A collection of short stories from Year 6 Students attending the Writer’s Workshop 2015 Jacobs Well Environmental Education Centre

An Imaginative Journey
Young minds unbridled
Foreword

Anita Bell has written both fiction and non-fiction books for adults and children and has won a number of awards for her endeavours. For several years she has held workshops at Jacobs Well Environmental Education Centre to share her knowledge with year six students from the centre’s cluster schools. During the workshops she holds students spell-bound for three intensive days.

Over that time the students write their masterpieces under Anita’s guidance and direction. Their imagination knows no bounds and for them, trying to encapsulate their expansive ideas in text can sometimes be a challenging task. However, by the end of the workshop they have a basic storyline which they then take home to finesse.

This publication highlights some of the talent that can be found in our local schools and aims to encourage these young writers by providing the stimulus to write creatively.

Please enjoy.

Steve Rowell
Principal
Jacobs Well Environmental Education Centre
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American Hero
Brody Lowe

Terrance stared in shock and disbelief at his television.

“A disturbing, new villain that goes by the name of ‘Cyboric’ has managed to construct a colossal killing machine that he claims will destroy humanity,” read the news reporter.

Terrance was a very wealthy American man, who although rich, always seemed to feel despondent. He appreciated the gift of his inheritance, but people always seemed to misjudge him because of it. Nearing the age of 88, he didn’t want to die the way society viewed him. He wanted to be remembered as a hero.

Snapping back to reality, Terrance realised this was his opportunity to permanently change the way people thought of him. If he could take down Cyboric, maybe everyone would finally think of him as a worthy, courageous citizen.

The ground below started to tremble, and he inferred that Cyboric must be approaching closer by the minute. As Terrance gazed out of the window, he heard the terrified screams of the townsfolk. He noticed the skyscrapers and other structures were now left in ruins, scattered in piles across the streets like strange skeletal remains.

Terrance flew backwards, from a force that was a goliath, metallic fist. It had punched through the dense, stonewall of his prized mansion.

“I demand to have all of your finest possessions!” Boomed the robot’s deep, threatening voice.

Without hesitation, Terrance started dispensing his bags full of notes, coins and precious gems. As the cyborg stormed off into the distance, Terrance was able to catch a glimpse of the man behind the machine’s controls. Terrance thought of reporting this information to the police, but he knew that wouldn’t be heroic enough. He was going to destroy the robot personally. This was his destiny!

Terrance bolted towards the deadly piece of machinery. Stumbling on the cold metal ladders that his feet managed to find, he finally reached the robot’s highly-polished, steel shoulder. Terrance glanced up to see the controller of the lethal machine. He crawled inside the hatch on the head of the robot, meeting face to face with Cyboric at last. He had flowing blond hair and menacing red-rimmed eyes.
Terrance started to take deadly punches. In a state of severe pain, he swerved around Cyboric and rapidly started pressing keys to shut down the robot, but he wasn’t fast enough. Terrance received a mighty kick to the chest. Seriously injured, he shrieked in pain. Only one more button was required to shut down the life-threatening robot for good, but it would cost him the ultimate price. His life.

Wanting his dream to become a reality, he leaped towards the keypad and frantically pushed the final key, as his life flashed before his very eyes. His eyelids slowly began to flutter before closing for the very last time.

* * * *

As dusk arrived, the police recovered the corpses of the two dead men. Even though he was dead, at least Terrance would be satisfied with his new title: Terrance Quarz, an American Hero.
**Bank Brawl**
Boen Chesteron

Zap! Zoom! I struck down enemies one after another. Just before the relief of victory could flow through me, a juggernaut soldier stood before me.

“You’re doomed!” exclaimed the beast. At that moment I knew I had lost. Game over.

“Arghh! Every time,” I complained as I lumbered to my sleeping quarters. My ears were pierced by a loud screech echoing from the kitchen.

“Zedd come on we have to go now!”

“What’s the problem?” asked the archer.

“Suspected robbery at east bank,” replied a sidekick.

The archer paced, considering the possible robbery.

“I want two lookouts surrounding the bank, someone to evacuate the building, and a constant communicator at base,” grumbled the archer.

Sidekick after sidekick filled the room grabbing countless amounts of spy material.

“Yes sir, Ready for action now! You better get suited up,” the head sidekick recommended. Before you knew it the room was empty.

****

“Hands up! I know you did it!” I demanded.

A hand plummeted onto my naked arm.

“Stop being stupid you’re not a superhero and you never will be, go play somewhere else,” mum groaned.

****

The loud noise of debating between tellers and their clients filled the room. This was cancelled out with a slam of a door and the yell of an engineer.

“Get out there’s a bomb in the building!”

I jumped to my feet alarmed by the upcoming danger. Everyone thrashed their way through the mob trying to escape.


I was yanked towards the door, my hand loosened and I was left to the sound of doors slamming.

“Help! Help!” I screamed at the outsiders. With their heads shaking in reply I knew I was on my own.
Thud! Tssssss! Smoke engulfed the room. I scrambled around trying to take cover from what was happening. As the smoke lifted strange figures danced around. Ting! Ting!

“What are you doing?”

“The point is to make sure we are not known to be here,” shouted a figure.

“Who cares, they’ve evacuated the building, just get it all.”

I sat there observing the ongoing robbery until, SMASH! A window spat itself everywhere. The light layer of smoke was almost gone and a faint archer stood before the mercenaries.

“Surrender now,” grumbled the archer.

Ignoring the words the mercenaries took a few steps forward and readied their guns.

“Now what can Robin Hood do against three guns,” laughed a mercenary. Pshhhh.. Ting! An arrow was fired through the air.

“Ahhhhh! It’s in my foot! It’s in my foot! Shoot HIM!”

The mercenaries shot their guns. The archer dodged all attempts and had time to sling an arrow straight into the shoulder of one of the enemies.

“Two down. Now you want to surrender?” grumbled the archer.

The last mercenary shot at the archer while he was fixing another arrow to his bow.

“Get out of the way,” I said in fear and jumped up, ran straight towards the archer and pushed him onto the ground.

“What are you doing in here?” he grumbled.

Before I could speak the mercenary charged at us. Ting! An arrow flew from the bow.

“Hasta la vista baby,” grumbled the archer.

He fell only a foot away. The archer had taken down all three armed men.

Maybe mum was wrong maybe it’s possible to become a superhero, I thought.

“Thank you, what is your name?”

I jumped onto my feet and replied, “Zed sir.”

“Well Zed, from the honour you have shown me, would you like to become my apprentice?”

I was astonished! He wanted me to become his apprentice! What would anyone want with a lean small boy?

“Yes I will.”
“You have a new message.” Addy didn’t need to look down to know who it was.

*I’m only twenty minutes late*, thought Addy. Her heart was pounding and her weight was pushing against her feet. Her crystal blue eyes were blinded by the morning sun and her hair had a matching red glow.

Ring! *Damn that bell is going to blow my cover*, thought Addy.

“Nice to finally see you Miss Kipem,” said Mr Stred.

“You know you have a really nice tie?” stated Addy sarcastically.

“Get to work!”

*I’m already in trouble so there is no use trying to be good*, thought Addy as she got out her notebook and began sketching a cat.

Purr. Addy felt a soft furry animal rub against her leg.

*What is that?* Panicked Addy. She moved frantically to hide the feline.

“Is that a cat I can hear?” asked Mr Stred.

“There’s no cat here!” squeaked Addy. Her boss walked off but was frequently turning to keep a close eye on Addy.

“We have to hide you so my boss doesn’t see you,” instructed Addy to the cat. The cat jumped into Addy’s purse. “Sir, you may find I’m entitled to a day off. Can I please redeem it?” Addy asked Mr Stred.

“I expect you to be on time tomorrow,” mumbled Mr Stred. Addy ran out of the store.

****

A text message appeared on Addy’s screen.

‘Nora: sorry 2 break it 2 u but we can’t be friends we’re just too different.’ Addy jumped into her car and choked back her tears.

The elevator up to Addy’s apartment seemed like it went on forever.

“Hello Addy,” said Addy’s grandmother. Addy stormed past and flung the door closed and slammed down her purse.

“Meeeeeeow!” Addy didn’t even care about the cat.

She collapsed into her chair and began to sketch out of depression.

Dark creatures and figures swirled onto the page.

“Heeeelp!”

Screams from outside filled Addy’s ears. She ripped open her curtains, a giant shadowy figure was eating up the city with every step it took.
Addy recognised this figure. Her notebook! She flipped through the pages and tore out the page without thinking. The dark destructor was still there.

*What do I do?!* panicked Addy. She ran into the kitchen, grabbed the nearest knife and stabbed the notebook repeatedly. She threw the book onto the stove; flames licked the pages until only the ashes remained.

As the roaring and screaming slowly subsided, Addy opened the curtains to find the city safe, turning she found the cat gone too.
Concrete Corridors
Britney Gwynne

Jack Ironbark is a smart enough kid, top of the class actually, although he has ADHD. He was a well behaved kid with numerous sports and academic trophies. The day he saw a soft, silver light emanating from under his floor boards, his whole life changed. He had to leave his home in Upper Coomera because of the continuous monsters attacking him and his family. He thinks it’s because of his sword, but it isn’t! Without his sword he would be shredded to bite sized pieces by the ferocious beasts that come after him.

Jack’s story started with a maze…

“No! Don’t eat me, I’d taste horrible!” I yelled in a desperate last attempt to get this monster, with its human like features, canine teeth and sparkling, evil eyes, away from me.

The monster looked like it was pondering this. Finally it decided. It lunged for my head. I don’t know how I did it, but time seemed to slow down. I shifted my gaze from the beast trying to kill me, to focus my attention on looking around the room for an exit to get me out of this terrifying situation.

There. My eyes locked on a dark rectangle, easily big enough for me, but an impossible squeeze for the monster. I dashed towards the black opening in the concrete wall, with no idea where I was, what was going on, and only my wildest guess at what else I would find. I was in a dangerous situation.

I found myself walking around, surrounded by the looming walls with light streaming in penetrating the musty, dusty air. The source of the light was drifting closer to the horizon, the longer I trudged on.

I soon realized where I was – a maze. I walked through straight corridors, constantly stumbling into dead ends. I’d heard of a trick to get out of mazes where you were supposed to put one hand on a wall and follow that wall. It may take a while, but it apparently worked. With my hand on the left wall I stumbled through the seemingly never-ending maze.

“Ouch!” I yelled as I removed my head from the very solid wall. I knew I shouldn’t have been looking down.

“Wait… what the..?”

The bright yellow door towering above me was a great contrast to the dull, grey concrete. Written on the door in solid black writing were the words
‘What gets wetter and wetter the more it dries?’

Me, being fascinated by riddles and having read quite a lot of them, I soon figured this riddle out. But where do I put the answer? I looked left and right. I even looked up. I hadn’t looked down though…

“Aha,” I murmured quietly to myself when I saw the writing book and pen. When I began to write, a crimson coloured ink, like blood, came out of the pen. “This is so easy. It’s obviously a towel.”

A shudder traced its way up the length of the door.

“Beware!”

I don’t know who said that, but it sounded like the door. Not wanting to start a conversation with the door, I moved on. A new sound could be heard over the howling of the wind through the concrete walls.

“Whoosh! Whoosh!”

It sounded like it was coming from behind me. I spun to find myself staring at suspicious looking holes in the walls I hadn’t noticed before. Nothing was happening that I could see that would make that sound, but I had my suspicions. I was beginning to turn back around when I saw it. Black and red arrows whizzed across my vision from wall to wall, from hole to hole.

But that wasn’t the bad part.

The bad part was the streaking arrows zigzagging their way towards me. At least I knew what the holes were for now. I wasn’t sure if I could outrun the constant supply of arrows and holes, but I had to try.

Bang!

“Ouch! Again? Now?”

Another towering door was blocking my escape of the very pointy looking arrows, but this door was a deep blue. By running into the door, I lost the lead I had been making on the arrows and one nicked my leg. I stifled my shriek and focused on the new riddle before me.

“What runs but has no feet and has a bed but does not sleep?”

A river, I knew it was a river. After quickly scribbling down the answer in the creepy blood coloured ink, I raced to get through the opening door and away from the arrows. I nearly fell on my face when I saw what was on the other side.

A circular room, still made of concrete, but such a change from the straight concrete corridors I’d been walking through for the past couple of hours. That’s when the door closed behind me. To make matters worse, a crack appeared in the concrete. My glowing, metal sword could defeat a lot of problems, but a giant crack snaking its way towards me? Was not one of them. I was trapped – I didn’t have a back-up plan this time.
And to top it all off, the human-like dog (or dog-like human, whatever), jumped out of the crack to land right in front of me. I seriously didn’t think I could defeat this monster with my puny sword, but I had no choice. It was either try or die.

As I ran up to the monster I slid on the floor and under the beast. I stabbed upwards into its stomach, hoping I hit something important. The monster turned, pulling the embedded sword out of my hand. The monster turned to dust.

“Huh, okay.” I ran into the corridor branching off the circular room like an artery.

I could see colours! I was in a garden! I was free! I spun around in a full circle and saw that there were gargantuan walls around the garden. And the door closed behind me. I could survive, but I’ll probably never get out. It’ll be pretty boring I guess. All I can do for fun is run into walls. Yay!
Dancing Dilemma
Tara Hollindale

Kira Danez rushed into the cold night air, her amber hair flowed behind, with a first place trophy in her hand. Her emerald eyes spotted her Mum and Dad. Kira ran over to them to give them a powerful squeeze. She heard the dancers chatter being thrown around in the wind. She knew her parents loved her dancing.

“You are the best dancer I have ever seen,” burst Kira’s Mum.

Sara Clark bubbled with extreme excitement since her best friend won nationals. Kira is now enrolled to go to the World Championships in America

“Could Sara please come home with us?” Kira pleaded with puppy eyes. “Sara has been given permission,” she went on.

“I guess so, but let’s get going,” replied Kira’s Mum.

They ran to the black polished car, stopping when their hands reached the door. Once they were inside it felt like a freezer. Kira’s mum put the air-con on and the girls relaxed. The breeze rippled through the soft strands of Kira’s hair, which gave her a sense of relief from the chaos outside.

An hour went by of non-stop talking and they reached home. The girls grabbed their duffle dance bags to take inside. Sarah and Kira sprinted at full speed towards Kira’s green themed room whilst giggling with each other. The speckled sky shone with stars, as the girls got ready for a hot shower.

“Kira I need to talk to you,” echoed her Mum’s voice through the white walls of the magnificent house.

She ran up the long hallway passing many family photos as Sara followed.

“I’m so sorry Kira, but we just can’t afford to go to America,” her Mum exclaimed. “Maybe you girls can sort something out tomorrow,” she continued.

Kira’s eyes began to well up in salty tears as her glossy lips pursed together in sorrow.

“I guess so,” Kira whimpered.

Kira walked slowly back to her room thinking what she could do to solve this problem. She sat on her comfy bed thinking deeply, when a light
 bulb flicked on in her head. The hint of the idea sent a shiver of happiness throughout her.

“**I will tell you of my idea in the morning,**” Kira happily mumbled. Sara nodded peacefully. Once the girls had a quick shower they snuggled up into the toasty bed as her mum softly said goodnight.

****

In the sunny morning, Kira and Sara woke up thrilled as ever to get started.

“We could do a garage sale, bake sale and raffle tickets,” Kira burst through her ruby red lips.

She ran through all of her great ideas to her mum, and she loved all of the suggestions. A boring hour passed of arranging the garage sale. Sara was constructing colourful posters whilst Kira was on the phone to Mitre Ten. “**They are going to donate a BBQ,**” screamed Kira cheerfully.

She jumped up and down with a gargantuan smile across her face. Just as the dusk of night came, the BBQ was at their house and Sara had been picked up. Kira walked into the dining room and plonked herself onto a seat. Vegetables and sausages sat in front of her. Kira needed to raise a lot of money because she would absolutely love to go to America.

****

As morning arrived, the summer sun glared down on Kira as she got out of bed. Her mum was outside selling goods to hysterical customers and her dad sold raffle tickets. Whilst waiting for Sara to arrive, Kira gathered the ingredients for the terrific bake sale tomorrow. Finally Sara arrived and helped sell things. Kira could see a magnificent amount of people walking and driving up the big street. She couldn't believe it.

A long, tiring, but hugely successful day went by and they made $4994.85. Once again Kira went to bed utterly exhausted after having a shower and dinner.

****

In the fresh morning, Kira, her Mum and Dad and Sara were baking cakes, cupcakes, cookies, fudge and toffee apples. The food looked delicious. Sara and Kira set up a lovely table with the mouth-watering food on top. A massive amount of people showed up leaving no food at the end of the day. Kira counted the money and they made $1276.25. Overall, the Danez family made $6271.10. Kira jumped out of her skin at the mention of that amount of money.
“Mum, can I please sleep over Sara’s house to celebrate” Kira shouted.

“Is your bag packed? Is Sara’s mum okay with it?” Her mum replied.

“Yes, YES AND YAY” screamed Kira at the tiptop of her lungs.

Sara’s mum arrived not too long after the girls gathered her stuff.

They jumped into the car. After the long drive, seeing flowers, kangaroos and dark roads they arrived at the luxurious house. The girls ran up the carpet stairs into Sara’s blue oasis room.

“Kira, the phones for you,” desperately shouted Amanda, Sara’s sister.

“Okay, I will be down in a sec,” Kira politely said back.

She walked back down the stairs with a curious look on her face. She reached for the grey phone.

“Hello,” Kira silently spoke through the phone.

“Hello, your parents are here with me at the Delsis Hospital and they are in very severe condition due to a horrific car crash,” a deep voice said.

Kira started to feel a pounding in her chest, as scary thoughts raced through her mind.

“Your Mum said they have no money to save themselves and it’s up to you,” he continued sadly.

Kira’s heart broke dramatically. Immediately she shouted down the hallway to Sara’s mum.

“Can you drive to the Delsis Hospital NOW?! Mum and Dad were in a car crash.”

“I’ve got the keys!” she stressfully screamed back.

Kira saw Sara running down the stairs, so she followed. They drove for 30 minutes until they arrived at the hospital. Kira jumped out of the car and to the reception desk.

“Tracy and Dave are my parents and I have saved this much money,” asserted Kira as she passed over the moneybag.

“Can I see them?”

The reception lady stood up and led her to room D in ICU.

“Mum, Dad!” she shouted.

Kira could not hug them but she saw a smile appear on their faces.

Kira smelt the dust and sour smells around the room as she touched the warm blankets on the end of the white bed. She smiled contentedly to herself, as she knew they were going to be okay.
An Imaginative Journey

Illustration by Tara Hollindale © 2015

Dancing Dilemma
"Do you have the basket?" Mark said as he shut the rusty ute’s boot. The newlyweds were on vacation.

“Do I have the basket? Of course I have the basket, why wouldn’t I have the basket?” Amy yelled over the sound of the birds chirping and the trees swaying.

When Mark sat down, the only thing audible was Amy singing “Cupcakes, cupcakes, cupcakes. I’m getting the cupcakes out of the car.”

“Okay, I’ll wait here!” Mark called after her. Amy walked towards the car having no clue of the unidentified stranger heading towards her husband. Nor did he realise what was about to occur. The dark masked man approached Mark silently, pulled a sharp knife out of his pocket and stabbed the blade through Mark’s head just as Amy turned around with the cupcakes. The cupcakes fell to the ground as the killer dropped his knife and ran way.

****

“I’m telling the truth, why would I kill my own husband?” Amy wept and protested.

“We have the evidence and you asked us to scan it, so we did and what we found was your thumb-print.”

Two officers walked around to the other side of the desk and arrested her.

“No, no, please, don’t take me away! Don’t accuse me for something I didn’t do. I thought you were the good guys!”

“We are Miss… and we have caught the bad guy.”

****

Ten years later…

“You are free to go Miss… whatever your name is.”

As the officers unlocked the gate, gave her back her clothes and
finally let her out, Amy piped up, “I want you to keep examining that knife until you find someone else’s fingerprint.”
“I want you to learn how to keep your mouth shut,” The officer muttered under his breath.

****
“Catwalk! Catwalk! Amy, you are on!” called the fashion designer Luigi Lingui over the sound of the other models chatting.
“Alright, I’m coming!”
As she strutted down the catwalk, she noticed a good-looking guy who stood out amongst the others in the crowded room. Later, in the wrap-up party he approached Amy and politely introduced himself.
“I’m Jon, can I get you a drink?”
“I’m Amy, and yes, that would be lovely, thanks, Jon!”

****
One hundred and seventy-two dates and one marriage later…
“I love you more than the universe!” Jon said this to Amy about three times a day.

Ring, ring. Ring, ring.
“I’ll get it!” Jon tried to compete with the volume of the ringing. He picked up the phone and answered, “Hello?”
“Can I speak to Amy Galtow please?”
“Sure hang on a second. Amy! It’s for you!”
“Hello?” Amy answered wondering why someone would call so early in the morning.
“Good morning, this is the head officer of the police force. I presume I’m speaking to Amy Galtow?”
“It could be her. What is it officer?”
“I had the knife examined repeatedly and have identified the killer of Mark Bennett.”

As she was talking, Jon went to the kitchen and pretended to cut the cake but got out his favourite knife instead.
“Who is the killer?” Amy bit her lip to hide the tension and fear inside her.
“It is…”
Amy could hear the static crackle in the telephone.
“Jon Galtow.”
She gasped and fell to the ground.
“Thank you!” Jon did his best impersonation of Amy and hung up the phone. Jon stared at Amy’s closed, hollow eyes. “What am I going to do with you? I killed two birds with one stone! What more could I ask for?”
“Yap! Yap!” Chloe’s delightful golden retriever, Buttons, barked urgently. The young woman followed to the large waste bin around the side of her apartment. The odour of the foul-smelling city caused her to shudder.

“What is it boy?” She asked as she flung open the heavy lid to the bin. The smell was atrocious. She paused to look at her watch then called out, “Braden! If you don’t get up already, you’re going to miss this match with that famous tennis player you won’t stop talking about! And why is your racquet here on the floor… and a guitar string…”

No reply. Typical Braden! The agitated girl looked down into the rectangular shaped container full of rubbish… _and was there blood?_ There was something else in there too… something big. She began to uncover the mysterious object then gasped in horror!

“Braden!”
“_But_…”
“_How_… _Guitar string_… chanted an unfamiliar voice in Chloe’s bewildered mind.

“Stay here Buttons,” she ordered as she climbed into the bin in search of clues. She felt the bags of rubbish squelch and crumple under her feet. Her short brown hair felt as greasy as ever.

_What do you do when you find your little brother’s dead body in the trash with no evidence but a guitar string?_ She thought to herself. _Cops, cops, I’ll call the cops!_ She reached into her pocket for her phone. 0-0-0. _Ughhh! No battery!_

After crawling down deeper into the bin and trying again, (without any luck), she heard the rumble of the garbage truck’s engine. She tried to get out of the bin before it reached her, but she slipped on something wet and oily. The lid slammed shut and something metallic clanged into the side of the bin. It was hoisted up and she and everything else was tipped onto the floor of the garbage truck.

Chloe struggled to her feet; she could have sworn she heard a faint yet close metallic click. Her cheeks went cold.

“Yap! Yap!”

“Oh Buttons!” she declared as she threw her arms around her loyal companion. If only her phone had battery and she could call Joel, Braden’s
friend; the one who played guitar. She was feeling much older than 24 and nothing in university had taught her what to do in an emergency like this.

The door screamed open. Chloe was blinded by light. A shadowy figure blocked most of the light. Some of it fell upon the figure’s sour face. It was Joel. Chloe’s mind raced. Something thin and wiry scraped her leg, the guitar string.

“It was you, wasn’t it?” she murmured slowly, “How could you?” He gave no response, unless of course you consider raising a shotgun to her head a response.

“Joel,” she said as though she was talking to a dog. “Put that down.” His finger flexed nearer to the trigger.

“I can’t do it,” he admitted.

“Then why did you do it to Braden?”

“He’s so good at everything, Math, English, Science, History, Art, LOTE, PE…Tennis. Definitely tennis!” He grumbled. “And all I’m good at is boring old music. But you did nothing wrong.”

“Neither did Braden!” Chloe interrupted.

“Be quiet,” he snapped still holding the shotgun firmly. “He destroyed my life. Now go!”

Chloe signaled for Buttons to follow, climbed out and thought, *Do I do the right thing, or get my revenge…*
“No, what have I done!”

Imagine real life frozen as a picture, where nothing moves and nothing talks. Everything is just still. This is the tragic event that occurred because of my powers. No, these aren’t extraordinary powers that lift buildings and leave you hero of the day because you saved someone’s life. These powers make you more hated than liked because you are perceived to put lives in danger. I wish I could be frozen then I wouldn’t feel this guilt.

Using all the strength in my body I unfroze everyone and sprinted into the sunset veering off into an alleyway. I found sticks scattered across the pavement and used these to produce friction and a fire erupted. I slouched against the cold, brick wall, listening to the fire crackle, as I drifted off to sleep.

****

The sun brightly shone in my eyes and I heard the birds chirp gracefully. The busy hustle of the streets of England became more alive. Everything seemed peaceful.

“Ouch!”

Something sharp hit the corner of my cheek. I looked left! I looked right! High School students charged at me. Rubbish was thrown at me. Names were called. Bellowing voices were in my face. I was left sitting in the alleyway, weeping hysterically. I wish I was normal like the others then none of this would’ve ever happened.

****

It all started in 2001, 2nd June, the day the world would be in danger. My abnormal powers could freeze the world except for me. My powers were discovered after accidently freezing a teacher. I was left on the cold, windy, busy streets and people treated me as if I was an alien or some sort of un-normal species. My powers are like a ticking bomb. I never knew when they would freeze the world.
My chest began to throb. Dizziness entered my head and my breathing was shallow. Something unusual was happening. My powers ignited! I was looking at everyone like a picture that didn’t move or didn’t talk. I couldn’t move, I couldn’t talk. If I am frozen, how will I unfreeze everyone? Will everyone be stationary for the rest of their lives?

to be continued……………..
Get to the Chopper
James Field

Don Rugged woke to the sound of gun chatter echoing through his shed. He moaned at the thought of another days work, while stepping out of his helicopter he called ‘Betty’. He knew something or someone was nearby as their footsteps beat the luscious blades of grass in the farm paddock. *It could be anything, considering where this sheep shed is,* Don thought.

Sitting at his desk, Don put his headphones on and stared at a phrase, bold on the wall. ‘The only easy day was yesterday.’

“The only easy day was three years ago,” He sighed.

He was interrupted by a tin noise from above him. Don hobbled outside to come face-to-face with a teenager wearing a flat cap and a thick glove picking up a baseball. They both stumbled backwards.

“What are you doing around my shed mate?”

The teenager looked at him with dazed and terrified eyes. The boy bolted into the shed and locked both doors.

Hearing frantic footsteps moving around the shed, Don pounded at the rusted doors. He finally managed to kick one of them down. The teenager looked at him fearfully, then grabbed his baseball bat and smashed Don’s headphones. They exploded in a shower of sparks igniting the top secret weapon hidden within them which then changed into a huge monster. With the kid gone and the shed engulfed in flames and chaos, Don dived into Betty. He shoved the ignition key in. The huge helicopter roared to life and its blades rip through the tin roof. The engines began to compete against a now raging monster for oxygen. Betty finally leapt into the air but was getting attacked viciously. She exploded, sending burning carbon fibre and super-heated steel everywhere. In the destruction, Don was tossed out and towards the ground.

****

He woke in the ER.

“He’s awake!” someone exclaimed.

“Where am I?” Don asked,

“All that matters is that you’re alive,” a booming voice stated.

“Well mate, I feel fine so I’m going,” Don argued.

“First, Don, you’ve been in a coma. Secondly, you’ve broken almost every bone in your body, and thirdly, you’re going to prison for spying.”
“Creak!” I open the door with one big push and step into the room to be greeted by a warm, friendly scent that navigates me to the kitchen. I drop my bag smack-bang in the middle of the dining room as I make my way up to the hot, stuffy kitchen. My mum has obviously been cooking. It smells so divine; my stomach starts to hurt as I hear a low rumble coming from it.

I walk up to my mother and surprise her by kissing her on the cheek. She turns around, startled by my presence. Her face lights up with joy as she notices me standing there as my beautiful long blonde hair whips against my dazzling, blue dress.

“I’m so proud of you, my little model,” my mother whispers as she kisses my head gently. “I have a surprise for you but no peeking until your father gets home”.

“Step-father, you mean.” I say in a slow, hushed voice. I’m startled to hear a loud, ‘SMACK!’ as the door swings back and hits the wall. I see a huge, revolting beast step into the hallway. His eyes burning into mine and booms with a loud, raspy voice.

“Where’s my star?”

“AHHH, get away from me!” I say to my step-father in an ungrateful, selfish sort of way.

He walks up to me with big outstretched arms ready for a big hug. I punch him in his big, round belly that wobbles like jelly when he walks.

It’s time to make a run for it, now! I back away and then I stumble into my cramped bedroom. I hear him crying in agony.

His cries were drowned out by angry, heavy footsteps marching up to my bedroom door.

Gee, I’m in trouble! I open the door to reveal make-up running down my cheeks. I feel my mums heat, anger and distress. I feel like the worst child ever. I see her bite her lip and clench her fists until they turned as white as clouds. I see a tear drop run down her damp cheek as she sighs. I know that she must be disappointed by me.

“EXPLAIN!!” she grumbles to me as her shoulders slump forward.

Okay, here goes! I HATE HIM, I HATE HIM, I HATE HIM!” I say continually until I was sure my mother got my meaning.
She decides that I should have a break and leave him alone. I nodded, just to cheer her up. She walks out of my room with her arms crossed like tied knots.

“I know what to do, if I can’t get rid of him I’m leaving!” speaking out loud to myself.

I start pacing back and forth in my room until I come up with a plan. An epiphany flashes inside my head. I quickly start to pack my bag with the things I need when I come across a sheet of newspaper I once used for a school project. It says a prisoner is on the loose after breaking out of prison. And guess who’s face is the on the cover, my step-father.

I shove the sheet of newspaper into the front pocket of my bag. I rush over to the other side of my room and enter the numbers into my food safe. I stash piles and piles of food into the back pocket of my bag. I open my bedroom door and start for the stairs.

As I start to walk down the stairs I see beaming light rays coming from the TV. I see my favourite dinner sitting on top of the dining table. It’s a surprise. My step-father and mother are waiting, waiting for me. The roast dinner is sitting right in front of them. It is so tempting just to take a nibble. I take the risk of putting down my bag and coming face to face with the horrible step-beast.

As I’m reassuring myself, I’m wondering if this is a bad thing to do. For mum, I sit down in front of them and I feel comforted by my mother’s appearance. I know she’s mad but it doesn’t mean I’m turning back now. I’m not making that mistake again.

I finish my dinner without speaking a word. The big, chunky, whale of a man stares me cold in the eyes as I jump out of my chair and head to the stairs to pick up my bag.

“Where are you going young lady?” calls mum as she starts collecting the dinner plates of the table.

“I’m going to stay at my friend’s house tonight”. I replied back softly. I open the door and then slam it shut with a loud “BANG!!”

I feel like I have been walking for hours. My head aches, my legs are numb, and my hair is as messy as a gorilla’s back. I’ve walked about 5 blocks or so but I wasn’t going anywhere. Not to my friend’s house but to a payphone. I know exactly who to call, mum. The cold, chilly air brushes up against my face as it brings a shiver down my spine. I find fifty cents in my pocket and I insert it into the payphone. I dial the numbers carefully, so that I don’t call the wrong number. I gently place the phone up to my cold ear. Mum has picked up and as she did she let out a long whoosh of air in relief.
“Finally you called”, she urged with all of her breath.
“I know, I know” I start to answer calmly, keeping as far away from me panicking. “Hey, but listen up, I’ve noticed a lot of strange things about my step-father, he is not normal. He tries to stay calm and polite so he won’t blow his cover. He is very suspicious and he is going to hurt you!”
But without another word I hear the phone hang up. Is it mum or someone else?
“Hello? Mum? Are you there?” I say in a slow hushed voice because of the cold.
“Yes, I’m here darling”. My mother replies back.
“Then who could possibly be on the phone and hang up while you are still on the phone.”
“It’s your step-dad, he heard to the whole conversation”.
I immediately drop the phone and sprint as fast as a cheetah back home. The eerie sounds of animals scampers around the bushes. I run to my neighbour’s house first and make a noisy racket on their front door until they finally answer. They come outside wearing only a dressing gown and slippers. I tell them a brief summary of what happened and they need to call 000 right away. They did what they were told and the police were on their way. I run to our house and burst the door open with the strength of an elephant. I hear mumbles and voices coming from the dusty living room. I run in. I see mum tied to a chair with the old musty rope my actual dad used to use. It brings back so many memories. I rapidly run to mum as fast as lightning to help her, when it all when black.
The lights were off and only a single light burst out from the ceiling. I see a tall round figure towering over the ground below casting a giant black shadow in the middle of the light source. He raises a gun to my teary face.
“Hands up, its show time!” My so called step-father booms.
I knew it was him; I start to whisper back, “I was right, you are the escaped prisoner. Well I have a surprise for you and its right behind you.”
He turns and to his surprise it was the police, his eyes wide with aggression. Hot steam shooting from his ears as two police officers stormed into the house and tackled him to the ground. There were screams coming from everywhere, some from the police yelling orders, some from the prisoner himself knowing he was caught. Within minutes he was hand-cuffed and shoved to the ground.
The police officer speaks up with a deep toned voice, “Gotcha! You’re surrounded!”
Hanging onto the Truth
Satya Jackson

“Make sure you catch the bus Selena!” Mum yells then struts out the front door. We are staying in my great grandmother’s old house. I like to explore new places, but I’ve not been up to the attic as of yet. Forget school, I think to myself, I’m going to have another day to explore this mansion.

Creak! Creak. Bump! Ouch!
A big white cardboard box crashed to the creaky floor boards and stubbed my toe. Inside I find a blue journal with the name ‘Sasha’ embossed in gold letters on the cover. I run to my room and start reading.

****


“Jake I’m not going to the park! I don’t have time for your nonsense, I have to go train. Bye!”

Once I got to the S.P.Y centre, Yuli is already there doing speed chin ups. I dump my sports bag in my new locker and join her on the cold, silver metal bar. After a hard hour of training, I pack up and head to Barney.

“Hey Barney any missions for me?”

“Ahh, no, I’ve got nothing for you, sorry.”

“Come on! You always have something for me, I’m bored! Nobody has pointed a gun at me or wanted me dead since last week!” I look at Barney pleadingly. After a long pause, he hangs his head then sighs.

“Fine. There has been a kidnapping earlier on Maddox Road in the desert, far north. Work with Yuli on this, you’ll need help.”

“Great, I’ll be on it”. I smile broadly. I call Jake but he doesn’t answer. He is probably playing on the street. Anyway I leave him a detailed message on when I’ll be back.

“Hey Yuli, do you have an image of the victim?” I yell over the noise of the helicopter. I see my teammate’s jaw tighten, after a moment of silence she hands me a white envelope and then stares at the floor. I rip it open and pull out the image. I stare. I can’t believe it.

“Yuli, there has to be some kind of mistake”.

We fly in complete silence the rest of the way, but soon we land in the middle of nowhere. I quickly help Yuli set up the tent then I locate signs of life. I find one life form north of the satellite displays. Excitedly I run to Yuli and tell her the good news.
“I reckon we should attack at midnight.” Says Yuli yawning.
“Fine, you can sleep and I'll wake you up when its time.”

As soon the second hand strikes the twelve I immediately wake up Yuli.

“I'm coming I'm coming.” grumbles Yuli.

When we get to the wooden shack it’s near morning. There are a few birds cursing in the beautiful sunrise. In the distance I see a blur of red and skin colour, my curiosity gets the best of me.

“Yuli,” I say not taking my eyes off the object. She looks in my direction.

When we get to the tree I stare. I get a huge lump in my dry throat. I try to swallow it down but it’s no use. I wipe my eyes quickly hoping Yuli didn't notice my face, drenched in tears. I take out the image of the victim Yuli gave me and hold it up next to the figure of lifeless Jake in the tree. I feel my heart break slowly.

I try to look away but I'm frozen. Looking at Jake with the rope tied around his neck, black and red blood showering the tree and staining his poor face and soaking his shirt and shorts.

All the sadness vanished, replaced by anger and I'm hungry for revenge.

“Come on” I say, my eyes narrowed, in a deep voice as we head for the abandoned wooden shack.

We quietly walk down the stone steps that lead to a small underground brick house, with a small fridge, table, a pantry and an old worn bed.

Bam! Click! The door slams shut and locks without warning. And out steps… my step dad?

“Rex” I stutter “What are you doing here? What happened to Jake?”

“Revenge” Rex says in a different, yet slightly familiar voice. He pulls the back of his head and his entire face falls to the floor!

“Cortex!” I scream in disbelief. “You killed Jake!”

“My parents gave their life to settle the deal we had.” I whisper, now flooded with tears of sadness and anger. “They died so your race could live for ever in peace on Earth. You betrayed them, you betrayed everyone!”

I yell clenching my fists in anger and disgust. Yuli stops me from saying more.

“Cortex, what was wrong with the deal your ogre species made with us humans?” Cortex grins, showing thousands of vivid sharp teeth and he expels out air.
I sit in the tree house that Jake and I built together when we were a family. I wish for the thousandth time I’d paid more attention to Jake and not thought I’d be with him later. There was no more time. Wait. I scramble out of the treehouse and walk to Yuli’s house and slowly tell her the reason Cortex wanted revenge.

“That’s crazy” says Yuli.

“Exactly” I say.

The orange sunset isn’t helping Yuli and I find the wooden shack in this solitary waste land. After an hour and a half of walking and flying in the helicopter it’s 8:00pm and we are standing at the door of the wooden shack. I’m having scary thoughts that Cortex would rather finish the job and kill the last person in my family. Namely, me!

I take a deep breath and then nod at Yuli. She kicks the door down and we walk in. Cortex is standing in his living room and frowning

“What do you want?” He growls getting ready to fight back.

“We want you to meet another ogre, her name is Veslina. She’s at S.P.Y centre let’s go”.

“You humans killed all of the ogres except me! You’re tricking me!” growls Cortex.

“No, we had to keep her locked away and hidden. It was for human’s security, but now we know why you did what you did” Says Yuli softly.

“Fine, but if this is a trick you…” grumbles Cortex pointing at me “Shall die!”

Once we get to S.P.Y centre I get Yuli and my ID cards and pass all the security systems to get to Veslina in her cell chained up. When I unlock the cell she immediately opens her narrowed eyes. Once she sees Cortex her body loosens and her eyes soften, so does Cortex, and for the first time he is actually smiling! Yuli helps me unchain her, Cortex standing next to her grabs her hand looks in her blue eyes and expels into the air with her.

“My great grandmother was a spy!?” I say in amazement.

I hear noises downstairs. “Selena, keep the noise down please!” Mum yells.
Kick it Off
Angel Kirikava

Bang! I walk into a ladder.
"Ouch!" Holding my hand on my forehead, I look back seeing the dark shadows of the ladder behind me.

I continue to walk home after this incident and finally approach my front door. As I reach down into my pockets, I realise my keys aren't there, but I continue to rummage through. There is no sign of them. I start to climb up to my bedroom window. I climb into my room and fall flat onto my bed falling asleep immediately.

Ring! Ring! Ring! My alarm rings loudly. I sit up rubbing my eyes as I see this black object rush past the end of my bed and in a flash it was gone. I freeze with fear. In my wardrobe there stood a black cat peering out at me. I close the doors slowly and stroll away.

"What are you still doing in my house you black cat?" As I take the cat outside, SMACK! My friend Maxis heavily swings the door into my face. THUMP! I fall to the floor. I wonder to myself why is this happening to me, why me?

I finally come to, with the black cat sitting on my chest, purring at me. I continue to wonder, why me? I slowly shove the cat off me, look at the calendar realising it is Friday the 13th and my football finals are today. My friend comes, picks me up as we drive to our football game.

"Go Hugo, Go get it over the line!" shouted Maxis.
"He scores a try for his team!!" screeches the commentator over the microphone.

As I throw the ball high up in the air, my team bolts up to me. The sound of the crowd cheering for me makes me so excited. I can taste sweat trickle down my face from the heat of the sun. I thought to myself as I hear the commentator say, "Umm and the Redbacks.....WIN!".

We successfully achieved a victory even though it was Friday 13th!!
Lonely Ghost
Polly Walker

“You're so adorable!” Xavier muttered playfully as he gently stroked the tiny kitten that sat before him. As the purring grew louder, he heard a miserable cry coming from the corner of the dirty alley-way. Plopped down, beside the rancid garbage bins was what seemed to be a young girl, though Xavier sensed that the girl wasn't living. He heard the depressing cry of a spirit who was yearning to pass through to heaven.

He gave the kitten one final pat and cautiously stood up. He walked over to the girl, making sure she didn't get scared. She only looked about ten or eleven. Her long, beautiful hair cascaded over a starved, bony body.

_Such a young age to die!_ Xavier thought sympathetically. “Hey?”

Xavier spoke softly, hoping to calm the sobbing ghost.

“You can see me?” The young spirit whispered, still weeping with her head in between her knees.

“I can.” He eyed her carefully. “Why are you crying?”

“The watch... I need it.” She slowly lifted her head and looked at Xavier with pleading eyes, full of hope. “Can you get it for me? I must have it!” the young spirit cried.

Xavier tilted his head. “What watch?”

“There is a watch passed down through my family. I was thinking I'd be able to escape from this disgusting alleyway if I retrieved it. I can't go to get it because…”

Xavier cut her off. “I think you're in limbo. You need your special item to pass on.”

She nodded, surprised he knew what she needed.

“It's at the park on the other side of the city, the big one. The watch, from what I believe should be buried under the giant oak tree. You'll spot it when you get there.” She explained.

“Got it!” Xavier chuckled.

Once Xavier reached the big park, after getting lost half-way, he knew all he had to do was find the big oak tree the girl had mentioned.

“Where is it? Huh?” After scanning the park, there was no oak tree at all. “Was she talking about the correct park?” he thought to himself, becoming quite stressed.

“Do you seek the watch Lucy needs?” a cool, soothing voice echoed behind him. A shiver traced its way down his spine.
It feels like a spirit, Xavier thought, curious about the voice. Just as he was going to turn around to ask who she was, he felt something cold on his shoulder. He picked it up only to see the golden pocket watch.

“A watch? Why did you give this to …?.” Xavier began, but the presence of the spirit had already vanished.

“Lucy!? Watch!.. Ahhh!” The sudden thought struck him. He ran from the park. “It's her watch!” This was only a guess, but his gut told him he was right.

When he reached the alleyway, he saw the girl, sitting in the same spot.

“Hey, you're Lucy, right?” he asked the girl.
She nodded, slowly.

“This must be yours, then.” He handed the watch to Lucy. After she took it, a bright light appeared all around her and before he could say “Good luck!” she vanished.

As Xavier turned around to walk away, a fluffy tail brushed against his leg. It was the tiny kitten meowing as if to say, “Cheer up!”
**Melinda’s Luck**  
Mikayla Tully

*Wow! What was that.* Melinda awoke as sweat dripped down her face. She was startled as all four windows were open and the fan was on. She could hear worried voices outside the house, they sounded like her parents. She started to walk down the stairs to realise the full moon was still shining bright. Melinda looked further out to witness the devastation outside. The bush, home to lots of Australia’s native animals was consumed by tall, blazing flames. Melinda hurried out into the warm, thick smoke.

When she stepped outside, her mum told her to go back to bed because it looked like they were going to have a gargantuan day tomorrow. She agreed and started to wobble back inside. Mum had given her permission to help in her vet centre tomorrow, which was set up in the shed. She raced up the carpet stairs into her room, hoping the animals would be okay in the uncontrollable fire. She tried to go to sleep but it was extremely hard when all she could smell was sickening, heavy smoke.

Melinda was nearly asleep when she heard a noisy crowd outside the shed. Her unfocused eyes could just spot the cute little animals. She jumped up in a flash, dressed and was out the door with her vet kit. Her mum started to take the animals to put them in cages. Melinda inquisitively asked what she could do to help. Her mum gave her a hand full to do, such as get water and food bowls ready and make sure there are clean towels on the bottom of the cages. Her mum told her to choose one job however she secretly decided to do all of them.

Melinda asked her mum if she could bottle feed the babies as it was something she would have to do in the future. Melinda found herself in the kitchen with fourteen bottles of mixed formula. The koala was the first to be fed; it needed two bottles as it was the smallest and youngest animal. The koala had a burnt hand and nose and she appeared extremely shy. Her fur was soft and fluffy. All the other animals were playful and just needed a home whilst the trees grew back. Melinda’s mum told her not to get carried away with the animals but she couldn’t help it, the koala looked so much like a ‘Lucky’.

Over the couple of weeks that she had spent with her she fell in love with Lucky, though knowing she was nearly ready to go back into the wild. Before the fire, Melinda always walked around with a frown on her face, especially since her two rabbits had passed away. But since Lucky arrived,
Melinda always had a huge smile on her face. Her mum could see it too. She was hoping she could keep Lucky as a pet but she had her doubts.

The day arrived to free Lucky. Tears welled up in her eyes when it was time to say her final good bye.

Her mum knocked on the door and said, “I have a surprise for you.” She walked out the door curiously with Lucky holding onto her arm. When they arrived at the place that looked like an animal homing centre for wild animals. She slowly handed Lucky to the man who was going to let her free.

He said “As Lucky had been burnt it is unlikely that she would want to go back to where she first lived. We’re going to keep her here in a wild environment enclosure. It means you will get to see Lucky whenever you like.”

Melinda was relieved and gave her mum a big hug as she thought I will see Lucky tomorrow. Tears rolled down her face as she gave Lucky a hug and hopped into the car.
“Alright class…” Mrs Bore-Dom began to ramble on about our silly assessment. I wasn’t paying any attention. I never do! Villain School is complete nonsense! I’d rather be a super hero. I wasn’t the only one who didn’t care as mumbles around me filled my ears.

“Arabella!” announced the teacher. I snapped out of my daydream, but she had already forgotten about me. The sun shone in my eyes as I lay my head down. I opened my eyes, but my surroundings were different. I was in an alleyway. How do I escape?

****

How did I not realise this before? The teacher had kidnapped me of course! I attempted to run, but the alley seemed endless.

“Muhahaha!” cackled a familiar voice. Mrs Bore-Dom? I glanced up to see a tall figure on the rooftop above me. It was a middle-aged woman dressed in a tight pink suit and a bright blue mask. I started to laugh hysterically.

“What? Why are you laughing?!” Mrs Bore-Dom exclaimed. Anger started to swarm inside of her. The furious teacher stomped her foot, which seemed to cause the world’s smallest earthquake.

“Geography go!” she screamed as a map came flying at me. “Pathetic” I teased and continued to laugh.

“James! Get her!” Mrs Bore-Dome called to James, the nerdiest and soppiest kid in my class. For a 13-year-old, he looked like he was 8. The nerd rose up from the ground and started slapping me weakly.

I forced myself to grow taller and started to become stronger.

“How ya!” I screamed and everything started to slow down. I slowly placed my foot on James’s head, ready to squash him.

****

“Arabella Lurkham! Get down!” ordered Mr Big-Wallet, the principal. I quickly slipped out of my creative dream. I stood on my desk, back in Mrs Bore-Dom’s classroom, with my foot perched on James’s head. He looked like he was dying. I wasn’t tall any more, Mrs Bore-Dom wasn’t in her suit,
and we weren’t in the alleyway either. It was all in my head! Something else was different too - I had detention.

As I walked out of the classroom, I was oblivious and didn’t see Mrs Bore-Dom shoving something pink into her desk.
Murder House
Maddison Levitt

February 17th
I hear my mother's booming voice coming from down stairs.
"KAYLAAAAAH! COME HERE RIGHT NOW!"
My stomach drops. I know that tone. She knows something. I put on a pair of shoes and scramble down the stairs.
I ask timidly, "Y-yes? What's wrong?" Though I know exactly what's wrong.
She holds up my phone revealing a picture of a small tattoo.
"EXPLAIN"
"Uhhm... I – I, uh, it's." Here's the thing with my mum. She's really strict. She flipped out when I got my ears pierced, and she was there!
She lowers her tone. "Kaylah. You have 10 seconds to explain before I..." She stops. She raises her hands and starts counting on her fingers.
"Um, I was out with friends and..."
Now I am cut off with her fist in my face. I grab a chair for balance, and hold my throbbing face.
"You were with those girls, Lara and Trayana, weren't you?!"
Her brown eyes look straight through me as I crawl across the floor. Her tall slender figure towers over me. I grab my phone and sprint upstairs. She screams things at me that I'd rather not repeat.
I lock myself in my room and lower my face into my palms, and sob so loudly it sounds like I've been stabbed! Well, it sort of feels like it. I wipe my eyes, settle myself down, and pack my bag.
"I'm fine. I'm only going for a week. When I get back, everything will be fine," I whisper reassuring myself, even though in reality, I don't know where I'm going.
I grab my key and try to unlock my window, but it's stuck. It won't budge. I try kicking it and it flings open and hits the roof. 'THUD!'
I gasp. What if mum heard? What will she do? Questions and thoughts are racing through my head two hundred miles per minute.
"KAYLAH. UNLOCK THIS DOOR RIGHT NOW!"
Shhhhhhh. I hush myself, throw my bag out the window and fling myself out too. I sprint at least two kilometres from home without stopping. I
sit on the side of the road puffing and finding it hard to breathe. I was so focussed on leaving, I forgot about my asthma.

**20 minutes later**

I feel so safe - until I get a text. It's from Trayana.
"Kaylah! Please help! Your mum is outside my house with a baseball bat and shouting at me from my window!"
I struggle to breathe again. I get another text but this time, it's not from Trayana - its mum. It's a three letter word that makes my heart stop.
'RUN!!!!'

No. No. No.
Trayana and I are really close. Correction, were.
I fall to my knees. My phone buzzes yet again.
'YOUR MUM IS SCARING ME.
SHE'S GOT A KNIFE AND SHE JUST COME INSIDE MY HOUSE!'
It's Lara.
"Ugghh I am so sick of this and her! Just kill me!" I scream. My prayers were answered. There's a big hand over my mouth and I can feel a knife on my throat.
"Shhh. Don't you dare scream or I will hurt you!"
I don't dare to speak, or even move. The person ties my wrists together with ropes and puts a gag in my mouth. We get into an unfamiliar car. It's not mum, but it is a woman. She's laughing like a psychopath and it's frightening me.

**5 minutes later**

She pulls over at a bridge. Oh no. Not this way. She opens the car door and pulls me out by my hair. She pulls the gag down so I can talk.
"Name?"
"K-kaylah"
"Age?"
"16."
"Why were you out there, huh?"
I explain what happened. She laughs a sarcastic laugh and shrugs. She pulls the gag up covering my mouth again. She must be a body builder because she lifts me up like I'm a feather, and props me up on the edge of the bridge.
"It was nice talking to you, but I can see why your mother was like that. You're pathetic! And we need less people like you on this earth."

This is it. Is this how I die.

"Bye honey" she smiles, but I can tell it's put on. She pushes me. I feel so light, that is before my body collides with the water below which feels like landing on a pile of bricks.

I'm drowning. I can't breathe.

I sink like a rock. Darkness, all I see is darkness. Black, No colours but black.

**10 weeks later**

The light is unbearable and very foggy. My head is throbbing. A nurse looks over at me.

"Ah Kaylah! You're awake!"

I do a fake, forced smile.

"Not to alarm you, but you've been in a coma for 10 weeks. You're actually very lucky to be alive! These two young girls found you, washed up on the shore"

She keeps going on and I stop listening because a familiar face gets my attention. It's my aunty Katie.

"Um.. Hi. I'm here to collect Kaylah. I'm her aunty," she interrupts, shaking the woman's hand.

"Sure! I'll just prepare her to leave." She removes the tubes from within my nose, and the heartrate monitor from my finger.

We leave and go to the parking level, and get into the cramped car. She tells me she's taking me home to get my clothes because I'm staying with her.

**At home**

"Quickly, your mother's not home; go upstairs and get your stuff!"

I run upstairs and there's a foul odour in the air. I realise that the smell is coming from my room. I open my door to a terrifying scene, my friends dead on the floor. There's a note on my wall written in blood that makes my knees weak.

"You're next."

In a rush, I gather what clothes I can, and rush downstairs, fearing what horrors the future holds.
"RING RING!" Joy's mobile buzzed inside her school bag. She threw it over her shoulder and headed to the school's janitor closet. Joy wasn’t your ordinary teenager; she was an undercover spy working for a secret government agency. She was an advanced spy who had never failed a mission. Joy was a genius. She could hack into any computer system and was a black belt in karate.

Every time Joy was alerted for a mission, she was sent to the school's janitor closet where she would find a small button behind a shelf of cleaning supplies. You wouldn't be able to find the button unless you knew what you were looking for. When she clicked the button, a robotic-like voice would ask Joy for some sort of clarification to confirm her identity. Sometimes it was voice recognition, or a finger scan, but to Joy’s surprise, today it was a hair sample. Joy plucked a strand from her head and inserted it into the small, silver container.

"Welcome agent JM 17," announced the robotic voice.

Then came her favourite part; a long, plastic tube appeared below her feet and she slid down a rapid tunnel to HQ. Once she reached headquarters, a large T.V. screen sprung up in front of her, where Chief Maranzo would assign her mission.

"Joy Murphy, we have had reports on a mysterious male student lurking around the school after dark. Your mission is to find out about his mischievous plans. Understood?" Joy nodded, picked up her backpack and spy gear and headed towards the exit.

Mysterious male student, she thought to herself. She discreetly looked around, trying not to make it obvious she was looking for someone.

"BRIING BRIING!" The school bell howled through the halls. She was making her way to class when she accidentally tumbled into someone. He helped pick up the books that Joy had clumsily dropped. He was wearing a jet black hoodie and had bronze coloured hair. His emerald eyes looked straight into Joy’s.

Gotcha, she thought. Joy knew nearly everyone at Bridgewood High, and his wasn’t a familiar face.
After school Joy stayed behind to see if she could catch him again. She hid behind a trash can waiting for a surprise attack, just when he crept behind her.

“Looking for someone?” Joy got a fright.
“What are you up to?” she questioned.
“You’ll never catch me alive, there is a bomb set to explode in less than two minutes and there’s nothing you can do.” He ran at her full speed with flying fists and fighting action.

Joy was ready. She grabbed him by the wrist and flipped him down onto the hard tiled floor, knocking the criminal out cold.

“The bomb!” She remembered.

Joy tore hastily into the school searching for the deadly device. Her heart was racing, beating hysterically out of her chest. Sweat was dripping nervously from her head. She found the bomb. 10 seconds left! Her sweaty palms made it difficult to grab hold of the bomb and wiring.

Blue or red? She thought. Which one to pull? A life threatening decision was about to be made. She closed her eyes and quickly snapped the red one. 3… 2… 1… The ground shook and a wave of bursting flames invaded the area.

Illustration by Georgia Scott © 2015
“Move for cover!” called Joseph
    “Quickly! They’re coming!” panicked Liam.
A vivid scarlet light burst from the darkness of the fetid earth surface. Little did they know a dawn of a new generation sprouted just beneath their grasp. The soft breeze, which was invigorating to the skin, soon brewed into powerful gusts of wind. The ground began to shake. People trembled in fear of this strange occurrence. Bold inquisitive eyes appeared; they spoke in a majestic way telling their wistful stories.
    A cold hand stretched out pulling me closer as a dim mist shone brighter in front. I finally knew that I could trust my eyes and I was aboard an alien spacecraft, two extra-terrestrial beings stood solemn in front of me. I felt the quivering of my knees, I knew I wasn’t alone. The spacecraft came to a halt and the beings proceeded with their departure. I saw a nation of supernatural lifeforms gathered under their supreme leader. Unwelcomed and bad feelings arose, haunting me.
    “This wasn’t just an army, this was a cloned army!”
Earth glowed like a ruby in the night sky and I missed the warmth of my home. These menacing pests have taken a dozen other children to clone themselves, I have to escape. Joseph charged to the high tower, looking over the filth covered desk and retrieving the blueprints to their malignant plans.
    “They are going to invade Earth,” bellowed the ragged boy.
As the spacecraft headed for lift off, Joseph ran for the vital control room. In the darkness of the room he found an alien guard. The creature’s arm rose slowly firing its deadly weapon. Blood filled Joseph’s eyes, removing his ability to see. His blood covered hands fell, just reaching the self-destruct button. This one desperate move annihilated the entire alien empire. The final gushes of blood left his heart and he hit the floor. Joseph lay; a fallen and unknown universal hero. One life lost, a civilization saved.
    Minutes later - ‘Crack! Crack!’ a miscellaneous egg hatched on the almost devastated planet.
The guard opened the gates like any other normal garbage day. My phone vibrated on the chair and I grabbed it. The text was from Megan and it simply read, ‘Where are you?’

‘I’m at NASA I’ll talk to you later,’ I replied.

‘Don’t do it! Knowing as I do, with my job as a reporter... this could go very badly.’ Megan’s text read.

I moaned and threw the phone onto the spare seat beside me. I continued up the driveway. I looked if anyone was there, there was no one. I quickly grabbed what I needed and jumped out of the truck.

I grabbed two paper clips out of my pocket to pick the lock. Once the door was opened I ran inside and quickly sat down at the computers. I scrolled through the files, desperately trying to find what I needed.

‘Where are they?’ I muttered to myself.

I heard a man’s voice yelling, ‘Hold on! I think I forgot something’. I gathered all my stuff as fast as I could and opened the closest door. As I turned to look behind me, I saw the impossible.

A space ship.

I knew they were real, “I knew it. I knew it!” I yelled, momentarily forgetting that I was hiding.

Then a man said, “Did you hear that? I’m going to go check it out.”

“Don’t worry about it, it’s nothing,” a deeper voice murmured.

“Come on then, let’s get out of here. Our job is over.”

I peeked through the little gap in the door to see if they had left. I heard the door slam. I went to explore the space ship. I thought to myself, ‘I’ll take a picture of the ship and gather all of the documents on my USB’.

It was while I was copying the files I saw the saved, grainy pictures of aliens. I exited the building and sped down the driveway.

I sent Megan a quick message. ‘You would not believe what I have found! I found a space ship and there are aliens on earth. I told you that aliens were real. I’ll tell you more about it when I see you. But remember: we have to keep this to ourselves’.

****
The next morning, reaching for the newspaper, I was shocked by the headline: ‘There is now proof of alien life on planet earth.’ There was the picture that I had taken yesterday and the byline said ‘Megan Shrank’. My heart sank.

I dialed her number. “Hello, this is Megan speaking.”
“You told them? Why did you tell them? I thought I could trust you!”
“I’m sorry. I wanted to keep my job,” she answered.
“So your job is more important than our friendship? I get it now.”
“No, it isn’t like that,” she tried to explain.
“No, I understand perfectly.” I hung up.

My phone rang from an unknown number. “Hi this is Officer Dan, am I speaking to Crystal Blackwood?”
“Yes.”
“Could you come to the station please.” the officer stated seriously.
“Could I ask what this is regarding?”
“Because of a recent hijacking at NASA,” he replied coldly.
“Okay, I will come straight down.” I felt the blood run from my face.

They knew it was me. The police visit did not go well.

****

“Crystal Blackwood you have a visitor.”
I turned to see my former friend. “Oh, it’s you! Long time, no see, since you put me in this cage,” I spat angrily.
“I didn’t mean for this to happen. I’m so sorry Crystal,” Megan explained.
“Well here I am. But you taught me a lesson.”
“What lesson did I teach you?”
“Never trust anyone but myself,” I replied coldly.
“Please don’t be that way, I’m so sorry for what happened,” Megan whispered apologetically. “I’ve lost my job over this, and now I’ve lost my best friend.”
“You lost your job?” I questioned.
“As a reporter I have to protect my source and I did not do that. My boss reminded me; it’s reporter’s code.”
An officer appeared, “Times up. Everyone exit now”
“I’m sorry for everything,” she repeated.
“What’s done is done,” I whispered to myself as she walked out the door.
The guard came back into the cell and said, “Follow me.” While we were walking down the hall, he turned to me and said “Well missy, haven’t you made a name for yourself?”

I didn’t know what he meant, “What do you mean?” “You have become our country’s hero.” “The public want to know all about you and what you found.” I still looked at him blankly. “The T.V. station and radio shows all want to interview you. The public disagree with your jail time and want your immediate release. The Prime Minister has agreed to release you. You and your friend, the reporter, are big time stars now.”

I walk down the steps of the police station and I’m surrounded by the bright, flashing lights of television crews and microphones are shoved in my face.
Ameliah’s mother was laughing so hard because Chase was tickling her and wouldn’t let her go.

“You should have seen how big your head was when you walked in, I thought it was going to explode!” he said making her mother laugh even more. Ameliah couldn’t help but laugh too.

When he noticed tears of her laughter rolling down her cheeks, he stopped and put her down.

“Much better,” he said and walked back to the counter.

“Why are you even here, aren’t you meant to be pestering Bailey?” asked Ameliah. Bailey was one of Ameliah’s best friends and Chase’s girlfriend.

“She’s coming over for dinner, she told me to meet her here after work,” he said pulling out his phone. He texted something then put his phone away.

Ameliah’s mother kissed her forehead, then gave Chase a funny look as if to warn him about something. Ameliah just let it pass; she was too upset to ask.

She walked to the lounge room and turned the TV on and heard her mother speaking to her brother in a low voice. A few minutes later the door opened and Bailey walked in with a bag of groceries. Ameliah got up to greet her friend, but Chase beat her to it. He took her bag and led her to the kitchen. Ameliah followed.

“Hey Ame,” Bailey said giving her friend a hug. Then she went to Chase’s mother and gave her a kiss and a hug too.

“She’s still sad about it,” said Chase. Bailey gave Ameliah a sympathetic smile and rubbed her back.

“We’ll figure something out, ok?” she said.

“The trip is in a week, where am I going to get that money in that time?” she bellowed.

“Whatever, can we please not talk about it, I’m getting upset even more now,” she said shaking her head. Bailey gave Chase the same look as her mother did.

*Why do they keep doing that?* She asked herself.

“Anyway, dinner is ready everybody. Let’s eat,” said her mother.
After dinner, Ameliah’s bank rang to inform her that they could not trace the thief. They said that whoever took her money couldn’t be found. So she had no way of getting her money back.

“I’m going to bed. Thanks for dinner mum” she said picking up her plate.

The three of them glared at each other, then at Ameliah. Chase stood up to stop her. He took her arm and led her to the lounge room with her mother and best friend following.

“What is it now Chase?” she asked, getting annoyed.
He sat her down and she could see a smile forming on his face.
“We have something to tell you,” he said looking back at his mother.
“What is it?” she said looking at Bailey.
“Please don’t punch my face in,” he said, “but…”
She frowned. “Just tell me,” she said.
He took a deep breath. “This was not my idea, ok,” he said.
Bailey smirked. “Yes it was” she said.
Chase shook his head at her. “Thanks for the support” he said, making her chuckle.
“You’re welcome” she said smiling.
“What’s going on here?” questioned Ameliah.
They were making her very nervous. Chase took another big breath and looked at her.
“I took the money out of your account. It was just to play a joke on you. I came up with it but mum gave me your account password,” he said really, really fast.

“Whoa, say that again but in English please,” she said, her mother shook her head and walked away.
“I was the one who took your money. It was just a joke. Remember that time you got a car that looked exactly like mine? You smashed it with a hammer just as a joke. I told you I would get you back.” he said.
Ameliah couldn’t believe her ears.
She looked back and forth from Bailey to her brother. It took a while to process it. She started laughing, so did Bailey and Chase.
“That was a pretty good prank,” said Ameliah, then got up and walked off, leaving her family laughing very hard.
Chase gave Bailey a glare; the appearance of his white teeth grew wider, “I cannot believe she fell for that.”
Sacrifice
Liarna Pileckie

As Caesar sauntered into his new workplace, sweat slowly fell down his face. The childcare centre’s walls were old and worn, the floor just the same. Toddlers screeched and new-borns whined. Teachers raised their voices at the two young boys having a block war. One hit Titan, a loving German Sheppard trained to be a companion. Unable to hold it in, he yelped.

“GET DOWN!” screamed a booming voice, “NOW!”

A tall and skinny figure stood covering the floor with the darkness of his shadow. A gun now faced the two boys with blocks who now stood crying. Titan leaped to their side, comforting and protecting them. As Caesar crawled to bring the boys to safety, the gunman opened fire. Caught in the fire were both Caesar and Titan; sadly Caesar immediately passed. Although badly wounded inside and out, Titan stood strong.

When the police arrived the gunman was arrested. Titan was rushed to medical help but died on the emergency table from loss of blood. Caesar and Titan’s bodies were taken and buried together, like they should be.

‘The bloodstains are now gone, but the memories are still with me.’
Scarlet Eyes
Tara Van Rossmalen

People were screaming and running as they tried to flee from the streets to the emergency bunkers. As ancient Egyptian mummies terrorised the world above, mankind was forced underground and into medically induced comas. Very few people remained above ground; those that refused to leave their homes and those struggling to fit into the crowded underground sanctuaries.

Neither of these reasons applied to Katherine Rilh. The only reason she was in her house was because she was different. If she went into the bunker she knew that people would shy away, whisper and stare at her; just like every time she went out in public. There was no point. Katherine had been housebound for weeks, too afraid even to go to the supermarket. She was a freak in their eyes, a weirdo. She wasn't always this way though. She grew up a regular kid, then a regular adult. She was normal until her recent trip to Egypt. A holiday she had literally dreamed of doing for as long as she could remember. Just as she had imagined it would be, the vacation was amazing. She had explored every inch of the Step Pyramid of Djoser, and had felt more at home among the ruins of Memphis than she had ever felt here in the street of her own neighbourhood.

Ever since returning home though, Katherine had noticed some very peculiar things happening to her. The first symptom was an angry red rash on the left side on her body, which was quite painless and didn’t bother her too much. Later that week she started noticing a pattern of nightmares, all about Egyptian curses. One night she woke screaming from a dream about mummies, it was then she started to worry. The last stage was by far the most terrifying. She woke one morning to find her irises had turned a dark scarlet. Katherine had been to countless doctors but each was completely baffled by her case.

As the sun dipped below the horizon, Katherine switched on the TV to try and take her mind off the heaviness of life. “Supplies are running low and if this doesn't end within a week or so humanity may be in grave danger. Military personnel have been involved but have failed to make any significant progress saying ‘the mummies just keep coming.' We hope to see some improvement...”

As she flipped channels again, on the news channel a man interviewing a famous Egyptologist blabbering on about an ancient Egyptian curse appeared. Katherine couldn’t believe her ears, how can people believe
this garbage she wondered to herself. The whole thing was obviously a hoax, but it had scared people senseless. All of the people in her street had evacuated without actually even seeing a mummy themselves. These so-called mummies were probably just loonies wrapped in toilet paper that had decided Halloween shouldn’t end with the start of November.

She heard the creaking of a door, accompanied by a soft pattering of footsteps in the hallway and despite her own thoughts towards the recent turn of events, became instantly alert. Katherine let out a sigh of relief as her best friend Peter Hemox poked his head into the living room. He was the only person in the world who didn’t judge her, even after her icy blue eyes had transformed to their current crimson state.

“Hi Kat, how’re you?” he said plopping down on the sofa beside her.
“Love one, but can’t,” he continued “I’ve gotta run. The department wants me to investigate this case and..”

“Don’t tell me they believe this mummy rubbish too!” she groaned.

“Pete you know I love all things Egyptian, but really this has all gone too far.”

“They’ve found this expert Egyptologist who insists he can ‘explain the mystery’ behind the current phenomena.”

“Ha, well that’s certainly a reliable source,” she said sarcastically.

“He’s probably as crazy as the freaks who set up this prank.”

“Crazy or not, it’s my job to investigate, and if the lead’s false I still get paid. It just means less paperwork,” he chuckled. “But seriously,” he said, getting to his feet and heading towards the hallway. “If anything crazy happens you have my number.”

‘Whatever you say boss!” Katherine retorted with a mock salute.

“And stop worrying.” she called out as the door clicked shut.

Katherine let out a yawn; all this stuff was hurting her head. Finally she decided that all she needed was a rest and was soon fast asleep on the sofa.

Katherine woke with a jolt, the shrill cry of sirens and pounding of fists startling her awake. “MISS KATHERINE RILH! EXIT THE HOUSE IMMEDIATELY WITH YOUR HANDS ON YOUR HEAD!” boomed a voice through a megaphone. “MISS KATHERINE RILH…” It repeated.

Katherine rushed outside to see what was going on. Her worries grew as she found a line of soldiers surrounding her house, each bearing a
tremendous black gun. A small team of detectives also huddled towards the left corner, arguing fretfully.

“You Miss Katherine Rilh?” the man with the megaphone asked.

“Of course I am!” she snapped. She found him staring at her eyes.

“Sorry miss, I was expecting you to look different, your eyes are…”

“Save it,” Katherine answered sharply “But feel free to tell me what is going on here,” she spat, gesturing to the crowd around her.

“Detective Hemox can explain that one to you,” he sneered whilst motioning towards her comrade with obvious distaste.

Katherine raced over to where Peter was standing with the familiar looking and slightly dwarfish little man and her doctor; she knew her friend would be able to explain this mess.

“Um, hi Katherine,” Peter mumbled, shifting uncomfortably under her gaze.

Something’s up, Katherine thought anxiously. She had known Peter all her life and never, not once had he ever called her Katherine. She bit her lip.

“What’s going on?” She asked, hesitant to know the answer.

A long silence followed.

Peter was the first to speak, “Katherine this is Doctor M’Carney, the Egyptologist. He insisted he speak with you.” He sighed, looking strained.

M’Carney nodded slightly before explaining. “I have been studying your family for years Miss Rilh,” he stated bluntly. “And I have found out quite a disarming truth. Your ancestors were the founders of an ancient Egyptian tomb, this particular one bearing a curse. The locals warned them not to gaze upon it and conceal it immediately but they did not heed their advice. By offending the rights of the Pharaoh, whose tomb they had discovered, they released the curse. They immediately regretted the decision and then tried to conceal the tomb, but it was too late.” He paused as if waiting for someone to argue, but everyone remained silent.

“Your family fled Egypt as well as the curse, and had successfully hidden from it for years, but when you ventured back there on your recent holiday the curse found you, hence all the mummies. The only way to stop it is to sacrifice one of the bloodline and as you have no living relatives you are the only option.”

“But you said you found a cure!” Peter argued.

“It was the only way we could get you to tell us where she lived.” M’Carney admitted.

“You lying rat!” Peter cried, lunging forward.
M’Carney screamed as Peter tackled him to the ground. Five of the soldiers struggled to peel Peter off him.

“Enough!” M’Carney screamed clutching his bleeding nose, “Get the girl!”

Katherine shrieked as two strong arms heaved her into the back of a truck. The sound of Peter cursing followed her as they slammed the door shut, locking her in. She heard a loud thud and the sound of a man gasping for breath as if the wind had been knocked out of him.

“What have they done to Peter!?” She raged, bashing on the walls of the container. The truck rocked gently under the weight of added passengers then lurched forwards as the driver accelerated. She made one last attempt on the walls before finally giving in. This was just like her nightmare, but this time there was no waking up.
“Run” exclaimed Wiz to himself as he swiftly dashed his way out of trouble from the monster’s perilous jaws.

He staggered left and right, too slow for the beast’s gargantuan claws. He struggled and struggled as he neared the beast’s rancid mouth and in one humongous gulp Wiz woke up.

Wiz gave a bellowing yawn and lay slumped in his bed like a stiff doll. Wiz peered around the room looking for the thing that woke him. He noticed his mischievous baby sister, Lauren, playing with his English assignment. Wiz hopped out of bed and quickly escorted her to the living room. Whilst returning to his chamber of slumber he heard his mother give a deafening cry. Wiz pounced out of bed and ran to his mother’s aid picking up his sister on the way. As he approached closer, he smelt the essence of smoke and heard a roar of flames echoing through one ear and out the other. Wiz was eager to know what it was. One step into the kitchen and all his confidence was gone, he saw his mother trapped inside the fire’s burning flames. As Lauren cried, Wiz worked out a solution to free his mother and survive by abusing the fiery monster with water, from a tap outside the kitchen.

As the water broke an exit in the fire, Wiz leaped to action and pulled his mother out from inside the fire. He stumbled towards the doorway picking up his sister along the way. The fierce beast lurked crazily behind them, snatching at their heels and devouring everything in its path. Wiz shrieked like a little girl, stumbling as he could feel the creeping flames. He managed to exit the doorway just in the nick of time.

Wiz looked back in horror, as he watched his house die painfully from the fire. Tears rained down his mother’s cheeks as she pulled a puzzled face while trying to cheer Lauren up. The sound of sirens grew louder as the firemen approached their house, cutting the flaming beast down to size with their hydraulic hose. The smoke fogged Wiz’s sight and the smell of burning ash engulfed Wiz’s nose, causing him to cough repeatedly.

Wiz looked to the sky, full of amnesty and sorrow and realised this happened in his dream. The only difference was that this time, the monster didn’t stop and it got its snack.
“It's memories like these that'll scar your lives forever”, Wiz wept, feeling like a quote artist. Emotionally scarred, he turned to his family, with a crooked smile, trying to cheer them up. His mother smiled back and smothered Wiz and Lauren with her unconditional love.

Wiz looked to the sky with only two thoughts in his head, *Lucky we have insurance!* and *Why me?*
Shreddar: The Australian Monster
Blake Bourke

“Yum, tastes like citronella,” he hissed in the shadowy corner. What’s next on the menu? he thought to himself whilst he plucked his fangs with a bone.

He slithered over towards the tall, meaty man, wondering what limb he was going to grab first. The man looked down to see the serpent’s crystal clear eyes. The man screamed and ran, though not nearly fast enough to escape the horror of The Shreddar.

****

Bob had just ventured home from work, when he turned on the television. He listened as the news broadcaster said, “The escape of the elusive Shreddar has caused catastrophic terror around Australia. Everyone is running in fear that they might be the next on the menu for the serpent. I’m crossing over now to Clarisse who’s on location with an eyewitness.”

“Thanks Sara, I’m reporting live with an eyewitness, Shane. Shane, tell us; what did you see last night?”

“I saw a gigantic serpent slithering over to a man. The man looked down to see ruby-brown diamond shaped eyes glinting hungrily at him from the shadows. The man screamed and ran away. Unfortunately, he was not fast enough and was swallowed.”

“Crossing back now to Sara in the studio,” said Clarisse gravely.

“Thank you Clarisse, and now you know exactly what this slippery serpent is capable of. I wonder if.. AHHHH! RUN! It's Shredddarr! AHHHHHH! Stop please!”

Bob stared at the television in horror. He’s at it again thought Bob.

“I better do something about this! I'm getting sick of it and I think the whole of Australia is too. I don’t care how far I have to go, even if I have to lose a couple limbs. I need to track down this creepy carnivore, but where could he be? He could be anywhere!”

****

“Hsssssss, I smell food, where are you food, I'll find you and, hsssssss gobble you up.”

This time a tall pretty lady was the serpent’s prey. The first thing that came to Shreddar’s gruesome mind was to grab a leg and strangle the
innocent woman.

Just before he could grab her though, Bob hopped out of the dark corner yelling, “Stop! Fight me you coward; with all your might! If I win you must return to the woods and eat animals.”

“But if I win. Hsssss, I get to eat you, this lady; and continue on my mission to gobble up everyone in the world.”

The lady was shaking her head in fear, “No! No! No!” she screamed; her voice a blood-curdling howl.

“Let’s fight.” Shreddar slithers over to Bob opening his mouth as wide as he can, to swallow him whole. At the same time, Bob pulled out a knife and a grenade and ran as fast as he could at Shreddar. Without a second thought, Bob jumped inside him, pulled the grenade and blew up Shreddar.

“Welcome back to the 7pm news. He saved the world but at the price of his own death,” the reporter said solemnly, “No wait! He’s alive! He’s alive! We have called an ambulance, they are on their way.”

The reporter flashed back on the screen.

“The ambulance has taken him to the hospital and he is now in a coma. At the moment he is in a critical but stable condition. We are waiting to see the results, and to see if this brave man will survive.”
Surprise
Karishma Lashand

“Bargain! It’s the perfect size and colour,” screamed Ruby while she jumped up and down with glee.

“It’s nearly closing time,” yelled an impatient man who seemed like an explosive bomb.

Ruby leaped from one side of the room to the counter so she could pay for the marvellous treasure. Three days until she could wear her special outfit for a very special occasion. Nothing could’ve ruined her cheery mood.

“Ruby, come down and fold the washing before Benje devours it,” blabbed Ruby’s Mum.

Ruby trudged down the endless staircase. She was surprised to see Benje nowhere in sight, but then again the super crazy dog could’ve been playing peekaboo.

She raced outside at lightning speed, simultaneously shoved the clothes into a basket and started folding as if her arms had fully charged batteries. Still, Benje hadn’t greeted her. Maybe her older sister had taken him for a walk.

“Ruby, where’s Benje?” moaned Amy, Ruby’s grumpy, older sister.

“I thought you took him for a walk,” Ruby replied quite startled that Benje was nowhere to be found.

“Who’s going to tell mum?” said Amy and Ruby in unison while panic filled their faces.

“I will,” Ruby nodded, “After all, it’s my responsibility to look after Benje while Anna’s gone.”

She hoped Benje was safe and nothing bad had happened.

Ruby’s mum was enraged. Smoke shot out of her ears, but she calmed down when she remembered Amy’s and Anna’s plan. With Ruby’s birthday in a few days, Ruby’s mum still hadn’t bought her a present.

“Mum, should we let Ruby find Benje or should we wait until Anna comes back and then she’ll explain that Benje is my birthday present to her,” explained a rather un-slouchy sister. Being a slouch was part of Amy’s ‘Birthday Present Plan’. Her present to Ruby was in fact Benje, even though Ruby thought he was Anna’s dog, but surprise, Anna’s dog remained with their family in Hawaii. Benje was an unknown breed making him unique and the best birthday present EVER!
At last Ruby’s birthday was here. As the birthday girl came down the stairs, she was still in her pyjamas. Her scarlet hair was tangled into billions of knots. Ruby had forgotten it was her birthday but she was more worried about Benje. She stood on the stairs frozen while horror filled her face. Ruby knew she couldn’t have a birthday when she looked like that. She galloped up the stairs and squeezed into her crimson dress covered in sparkling sequins, applied perfume which smelt of heaven and brushed her hair into a ponytail.

For the second time she walked down the stairs. To her surprise she glanced at Benje who wagged his tail off, Anna holding a gargantuan present, her mum who shoved a fudge cake in her face and Amy laughing at her reaction. This was the best birthday Ruby had EVER had! After Anna and Amy explained that Benje was their birthday present they all had the fudgealicious cake, until they noticed Benje had vanished.
The Escape
Alexandra White

“Let me go!” I scream at him and struggle out of his grasp. I run, navigating through the endless narrow hallways. I see huge double doors at the end of the corridor. I push and push on the doors, but they won’t budge.

THUMP!
The door swings open; I keep on running, through the forest, around the trees and avoiding the cliffs. I wish that I had never run away from home, but that doesn’t matter, I just have to get away from him. John is my biological father, but I hate him. I can see the sun rising through the trees. I’m nearly there!

The warmth of the sun is comforting, I think as I stop to rest. My heart is racing, my legs are aching and my head is spinning. I see a payphone and reach into my pocket to find just enough money to call mum.

RING! RING!
“Hello?” I recognise the voice. It’s mum.
“It’s me, Alex.”
“Oh my gosh! Is it really you? Where are you? I’ve been so worried.”
“In the forest.”
“Why?”
“John kidnapped me, but it’s okay, I’ve escaped. I’ll come home as soon as I can.”
“Okay, I love you, bye.” Mum’s voice sounds regretful.
“Bye.”
CLICK!
I realise that I need a place to stay for the night. I know this town! I remember that my best friend Sarah moved here. I find her house and knock; she opens the door and invites me in. I explain everything to her and her mum invites me to stay for the night. She also gives me $150 and a 3L water bottle.

I wake up to the sound of chirping birds and bright sunlight. Stretching my arms out and yawning I think Ahhh! What a beautiful day! Too bad I can’t stay. After breakfast, Sarah and her mum drop me off at the train station. I thank them and board the train.

“Goodbye!” I wave to Sarah and her mum until we turn the corner. After endless hours I finally arrive in Brisbane. The train stops and I step out. It’s good to be home I think. Inhaling deeply I recognise the smell of an
Italian restaurant, my favourite! I run over, thankful to see a familiar sight, find a spare table and sit. I order a meal of spaghetti and meatballs to eat, feeling relieved that I’m safe from him at last. I take out the remaining money and call for a cab to take me home.

After I’m dropped off at my street I walk to my house and ring the doorbell. Mum appears at the door.

“Welcome back” mum greets me, but with a sad tone, she doesn’t invite me in.

“Is something wrong?” I feel a stab of pain.

Mum is starting to cry. “I’m sorry, he made me do it.” A large hand grabs me inside, tying me to a chair. There is a single light and I see my sister in the same position as me and dad, now mum.

A dark silhouette emerges from the shadows…

.................. ....to be continued
The Haunted Sleep
Madeleine Heaton

“Come on! We’re going to be late to my amazing performance, because of you!”

Maplez Lenpan raised a jewelry-covered arm in annoyance at Nimes Lanzd. Maplez strutted out of her hotel room, jingling like sleigh bells. She pranced out of the lobby, not waiting for Nimes to catch up. Glare from the citrus sky bounced off Maplez’s black sports car onto her gold sunglasses. She slipped in, slamming the door and screeching out of the carpark. Nimes was left chasing after the car, again.

Maplez made it to the modelling shoot. She performed her grand entrance then stormed into her studio. She shrieked complaints that her tea was too cold and that her scones didn’t have enough thick, sticky spread pasted over them.

Maplez flaunted down the cat-walk in her Mona Lisa dress, a peachy smell wafted from her. As she took her final spin, an enormous applause erupted from the hysterical crowd. Cameras blinked white flashes as her heels clicked up the runway. A single piece of paper fluttered out of her dress into the audience. A sentence was written in ebony ink. That paper could just be one of the deadliest weapons known, possibly fatal. Maplez exited the stage area just as Nimes arrived.

“Oh hi, thanks for finally turning up,” Maplez spoke a little too sweet as she trotted into the after-show party. With exhaustion and disgust, Nimes fell hard onto the cold road watching Maplez walk off. To everyone’s delight, Maplez entered.

“Hey! Does anyone want a maid named Nimes? She’s a strange doctor,” Maplez lied.

She ran out, cackling at her plan to ruin Nimes’ life. She kicked the stumbling doctor as she left. A cyclone of cash, showered out of Nimes’ pocket into Maplez’s waiting hands.

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Four weeks late at her surgery Nimes found a note on her desk. Meet me. Marson’s Creek, 11:30pm sharp! — M.L. It was from Maplez. The thought of meeting her at that time and place made ice flow through Nimes’ bones.
Maplez moved along the road at 175km per hour. She was late to a media conference. The black sports car approached the gargantuan building. A snaking crowd waited.

“I would like to thank you for coming today,” Maplez praised on live television. “And you will not be disappointed. First things first, I would like to talk about my old maid, Nimes Lanzd. What a humiliation she was to me. So strange, and when I needed money most, she didn’t share. A selfish person, she couldn’t even make a bed properly!” Maplez exclaimed.

Meanwhile Nimes was on her half hour break. She saw Maplez’s televised conference. Nimes’ body erupted into red, smoking flames. Eyes stinging, she bit her trembling lip. Maplez was jealous of her money, and clearly threatened to put an end to it at Marson’s dry creek-bed.

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The clock rang eleven times so Nimes crept out of her apartment onto the slippery road, the singing moon’s reflection shining. Nimes’ shoes squelched through water from a storm. Millions of green statues rose above her. The leftover track of a giant snake that long ago slithered through the lands, leaving a muddy path lay below. Marson’s Creek. Across a ditch, a shadowy figure loomed. The mysterious figure uncloaked itself; a streak of light reflected off the moon’s blazing beams. A powerful screech like a banshee echoed through the trees.

“You ruined my life with all your money and smarts! I am to put an end to it!” Maplez pulled out a broken mirror.

“Please Maplez; spare me, judge by the generosity of my heart, not the size of my wallet!”

“I’m sorry…” Maplez cried, clutching her hand to her heart. “I was so jealous; I wanted your smarts and money. Will you ever forgive me?”

Those five words whirled around Nimes’ head. Could she forgive her for everything? Not bearing to see her old best friend cry, Nimes gave an uneasy nod.

“I always knew you would fall for that! I understand that friendship matters. That’s what I have model friends for. I have learnt to accept them, but not you. You humiliated me, you ruined my life! I am going to put an end to that!” Maplez cackled.

She lunged at Nimes, mirror in hand. With a sickening crack, Nimes landed on the ground. She whispered her last words.
“Thanks for being there, remember I love you as a frie-.” Blackness overwhelmed Nimes.
“Sorry Nimes, I wish I could take everything back.”
Maplez lay down next to Nimes, closed her eyes clutching a shard of mirror. In an instant they were asleep together, forever.
The Kidnapper
Olivia Clark

Maria peeked around the field on a shadowy night. A band was playing on a large wooden stage and the butterflies in her stomach made her think something was off. She had been standing on the crane in the neighbour’s field for about half an hour watching the crowd below enjoying the music. No crimes so far. I guess I could go down and talk to Jacob, the thought ran through and left her mind. She climbed down and looked around the crowd. He wasn’t anywhere. She turned around and saw him trudging mournfully toward her.

“Jacob, are you all right?”

He ignored her as if she was a stranger and shoved her out of the way. Maria stared at him in disbelief as he stormed down the hill. Maria sat slumped against the crane. Why would Jacob do that? As far as she remembered Jacob had never ignored her like that before. A huge piercing scream filled the arena.

“Help! Someone help me!”

Maria bounced to her feet and dashed down to the action. There were lots of other police walking around, talking to two adults.

“Sarah!” the woman screamed. “Sarah! Sarah where are you? Come back.”

She started to run around searching the buildings for her daughter, until a man stopped her.

“Don’t worry. The police will find her,” he assured her.

Maria started to look for clues. She looked at the ground and thought, if I had stayed on that crane I might have seen it happen. Maria searched the back of the stage area, she looked up and was shocked to see Jacob. He had a huge duffel bag and it was moving about.

“Jacob, what are you doing? Stop that! What’s wrong with you Jacob? Let her go!”

He ran away taking the duffel bag with him and dropping a knife on the floor. Maria called for assistance and soon other cops were there to help.

“What happened?” a police officer demanded.

Maria did not answer. She was far from answering.

“What happened?” he said again, getting cross.

He pointed to the shiny knife that had stuck into the ground. He went over and pulled it out.
“Is the girl alive?” he asked.
Maria nodded.
“What does this kidnapper look like?” the police officer asked.
Maria paused. She did not want her best friend to go to jail, but then
she thought about what had just happened.
“He was wearing a black jacket with a hoodie shading his face,”
Maria replied.
“Which way did he go?” the officer asked.
“Straight ahead.” Maria replied.
All of the police rushed forward like crazy bulls on a rampage, in
search of the kidnapper. Maria stayed back and watched them go. She
sighed and walked back to the station with many thoughts running through
her mind.

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Later that night in bed she stared at the roof and squeezed her fists
trying not cry. It was like her stomach was knotted with emotions. Suddenly
she burst with anger and screamed, “Jacob why would you do this? Why
would you kidnap an innocent child? Why!”
Maria shoved her head into her pillow and cried herself to sleep.
Waking up early she drew the curtains to reveal a sapphire sky. It
was a good morning until she remembered the kidnapping.
“Why, why, why!” she screamed and ran outside, collapsing on the
grass.
She rolled over and heard a voice.
“Maria, where were you last night? Did you hear about the
kidnapping?” It was Jacob.
“Ahhhhh! Get away from me! Y-you kidnapper!” Maria shouted.
“What, what do you mean?” Jacob sat down beside her. “That
wasn’t me.”
“Yes it was! Give the girl back!”
“I am your best friend. I wouldn’t do that!”
“I’m not your best friend,” yelled Maria.
The words struck him like a knife.
“I won’t be your friend,” then ran off.
During the evening Maria went to Jacob’s house to investigate. She
looked through the window. He was lying in bed with tearstains down his
face. She started to doubt that it was him she had seen taking the child. She looked around and saw a hearse going by. It was heading towards the store. “In the middle of the night, that’s strange,” Maria mumbled to herself. She decided to go and check out what was going on. She hid behind a bush and saw a man wearing a black jacket move out of the car. The man’s shadow moved towards the glass doors. That’s when Maria realized he was carrying a huge squirming duffel bag.

The kidnapper.

He reached into his jacket and pulled out a toothpick. He shoved it into the corner of the door frame and the door opened slightly. The alarm did not go off. She waited until he had disappeared and then called the police.

The cars rolled to a stop in front of the building. Fifteen police officers jumped out and walked to the entrance. The shadowy figure was stuffing the duffel bag with money at the counter. Maria led the police into the store and shouted, “Hands up! You are under arrest”

He looked up and scowled, showing his dark yellow teeth. He picked up the duffel bag and ran, but not fast enough. He lay on the ground, while the police pulled off his hoodie. It was not Jacob, but it sure did look a lot like him. She ran straight to the bag and unzipped it. She cuddled the child and told her everything would be ok. After the girl’s parents arrived, Maria headed to Jacob’s house.

She whispered, “I am so sorry. I will always be your best friend.” Maria told him all about the arrest. They rode Jacob’s Ducati back to the store and the police were talking to the parents. The Senior Officer came over to congratulate Maria and announced, “Let’s get this criminal behind bars.”

“Ummmmm boss, he’s disappeared.”
The Sacrifice
Connor Lynch

“Stop! Did you hear that?”

She did not stop. She kept yapping about how the pregnant moon shone on the crystal water below the stone road she stood on. Banny turned to see where the noise came from. Gobsmacked at seeing something he thought he would never see in his life, he fell to the ground.

A few minutes earlier, “the news says the alien invasion has begun,” Panny shouted to Banny.

“Don’t let that ruin our night,” replied Banny.

They strolled over to the bridge.

“The moon is beautiful,” explained Panny. “I love how it shines on the water.”

“Woof!” barked Mazpy the dog.

“The dog likes it too,” followed Panny.

“Wait did you hear that?” asked Banny.

He paused for a second, grabbed his knife, then turned to see a giant hemisphere hovering. He looked up to the small opening under the hemisphere. A green light started to shine on him. Panny turned to see nothing except a saucer flying to the stars. Panny dropped to the ground. She covered her face with her hands, which soon became wet.

“Why him? Why him out of hundreds of people?” Panny asked the air around her. She stood up and ran to the nearest taxi.

Banny woke up to a bright, white light shining in his eyes. Banny moaned, and sat up on the metal plank he laid on. *The window is just two metres away. I can smash it and escape*, thought Banny.

When he realised his feet were strapped down, thoughts of his pocket knife raced through his head. He shoved his hand in his pocket, the knife was not there. He looked around the room.

“There it is,” said Banny. He stretched out his arm, *just a little further*, he thought. He just reached it, and began to saw at the belt.

*Come on, just a bit more*, words of encouragement raced through his head.

He ran to the window and jumped.

“Ow,” he shouted as he was thrown back by an electric shock. *The window must be shielded.*

The door opened, in charged two green humanoid figures.
“What is the location, of what you humans call, Area 51?” asked the lead alien.
“I won't tell you anything,” answered Banny.
The other alien picked up his weapon and aimed it at his head.
“Ninety-five degrees north and five degrees east,” Banny blathered out, in fear.
Panny grabbed her computer and placed it on her lap. *N.A.S.A. That is what I have to hack into*, thought Panny. She went through many lines of coding before finally hacking the system. *Looks like N.A.S.A. has been tracking the space craft for a while*, she thought.
“Tokyo. That is where it has landed.” She rushed to the airport and took the earliest flight.
There it was; the spacecraft. It had landed on the Tokyo Tower. She took the elevator to the roof and ran inside. There was Banny. Panny followed him to what looked like a control room. No-one or thing was in there. A big red button labelled; ‘Self Destruct’ lay on the computer interface. He held out his arm to push it.
“Stop! No, don't, please don't,” Panny cried.
“I have to, to save the world,” replied Banny. “Go, now go!” he demanded.
She ran to the exit, with water gushing out of her eyes. Banny held out his hand and pushed the....BOOM!
Kaylee awoke in the ninja dojo, ‘Sensei!’ The sun shone through the windows, waking up the whole of Japan. She got up and began to look for Sensei until…SMASH! Glass broke and Kaylee ran in circles as red smoke filled the room. There was the sound of glass smashing and armoured men racing around the loft, breaking cabinets and stealing sensei’s possessions.

“Stop that! Give it back to me!” Kaylee pointed to a man stealing the dragon staff.

The ruby at the top of the staff glinted in the soft dawn light. The man glared at her and simply pushed her over like a limp rag doll, releasing a gas bomb that sent her off into a deep, deep sleep.

“Sensei?” Kaylee stood up and shuffled around the room.

“I am here, Young Fox.” Sensei put his hand on her shoulder. A shadowy figure appeared at her side. Her red hair was the origin of his nick name for her. It was silly, but she liked it when he called her that.

“Kaylee,” he bent his head and whispered. “They took my dragon staff!” Kaylee gasped and said, “I know, I tried to stop them but they got away with it.” The dragon staff was the holder of all powerful magic, but in the wrong hands, it was a deadly weapon.

“I need to sit down,” Sensei croaked. The old man looked pale. Kaylee cringed as a shiver travelled down her spine. Sensei was the all-powerful, almighty holder of all wisdom. Now slumped in his chair, his wispy grey hair was framing his wrinkled face. He looked like an ordinary grandfather.

“I will get your staff back, Sensei” Kaylee announcing, while adjusting her ninja suit.

“Ha!” Sensei collapsed into laughter. “Really, I know you want to help your grandfather, but really Kaylee, really?” He continued to laugh like a maniac, even though the source of his powers was in the hands of his evil brother, King Shaun.

Kaylee stomped out of the dojo, her face as red as her flaming head of hair. She was frustrated, embarrassed that her own grandfather would laugh at her attempt to help him. She wandered through the town, stopping...
to drink in the extraordinary sight of the palace of King Shaun. There were
two guards standing under a low lying, open window. Both looked idle and
purposeless. Kaylee planned her attack.

She ran towards the window and using her strength leapt onto the
shoulder of one of the guards and crawled through the window. *One of the
guards must have torn off my mask*, she thought. Her wild hair flew
everywhere. She was in the art room, surrounded by paintings and
sculptures. Luckily, there was no one to be seen. She slipped into the
passage way.

King Shaun sat on his throne, shaking the staff like it was a baby’s
rattle, unaware that Kaylee the ninja was in his room. Slowly he became
aware of her presence.

“So,” he gestured to the staff. “Came to get this back?”

“No, I just came to say hi,” Kaylee joked.

He smirked.

An icy blue bolt shot out of the staff, freezing Kaylee inside a block
of ice. She struggled, twisting and turning until the ice shattered and she
was able to spring into action.

She ran up to a dazed King Shaun, kicking him in the face and firing
the staff back at him. The King found himself trapped in a huge icicle. A look
of anger was frozen on his face. Kaylee ran out the front door and sprinted
back to the dojo.

“Sensei!” Kaylee thrust the staff at him.

“Oh Kaylee!” Sensei cried, hugging his granddaughter. “I am sorry I
ever doubted you Little Fox.”

Kaylee knew what was coming. In the past, she and Sensei had
made a pact together. If Sensei ever doubted her again, he would turn
himself into a little fox.

Sensei cast an enchantment and there he sat on a stool, clutching
the now miniature staff in his little furry fox paws and smiled up at his
granddaughter.

Laughter twinkled in his eyes.
Twisted Treasure
Lani Gibson

“Don’t be ridiculous Jo-Jo! This is an adventure, what could possibly go wrong?” teased Liam. “I have done this many times before, plus the volcano hasn’t erupted for 80 years,” he continued.

Jo-Jo flipped her brunette hair over her shoulder. “Are you sure?”

“Don’t worry,” Lisa demanded, putting her arm around Jo-Jo’s back. “Yeah, if there is any treasure here, we’ll find it,” Sam added.

“How far?” Tom asked.

“Hopefully we’ll be there by sunset tomorrow,” Lisa answered. They continued trudging up the rocky mountain track.

“Are you sure the treasure is actually there?” Tom questioned.

“My Grandfather’s journal states that the treasure lies in these mountains, and I have a map to guide us to where it’s hidden,”

They continued up the narrow track and spotted a cave. The group agreed that it would be a good place to get some rest and sleep despite the rocky, uneven and uncomfortable surface.

The sun rose piercing through the entrance of the cave waking the group one by one. Lisa checked the contents of her backpack quietly, ready for the next leg of their journey. It was all there, candy bars, a torch, water and a grappling hook.

Lisa, with her backpack checked and ready, announced reluctantly, “Let’s go!”

Everyone started moving up the mountain track, the sun shone brightly causing Lisa to shield her blue eyes.

“I don’t think this is such a good idea,” Jo-Jo recommended. Lisa had her face buried in the map.

“Hey Lisa, where are we going next?” Liam asked.

“Rancid River,” replied Lisa. “We need to find the first key in the river, according to this map,”

Lisa added.

“Eww, gross,” Jo-Jo squealed.

“Down there,” Lisa pointed towards a large, gentle flowing river.

“We’re here, let’s look for the key and get out of here!” snapped Lisa.
There were flies in huge quantities buzzing around; the smell of horse manure was dense. Liam and Sam dropped their backpacks, stripped down to their shorts and starting searching the river for the key.

“You know we could use some help,” Sam yelled back to the others.
“Come on Lisa! It’s fun!” Liam shouted.
“I’m not here for fun,” Lisa snapped.

Jo-Jo leaped in joining the search.
“I found something. It’s the key,” Jo-Jo squealed in delight.
They all checked the map to see what was next.
“The Frightening Forest,” Jo-Jo groaned.

Sam decided it was time to get moving.

When they arrived at the forest, they all noticed the sign that read ‘Keep Out’ in bold red.
“Let’s go in,” Sam demanded.
“What about the sign?” Tom asked.
“That’s just a suggestion,” Sam joked.
This forest is freaking me out!” Jo-Jo replied.
Slowly they continued carefully through the forest.
“We must find the second key,” Lisa stated.

Sam climbed a tree, whilst the others checked the ground.
The sun peeked through the thin canopy of trees and limited the light making the search difficult. Animals rustled through the bushland and birds chirped from the trees.
“This place is giving me the creeps,” Jo-Jo whispered.
“Got it!” yelled Sam, “Now let’s get out of here.”

“Onto The Cave of Cruelty,” noted Jo-Jo gulping fearfully.
They moved on heading towards the next location. Liam and Sam where chatting happily and laughing. Lisa secretly smiled to herself, she was actually having fun.

After a long walk they finally reached the cave. It was dark and seemed to be extremely deep. They all searched for the last key.
“There is nothing here!” Tom grunted.

Reluctantly Lisa nodded, looking around disappointed until a hole in the roof of the cave caught her attention. She stared into the endless darkness at the end of the cave that sent shivers down her spine. Turning to face the wall she continued searching for the key. She felt a strong tug on her left ankle.

“Go away Tom,” Lisa snapped.
Something wrapped around her leg and strangled it. She turned around to discover a bear-like beast growling at her. She screamed in fright, alerting her friends she was in danger. As the grip loosened she tried to escape from the beast by crawling to safety with Jo-Jo. Liam ran to stop the ugly beast but its long tail whipped him causing him to fall onto the ground. The beast’s tail hit the unstable wall and caused it to crack. The cave started to crack and break. Lisa scrambled to her feet and huddled her friends into a group.

“Hold on!” she warned them as she grabbed her electronic grappling hook and threw it out of the large hole in the roof.

The cave was going to collapse and the beast tried to run over to them. They were running out of options and time. The grappling hook couldn’t hold their weight. Tom smiled and let go, as they quickly started to zip up out of the hole. Tom had made a sacrifice to save all of them. They were pulled to safety as the cave crumbled.

“No!” They all screamed.

“We didn’t even find the key.” Jo-Jo complained.

Lisa nodded in agreement, but still shocked. She spotted something shiny in the debris of rocks. Lisa dove for it and discovered the final key. They all cheered, still wary that we had lost a friend. They trekked up the path and discovered the chest. They jiggled the three keys in the chest. It opened magically. Inside was a note. *That’s unusual*, Lisa thought.

‘Hello, there. You have done well collecting the three keys. It does disappoint me to announce that there is no treasure. The treasure is the friendship and teamwork you and your friends have achieved. Isn’t that better than any treasure?’ Lisa read the letter out loud.

At first she was furious. But then she realised something better than any gold or riches, her friends.

“My grandfather is right. I love you guys,” Lisa laughed. They all hugged and walked away, happier than any rich person could ever be. After they walked away the wind blew revealing an open chest with gold and jewelry to last millions of years. Either way they were glad to have such a twisted treasure, friendship.
“No return, no return,” hollered the man on the television screen as Brooklyn’s friends watched enthusiastically. With her eyes wide open, and dusk about to fall, she continued to watch the movie. Brooklyn rested her head down on her hand and realised how much fun she could be having seeking a real life adventure of her own elsewhere. Her mind now working in over drive, she made her way to the bedroom to put her vain imaginations to sleep.

Brooklyn woke early “I can’t wait for my adventure today,” she buzzed. With her golden curls draped over her shoulders, she excitedly waved goodbye to her Dad. The sun’s light peeked over the crimson horizon, as the boat continued to struggle desperately through the ocean’s angry surface. The engine roared abruptly as smoke bellowed into the sky. Brooklyn, thrilled for her dive, began to zip up her suit, as the boat floated adrift.

SPLASH! The sun’s sting was washed away by the turquoise sea, revealing an underwater world of beauty and mystery. Her plump body sagged unpleasantly beneath her wetsuit as her adventure began. Her eyes bulged in astonishment at this underwater spectacle. Multi-coloured coral reefs sat perched on craggy rocks. The waters teemed with schools of fish. Meanwhile other marine life welcomed Brooklyn with outstretched fins, as the alluring pregnant sun shone affectionately into the depths of the waters.

Curious to investigate this underwater paradise, Brooklyn glided further beneath the surface. A boisterous noise emerged from the ocean floor, leaving her with a tingling sensation. The water turned bitterly cold. Her hands became tense, and her heart pounded violently within her chest.

BOOM! An explosion of colour cascaded, illuminating the sight in front of her. Both frightened and aghast, she found herself face to face with a monstrous beast who glared intently into her eyes. At this moment she wished her friends were with her (despite how boring they all were). Brooklyn studied it quizzically while asking herself, what could this ghastly thing be? Long fetid tentacles like grass swayed around its body, with yellow eyes almost lighting the scene. What should I do? Her mind helplessly ticked.
Face to face it began to speak in a strained voice, “Touch it if you dare, but whatever you do, remember; many creatures lurk within the mysteries that lie beneath.”

Brooklyn’s face burst into a collection of thoughts, trying to figure out what was happening and why.

“No return, no return,” the creature continued. Where had she heard that before? Recognition dawned that she had heard this last night. The haunting words of no return continually echoed inside her head. That’s when she noticed a reflection; glaring from a long golden plate dangling from its chest. She looked a little closer, trying to observe the words and the symbol that seemed to be engraved on it.

‘Kurama – Protector of Mysteries.’

Brooklyn reached with her shaking hand to touch the golden plate, when only millimetres away from contact, a loud snap groaned at her. It was Kurama. He breathed long heavy breaths, screwed up his face and flared his nostrils at her. Kurama was after her, at least that’s what Brooklyn thought. She felt trapped in an underwater world without her boring friends. She must have needed them after all.

She began to manoeuvre away at such a pace she disappeared in a flash. No matter where her heavy eyes looked, Kurama’s face lurked upon her. Out of the corner of one eye Brooklyn spotted a group of rocks piled upon one another. Determined to survive she raced over to them, her heart doing the same. Strange, but somewhat familiar noises erupted from the other side of the waters. She turned around and the abnormally large face floated in front of her, the gold plate shining brighter than ever into her eyes. At that very moment in time, she noticed that behind her was a rigid stone wall when in fact there should have been a vast open sea. She was trapped. It was well and truly the end.

Her brain ticked helplessly as another thought came to mind, you’re protecting something, something undiscovered, and I know it lies within the wall. Brooklyn swallowed her fear, as she continued onwards. I know the secret lies within that, pointing to the golden plate draped around Kurama’s neck.

Kurama nods in agreement.

No return, meaning if I touch that plate, I can’t go home.

Once again he nods, this time looking desperate.

Brooklyn would love to stay behind and discover this new parallel universe, full of adventure packed mysteries. However, her friends were like family and she could not abandon them.
She jumped in fright. Her oxygen tank levels decreased and the air rapidly became thinner. A slimy hand brushed against her suit. Flabbergasted, Brooklyn lifted her head; her eyes already welling with tears. Kurama’s pleasant smile stretched from ear to ear. *He never meant her any harm*, Brooklyn understood that now.

Kurama offered his hand and lifted her until she sat mounted on his back. Together they sped through the water, huffing and puffing while Brooklyn ensured the water kept clear from her mouth. As their heads broke through the surface, a splash hoisted high into the air. Her eyes opened at the close.

Trying to avoid any commotion, Brooklyn strolled onto the sandbank dripping with water from head to toe. She looked for Kurama, who was nowhere to be seen. A rush of relief penetrated throughout her body because she heard a series of giggles behind her. Three familiar looking faces stood on the shore. Thrilled to see her friends, Brooklyn ran and swung her arms around their necks.

“You’ll never guess what just happened to me, I was out in the ocean, diving when I came across a rather odd creature, protecting some—” her words were soon silenced.

Confused and shocked her friends gawked at her.

“Impossible!” one shrieked.

“You’re just tricking us. That’s exactly what happened in the movie we watched last night.”

“Let me guess no return, no return,” added another, re-iterating the exact script.

Her friends stomped away one by one, leaving her standing alone, but not before Mackenzie, one of the girls, turned to her and said in a strained voice, “Touch it if you dare, but whatever you do, remember; many creatures lurk within the mysteries that lie beneath.”

Mackenzie walked away with a friendly smile, touching the golden necklace hanging from her neck.
“Ugh!” exclaimed Ollie as he slumped onto his bed. He had finally finished writing an essay for his homework. Ollie was obsessed with perfection and loathed anything out-of-the-ordinary; especially his freak school. Just as Ollie was about to flick off his lamp, he spotted something in the corner of his eye. A book.

He dragged himself out of bed towards the book, lured by curiosity. It looked like a gargantuan box with pages, drowning in dust. Expecting the monstrous book to weigh as much as a boulder, he hefted it up, almost hitting himself in the face. There were no pictures. With nothing else to do and no longer feeling tired, Ollie began to read. 

*Well that was a load of rubbish* thought Ollie on finishing the book. Disgusted by the book’s weirdness, he put it aside and dozed off into a deep sleep.

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His crystal clear eyes opened and took in his surroundings. “Ummmm…” Ollie was standing in his living room, staring out the window.

Without thinking of how he got there, Ollie threw his bag over his back and set off towards the front door. As he neared the door he noticed the calendar, *14th July*. That can’t be right. *It was the 12th yesterday*. Ollie decided to ignore it and got on his skateboard, heading to meet Jamie, his best friend, at the smoothie bar.

“Hey Jamie!”

“Long time, no see,” yelled Jamie, through half a mouthful of smoothie.

Ollie told Jamie about how he thought today was tomorrow when it should be yesterday. Confused, Jamie just told him it was the *14th* of July and walked off. Exhausted by the confusion, Ollie decided to head home.

On the way, Ollie saw something dreadful. Just outside his house there was a cat stuck in the drain. After retrieving the cat, Ollie discovered it had no pulse. Distraught, he didn’t even bother changing when he got home and went straight to sleep.
Ollie woke up with a shock as his alarm sounded. He checked the calendar. 14th July.
“What the...” began Ollie. “This can’t be possible.”
Ollie sprinted to the garage, grabbed his skateboard and headed to the smoothie bar just as he did yesterday.
“Long time no s...” started Jamie.
“Shut up!”
“Hey! Why so rude?”
Ollie told her about the 14th July and it feeling like a Déjà vu. Jamie laughed at him. Ollie was furious with her lack of understanding and marched home in the dark, seeing the cat again.

Ollie’s eyes opened and he watched the room come into focus. 15th July. Ollie hoped that nothing weird would happen. So far, it was okay. It was midday when something unusual occurred. A volcano erupted 10 miles away and caused an extreme heatwave. Ollie’s skin was sensitive and became excruciatingly itchy. He didn’t enjoy this one bit. Nothing else eventful happened so Ollie went to bed early.

According to his calendar, the next day was also the 15th of July and all the same things happened. Eventually Ollie thought of something. What if he could live a day in the future and then relive it? He would know what was coming. He could warn people about dreadful things.

Ollie awoke to a horrible, hot sensation. He checked the calendar, 16th July. He rushed towards the front door but before he could set foot outside he got the fright of his life. Lava! His house, along with all the others in his street, was floating along a lava river.
“AARRGGHH!” Ollie didn’t know what was going on.
Why wasn’t his house burning?

Before Ollie could finish thinking he passed out on the spot.

“Huh? What’s going on?” Ollie struggled to get to his feet. He looked around and saw that he was in a library. There were whispering voices. Ollie tried to make out what they were saying.

“The boooook! Read the boooooook!”

Completely forgetting about lava, Ollie picked up the same book he had read only a few days ago and began to read. Ollie discovered a new meaning to the book. He knew what he had to do to save everyone from all the lava. Again, Ollie passed out unexpectedly.

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Ollie’s eyes opened. It was still the 15th of July. He still had time. Ollie jumped out of bed and raced to the TV station on his skateboard. The moment he got there, Ollie explained everything. At first the reporter doubted him but agreed. The headline wasn’t quite as he would’ve liked it to be. (‘Mad boy claims he can predict the future! He warns you to evacuate because of lava!’) Ollie was the most popular kid at school so most people believed him.

Ollie had stayed up making sure everyone was safe, trying his hardest to convince everyone who didn’t believe him. Eventually everyone except an ex-criminal would leave. Ollie knew there was nothing more he could do.

One thing Ollie forgot; was to save himself. It was too late. He could already see a river of lava trickling down the hill. Ollie knew he was doomed. Everyone had their purpose and his was to save the town. One last time Ollie passed out. However this time, he didn’t wake up.
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