money. Just a quiet gesture.

People called him strange. I called him interesting. I had gotten good at looking like I didn't care; it was easier than getting my hopes up for something that came free. I didn't trust kindness without a catch. I had learned that hope usually comes with a price, like apologies that were too late, promises that didn't mean much, and

adults who disappeared behind the word “change.” So, I watched him from a distance, like I watched a flickering streetlight and wondered if it was magic or just broken.

He moved like someone who knew silence was powerful. He didn’t make a show of it. He just passed umbrellas to people who needed them. A thank you here, a smile there, and then he faded back into the background. On the third week, I noticed something different. A slip of paper was tucked inside one of the umbrellas. It had a name and an address. That tiny detail hit me harder than I expected. It made me curious in a way I hadn’t felt in a long time. So, I followed him.

The next morning, I left home earlier than usual. I told myself I wasn’t invested, just curious. I had my camera tucked in my bag and my raincoat zipped up tight. The city had that washed out look again, the kind that makes everything feel temporary. I waited at the stop, pretending to scroll through my phone, but really, I was watching for him.

He showed up right on time. His coat looked older in daylight, the cuffs frayed, the fabric damp with years of weather. He carried the same battered case. Now I could see faint scratches carved into its surface, maybe initials, maybe memories. When the first raindrops began to fall, he opened the case and handed out umbrellas as if he’d done it a thousand times. I watched as he handed one to a woman juggling groceries, another to a man with a crying toddler. Every movement was calm, like a ritual.

I stepped closer. My heart was racing, though I didn’t know why. “Why do you do that?” I asked, trying to sound casual.

He turned to me, his eyes kind but distant. “Rain doesn’t choose who it falls on,” he said. “So why should kindness?”

I didn’t have an answer. I just stood there, letting the rain hit my face. He smiled, then walked away before I could say anything else.

In the following days, I couldn’t stop thinking about him. His words stuck with me. I told myself people like him were just bored or lonely.

People who gave too much because they had nothing left to lose. But that didn't explain the slip of paper I'd seen before. So, one rainy evening, I followed him again.

He didn't go far. Just a few blocks into an older part of town, where buildings leaned into each other like they were tired. The streets smelled of rust and old rain. He stopped in front of a run-down apartment complex and climbed the stairs, one hand on the railing, the other gripping his case. I waited until he disappeared, then slipped inside.

The hallway was dim. Paint peeled off the walls, and water stains marked the ceiling. On one door, I noticed a small drawing of an umbrella taped beside the number 17. I first hesitated, then knocked.

The door creaked open. The Umbrella Man stood there, surprised. For a second, I thought he might tell me to leave. But instead, he said, "You'd better come in before you catch cold."

His apartment was simple. Old photos, stacks of books, and in one corner, dozens of umbrellas hung like trophies. Each one had a note attached: names, dates, short messages. I stepped closer and read from one. "To the stranger who saved my presentation." Another said, "To the man who made me believe in good people again." I looked at him.

"You kept their letters?" I asked.

He nodded. "Each one reminds me that it mattered. Even small acts of kindnesses have a greater impact than we think."

"But why umbrellas?" I asked.

He smiled sadly. "They used to belong to my wife. She loved the rain. Said it made the world honest and washed it clean, even if only for a while. She used to lend her umbrellas to strangers who looked lost." His voice cracked. "After she passed, I found them all in the attic. I couldn't let them just sit there, gathering dust."

I didn't know what to say. The room felt heavy with memories that weren't mine, but somehow mattered anyway.

That night, the rain hit harder than usual. I left his apartment with one of the umbrellas, a navy blue one with a wooden handle and a faded floral pattern. He insisted I take it. "It's not about keeping dry," he said. "It's about remembering to share the shelter."

The next morning, I saw a girl at the bus stop, holding her laptop over her head. Without thinking, I handed her my umbrella. She blinked in surprise, then smiled. "Are you sure?" she asked.

"Yeah," I said, and for the first time, I meant it. "Rain doesn't choose who it falls on."

As she walked away, I realized that it felt strange to repeat his words. But it also felt right. Maybe hope doesn't come all at once. Maybe it moves slowly, passed from one hand to another, one small act at a time.

Weeks passed. We both developed a quiet routine. I'd meet him at the stop, sometimes helping, sometimes just listening. He told me stories about strangers he'd met, places he'd visited with his wife, and the day the rain first came after she was gone. His kindness wasn't loud. It didn't ask to be seen. But it changed the way I saw everything.

Then one morning, he didn't show up. The bench was empty, his spot untouched. I waited an hour, then two. Finally, I went back to his apartment building. The umbrella drawing was still there. When I knocked, no one answered. A neighbor opened her door instead.

"You're looking for Mr. Hassan?" she asked. I nodded. "He passed away last night. Heart failure, they said."

I didn't know what to say. The woman looked at me kindly. "He talked about you," she added. "Said it was nice having someone to share the rain with again."

Back at the bus stop, the rain felt different. I stood where he used to. Then I noticed a small, battered case, leaning against the bench. Inside were three umbrellas and a folded note.

My name was written across it.

Ali,

If you're reading this, the rain has probably found you again. Don't let it wash away what you've learned. Keep the umbrellas moving. Hope doesn't stop; it changes hands.

– Hassan

I didn't realize I was crying until the ink on the note began to blur.

That night, I walked through the rain, handing out umbrellas. No introductions. No explanations. Just quiet gestures that meant something. And though the world still looked grey, something inside me had changed.

Because the thing about hope is it doesn't need sunlight to grow. Sometimes, all it needs is rain.

Days passed, and I found myself at the bus stop. Each person I helped, each quiet smile I caught in return, reminded me that even the smallest gestures could carry the heaviest weight.

One evening, after a long day of rain, I paused on the empty street. A child ran after a balloon, soaked from head to toe, and I lifted an umbrella over them just in time. For a moment, I heard Hassan's voice in my head: "Rain doesn't choose who it falls on. So why should kindness?"

I smiled through the drops. The bench was empty, the umbrella case gone, but hope was still alive, carried forward by my own hands. As the rain fell harder, washing the city, I understood something I hadn't before. Hope wasn't something you waited for. It was something you gave away, one small act at a time.

And tonight, I was giving it away too.

**Judge's Comments**

*The writer begins this tale of intergenerational friendship at a bus stop on a rainy day, where the older protagonist offers umbrellas to those without them. Finding him intriguing, the younger protagonist shares first-person observations about the "Umbrella Man," leading the reader to understand the circumstances and character of both men through descriptions of actions, thoughts and speech. Readers can find inspiration in the old man's philosophical comments about hope and kindness (e.g., "Hope doesn't stop; it changes hands," or "Rain doesn't choose who it falls on. So why should kindness?"), which the young man repeats as he begins to mature and reaches out to help others.*



**April Hardy** grew up in the New Forest. Since leaving drama school, her varied career has included touring pantomimes, children's theatre, a summer season as a Butlins red coat, much waitressing, and working in hotel kitchens. She spent many years in Greece, as a dancer/choreographer, worked on a Greek cruise ship, then for a cake designer, training as a pastry chef at a Swiss hotel school in Athens. Whilst living there, she also volunteered at a local animal sanctuary.

Relocating to the UAE with her husband and deaf, arthritic cat, she has lived in both Abu Dhabi and Dubai, where she was delighted to have the time to devote to writing her romantic comedies! At the 2014 LitFest, she won the inaugural Literary Idol competition with the opening page of *Hazard at the 19th*, before being signed up by LBA Books. In 2015, she signed a 3-book deal with UK publisher, Accent Press. *Sitting Pretty*, the first of her New Forest rom-coms, was published in 2016 and shortlisted for the Joan Hessayon, Romantic Novelists' New Writers' Award. In 2017, both *Kind Hearts & Coriander* (shortlisted for the Exeter Novel Prize) and *Hazard at the 19th* were published. In 2017, she was also signed up by Felicity Trew at the Caroline Sheldon Literary Agency.

After seventeen very happy years in the UAE, April has recently relocated to the Thai island of Phuket, where she divides her time between writing, volunteering at local animal charities, and being bossed about by her rescue cat, Mr Wonky Tail – which may well provide settings for future rom-coms!

She misses her Dubai writing pals very much and so is delighted to still have a link to the wonderful Emirates LitFest by remaining a judge for the OUP Under 11s' writing competition.



**Kathy Hoopmann** has written over twenty books for children and adults, including picture books, novels and nonfiction, with translations into almost as many languages. All up she has around fifty of her books in different languages on her shelf. She has won, and been shortlisted for, numerous literary awards including the Children's Book Council of Australia Award, the ALCS Educational Award (UK), the Living Now Award (US) and has five times been awarded a Nautilus Award (US) which is granted to 'books that change the world'. Kathy is best known for her writing on neurodiversity, and her photo illustrated books, *All Cats are on the Autism Spectrum*, *All Dogs Have ADHD*, *All Birds Have Anxiety* are bestsellers worldwide.



**Kathy Butti** has taught English for many years in both the United States and the United Arab Emirates. Her courses have included American and English literature, media studies, creative writing, TOEFL and IELTS preparation, and English research and writing skills for university. She has also worked as an editor for a contemporary art foundation. A strong supporter of the Emirates Airline Festival of Literature, she has served as a judge for the Story Writing Competition since 2012 and offered two workshops and a webinar for competition participants.

**د. بشاير العطروري،** كاتبة في أدب الطفل ومؤسسة أكاديمية «ثوتس» للخدمات الثقافية والمعرفية. تتخصص د. بشاير في تصميم البرامج والمناهج التربوية الموجهة للطفل، وقدمت العديد من الورش والبرامج المبتكرة في الكتابة الإبداعية وتصميم الدمى والدراما المسرحية.



شاركت الكاتبة في مؤتمرات عربية بأوراق بحثية، وهي عضو في لجنة تصميم العرائس لقناة «براعم» بدولة قطر، كما أعدّت وقدمت برامج تربوية في تلفزيون دولة الكويت.

تؤلف الكاتبة القصص المصورة (الكوميكس) في مجلة «العربي الصغير»، وحاصلة على شهادات متخصصة في التفكير الإبداعي وتنمية الابتكار والعلاج بالدراما. لديها إصدارات قصصية ومسرحية تُعنى بتنمية الطفل وتحقيق أثر تربوي مستدام.

على نضج أسلوب الكاتبة و تطوير اللغة لتصوير الانفعالات والمشاعر  
مما جعل النص متكاملًا في فكرته وأسلوبه وتأثيره وأوصي بالحفاظ على  
هذا التوازن الجميل في أعمال الكاتبة القادمة.

شيء أفضل ينتظرني.

الهواء حولي بدا أكثر برودة، لكن قلبي بدأ يشعر بشيء من الدفء، دفع الأمل الخافت الذي يرفض الانطفاء. كان هذا الرفض أول درس تعلمني إياه الحياة أن طريق النجاح يبدأ بالعثرات.

في تلك اللحظة شعرت أن قلبي بدأ بالهدوء وان كل الصخب الذي بداخلي أصبح أهدأ، وأن الدموع لم تعد مجرد رمز للحزن، بل كانت بداية لشيء جميل، إنه شعور التفاؤل.

في اليوم التالي من ذلك اليوم المشؤم، بينما كنت أحاول استجماع قواي، جاءني إحدى الصديقات وابتسامة ساخرة تعلو شفتيها. لم تنتظر حتى تهدأ جراحي.

الصديقة: «سمعت أنهم ما قبلوك... كنت أعرف، مستحيل تنجحين!»

كانت كلماتها مثل سهم يتجه نحوي، لكن شيئاً ما تغير داخلي. لم أعد ذلك الشخص الهش الذي يقبل الاستهزاء به. ابتسمت بثبات، نظراتي أكثر صلابة من ذي قبل، وقلت لها:

«المستحيل مجرد كلمة، وأنا عازمة على حذفها من قاموسي إلى الأبد والخيرة فيما اختاره الله.»

ضحكت هي باستخفاف وذهبت، لكن كلماتي لم تكن مجرد رد فعل، بل كانت موجة لي قبل أن تتوجه إليها. عدت إلى المنزل والعزم يشتعل في صدري كله لا يعرف الاستسلام.

مرت الأشهر، والروتين اليومي يتكرر بلا كلل: من حجرة الصف إلى مقعد الحافلة، ثم إلى غرفتي بين أكوام الكتب و المجلات. لكني لم أعد أسيرة للأفكار السلبية. تحولت غرفتي إلى ورشة عمل، حيث كنت أذاكر حتى منتصف الليل، والقلم في يدي لم يعد مجرد أداة للكتابة، بل أصبح سيقاً أقاتل به العجز. كل كلمة كتبتها كنت أحارب بها يأس وقنوطي.

تشكلت إرادتي. لم أعد أرى الرفض كارثة، بل كان الدافع الذي أيقظ الوحش الذي بداخلي. كل يوم يمر كان يقربني خطوة من هزيمة ذلك «المستحيل» الذي صدقته ذات يوم.

بعد سنوات من تلك الأحداث وصلني خبر مدرسة جديدة تتبع نظام جديد ومميز كان يرتحلها أخي الكبير قبلي فكانت من أفضل المدارس لكن حتى الآن مازال المستحيل رفيقي في قصص المدارس هذه ولكن ناولت بالتقديم وإذ أنا في اليوم التالي

ذاهبة لقاعة الامتحان، وكان قلبي ينبض برهبة ممزوجة بالثقة. تذكرت

- «يا عزيزتي، كل شيء يبدو بعيداً فقط لأنه لم يُنجز بعد، ما دام الإنسان يسير نحو الأمام فهو في طريق النجاح، ليس الأمر سهلاً، لكنه ليس مستحيلاً، أليس كذلك؟»  
هزرت رأسي، أكملت حديثها...  
أحياناً يتعثر المرء، لكن ينهض، فيصبح أقوى وأقرب إلى الهدف، صدقيني.  
بعد أن أنهت كلامها جلست على المقعد المقابل لها، أراقب حركاتها وهي تطهو، واصلت كلامها، ونبرة صوتها أصبحت أشبه بقصة تُحكى لفتاة تائهة تبحث عن طريق الأمل:  
- تذكر يا صغيرتي، ليست النتائج هي التي تصنع الفرق بل الإنسان نفسه كل موقف تتعلمين منه سوف ينيك. تأملي قول ذلك الشاعر وهو يمدح المعتصم حين حقق هدفه ووصل إلى مراده:

بُصِرَتْ بالراحة الكبرى فلم ترها      تُنال إلا على جسرٍ من التعبِ

شعرت بدفع تلك الكلمات، وأدركت أن أمي ليست أمّاً عادية، بل حكيمة علمتها الدنيا وصقلتها التجارب، تعرف ما تقول بحق. ابتعدت عني قليلاً، نظرت إليّ بعينين تشعان كما يشع الشمس لكن يشعان بحنانها، وقالت بابتسامة:  
- غداً يوم جديد،  
همست وقلت:  
- أمي... كلماتك قد حلت عقدي «وضحكت»  
ثم رفعت عيني لأملأهما منها، وتنهدت. كانت تلك اللحظة نقطة تحول، أشعرتني بأنها بداية رحلة نحو الهدف.  
جلست حذاءها في المطبخ، ويدي تمتد لأساعدها في ترتيب الصحون. لم يكن مجرد ترتيب أدوات، بل كان شعوراً بالسيطرة على فوضى اليوم.  
في تلك اللحظة شعرت أن البيت كله أصبح رمزاً يبين معنى الحياة. الجدران ترمز إلى صلابة الحياة، الكرسي إلى الجهد الذي يضعه الإنسان في جلوسه، والضوء من القمر إلى الأمل الذي لا يغيب كل شيء حولي مهما بدا بسيطاً كان كافياً ليخبرني قصة.  
بعد أيام من ذاك المساء الذي قضيت فيه وقتاً مع أمي، وصلني خبر عن مدرسة جديدة، حضرت كل أوراقها بعناية لأرتحل إلى فرصة أفضل وأكثر تشويقاً.

# طققة أمل

المركز الثالث: جواهر راشد محمد طاهري، 16  
مدارس التكنولوجيا التطبيقية، عجمان

كانت الحصة الأخيرة قد انتهت، ضجيج الطالبات عند الرواح يشبه هدير بحر في عاصفة، الطالبات يلملن أشياءهن، أوراق تتطاير، مقاعد تُجرّ بلا نظام، ضحكاتٌ تتعالى. وشمس الأصيل تتسلل من خلال النوافذ فتغمر السبورة بضوء ساطع.

أما أنا، فبقيت جالسة على المقعد الخشبي أحرق ساهمةً في السبورة: التي لم تكن مجرد سبورة؛ بل مرآة، أرى فيها خوفًا من المجهول. أفكارها كانت تتصادم كحادث سيارات متتابع: هل سأحقق ما أريد؟ فجأة دوى صوت الطاولة، فاهتز قلبي معها. التفت لأجد المعلمة واقفة عند الباب، تراقب الصف الفارغ. تقدمت بخطوات تطقطع بكعبها العالي وكل طققة تضغط على سمعي وقلبي، وضعت يدها على الطاولة.

المعلمة (بابتسام): يا ابنتي، إلى أين سرحت خيالك؟ جميعهم خرجوا، وأنت ما زلتِ هنا.

رفعت رأسي، ووجدت في عينيها قلق معلمة أم، (تنهدت طويلًا ثم بصوت متقطع مليء بالتردد)  
«أنا... أنا...»

(صوت يكاد يختنق)...

كنت أفكر في مستقبلي...

جلست المعلمة على حافة الطاولة، ونظرت إليّ نظرة عميقة. المعلمة: المستقبل مثل نبتة تزرعها بيديك، لا تكبر بين ليلة وضحاها، لكن بصبرك وسعيك تثمر بفضل الله، لا تقلقي فلتذهبي الى المنزل الآن.

جمعت كتيبي أخيرًا وخرجت من الصف. الممر كان يعج بالطالبات ووقع أقدامهن المتسارعة، ضحكاتهن تتداخل مع صدى الأبواب كأنها موسيقى درامية في فيلم رعب تعكس الفوضى في المدرسة. ظللت أمشي حتى وصلت إلى الحافلة، جلست قرب النافذة. كان المقعد باردًا،

تحولت الأيام إلى لحظات من القلق، ومع قيامهم برعاية إمداداتهم المتضائلة، قاموا بتكوين رابطة لا تنفصم. كل عقبة عززت وحدتهم، ونفخت الحياة في هدفهم، وأشعلت رغبتهم في الوصول إلى كيبلر 283. وبعد أسابيع من السفر الشاق والعزيمة التي لا تعرف الكلل، وصلوا أخيراً إلى مدار كوكب كيبلر 283. وبذهول جماعي، نظروا من فتحة المشاهدة، وقد أذهلتهم الدهشة. كان الكوكب خلاً، لوحة نابضة بالحياة من الألوان الدوامة ومغلفاً بأجواء متلاثلة، ومنازة ترحيبية في ظلام الفضاء. «لقد نجحنا»، همس أحمد بصوت مليء بالعاطفة. «نحن هنا. لقد صنعنا التاريخ».

وبينما كانت سفينة ديسكفري تستعد للهبوط على هذا العالم الغريب، المليء بفرص جديدة للاستكشاف، جمع أحمد أفكاره. فقد كانت رحلته حتى الآن بمثابة اختبار لشجاعته وصقل لشخصيته. ونظر إلى أفراد طاقمه، الذين أصبح كل منهم الآن أكثر من مجرد زملاء بل عائلة، متشابكين في التجارب التي واجهوها معاً.

كانت هذه مجرد البداية. ومع اشتعال الحماسة في قلبه، أدرك أن المغامرة الحقيقية كانت تنتظره. كانت أسرار كيبلر 283 تنتظره، ومع طاقمه المخلص، شعر أحمد بثقة هائلة تسري في عروقه. سوف يكشفون أسرار هذا العالم البعيد، ويفتحون عصراً جديداً من الاستكشاف. وعندما هبطت المركبة الفضائية ديسكفري على التربة الناعمة المضيئة في كوكبة كيبلر 283، توقف أحمد للحظة ليستنشق الإشارة الكامنة في الإمكانيات، وراح يتطلع إلى ما وراء الأفق. كانت النجوم تتلألأ حولهم. في تذكير لهم بأن حدود الكون شاسعة، ولكنهم كانوا يعرفون في قرارة أنفسهم أنهم سوف يكافحون إلى الأبد للوصول إليها، بغض النظر عن التحديات التي يواجهونها. وفي تلك اللحظة، أدرك أحمد أن مغامرته وكل ما تضمنته كان مقدرًا لها أن تتردد أصداؤها ليس فقط في النجوم، بل وفي قلوب أولئك الذين يعيشون على الأرض أيضاً.

فجأة وبغنف، شعر أحمد أن جسده وروحه قد استيقظا على صوت الأذان، وأنه مهد الطريق ليوم مليء بالبركات والفرص. وعندما خرج إلى ضوء الصباح، تردد صدى صوت والده وصلاة الفجر في داخله، ليعمل كتذكير دائم بالدعم والحكمة التي سترافقه طوال اليوم وما بعده.

التي لن ينساها التاريخ إلى كيلبر 283، وهو كوكب خارجي بعيد 20 سنة ضوئية عن الأرض، كانت هذه النتيجة النهائية لسنوات من التدريب وسنوات من التطورات التكنولوجية.

شعر أحمد بإحساس هائل بالواجب والنشوة في نفس الوقت الذي كان محاطًا فيه بأثني عشر من أذكى العقول والعلماء والمهندسين والفنيين في العالم.

بينما كانت السفينة تستعد للانطلاق من بايكونور في محطة الفضاء الدولية، شعر أحمد باهتزازات المحركات ترتجف في عظامه وتسارعت دقات قلبه. أعلن لطاقم المحطة وكان صوته مزيجًا من الحماس والجاذبية: لقد حان الوقت! إنها اللحظة التي تدريبنا فيها طيلة حياتنا. فلنصنع التاريخ!

ومع اقتراب العد التنازلي من الصفر وانطلقت المركبة الفضائية ديسكفري في ظلمة الفضاء، لم يستطع أحمد أن يكبح جماح نشوته. فقد شاهد الأرض تتلاشى إلى كرة زرقاء تضيئها الشمس وقد أذهله جمال كل ذلك. ولكن مع تلاشي آخر شعاع من الضوء عن الأنظار، بدأ الواقع يتكشف أمامه. إن هذه المهمة سوف تكون محفوفة بتحديات غير عادية. كانت المرحلة الأولى من رحلتهم هادئة حتى بعد مرور عشرة أيام، عندما وقعت الكارثة. لقد اندلع انفجار غير متوقع من أحد محركات السفينة مما أدى إلى خروجها عن السيطرة، انطلقت أجهزة الإنذار، وسارع الطاقم لاحتواء الفوضى. أصدرت الأستاذة جانيت، بطبيعتها العملية الأوامر نحن نفقد الارتفاع حافظوا على استقرار السفينة. يا رفاق اذهبوا إلى محطاتكم.

ركز أحمد على استعادة السيطرة على المركبة وصاح وسط الصخب: اهدؤوا جميعًا، نحتاج إلى إعادة توجيه الطاقة من المحركات السفلية وتوزيعها لتحقيق الاستقرار.

وبفضل عمل الطاقم معًا واتخاذهم السريع للقرارات، تمكنوا من استعادة السيطرة، لكنهم قاموا بجد إمداداتهم، قالت الدكتورة زولا بصوت متقطع من القلق: لقد انخفض احتياطينا إلى النصف وبهذه الوتيرة لن نتمكن من الوصول إلى كيلبر 283.

تحولت الأيام إلى أسابيع، واستمرت ديسكفري في مسارها، لكن فقدان المعدات جاء بعواقب وخيمة. ففي خضم التعامل مع نقص الطاقة، اجتاحت ظاهرة كهرومغناطيسية غريبة السفينة مما تسبب في حدوث نوبات غير متوقعة. أصيب فني الكهرباء وهو شاب واعد يدعى رائد

وكان يضرب لهم أمثلة من التاريخ فيقول لهم: الأمل هو ما جعل النبي يعقوب يصبر على فقد يوسف سنين طويلة حتى عاد إليه، الأمل هو ما جعل أم موسى تلقي بطفلها في اليم وهي على يقين أن الله سيرده إليها، الأمل هو ما جعل أهل مكة يرون في غار صغير بداية لنور غير وجه الأرض كلها. ويقول لهم أيضاً: انظروا إلى الشمس كيف تغيب كل مساء فيظن المرء أن الليل قد انتصر لكنها تعود كل صباح مشرقة من جديد، كذلك هو الأمل مهما خبا يعود ليضيء الحياة. وذات يوم جلس يوسف في متجره الجديد وقد أصبح من أكبر تجار السوق. نظر إلى جدرانه المزينة بالقماش الملون وقال في نفسه: لقد خسرنا كثيراً لكننا ربحتنا ما هو أعظم، لقد ربحتنا درساً لا ينسى. أن الأمل هو التجارة التي لا تبور، وهو رأس المال الذي لا يخسر، ومن تمسك به لا يفتقر أبداً. ثم رفع بصره إلى السماء وحمد الله على ما أنعم به من عزم وصبر، وابتسم وهو يحدث قلبه ما دام فينا نفس يتردد فالأمل لا يموت.

### رأي المحكم

نص «الأمل» نص ممتاز جمع بين البساطة في الطرح والعمق بالفكرة. طرح الكاتب لتفاصيل في وصف الزمان والمكان أضفى عنصر التشويق للقارئ وكأنه يعيش أحداث القصة معه، كما أن التشبيهات التي استخدمها كانت معبرة وبليغة، مما منح النص بعداً فلسفياً وإنسانياً في نفس الوقت، تميز النص بتسلسل منطقي للأحداث وانتقال سلس بين المشاهد مدعوم بتساؤلات وحكم وضعها في قالب حوار بين الشخصيات مما يثري التجربة القرائية لدى القارئ. عمل متوازن في اللغة والفكرة يعكس نضجاً أدبياً ووعياً بالقيمة التي يجسدها الأمل، أثني على الكاتب وأشجعه على الإستمرار في هذا النهج المتقن في الكتابة وتطوير أدواته السردية والفكرية باستمرار.

وقصتنا اليوم ليست سوى شاهد على أثر الأمل في النفوس، وكيف يمكن أن تصنع كلمة صادقة أو فكرة بسيطة تحولاً عميقاً في حياة إنسان وتفتح له أبواباً لم يكن يتصور أن تُفتح يوماً في زمن ظن فيه أن الأفق قد انغلق أمامه.

في مدينة عريقة تمتد على ضفاف نهر واسع وتحيط بها الحقول الخضراء من كل جانب، كانت هناك أسواق مزدهرة، عُرفت بأنها قلب التجارة في البلاد. كانت الحركة لا تهدأ فيها من الصباح حتى غروب الشمس، وكانت الأزقة تضح بأصوات الباعة وهم ينادون على بضائعهم وتفوح منها رائحة البهارات والقماش الجديد والخبز الساخن. وفي قلب ذلك السوق كان هناك تاجر يُدعى يوسف، اشتهر بين الناس بأمانته وجودة بضاعته حتى صار متجره قبلة لكل من يبحث عن المنسوجات الفاخرة. وكان يوسف يعيش في رخاء مع أسرته زوجة طيبة وأبناء يملؤون البيت سعادة.

لكن رياح الحياة لا تعرف الثبات، ففي ليلة من ليالي الصيف اندلع حريق مهول في السوق، سببه مصباح انقلب على أكوام من القش اشتعلت النيران بسرعة هائلة والتهمت البيوت والدكاكين.

هرع يوسف إلى متجره فلم يجد سوى جدران تتهاوى وسط اللهب، وأقمشة تحترق في لحظات وعيون الناس تملؤها الدموع كانت صيحات النساء والأطفال ترتفع في أرجاء السوق. وكان يوسف واقفاً عاجزاً يراقب ثم جلس على الأرض ورماد بضاعته يلف ثيابه وهمس بصوت متهدج لقد انتهت حياتي.

مرت الأيام ثقيلة، لم يعد يوسف يجد في نفسه قوة على النهوض، كان يستيقظ كل صباح فلا يجد ما يشغله إلا استرجاع صور متجره وهو يحترق. كان يسير في طرقات السوق فيرى التجار الآخرين يعيدون البناء، أما هو فظل غارقاً في حزنه يردد: لا جدوى بعد الآن، لقد ضاعت تجارتي وذهبت معها سنوات عمري، وكانت أسرته تحاول مواساته لكن قلبه كان مكسوّاً بظلال اليأس .

وفي أحد الأمسيات، جلس بجواره رجل مسن من أهل السوق كان معروفاً بالحكمة فقال له: يا يوسف لا تحزن فما أصابك ليس نهاية الطريق بل قد يكون بداية جديدة. إن كثيراً من التجار فقدوا أموالهم ثم عادوا أعظم مما كانوا، تذكر أن النار لا تحرق إلا ما هو قابل للاحتراق. أما قلبك وإرادتك فلا يحترقان أبداً، انظر إلى هذه الحجارة السوداء من حولك، ستصبح يوماً أساساً لمتجر جديد إن تشبثت بالأمل.

# 15-18 سنة

## تقرير لجنة التحكيم

سعدت جدًا بما قرأته من نصوص أدبية متميزة تعبر عن طاقات إبداعية واعدة، تنوعت فيها الرؤى و الأساليب مابين الخيال والواقعية، كما وأهني جميع المبدعين المشاركين على جهودهم الواضحة وطلاقتهم في التعبير عن أفكارهم، فقد أظهر جميع المشاركين تمكناً لغوياً وحساً فنياً ناضجاً، وقدرة على بناء الشخصيات وتصعيد الأحداث بصورة مشوقة، برغم من تباين المستويات بين النصوص، فقد تميزت بعض النصوص بثناء لغتها وعمق تشبيهاتها وسلاسة أسلوبها، في حين برزت أخرى بواقعيته وقدرتها على نقل التجربة الإنسانية بوضوح. ومن أهم النقاط التي يمكن للمشاركين العمل عليها لتطوير كتاباتهم مستقبلاً هي الحفاظ علي التسلسل المنطقي للأحداث يحافظ على تصاعد منطقي ومشوق للحبكة، زيادة الحوارات بين الشخصيات لإثراء الأحداث وإظهار الصراع الداخلي بأسلوب غير مباشر يعمق الجانب الدرامي، الاهتمام ببناء نهايات أكثر قوة وتأثيراً يمنح القصة بعداً فكرياً وعاطفياً يرسخ في ذهن القارئ، إلى جانب التقليل من الحشو اللغوي والتكرار لتكون الجمل أكثر كثافة ووضوح مما يمنح السرد قوة وإيقاع لغوي، ومن المهم أيضاً توظيف الخيال الذي يسهم في إثراء النص وتوسيع آفاق القارئ. تمنياتي لجميع المشاركين بالتوفيق وأن يواصلوا كتاباتهم بثقة وإبداع ليقدموا أعمالاً أكثر تفرّداً وتأثيراً في المستقبل.

**د. بشاير العطروزي**

نوفمبر 2025

كل هذه الشائعات؟ شعرت وكأنني أعيش معركة كنت أقاتل فيها لوحدي، معركة بين ابتسامتي التي أظهرها للعالم ودموعي التي لا يعرفها أحد.»

استمرت هذه المعاناة لشهور لكني كنت أشعر كأنها كانت مئة سنة. كل صباح كنت أستيقظ وأشعر أنني أذهب إلى ساحة معركة. لم أعد أشارك في الصف كما كنت من قبل، وصرت أكثر صمتاً. حتى الأشياء الصغيرة التي كنت أحبها لم تعد تفرحني كما كانت. أصبحت أعود إلى البيت وأغلق باب غرفتي لأبقى وحدي مع أفكاري، وأحاول أن أفهم ما الذي يحدث. كانت الضحكات من حولي تزداد قسوة، والنظرات التي أواجهها كل يوم كانت تُشعرنني وكأنني غريبة عن هذا المكان الذي من المفترض أن يكون بيتي الثاني. كنت أحاول أن أخفي دموعي، لكن ثقل الوحدة كان يزداد في داخلي يوماً بعد يوم. لم يكن الأمر مجرد كلمات عابرة أو تصرفات مؤقتة، بل كان إحساساً عميقاً بالعزلة وكأنني مُحاطة بجدار لا أستطيع تجاوزه.

كنت أعود إلى المنزل مُتعبة نفسياً، أضغ حقيبتني جانباً وأشعر كأنني خرجت من معركة لم أنتصر فيها. لكن عندما كنت أحيي لوالدي ما يحدث، كانا ينصتان إلي بكل اهتمام وكانا يقولون لي: «هذه التجارب ستصنع منك شخصية قوية في المستقبل». «فكنت أقول لهم: أعلم ذلك، لكن الأمر صعب جداً الآن.» فكانوا يردوا ويقولوا: «نحن هنا معك دائماً ولم نتركك وحدك.» ولم تختفِ آلامي بين يوم وليلة، لكن وجودهما بجانبني كان كالنور الذي يُضيء عتمتي، ويذكرني أنني لست وحدي. وفي أحد الأيام، اقتربت مني زميلة في الصف وقالت: «هل أنت بخير؟ تبدين حزينة اليوم» بعد ذلك ابتسمت ابتسامة صغيرة وأجبتها: «نعم، فقط يوم صعب قليلاً» فقالت لي: «لا تقلقي، أنا هنا إذا أردتِ التحدث».

وبدأت ألاحظ أنني لست تمامًا وحدي في المدرسة. صحيح أنني لم أجد بعد تلك المجموعة القريبة التي كنت أحلم بها، ولم يكن عندي الكثير من الأصدقاء في مرحلتي العُمرية، لكن كان هناك بعض الأصدقاء الذين أظهروا لي مواقف صغيرة مليئة باللطف. أحدهم كان يضحك معي في أوقات الفسحة، وآخر كان يسأل عني عندما أبدو حزينة. قد تبدو تفاصيل بسيطة، لكنها بالنسبة لي كانت كبذور صغيرة من الأمل، تُذكرني أن هناك دائماً فرصة لبدء صداقات جديدة، حتى لو لم تكن على شكل مجموعة كبيرة كما تمنيت.

ومع مرور الأيام، بدأت ألاحظ أنني لم أعد تلك الطفلة التي كانت تنكسر بسرعة. صحيح أنني ما زلت أشعر بالوحدة أحياناً، لكنني تعلمت

# نُورُ الأَمَلِ



المركز الثالث: زينة النصيرات، 13  
كلية دبي للتخاطب بالإنجليزية - دبي

الحياة كالمدرسة، لكنها ليست مدرسةً عاديةً، بل مدرسةً مليئةً بالاختبارات والتجارب. لكن أصعب اختباراتها تبدأ حين تدخل المدرسة الثانوية. تبدأ رحلتها عندما تُولد وتنتهي عند موتك، فإنك لا تعلم متى ستترك هذه المدرسة وتخرج منها. لكن من دون أي شك ستكون هناك مراحل مُتنوعة ومُختلفة في هذه المدرسة، فإن البعض من هذه المراحل ستكون صعبةً، وستشعر أن من المستحيل أن تأتي نهايتها والبعض منها قصيرة وسهلة، وتتمنى ألا تنتهي وتفارقك. وفي هذه القصة سأكتب لكم عن مرحلة عاتمة مرقت بها أثناء حياتي؛ مرحلة علّمتني معنى الصبر وقيمة الأمل.

كنتُ بنتًا صغيرة وبريئة، قلبها مليء بالحنان والأمل في بداية حياتي في المدرسة الثانوية. فعندما دخلت أبواب المدرسة الكبيرة، البضاء في ذلك الصباح المُشمس، شعرتُ أنني أدخل عالماً جديداً وغريباً، وشعرت بمشاعر مُختلطة؛ فكنتُ خائفةً ومُتحمسةً كنتُ سعيدةً؛ وأشعر بحزن؛ لأنني تركت مدرستي الابتدائية وأصدقائي الذين كانوا فيها. وكنت أسمع أصوات الطلاب في الساحة تختلط مع دقات قلبي المُتسارعة، كأن المكان كله يُراقبني، والعيون كثيرة حولي.

بعد أن دخلت أبواب المدرسة؛ رَحبت بي آنسة رأيت على وجهها ابتسامة واسعة، وقالت: «أهلاً بك هنا في مدرستنا! أعلم جيداً بأنك

لأملهم الجديد ويأخذون منه نصف الدواء لكي يعالجوا أملهم الوحيد بعد تحقق الشرط وتعلمهم.

ومرت الساعات والساعات ولم يأتي الأمل الجديد، وما هي إلا ساعات وتبدأ الشمس في المغيب، ويقترب موعد الحصاد. فبدأ الخوف يسيطر عليهم، خوفهم على أملهم الوحيد وخوفهم على المحاصيل. فتعالّت الأصوات، فقال بعضهم: لقد خدعنا الطبيب وقطع لنا كل الآمال وضيعنا وقتنا في تعلم القراءة والكتابة. وقال آخرون مهلاً لعلنا لو صبرنا وانتظرنا ربما حدث للطبيب شيء. فتذكر أحدهم الرسالة، وقال: هيا بنا نذهب إلى أملنا الوحيد فنعتذر له عن عدم إضرارنا للدواء ونذكره بالرسالة ونقرأها كي نتبين ما المكتوب فيها وما الغرض منها.

وصل الجميع إلى المنزل واستأذنوا في الدخول فخرج لهم كبير القرية وقال لهم: إن الأمل الوحيد خرج وترك لهم رسالة أخرى وعليهم قراءتها بعد رسالة الأمل الجديد. فاستغربوا جميعاً وسألوه: كيف استطاع الحركة والخروج؟ وطالما تحسنت صحته واستطاع الخروج فهل سيساعدنا غداً في الحصاد هل سيكون معنا في تشغيل المعدات. فقال لهم: لا تتعجلوا، الآن أصبحتم أنتم الأمل وتستطيعون القراءة والكتابة. فنادي فيهم الكبير من يأخذ هذه الرسالة ويختصر لنا الوقت ويقرأها فأخذها أحدهم وقرأها بصوت عال. الأمل الجديد يسلم عليكم ويخبركم بأنكم أنتم الأمل الدائم والمتجدد، وأن الدواء كان جرعة واحدة، وأن الميعاد سيكون غداً وقت الحصاد وفي وسط المحصول، وأنه سيحضر هذا الموسم معهم.

وهنا بدأ الأمل يعود لأهل القرية وقالوا لقد أصبحنا في أمان الآن، ومع شروق الشمس واقترب وقت الحصاد، وأنهم ولأول مرة سيكونون هم الأمل. ولكن أين ذهب أملهم الوحيد؟ وفجأة سمعوا صوت الآلات الزراعية وكأن أحدهم قام بتشغيل المعدات وبدأ الحصاد. فقالوا: ما هذا الصوت ومن هذا الذي يستطيع تشغيل المعدات والآلات؟ هيا بنا نذهب إليه سريعاً لكي يساعدنا في الحصاد.

فقال لهم كبير القرية: أما كفاكم بحثاً عن الأمل عند الآخرين؟ اعتمدوا على أنفسكم واخلقوا الأمل بأيديكم. فقالوا: نعم، حان الوقت لخلق الأمل. فقرأ عليهم كبير القرية الرسالة، ومكتوب فيها: حان وقت العمل، فأين الأمل؟ لماذا تأخرتم؟ نحن في انتظاركم. فخرجوا جميعاً واقسموا بأن يعتمدوا على أنفسهم. فخرجوا وكبير القرية معهم وهم يرددون: نحن الأمل، نحن الأمل.

# موسم حصاد الأمل



المركز الثاني: ادم ابراهيم طه السيد الرزاز، 12  
مدرسة الحكمة الخاصة، الجرف

في زمان ليس بالبعيد، وعلى ضفاف النهر السعيد، حيث الأشجار الخضراء المزهرة والمحاصيل الزراعية المثمرة، عاشت قرية صغيرة بجانب النهر، يشربون المياه العذبة الصافية ويستمتعون بالطبيعة الجميلة الخلابة، ويأكلون أطيب الثمار، وتغمرهم السعادة إلى أبعد الحدود، فكان الجميع يشتغل بالزراعة ما عدا شخص واحد، ويسكن بالقرب من بيت كبير القرية. وكان أهل القرية يحبونه حبًا شديدًا، وأطلقوا عليه لقب (الأمل الوحيد)، وكانوا دائمًا يدعون بأن لا تنقطع البسمة من على وجوههم، ولا الثمار من على أشجارهم، ولا يفقدون (الأمل الوحيد).

فطوال العام يزرعون ويحصدون وساعدهم الأمل الوحيد في تشغيل الآلات والمعدات ومعرفة مواعيد الري والحصاد، وبعد الحصاد يأخذون النصف ويوزعون الباقي على القرى المجاورة. وظلت الحياة هادئة سعيدة، حتى فات الكثير من مواسم الحصاد.

وفي ليلة استيقظ أهل القرية على صوت غير معتاد، فسرعان ما انتشرت الأخبار بأن الأمل الوحيد مريض جدًا ولا بد له من الراحة التامة. فحزن أهل القرية حزنًا شديدًا، فمن غيره يستطيع القراءة ويعرف مواعيد الري والحصاد، ومن سيقوم بصيانة السدود وتشغيل المعدات والآلات، فقد كان هو أملهم الوحيد. فقال أحدهم لبيتنا سمعنا كلامه وعملنا

على الغصن، خفق قلبه بسرعة وقال هل اشارك؟ ماذا لو سقطت؟ لكنه تذكر كلمات أمه وقال: «سأحاول، حتى لو فشلت.»

انطلق السباق، وكانت النسور والعصافير الكبيرة تحلق بسرعة مذهلة، بينما خفق سليم بجناحيه بكل قوته محاولاً اللحاق بها. لكنه لم يطر بعيداً وسقط أرضاً بين الاعشاب المتمايلة. ضحكت بعض الطيور وقال الغراب ساخراً «أنت لست إلا طائر صغير، مكانك على الأرض» شعر سليم بالحزن، لكنه رفع رأسه وقال «سأعود أقوى سأطير يوماً ما.»

جلس سليم على صخرة قرب النهر حيث انعكست أشعة الشمس على سطح الماء كقطع من المرايا المتلألئة، يفكر في حلمه: كيف سأحقق الطيران؟ وفجأة ظهر نسر ضخم ذو ريش ذهبي لامع يجلس على صخرة مقابلة ويحدق فيه بحنان. اقترب منه وسأله بصوت عميق «لماذا حزين يا صغيري؟» روى سليم كل شيء، عن حلمه، عن سقوطه، عن كلمات الغراب القاسية. ابتسم النسر وقال «الأمل هو الذي يجعل الطائر الضعيف يحلق عالياً. القوة الحقيقية تأتي من القلب.»

بدأ سليم يتدرب يومياً، يقفز بين الغصون الصغيرة، يرفرف بجناحيه، يحاول الطيران لمسافات قصيرة ويسقط مرات عديدة على الأرض المليئة بالأوراق المتساقطة. أحياناً كانت الطيور الأخرى تضحك عليه. لكن بعض العصافير الصغيرة كانت تشجعه «لا تستسلم يا سليم». مع مرور الأيام، صار سليم قادراً على الطيران لمسافات أطول، يتمايل بين الأغصان ويشعر بالرياح تداعب ريشه وقلبه يفيض بالأمل والشجاعة.

وذات مساء، اجتاحت الغابة نيران قوية وارتفعت ألسنة اللهب البرتقالية الحارقة والدخان الكثيف غطى السماء، وأصبح صوت صراخ الطيور الصغيرة يملأ المكان. حاولت النسور الكبيرة إخماد الحريق لكن النار كانت تتقدم بسرعة. صرخ الغراب مذعوراً «الهروب النار ستأكلنا».

لكن سليم تذكر كلمات النسر الحكيم «الأمل يعطي القوة للطيران... والأمل قادر على تغيير المصير». خفق بجناحيه بكل قوته، وطار نحو النهر المتلألئ، حمل قطرة ماء صغيرة بمنقاره وعاد لسكبها على اللهب. كرر ذلك مرات ومرات، وكل مرة يزداد قلبه قوة وعزيمة. الطيور الأخرى، مستوحاة من شجاعته، انضمت إليه وكل منها يحمل الماء بجرأة. ومغماً أطفأوا النار تدريجياً حتى هدأت، وبقيت الأعشاش سليمة.

عندما هدأت النيران، وقفت كل الطيور مذهولة بشجاعة سليم. وقال أحدهم: «لم نعد نهتم بضعف جناحيك... لكن قلبك وشجاعتك أعاد الأمل

# 12-14 سنة

## تقرير لجنة التحكيم

أبدع الأدباء اليافاعين في تناول موضوع الأمل، فنظروا إليه من زوايا متعددة، ليثبتوا أنهم هم الأمل لمستقبل واعد.

لقد وقع معظم الأدباء في فخ العناوين التقليدية غافلين عن أهمية اختيار العنوان الإبداعي، لكنهم كتبوا بلغة سليمة، وبنوا للأحداث مسرحاً يقترب من الواقعية، لكنه يقدمها بشكل أدبي جميل.

إن المباشرة والحشو يثقلان النصوص، لكن الفكرة الجيدة جوهرة تلمع رغم بعض الشوائب.

كان الخيال نادراً في النصوص، لكن الواقع مصدر جيد للقصص، وخاصة مع حضور بعض الفلسفة والرمزية والمشاعر.

الأمل قيمة حرّضت الإبداع، فتدفقت معاني الأمل الإيمانية والوجدانية والعاطفية والفلسفية، لنكسب نصوصاً تؤكد أن كل من شارك في الكتابة هو مبدع قابض على قلم الأمل.

**مهند ثابت العاقوص**

نوفمبر 2025

# زهرة في الطريق



المركز الثالث: ميرا الخولاني، 11  
مدرسة دار المعرفة الخاصة - دبي

في قرية صغيرة بين الجبال كانت تعيش فتاة تدعى أميره.  
كانت تحب الزهور كثيراً و تزرعها في وعاء صغير على شرفتها.  
لكن الأرض في قريتها كانت جافة والناس يقولون دائماً «هذه الأرض  
لا تنبت شيئاً لا تتعبي نفسك يا أميره.»  
لكنها لم تيأس. كانت تبسم و تقول: «ربما لم تجد الأرض بعدُ من  
يؤمن بها.»  
في أحد الأيام، قررت أميره أن تزرع زهرة قرب الطريق الترابي الذي يمر  
به الناس كل صباح.  
حفرت حفرة صغيرة، و غرست البذرة، وسقتها بالماء الذي كانت  
تحفظ به في زجاجة صغيرة.  
كل صباح كانت تمر عليها و تهمس:  
«اصبري يا زهرتي، يوماً ما ستكبرين.»  
مرت أيام طويلة دون أن يظهر شيء. بدأت أميره تشعر بالحزن، وذات  
ليلة جلست على سريرها تبكي و قالت: «يا الله، حاولت ولم أنجح، يبدو أن  
الأمل لا يعيش هنا.»  
لكن في الصباح التالي حدثت المفاجأة. عندما خرجت من البيت، رأت  
نبته صغيرة خضراء تشق التراب الجاف نحو الضوء. ركضت نحوها وهي

# الأمل في صحراء الربع الخالي



المركز الثاني: شبيخة خالد سالم الصريدي، 9  
مدرسة الزلاقة - أبوظبي

في قلب صحراء الربع الخالي، حيث هناك شمس حارقة و أمواج من الرمال تمتد حتى يبتلعها الأفق. عاش شاب اسمه أحمد، رجل بدوي، لديه حلم غريب لا يليق بجو المكان الذي يعيش فيه. يحلم أحمد في أن يجد عين ماء في هذا المكان المليء بالرمال الحارقة. حلمه غريب و لكن معه أمل و حلم بأن يتحقق ما يريد. هذا الحلم موجود في ذاكرة أحمد منذ أن كان صغيرا حيث أخبره جده عن عين تسمى عين الحياة و هي مختفية بين كثبان الصحراء. لا أحد يعرف مكانها إلا من كان في قلبه إيمان بوجودها. إنه الأمل الذي يصنع المستحيل. أحمد لم يفقد الأمل بالعثور على العين و يواصل دائما الإيمان والتعلق بوجودها فهو مستمر بالبحث عنها في صحراء الربع الخالي.

سخر الناس كثيراً من حلم أحمد و كانوا يقولون له: أين ستجد عينا في هذه الرمال؟ هل أصابك الجنون؟ هل تريد أن تقتل نفسك و تبحث عن عين لا وجود لها؟ و لكنه دائما يرد عليهم بقلب قوي و متفائل: نعم سأجدها. إنها موجودة لمن لا زال لديه أمل بوجودها. لن تكشف الرمال عن هذه العين إلا لمن يستحقها و الأهم من ذلك من يؤمن بوجودها.

# خيمة أمل



المركز الأول: ريمان يوسف، 9  
مدرسة عمر بن عبدالعزيز حلقة أولى - عجمان

كرم فتى في العاشرة من عمره هوايته الرسم وهو يرسم على أي شيء يقع بين يديه ويده فرشاة الرسم يمسكها بين أنامله، يرسم طيراً وبيتاً، وأحلاماً بريئة.

يعيش كرم مع والديه في قرية نائية حيث يكاد والده يوفر لهم العيش الكريم بينما تعمل أمه في الخياطة وتجمع أكياس الطحين الفارغة وتحولها إلى ملابس جميلة، ثم تبيعها وتساعد زوجها، لكنها لا تحصل على مبالغ كبيرة وتحصل على مبالغ زهيدة. مرض والد كرم مرضاً شديداً واضطر للتوقف عن العمل فهو بحاجة إلى عملية جراحية، لكن تكلفة العملية والعلاج لا تتوفر مع العائلة.

وفي يوم من الأيام أعلنت معلمة الفنية في مدرسة كرم أن هناك هيئة كبيرة في الدولة قد أعلنت عن مسابقة كبيرة في الرسم للأطفال وأنه سيحصل الفائز على مبلغ مالي كبير جداً. فرح كرم فرحاً كثيراً أنها فرصته ليساعد والده عاد إلى البيت مسرعاً وطلب من أمه أن تخطط له قماشاً كبيراً يرسم عليه لوحة ويشارك بها في المسابقة.

ظل كرم يرسم اللوحة بشغف وحماسة، وأخيراً انتهى كرم من لوحته وسلمها للمعلمة التي وعدته أن تصحبه إلى المدينة ليقدّم العمل الفني للهيئة. وفي الطريق واجهوا طقساً شديد البرودة وبينما كان كرم يشاهد

# المحتويات

## 11 سنة وما دون

|    |                                                      |
|----|------------------------------------------------------|
| 11 | خيمة أمل - ريمان يوسف                                |
| 13 | الأمل في صحراء الربع الخالي - شيخة خالد سالم الصريدي |
| 15 | زهرة في الطريق - ميرا الخولاني                       |

## 12 إلى 14 سنة

|    |                                                    |
|----|----------------------------------------------------|
| 18 | القلب الذي علم الجناحين الطيران - نوره فالح الشمري |
| 21 | موسم حصاد الأمل - ادم ابراهيم طه السيد الرزاز      |
| 25 | نُورُ الأمل - زينة النصيرات                        |

## 15 إلى 18 سنة

|    |                                  |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 30 | الأمل - عبد الرحمن عادل السويدي  |
| 34 | الأمل - محمد خليفة الشامسي       |
| 39 | طقطة أمل - جواهر راشد محمد طاهري |

الأمل ليس مجرد شعورٍ عابر، بل موقف إنساني عميق يعبر عن إصرار الإنسان على النهوض مهما أثقلته التجارب، إنه حافز نحو التغيير، ومصدر إلهام دائم لمن يؤمن بأن الغد يُصنع من رحم المعاناة.

لقد حملت قصص المشاركين هذا العام ومضاتٍ من هذا النور، عبّرت عن إدراكٍ متنامٍ لقيمة الأمل والإصرار، وقدرة الأدب على شحن النفوس بطاقةٍ إيجابية تُعيد التوازن للعالم. فالكلمة هنا ليست حبراً على ورق، بل بوصلةً نحو الحياة، تُذكرنا دائماً بأن وراء كل تجربة قاسية بذرة رجاء تنتظر من يسقيها بالإيمان والعمل.

ومن هنا، أوجه دعوتي للكتاب والناشئة أن يكتبوا من قلوبهم، لا من صدى ما حولهم، أن يجعلوا من الكلمة منارةً تضيء للآخرين طريقهم في هذا العالم المتسارع، فلا ينجرّفوا مع تياره، بل يُضيفوا إليه معناهم الخاص وجمال رؤيتهم.

#### **د. بشاير سليمان العطروزي**

كاتبة وقاصة كويتية، لها ثلاثة عشر إصدار، مؤسسة لأكاديمية ثوتس للخدمات الثقافية.

الشراكة المميزة تتيح منصة مرموقة ومفتوحة أمام المواهب الكتابية الصاعدة في دول مجلس التعاون الخليجي، ليتألقوا بأعمالهم ويصلوا إلى جمهور أوسع. إن هذا الدعم الإيجابي من دار جامعة أكسفورد للطباعة والنشر يشكل ركيزة مهمة في مسيرتنا ويعزز جهودنا المستمرة.

ومع اختتام هذه الصفحات التي تحمل بين طياتها القصص الفائزة، نأمل أن يجد قراء هذا الكتاب ما نجده نحن من صلة ومتعة في كل عام.

### **فريق التعليم**

مؤسسة الإمارات للآداب

«نحن في دار جامعة أكسفورد للطباعة  
والنشر، نُثمن شراكتنا الوطيدة مع  
مهرجان طيران الإمارات للآداب. إن  
التزامنا الراسخ بإلهام طلاب المدارس  
على الانغماس في التجربة الغنية  
للكتابة الإبداعية وسرد القصص لا  
يزال قائماً، كما هو الحال مع سعادتنا  
بقراءة نتاج إبداعهم الملهم.»

**دار جامعة أكسفورد للطباعة والنشر**

# أمل

ملاحظة للقراء: يرجى العلم أن القصص الفائزة لم يتم تعديلها أو الإضافة عليها، وهي كما أرسلت من قبل الكتاب.



المشاركات الفائزة في مسابقة "دار جامعة  
أكسفورد للطباعة والنشر" لكتابة القصة 2026

# أمل

