

Re-imagining statues: how should we do this?



Emperor Commodus,
Germanic Museum, Cologne



'Kindertransport',
Liverpool Street Station, London



Walter Tull memorial,
Sixfields Stadium, Northampton



The 'Women of Steel',
Sheffield



Mary Seacole,
St Thomas' Hospital, London

**Suggest
a person
from the
past who
you think
deserves a
statue.**

Historical Fiction Prizes: Summer 2020

The following extracts are taken from what our judges consider to be the winning scripts in what provided to be an exceptional strong range of entries.

The Burning Aztec Sun by Nischay Singh Sembi (Year 5)

This story relates to the early stages of the defeat of the Aztecs through the eyes of two boys: Citlali who reflected the Aztecs, and Pedro who reflected the Spanish conquerors.

....A few days they had spent, riding their black creatures. Citlali was very amused watching such weird animals. He could not imagine how they could allow men who were much smaller and undoubtedly weaker to ride them. Maybe the men were Gods or at least Gods' minions. However, he had his doubts. These men were just like any other men, except for their thunder sticks and shining hard clothing. Citlali followed the shiny men on their black creatures until all of sudden he was on top of a hill and could see for miles. Far on the horizon he could make out the Aztec city of Veracruz. The black creatures with their masters approached the town. A few hundred eagle warriors, one of the most feared warriors in Central America, stood in front of the shiny people. They charged towards them bravely and disappeared in a thousand BANGS! It was all finished in a single cloud of dust. It was a massacre: hundreds of elite warriors lost their lives. By the time the sun set, the town was part of the Spanish Empire. Much to the surprise of Citlali the men spent much time walking in groups and moving to shouted commands. These people were not Gods, Citlali was convinced. He stayed in the hills and fended for himself, whilst the men stayed at Veracruz. After a few weeks of this, 400 men marched off leaving 100 behind in the now Spanish town. Citlali followed them at a distance and as they reached Cempoala he witnessed them forge an alliance in order to avoid any bloodshed. Then off to Jalapa they went and onwards to Cofre de Perote and Xocotla. Massacres at these places made up for the lack of spilt blood at Cempoala. At Ixtacmaxtitlan, even more killings took place and every night Citlali would sit sobbing silently by his fire, horrified by the images of the day. Out of sheer curiosity and thirst for knowledge, he continued to follow the shiny men and when they reached Tlaxcala he thought that the Aztecs could finally defeat them. The army killed two horsemen who up until now seemed to be immortal. The Tlaxcalans launched many successful attacks on the Spanish camp, but the Spanish night attacks with their cavalry were proving much more effective. After many a day of fighting, Tlaxcala finally surrendered and formed an alliance.

Pedro was lucky as Alfonso couldn't go around picking on him with the general who was in charge of their camp, Cristobal de Olid, watching closely. Pedro didn't take too much notice of the fighting. All he knew was that the Spanish were winning. The Spanish army grew bigger and bigger, especially when they allied with Tlaxcala. At Tlaxcala he went for a few night raids and nearly shot a mother of 3 young children. He was not very proud of himself afterwards but he could see Alfonso bragging as to how he had killed entire families. But for Pedro nothing much happened in this time from April to August in the year 1519. He had grown increasingly contemptuous of these people who were meekly cowering in front of the small band of conquistadors and not even trying to fight back.

The Independence Diary by Zoya Subramanian

This story was written as a diary from the perspective of Gandhi's grandchild to provide an insight into their feelings and experiences during the period when India was challenging the British Empire's domination. The extract relates to the issues surrounding the Salt March in January 1930.

I CAN'T believe it! The soldiers literally rationed our salt! The salt that comes from OUR sea!! They don't have the right to do that! Everyone was so upset. Even Mama, who doesn't get involved in this independence fight, was LIVID. So me and Nanaji arranged for things like talks, fundraisers to get salt for our citizens and a big walk to Dandi to collect our own salt. The walk is not so much to get salt, but to show the Britishers what we can do.

And to add to the fuss, a close family friend of ours, Amit Mehta, was shot last night. His funeral is next week. He was a close friend of my Papa's, so he is devastated! And so am I. He was a really funny man, and I will miss him a lot. So here is a message to him:

Namaste Amit uncle!

I am so sorry that you passed. You will be dearly missed. And I promise, I will get revenge for you! Yours truly, Tara.

I am actually really excited for this salt march! Me and Nanaji have been quietly spreading the word to our friends (who are not in league with the British anyway) and they spread the word to their friends too. So far around 25,000 people are coming for it! And since the walk is going to be for 2 weeks, I pestered the chaat vendor to give us a ton of vada pav!

I am so excited for India to get its independence! Because ever since I was born, the Britishers have been telling me what to do. But when they leave, no - one (except my parents) will be able to boss me around anymore!!

Anyway, my parents made me meet another boy today. His name is Prasad Bhattacharya. To be honest, he was okay! I talked him into it and he said he would be coming to the Dandi Satyagraha - salt march. And he loved to read, just like me!

.. Oh no. Do I like him?! No. No. No. But who cares. I have to focus on my country now.

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