My Screen Time is a Raging Monster in Me

3rd Place, by Mika Lumbera

It dresses in red, the colour of both intense hatred and desperate love, which somehow we feel both towards this beast. You and I share the same unconditional attachment to it. Like a virus, it is always present, silent and patient, waiting to consume the mind of its next host. It spreads without force, accumulating control until we no longer notice its grip. Though it depicts vivid shades of red, it is usually invisible. It cannot survive alone; it needs a host.

Our world continues to suffer as though struck by a modern plague. Born only recently, this creature has embedded itself into nearly every aspect of our existence. Hatred feels like a harsh word to describe it, but perhaps it is the only honest one. We adore the brief surges of dopamine it rewards us with, making it feel less like a parasite and more like a necessary companion. In reality, it behaves like a drug. During moments of distress, loneliness and procrastination, we crave it. The withdrawals leave us restless. Prolonged exposure clouds our concentration, strains our eyes, and fills our minds with endless noise. Its presence offers temporary happiness before abandoning us in a landscape of broken promises.

Its first initial is “D.” We are unsure why. Its surname is “Evice.”

When we meet D. Evice, it introduces us to a world that seems perfect, a place where everything looks effortless and attainable. It controls us, leading us through polished illusions until we become entirely dependent. It does far more harm than good, yet we continue to tolerate it, as many struggle to imagine life without its presence.

Unlike us, D. Evice has no sleep-wake cycle and operates without a circadian rhythm. As humans, we possess an extraordinary ability to adapt, but this time our greatest strength has become our weakness. We slowly mirror its sleepless existence, sacrificing our own wellbeing. It exhausts us, weakens us, and erodes our potential. D. Evice never hunts for physical food; it has no natural predators. Instead, it survives by feeding on our attention, our sanity, and our time.

This beast is not alone. It has siblings: R. Eels and F. Yp. Though they do not share the same surname, a rarity within their species, they function as an inseparable trio. Together they dance, lure and consume, sharing one common goal: to possess the human mind.

One of their greatest hunting strategies is hypnosis through colour and motion. Endless streams of vibrant videos flood our vision, designed to keep us watching. The algorithms learn what excites us, what comforts us, and what keeps us scrolling. Each swipe delivers small sparks to our brain’s reward system until satisfaction becomes addiction.

We can live alongside D. Evice without allowing it to rule us. The answer is not complete rejection, but conscious control. By seeking real conversations, discovering meaningful hobbies, and creating instead of consuming, we weaken its hold over us, ending its hypnosis and reclaiming our futures.