**1. Boy**

Spurred on by our shouts and taunts, the ancient sister began to increase the speed. The engine roared and the body vibrated. The driver was clutching the steering wheel like the hair of a drowning man, and we all watched the speedometer needle creeping up to twenty, then twenty-five, then thirty. We were probably doing about thirty-five miles an hour when we came suddenly to a sharpish bend in the road. The ancient sister, never having been faced with a situation like this before, shouted ‘Help!’ and slammed on the brakes and swung the wheel wildly round. The rear wheels locked and went into a fierce skid, and then, with a marvellous crunch of mudguards and metal, we went crashing into the hedge. The front passengers all shot through the front windscreen and the back passengers all shot through the back windscreen. Glass (there was no Triplex then) flew in all directions and so did we. My brother and one sister landed on the bonnet of the car, someone else was catapulted out on to the road and at least one small sister landed in the middle of the hawthorn hedge. But miraculously nobody was hurt very much except me. My nose had been cut almost clean off my face as I went through the rear windscreen and now it was hanging on only by a single small thread of skin. My mother disentangled herself from the scrimmage and grabbed a handkerchief from her purse. She clapped the dangling nose back into place fast and held it there.

(From Boy by Roald Dahl)

**2. History of China**

China, one of the countries that can boast of an ancient civilization, has a long and mysterious history – almost 5,000 years of it! Like most other great civilizations of the world, China can trace her culture back to a blend of small original tribes which have expanded till they became the great country we have today.

It is recorded that Yuanmou man is the oldest hominoid in China and the oldest dynasty is Xia Dynasty. From the long history of China, there emerge many eminent people that have contributed a lot to the development of the whole country and to the enrichment of her history. Among them, there are emperors like Li Shimin (Emperor Taizong of the Tang), philosophers like Confucius, great patriotic poets like Qu Yuan and so on.

Chinese society has progressed through five major stages – Primitive Society, Slave Society, Feudal Society, Semi-Feudal and Semi-Colonial Society, and the Socialist Society. The rise and fall of the great dynasties forms a thread that runs through Chinese history, almost from the beginning. Since the founding of The People’s Republic of China on October 1st 1949, China has become a socialist society and become stronger and stronger.

**3. The Vile Village**

At the count of ‘minga!’ which of course meant something along the lines of ‘three!’ the children raced toward the wall of the Deluxe Cell and smacked their battering ram against the bricks with the mightiest THUNK! This noise was accompanied by an enormous cracking sound as the invention snapped in two. Violet staggered in one direction, and Klaus and Sunny staggered in another, as each separate half made them lose their balance, and a huge cloud of dust sprang from the point where the battering ram had hit the wall.

A huge cloud of dust is not a beautiful thing to look at. Very few painters have done portraits of huge clouds of dust or included them in their landscapes or still lifes. Film directors rarely choose huge clouds of dust to play lead roles in romantic comedies, and as far as my research has shown, a huge cloud of dust has never been placed higher than twenty-fifth in a beauty pageant. Nevertheless, as the Baudelaire orphans stumbled around the cell, dropping each half of the battering ram and listening to the sound of crows flying in circles outside, they stared at the huge cloud of dust as if it were a thing of great beauty, because this particular huge dust cloud was made of pieces of brick and mortar and other building materials that are needed to build a wall, and the Baudelaires knew that they were seeing it because Violet’s invention had worked.

(From Unfortunate Events by Lemony Snicket)