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The **Epitome** */I'pitəmi/*

Academy of Language Studies, UiTM Kedah Branch

Unleash the epitome of creative writers

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SYNOPSIS

The Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Kedah branch is proud to present the first issue of its e-magazine, The Epitome, as our focus to highlight our commitment to contribute to the areas of creative writing.

THE EPITOME aims to provide a platform for writers, educators, academicians, poet, and researchers to share their ideas, findings, knowledge, and experience, particularly on various creative writing genres - personal essays, poetry, short stories, songs, movie scripts, plays, and innovative projects in four different languages (English, Bahasa Melayu, Mandarin, and Arabic).

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear readers,


It is with great pleasure and immense pride that we, the Academy of Language Studies at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Kedah branch, extend our warmest welcome to all writers and readers to honor all 127 artistic masterpieces. This is indeed a tremendous achievement to commemorate our debut.

We are privileged to offer the platform for the writers to show their talents in creative writing in this magazine, which serves as a testament to our commitment to the area of personal essays, poetry, short stories, songs, movie scripts, plays, and innovative projects. Their invaluable contributions and unwavering commitment to academic excellence have played a vital role in shaping this magazine.

Thank you.

Best regards,

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A WITNESS

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It was a breezy night. I cycled home from my extra class as I passed by the heavily faded, white and rustic villa that has been the talk of the town. It is Villa Nabila. The villa was well-known for the crime scene that had shocked the entire country back in the 1980s. From the widely-spread rumours, the owner of the villa was Puan Nabila, a career woman in her 40s who had lost her dear husband and son in a fatal car accident. After the incident, she was seen to have lost a grip on reality as she locked herself up in the villa without any connection with the townspeople. The only remarkable thing about her was the mad screaming in the middle of the night. The next thing that the nearby neighbours noticed was a foul, rotting smell from the garden of the villa. After a thorough investigation, her badly decomposed body, chopped into pieces, was found underneath a mango tree. I was reminded of the story and every other story that my friends told me in school – mainly about the spirit of Puan Nabila that had never found peace as she could have been robbed, raped and killed in her own villa. Some also speculated that every Friday night, those who happened to pass by the house would hear her weeping and wailing along with some strong smell. That particular night was just another Friday night for me. Whenever I passed by, I would only fix my gaze towards the front as I never wanted to cross path with Puan Nabila's restless spirit or whoever it was.

"Help me.... Kid... Helppp...."

It was a distant cry. I glanced through the long window at the first floor of the villa. It was a man in black, standing in the dark facing the other side of the house. I fixed my sight towards him and in a second, he turned his face towards the window. We exchanged eye contact through the big holes of the woody brown fence that was almost completely wrecked. He waved at me with his squinting eyes and a face half covered with a mask. I squatted down and peeked from my thighs, and he surely was not hanging

midair. I forgot the distant cry for a moment and walked to the front part of the villa.

"Hello there little one.... You seem to be lost, aren't you?" he smiled at me.

"Ah... no Mister, I'm not. I was just going home from my tuition."

"Aha I see... Where do you live dear? Is it nearby?"

"Yes, yes. My house is in the nearby neighbourhood. Taman Gemilang. Only 3 to 4 houses from here. But may I know if you are in need of any help? This villa is not a safe place, my mum said."

"Uhuu. I'm getting afraid now little boy..." he looked at me with his sad eyes.

"Maybe you can run away in an instant. Or maybe we can run together. I have a bike though," I claimed.

"Nah it's okay boy. I'm just going to settle my unfinished business for now. I will find my way out soonest."

I nodded in silence and smiled.

"Anyway, you should go back now, little one. Your mother might be worried about you at home. But let me ask you one last question, okay?"

He sighed and turned his back before he began to ask me.

"Did you see anything earlier? From when you were peeking through that hole?" He smiled while pointing out to the woody brown fence.

"I saw you, Mister. And you were waving at me, right?" I answered him with another question.

"Aha! That's it. I guess...? But aren't you curious about who I am and what I am up to after you go home...? Would you tell anybody else about me?" he smiled countless times.

"What are you doing here at night then Mister? I thought everybody else is afraid of this villa." I scratched my head.

"Hmmm.. what am I up to..." He slowly removed his mask.

"Uncle.. I mean Mister... Ah... your face.... It's bleeding..." I was shaking as I saw his scratchy face with blood stains on his forehead and his left cheek.

"Calm down dear. I was born with this mark and scratch on my face. But the blood stains though.... It was an accidental doing." He pats me on the head.

"I see. I'm sorry. Maybe it's time for me to go back!" I stuttered a bit.

"Of course, boy. It's getting late... But remember... You didn't see me at all tonight,

okay? You are too precious," he muttered while patting my right shoulder.

I cycled back home that night with mixed feelings. I began to wonder about his identity and his presence in the supposedly haunted Villa Nabila.

Almost a month later, the townspeople received news of a heinous crime that had happened in the nearby area. It involved a murder of a thriving business woman as the cops found a chopped up body in the river that connected Taman Gemilang and Taman Sejati. After a thorough post-mortem on the body, the police claimed that she had been raped before the body was cut in three parts. Her head, arms and a few ligaments of her right calf were found in a separate location along the river.

That was the turning point of my life. The incident that had happened almost 10 years ago. I remember his scratchy face clearly up till today. And I never wanted to disclose it to anybody else, including my doctors here. The only thing that is certain is I have been here since I was 12.



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