



63<sup>ആം</sup>  
കേരള സ്കൂൾ  
കലോത്സവം  
2025 ജനുവരി 4 മുതൽ 8 വരെ  
തിരുവനന്തപുരം

Item Code:

695

Participant Code:

A36

Topic: "With a heavy heart, burdened with all that had happened, she started out. The road to future stretched out before her, uncertain yet hopeful..."

Phoenix Rises From Ashes  
X ————— X

"Dancing Queen ... young and sweet only 17..."

As the final notes of ABBA's famous 'Dancing Queen' ended Reese broke out of her reverie.

"Happy Birthday to me..." she wished herself with a muffled sob. Blowing out the lone candle she had stuck into a chocolate muffin, she cut it into 5 parts. One for herself, One each for her mom and Dad, and one for her baby sister and one





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for the birds and animals there. Distributing them, she stood up wiping her tears, holding back ugly sobs that threatened to break her down again. With one last look at the family tombstone Reese collected her belonging and made her way out of the graveyard.

\* \* \*

The chiming bell of the cafe indicated a guest. Jake looked up with a smile to greet the customer and was met with the sight of a miserable Reese. "Hey! If it isn't the birthday girl! What brings you 'dancing queen' to my humble cafe on such a special day?" - Jake exclaimed patronisingly trying to lighten up her mood. "Seriously Jake? What's gotten you in the cheerful mood today? Heila confessed





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her undying love for you or what?" -  
retorted Reese, her bad mood laying bare  
on Jake to unravel and comfort.

"Nah mate. I am cheerful because today  
is my queen's birthday and I don't plan  
on letting her wallow around with  
self pity, partying all day with dark and  
depreciating thoughts." "Now gorge on this  
beautiful specimen of Blueberry scone my  
queen; my treat while I go finish up  
my shift. I plan to spend the whole day  
with you..." - Jake handed her a blueb-  
erry scone and went to the kitchen to  
restock on muffins.

Reese slowly ate the scone,  
the incidents of the past two years play-  
ing in front of her like a movie. A sad,  
depressing emotional movie.





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Two years ago Reese had an accident. She had just been selected to play Odette in that year's ballet production. Her years of grind had payed off for that moment. Three weeks into practice, a lift had gone wrong taking away her Odette and her ACL. An ACL injury was career ending and even the doctor's were unsure if she would dance walk let alone dance again. That injury was a hard blow for her. A fifteen year old rising professional ballet dancer had her career ending before it even began. Miserable and depressed stuck in rehab half way across the country her only solace was her family's family's weekend visits.

But tragedy struck too soon before





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Reese could even recover from the first one.

On ~~a~~ the way to visit Reese, a heavy-duty truck lost its control and slammed into the family car killing her mom and dad on site. Her baby sister was severely injured but alive. Barely. A week after Leodia and Chris Thompson's emotional funeral; her sister Skye too died. The injury, parents death and sister's death all in the span of a month made Reese loose her mind.

2 years of suicide attempts, therapy and rehab later here she was sitting in her bestfriend's safe family cafe eating a scone on her birthday while her family was six feet under the ground in a cliff overlooking the sea; that was where





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her dad proposed to her mother; both fresh out of college 20 years ago.

"Reese... Reese..." - Reese broke out of her trance looking at the worried face of Daniella; Jake's mother. "Oh Mija, it's alright to cry, I'm sure you miss them today especially, don't you..." Daniella crooned sitting in front of her and wiping her tears away with those warm motherly hands of hers. Salty streams that had made its way down her face without her awareness. Daniella smelled just like her mom. Home. Breaking down again, Reese rushed out of her seat to hug Daniella. As they sat there with Daniella comforting her whispering sweet nothing's into her ear, Jake walked back out again from the kitchen. His





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expression softened seeing his & best friend and his breaking down and his mom comforting her. Not wanting to break up the heartfelt moment he joined the hugfest; tangling his arms in Reese's hair, playing with it, comforting offering silent comfort and support.

\* \* \*

Reese drank her tea; hot peppermint with honey offering her a sense of content and calmness. A lot had happened in the past year. Shortly after her 17th birthday, doctors had cleared her health and she got back into dancing. It was hard at first with the bitter memories weighing her each step like an ~~ax~~ anchor in sea, but she pulled through. Both her and Jake successfully graduated school





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which resulted in an impromptu world trip. It was with a heavy heart that she set out, burdened with all that <sup>had</sup> happened the past few years. ~~The road to future stretched out before her, uncertain yet hopeful.~~ But she wasn't alone. She always had Jake with her; a strong support that always pulled her up when she seemed to sink, <sup>his</sup> family, her instructors and friends at the studio, the nature... She was never alone. It took some time to realize that, but she eventually got there.

Draining the last of her tea, she got back into the dressing room. A black door stood there 'REESE THOMPSON' in big red letters were stuck on the door. In a smaller white font 'ODETTE' seemed





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to mock her. It was ~~be~~ slowly becoming a full circle. With Odette she lost everything she loved all a once. But now with Odette once again she was sure she would find new things to love. Maybe not at once, but slowly; gradually. The 'ODETTE' sign slowly seemed to stop mocking her. With a deep breath, she pushed the door, stepping into the hustle and bustle of last minute backstage preparations.

~~As she struck the last pose; bowing to the audience~~

Endless ovation and applause echoed throughout the hall as Reese Thompson 'dancing queen' struck the last pose, bowing to the audience. Every one there knew her story. England's darling 'dancing





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queen'. A phoenix who rose from the ashes when all seemed lost. A soul relentless soul who never gave up no matter what life threw at her. They were sure that she will <sup>shake</sup> take the dancing world <sup>as</sup> a storm, conquering the hearts of many more all across the world.

Reese looked up at the applauding audience with tears brimming her eyes. It was a nostalgic and emotional moment for her. Through the tears she looked at the very front row. Three seats had been maintained empty. In honour of her family. She gasped when she saw her mother and father tearful and happy, to side hugging each other with a proud look on their faces. Her little sister





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skye was beside them jumping up and down cheering her name. Reese blinked trying to digest what she saw - as she looked again the seats were empty. She felt a pang of sadness hit her. But she closely looked to see ~~white~~ petals of white roses strewn across those three seats. Reese wanted to believe that they were watching over her. Happy that she pulled herself through the difficulties of life.

She was phoenix. She rose from the ashes when she lost everything. Now no matter what she will rise over and over again in life. The road to future stretched out before her, uncertain yet hopeful. Now she was looking forward to it.

The End