



## Haunted

By Christina

Moonlight leaks through the broken windows  
Shadows creep next to them, outlining the jagged lines  
No fire in the fireplace, not even a lamp to light the lane  
Leaves sweep into the dark rooms, littering the dusty floors.

Anger and sorrow hang in the soft breeze  
Still left from all the years that had past  
Spider webs caught the bad memories and let them freeze  
Enduring misery waited for the hopeless.

## Free

By Christina

I wish I were free  
Like the breeze  
Carefree and lazy  
Gliding in the blue expanses of sky  
Playing in the sun  
Without any worries  
Free.

## Moonlight

By Christina

Shafts of chilling light leaking through the air  
Shinning on the snow, making it glitter and sparkle  
Bright, yet as pale as winters breath.

## Fall Colors

By Christina

Yellow against the dark rocks of the mountain,  
Like golden flakes dusted lightly on the sides.  
Orange leaves floating lazily in the breeze,  
Leaving the still green leaves hanging.  
Vibrant red completing the patchwork,  
Like fireworks at midnight.

# *“Trees that swim”*

*By Denver Blackson*

Trees swim briskly through

Comatose grass that  
shines like dark concrete

Trees are not screams

Hills are not thorns

Rocks aren't the dark

Trees don't fly

Trees don't walk

Trees just swim

Life's point

Simple

Yet gone

Ill

Wills

Chill

# Shipwreck

*By Denver Blackson*

A boat lies on a rocky shore  
As Waves beat on its broken bow  
The rage of the sea, Contrasting a corpse  
That moved hesitantly with ocean's flow  
Crash of lightening  
Roar of thunder  
Shore covered by boat asunder

# The True Sky

*By Denver Blackson*

Endless Blue Above  
Endless Grey Below  
Not a sound in the between  
Not a creature in the between  
Not a thing in the between

# Le Lion (imaginary translation)

*By Denver Blackson*

O lion, magnificent image  
Your location's choice is lamentable  
To be confined in a tight cage  
A tragedy to say the least

**My home, but scary**

By Esme` Roslyn Crossett

I open my eyes but there is little light,

The home I love has held a scary fight,

The house is wilted,

Filled with death,

And I don't dare take a single breath.

**Clouds change clear sky as they pass by**

By Esme` Roslyn Crossett

Clouds change clear sky, as they pass bye.

Stars sprinkled on the sky, sun slithers in to spy.

Blind bones wander by, hiding from the sun spy.

Without Sound

By Esme` Roslyn Crossett

The night is deserted,  
with sound only from my footsteps.

When the sun comes out to welcome another day,  
the birds wake but do not chirp.

The ants peek from there holes but do not speak.

The dew from the leafs run on to the grass,  
but do not splash.

It is a morning without sound.

## A Strange New Place

By Helen Thurston

Stumble, trip, fall that is what life is like in a strange new place,

Is it hot? Is it cold? Indoors or out? What colors do you see?

You try to find people, lurking out of sight,

I try to find water that you can see but always seems to be moving in the same pace you are but away from you,

We try to find food that seems so sparse,

Stumble, trip, fall that is what life is like in a strange new place,

## Change

By Helen Thurston

Desserts dissolve,

Deserts grow.

Green turns to gray,

Blue birds turn to black birds.

Children change,

Enormous, empty eyes.

Plumes turn yellow,

Bananas turn blue.

Life will listen,

As light will fade.

## My Masked Misery

By Jordan Martin

My masked misery,

Is another attempt at hiding.

Gloomy gypsies dance behind the mask.

My reactions don't reflect the rivers of rage.

Photographed puppets playing pretend.

I clame the crutch that cures my mystery.

An edge to emotion, error no more.

Remember?

By Jordan Martin

We'd turn up the volume on the stereo.

Listening to punk rock off of the radio.

Hearing the sound of strings, drums, and voices,

Fearing the screams and the metal noises.

# Synesthesia

By Jordan Martin

My eyes like a sound,

Hear music.

Blind to color.

Colors in music,

I can't see.

Vivid to others.

I hear and I see,

Separate things.

Don't clash in my head.

## The Journey

By Molly Sanders, Jordan Martin, and **Margaret Norton**

The ocean makes me want

Things I cannot have.

I stared upon the marvelous dress

Wrinkled and withered, but I needed

**Something to revitalize me, and with my strength depleted**

**My wanderings have ceased for now,**

But I know I will wander again.

Wandering is not the same as lost.

I wonder when will a cow moo.

Back in time I gaze, speckling my glasses with wonder.

**My beginning, my memories and myself seem to grow,**

**And as I wipe away the tears,**

I think then wonder

If tears are worth my time.

I shutter away into the darkness

Lingering on with only hope.

**And yet, hope is all that is needed,**

**For that we can never loose.**

## **Muffins**

By Kaec B

Peaches were in the carpet  
Eggs were on the floor  
The windows were cracked and broken  
And clothes hung from the door  
But the party was just getting started  
And things began to soar  
Rose thorns began to poke through the couches  
And gave you tingling feeling in your core  
A whisper seeps through your eardrum  
And butterflies swarm the air  
The muffins are smashed into a mattress  
All you can do is stare  
Then Folds of delusion cloud your mind  
And trip you like a snare  
Lost in empty space  
With music bumping in your ear  
A transparent sway of perfection  
Has found its way to sear  
Then leaving you standing lonely  
Could almost conjure a tear  
So you find a flame to brighten the night  
And a splash to help it cool  
But flickering lightening clears your mind a bit  
Running from the flash can be cruel  
Stumbling through the darkness was a horror

At least you weren't burnt like a fool  
And finally your mind begins to settle  
And take you away from the fight  
The rest come easy  
As you slip into that cold dark night

# *Combinations*

*By Kaileigh Krosse*

*A shell floating in the middle of the  
ocean,*

*A stone on a sandy beach.*

*Love and hate atop of one another,  
Joy and sadness interjoined.*

*A lone book on an empty shelf,  
A key that won't open its door.*

*A painting on a bare wall,  
One chair in an empty room.*

*An island without a lighthouse,  
Boats marooned out of water.*

*Roses in a sandbox,*

*A house on a lake.*

*Grey skies loom above our heads,*

*Grey dirt that we walk on.*

## ***Together***

**Replacing the top to pick roses.  
Their petals placed in her basket  
like blankets.**

**Faded paintings. A tattered velvet  
shawl.**

**Whisper winds. Swans glide across  
the lake.**

**The same song in a different key.**

## *Images of Before*

*The shadow of a rising tiger,  
The silhouette of a city submerged in water,  
The fading glow of a waning moon,  
The echoing clang of a fallen spoon,  
The sway of an object after it's been stricken,  
A dream that fades after you awaken.*

## **Still**

*The shining moon over a midnight breeze,  
Dreams glide across the stars,  
The swan lays motionless over her egg,  
Gulls sweep from near to far,  
An unheard prayer lingers in the air,  
Hopes and dreams that are forgotten,  
The sun's bright rays touch and innocent child,  
A treasure buried deep... Begotten.*

# Things I Learned Last Week

By Lexi Gross

When you step in syrup,  
Your shoes will stick to the floor every time you take a  
step.

Sometimes, you can salsa with a partner,  
And your eyes are closed.

On a computer, you can make the worst mistake ever,  
But there is always a way to undo it.

If one clock says 9:30,  
Check another just to make sure it is not on the wrong  
time.

There is a big difference between a turn and a spin.

Always smile even if you are in complete pain.

If you try your absolute hardest on making something  
look good,

There is always room for improvement.

Water

By Lexi Gross

Water slowly trickles down the faucet,

With the handle not totally twisted off.

The endless supply of water seems never ending,

But it will stop.

Eventually.

# Just For a Day

by Margaret Norton

Let's check the clock,

let's eat the cake,

we'll make sense of today,

and risk tomorrow,

oh, how happy we'll be,

and soon you'll see,

there's no need for all that useless sorrow.

# Dreaming out loud

by Margaret Norton

Enchanted lay the glasses as they washed upon the shore,  
seagulls begin to fly as penguins learn to soar.

With a world as topsy turvy as ours,  
it's amazing more people don't spend more of their nights searching through the  
stars.

Of glitter and glue and marshmallow fluff,  
skipping through the rain and other fun stuff.

It's a wonder people work at all,  
with these big things happening and the world so small.

What a life it is, what a dream become so real,  
what a life I live, and all the amazing feelings I feel.

## Eagle

by Thane Cunningham

I saw the eagle atop the prow.  
The wings outspread and gliding across the water.  
How proud it looked atop the prow.  
Gently rocking above the water.

# Glowworms

by Thane Cunningham

No, no do not torch glowworms. Two OW horror.  
Glowworms zoom on dolls. Vroom . Months work, work ,  
work. Voodoo glowworms. Spolsh! Poof! Torch glowworms

## Watching

Boats crowd my vision, with a soft huff.

Puffs of smoke arise from somewhere within.

Escaping into the white expanded sky above.

I breath slow, a shiver crawls down my spine

As I sit watching.

The water is my favorite, dancing slowly around the crowded boats.

Gently stroking it as though it was a mom cradling its baby.

## Sound

The melody reaches into my heart,

Tearing out only disappointment and joy.

I am proud of who I am and

Unreasonably happy for a moment.

Lost in the train of thought,

Thinking about where I ought.

Then the moments over,

And time lye's still.

## Quick Timing

November, December, April and May.

They come by to greet you every other day.

I laugh and I cheer, I smile and I cry.

Gone, gone they go by.

By Molly Sanders

# Nonsense

By: Yana Warner, Baraz

Hirsh, Kailzigh Krossz, Christina Vandenhoogen

A blanket of fog on a bead of water.

Flying into the golden clouds, the moon shining pale overhead  
Reflecting on the water, distorting images, of a face, deformed  
and ugly.

With a wart on one nose and a pretty heart-shaped mole on the  
other.

A flowery hat sat upon her head as she pranced along the  
sidewalk.

Fall on the pavement...OWIE.

It was miraculously painful, the wound never healed

I picked off the scab but it just got worse

The dog got out and the cat got eaten.

Then peanut butter got stuck to my roof.

The rooster goes cockle-doodle-do on the farm roof.

## **Footsteps**

By Celia Lubin

It was winter when my grandpa died. I was little, but I remember spreading the black ashes that used to be a man on the snow in back of my grandma's house. I was wearing pajamas and boots because the snow was deep. I remember the footprints in the snow. Alongside, were the small, dark, ashes.

## **Morning**

By Celia Lubin

I feel happy and at peace when I wake up, because it is my time to be alone, to explore what to wear, to eat breakfast, and listen to my music, before my bustling house wakes up. Waking up early is much like a preview of the day. It's like a sneak peak that only those select early risers get to see. But, the best thing is being in a house full of sleeping people. With them, I can be alone, but not lonely.

*Figuring it out- Fayth Danielle Carter:*

*Which path to take?  
Right? or Left.*

*Who should I shake hands with?  
Delight?  
Or Death.*

*Take the path less taken*

*But I dont want to be mistaken...*

*If nothings going right, go left.*

*Who should I sell my soul to?  
Wimp?  
or Theft?*

*Figuring it out is like the sting of a whip.  
Better hold on our I might lose my grip.*

*Should I be This?  
or That.*

*Should I take a kiss of death?  
Or just take it as a threat?*

*Figuring it out like the cry of a Sheep.  
Dont fall to far into my sleep.*

*Keep one eye open?  
Or two eyes closed?*

*Should i be her friend?  
Or foe.*

*Figuring it out is like a bridge with a bend  
Dont turn to far or i might lose my head.*

# ***SFAC (SITKA FINE ARTS CAMP)***

***THE FIRST TIME I WENT INTO CAMP, IT WAS MINI FINE ARTS CAMP. I WAS SO HAPPY TO BE IN CAMP. I HAVE BEEN IN CAMP SINCE THEN. EXCEPT I MISSED LAST YEAR SINCE I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO BE OUT OF TOWN. I THINK CAMP IS SO COOL BECAUSE YOU CAN PICK YOUR CLASSES AND ALSO CHOOSE IF YOU ARE ON CAMPUS OR NOT. SURE ITS EXPENCIVE BUT ITS WORTH IT. I THINK IF YOU WENT TO MINI FINE ARTS CAMP AND YOU LIKED IT YOU SHOULD COME TO SITKA FINE ARTS CAMP. ITS ALSO COOL THAT YOU HAVE ART SHARES AND YOU CAN CHOOSE WHAT YOU WANT TO PUT IN. AN ART SHARE IS JUST A BIG ART SHOW AND IT TELLS YOU OR SHOWS YOU WHAT YOU WILL DO FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS AND WHAT THE COUNCELORS DO FOR A JOB. I THINK EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE A CHANCE TO COME TO CAMP. IT'S A KIND OF CAMP WERE EVERYONE IS ACCSEPETED. ANOTHER THINK IS ABOUT AN ART SHARE IS THAT YOU ARE IN THEM AND THE END OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> WEEK. SITKA FINE ARTS CAMP HAS BEEN A CAMP FOR 35 YEARS AND IF NOBODY LIKED IT, THERE WOULDN'T BE A CAMP ANYMORE. SO COME TO SITKA FINE ARTS CAMP NEXT YEAR***

***BY EMILY DAHLQUIST***

## Fishing

Benny Toudic

I remember a few months ago, my Boy Scout troop went to a ranch owned by a friend of the troop. They had many activities including shot gun shooting, rifle shooting, archery, and fishing, After getting tired of shotgun shooting, (I already had all three of the shooting merit badges) I decided to go fishing with some of the older scouts and a few adults.

We rode in the ranch owner's all terrain, open top WWII antique jeep with our gear all the way to a very nice pond at the end of a huge meadow. The entire ride was off-road and at one point passed through a shallow river. It was raining lightly, and the fish were swimming.

One of the adults who had previously taught me how to play craps at a Boy Scout meeting taught me the proper fishing techniques, and showed me "hooley poppers." I used his special big lure and he explained that sharply pulling the rod back and making it jump would attract fish, because to them it looks like an injured animal or an insect moving on the surface. After about two hours, I had caught two big, nice bass with a shiny green top and a white underside. When they were pulled out of the water, they opened their gills all the way, and exposed their bright red insides, almost looking plastic. This was a great day, and I learned a lot about fishing.

## Spider Web

By: Haley O'Brien

*I picked a spider web to write about even though I hate spiders. I just thought it was pretty and very interesting the way it was designed. It stood out to me because it was so different, from what I can remember I have never seen one like that before.*

*I walked outside to the blue railing, by the pit, by the ramp in the middle of the second and third rail was a spider web. It looked like it was connected to the railing in eight or so places. The wind was it back and forth and the web looked as if it might rip*

*in the middle because it looks like it is missing two chunks on one side. It's kind of like a square pie with two chunks missing from it. It has about has about twenty lines going to the middle of the web, and on one maybe eighteen lines connecting two lines heading towards the middle together. It looks like the web has a bunch of little things stuck to it. The web is a work of art.*

## **Memory of a river**

By Hanna Hellen

Crack I jumped as a branch cracked under my foot.

“Shhhhhhh,” my brother hissed at me.

His warning was not needed no noise could make it over the roar of the river rushing by. We stalked slowly closer to my parents.

“Ready the bows” my brother said.

Slowly I pulled the string of the make shift bow back to my ear.

“**Fire,**” he yelled.

I let the bow string go and watched. The long thin piece of grass few threw the air and poke my mother in the back.

“Now **charge,**” exclaimed my brother his voice rising to a yell.

I charged brandishing my staff to win the battle.

## Henry

Henry. The name pounds around my head giving me a headache and still no answers. Who is He? And why is he in my life? In the course of one day he became four different people. Now I don't know who he is.

The first Henry I knew was the incredibly good-looking boy who was in my writing class. He was also always insisting I give my character James AIDS.

The second Henry I knew was the boy who sat next to me in class. He told me he was rich or more his father was and that he lived in California. He was also the Henry who teased me for wanting his life, skipped a year of school and offered me a hundred dollars to read my story.

The next Henry was the one I talked about with Peter. The one every girl has a crush on, had costume mad jeans that looked like jeans and has a privet jet. Peter also said that he cussed on every other word and hated Shakespeare.

The last Henry I would never have believed was it was Henry at all, unless I had seen it with my own eyes. The only admirable trait this Henry had was that he was a good loser. Other than that he was the stereotyped rich kid. He was arrogant, rude, snobbish, swore like heck, teased people and all sorts of things I would never write down. After deciding I wanted James to win, he promptly decided he didn't like me. I however was still trying to think of him as one of the other Henrys I knew but finding him to be all the things I already stated I decided that I didn't like him either. I hated him.

Now that I have laid out all the Henrys I know, what I wish more than anything is to know who he is, and how he should fit in my world.

By Isabelle Geddes

Note: when I first originally wrote this paper I was really mad and so the feelings I related may not be true now. Also when I wrote it, it was under another name which I have now changed. The names that are used in the piece are used merely as replacements and there are no real connections to any ones who actually share this name.

# Mountains

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*By: Israel Alexander*

The mountains seem interesting enough to work about. They're all green with heavy life. It looks like it has clouds around them, perhaps fog or smoke. I can't tell if there are five, four, or three mountains. I noticed a raven disappear into the great green yonder (trees). Another thing I realized is how many dead and dying trees there are.

They reminded me of going to Denali or when my sister worked at a resort there. It also reminded of going rafting with my church there. Also a person whose name is Deenaalii, I think I spelled that wrong though. It also reminds me of my other sister's wedding, I don't know why though. The mountains are just something that is mixed with lots of peoples lives.

## Dance

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*We were just getting out of school  
I'm going to my friends house to get  
ready for the dance we went in the  
hot tub for about two hours just  
talking about school and all the  
"DRAMA", oh and also listening  
to music of course, and we always*

say "what get says in the hot tub stays in the hot tub". After being in there long enough we start getting ready, putting our makeup on, and being crazy, it was themed, and the theme was sports!!! Sense my friend's house was close to the school we always get to walk in the

*DARK!!! (sometime's). It's the  
last dance so we have it in the big  
gym and it's so fun just running  
around dancing being well always  
crazy?? After it's done sadly it  
ends, but it was the best night ever!!!*

*By Kyla*

# Conformity

By Linnea Kelly

Con·form vb. 1: to make or be like: AGREE, ACCORD, COMPLY

Sometime, when you have the time, you should take a moment and step inside a middle school. Last year, chances are this is what you would see: All the girls would be wearing black North Face jackets, skinny jeans, hair perfectly straightened, way too much makeup, and Ugg boots. I never really got Uggs. I mean seriously, the name says it all. I wonder what idiot decided to name their company that. The guys would just look... boring. They would just sit there in plain V-neck shirts and jeans, looking at the girls ("It's the North Face logo I'm staring at, I swear!") Sooo individual, right?

This year, everything has changed. It has become conformist to be nonconformist. What the hell?! That's my thing people? I almost had to buy Uggs and a North Face jacket in protest! How am I supposed to be different now? Someone out there is definitely out to get me.

# Blue

By Linnea Kelly

I stepped from the boardwalk onto the burning sand and gazed at the ocean. It mesmerized me with its sort waves, it's depth, it's sparkling surface, it's beautiful color. I stood there with the water lapping at my bare feet. The sun shone, making the water the same color as the brilliant cloudless sky. Sky and sea stretched on forever, blending in perfect eternity. I remember clearly thinking as I ran out into the sapphire bliss, "This is what heaven feels like."

By: Makena Hardwick  
Writing Your Life

## Things I Have Lost

I have lost many things at the beach when I go swimming with them on they fall off in the waves I have lost a bracelet, a swim mask, and my love of beaches. I have lost people and pets too but I don't know if you can call them things. I lost my grandpa on my dad's side before I even knew him I am not sure if you can lose something you never had but I feel like I lost him. I lost my grandpa on my mom's side when I was eight; he died in his cabin in Hanes. I wasn't that close to him but we were very similar our birthdays are the same; we both like the same kind of food. I didn't know that much about him either I now know after reading the first few pages of a book he wrote about himself that I am like him in more ways than I knew like that we both would stick up for what we think is right when the situation demands it even if it means breaking the rules. I have lost two dogs that I had at birth one recently lost peacefully and one lost because she was run over by a car at night because she was chewing on the tire and she was black her name was Lava the one recently lost was named Lani she was white they were sisters, and opposites. I have lost many things but some things you lose you just can't get back.

# Ocean

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*By Nicholas Rhyne*

I'm going to type about the ocean. I noticed that the waves move in patterns. If a boat comes along and messes the patterns up, the waves will start a new pattern or resume the old one. Sometimes the waves forms bubbles and go up to the surface. When you watch the waves for a while you can see things floating along with the ocean. I choose to talk about the ocean because it was the first thing I saw when we were told to talk about something. The ocean is connected to me because sometimes I like to swim. I can do tricks under water and have fun. It helps on a blazing hot day. The ocean is interesting and super cold.

# String Beans

By Nick Gregg

Unlike snap Peas, This morsel is one of the lowest on MY list. String Beans. These unsatisfying green strips of revolt in a can taste terrible. This thing served at the dinner table is utter unnecessary Nonsense. I don't blame the infinite number of infants that despise this vile food.

# Think Pink!

Today we are writing about a color that reminds you of a memory,  
The color I chose is Pink! It reminds me of when I was a Ballerina. I  
was five and a ½ when I started ballet, and almost all little ballerinas  
or prima ballerinas wear pink! Well anyway, I had a ballet recital,  
and I have, even still, a little ballerina dress that is very light, light pink  
with little tiny flowers on it, it's so adorable! It was from my very first  
recital and I remember having a ton of fun!

**By: paige Cassell**

# Green

TIM FLANAGAN

Representing life, it spreads over mountains rolling like the ruffles in a blanket, filling the crops that sustain our lives.

As a much younger child, I looked up in my sheltered, albeit wet, home, to the sheltering boughs of the canopy that created a cavern, magical and peaceful, from a torrent of the elements. I would avoid poisons and sharp stalks of devil's club. We would put a bit of dye into Norwegian butter cookies shaped like our sweet smelling tree, and I would paint rather crude pictures of my woodland surroundings. Emerald gems, the water of passages to glaciers, life giving plants- all are supported by a single color.

# Opinions and Facts

Red pens are cooler than blue pens which are cooler than black pens...

But don't worry...

It's just an opinion, not a fact.

The feeling of getting up in the morning varies according to location and circumstances. Possible feelings: tiredness, laziness, excitement, getting up in the morning, terror, happiness, joy, jealousy, and anger. The feelings are in no particular order according to probability of occurrence...

But don't worry...

It's just an opinion, not a fact.

Blue is the color of the mountains when the sky is gray, and when the mountains are gray, it is the color of the sky...

But don't worry...

It's just an opinion, not a fact.

A cellphone associates me with people who will end up working at McDonalds, Subway, or any other place that requires only empty head workers. Texting is wasting time, and more time...

But don't worry...

It's just an opinion, not a fact.

Heavier chairs should have a higher priority to be thrown at people than lighter chairs...

But don't worry...

It's just an opinion, not a fact.

All schools should have lights turned off with ghosts whistling around in the hallway.

But don't worry...

It's just an opinion, not a fact.

In 147 years Sitka Fine Arts Camp will increase dramatically. The population will become over four thousand campers, and the average dorm will have over thirty human beings live in it. The rooms that are now classrooms will be pure dorms, and the small and extremely crowded classrooms will be located on the other side of Sitka and will require a bus ride for approach...

But don't worry...

It's just an opinion, not a fact.

All bombing experiments must occur at large cities so that more bad people die...

But don't worry...

It's just an opinion, not a fact.

The world must be destroyed and all living things should be controlled by aliens...

But don't worry...

It's just an opinion, not a fact.

By Vladimir Kulchitsky

Demaris Oxman

Cassandra kicked upward, thrusting her head out of the water. The sun was bright, glinting off the blue-green waves. She thought, for probably the thousandth time in her life, *I could live here forever*. She ducked back under the water and swam toward the docks.

“Cassandra!” She turned. A tall girl with dark hair was standing on the ledge in a bathing suit. “Are you sure this is a good idea?”

“Just jump, Ellie! Don’t think about the drop.”

Ellie jumped, shrieked, and hit the water with a SPLOOSH!

“COLD!” she yelped. “That was fun, though. Thank you for making me do that.”

Cassandra laughed. Suddenly a woman’s voice called her name from the ten-foot ledge off which they had cannonballed.

“Coming, Mom!” She turned to Ellie. “I’ll come by later, okay?” Ellie nodded, and Cassandra ran up to join her mom.

“Come with me,” she said, not looking at her daughter. “Dad and I have something we want to talk to you about.” Cassandra sensed that something was wrong, and followed her mother without a word.

Cassandra’s dad was waiting on the back patio. He too had a serious expression on his face and would not look at Cassandra. She settled herself into a chair and looked from one parent to the other. “You guys are freaking me out a little,” she said, attempting to smile and failing. “What’s the matter?” Her mom sighed and said in a rush, “We’re moving to New York City.”

At first she didn’t think they were serious. Her parents both enjoyed teasing her from time to time. Cassandra laughed uneasily. “Come on,” she said, “you...you’re not actually...”

“Listen, honey, said her dad, “I—”

“No!” Cassandra jumped up and ran from the house.

“Cass, wait!” Her parents began to chase after her. SPLOOSH! They had reached the ledge overlooking the ocean. Cassandra had jumped. She popped up and stared defiantly at her parents as she treaded water.

“Cass, Dad got—”

She ducked and stayed down for as long as she could. There was water in her ears, her eyes, her nose. She held her breath until she felt light-headed. When she finally resurfaced for air—

“—a job.”

Those two syllables alone stopped Cassandra from submerging herself again. She knew how long and hard her dad had been looking for good work. She climbed onto the dock, then up the stairs to the top of the ledge to join her parents.

“Would we visit?”

“Cassandra, how could we not? All our family is here. We’ll visit on holidays, and every summer.”

“Cass, honey.” Her father’s voice was gentle. “Please try to understand, this is hard for us too. We love it here just as much as you do.” Cassandra just looked at the ground. “Cassandra, are you angry?”

“Yes,” said Cassandra simply, and ran in the direction of Ellie’s house.

Cassandra had always thought that nothing could make her truly angry. Sure, she got annoyed now and then, but she never stayed that way long. Then again, she had never imagined anything like this happening. It had seemed impossible.

During the next few weeks, however, Cassandra got used to the idea. Her parents were a big help, and so was Ellie. Many girls at school told Cassandra that she was lucky to be going to the big city. She told them that they were welcome to go in her place, but as time passed she meant it less and less.

By the time they left in early August, Cassandra was almost excited. She had the e-mails and phone numbers of all her friends. She was interested to see what New York was like.

New York was big and noisy. That was what Cassandra discovered the instant she got off the plane. People swirled around her. She grabbed her father’s arm, afraid they would be separated otherwise. “It’s all right,” he said, sensing her thoughts. “I’m right here.”

They found their luggage and took a cab to their new house. The rest of their things had been sent ahead of them several weeks before. Cassandra’s parents began to unpack, telling Cassandra to “stay out of our hair,” in the words of her mom. Cassandra walked around the new neighborhood, familiarizing herself with the place. She met a girl

her age named Teresa, with whom she thought she would be good friends. Not like Ellie, of course—nobody could replace Ellie.

Days passed, which turned into weeks, which turned into months, and Cassandra still didn't feel settled. Teresa helped her, or tried to help her, get used to the city. But every time she was in a big crowd, as she was everywhere now, she found herself clutching the arm of Teresa, or one of her parents. Cassandra had never known she was afraid of large crowds. There had been no such thing back home. She began to avoid crowds.

One day, however, at the end of October, Teresa put her foot down. "Cassandra, you can't live here and avoid crowds all the time."

"I know," Cassandra sighed.

"And that's why I'm going to make you come this Friday."

"I...I don't know. I don't have a costume."

"I can help you with that. C'mon! It'll be fun!"

And suddenly Cassandra laughed. She laughed harder than she had in a long time. Teresa looked baffled. "What? What did I say?"

"You remind me so much of myself," she said, "pushing my friend Ellie to do all kinds of stuff. And then she would, and she'd have fun. So I'll come."

Cassandra and Teresa spent a great deal of time that week making Halloween costumes. They discovered that they had the same Halloween costume rule: something scary. They went to the Halloween party and for the first time, Cassandra felt like she belonged here. And for the first time since moving to New York, she felt like herself.

The next day they went downtown, walking around the streets, familiarizing Cassandra with New York City. Cassandra felt more and more in touch with her old self. She felt like daring herself and Teresa to do crazy things, as she had with Ellie. She finally felt she could get used to the big city.

She e-mailed Ellie that night, as she had at least once a week since moving. There was one question Ellie always asked: "Do you like it there?" Tonight, she could respond with a yes.

# The Fight

By

Ebby Ohaus

“But dad, I need help. I can’t do this on my own,” the boy said looking at his father earnestly. “You said you would always be there to help. And now your never there,” he said on the verge of tears.

“I know son. I’m sorry that I’ve disappointed you but I have things I need to do.”

“Like what?! Ignore your son? Give him the responsibility of something that he is way to young to have to be dealing with? Huh? Seriously, dad?”

“You don’t need to be this way about it all. You know everything will work out it always does.”

“Yah it does work itself out dad. It works itself out over months, sometimes years. And all that time I am sitting there waiting for you to help m. but I’m done waiting dad. I’m done. You can do whatever you want now. ‘Cause I don’t care. So you won’t even have to worry about apologizing for never being around. Oh, and you don’t need to thank me for making your life easier, because I’m doing thin s for me. And I should have done it years ago.”

“The boy then got up, placed one, golden, key on the table and walked out the door.

As soon as the door clicked shut behind the boy the man lowered his head to his hands. He was always better with dealing with anger. He was never good with disappointment, but he was the worst with a combination of the two. And with his son, and his ex-wife there was always anger and disappointment. He always felt as if he was failing them, which he knew he did. He had no idea what to do anymore. First his wife left, and now his son; now he can only think... I have nothing left.

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People watched the boy walking down the street, the dark grey light casting shadows across the sidewalks. The boy had a sad expression on his face. He walked like any other person would but something about him gave the illusion that he was walking slouched over. Once a man called out to him, “hey jack!”

But all he did was wave back at the man. It went on like this, people waving and calling his name, him just waving back and continuing on his way.

Finally he got to the place he was looking for. He opened the door letting the jingling bell tickle his ears, and the smells drift up his nose.

“Jackie boy! Come over here!” a deep booming voice rang out over the noise of the customers. “How ya been my boy?”

“Okay, you know, me and my dad got in another fight.”

“Aw, well you two always seem to figure these things out. You want a cookie? There fresh out of the oven.”

“Yes to the cookie, but about my dad I think it’s different this time. He needs to see that he can’t treat me the way he does, and I won’t always be there for him, because he is never there for me.”

“Oh give the man a break will you? You know he is going through a rough patch with your mom leaving him and all.”

“I know but that is no excuse for the way he treats me!” Jack bursted out. He couldn’t stand it anymore. He walked out of the bakery, slamming the door behind him.

Back on the street Jack stomped his boots on the pavement. Wishing that someone would be on his side for once, why did everyone think that it was okay and that things would work out with his father? Why did they all stand up for his dad when he treated Jack that way? Why couldn’t someone be on his side and hate his dad as much as Jack did.

Meanwhile his grandfather sat at the counter in the bakery confused by Jack’s behavior. Wondering what David had done to Jack this time. Bill knew that Jack had gotten angry with David before, but never this angry.

“Bill, is everything alright?”

“Yah, Jack just came in. that’s all.”

“Oh, well okay.”

Bill went back to waiting for more customers to come in to the bakery.

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David was still sitting there with his head in his hands when Jack walked in the door again.

“Dad, I am moving out. I have enough money to get a lease on an apartment and I am getting my stuff and leaving.”

David didn’t know what to say. He sat there dumfounded thinking, “wow. You really blew it this time David.”

A few minutes later Jack was gone. The only thing David dint know was just how gone Jack really was... that is he didn't know until Friday, November 15<sup>th</sup>.

Cincinnati times

Friday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005

front page

Recently a local boy, Jack Roger's, was run over by a garbage truck while crossing the road. The boy was headed to the blue apartment on Main Street. The truck ran a red light hoping to make it through but unfortunately the boy was also crossing the road. The truck wasn't paying attention and the boy was hit. He wasn't killed immediately and the truck quickly drove away. The license's plate is still unknown. The boy was admitted into the hospital into the EC. He was in there for many days and this morning at 3:57 a.m he died. They were unable to contact either parent but we're able to get a hold of his grandparents who are currently arranging a funeral. There is a reward for any information on the truck, and a full investigation will start this afternoon.

# Tales of the Humanian Isle

By: Ethan Burck

*The King's country of Transalan was in ruins from the hordes of bandits. The greatest heroes of this time will rise up to save this and other kingdoms. Transalan is neighbored by three other domains, Warwick, Traxanan, and Seranixan. All that protected Warwick was a small picket line. A forest was the border of Seranixan. The crossing rivers protected the rest of the island from the mad king of Transalan. Several Elves roam this land acting as envoys for country's traveling through the most dangerous lands. But only a few.*

"Please hurry!" She yelled. Turning around, her hair moved, revealing pointed ears. Traxon though did not notice, as he ran into the forest. He searched for something to help her wound. He ran into a clearing. He tripped and a small snick set off the net trapping him within it. The elf came out into the clearing and with a sly grin sat down.

"Help me!" Traxon Yelled

"No, I don't want to, you're my lunch"

"You fiendish Elf!"

"Oh no, not an elf."

As she said this, the creature's skin fell away to reveal a small green figure. About three seconds later, an arrow whizzed out of the tree line.

"What!" the Goblin yelled, as the arrow struck him.

Then a figure emerged from where the arrow came from and charged the goblin yelling "Die spawn of evil!" and hacked it to pieces. He then cut Traxon loose and said to his companion emerging from the trees, "what should we do with him Klivack?"

The response was quick and hurried, "Let him come with us Civlav."

"We have to go, now."

"So, human, do you want to come with us."

"Yes, but..."

"Yes, I'm an elf, and Civlav is a half elf. Let's head move" Klivack said snappily

Lukas heard the news of what was happening in Transalan; those bandits would come here next. *All that stood in the way of the invasion of the north was Transalan. Without them the south would fall. Warwick may have had a large military in the past, but most had died in the onslaught of the north. Although the veterans could easily defeat an enemy army 5 to 1, from the north and east, there was no hope. Only by liberating Transalan would there be any hope of saving themselves. But, if Traxanon could attack Transalan, then they could defeat the northern armies.* As he thought this out he went towards the fields that Warwick lived off of, and where he worked.

On the way he saw a few bandits attacking a Warwick soldier. The soldier was wielding two small daggers, while the bandits had long swords and spears. Lukas ran to help, but before he had gone 20 steps, the soldiers had disarmed 3 of the 5, had one rolling on the ground in pain, and the one fleeing into the small wood that was by the fields. The soldier brought his knives and threw them at the coward who was running away. A knife severed his hamstrings and he fell. The guard then got some rope from a peasant and tied them up.

Lukas could only stand in awe at what the soldier had done. He had heard tales of the legendary soldiers, but never seen one in action. He only hoped that the pathetic group of spearman he was drafted for could someday rival these great soldiers. His thoughts were interrupted when 3 men walked up to him, two with hoods on. One of them said, "where is your Duke, we are envoys from Traxanon and Seranixan". Lukas just pointed to the city.

The little group left and Lukas continued to the fields. Bandits were becoming more and more of a problem. He then realized that he had training that day. He hurried back to town and got ready for drill and endless marching.

After the training Lukas had many small injuries including a broken thumb. He had annoyed the Veteran drill sergeant and the drill sergeant broke his and his training partner's thumb. So now he was going to Elizebeth the healer of the small town outside of the castle. He had always liked Elizebeth, but never had the courage to make an advance. It was Max who always prevented him from getting to

her. He constantly made fun of him in front of her to stop him from getting to her. Now he had a valid reason to see her. And he hoped it would go well

"I will not leave this land. We will protect it at all costs!" the Duke of Warwick yelled at Klivack, the envoy of Seranixan.

"It is the only way!" Klivack yelled back. He was really beginning to get fed up with this duke.

"Klivack, why are you always so angry?" The Envoy of Warwick asked, mockingly.

Civlav drew his knife and stabbed it into the table, "You humans and elves are always bickering. If he wants to stay, let him stay, give his people the choice to leave."

"Neither me nor my people will be leaving!" the Duke yelled.

"Have fun being slaughtered", Klivack said, walking out the doors with Civlav and Traxon at his back.

"We will survive!" the Duke yelled back, but with doubt.

## Epilogue

### Klivack's report to the Elvin high council

*In the end, Warwick was lost to north. I, Civlav and Traxon left before the terrible assault on the capital. The duke Just wanted us out of his city. The envoy of Warwick turned out to be a spy for the Northern armies; we killed the traitor as he left for Transalan. Traxanon also fell, but only with the support of both the north and east. Seranixan continues to fight, for all enemies of the north are welcome here. Please, we require supplies, the humans are starving.*

"On guard, ready fence." James flicked his foil hitting his opponent's blade away from his chest. "A hit" cried his friend Henry who was being the judge.

"Wow James that was fast said Peter taking off his opponents mask "if you were a real knight and this was a real duel id be dead."

"No" James snickered "you'd be dead five minutes ago" At this the trio burst out laughing just as Father John walked in.

"Good Morning Boys"

"Good Morning Father John" The three chimed.

"Duke Garith would like to come to his office James" Father John informed them. James walked out of the fencing court to the sound of oooooos. He changed into fresh clothes and walked up the huge steps of the castle to the Dukes Office. He knocked five times and was told rather sharply on the fifth time to 'come in'. He walked in and said pleasantly "It's nice to see you again your honor."

"Well it's a little too soon in my view James," Duke Garith replied "James I have asked you to come see me because of your disturbance during math class this week. I was informed that you told a highly inappropriate joke in class and as a punishment I am going to assign another page of algebra problems, which will be due tomorrow."

"Yes your honor, see you soon your honor."

"Not too soon I hope" Duke Garith called after him. James hurried back to the fencing yard where Henry and Peter were waiting.

"So what did the duke want to see you about" shouted Henry as soon as James was in hearing range.

"Something about the highly inappropriate joke I told in math" James yelled back running to catch up to them. "I have to do a whole extra page of algebra as a punishment."

"A whole extra page" Henry said sarcastically rolling his eyes "that's awful. It's not like you're totally brilliant at math or anything."

"Math isn't too hard" Peter put in scratching his arm.

"speak for yourself Peter" Henry cried clutching his hair in mock outrage "I can't understand a word you or father miles say" Henry then changed his voice so it was high pitch and sounded like Peter's "To divide a fraction by a fraction you divide the first fraction's nominator by the denominator of the second fraction."

"Well actually you also have to..." Peter started but James cut in

"Henry do you know how to times fractions?"

“Yah I’m not a simpleton.”

“Well take the second fraction and switch the numbers around so the top number is on the bottom and the bottom number is on the top.”

“Then you times that with the first fraction! Oh my god James, thank you so much! It makes so much sense.” Henry cried practically hugging James (math was not his strong subject).

“Happy to help that will be ten shillings please” Henry shoved him which caused him to bump into peter who said irritably “watch it” “sorry Henry pushed me” James said and then “what’s bugging you”

“Nothing. It’s just I have a headache and my arm itches.”

“ Aww poor baby. Maybe you should go see the nurse.” Henry joked

“Maybe I will” peter replied smiling weakly, still itching his arm.

•

“Good Morning Boys”

“good morning Father John” It was Monday morning and the trio were sitting at the breakfast table eating oatmeal when Father john walked in with a letter for James. “It’s a letter from my mum” James noted seeing the hand writing. Tearing open the seal he read the letter, then sat back with a grin on his face. “It is my mum and she is writing because she misses me and wants me to come home.”

“That’s funny.”

“No its sweet, at least your parents care about you.” Peter said looking down cast and James felt a pang of sympathy. He then had what he thought a brilliant idea.

“Hey peter how about the next time I visit my family you come to.”

“I would like that Peter said giving James a small appreciative smile.

“I have ask the duke whether I can go visit or not. I’ll see you two latter.”

“See you James “

“Later man”

James left the table and climbed the stairs to the duke’s office. Like before he knocked five times and was told to ‘come in’

"James what have you done now" Duke Garith asked in an exasperated voice.

"Why do I have to be in trouble to come and see you" James said looking offended

"Well you've never done this before, so what do I owe this honor to?"

"Well my mum wishes me to visit and I was hoping you would grant me leave."

"Your sounding so eloquent today James." Duke Garith noted raising one eyebrow."

"That's because I want to stray on your good side "James replied grinning

"You're a pert James, but a smart one. Very well you seem to be ahead in everything except maturity and since you'll only create mischief you might as well create it at your own house."

Thank you so much" James cried

"You'er welcome James, I hope this will keep you out of trouble." James laughed and was half way to the door when Duke Garith said "oh yaeh please apologize to your mother for me."

"Can do." James answer good naturally. James spent the rest of the day packing and had just enough time to eat dinner and say good-bye to Henry and Peter. "I'll only be gone for about 11 days"

Why 11" peter asked

"It takes about two days to get there and I want to spend at least a week with my family.

Grinning Henry said "I totally understand" Slapping him on the back.

"Be safe" Peter whispered scratching his leg slowly

"Don't worry I will, and next time I go I'll have you to protect me" climbing onto his horse Lightning Jack he rode off to the farewells of his friends.

•

James sweated though his thin cotton shirt. He hadn't meant it. He didn't want to hill Henry but it was kill or be killed. Do or die. These thoughts reeled through his head as he warmed up.

"I hope you're ready" a voice cut though his thoughts. Turning around he saw Henry standing on the other side of the court yard. Lowering his foil James called out beseechingly "Henry please, call it off. Peter would not have wanted this."

“How dare you speak of Peter” Henry roared and with that he lunged at James with his sword. Taking that as the sign the duel had started James parried the lunge easily and waited for the next blow which was aimed for his leg. Blocking that blow he arched the two blades over their heads and stepped back. This move causes Henry sword to make a swing back towards the ground causing Henry to get off balance.

“Nice move “Henry growled

“Thanks. I always was the better swords men” James replied “even if most people didn’t know that.” He was about to say more but Henry cut him off with a blow for the left arm. James parried the blow but not quickly enough. A long gash appeared on his arm soaking his white sleeve red. Suddenly James was struck by the realization that this was not another practice. At that moment James locked blades with Henry and twisting his blade at an odd angle, he sent the other boys blade flying. For a moment neither boy could speak, then slowly James pointed his sword so it was an inch away from Henry’s throat. Kneeling Henry looked up and said sneering

“Well what are you waiting for? You won. Now you have to kill me, or are too big of a chicken to do it.”

“No Henry I could kill you but I’m not going to. Peter wouldn’t want me to and I don’t want to.” And with that he let the sword slip from his fingers and turned around. What happened next was too fast for either of them to realize what had happen in till it was all over. James had turned around and was walking away when he heard the scraping of metal and felt a searing pain in his lower chest. Looking down he saw the blade of his sword piercing his stomach. Already the blood was pouring out from the wound. Turning around he Henry standing, his arm still extended in a lunge with shock a shocked looked on his face.

“Why?” James asked falling to the ground, blood splurging from his mouth.

“Oh my god James! I didn’t mean to.” I was angry and before I knew what I was doing I stabbed you” Henry cried looking distraught. James gazed at him even as Henry slowly became more and more blurred.

“Its ok Henry,” James whispered weakly” I forgive you, so try and forgive yourself” and with one last look at the sky he died.

•

A month later two more graves appeared next to Peter’s. On read:

Henry Cardeck-age 15

Was born on May 15

Simitted to execution July 24

The other:

James Mcglassen \_ age 15

Was born on April 19

Was killed June 20

And above all three of the graves was a statue of the tree of them with a plack that read:

They followed each other

Unto death

Bided by love.

By Isabelle Geddes

Note : this is not the full copy

## Hope

by Jessica Struempfer

Clear blue waters. A sunny sky. It's just another lazy day, drifting in the ocean. Clouds come rolling in. The gray storm clouds come in fast. There is no way to prepare for the storm; it is too fast. In seconds the boat is struggling to keep above the waves and stay ahead of the lightning. The boat flips; the girl falls. She is drowning; she can't see the surface anymore. Just going down... Abby wakes with a start. "I hate nightmares." She mumbles, as she starts getting ready for another long day of school.

Abby was the first person in the class room. She didn't really know anyone enough to talk a lot during passing. By the time everyone else was in the class room she had already finished the assignment; she just pretended to keep working on it. She doesn't really want to talk much to anyone. She feels uncomfortable talking to anyone she doesn't really know.

Abby was doodling on her page when someone sat next to her.

"Mornin Abbs!"

"Hey, Hannah." Hannah dropped her books on the table with a loud thud.

"Do you have to be so loud?" Hannah laughed.

"Sorry Abbs! Hey, can you help me finish the homework from last night? I never really got around to it."

"Do you ever finish your homework on time Hannah? Why should I help?" Hannah rolled her eyes.

"Well duh! I'm too busy actually talking to people. There is a world out there, with people you know. You should go there sometime and make some friends! And with the homework, I'm too stupid and your smart so I hope you'll help me!" Abby sighed.

"Whatever Hannah. I'll help."

"Thanks so much! And after school I'm taking you to a party. You could meet people and Conor is going to be there! I know he has been looking your way a lot!"

"Yeah right. I'm not going anywhere...but you say Conor might like me? Why me? I mean, there are so many other prettier girls and why would he like a girl like me, who has no friends?"

"We have talked about this. You are going to this party and you will have fun and make friends. And what's not too like? You're so hot you're melting the ice cubes babe. Your hair is the perfect blonde color, with a little bit of brown, its curly, its soft, your eyes are different colors which is awesome! And you're smart! You're a pretty girl who's on the honor roll

with straight A's! God Abby you're so freaking perfect! If you would just talk to people you could be the most popular girl in school!"

Abby reached up to her neck to touch her necklace charm. She always wears that necklace charm; she hasn't taken it off since her best friend gave it to her three years ago. It was a friendship necklace, and the twisting pattern that meant forever in New Zealand. She thought of Brienna and wished she was here. It was always easier to talk to Brienna than Hannah.

"Hey Abbs? You in there?"

"What? Oh yeah. Umm sure I'll go to the party."

"Yes! I'm gonna get you the cutest outfit, and do your makeup, and your hair! Ahh oh my god I can't wait!"

"I'm sure you can. Now be quiet I can't hear the teacher!" Hannah laughed.

"God! You're such a nerd Abbs!"

"Come on Abbs! This is gonna be fun!" Abby looked down at her outfit. She was wearing some white skinny jeans with a blue sparkly sequin top. Her hair had been straightened and put up with some hair clips. Hannah also drenched her face in makeup, and while she said Abby looked amazing, Abby still didn't like it.

"Yeah, whatever. I look ridiculous."

"No, you look good! I think I did a pretty good job if I do say so myself!" Abby hesitated before the door.

"I changed my mind. No parties for me!" Hannah grabbed Abby's arm as she started to turn around.

"Abigail Mikelle Evans! You walk in that door right now or I will drag you in by your hair!" Abby sighed, then walked through the door with Hannah, who was jumping with excitement.

"Party time! And maybe you will get to dance with Conor!"

"I knew that! I was texting him on the way here!" Hannah raised her eyebrows in a suggestive manner. "You know it's not like that! We are just friends! How many times do I have to tell you?"

"50. Oh my gosh! There are so many people you need to meet! You're going to love Sam, and Kailey! Kailey is so funny! And we can't forget Brandon! Remind me not to forget to introduce you to him, he is the best..." As Hannah kept talking, Abby was able to sneak

away. As soon as Abby is safe, she starts looking for a quiet spot. A few minutes later she settled into a small closet and began to read the book she was able to hide from Hannah. Minutes after she got absorbed into her book, someone walks in looking for their jacket and trips over Abby.

“Sorry! I didn’t see you there!” Abby looks up to see Conor sprawled on top of her.

“Sorry Conor! I really shouldn’t be lying on the floor of a closet.” Abby finds herself staring into Conor’s brown eyes.

“That depends. Is it comfortable?”

“No, not really.”

“Let me see.” Abby blushes and looks down as Conor sits down next to her in the dark, small space. “It’s not that bad down here. Why aren’t you out there enjoying the party? You should be showing off how nice you look!” Abby blushed even deeper, if that is possible.

“It was all Hannah could do to drag me out here in the first place. I had to hide this book from her too. And this book is very entertaining, so technically I am enjoying myself!”  
Conor laughed.

“I guess this counts then. You are at the party and you are entertained!” Abby and Conor sit for awhile and just talk, and soon enough Hannah comes walking in.

“Hey Abbs! I was looking all over for you!” Hannah looks around, and then sees Conor. “Oh, hi Conor! I didn’t see you there! Well, Abbs, I think it’s time to head back.” Conor looks straight at Abby.

“I guess I have to say goodbye then. It is getting pretty late. Bye you guys!” Abby and Hannah both stare daggers into Conor’s back as he walks away.

“Ooo someone’s in love!”

“Shut up Hannah! We’re just friends and I’m planning to keep it that way!”

“Whatever, love bird.” Abby just silently walks outside, headed for the car.

By the time Abby gets home, she is exhausted. The whole car ride home was full of just Hannah calling Abby and Conor love birds. “We’re just friends” Abby thinks to herself. “Nothing will ever happen between us. We’re better off as just friends.” She decides to skip dinner and just go to sleep. “There is a big test tomorrow.” She thinks as she begins to drift off.

Abby wakes up, gasping for air. “Drowning would be a horrible way to go.” Abby mumbles. “It hurts too much.” Abby checks her clock. It’s 2 a.m. As she tries to fall back asleep, she thinks about what she and Conor talked about. Suddenly she starts worrying. Could he have figured it out? Does he know what is eating away at her inside? No, of course he

doesn't. He would've said something to me. She keeps telling herself this as she falls back into a fretful sleep.

While the tests were being handed back, Hannah slips into the seat next to Abby. "We need to talk Abby."

"Okay, about what?"

"You. You've been acting different lately, like something is bothering you."

"Nothing is wrong Hannah! I haven't been acting differently!" Hannah looked straight into Abby's eyes.

"Look at me. You've dropped out of swim team, choir, even seminar! You've stopped talking to all of your friends-"

"I'm talking to you and Conor aren't I?"

"-You don't even try to make yourself look pretty in the morning! You're so disconnected; you've forgotten how to have fun! Talk to us Abby! We're here to help!" Abby looks at Hannah.

"Us?" Hannah starts looking around and waving her arms around trying to explain.

"I didn't say us, no one else noticed, I mean, who would notice? You're practically invisible!" Abby looks Hannah straight in the eyes.

"Who is us Hannah? Tell me." Hannah puts on a slightly guilty face.

"Okay, okay! It's Conor. He noticed that you were acting differently first! But that's not the point. We miss who you used to be!" Abby looks down at her test.

"There is nothing wrong with me you hear? I am completely, 100% fine." Hannah gives a tired sigh.

"Just meet Conor and I at the pizza place okay? Please?" Abby rolls her eyes. "That better be a yes!" Hannah exclaims. "I'm not accepting anything else!"

When Abby walked into the brightly lit pizza shop the first thing she saw was a cardboard cutout of a little Italian man holding a little pepperoni pizza. Figures, she thought. She weaves between the tables before she gets to the back to find Hannah and Conor waiting for her. Conor and Hannah keep their eyes on Abby as she takes her seat at the round table.

Conor smiled warmly at Abby as she sat down at the table. "Hey Abby! Do you like pepperoni? The waiter was getting impatient so I had to order." Abby nods.

"So you guys wanted to talk? What's up?" Hannah sits nervously as Conor responds.

“Well, I know I needed help with my math homework-“

“God I can’t take it anymore!” Hannah interrupts. “We asked you to come here because you’ve been acting differently and we know something is wrong and.... and...” Hannah stutters. Abby starts thinking of excuses. Should I tell them nothing is wrong? No, that won’t work they already suspect too much. I should make something up. Tell them my cat died. Yeah, that should work. As Abby begins to open her mouth to tell the lie, her phone rings.

Abby looks at the caller I.D. Oh no, she thinks. Abby stands up from the table. “well you guys, this was fun but I have to get going now.” Hannah just stares while Conor tries to start talking.

“Abby-“

“Bye guys, see you Monday.” Hannah and Conor’s eyes follow Abby as she picks her way around the packed restaurant, then walks out the door.

Abby wakes up with a start from another nightmare. This time, the girl was just standing in the forest, enjoying the beauty of nature. Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake. Trees were tipping over from the roots, rocks were going everywhere, and the girl was scared. She had no idea where to go or what to do. Suddenly a rock came flying through the air. It got closer, and closer. The girl screamed, terrified. Just before impact, Abby woke up. She still can’t find a way to help the girl.

Clear blue waters. A sunny sky. It's just another lazy day, drifting in the ocean. Clouds come rolling in. The gray storm clouds come in fast. There is no way to prepare for the storm; it is too fast. In seconds the boat is struggling to keep above the waves and stay ahead of the lightning. The boat flips; the girl falls. She is drowning; she can't see the surface anymore. Just going down... Abby wakes with a start. "I hate nightmares." She mumbles, as she starts getting ready for another long day of school.

Abby was the first person in the class room. She didn't really know anyone enough to talk a lot during passing. By the time everyone else was in the class room she had already finished the assignment; she just pretended to keep working on it. She doesn't really want to talk much to anyone. She feels uncomfortable talking to anyone she doesn't really know.

Abby was doodling on her page when someone sat next to her.

"Mornin Abbs!"

"Hey, Hannah." Hannah dropped her books on the table with a loud thud.

"Do you have to be so loud?" Hannah laughed.

"Sorry Abbs! Hey, can you help me finish the homework from last night? I never really got around to it."

"Do you ever finish your homework on time Hannah? Why should I help?" Hannah rolled her eyes.

"Well duh! I'm too busy actually talking to people. There is a world out there, with people you know. You should go there sometime and make some friends! And with the homework, I'm too stupid and your smart so I hope you'll help me!" Abby sighed.

"Whatever Hannah. I'll help."

"Thanks so much! And after school I'm taking you to a party. You could meet people and Conor is going to be there! I know he has been looking your way a lot!"

"Yeah right. I'm not going anywhere...but you say Conor might like me? Why me? I mean, there are so many other prettier girls and why would he like a girl like me, who has no friends?"

"We have talked about this. You are going to this party and you will have fun and make friends. And what's not too like? You're so hot you're melting the ice cubes babe. Your hair is the perfect blonde color, with a little bit of brown, its curly, its soft, your eyes are different colors which is awesome! And you're smart! You're a pretty girl who's on the honor roll with straight A's! God Abby you're so freaking perfect! If you would just talk to people you could be the most popular girl in school!"

Abby reached up to her neck to touch her necklace charm. She always wears that necklace charm; she hasn't taken it off since her best friend gave it to her three years ago. It was a

friendship necklace, and the twisting pattern that meant forever in New Zealand. She thought of Brienna and wished she was here. It was always easier to talk to Brienna than Hannah.

“Hey Abbs? You in there?”

“What? Oh yeah. Umm sure I’ll go to the party.”

“Yes! I’m gonna get you the cutest outfit, and do your makeup, and your hair! Ahh oh my god I can’t wait!”

“I’m sure you can. Now be quiet I can’t hear the teacher!” Hannah laughed.

“God! You’re such a nerd Abbs!”

“Come on Abbs! This is gonna be fun!” Abby looked down at her outfit. She was wearing some white skinny jeans with a blue sparkly sequin top. Her hair had been straightened and put up with some hair clips. Hannah also drenched her face in makeup, and while she said Abby looked amazing, Abby still didn’t like it.

“Yeah, whatever. I look ridiculous.”

“No, you look good! I think I did a pretty good job if I do say so myself!” Abby hesitated before the door.

“I changed my mind. No parties for me!” Hannah grabbed Abby’s arm as she started to turn around.

“Abigail Mikelle Evans! You walk in that door right now or I will drag you in by your hair!” Abby sighed, then walked through the door with Hannah, who was jumping with excitement.

“Party time! And maybe you will get to dance with Conor!”

“I knew that! I was texting him on the way here!” Hannah raised her eyebrows in a suggestive manner. “You know it’s not like that! We are just friends! How many times do I have to tell you?”

“50. Oh my gosh! There are so many people you need to meet! You’re going to love Sam, and Kailey! Kailey is so funny! And we can’t forget Brandon! Remind me not to forget to introduce you to him, he is the best...” As Hannah kept talking, Abby was able to sneak away. As soon as Abby is safe, she starts looking for a quiet spot. A few minutes later she settled into a small closet and began to read the book she was able to hide from Hannah. Minutes after she got absorbed into her book, someone walks in looking for their jacket and trips over Abby.

“Sorry! I didn’t see you there!” Abby looks up to see Conor sprawled on top of her.

“Sorry Conor! I really shouldn’t be lying on the floor of a closet.” Abby finds herself staring into Conor’s brown eyes.

“That depends. Is it comfortable?”

“No, not really.”

“Let me see.” Abby blushes and looks down as Conor sits down next to her in the dark, small space. “It’s not that bad down here. Why aren’t you out there enjoying the party? You should be showing off how nice you look!” Abby blushed even deeper, if that is possible.

“It was all Hannah could do to drag me out here in the first place. I had to hide this book from her too. And this book is very entertaining, so technically I am enjoying myself!”  
Conor laughed.

“I guess this counts then. You are at the party and you are entertained!” Abby and Conor sit for awhile and just talk, and soon enough Hannah comes walking in.

“Hey Abbs! I was looking all over for you!” Hannah looks around, and then sees Conor. “Oh, hi Conor! I didn’t see you there! Well, Abbs, I think it’s time to head back.” Conor looks straight at Abby.

“I guess I have to say goodbye then. It is getting pretty late. Bye you guys!” Abby and Hannah both stare daggers into Conor’s back as he walks away.

“Ooo someone’s in love!”

“Shut up Hannah! We’re just friends and I’m planning to keep it that way!”

“Whatever, love bird.” Abby just silently walks outside, headed for the car.

# Don't Leave Me

By Kaileigh Krosse

Cameron walked silently through the street, walking slowly as to capture the early morning sunrise. As the pink and yellow light painted the lamp posts and shop windows, Cameron edged closer and closer to a place where she didn't want to go.

She fingered a pansy in a hanging basket. Then Cameron traced a design on the pavement with her shoe. Anything to keep her from getting there sooner.

Cameron sat down on the sidewalk and leaned her head against a lamp post. She closed her eyes and listened. She could hear the birds chirping and heard the gentle breeze rustle the maple and alder trees. Cameron inhaled the scent of flowers and wet asphalt –it had rained that night – and felt the bare skin on her face and arms tingle as the cool wind washed over her.

Then Cameron got up and began walking up the street once more. She turned left onto Jackson Street and then right onto a little dirt lane.

The lane was lined with shrubbery peeking out through the white picket fence. The house up ahead was large: three stories, a giant wrap-around porch. All of it was completely white-washed. It hurt to look at the structure for too long: it practically glowed in the now bright morning sun.

This house was way too big for only two old people and a kid. The Hanlons were both about a billion years old. The both of them had light grey hair and faces and hands so wrinkled they sagged downwards, making them look stretched; in more ways than one.

Then there was Cameron: a fourteen-year-old living with billion year old foster parents. Cameron had chestnut hair and olive colored skin. Her eyes were the most extraordinary shade of green: a mix of pine and ocean green. Those green eyes stare at you hard, a penetrating gaze that sometimes made you uncomfortable, and other times made you sad.

Cameron's parents weren't dead, well, not both of them. Her mother had died of a brain tumor when Cameron was only six months old. Her father was off fighting in the war in Afghanistan.

Cameron thought on her past as she fished around in her pocket for her house key. Cameron wished that her mother was still alive, for more than one reason. She didn't want to have to deal with her dad's horrible lawyer, Jon Ross. Cameron needed for someone besides the Hanlons to take care of her. There were a couple of other reasons that Cameron had thought of as well, but she didn't really want to think about them that much.

Whenever she'd think about her family, Cameron would start to cry, and that's what started to happen. She quickly switched her thoughts to how the stupid house key wouldn't open the door.

When Cameron finally got the door open, she kicked off her shoes and walked into the kitchen to pour herself some cheerios.

By the time Mrs. Hanlon came down the steps in her ridiculously pink and fuzzy robe and bunny slippers, Cameron was putting on her shoes to go. Mrs. Hanlon said groggily, "Don't forget your late assignments. If you get another note sent home about them I swear I'll kill you."

Cameron took the assignments out of her pack and held them up, rolling her eyes. Then she opened the door and headed out again.

On her way to school, Cameron did nothing but mumble angrily to herself and kick rocks. Lots of things made her mad. The Hanlons did, her math teacher, Mr. Dossit, did, being alone did... so Cameron was pretty fired up by the time she got to school.

Cameron's friend Sam came up to her and said, "Hey how's it going..." she trailed off when she saw the look on Cameron's face.

"Fine," Cameron spat, "just great. I just *seriously* hope that Mr. Dossit doesn't rag on me today." The two girls stood in silence for a while, and then the bell rang. Sam said, "Yeah. I know. But just don't give him a reason to get mad at you."

As they walked into the building Cameron said, "But how can I control if the guy gets angry if I don't understand pre-algebra?!"

\*\*\*

Cameron was slumped on the couch staring at the floor while listening to Mr. and Mrs. Hanlons yell at her about how horrible it is to throw a chair at your math teacher.

Mrs. Hanlon screeched, "What the... what were you thinking?!" Cameron glanced up and shrugged.

"I don't know." She said. One phrase answers were the best at this stage in an argument.

"You don't know?! How could you not know what was going through that little pea brain of yours?!" Mr. Hanlon had smacked the side of Cameron's head when he'd said, 'little pea brain.'

Cameron sat bolt upright and stared at him with a look of hatred in her eyes. You could tell by Mr. Hanlon's expression that he'd accidentally hit her a lot harder than he'd meant to, but Cameron wasn't going to let that slide.

She screamed as loud as she could, "Don't even TOUCH me!! I threw that chair because the teacher was explaining something I didn't understand. I told him that and then he said to me that my brain was too small to understand anything!" Cameron stared at the Hanlon's with tears in her eyes. She could see that they were really sorry, but she kept going. "Mr. Dossit always does that stuff to me, and I'm sick of it! I shouldn't have to deal with that at school."

Mr. Hanlon said softly, you're right Cameron. I'm sorry that I hit you, and now I remember you telling us these things about your teacher. I'm really, very sorry."

Tears streamed down Cameron's face. She said "Whatever!" and turned her back on them. Cameron hated for people to see her cry. Just as Mr. Hanlon was about to say something, there was an abrupt knock at the front door. There was a moment where no one moved. Then Mrs. Hanlon bustled to the door and opened it.

There were some unintelligible whispers and mumbles. Cameron heard her name mentioned a couple of times.

Then Mrs. Hanlon said weakly, "Cameron, come here please, sweetie." Cameron knew there was something majorly wrong. Mrs. Hanlon had called her 'sweetie.' She went to the front door, and there stood a tall man in a spiffy-looking military uniform. He didn't even need to say anything. His face said it all.

Cameron had started to sob before the man finished saying, "I'm sorry to inform you that your father, Captain Michael J. Lennox has been reported 'Missing in Action.' We've looked for months, and we haven't found him. I'm so sorry."

Cameron started to say, "No, no, no..." it grew from a hoarse whisper to a piercing scream. She cried, "Don't leave me..."

"Brr! I can't believe you got me to do that!" Sami's friend violet shouted. "c'mon, you have to be able to swim in glacier water to be a true Alaskan!" Sami laughed. "Her wet hair dripped down over her shoulders and down to the ground where a small puddle was forming. Do you want to go get food?" she asked and clutched her stomach in fake starvation. "Ok!" violet agreed and the two of them started towards town. "Hey... is that Jesse over there?" Before violet could answer, Sami in her dripping towel was running frantically down the road, waving her arms. "Jesse, Jesse!" Sami finally stopped running and grabbed Jesse's arm. "Do you want to go and get pizza with me and violet?" Sami panted. "Uh yeah sure" Jesse mumbled. "Why are you just wearing a towel?" "I just went swimming in glacier melt!" Sami replied happily. "Let's go ok?"

The next day at school, Sami was walking down the hall, swinging her bag, with her heavy science books, when she almost tripped over her friend. "Where are you going after school Sami?" Jesse asked her. Nice thing to say after almost knocking someone flat on their face! Sami thought. "I'm uh... I mean I can't remember" Sami stuttered. "Oh... Huh" Jesse pouted. "See ya then". Sami knew perfectly well where she was going after school and it was shopping. That might seem like a fun thing to do with your friends, but not for Sami. The thought of going shopping made her remember things that she would rather not. Sami's parents didn't buy her clothes for her. They didn't buy her snacks for her. They simply gave her money to do it herself. Such lousy parents, Sami thought. She had never been close to them and they had never expressed any interest in being closer. Sami was the kind of person who you would think would like this, would be very independent, and able to take care of herself. Of course she was, and didn't think that was a bad thing, but just the fact that she had to be. If she didn't know how to act around other people, count money, or even if she was really shy, she didn't reckon she'd have lived the 13 years she had. Sami slowly calmed herself from her private rant, and continued walking to class. The vision of her parents wouldn't stop swirling around her head though, and it just made

her more and more mad. By the end of the day she was so upset that she started crying the moment she ran out the door at the final bell. Sami wasn't old enough to drive yet, so she had to take the bus like she always did when she went to the mall. It made her embarrassed that she was crying, but she tried to ignore all the strange looks she got from people. At least the looks weren't as bad as what she was feeling.

Sami's sopping shoes squeaked as she ran through the sudden downpour on the way home from the bus stop. She almost missed her street, and veered onto the sidewalk, stumbling like she was drunk as a jeep almost ran her over. She sighed and squeezed her eyes shut as tears started to stream down her cheeks. Her bags full of food and clothes hit her legs and reminded her where she had just been. Clothes shopping. Buying food for her lunches and dinners! Without her parents. When she reached her driveway, she wiped her tears away and tried to look composed and perfect, almost out of habit. Just to please mom, she grumbled. Why doesn't she do anything for me? She wondered. Sami pushed open the squeaky front door and dumped her bags on the floor. Her mother burst out of the laundry room holding a blue tablecloth in her newly manicured fingers. Sami knew what all that meant. "Chop chop, Sami! Put your things away and get ready!" Sami groaned. Why did she have to be part of all her parent's parties? Her mom handed her a dark pink chiffon strapless babydoll dress with soft ruffles. At least it was pretty, Sami thought. But probably not very comfortable. But why would her mother care about that? She didn't even take into account that Sami "possibly" could have homework! Annoyed, Sami rushed upstairs, into her room, and slammed the door for added drama. She threw the shopping bags and the dress at the wall as hard as she could, and they landed with a thud. She sighed heavily and her breath shook with anger and sadness. Defeated, she slumped in front of the mirror to change.

Sami slowly changed from her plain red shirt and black crop sweatpants with neon splatters (She splattered them herself) into the fancy dress. She smiled when she noticed that she hardly looked any different (because of her drastically highlighted hair). That was a good thing. The one thing that was good about having uninvolved parents was being able to do whatever you want to your appearance. The only good thing. Sami's mother wouldn't expect her for a little while so she had some time to herself. She pushed open her window and scooted her legs around so they were dangling off the outside. Sami did this often, especially when she was sad. She could look out on to the street behind her house and watch cars go by. A gust of wind blew by, and she saw a shivering boy cross the street in a heavy coat and raggedy pants. What was he doing? She thought. Where was he going by himself at night? He could just be going home like me, it occurred to her, but then she noticed that the boy was so little, and sad looking. Who took care of him? It looked like no one. It struck her for the first time in her life that her parents really weren't the worst they could be. She should have known this by now, and she probably did, deep down, but it hadn't really come to her mind when she thought of how they neglected her. Of course they wouldn't be allowed to dress me in rags, she thought, because Sami had a very rich family, but she realized at that moment that her life surely was different and better from that little boy's. She sighed and swung her legs around to step into her room again. She felt better than she ever had about her parents, and actually felt lucky to have them, because no matter what they didn't do for Sami, she was sure a lot of poor kids would kill to have their parents take care of them as much as hers did. After all, no one's perfect she smiled, remembering something she had heard when she was little. "Hmm... I think my mom told me that" she whispered to herself, and smiled again.

"Yea, I know mom. Meet in the 'basement' at 12:30. O.K., mom I will. O.K.!! I get it, don't be late or else. K. Love you too, bye." Cami flipped her phone shut and looked up at the ceiling in the girls locker room. She breathed a sigh of exasperation. Today was the day that her mom would bring her before her 'counsel' and ask to let her work in her mom's agency. Cami's mom was an agent at the ASB agency...actually, her mom owned it. As Cami was about to get up, she heard one of her friends calling her name, so she got up and skipped out to find her.

Her friend was waiting for her outside. "I figured you'd be in there. You usually are. It's like you have some sort of secret meetings or something in there." "Well, I kinda do have little meetings, but usually over the phone." Cami thought. "Hay, a couple of us are going out to ice cream and pizza for lunch. Dou you wanna come?" said her friend. "I would love to, but I have stuff planned with my mom. Sorry. Maybe next time?" "Sure, whatever. See you in class."

'I can't believe this!' thought Cami as she slammed the door to her room. Cami was fuming about how the meeting went. Her mother's stupid, idiotic, sexist agents had denied her application. Then there had been a vote to see how many wanted her to join and the worst part? The worst part was that her own mother had voted against her. Cami started packing a bag full of clothes, food, water, and things that she would need for three days. Next, she started planning on where she would go. A half an hour later, she set out to 'disappear' for the next three days.

Her plan worked very well. It worked so well that her mom not only sent out her top agents, but also the police. After her three days, she set out for home. Carefully and easily dodging agents and the police. Cami decided to sneak in as quiet as possible.

As soon as she walked through the door, she heard someone say "I'm so glad the she's gone! She's such a little bratt. She thinks she's soo good, but she's not." 'Donovan' Cami thought. 'He was always jealous because when I five, I beat him in a maze and won a hundred bucks.' "I actually like her. She's really good at sneaking up on people...the element of surprise." Said another voice. 'Good old Jake. He's always sticking up for me. Not to mention he's telling the truth about sneaking up on people.' During the time that she had heard them talking, she had snuck up behind Donovan. The only reason that Jake knew that she was there was because she had let him see her. "Whatever! She sucks at sneaking up on people!" It was time to end this and to make herself known. "Actually, Donovan, I'm pretty good at it. Take now for example. The only reason that Jake saw me was because I let him." Cami had a huge smirk on her face. "How long have you been standing there?" asked a very rosy cheeked Donovan. "Long enough to hear you." Cami said smugly. "Oh, and if I ever

catch you talking like that about anyone in the agency, you'll be packing up your stuff and finding a new job. You're lucky I didn't have a voice recorder." Said fiercely, but still smiling.

Cami pushed open her mom's bedroom door just a tiny little crack and took a peek. Her mom was sitting in the middle of her bed under huge mound of a goose-down comforter. She was watching the news for any sign of someone finding her daughter. "Mom?" said Cami softly. "Cami!!" her mom shouted with joy as she raced over to her daughter and caught her up in a huge tight hug. When they finally broke apart, Cami thought to herself 'Here comes the scolding' and she was right.

# The War



Noah Perlmutter

# 1

Harsh rays of sun streamed through the translucent cockpit. They bounced back and forth across the in-glass instruments and created dazzling rainbows, shafts of light that could even penetrate the thick tinted sunglasses of Lt. James Farell. Farell squinted and took his hand off the joystick of his P-51 mustang. Guarding these B-17 bombers was going to be easy. He rubbed his numb hands together and shivered.

Afraid that any small movement might send him into the South China Sea below, he reattached his hand to the joystick.

Suddenly, there was a flash of bright light. There was an explosion as his right wing man's plane burst into showering pieces of gleaming metal.

Farell reacted quickly. He pulled on the joystick and the plane rolled to the left. Farell finished his escaping roll and put the plane into a sharp banking turn. He pulled the cocking lever for his six Browning .50 caliber machine guns. Almost done with the tight turn, Farell looked out of the side window. Then he saw them:

3 glittering Mitsubishi Zeroes.

He yelled into his comlink, "Got three zekes. I'll take them down."

He squinted through his gunsight and pressed the trigger. Rat-tat-tat-tat-tat-tat-tat. The zeroes dodged this way and that, trying to evade Farell's bullets. Two caught on fire and plunged towards the sea below. The last pilot was smarter than the others. He had evaded Lt. Farell's fire.

Then he did something foolhardy. The Zero pilot pulled back on his joystick. His plane roared and struggled to complete a loop. The man behind Farell shot at the Zero. The slugs penetrated the Zero plane, but did no real damage.

The Zero pilot managed to complete the loop and fire at the man behind Farell. The man behind Farell knew that he would be shot down, so he released the throttle. The Zero and his pilot had no time to react, and they crashed into the man behind Farell's plane. James Farell sighed in relief. The rest of the trip was uneventful.



He walked hurriedly to the general's tent. He walked in.

"Sir"

"At ease, soldier. I've been hearing some good things about you, Farrell."

"Thank you, sir."

"I've decided to give you a mission of all missions. You will survey and report the defenses of a small island, Iwo Jima. It is heavily defended. I can assure you. You will scout, destroy any fighters, and if you return back alive, I will make you a First Lieutenant."

"Alone."

"No, of course not. You will be accompanied by two men."

"Of course, sir."

"Takeoff will be at 06:30. That is all."

"Thank you sir."

James Farrell was troubled. He showered, undressed, and got onto his cot.

"Howe"

"Yep"

"This may be the last time you see me."

### 3

A bloodred sky. The birds were still asleep. James Farrell tiptoed out of his tent. He had all of his gear, but still he felt like a piece of him was missing. Farrell climbed onto the wing of his P-51.

Larry and John, the pilots who accompanied him, did the same. Farrell gave the technician a thumbs up. Then he taxied to the runway.

After completing a flight check, he pushed the throttle and the plane sped down the runway. His wheels lifted off. The Mustang climbed steeply, early morning sunlight glinting off its silver fuselage.

## 4

Farell bit his tongue to keep from falling asleep. That coffee had not lasted long, he thought. James called into his comlink,

“Right wing, left wing. Loop around 1.”

Larry and John murmured assent, and they started the maneuver.

The maneuver was used against pursuing enemy planes normally, but Farell had called this one for practice. His two wingmen looped around and he pulled back on his joystick to complete a full loop. The plane submitted to his strength and completed the loop. He whooped and yelled into his comlink,

“Nicely done, boys.”

They cheered and made their planes swish this way and that. Farell locked his joystick and pulled out a map.

“Guys, we’re almost there.”

In the distance they could discern an island.

“There it is.”

Farell unlocked the joystick and called into his comlink,

“Defensive V.”

His wingmen slowed and they came together to form a triangle. When they were almost above the island, they heard a noise. It sounded like this:

POM – POM – POM – POM – POM – POM

Farell yelled,

“It’s flak, dive and roll. The planes broke formation and dived and rolled in between the towers of flak. Some Japanese fighters came up and the Flak cannons stopped firing.

When they had destroyed the fighters, they decided to head back. They had successfully scouted the island of Iwo Jima.

## 5

Their touch down at the base airstrip was not pleasant. The field had become sodden with the copious amounts of rain that had been dropped on the base while they were away.

It was still drizzling, and when Farell taxied into the hangar, he was already wet. The first thing he noticed when he stepped out of the plane was the lack of people. The base was not quite deserted, but most of the army men and marines were gone. Marines!

WHERE WAS HOWE!

He ran all over the camp, shouting,

“Howe, where are you.”

Howard Johnson was nowhere to be found. He ran to General Smith and yelled,

“What the hell is going on.”

The general looked coldly and James.

“You returned from your mission, I see. But sadly, your insolence towards me will not be tolerated. Your promotion is revoked. To answer your question, however, a bit of resistance has flared up in the south. It seems like we didn’t kill all the Japs.”

Farell had heard enough. He ambled back to the tent, murmuring,  
“He is going to be OK.”

## 6

Several days later, most of the marines and army men returned. Farell quickly went up to a blood-splattered marine he recognized from Howard’s squad. He asked,

“Do you know where Howe is?”

The marine looked sadly at James.

“We were in a bit of a tight spot where the Japs were on a ridge. Howe went forward bravely while our snipers covered him. But he never came back. When we got to the ridge, there was no one to be found. The Japs probably chopped him up and threw him in the river.”

Farell stared blankly at the marine, unable to believe what had happened.

The marine continued, “Actually, I got into a fix myself. There were 5 Japs firing at me. I took out two with my grenade,” whereupon he showed James a blood splatter and a piece of skin sticking to his shirt.

“I took out another two with my M1 Garand rifle, both in the head. For the last one, I snuck up behind him, grabbed his bayonet, kicked his gun out of his hands, and stabbed him right through the throat.” He showed an entirely blood – soaked portion of his shirt stretching from his neckline to the bottom of his ribcage.

Farell was angry. He stalked away with fury in his eyes. He was going to kill those Japs. He would become a better and more deadly pilot in revenge for Howe’s death. He would stop blood-shed with more blood-shed. He did not care about the ethical truth or falseness.

He would avenge Howard Johnson.

[End of part 1. This is also the end of this particular excerpt.]

# Skate

By Orion Cohen

Everything was yellow and there was a loud ringing in Rays ears. There was a metallic taste in his mouth. He thought back to his morning and started to fall asleep, it was so peaceful.

Ray awoke to the sound of his phone buzzing. He glanced over at the clock. Saturday 12:23am. Who would call him this early? He thought. The phone stopped buzzing and he laid his head back down. Rays of light went through the blinds and all over the room. Ray looked over at his dresser and grabbed his pants, which were limply hanging off the corner of dresser. He threw his pants on and sleepily inched over to his closet. The doors were open so he scanned the small space for a clean shirt. He grabbed a red shirt with a skull taking up most of the front. Yawning loudly he stumbled over to his dresser and grabbed his phone. One missed call from Mom. Ray sighed. He flipped his phone open and dialed. The phone rang twice before his mom picked up.

“Hello”

“Hi Mom”

“Joe” His mom squeaked excitedly.

“No its me Mom”

“Oh”

“You’re always expecting Joe,” Ray spat.

“Honey, Joe and I were talking earlier about the raise he just got, but he had to go. Maybe if you got a real job I’d be more exited to hear from you.”

“Mom with college and everything, I can’t get a full time job.”

“Community college.”

“That’s still college.”

“Your brother went to medical school you know.”

"I'm sorry I'm not Joe."

Maybe if you gave up your silly little skateboarding hobby you could get a job."

"That will be my job."

"You're not good enough."

His mom's words stung Ray.

"Mom! I am good enough!" He yelled unsure.

"Sweetie, There's no need to get worked up. I heard about your little tournament last week. You got dead last out of 31 people, didn't you."

Ray pressed the hang up button hard and slammed his phone angrily down on the dresser. Suddenly regretting his decision, he picked his phone making sure the screen wasn't cracked and gently put it in his pocket. Ray's mind was in turmoil. He was good enough to go pro, he'd only done badly in the tournament because he had bad luck. Ed only got second because he was really lucky and John got fourth because he somehow did one hard stunt on the half pipe. It was all in the luck. Ray picked up the remote and flicked on the beat up TV. 20\$ a month for cable was totally worth all the time he spent watching TV, mostly skateboarding programs. Ray flipped to espn, I was poker but a Toni Hawk skateboarding special was supposed to start in seven minutes. After the special ended at two, Ray took a shower, still seething about his conversation with his mom. He got out, dried off and got dressed. As he sat back down on his rundown couch he got a text.

"Dude come down to the park."

It was John. Ray hit the reply button and his fingers flew like lightning.

"Not now I'm not in the mood."

"Come on this is y u suck."

As Ray read the screen he became angry.

"FINE, I'll be down there in 30min," Ray pounded out.

Ray flicked on the TV, too angry to go down just yet. First, his mom then this, he wished he'd never entered that tournament. The show was a recap of what he had just watched. It was talking about how Toni Hawk changed skateboarding and the tricks he'd done it with. The screen showed Toni doing a backflip in slow motion. When Toni landed Ray flicked off the TV and grabbed his shoes from by the door. He

slipped them on. A pair of Nike Airs. He snagged his skateboard on his way out the door. Ray strutted briskly down the long hallway, doors evenly spaced on either side. The carpet was an ugly grey color. The type of carpet often put over concrete. Ray reached the end of the hallway and flew down a flight of stairs. He went through a door pressing down on the door opener with the top of this skateboard. He got onto the sidewalk and put down his board. He put one foot on it and gave himself a push, then he was gliding.. people stepped out of his way which ray enjoyed it gave him a sense of power. After twenty minutes Ray was at the skatepark. John was waiting for him outside.

“Dude, before you got here I was getting major air on the half pipe,” John trumpeted.

Ray got the feeling he was being teased. He had done badly on the half pipe in the tournament.

“Dude, I wasn’t sure you’d come after getting scraped up last week.”

“Shut up dude,” Ray snapped, frustrated.

John chuckled.

“Ed should be here soon.”

The skate park itself was a large building that was basically skateboard heaven. A single shop sold everything skateboard you’d need. The rest of the building was jumps, rails, halfpipes, quarter pipes and everything else skateboard.

“Dude, you sucked at the tournament last week.”

“Shut up, I had bad luck.”

“Yeah, sure. No, you suck.”

“No dude I wasn’t trying my hardest.”

“Sure,” John sarcastically remarked.

They sat in silence for a few minutes on a bench outside the skatepark.

“Dude it’s about time you got here.”

Ed skated up to them.

“Whoa, Ray, you’re here. I expected you to quit, Since you SUCK.”

Ed and John both laughed.

“He said he had bad luck,” John mused.

“I did.”

“B.S. you just suck,” Ed shouted.

Ed and John went in laughing and Ray followed behind them. Ray was fuming, why the heck did he hang out with these losers? They were both IDIOTS. They all went up to a half pipe and climbed to the top. Ends rose about six feet off the ground and the center touched the ground.

“Okay dude I’ll go first.”

John gracefully glided down the half pipe and caught a foot of air at the other side. He turned around and went back to where they were standing.

“I got this.”

Ed jumped off and zoomed across the half pipe getting almost three feet of air and doing a kickflip at the other end.

“Holy crap dude, that was awesome,” John yelled.

“Ray go,” John commanded.

John and Ed both snickered. Ray jumped onto his skateboard and went down the pipe. He went off the top and got a few inches of air. As he was going down his wheel hit the corner of the half pipe and his board fell behind him. Ray fell straight down, putting up his arms to shield himself. His arms scraped along the half pipe shaving the skin off his forearms. Ed burst out laughing. Ray lay there for a second. Anger boiling up inside him. His skateboard landed on his knee. John started laughing too. That was it. He climbed to his feet, blood dripping down his arms and through his hands. Drops of blood fell off his fingers and splattered on the ground. John and Ed both stopped laughing.

“Dude, are you okay?” John said worried.

“He’s fine, anyway who cares, it’s Ray,” Ed laughed.

Ray grabbed his skateboard and walked off the pipe. They would respect him, he would prove how good he was and amaze them. He would make millions and his mom would love him more than Joe. Joe would be proud of him too and not treat him like an embarrassing secret. Ray walked towards the biggest halfpipe there. With 18 foot high walls, it was rightfully nicknamed “The Monster.” Other Skaters noticed Ray and the blood dripping from his arms. They murmured things like:

“Look at him,” “Oh my god,” “Somebody stop him,” and a variety of other exclamations.

Somebody began to walk towards him but he thrashed his arm at them splattering them with blood. At that point the shock wore off and shivers of pain shook Ray. But he kept going, he would be respected. He began to climb the ladder to the top of the half pipe.

“Dude stop,” a voice from behind him yelled

He didn't stop. Ray reached the top of the half pipe and looked down on the people below, everyone was watching him. He put his board below him and put one foot on it.

“Stop,” Ed yelled.

“Why?”

“You'll die”

“No I won't, I'm the best.”

Ray pushed onto the half pipe and rocketed down, flying up the other side. He flew into the air and began a backflip. In midair his board flew out from under him. He had too much foot speed and his board flew out from under him. Ray's skull cracked against the corner of the pipe as he came down.

Everything was yellow and there was a loud ringing in Rays ears. There was a metallic taste in his mouth. There was some sort of commotion around him, he didn't know why. He knew that he was tired though, so he closed his eyes and went to sleep.

# Fish and Soup

By Robert Newman

“Sally, what are you doing?” a voice yelled from downstairs.

“We have to be at the party in 15 minutes, and you’re not even washed or dressed!”

“I’m almost ready mom!” Sally yelled back.

She put the dead goldfish she was holding back in its jar and looked around for the lid. She found it under another dead goldfish jar. Then, she screwed on the cap and put it on her desk.

“What is taking so long?” the door flew open and Sally’s mom walked in.

“Sally I already told you that the dinner party starts very soon! You should be ready to go by now!”

“Why do I have to go to this dumb party anyway? I just wanna stay here and look at the insides of goldie!”

“Sally, that’s disgusting! Now hurry up and get your dress on!”

“No! I don’t want to go!”

“Sally, you have to!”

“No! You can’t make me!”

“Actually, I can make you. It’s just too bad that you’ll have to go to the party looking like that!”

“What’s wrong with what I’m wearing?”

“It’s just that this is a very fancy dinner party, and everyone except you will be all dressed up.”

“Fine, I’ll put my dress on!”

“Thank you, Sally.”

Sally’s mom smiled. Sally frowned.

“THWACK!” Sally stabbed her fork into the underside of the table. She wiggled it around to loosen it, then she pulled it out.

“I’m so bored mommy!” Sally moaned at her mom.

“THWACK!” again with the fork.

“Not now sweetie.” Sally’s mom answered.

“Now eat you soup.”

The dinner party had been held at a very fancy restaurant. There was a big chandelier in the center of the room. It had dozens of brightly lit candles with tiny glowing flames that cast a dancing orange glow around the room.

On every table there was a small fishbowl with a beautiful fish swimming around.

Sally saw all this, then looked into her grey soup and made a face.

“Eat it, Sally.” Her mother said.

Sally took her spoon and dipped it into the soup. She fished out something grey and lumpy.

“It’s probably a bat brain.” She mumbled.

Sally brought the spoon up to her chin, then slipped the contents into her mouth.

“Eewwwww!!!” Sally screamed.

She spit the soup out all over the table.

“Sally!” her parents turned around and yelled at her.

“This is a fancy restaurant!” Sally’s mother hissed.

“Now eat your soup and do not spit it out!”

Sally just stared at her mother. Her eyes narrowed.

“I know that look.” Her mother said.

Sally kept staring.

“Sally, please don’t do anything you’ll regret.” her mother pleaded.

“Okay mommy. I won’t.”

“Thank you. Now your father and I are going to get some drinks. I want you to stay here and be a good girl.”

“But I don’t wanna be a good girl!” sally yelled.

“I just wanna run around and spit my soup on everyone in the entire party!”

“Sally! You cannot spit your soup! You will eat your soup, and you will keep it in your mouth! You cannot spit it out!”

“Yes I can!!!”

“No, you can’t!!! I know you’re bored, but you have to stop yelling!”

“I can yell l all I want!!!”

“No! This is a fancy dinner party! You cannot yell at dinner parties!!!”

“Yes... I... Can!!!”

“SALLY!!!”

“Arrgg!!! I hate this party! I hate the soup, I hate how quiet you have to be, I hate everyone here, and most of all, I hate my soup!!!”

“Sally. I’ll do anything to make you quiet down!”

“Like what?” Sally was intrigued.

“Here, I’ll show you something secret.”

“What is it?”

Sally’s mother held a spoon up to the fishbowl in the middle of the table.

“This is a Japanese fighting fish.” she said, gesturing to the fish.

“If it sees another fish like itself, then it will attack it to get it out of its territory.”

“Ooohhhh.” Sally leaned in closer.

“If I hold up this spoon up to the fishbowl, the fish will see the reflection of itself and attack it.”

Sally snatched the fish out of her mother’s hand, l and held it right in front of the fish’s face.

“Now be careful.” Sally’s mother warned.

“If the fish gets too angry, then it might accidentally kill itself.”

Seeing that Sally was completely captivated by the angry fish, Sally’s mom went to go get drinks.

When Sally’s mother got back, the fish was of course, dead.

When Sally got home from the party, she was holding the dead fish in her hands.

“That party was a lot of fun mommy! Can we go again tomorrow so that I can get another fish?”

“No.” her mom said.

“We are not going to another party like that until you’re much older! Your behavior! was unacceptable!”

“But that’s not fair!” Sally shouted.

“You can’t do that it’s not fair!”

“Well maybe if you would just behave...”

“I don’t like behaving!” Sally cut in.

“I want everyone to stop telling me what to do!”

Sally raised back the hand that held the dead fish.

“What are you doing Sally...” her mother said slowly.

Sally’s hand snapped forwards, and the fish went sailing through the air. With a wet slap it landed on her mother’s face. Sally had just enough time to see her mother scream before she slammed the bedroom door in her face.

**The End**

## SARAH GUCKER'S STORY

### WILLOW STORY

Tuesday morning and I'm up on my feet. The Biology test is today. I've studied hard and I have a great feeling about this! I ran past the dining room table without taking a second glance over at my brother who was eating breakfast. Right before I turned the doorknob to exit my house I realized that school doesn't start for another two hours.

"Where ya goin' Wil?" my little brother Alex asked me in between mouthfuls of cocoa puffs.

"Oh, nowhere. I'm just really excited for school today. I'm almost positive I'm gonna ace the science test and also, there's supposed to be some exchange students from Spain coming today."

"Nerd," he said, "who would be excited for school? If I had a choice I would just play video games all day."

"Well of course *you* would." I retorted. He stuck his tongue out at me.

Quite frustrated with Alex I plopped down onto the sofa and opened the book I'd been reading. "THE TRUE CONFESSIONS OF CHAROLETTE DOYLE" was a great novel but I defiantly prefer something a little easier to follow. I absolutely love books with lots of adventure because I've always wanted to live an adventurous life but I've always been too shy and scared to do anything about it. I love being able to jump into a completely separate universe from my own.

I would love to have a great body figure like the ones described in my books too. Sometimes I look at myself in the mirror and imagine myself as one of them and not this skinny little brunette that is in no way developed. My braces are a pain too. People at school make fun of the way I dress too, because I don't wear tube tops or skinny jeans.

I shut my book quietly, grabbed my backpack and headed outside to catch the bus. The bus stop was not very far from my house; actually it was a two minute walk down the sidewalk. When I get to the bus stop I sit down on a flat and cold boulder. I can smell the sweet grass and the cold air surrounding me in my Alaskan town I call home. I grab a dandelion by the stem and pluck it from the ground. I pull the petals out by the chunk and watch as the powdery, yellow pollen floats down to the wet ground to be dissolved.

The bus comes to a screeching, ear piercing halt. As the exhaust from the bus surrounds me I can smell the gasoline and the faintest smell of vinegar. On my way up the three steps to the bus I can already hear my two best friends, Karly and Jacob, calling to me and waving. They always save me a seat next to them on the bus.

Karly is my best friend. She has a rounded face and really tan skin. She has super long, black hair that hangs down to her lower back but she keeps it in a tight braid. We've known each other since kindergarten and we've been best friends since.

Jacob is so funny and he always is trying to act way cooler than he really is but Karly and I love him all the same. He has blonde hair and light blue eyes. He's very good looking but we've been best friends forever and I don't think he wants to change that any more than I do.

On the way to school Jacob, Karly, and I talked about how cool it would be to have seven kids from Spain come visit our school.

"I'm so excited!" shouted Karly, "I hope some of them are cute..."

I giggled. "Yeah."

"I hear Spanish chicks are hot." Said Jacob pretending to slick back his hair.

We all laughed.

When the bus stopped everyone piled off while the angry bus driver yelled "Single file line kids!" There were at least fifty students already gathered around the front door of the school waiting for the exchange students that were supposed to arrive at around 9:00 today.

I heard someone yell, "They're here!" So I ran to the front-ish of the crowd of students and watched as five boys and two girls entered. They didn't look Spanish at all though, in fact they looked American. I could see that they all had unusual piercings and I thought I saw a tattoo on the girl's arm.

The principal welcomed them each with a shake of the hand.

One boy was very strange looking; he had almost platinum white hair and a scar that ran from his cheek bone down to his lower jaw. Another boy had brown hair with caramel tips and was looking around very paranoid. The others looked fairly normal though.

Everyone rushed to class. I was on my way to history and I had a really weird feeling that I just can't put my finger on.

I sat in my assigned seat and waited for class to start. Mrs. Phillips welcomed the exchange students and started talking about WWII.

About half way through class the white haired boy took out a gun and the other two followed quickly behind him. When Mrs. Phillips turned around she looked like she was going to scream but before she could a bullet was in her neck. She dropped to the floor and that's when the class started screaming. The other two students started knocking out lights and windows. There was a regular student beside me whimpering. I tried to calm her down.

But with my head turned I didn't notice Jacob try to make a run for it.

“No!” I screamed.

BAM BAM

The paranoid boy fired his gun and hit Jacob twice in the stomach area. He plummeted to the ground with a thud when he hit the tile floor.

Oh my gosh. I just got my best friend killed. “No, no, no, no no.....” I whimpered as I slid down to the floor and into the fetal position. My eyes were clamped shut but I could hear a woman shout through the door, “We got it!” The people with the guns left but there was still that feeling.

When I was sure they were gone I crawled over to my dying friend. I lifted his head and gently set him in my lap. I really didn’t care that my clothes were soaked with his blood. I stroked his bloody hair and cried. I could feel his pulse slipping away beat by beat.

This was too horrible for me to stand. I thought about him as I cried. He had his whole life ahead of him. He hadn’t even finished high school. His friends were going to miss him. Wait, what was Karly going to say?

I felt a light tug on my shoulder. I turned around to see two people in uniforms. One was tall and had a mustache and the other was round but muscular with orange hair.

“Ma’am,” the tall one said, “I’m sorry but we need you to come with us for a while. We’ll take care of the victim too.”

I did what I was told because, right now, I really couldn’t think for myself. I tried to stand up but I couldn’t make my legs work. With help from the other uniformed man I was able to prop myself up enough to sit in a chair. I watched as they laid Jacob into a dark green body-bag, zipped it up and rolled him away on a gurney.

The officers helped me get to their car by holding my shoulders to make sure I wouldn’t fall over. When we stepped into the school parking lot I noticed it was filled with students waiting for parents to pick them up. Apparently school was over for the day. As I walked by I could hear kids talking about the shooting. One of those kids was Emily, the school’s bully and gossip girl.

“Yeah. I heard a student got shot too,” she said. “It was that Jacob kid. I got it straight from someone who saw it happen!” said one of her clones.

“Oh, well. Nerds are better off dead anyhow.”

There was a bunch of agreeing and yeses from the crowd surrounding her. That’s when I did something I knew I’d regret later on. With tears running down my face I took off full speed toward Emily. I rammed her over and punched her dead in the nose. There was hair pulling

and scratching, gasps came from the other girls. When the tall officer pulled me off of her, her hands went straight to her nose. There was so much blood.

“You f\*\*\*ing broke my nose!” she screamed at me. “What’s wrong with you?!?”

I jerked away from the police officer and started walking toward the car.

I pulled open the car door with such force and anger that it slammed into my shin. I cursed and held my breath for a few seconds before sitting in the police car.

One of the officers closed the door for me. As soon as both cops were in the car, the officer with the mustache did something all annoying adults and dentists do; he started asking stupid questions to keep my mind off of all the pain and misery that was filling me up. I answered him with short answers because I didn’t want to talk but Jacob was the last thing I would want to think about now.

“So, do you like school?” he asked.

“Yes.”

“What’s your favorite class?”

“Biology,” I answered simply.

“Well, that’s nice.” He smiled. “What’s your name again?”

“Willow.”

“That’s a pretty name! And how old are you, Willow?”

“Fifteen.”

“Great, we’re here!”

I fiddled with my thumbs as he parked. I’d never been in a police station before . . . unless you count the field trip to the state troopers office in first grade.

It was raining when I stepped out of the car so I ran across the parking lot. I entered through the glass double door and sat in one of the chairs in the waiting area. I looked over and saw a woman sobbing with dark circles under her eyes and dark brown hair that fell around her shoulders. She had a baby in her lap that was fast asleep but had tear streaks down his cheeks like he had been crying too. The woman glanced over and gave me a sad smile.

A lean woman walked over to me and asked, "Are you Willow Sims?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Come with me," she said, "I need you to answer a few questions for me."

I silently stood up and followed her to a room where she sat me down in a wooden chair and told me to wait for Officer Paul.

When Officer Paul came in I noticed he was wearing a white shirt with a first-sized coffee stain on his chest. He had a big belly and was completely bald. He looked very African American.

"Did you know this boy?" was the first thing he asked.

"Yes," I answered, trying not to cry when he showed me Jacob's school picture from last year. "He was my best friend."

"Okay, good. And did you know this girl?"

He showed me a picture of Karly. I started bawling. Seeing her picture and thinking she had been shot too pushed me over the edge—I felt nauseous and ready to pass out.

"She's not dead," he assured me, "but she is missing."

## The Gifted Children

### Descendants of Amthos:

Ryan Kristoph: Strength

Matthew Rush: Speed

Peter Rush: Stamina

James Mcullugh: See in the dark

Jack Hellman: Agility

### Descendants of Tor:

Jackson Gale: Weather Control

### Descendants of Rosalia:

John Ivy: Plants

Mary Rose: Plants

### Descendants of Achellius:

Alan Coleman: Telekinesis

Troy Gateman: Barriers

### Descendants of Hekata:

John Sharpe: Hypnotism

Isabella Sharpe: Unknown

The man walked down the frozen street, leaving foot shaped gaps in the ice where his boot fell. The man spun around and clicked his left hand. Fire formed a floating ball at his finger tips.

"You shouldn't have come here, Michal," the man said, his voice hard.

The man named Michal stepped out from hiding and replied coldly, "Leave Liam or I will kill you." The coldness of Michal's voice disturbed Liam, because he had no doubt that Michal would kill him. Then he was lifted off his feet by an invisible force and smashed into a car 50 feet away from where he was standing before. As he slid off the hood of the broken car another invisible force hit him slamming him into the car again.

"YOU!" *Slam* "WILL!" *Crack*, Liam screamed in agony as his bones fractured and snapped, "NOT!" *Snap* "KILL!" *Bang* "MY!" *Boom* "FAMILY!" *CRASH!!!!!!!!* Liam lay broken and deformed on the ground

as Michal stood 20 feet away, hands throbbing from exerting that much power. Then he just walked away.

Let's imagine there is an island somewhere in the Atlantic, closer to Europe. I see it as if I was approaching from the south- a panorama of deep blue sea, lighter blue sky, white, puffy clouds, all surrounding a green island far from any other land mass. In the middle, an out-of-place mountain rises, a curtain of mist rising to the clouds behind it. A light green woodland is at its base. A river flows southward over flatter land covered in agricultural operations. At the estuary on the southernmost point, a town with canals instead of streets and whitewashed buildings with black-shingled roofs covers the delta.

This island is the Kingdom of Créto. Little known except by the royal and leaders of nations, Créto is one of the smallest, yet most powerful nations on earth. They control the Ameronian Archipeligo, a small chain of islands several hundred miles away from the North African coast. Most of the islands are at least 30 miles square, usually with mountains, cliffs, and towns; the capital, in the rain shadow of the main crescent of extinct volcanoes, is much smaller.

More important, though, is the other side; behind the cloud of mist is a massive building, about 3,400 feet tall. There are 36 one-acre square courtyards (208 ft. by 208 ft.) separated by 104 ft. by 208 ft. halls; the tower itself rises in the centre, taking the place of four courtyards. The building is the headquarters of Creto, which is also a massive multinational corporation.

Now, seven eights of the way up, focus on the southeast corner- zoom in, getting to the window where an Irish man- although little accent betrays it- walks at a hurried pace.

Amhalghaidh walked at hurried pace, turning a corner; he wore a black jacket and dark glasses, and had dark black hair. A gold ring adorned his left ring finger, a celtic knot design twining around, the only sign he was regent to one of the smallest yet most powerful nations on earth.

Amhalghaidh opened the door to a room on the left. Sitting down were a young woman and teenage boy, his two cousins; the woman, Claudel, held a phone (HTC android hero) with an elaborate gold pattern on it; the boy slouched glumly in his chair.

The boy is the Emperor, King of Créto, who owns the nineteen islands of Amerone. He wears all black, and dark glasses, his hair dyed black with blonde streaks in it; his clothes are also black, and a sapphire ring on his left hand recognizes the fact that he will be emperor on his twenty-first birthday; he constantly sips rockstar as he never manages to sleep, and music plays in one ear.

Claudel, the woman, on the other hand, is elegant, long blonde hair falling down her back, wears colorful, airy dresses, with gold embroidery. A gold bracelet identifies her as cousin and guardian of the King, while rings are decoration on her hands. She was born in France, and her father was a wealthy businessman in Clichy; the entire family is part Irish, Norwegian, German, Welsh, French, and Dutch.

Amhalghaidh took a seat across from the other two, and started a ‘conversation.’

“*You* need to take responsibility for your country! Once you turn twenty-one in six years you must be the king, and not have others lead your nation!” He said, voice raising with every word.

“And who said you do my work for me,” the Emperor countered.

“All *you* do is build massive, expensive palaces and hang out with your stupid friends!”

“And you *don't* like what I design for our family?”

Suddenly water covered the table; Amhalghaidh leaned to the left as the entire tower was pitched northward by a strong gust of wind, usually blocked by Amerone.

The emperor lost his regal composure, and upon the tower righting itself he abruptly left the room.

The recent exchange was truly common among this happy family; usually, it is much, much longer, but a strange event like an El Niño wind gust can be a great conversation stopper.

The emperor boarded an elevator and took the five minute trip to the ground. Once there, he stepped out from the magnificent lobby boasting a sample of all of Créto’s riches into the sunlight of the South Atlantic. He walked down a marble path, opening a magnificent gate with his thumbprint. He turned left as he entered the mountain.

The forests of the island are of trees known colloquially as *Baijamba*, pronounced by-YUM-ba with a *J* as in most Germanic languages. This tree has light green leaves that let tons of light through their canopy, and are twenty feet tall on average; the branches start at about halfway. There are often huge blossoms of white flowers with red spots on them; these often turn into Baijamba fruit, an amazingly sweet blue fruit, filled with indescribably flavourful juices that can be made into an assortment of beverages.

A stone path wound up the mountain, going to the south side about three-quarters of the way up. Our emperor followed it, climbing the occasional steps. Eventually he reached what was called the Glade.

The Glades are clearings in the Baijamba forests, usually with some water source to replenish gardens only the royal family are allowed in. At the top, a massive one of religious significance lies in a crater. The one that the emperor was going to, however, was much smaller. A river bisected it, with a waterfall coming off a cliff. Some small caves were dug in the cliff, where the Emperor often lived. There were small patios with lawn chairs, and many flower patches.

Under the shade of a weeping willow, the emperor was awoken by the sound of helicopter blades. Claudel was shouting to him, and he strained to hear over the wind invoked by the helicopter.

*“We have to go to Philadelphia for the American conference!”* she shouted, her heavy French accent obscuring the words further. The emperor reluctantly stood, and walked over the bridge to the other side of the river, and boarded the large vehicle.

The helicopter took them to Ottulisa, the biggest island of Amerone. It landed on the airfield, where a CRETO concord jet, recycled and re-stylised to Royal standards, was waiting for them. After a sonic boom and two hours, they landed in Philidelphia.

*I unfortunately did not have time to finish this story; this is only the first two pages, but I would like to continue at home.*

*Thank you.*

## Lonely No More: The Excerpts

By Zailey Dangel

Nick sighed. He was thinking about those eyes again. The boy noticed a book about the human body in his hands. The page he was on was all about the human eye. He looked up from the page to focus on the clock on the other side of the high school library. Staring through the ticking clock hands, Nick thought hazily, 'How long was I thinking of them? Fifteen minutes? Thirty?' He started to remember about the eyes again and let out another sigh.

"It was so long ago, when I had a friend," he whispered out loud in the empty library corner, the words lightly rolling off his tongue. His face saddened. 'Why did he have to go, why did he leave without telling me even a name?' Nick remembered what his friend had said the last time he saw him on his first day of preschool, 'See ya Tomorrow, Nicky!' The words echoed in his mind, taunting him slowly. He tried to start reading again.

Nick was in a corner of the room, where all the comfortable furniture was located. He had in his hands a book that he was reading. The bookworm stopped the page he was on when he noticed another teen coming up to him; he looked up to see who it was. He squinted his eyes, 'This guy looks familiar...Oh! It's that guy who asked for 'help' on his homework earlier.'

Sam came into Nick's focus; tall, popular guy, wearing 'shades'. "I'm surprised you don't wear glasses from reading so many books," the 'popular' said to him jokingly. Nick did not look amused, 'A waste of time.' He went back to reading, but stayed on the same page. "Look man, I'm sorry, it's just that you never hang with anyone, and I thought you would like some company for once, alright?"

Nick's eyes narrowed. This conversation was going on too long for him. 'He's trying to pretend with me, just like all the others. 'Please be my friend', they'll say, or even 'I'll be your friend.' He wouldn't let the other teen get to him. He knew that fate wouldn't allow those words to come true, they always become just hollow, broken promises.

"For the last time, no!" Nick was getting tired of this argument. This stupid person, this stupid 'popular', would not let up!

"Please, Nick! I know you want to! It's so plain to see, you're always alone, and always reading."

"You're such a pain! Get it through your thick head, I don't want to, I just want to be alone and I just want to read; that's how it's supposed to be. My life does not revolve around doing homework for other lazy students like you!" Nick had finally let everything out, all what he felt.

“You think I want you to do my homework? I don’t, I just want-“

“What makes you think I’ll believe you; that you won’t just turn your back on me and leave?” The two boys were standing now, anger in both of their faces.

Sam’s face softened. “Please just think about it. Please Nicky.” Sam turned away and walked off silently out of the library, leaving the other boy in shock.

Nick just stood there, clutching onto his book, which his finger was being used as a bookmark right on the page of the human eye. ‘It can’t be, there’s just no way.’ When Nick left the library, he did think about it. He hoped that under Sam’s sunglasses would be the dazzling green eyes that he’s been thinking about for so long.