

REQUIRED ENTRY FORM

A completed entry form must accompany each entry (photocopies OK)

Please print clearly

NAME: SAURA CHARLU

STUDENT (OR PARENT) EMAIL: arpicharu@gmail.com
(Winners are notified by email.)

TEACHER NAME: STEPHANIE HOLDRIDGE

TEACHER EMAIL: sholdridge@thepegasuschool.org
(We like to share the list of winners with our teachers 😊)

SCHOOL: THE PEGASUS SCHOOL GRADE: _____

TITLE OF WORK: FREEDOM

Freedom

I cluck my tongue in disgust at a 6th grade student playing video games in my class. I have made my point clear that I loath video games. They mutilate your brain, and are just plain boorish during school. The boy looks up with his unruly cinnamon hair escaping his sideways cap and his mismatched oversized clothing determined to drape his stick-figure body. His olive colored eyes peeking through droopy and baggy lids stare intently into mine silently shouting, *All you do is order us around all day, we don't have a say in anything anymore!* I take a step back and glimpse at my classroom, witnessing a sea of robots working mindlessly and simultaneously, following my directive commands. I always believed in order and structure in the classroom as the *Boop boop* sounded! Again! "I told you to put that device away!" Livid at that point.

"Fine! You just don't understand!" mutters the boy.

Suddenly, the world becomes glitchy and I am falling, falling, falling through a portal? Finally, I plummet onto a soft patch of grass and suspiciously peer around. Everything looks real except in the form of pixelations. My whole body jolts and suddenly I am jumping from mushroom to mushroom against my will. Looking up, I see the edge of thumbs popping in and out and can hear a *beep boop, boop, beep*. I glance up and abruptly see the same intent olive eyes staring at me. I pinch myself, am I dreaming? But I see the same olive eyes of that boy. It all comes to me: the eyes, the boy, the glitchy world, the video game noises, and me moving against my will. I am in a video game with that same boy controlling me! Drawn back to my digital reality, I was in a video game! "Help Help," I call to the clear sky above me. Nobody responding, I am trapped. Despite my efforts to run and escape, instead I am forced to jump from mushroom to mushroom, flying over mountains, again controlled by the boy. The boy made a wrong move and suddenly I was plunging into a deep pit. The world turned black. It gave me some time to compile my thoughts. This is a dystopia. The student is controlling me instead of me controlling the student. The reality has reversed. I must figure out a way to break free.

"Hey hey you up there, boy player" I called, desperate for him to respond back.

"I got you in just the right spot," said a booming voice coming from up above that she recognized as the boy.

"What do you mean, I'm not your toy to play with, I'm your teacher," I called back in fury.

"I deserve more respect." I recourse

"You thought you could escape, huh?" the booming voice once again filled her ears.

"I need to get out of here!" I add for recourse.

"I got you!" He huffahs in a haughty voice.

"Can you even hear me?" Hopelessness spills out.

“Oh yeah!! I get 5 extra bonus points,” the boy arrogantly exclaims.

Embarrassed that I actually thought I could communicate from video game character to player, I question, *What was I thinking expecting for an unrealistic miracle in an unrealistic world!*

The charcoal blackness around me turns to a beach scene with a clear ocean. I crave going to the ocean and wish with all my might to be relaxing and liberated in its vastness. Promptly, I feel his dominance of me slipping away. Motivated by the slight taste of freedom, I urge my brain to think harder and stronger, but my brain is parched from my last attempt. Soon he leads me over to a car and drives me around the beach, racing a few other cars. While he steers me and the car around, I realize the force of confinement suppressed passion, motivation and inspiration. As I tackle the authoritative fullback, I muster my brain muscle and force my hands off the wheel. We lose the race and the world around me turns pitch black again, only to endlessly reappear in a swampy forest. I soon figure out that this is a survival game involving stealth, rations, and vicious animals. Soon, the boy finds a well and that is a rare value in this game. He guides me there. Yearning to return to my students to guide and nurture them, I use all my brain vigor to break free from his control. Feeling in a daze, I open my eyes to appreciate the return to my warm and comforting classroom. The color of my students' eyes shined brighter than ever as I recognize that inspiration comes from freedom and ingenuity and my role became clear.