



The **Epitome** */i'pitəmi/*

Academy of Language Studies, UiTM Kedah Branch

Capturing Life Lessons and Moments

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Copyright Page

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Published by:

UiTM Cawangan Kedah,

Pn. Razanawati Nordin, Chief Editor,

UiTM Cawangan Kedah, Kampus Sg. Petani, 08400 Merbok, Kedah

Email address: razanawati@uitm.edu.my

Contact No: 044562421

Copy Editor: Ms. Rafidah Binti Amat

& Ms. Nor Asni Syahriza Abu Hassan

Graphic Designer: Mr. Mohd Hamidi Adha Mohd Amin



APB KEDAH : THE EPITOME

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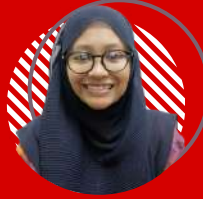


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Synopsis



The Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Cawangan Kedah is thrilled to announce the release of the fourth edition of its e-magazine, *The Epitome*. This publication represents our steady dedication to cultivating creativity in language and literature.

The primary objective of *THE EPITOME* is to offer a platform for writers, educators, scholars, poets, and researchers can come together to exchange their ideas, discoveries, expertise, and narratives. Our special focus revolves around an array of creative writing genres, encompassing playwriting, short stories, songs, speeches, memoirs, literary journalism, humour writing, lyric essays, innovative essays, and personal essays, with a goal to embrace diverse linguistic expressions, with content available in four languages: English, Bahasa Melayu, Mandarin, and Arabic.





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Preface

Mr. Azlan Abdul Rahman
Head of Faculty
Academy of Language Studies
UiTM Kedah Branch

Welcome to the fourth issue of *Epitome*, where creativity and imagination shine brightly. Within these pages, you will discover a rich tapestry of voices and visions—each piece a celebration of the limitless potential of words.

This issue of *Epitome* is more than a mere publication; it is a tribute to the art of storytelling in all its forms. Whether you are captivated by evocative poetry, enthralled by engaging short stories, or intrigued by insightful essays, we aim to present something that resonates with every reader.

We are passionate about the transformative power of literature, and we hope that this collection will inspire, challenge, and delight you. As you explore these pages, may you uncover new perspectives and experiences that enrich your own creative journey.

Thank you for embarking on this literary adventure with us.

Happy reading!





Editor InChief

Dear gentle readers,

Let me welcome you to our fourth edition of e-magazine, where we explore the beauty of life's journey. Our theme, "Capturing Life Lessons and Moments," encourages you to pause, reflect, and celebrate the wisdom that arises from everyday experiences.

Life is a mosaic of moments, each with the potential to teach us something profound, inspire change, or remind us of the surrounding beauty. Within these pages, we have unfolded stories, reflections, and insights that illuminate the lessons woven into the fabric of our lives. From the quiet wisdom found in fleeting moments to the power of life-changing events, this edition pays tribute to the learning that occurs beyond the classroom, in the heart of our daily lives.

Our contributors have poured their hearts into capturing these moments, sharing personal stories that resonate with authenticity and depth. You will find essays exploring the significance of small acts of kindness, articles reflecting on the lessons learned from adversity, and creative pieces celebrating the joy found in simple leisure. Each piece serves as a reminder that life's greatest lessons often emerge from the most unexpected places.

As you flip through this edition, we hope you find inspiration in the shared stories and perhaps discover a mirror to your own experiences. May these pages encourage you to appreciate the moments that shape you, learn from the challenges that test you, and embrace the wisdom that life offers at every step of your journey.

Thank you for joining us in exploring life's lessons and moments. We invite you to take your time, savour each piece, and maybe even gain a new perspective on the experiences that have shaped your own life.

Happy reading!

Warm regards,

Razanawati Nordin
Editor-in-Chief
THE EPITOME



Mornings of Resilience

Nik Siti Maisarah Abd Rahman
Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, UiTM Shah Alam

Image by Canva Stock Photo

She woke up every day with difficulty. To bring herself seated at the edge of the bed required raw strength, at least on her end.


Before getting there, she had to pry her eyes open. She imagined the day when she could flutter her eyelids gallantly, akin to the Disney Princess who was awakened by a true love's kiss. Sadly, in her reality, it was as if boulders were stacked just above her lids instead, stopping her from seeing the light of day. The size of the boulders, to her glad, was growing smaller. She didn't have to exert the same force as she did yesterday. Her eyeballs, just like any other morning, emerged and stretched their crimson, veiny arms, albeit thinner than usual; its fingers gripped at the slick membrane, and slowly stretched the slits open. A blurry image began to form itself into spinning shapes and thicker lines. The image somehow reached its final form, and she found herself staring at a weary, whirling ceiling fan, creaking around its hinges in every weak rotation.

Her eyes lingered, gazing from the yellow-brownish cloud staining the chalky ceiling to the dangling, collected dust strung from the cobwebs at the upper corner, slightly torn, wallpapered wall. She was pretty sure she dusted it off already, but that was probably just one of her dreams because she was pretty sure she didn't have the cobweb broom to begin with.

The bedroom was only lit by the table lamp she had placed on the cold floor. It was the only stylish home appliance she had in her disposition. Minimalism had been creeping into every modern home like a plague, or so she heard. It took her a few scrolls in the e-commerce app to add the Nordic, oblong-shaped lamp into the cart and purchase it at the tap of her finger. When the orange notification popped up, noting Your parcel is out for delivery, she beamed from ear to ear, her eyes gleaming towards the phone every time the screen flickered. The anticipation, however, was short-lived, due to the lack of a proper table for the fancy table lamp. The poor fellow had to settle amongst the rest of the forgotten things strewn around the tier. She, for one, was grateful the light hadn't died out. It stood by her side countless nights, especially on days when the light failed her, and was ashamed to grace her pale skin for times she needed it the most.

Her eyelids felt heavy again. She wanted to give in, but the sudden blast from the phone alarm jolted her. Eyes now wide open but with a body as languid as ever, she flung her right arm to grab the smartphone she had hidden beneath the pillow. She brought it to her face, and she saw her reflection on the dark, cracked glass screen. It was just a fleeting moment, but she wondered silently what had become of her. The countenance that had seen better days.





Something primal and ugly rose inside her belly, making its way through the slithery oesophagus. A thick void desperately wanting to escape. It began to mimic limbs, gripping the insides with its blackened, sharp claws, scratching mercilessly around the pink walls. Throughout the years of its tenancy, it grew wiser, bolder, and flooded itself in her cavities, extending much smaller limbs with scrawny, razor-edged fingers. Through the hollow den, they jabbed the fleshy gum, expecting some sort of reaction from her.

But her lips were tightened shut. Not today, she thought to herself. Not ever again.

Her scrunched up face vanished from the screen as the second alarm lighted the phone, blasting the most mind-shattering sound that she had hoped would deter her from falling asleep. It had worked thus far, but the next hurdle was as challenging as ever.

Wrapped around her body was the flower-patterned quilt gifted by her mother. Gifted, meaning, her mother unearthed one of the boxes of old gems and nostalgia she had stored, and then deposited the box again in the deepest pit of the storeroom for the archaeologist to discover a hundred years from now. She contorted her body, wishing she could cave in longer under the fresh, cosy fabric but she had to relent. It was funny, hilarious actually, that as soon as she wanted to remove the cover, the quilt hardened, and attempted to petrify together with her.

She let out a small, exasperated laugh at how conniving the void was becoming; how fast it had gotten to her only-prized possession. The quilt was her only connection to her sense of belonging, and the void was yearning to snatch it away from her. For a despicable enigma, it had spirit, a mean one at that.

She took the quilt off of her with ease, kicking it to the side. Sprawling on top of the queen-sized bed, here came the hardest part: waking up from the bed itself. Shifting to the left side of the body, she dragged her frame away from the dented pillow while putting the rest of her willpower on her single elbow. Charged with hopefulness, it managed to support her upper body to be fully erect.

That didn't stop her there. She could feel her legs were almost iced, laid frozen on the mattress. The remnant of her acquired energy made the journey to the lower part of her being, oiling the hinges, revving up what was to come next. The ice enveloping the entirety of her legs began to crack and break, and it took her no time to slide them over until the toes were kissing the ground.

Now, as she was seated at the edge of her bed, a smile decorated her chapped lips. An early win for the day, she thought to herself.

The next thing on the list was to march on and face the bigger demons that awaited her at every step of her taking.



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