



Warlingham School
& Sixth Form College

Wide Horizons
High Aspirations



Year 6-7 Transition

English Project



Task 1: Read and analyse a story

Read the passage below, or click [here](#) for an audio version.

Answer the questions that follow: You could hand write your answers or type them up. If you can't do a question, don't worry, just move onto the next one.

Passage

The problem with growing up around highly dangerous things is that after a while you get used to them.

For as long as she could remember, Aru had lived in the Museum of Ancient Indian Art and Culture. And she knew full well that the lamp at the end of Hall of the Gods was not to be touched.

She could mention "the lamp of destruction" the way a pirate who had tamed a sea monster could casually say, *Oh, you mean ole Ralph here?* But even though she was used to the lamp, she had never once lit it. That would be against the rules. The rules she went over every Saturday, when she led the afternoon visitors' tour.

Some folks might not like the idea of working on a weekend, but it never felt like work to Aru.

It felt like a ceremony.

Like a secret.

She would don her crisp scarlet vest with its three honeybee buttons. She would imitate her mother's museum-curator voice, and people- this was the best part of all- would *listen*. Their eyes never left her face. Especially when she talked about the cursed lamp.

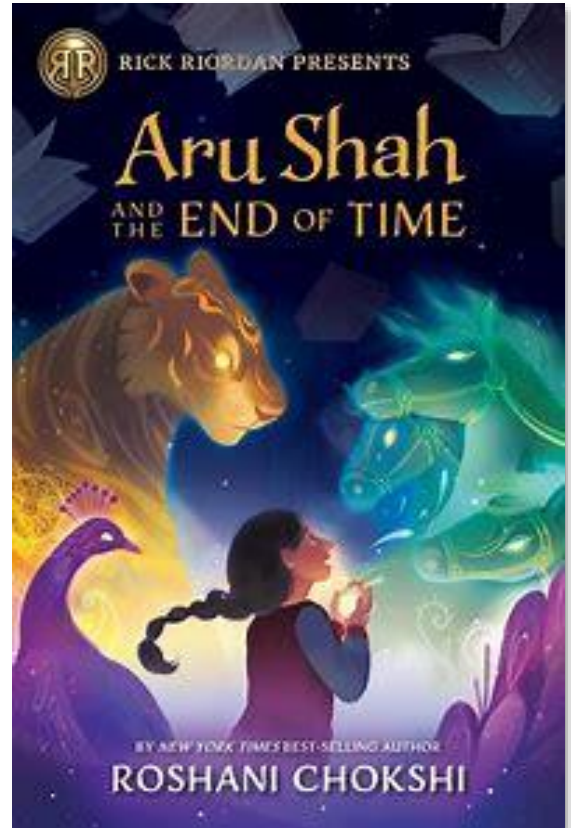
Sometimes she thought it was the most fascinating thing she ever discussed. A cursed lamp is a much more interesting topic than, say, a visit to the dentist. Although one could argue that both are cursed.

Aru had lived at the museum for so long, it kept no secrets from her. She had grown up reading and doing her homework beneath the giant stone elephant at the entrance. Often she'd fall asleep in the theatre and wake up just before the crackling self-guided tour recording that announced that India became independent from the British in 1947. She even regularly hid a stash of candy in the mouth of a four-hundred-year-old sea dragon statue (she'd named it Steve) in the west wing. Aru knew everything about everything in the museum. Except one thing...

The lamp. For the most part, it remained a mystery.

"It's not quite a lamp", her mother, renowned curator and archaeologist Dr K.P.Shah, had told her the first time she showed it to Aru. "We call it a *dija*."

Aru remembered pressing her nose against the glass case, staring at the lump of clay. As far as cursed objects went, this was by far the most boring. It was shaped like a pinched hockey puck. Small markings, like bite marks, crimped the edges. And yet, for all its normal-ness, even the statues filling the Hall of the Gods seemed to lean away from the lamp, giving it a wide berth.



“Why can’t we light it?” she had asked her mother.

Her mother hadn’t met her gaze. “Sometimes light illuminates things that are better left in the dark. Besides, you never know who is watching”.

Well, Aru had watched. She’d been watching her entire life.

Every day after school she would come home, hang her back-pack from the stone elephant’s trunk, and creep toward the Hall of the Gods.

It was the museum’s most popular exhibit, filled with a hundred statues of various Hindu gods. Her mother had lined the walls with tall mirrors so visitors could see the artifacts from all angles. The mirrors were “vintage” (a word Aru had used when she traded Burton Prater a greenish penny for a whopping two dollars and half a Twix bar). Because of the tall crepe myrtles and elms standing outside the windows, the light that filtered into the Hall of the Gods always looked a little muted. Feathered, almost. As if the statues were wearing crowns of light.

Aru would stand at the entrance, her gaze resting on her favourite statues- Lord Indra, the king of the heavens, wielding a thunderbolt; Lord Krishna, playing his flutes; the Buddha, sitting with his spine straight and legs folded in meditation- before her eyes would inevitably be drawn to the diya in its glass case.

She would stand there for minutes, waiting for something...anything that would make the next day at school more interesting, or make people notice that she, Aru Shah, wasn’t just another seventh grader slouching through middle school, but someone *extraordinary*...

Aru was waiting for magic.

And every day she was disappointed.

Questions

Q1: Why do you think Aru felt this way? Can you find any other parts of the text that link to this feeling?

Q2: Can you think of any other stories with magical or cursed objects? Do these stories have anything in common?

Q3: The writer is **alluding** to a real historical event here. Use this website to find 5 facts about the partition of India <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/46428985>

Q4: Later in the story, Aru lights the diya and wishes for something extraordinary. Does this wish make her happy or does she come to regret it? Make a prediction and explain your reasoning.

Task 2: Choose your own adventure

Choose from one of the two options below.

Option 1: Explore the stories in your own family. Talk to relatives- older ones are often best for this- and gather some stories.

There are lots of websites to help you find out more about your family's stories. Here is one to get you started <https://www.thoughtco.com/fifty-questions-for-family-history-interviews-1420705>

You could also conduct some genealogy research and find out more about your family tree.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/familyhistory/get_started/

Option 2: Explore the stories from a range of cultures about how the world was created. Creation myths are a great way to explore a range of cultures and traditions- just remember to be respectful of others' beliefs and traditions.

There are lots to choose from so you could start with your own ideas about how the world began and build from there. It is a good way to see the connections between cultures and what makes each one distinctive or unique.

<https://historycollection.co/16-incredible-ancient-creation-stories-from-around-the-world/4/>

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com.au/videos/story-of-god/the-aboriginal-creation-story-4214.aspx>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7vget_QAmo

Task 3: Write your own story

Choose an option and get creative. Use at least one of the details you learned from your research.

1. Write about a time when your family held a celebration. The story could be real or imagined.
2. Describe a place in which something magical could happen OR write a short story that begins with the sentence: "Suddenly, I heard it. It was coming from the other end of the passage."
3. Choose an object or animal that is important to you. Write a story (real or imagined) explaining how this animal or object came to exist using the creation myths you have explored to inspire you.
4. Inspired by characters in your reading, create a mythical character and tell the story of a heroic journey they go on.