The Writers’ Notebook
Welcome to the Marcellin College Short Story Anthology for 2009.

It has been a very busy and exciting year at Marcellin College for all of our budding writers.

Our writers have been inspired and encouraged through a range of enrichment activities which have included numerous visits from popular authors, a visit from a theatre company who performed Shakespeare to our senior students, an excursion to the 2009 Writer’s Festival at Federation Square, writer’s workshops, extension classes and an invitation to compete in the 2009 Marcellin Short Story Competition.

These activities serve to enhance the skills and techniques introduced in English classes where students are encouraged to exercise their imagination and develop their writing.

The stories appear here in their original format as sent by the students. The writers are to be congratulated on their dedicated work and preparedness to edit and polish their final pieces before submission. The skills of editing and proofreading often seem tedious, but they can either make or break a piece of writing as can be seen in this anthology.

I feel most privileged to have worked with most of these writers and wish them every success with their future writing endeavours. I look forward, as I am sure do you, to reading more from our very talented students who are quietly and consistently working at and developing their writing craft.

Mrs Nives Nibali
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She peered through the thick, tinted window that seemed to deform the outside world. It’s not real she told herself. Images flashed across her eyes, a blur, but still distinctly foreign. A chill ran down her spine, erecting each individual hair on her neck, like the members of a marching band. The cold, unfamiliar world around her, swallowing her, frightened yet excited her at the same time. She had never felt such mixed emotions before. At home in Baghdad she was always restricted in what she did or where she went or who she saw. But it was what she knew; it made her feel safe.

The train pulled up at the station hesitantly, building an unsteady feeling in her stomach. She had one final look through the glass doors until they swiftly retracted backwards, and with them, removing all the protection she had. What suddenly became evident to her was how far she was from home. Her mother firmly tugged on her small hands, forcing her to step out amongst the sickly dense air. Immediately in front of her was a group of girls her age. She could see their faces, perfectly made, their hair and even their legs. After gaping at the exposure of their bodies she realized they were staring and laughing back at her. Her face went bright red with embarrassment as they ridiculed her although she was puzzled why. Her mum waved good-bye as she slowly turned and walked through the rusty metal gates, unsure and cautious. The dark stone building towered over her, making her feel smaller as the alien world seemed to consume her. Things failed to improve from then on. In the school yard the children stared and mocked her. At one stage a small boy with bruised knees and rustled hair approached her. “I don’t understand why you wear that scarf around your head”, he said. Just then an older girl passing by publicly announced “My mum said it’s to hide the snakes in her hair! Billy don’t look her in the eyes or you will turn to stone.” She clasped her hand over the little boy’s eyes, blindfolding him from the sight of the girl. She was enthrallled with anger and humiliation. That same small feeling seemed to take hold of her again. She wanted to yell at her parents for making this happen. She wanted to slash at her religion and culture, rip up the Koran into a million pieces and burn it for making her feel this way. She failed to understand why these people were so different, why they experience such evil joy from ostracizing her and her differences. She thought maybe it was her culture that was wrong.

She gazed through the window on the train ride home, her mind blazed with constant thought. A group of tall ladies caught her eye. They were walking through the sun stained grass in a park, smiling and laughing with each other. She was captivated by their long dark hair, freely blowing in the gentle summer breeze. It was foreign and strange, but what amazed her was how beautiful the sight was. Her mother caught her mesmerized gaze and promptly asked how her first day of school was. She began to explain how she didn’t fit in and how small she felt. She wanted to tell her every detail: what the others had said and how hurt and frustrated it made her. She wanted to confirm why their religion was so important. She wanted to find out why something so worthwhile should be the cause of her immense discomfort and pain. Why she should feel sick in the stomach after one measly day at a school she would not call her own. A community she did not belong to. Her mind raced with questions for the whole ride home.
She was still striving for answers later that afternoon in her bedroom. She wanted a resolution to change the way she felt, to put her mind at ease. Whilst she sat on the corner of her bed she noticed how bare her room was. There were no bottles of make-up on the drawers, no celebrity posters on the white walls. Even a mirror was a fairy tale she had not experienced. All of a sudden she felt relaxed. She slowly pulled off her Burqa and placed it neatly beside her. Noor stood at the window now. Noor felt the warmth of the sun on her fragile skin as she looked through her reflection in the window and for a moment felt free, a part of the world around her.
A Darwin Nightmare
By Will Kirton

The water and heat in the air stuck to Private John Smith’s sun-tanned skin. He re-adjusted his tunic for the millionth time and undid a few of his top buttons, to let his sweating body breathe. Darwin’s summer in 1942 was particularly fierce and John had not reacclimatised to the city’s unfavourable conditions. He started walking back to the Militia’s Barracks, glad that today was the 19\textsuperscript{th} of February, as he was due for leave on the 22\textsuperscript{nd}.

He had barely flung himself to the ground when the first high-explosive bombs did their job in the next street. His blood froze and he struggled to stand up. John ignored cries for help, frightened in this new world of loud sounds and colourful and awesome explosions. It was his first time he had ever been in action. He stopped only once to apply his field dressing to an unlucky citizen, wounded by the Japanese bombs. Now the bombers were dropping incendiary weapons, sparking fires all around the metropolitan area. When John finally got back to the barracks he found them to be ablaze, with soldiers pouring buckets of water in a pathetic attempt to quell the flames. John dropped his pack and his rifle and helped the militia men try to save their barracks, belongings and pride.

Then, as suddenly as the bombing had started, it ceased. Men took a second to glance up into the skies, no more black cylinders dropped towards them; their ears were free of the high-pitched whine of falling missiles. After a platoon had been detailed to fire-fighting the Commanding Officer had called the rest of the militia to a briefing. They were told to patrol the neighbourhoods of Darwin and help out civilians whenever possible. As they were about to be dismissed the Commanding Officer also declared that any looters where to be SHOT ON SIGHT!

John was patrolling around the Chinatown area. He passed shanty looking shacks of which some were untouched and some were obliterated. John buried the dead he could find in shallow, mass graves. The medical dressings he had picked up at the barracks were gone within 15minutes; spent on gravely injured civilians sprawled on the ground with no-one nearby to help them. As he walked down one of the main streets he saw a shabby man running into a shop whose front door and windows had been blasted off by a nearby bomb. The man emerged a few minutes later with a sack. John aimed his rifle at the man, but found that he could not shoot him. His brain screamed at him to shoot him, but his emotions intervened. In the end John aimed his rifle above the man’s head, to fire a warning shot. His finger tightened on the trigger, the rifle’s butt recoiled against John’s shoulder. The smell of cordite hung in the air as John looked up to find the man. To John’s surprise, the man had collapsed; his limp body now was lying across the remains of a destroyed house. John walked over to inspect him; a dark red stain was now slowly spreading across the Chinaman’s shirt. John sat down, head in his hands and cried. He was a murderer, he was never cut out to be a soldier and this proved it. He ran his hands over the murder weapon; the gun sight had been bashed in; causing the shot to go low. But that was no excuse; he looked at the man’s face. He looked like his own father, but with an oriental twist. John dropped his rifle; he could never become a soldier.
Remember
Conor O’Grady
Year 9

He sat up. Another day, alone. He scanned the room, its interior committed to memory long ago. The water basin. He didn’t know where the water came from but he’d been drinking it for a year now and he wasn’t dead. The bed he slept in. The table, the chairs. The food vendor, connected to the toilet by a large pipe. He had suspicions about that, especially since the dispenser had the words ‘recycling for the future’ emblazoned on it. The only real problem with the room? The lack of doors and windows. The walls were a dull grey and the only light came from a small neon bulb. He was trapped here. Why? He jumped out of bed and sighed, just like every other day for the past year. He turned around. And screamed. There was a stranger standing there. Horribly, he looked exactly like him, except he didn’t. It was like looking into a distorted mirror. He seemed warped, wrong. Oh God. This wasn’t happening. This couldn’t be happening.

“Yes. It can,” said the stranger. Oh God…

“But who… who are you?” managed the man.

“You. I am you.

Ob-viously. You, me,

Us,” his speech was disjointed. Pauses appeared at random, he stopped and started and, much like his looks, it came across as familiar, yet wrong. There also seemed to be an underlying meaning to it.

“But, why are you here? What’s happening to me?” the man screamed.

“Yo-u’re sub-con-scious. That’s who I am.

Ob-viously. How long did you think you’d last? Before your mind sna-pped?

Unknown? Undeter-mined?” the stranger sounded mocking.

“Could be. You were always the quintes-sential scientist.

Asking ques-tions. Never stopping to think. Just trying to

Un-derstand. What about the people? What were they? Just

Some more th-ings in your way. You

Evil man. You

Dis-gus-ting man. Hot headed too.

Too emo-tional.

Hot headed. You should have never been on the re-search team. And then,

Isabella turned up. She

Sp-urned you, turned you down. Made you do what you did.”

“I don’t know what you mean,” stuttered the man.

“Aha-ha-ha,” said the stranger, and he did say it. He didn’t laugh. He spoke.

“Laugh-able. You know what I mean. You’ve hid-den from it, just-ified it,

Lied to yourself a-bout it and then you came to be-lieve it, in a way. But

You never forgot, don’t pretend you’ve forgot-ten. The running, the hiding,


Unplanned devasta-tion, far reaching cones-quences. All. Because. of her.”
Oh God. He remembered. The planning, the vial, the pure, unchecked anger. How could she have denied him? Chosen Anthony instead? He’d shown her. But the virus was stronger than he’d realised. It infected the rest of them, spread… He’d run in here; shut the door, listened in terror as they’d banged against it, futilely. He remembered…

“Leave me alone…” he said, quietly. “Leave me be. I want to die.”

“He? No. And you won’t die to-night.
Under-stand that. You’re a coward. But you will have another option.

Repug-nant though it may be. Remem-ber? The time lock?
Deactiva-tion after one year?
Esca-pe. That’s your op-tion.
Remem-ber? But
Esca-pe to what? Hu-manity must be gone now. Can you handle that?

And then he was no longer there. Behind the man, the hidden door swung open. He turned. Could he? Should he? Would he? But the stranger was right. He was a coward. There was only one option. The man turned, with tears rolling down his face at the memories, and walked through the door, into the future.
The lightning split up the night sky and the thunder claps were loud and menacing. It was a cold, wet and stormy night outside but the house was warm and cosy. I had the house to myself so I ordered a pizza and settled in with a match of FIFA 09 on my Play Station. Outside the rain was getting heavier and soon hailstones were battering the roof like thousands of ball bearings falling from the sky.

Rivers of rain were cascading down the lounge room windows and there was no sign of it letting up. Suddenly there was a bright flash of lightning that lit up the whole room. It was soon followed by a loud roar of thunder that sent Jackie, my Jack Russell Terrier, scampering across the room trying to find comfort in my lap. I tried to soothe her but I was starting to feel a bit uncomfortable myself. I liked having the house to myself but I didn’t like being alone during a storm and this one was turning out to be a pretty ferocious one. There was a loud and urgent banging at the front door that caught me by surprise and made me gasp. I soon realised it must be the pizza delivery guy so I hurried to open the door for him. He was completely drenched and shaking miserably under his raincoat.

“Pizza delivery. Sorry it’s taken so long. This storm has me running really late tonight,” he apologised as he shivered with cold.

“That’s alright. I’ll still eat it,” I replied and handed him the money. I hoped my small tip would make him feel a little bit better.

I carried the pizza into the lounge room and hoped to find comfort in the warm cheesy slices but I was too nervous to eat. Suddenly there was a loud crash coming from the kitchen followed by the sound of smashing glass. A moment later everything went black and I realised that the power had gone out. My heart started to pound as though it was a steam train heading down the track. Beads of sweat appeared on my forehead but I knew I had to make it to safety. I shuffled anxiously across the darkened room trying to feel my way to the phone. My effort was useless because the phone was dead and I couldn’t get a dial tone. I was filled with dread and trepidation. My hands were cold and clammy and my breathing was very uneven. I could hear more sounds coming from the back room but they were drowned out by the crashing thunder. I didn’t know who was there and I didn’t know what else to do. I crouched down on the floor and held Jackie tightly feeling completely helpless and petrified.

I don’t know how long I stayed like that frozen by fear but when the lights suddenly came on it hurt my eyes. My mother stood over me shaking me gently and asking if I was OK.

“We were worried about you being alone in the storm, so we came home early,” she said.

“A tree branch has smashed through the kitchen window. Were you hurt?” asked Dad, looking worried.

“I’m fine,” I pretended, “I just couldn’t find my way around in the dark.”

“Are you hungry?” asked Mum. “I see you haven’t touched your pizza, I can warm it up for you if you like,” she grinned at me.

“Thanks Mum,” I replied.

Jackie gave me a knowing look and I winked back, promising her a slice of my pizza.
Kevin Singlehand was an interesting boy, his genetic disposition for back flips made him ever so interesting and his ability to watch several episodes of Neighbours without gagging only ever increased his ability to engage mentally and somewhat physically in fun and sometimes rather risky video forums. Growing up in the notoriously quaint, trendy and slightly quirky suburb of Craigieburn provided his upbringing with adventures that nurtured his love of right wing conservative poetry. His father, a migrant, came to Australia amongst the wave of post cold war European settlers and was the first Russian male Burlesque dancer to work professionally in Australia. This talent was passed on from his father through many generations and one day Kevin too would acquire his father’s knowledge of this ancient art. His mother an innovative pharmacist was equally interesting as her husband; she had a successful chain of pharmaceutical outlets named “pharmacy lets shop!” and was the driving force in the widely popular YouTube video campaign.

Amongst all the chaos of his childhood Kevin seemed to grow up to be a competent, mature twenty-one year old and although he did seem content, all was yet to come for this ill fated supporter of trendy bookshops. For Kevin looked well and seemed well but behind this price of a man was a time-ticking soul that was more twisted than a pretzel. See Kevin was struggling with his identity, due to his father’s unorthodox religious practices Kevin had never owned a mirror and this caused major image problems. His ability to back flip was not a skill merely acquired for attention, nor for entertaining and not even for the acceptance of the ruthlessly judgemental circus critiques, but was a skill he’d acquired to be able to see whether his jeans were riding too low, for his lack of a mirror left him with little options. So Kevin let with nothing but his identity, at the tender age of twenty-two turned to the frightening world of commercial radio.

It didn’t take long for Kevin to become addicted to commercial radio and was not able to go a day without his fix of some Hughesy and Kate or Hamish and Andy. His parents soon become suspicious of Kevin’s activities when they overheard him sing Lady GaGa’s “Love Game” in the shower and reading The Herald Sun by candlelight. There was no denying, he was one of them. His father decided one day to confront him after having caught him sleeping in his car overnight with the radio on so that he could listen to the first, rarely listened to commencing hour of breakfast radio.

After the tearful intervention Kevin admitted to his father that he had hit rock bottom. He’d turned to listening to Vega Fm, and was listening to both Gold FM and Fox in individual headphones at the same time for more than 16 hours a day. His addiction was ruining his life like it has with so many others and he was out of control and although for Kevin it seemed like his life was over his father through his unconditional love assured him that he’d made the first step and he was going to help him through.

Kevin went through a rigorous detoxification program that included listening to community radio, public radio and government radio. He sat through hours of classical radio programs that had no advertisements apart from the self-promotional
sweepers that sometimes tempted him, but his parents constant reassurance helped
him get through. After four months of rehabilitation his father invited him back
into the family home and decided that it was time for Kevin to learn the ancient
Russian art of male burlesque dancing. He spent twenty-seven intense months of
rigorous and uncompromised training with his father at the peaks of the Snowy
Mountains in northern Victoria. He was forbidden to make contact with any other
humans apart from his father. After his training was finished he was able to return
to his humble home of Craigieburn and began working with his father.

His image problems are still a challenge although to coin the popular phrase; “If
there is one thing we know about burlesque dancers is that they never have image
problems”, so let’s just say he’s gained a lot of ground. Now days Kevin listens to
774 ABC local radio and whenever he feels the urge to return to commercial radio
he just sits through the latest of the many Pink albums on his iPod and it sets him
strait for the cold winter months.
Malton – King’s Peril
David Mcpherson
Year 7

The Kingdom of Malton stood proudly in all its glory. It was still shrouded in shadow as the sun struggled to scale the great mountains of the east. To the west thundered the powerful river of Galla, providing the kingdom’s lush green surroundings with an abundance of water. The kingdom was hemmed in from the north and south by vast deserts. The villages started on the outskirts of the tableland on which the kingdom was placed. Small stone houses were built right at the base of the mountains to the shores of the river. As you travelled further inland, the houses grew in height and importance to the extent, where placed in the centre of the tableland, stood an extravagant castle. It glistened in the new found sunlight as the first rays of sun emerged over the mountains.

The ground shuddered unexpectedly and a rumble resounded through the kingdom. Hanson, the King’s Chief Engineer rushed into the palace throne room, his eyes skirting nervously around before finally resting on the King. The King was a vile man, his greasy hair combed sideways over his head, trying to disguise his obvious baldness. An abnormally large stomach bulged ungracefully out from under his tunic reflected by a large chubby head and bright red cheeks. “Sire, we cannot continue carving your portrait on the mountains as it has created instability. If we forge on, a landslide will surely bury us all,” croaked a barely comprehendible Hanson. “Boulder dash,” the King screamed as a bowl whizzed past Hanson’s head. “You will continue.” “Yes sire,” Hanson bowed respectively, menace disguised behind his vacant green eyes. He hurriedly vacated the room.

Hanson gathered his fellow workers around him. “My friends,” he bellowed, “the time is upon us,” his voice echoing in the shallow mountain pass, “the King is leading us to certain death; it’s time to fight back.”

Hanson and his band of workers stood defiantly at the palace gates. They branded anything that had come to hand as weapons, from chisels to hammers to axes. “Come out you coward,” Hanson screamed, “Your time is up.” As if in answer, the castle drawbridge swung open; behind which stood a three hundred strong band of soldiers, loyal to their King. Vicious battle cries erupted as the two parties converged.

As quickly as the armies engaged they separated. Hanson’s troops never stood a chance. The undisciplined soldiers ran in shock as the first row of workers fell withering to the ground, convulsing violently as they hit the cobbled stone. The workers retreated at a rapid rate, rushing through the upper-class region to the jeers of the people as they packed the streets. The King’s Calvary forged onwards, pushing the workers into the slums of the kingdom. There was no cheering crowd engaging the streets now, just worried faces peering through mud-caked windows.

Hanson and his last surviving troops staggered to a halt as their backs pressed firmly against a giant cliff, the foothills of the great mountains of the east. A jovial King rode forward on a majestic battle horse, a smug grin evident on his rounded features. Pulling a bow and arrow from his pack, he cheerfully announced, “any last words?” “Just this,” Hanson replied, retrieving a rock from the ground and hurling it into the mountains. The King continued to sneer as he loaded the bow. There was a rumble, and suddenly, rocks pummelled the earth, obliterating the King’s army whilst the workers stood unharmed, shielded by the cliff face.
Hanson’s rock was all that was needed to unsettle it all.

From the rubble, Hanson produced a battered crown, thrusting it skywards as the sun glanced off it. The villagers gathered around the pile of rocks gazing at the figure standing proudly at the zenith. Hanson’s deep voice rung out, “through the destruction the crown lives on. This shall symbolise our new era; an era of wealth and prosperity.

With that, he disappeared, walking off into the sunset.
The Duel
Michael Neeson
Year 12

For half an hour, he had duelled. He could physically do this for an hour more, maybe, but mentally, he was almost broken. A thousand different battles had taken place in this time, each one unique, but all for the same cause, all against the same things, all by the same mind. He was a sword, when each silent stroke would either save himself or loose everything. He was an arrow, drawn to the point of release, completely focused on the target, where a single stray blink would loose him at himself instead of the thing he struggled for. He was a spear, a hair thin blade, flailing constantly to block against failure, while still aiming to achieve any small triumph. He was a boat, fighting endlessly with the raging sea. A bird, navigating the irregular winds. A river, pushing against the banks that held it. A magician, fighting the laws of the universe for arcane mastery. He was a slave, tied to the victory that he needed, for with failure, came the end. He could not again fight the duel from the beginning, for that would also lead to failure. So he was bound to victory, and to forsake that bond would also be the end. His chains were not what he was fighting against, but what he was fighting for.

And then, as if stepping from behind the last tree of the forest and into the open, he was out of the duel. He knew he had won, for it had ended, as it had many times before, and he was still in one piece, albeit a somewhat shaken one. He stood straight, and put down his weapons. He took off his armour, and steeled himself for what he was about to see. He turned around, and surveyed the ground of the duel, the battlefield, the site of the fray. He smiled, as he knew he would, but it never ceased to amaze him, the beauty his victory had, after such a long and hard fight.

Staring back at him was a person. A man, to be precise. He had his body facing to the left, but was turning his head to look at the victor. The man was in a room, with four walls and a floor of a slightly darker shade of purple. He was very handsome, and had smart clothes. He looked forlorn, as if he had strived for something that he now knew was unachievable, but had a certain twinkle in his eye, and if one looked closely, a slight curve to the lips, that indicated that he had really gotten what he had wanted. Just as the victor had seen him in his dream the night before.

Smiling still, the boy took the fresh painting and put in the sun to dry, cleaned up his easel, brushes and paint box, and left the school art studio. He knew that none of the other boys would feel the same way when they saw it. They would just call him more strange names. He knew that no one else thought the same way he did. Only, that didn't bother him. All he knew was the battles he fought, and the victories he won. He knew they didn't care, but as long as he knew the struggles he went through, he would always be immensely proud of the battles he fought to make his dreams become pictures. The canvas was his stadium, his smock was his armour and his brush was his weapon. His dreams were his enemies, but as he stared around the room his teacher had given him to paint and showcase, at all the battles he fought with tooth, nail and will, at all the duels he had won, he was sure that he could master any dream that came his way.
‘Aaawk, aaawk;’ the seagulls were making their familiar irritating noises as the sun was setting over the beautiful bay. The sun was blood red and was producing a spectacular array of colours forming a stunning glow in the sky. The salty sea breeze was refreshing and the water was as still as a statue. Calm, peaceful waves were lapping up the shore on another beautiful summer’s sunset. There was a tranquil, relaxing atmosphere and everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves; playing beach cricket, frisbee or going for their last swims after a lengthy day on the beach. This peaceful mood all suddenly changed when a desperate scream came from the bridge.

“Shark, shark!” screamed a bald headed man named Jack Anthony. Two pedestrians walked past and Jack alerted them of this danger. “A shark? Here, this time of year. You’ve got to be joking mate” the stranger said wryly. “He’s crazy,” said the other man - his jet black hair looking rather out of place on such a bright day. The men continued on their way. They had a point though; there had never been any sharks in this bay before, ever, and on the surface Jack did look a bit odd. This was because he had been seriously injured in a blazing house fire one year ago. Jack was just walking past when he heard frantic yells for help inside a ‘house of flames’. The thing about Jack is that he never likes to see other people get hurt. So he crawled his way through the inferno and sure enough saved everyone inside, not without cost though. During this adventure Jack’s head was badly burnt with his hair never able to grow back. He now also has sickening scars on his face and looks somewhat like an alien.

“Help! Shark! Get out of the water! Do Something! Help!” Jack was becoming hysterical as he saw two little children in the water struggling to swim. ‘Where are the life guards?’ He wondered. His question was answered when he looked at his watch. The time was 6.15 and the life guards had ‘closed up shop’ for the day 15 minutes ago. A few people remained on the beach and were still enjoying the last rays of sun as it descended rapidly into the ocean.

The giant, now prominent shadow of the creature gracefully glided its way towards the children. The renowned fin protruding out of the water was a sight you would expect to see only in horror movies, not in real life. Jack was delirious. He couldn’t just stand there and watch the innocent children die. The dilemma was that Jack was, and had always been, scared of water since his parents drowned in a boat crash. Jack had made up his mind and was now standing over the rails, holding on. Feelings of nervousness and fear were swirling around his head like debris in a tornado. Could he do it? He looked at his watch…6.30.15………………………….

6.30.16, the seconds were feeling like minutes and darkness had crept startlingly quickly upon him. His head was pounding, palms sweaty, knees week, arms heavy and a sick feeling in the pit of his stomach. He couldn’t do it. Who was he kidding – he couldn’t swim, the jump was too high, the water too frightening and the shark too dangerous.

Jack turned to walk away when he slipped over and went sprawling over the edge. He was momentarily airborne, spiralling speedily towards the darkness of the water. It was a good 5 metre drop but before he could come to terms with what had just happened, Jack found himself submerged in the icy, bone chilling water. “Ahhhh!” he yelled as he scratched at the surface to keep his head above the water. Jack dog paddled his way over to the kids and directed them to where the ladder was.
Survival seemed a possibility for a brief second until reality kicked back in. Jack felt something tugging at his leg and then a sharp pain. “Go on to the ladder, save yourself….” Jack went under the water and for a brief second saw his life flash before his eyes. The shark munched its razor sharp teeth that were as piercing and as powerful as 100 daggers being fired out of a cannon, straight through Jack’s scarred body. Blood quickly spread around the attack until it slowly dissipated in the water. “Where did he go?” the younger of the two children asked. “He’s gone.”

“Mummy, what does this say?” a young girl and her family were walking along the pier on a warm summer’s day the following year. She had noticed a plaque on the edge of the pier. “It says, In memory of a loving and caring person who always put others in front of himself and sacrificed his own life to save two young children. His name was, Jack Anthony.”
Destruction
Ameya Akhouri
Year 8

There, straight ahead was my house. It didn’t even resemble a house any more. It was a huge pile of ash. I walked through the rubble and found a few photos still in tact. I saw my parents, feeling a tear running down my cheek, I ran back to the police car.

* * * *

I could see it coming; it was about five minutes away, the huge wall of fire. The sound was horrendous; I could already feel it, engulfing me, my house, and my family. We had to decide to either run or stay, in five minutes.

“Dad, are we staying or leaving?” I asked worried.

“I think we should stay and defend the house, we have the equipment and it doesn’t look too bad.” He said, licking his lips nervously and trying to keep us all calm.

“Go and get the hoses and Mum and I will get the rest of the things we need to prepare the house.”

I ran over to the shed where we kept all of our gardening tools and took out the three largest hoses I could find. I could feel the fire closing in on us. The fire was still about three minutes away, but I could already feel the heat. We all grabbed a hose each and my mum closed all of the windows and doors. We soaked the grass and wood at the front of the house then ran to the back and did the same. We only had about a minute left. My whole body was damp with sweat. We ran inside and jumped into the spa full of cold water and pulled a wet blanket over our heads.

I had fallen asleep and woke to the sound of a roaring fire and I was sweating heavily. My parents weren’t there. I was horrified; because I knew that the fire was surrounding me and wondered where my parents were. I didn’t dare lift up the blanket and look out because I knew that everything around me was on fire and I could feel the heat.

About two agonizing hours later I heard the sound of sirens in the distance and realized that the firemen were on their way. I couldn’t feel the heat anymore or hear the fire so I lifted the blanket a little and saw what the fire had done to my house. As I climbed out of the bath I couldn’t believe that my whole house was nothing but ash. I ran around to where the other bathroom used to be. What I saw was going to haunt me for the rest of my life… I ran as fast as I could towards the road, hoping, that this was a nightmare and that soon I would hear my alarm and wake up and go to school.

What I saw in the bathroom was sickening. I saw my parents burnt corpses. No words could describe how I felt or even how I feel now. I ran to the fire truck that was speeding up the road towards me. I looked a mess, tears and sweat all over my face.

* * * *

I have no home, no parents, and no family. I am destroyed…
Remorse is a feeling which cannot be suppressed within my mind… I am already teetering on the brink on insanity, keeping my feelings closed in would only serve to push me over that permanent boundary that keeps me from madness. I am falling into an endless abyss; a void. I fear when I reach the bottom I will succumb to my hideous burden of lunacy.

My story is this:

Eve and I were cousins, and we grew hardly knowing each other, as she frolicked in the fields, lively, graceful, overflowing with energy, whereas I lived within my own mind, constantly meditating and contemplating life. While she roamed carelessly through existence, I studied, considering the true meaning of humanity. Our lifestyles contrasted in almost every aspect.

Her agility and vigour made me fascinated with her. It was not love, just what a person would call an “unhealthy obsession”.

Her face was so bright: White, sparkling teeth, Plump, rosy cheeks, Clean, brushed hair, Was she not perfect in every way?!

When I think of her name, a spark spreads through my body like water through a stream… it flows through me. How I love to hear the word spoken upon my tongue … Eve….Eve! I spent hours just thinking of her name, saying it.

I spent hours staring outside through a window, watching her skipping through the hills, Cheerful, jovial, a carefree smile imprinted upon her face.

Something changed within her one day. A subtle transformation, yet somehow noticeable. Eve’s energy slowly began to die, spending less time outside and more time doing trivial tasks like knitting and sewing. What on Earth inspired this…alteration?

The answer soon became obvious – Eve’s health was beginning to fade rapidly. Her teeth began to rot – Her wrinkled cheeks began to sink, forming vast pits in the sides of her face. Her hair became tangled…It hung over her face and concealed her eyes. Greasy, filthy hair. One day when I sat, observing her, her hair was parted and I saw something that made my heart begin to throb – her eyes.

Beautiful, light blue eyes! They radiated and shone over the rest of her face, dominating it, commanding it. An ordinary black pupil surrounded by the brilliant blue iris… it captured my attention and I feared would not be able to look away.

She met my gaze. I shivered. So perfect in every aspect. How I desired those eyes! She quickly moved her hair to cover them, and their beauty was concealed. I would not forget their outstanding brilliance.

Eve’s illness began to worsen and her health began to diminish.

I did not see her eyes again – yet I dreamt of them.

Eventually she was reduced to a pale, useless ghost, incapable of speech or movement; I knew her death was near.

The messenger who announced her death was a maid, weeping. Eve was no more. I comforted the maid, while a feeling of regret lingered in my mind. I would never see those eyes of hers again…

I found myself sitting in the library, the flickering of the lamp on my desk
illuminating the room. I noticed a box, next to the lamp, and I regarded it with a shudder, yet the reason for which I knew not.

Why did my spine begin to tingle, my hairs on the back of my neck become stiff, when it then?

I heard the weeping of a servant outside. He burst into the library,

Wearing bloodstained clothes, a look of disbelief etched onto his face.

“My lord!” He cried. “There is a mangled body outside, mutilated, yet still alive! It is Eve!”

It was then when I understood my feeling towards the box: I let out a yell and seized it, knocking it off the table.

What fell out of the box was a bloody scalpel, and two, perfect, light blue eyes, they rolled across the table and fell to the floor with a thud.
Rat in the Kitchen
Adrian Del-re
Year 8

Every Friday, after an exhausting day at school, I would be dropped off at my aunt’s small, cottage restaurant four blocks away. I usually arrived during my aunt’s hour-long break.

But, she was mostly tired from chasing that one rat almost all day. I would arrive there, hearing the loud shouting, & clamps from pots which echoed from the tiled kitchen. If anyone went in the kitchen during the break, they would think my aunt was some kind of maniac!

With her chef’s hat on, & white outfit, she chased that one rat, while making her voice as loud & piercing as humanly possibly. She could never find the rat hole in the wall. I hid it well to protect the poor thing from a murderous woman.

I knew where the hole was. Behind the leg of a side-table in the kitchen. The leg half-covered the chipped hole, enabling the rat to squeeze through to collect its needed scraps to survive. The hole was really a tunnel, which led to the study room next to the dining room, where I usually completed my annoying homework.

The rat somehow knew I was friendly enough to not kill it. I usually snuck a piece of cheese, or large crumbs in my pocket to give to the creature. “Don’t worry,” I told it, “You won’t be dead anytime soon.” I’m not sure how, but I knew it understood me & relied on me for its survival.

“Why doesn’t that darn pest go?!” my aunt often said in frustration. At times, she got suspicious of me & often questioned me if I was feeding it. I always, tightly managed to squeeze my way out of it, which left my aunt more suspicious every time.

I found it really quite easy to feed the rat without my careful aunt noticing. After a few weeks, I realised my rat friend was asking me for more food than usual. That’s when I got suspicious & peered gently into its hole.

I looked in pleasant surprise as I saw four pink babies, all with their heads pointed up, wanting more food I guessed. So, now I was taking more food, my aunt’s suspicion grew as I did it, but I convinced her that it was just a light snack. This wasn’t a lie, because it was a snack, just not for me.

Time passed, & the pink babies were now grey adults or teens. I was taking a lot more food, a lot more often which made my aunt a lot more suspicious. That’s when it finally happened. What I feared all along.

I was giving them food in the study room one day, then WHOOSH. The door swung open blowing cool air into my face. “AH-HA! I knew you were feeding them!” She said, then I began to beg her. “Please, can I keep them? They won’t survive.”

“Oh…alright then. But, they will need to be kept in a box outside. Do you understand?” I quickly nodded in relief. And that’s what I did, kept the four rats outside in an empty box.

The next Friday, my dad came over for a meal with his sly cat, Cecil. My dad & I both ate until I questioned my aunt where Cecil had disappeared to. She said she gave him food outside! NO!

My legs carried me out, where I found a full bowl of cat food, & the left side of the cardboard box torn right apart & thrown on the ground with blood stains staining it. The poor, poor things.
I run at one-hundred miles an hour up the stairs and reach the dreaded door to my Maths class. I’m late, and with Mrs. Spencer that’s a bad idea. Most kids in the school would rather take a flame thrower to their under-arm hair than be late to Maths with Mrs Spencer.

Just her face makes you want to crawl down into a ball and cry. When God handed out good looks, Mrs Spencer was busy handing out detentions and screaming at innocent little kids. Her mouth is puckered like a dog’s bum and her teeth always have little scraps in them, probably the remains of the last child she ate.

I consider running for my life, but I know I can’t. I bet she can smell me from in there and she’s just waiting until I open the door and she can rip into me like a hungry cat on a helpless mouse. I gently open the door but it still creaks and gives me away. When I peek into the classroom, every child’s bulging eyes are fixed only on me. And so are Mrs Spencer’s, lifeless and empty like two bullet-holes in her skull. Then she smiles; an evil, merciless smile. This can’t be good.

“So James,” she says, slyly. “Why, oh why, would you be late?”

My best friend Matt slips a note to me under his desk. It says, “Your car blew it’s internal combustion engine on the way to school.” He gives me a big, cheesy grin but I shake my head. “There’s no point in lying to you Mrs Spencer,” I say, as sincerely as I can when I’m completely pooping myself. “I’ll tell the truth. No matter how much it might hurt me inside.” I even manage a fake snuffle. “I know it sound’s pathetic but I couldn’t get out of bed this morning from sadness, being late for school because of the grief in my heart. For last night I was sitting in my grandparents’ backyard…”

I need to think of an idea that that’ll save my butt. I’ve already used fractured arse muscles, migraines, brain tumas and spontaneous combustion on other teachers, and they all talk to each other. What about… I know…

“…watching my grandad mow the lawn, when he tripped and let go of the mower. The mower sped off while he was still sprawled in the grass, hit a pot-plant, turned around and ran over my grandad!”

Mrs Spencer looks like she’ll buy a twenty million dollar mansion on an average teacher’s salary before she buys this. But the Matt puts his head down on the desk and starts crying. “And I witnessed it too. It was a shocking gruesome death!” he says, blubbering. Matt and I put our heads together on the table and cry.

Then something truly astonishing happens. Mrs Spencer’s face, always so hard and full of hate, falls soft and she rushes over and gives Matt and I a massive bear hug. I’m almost suffocated between her two enormous bosoms, but hey it’s better than getting yelled at. “I’m so sorry to hear about your dreadful loss boys,” she says. “You may go and wipe your eyes, then have the rest of the period off to deal with your sorrow.”

Is this really happening? No, she must be feeling ill or something! Nevertheless, we walk out of the classroom unscathed. “Did that just happen?” Matt asks. “How did that happen?”

“Because we’re good,” I say. “Very, very good.”
The Hero
Joel Rimes
Year 9

It was grand final day as the Richmond Eagles fought their way through the game. They had been the number two team the whole season and today they had come to prove something; who was number one. Their rivals had been very confident coming into the game, knowing that their past three meetings had ended with an upset for the Eagles. This was simply the past to the Eagles, they had come to play, and they had come to win. Today meant everything and they weren’t going to lose without a fight.

Beads of perspiration rolled across the players’ foreheads as they ran and ran until their legs wobbled and burned like fire. They were giving it everything they had and so far it had paid off. The scores were forty nine to fifty two, Eagles way. So far the team MVP, Jack Raysons had carried the team, scoring 24 points with still 45 seconds to go.

The coach shouted encouragement, criticism, instructions and advice from the sideline. This was his team and his game. He was not going to let them lose. The school had given him one instruction, win the title and we will fund your team next year, otherwise Richmond basketball will be replaced. He knew the kids and knew how much their basketball meant to them. He had worked tirelessly for nights on end, coming up with game plans and chasing players. He was not planning to let his team down.

The Eagle’s point guard, Jordan dribbled down the court, scanning his surroundings for options to score. There it was, Jack cutting through the key and looking open for the drive. He picked up the dribble aimed his pass directly at Jack’s chest but fatigue was starting to wear him down. He did not have the energy nor the strength. The ball floated through the air whilst an opposing player jumped in front. Steal. Jordan cursed and growled at himself for his mistake, bringing on another one. His player soared past him and down the court, completely open receiving the ball and shooting a three. It was dead level with twenty seconds on the clock. The coach growled, pulling at his hair and signalled to the ref for a sub. Jordan was going to get one hell of a talking to when this game ended. He trudged off the court and slumped down onto the bench. Words of anxious encouragement were muttered by his team mates but Jordan was too disappointed to take any notice.

The replacement was Callum; the youngest and shortest boy on the team who was from year nine and had only averaged 4 minutes per game this season. This was his chance to shine. Nervousness and excitement flowed into his stomach as he stepped onto the court. To Callum’s surprise, the crowd cheered and roared approval. He was their last hope. He received the ball and took it down the court following the coach’s orders; look for Jack. Jack caught Callum’s eye as he weaved through screens and dodged players. He broke free and screamed for the ball. Callum passed it off and it hit Jack right on the hands. Jack’s years of training were for this moment, for this shot. He jumped, lifting the ball above his head and shooting. It drifted through the air as a hush of suspense and anticipation settled amongst the crowd. Bang!! The shot was good and the stadium bounced to their feet. The spectators flowed onto the court lifting Jack above their heads. They chanted and cheered his name. He had won the game, he was their hero.
71...72....73 and now 74. I stand back and gaze upon the inscription I have just made into the grey stone wall. 74 days I have spent in this room and yet, I am left to ponder why, how, when and who. I only assume it is 74 days; to me now, a day is defined as when I wake up after I have fallen asleep.

The rough and uneven stone pavers beneath my bare feet feel cold; the same sensation as it was upon arrival. The room is just large enough for me to spread my arms out and complete a circle with my fingertips grazing the sides. I have learned to ignore the mechanical and low humming noise that has not yet ceased but rather become a part of my internal rhythm. Behind me and to the sides the walls are harshly constructed of bluestone and reach about 2 and a half metres high.

There is something strange about the fourth wall though, right in the centre at eye level is a small black square – in 74 days I have had thousands upon thousands of possible suggestions; could it be a tinted mirror? Is someone watching? Is it for security or some sort of identification purpose? Dangling above my head is a rusty light bulb, one that I cannot turn on or off, that is done for me. It descends from an equally condemning and intimidating stone ceiling.

I have many questions but few answers about this place. This is what I do know: I am receiving an air supply otherwise I would be dead by now, so, someone wants me alive or at least alive for the moment. Secondly, the needle protruding from my arm and leading into the black square has to be food; 74 days without food is fatal. I have been able to keep a tally of my time here due to a rusty nail I discovered in the corner – how a rusty nail came to end up in this room, I don't know.

My clothes are the only thing I can make sense of as they were the last clothes I remember putting on. The suit jacket has been converted into a pillow for the time being and my white silk shirt with the tag ‘J. Ralph’ embroidered on the pocket is no match for the disturbingly chilly climate in here. As you can imagine, the shirt, along with my trousers, is dirtied and torn. However, they took my shoes and socks and my blistered and bloodied feet are to show.

The last moment I can remember is laying upon my hotel bed in Paris after a gruelling day at work, turning to my beautiful wife to say goodnight and falling asleep, vulnerable and innocent. As I have done each of the previous 73 days, I search the space for any indication of where I might be. After what I can only guess is several hours, I am about to be confronted with the same result until.......the stone beneath my hand in the bottom right hand corner of the back wall shifts ever-so-slightly. My heart leaps into my throat and the adrenalin rushes through my system. Could this be an answer? Could this be a way out?

Cautiously, I run my fingers around the loose cement of the stone and meticulously dislodge the stone with great effort. I can see the gap left in the corner as I place the unexpectedly heavy stone on the ground. At this point in time, my eye is drawn to a small object squashed against the back of the gaping space. I move forward like a hunter stalking its prey and reach in to grasp the object. It’s a folded square, almost ancient, tattered piece of parchment; as I open the parchment and make out the letters, my hands begin to shake vigorously, my breath stops for several seconds, the hair on my neck stands upright and my heart beats as fast as ever – I drop the parchment to the ground in a state of shock...helplessness...disbelief. Stained in crimson red is ‘J. Ralph: Day 74 – The End’.

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As the crowd of people congregated together, a smooth, bone rattling voice broke through the noise of the people and from it, came a hush of silence.

The Queen stood tall on the balcony of the palace, and proclaimed to the people in her powerful voice, “Hear now, one and all! To you I bare my news. For the many years of your pain and suffering, I bring an end to it now. As I have no child to be the heir of my thrown, or any living relatives that were not lost in the time of the plague, I say this to you all. Age has brought its force on me, and the curse has let darkness fall upon the land. The one who shall bring the end to my life shall bare the responsibility of the kingdom on their back and be the next to sit in my throne. The one who makes the light of sun break through the clouds of eternal darkness shall be the new King or Queen of Anastasia.”

From that day forth, all men and women who saw the Queen, attempted to murder her, to rid the cling of mist and clouds that hung in the sky of eternal darkness and to gain the throne to the kingdom.

Many attempts on her Majesty’s life were made. There was poisoned fruit placed in her meals. Some archers took shots from the opposite side of the palace. Some set traps in the castle, but were caught in them themselves. Some were even bold enough to attempt stabbing her, but all attempts failed.

* * *

It was many years later, all hope of killing the Queen had been extinguished. By this point in time, she was frail and weak. She was now of the age of ninety-four, but no matter how hard people tried, the curse on her life would not lift.

It was a calm and warm autumn day, but it was shadowed by the lack of sun. Some children were playing in the palace gardens, with a pig bladder ball, throwing it to each other as they laughed joyously.

Throwing it high in the sky was much fun for these young children. As a boy threw it up, it hit a thick branch of an apple tree. It rustled with the shake of the leaves and the children had found new fun. They took it as a game, one by one, and made the leaves rustle.

As one boy threw the ball, it went too high and hit the branch from the top. A hard knock to the branch came from the ball. An apple fell from further along the branch that hung over the Queen’s balcony, striking hard upon her fragile head. There came a loud thud.

As she took her final breath, the Queen fell over the side of the balcony. The clouds parted and the sun rose above the horizon for the first time in seventy-three years. With this, a new King was born; a little boy who knew nothing of what had happened.
Normality
Patrick Sexton
Year 10

As I slowly ambled down the empty street something caught my eye. Another person! He was, I estimated, about 117 metres. Feeling elated to see another human; I started to quicken my pace, albeit without much coordination. The man, that I could now see rather clearly, was acting strangely for one of the normals. He was staggering, much like some of the kids do at my special school. As I came closer he looked at me with a sense of desperation etched upon his face. I was about 10 metres when I noticed a blotch of red on his shirt.

I looked at his face again. It had suddenly gone very white. I started to laugh because he looked like a ghost from one of the movies that we had watched at school. He looked at me with a horrified and stunned expression.

The smudge on his shirt had grown larger in size and it now took up most of the stomach region of his body. A large pool of the red substance had appeared at the man’s knees, which he was now on. And then, suddenly, it came to me! This man was bleeding and he needed help! But I didn’t know what to do; the teachers at school had never told us how to act in this situation. I looked up and down the street to see if there were any normals there, surely they would know what to do. But there weren’t any. A sense of panic gripped me, as the man started to wheeze. I suddenly felt very scared. I looked down at the man, and then up again. At the end of the street I was in was a very busy road that I estimated to be about 291 meters away. This road was full of normals who could surely help the man. I quickly broke into the fastest run I could muster and ran towards the street.

I got there in 1 minute and 34 seconds (I was counting the seconds on the way) and I ran up to the first normal I saw.

He stopped and looked at me quizzically.

“What do you want mate?” he asked. I opened my mouth to tell him what had happened but to my horror my mouth had stopped working in my panic and no words were coming out! I felt petrified as I stood in front of the normal, who seemed to be getting angry at me.

“What do you want mate?” he repeated.

I tried in vain to speak, but instead I spat all over the man’s face.

“What the hell are you playin’ at you idiot?” the man yelled and he shoved me to the ground. He quickly walked off, leaving me lying on the cold, hard concrete.

I began to feel a sense of both frustration and panic take hold of me. Why couldn’t I be normal like the rest of them? Why couldn’t I help this man?

Suddenly a hand grabbed my arm and pulled me up.

“You poor man”, said the normal who had helped me, “Are you OK?”

I ignored the question, and instead gesticulated down the street, trying to sign to the normal that another one of his kind was in trouble. The normal looked at me, and then down the street. He then looked back at me, a blank expression on his face.
This is when I screamed. I was so frustrated and angry at myself at how useless I was. I screamed as loud as I could. I started to pound the brick wall next to me with my fist, causing blood to spatter from my knuckles. I then grabbed the normal’s face and physically turned it down the ally and I then pointed to the now unmoving figure of the normal who was in trouble.

The normal must have seen him as he whispered, “Oh my God”, and he quickly sprinted down the street towards the man, grabbing out a black thing from his pocket, yelling into it as he went.

After exactly 2 minutes I walked away, the normal I had helped surrounded by other normals and flashing lights.
Harry, Paul and Russel walked in the Beaconsfield mine elevator carrying their slightly rusted and dirty pickaxes along with fourteen other gold miners. They attended the same high school together, Kingston High school. The elevator door closed in front of them. The elevator looked fairly old as some of the dark green paint started to peel off the metal frame. It had a unique murky smell that entertained the nose. The elevator descended, making a ‘mechanical’ noise with the occasional creak.

‘How’s Julie’s party coming along?’ Harry asked Paul.
‘The party’s next week and starts at ten, right?’
‘Yeah.’
‘And she’s turning two?’
‘Oh well done, mate. You remembered!’ Russell said surprised.
They all shared a little chuckle between them.

When the elevator reached the mine, it stopped and the door opened. Harry, Paul and Russel were the first miners to walk out of the elevator. They all turned on their headlights on their helmets as they were walking.

The mine was eerie and ink-black with the only source of light from the headlights. It was extremely narrow only allowing a maximum of three people side-on and it was about just above two metres. The mine ‘walls’ were rugged and dark grey in colour when their headlights illuminated the walls. The seventeen miners walked through the mine in a single file.

As the miners were walking a thick, heavy noise surrounded them as the ground started to vibrate. ‘What was that?’ Paul said scared. All of the miners stopped to listen.
‘It’s probably the vibrations from the machines,’ Russel said.
‘No, this is different.’ Paul protested.
The vibration continued. It quickly became louder and increasingly stronger.
Rocks began to fall from above, hitting some miners on their helmets.
The miners panicked. Larger rocks began to fall down. ‘Go! Go! Go!’ yelled the miners in desperation. The miners sprinted as fast as they could to the elevator. The narrow mine slowed their escape.
‘Hurry up!’ roared one of the miners in the middle, telling the front miner.
The first miner panicked even more. As he sprinted he dropped his pickaxe on the right side of the pathway. ‘Pickaxe on the right!’ The rocks started to fall more frequently leaving in the miners in extreme peril.

Most of the miners reached the elevator waiting frantically for the last three miners – Harry, Paul and Russel – to arrive. Paul, the very last miner, started to slow down. He looked up to observe the state of the mine. A large rock was in the midst of falling down a few steps away. He quickly pivoted to his right, disregarding the pickaxe just a few more steps away from the descending rock. He dodged the rock but slid on the pickaxe handle. ‘Arrgghh!’ Paul groaned loudly in pain. Harry and Russel looked backwards. Another large rock fell from the top of the mine and crashed into Paul’s back. ‘Arrgghh!!’ Paul groaned even louder in agony. Harry and Russel began running towards Paul to rescue him. ‘No! Get out of here!’ shouted Paul.
‘No way!’ Russell yelled.
‘But-’ Paul protested.
‘Stop arguing! We’re helping you no matter what!’ Harry interrupted.
Harry grabbed Paul’s legs and Russel clutched his arms behind his back. They swiftly lifted him up and began to run towards the elevator.

‘Don’t worry, mate,’ Harry said, ‘everything’s going to be fine – we’ll go to Julie’s party and have a good time.’

Rocks continued to fall more rapidly. The mine could no longer sustain the earthquake. It collapsed.
Bad Luck
Antoni Skoraczynski
Year 7

Have you ever missed something you were looking forward to? Not a TV show, but something big? I have. My friend Anthony and I missed the Manchester United versus Chelsea semifinal. We were furious! This is what happened.

It was 7pm, and the match was due to start at 9 pm. We were driving in Anthony’s brother’s rusty station wagon.

“We’ve got plenty of time,” said Anthony’s brother, Fred.

“Yeah, so if we’re late it’ll be your fault,” replied Anthony.

Anthony was one of the tallest boys at school. He was 15 years old, supported Chelsea soccer team, and was a good friend as he always kept his word. I was a Manchester United fan, but Anthony and I had been friends since primary school. Fred, Anthony’s brother, was 21 yrs old and so lazy that I was surprised he could be bothered even thinking.

“Yeah, yeah, whatever,” mumbled Fred.

Just then, bad luck seemed to be attracted to us.

“Oh no, I’ve only got enough petrol for one more kilometer! Joe, can you pull out the Britways and find the nearest petrol station?”

“Sure,” I replied.

I looked at the map and then I said shakily “It’s ten kilometers from here.”

“Anthony take out your phone and ring 33945 and say we’re on the side of Side Street.”

“OK, what’s 33945?”

“It’s road assist.”

“Oh. Ok.”

After a minute of talking into the phone, Anthony swore and hung up.

“They’ll get here in an hour and we have to pay them three hundred bucks.”

“What!” yelled Fred and I simultaneously.

“Guess we’ll just have to wait,” answered Anthony shrugging his shoulders.

Forty nine minutes later, we finally got towed to the petrol station. We filled up the tank and off we went.

Just three quarters of an hour outside the stadium, we were hit by more bad luck. Traffic jams. I hate them. They are so annoying. We had to travel 30 kilometers moving at snail’s pace. Impossible.

“30 minutes til the match Fred,” said Anthony.

“I know, I know. Just sit down and don’t talk.”

“Can’t you just go in the bus and taxi lane?” Anthony suggested.

“If you pay the fine if we get caught, then yes.”

“Deal.”

Fred accelerated into the bus and taxi lane, and then, inevitably, after 200 metres we were stopped by police.

“What do you think you’re doing? Huh?”

“I dunno officer.”

“I’ll tell you what you’re doing, you are getting your car confiscated. Get out!”

We got out reluctantly, grumbling as we climbed into the police car.

“Now Sir, you’re going to the station.”

“But…..”

“No buts. Just be quiet.”

We missed out on the match. Everyone at the stadium said it was the best game they had seen. The next day when people asked me how I enjoyed the match, I felt angry and frustrated.

But……. I’m going to watch the Manchester United versus Tottenham Final. This time I’m going to catch the train to the stadium.
Zyclon B
Timothy Cox
Year 8

The old floorboards creaked as I stood up. I stumbled over to the charred fireplace, the embers were glowing low. Seeking warmth, I cursed the merciless winter under my breath. The cold winter’s air greeted me as I opened the door. Gazing out over the countryside, the mountains and the icy river seemed even less comforting than the straw- filled mattress inside the cottage behind me. I knew that I had to leave. I sighed to myself in despair and a cloud of steam flowed out of my mouth like a chimney blowing smoke. Food was scarce, the days were growing shorter and the harsh winter was taking its toll on the land faster than I had anticipated. Taking a deep breath, I picked up my bag and placed the strap over my shoulder. I decided that I’d camp somewhere on top of the hills using an old moth eaten sheet that I had found in the cottage.

My legs were aching and more than once I had thought about dropping my bag, but knew that without it I wouldn’t survive very long. I looked up towards a higher hill. Black smoke was rising from the summit, although I couldn’t see what the cause of it was. What if it was another cottage? Filled with food and shelter and maybe even new parents! I decided to investigate the cause of the smoke. Once again I began to trudge up the hillside. I reached the summit not long after, but what I saw was not a cosy cottage with supplies and new parents. Instead I saw flames, flames engulfing a pile of dark misshapen objects. I crept closer, feeling the heat of the fire burning my face intensify with every step. My heart skipped a beat as I realized what was being burnt. The dark objects were bodies!

I began to panic because I saw armbands on the arms of the bodies. They bore the blue star. They were Jews. My breathing increased rapidly and I looked around frantically, looking for somewhere to hide. Nazis would be around here somewhere! I ran back the way I had come and ducked into a small crevice that had been cut into the side of the hill. I didn’t have time to run all the way down the hill in case the Nazis came and shot me or I fell over. I heard two men talking loudly in German, or was it three? Their voices were coming from the other side of the hill. I put my head down and curled up like a ball trying to make as little sound as possible. Please don’t let them hear or see me. Suddenly I felt a small tickling inside my nose. The tickling got stronger and I couldn’t contain it any longer. I sneezed loudly. The Nazis stoped talking. I slowly lifted my head. Where were the Nazis? Then I felt a sharp pain on my skull and everything went black.

I woke up and my head was pounding. I looked around. I was in a room with a lot of other people. A Nazi told us that we were to have a shower before getting to work. We filed into a nearby chamber. There were shower-heads on the roofs. Maybe we really were having a shower. It was packed tight with Jews. I heard a hissing noise and gas began to fill the room, coming out of the shower-heads. Was it some sort of new cleaning formula? I saw and heard men, woman and children yelling and falling over. Then I understood. The gas killed people. It filled the whole chamber and I felt my lungs burn in pain. My eyelids closed and I remembered all the children at the orphanage. I wished them luck.
The Scream
Fabian D'Amore
Year 9

The sky was an orangey/yellow with tinges of white, it was approaching evening and the sun was setting.

The sky looked quite a treat with all its shades of so many colours, it had such a dazing effect, just like watching fireworks at New years eve, 'Crack, sh0000m, sizzle, BANG! look at all the pretty colours'.

But this was no time to be thinking about those sorts of things, as I was being chased, and I was running away in full pelt.

Now, a person wasn't chasing me, nor was I being chased by a dog, or by any other animal for that matter.

I was being chased by nature, by an evil force that has built up and is now creeping over and taking over the surroundings.

Don't understand? Well let me explain.

I was walking on a path- a boardwalk, with two friends whilst the sun was setting on this Saturday night, watching the sun go down really was an extravagant sight but then suddenly the sky turned blood red so I paused and looked around but then I felt lethargic and out of breath all of a sudden so then I grabbed hold of the railing of the boardwalk and looked up expecting to see my 2 friends by my side helping me out of this sight, but I didn't see them.

Not at first anyway, as they must have continued walking as if nothing had happened and then I looked up again and saw the sky opening up, the sun rising back into the sky and flames shooting up. It seemed like everything was being tipped upside down, like the earth was a mix of colours on an artist's pallets but then the artist mixed all the colours together and shook it round,

Then at that moment I knew I was looking terror straight into the eye as I felt the ground crumbling beneath my feet.

I was frozen to the spot and trembling with distress.

I couldn't move at all.

I looked back at my friends again hoping they were running back to come save me from this, but no they were still walking away.

And it was at that point then when I knew I couldn't escape, I was trapped by all the surroundings, I felt as if I was going to be eaten up just like a vacuum cleaner sucks up dust, so then I straightened myself up.

I knew it was pointless trying to protect myself with my hands as the force seemed such an impregnable force so then I looked up at the teeth of this evil, put my two hands to my face and then I let out my final scream.

Everything turned black and my world started spinning.

I then opened my eyes when it was all over to find myself sitting in a hospital bed with nurses and d doctors surrounding me with concerned faces.
Halo: The Untold Story of the ODST

Jasio Dunford

Year 11

In the Era of Halo, there were many unsung heroes who were an essential part to winning the fight against the Rogue and corrupt Covenant species, whom will stop at nothing to destroy the human race and take the galaxy with everything in it.

The Earth created and established the United Nations Space Command (UNSC) where they created a special unit named Orbital Drop Ship Troopers (ODST). The troopers refer to each other as 'Hell jumpers'. This was because they were the first in to investigate an uncharted area, many in the ODST thought they should be better known as a dispensable crew who travel into places darker than hell itself.

The ODST currently consists of four units Private Tamir Johnson, Corporal Sally Krooks, Corporal Pablo Guardiola and the Leader of the ODST Sergeant Shawn Mayland. Each issued with their own permanent ID numbers to differentiate and keep their true identity secret. Private Johnson (121), Corporal Krooks (119), Corporal Guardiola (118) and Sergeant Mayland (117).

The latest development in the war against the Covenant had seen the ODST deployed to a Human inhabited planet but the war had decimated most life on it and those who remained were in hiding and unable to leave due to the occupation by the Covenant.

The orders came in, a brief of the mission was handed to the Sergeant, included were aerial photographs of the area they were to be dropped over, the photos themself recent to the minute he received them, this was possible as technology was 10 times more than state of the art.

The squad was briefed as routine with the specific details about the mission. The UNSC space aircraft named the Mombasa IV was the flag ship of the ODST, It from first sight was small compared to the others in the fleet.

With the destination closing in, the unit became switched into professional mode, they were fully equipped with their own custom made line of weaponry. They were coloured Jet Black to tie in with the special alloy metal armour that made the unit different from the usual UNSC soldier.

Deployment was completed over an isolated area, 5.24 seconds to the ground from 3000ft was a new personal best for the deployment crew of the Mombasa IV but that was irrelevant towards the mission at hand.

The area in view of the unit was barren and depleted from first sight, but looking closer the surroundings of the human civilisation were still intact. Homes still visible in the rubble. Mayland concluded with a minimal but precise investigation that the homes had been abandoned for at least 4 days.

For now it was time to push on Mayland took the front followed by Johnson and Krooks. Guardiola took the rear as he had more experience than the other two members of the unit.

Walking along the abandoned streets of the city, the unit kept close and surveying the area as they moved, without stopping like the professionals they were. Under the Jet Black alloy metal helmet Mayland wore he was perspiring although minimal due to the suspense the emptied city created, Mayland himself waiting for something or someone to appear and ambush them although unlikely.

Out of nowhere a Purple particle beam from a Covenant Sniper rifle came into
view of Mayland, he had amazing reflexes he managed to dodge and roll out of the firing range but immediately behind Mayland was Private Johnson and within 30 minutes of the mission Private Tamir Johnson ID number 121 was dead before he fell to the hard street surface.

It was very unlike the ODST to fall into an ambush but it was only a lone Covenant scout who stumbled on the unit landing in the street. Immediately the unit took cover in a crashed motor vehicle, out of the snipers view. Return fire was conducted for 1 long minute, then the snipers purple particle beam was no more. Mayland stood up and saw the tiny Covenant scout retreating. The plan now was to pursue the creature and discover if a nearby Covenant base was in the area.

The pursuit lasted all of 10 minutes. Amassed ahead was the local Covenant base, full with enemy Elites, Grunts and Hunters, but what was shocking for Sergeant Mayland was the sight of Human prisoners being put to work creating what would seem to be a Light-mass bomb that was large enough to destroy a planet's atmosphere and create a black hole. So many burning bodies of dead humans lay in huge piles around the base.

They had truly landed in hell....
Watched
Kurt Rimes
Year 7

There he was. The man I never wanted to see again, staring me down like a lion waiting to pounce on its prey, his cold, dark eyes piercing through my skin. Slowly, he started to approach me, his eyes full of hate. I had no other option but to hide, running was his talent and staying would result in certain death. Luckily, it was about ten and the sun was long gone making anything almost impossible to see. I spotted a small, abandoned building across the road with one of its windows smashed open.

I slowly crept towards it making the least amount of noise I could. As I reached the deserted store I sneaked into the broken, glass window. Footsteps, getting closer, he was coming. As I dropped to the other side of the window my leg smashed against what felt like a piece of glass. He must have heard because the footsteps were getting louder, and closer. I flung my hands out, turning the window closed at full speed. Suddenly, his face pressed up against the window smiling at me. I picked up the piece of glass that cut my leg, threatening him that I would use it. But his smile just got bigger and he walked away from the window. I looked around drastically for somewhere to hide.

“Knock, knock, knock, anyone home?” his unforgiving voice roared. BANG! The door slammed to the ground. I bolted underneath a desk, beside the window. CREEK, CREEK, CREEK, the sinister man was never going to forgive me for what I did.

“I’m gonna do what I did to your parents.”

I jumped back surprised how close he was to me. I could almost feel his cold breathe fuming against my face. I was too young to die, I’m only thirteen. I was in the Victorian State Cricket team and doing well in school. This isn’t fair. He started to walk in the other direction. I saw a phone sitting on the bench beside the desk on the other side of the room. I had no other chance, my leg was now bleeding uncontrollably and I needed medical attention. So I crawled across the long, planks of wood leading to my only hope of living. The blood was coming out quickly and started to feel drowsy. I picked up the phone and placed against my ear. 000.

“Emergency, how can I help you?” says a girl who must’ve been in her 30’s.

“I need police and an ambulance at…”

Beep… Beep… Beep. What? I look up and in front of me was the man. He was scarier than I ever had remembered him, his face gleaming with joy.

“I found ya mate.” He smiled.

Now he looked desperate.

“Why, WHY, did you send my brother to jail to die?” he screamed, “You are going to pay for what you did.”

I wish my parents were here, but he killed them. So I ran out of the house and they chased me down the road. I ran to a nearby police station. Luckily they saw I was being chased and ran after the man and his brother. The police caught the man’s brother but the worst man was way too quick and escaped.

But now I have nowhere to run and no-one to help me. My seconds are ticking. The man grabs me by the arm and throws me into the wall. He approaches me with an object he got from another room but I can’t see it properly. Everything is going fuzzy; I can vaguely hear sirens going. The last thing I remembered seeing was an athletic figure running away.
From Harley to Hayley

Brock Gibson
Year 7

My family and I were in Corowa with friends for our holiday. We go skiing on a nearby lake but one day it was around 40 degrees and my dad said that it was too hot to take the boat out. All day out on the lake, with the hot sun reflecting off the water from every direction is very exhausting.

The plan for the day instead was to swim in a lagoon that was next to the caravan park where we were camping. While we were swimming we notice a man that had two dogs on the edge of the river. He was throwing the dogs into the river and letting them swim back to shore. The dogs seemed to be enjoying the cool water as much as we were.

One of the dogs was very cute. Her name was Harley, she was a reddish brown colour and she was very, very skinny. The man with Harley offered us the dog for free.

At her last home, Harley had to fight for her food with bigger dogs. She had scars on her head as evidence of her fighting. Her owners used to hit her and be cruel to her so the R.S.P.C.A took her away to try and give her a better home.

Later that night we found out that there had been an incident out at the skiing lake that day. A massive branch had fallen where we normally parked our car. No one was hurt, but if we had gone to the lake it would have been our car and who knows if someone would have been hurt. So the trip to the lagoon saved our car, and also found us Harley. Surely this was a good sign.

After considering it for a day or two we thought that we should take Harley but we had to do it quickly because she was going to be put down on the following Friday. We really had no plans to get a dog or any pet at that time. But this just felt like the right thing to do, to save a cute little dog from death and give her a second chance.

We agreed to take her but we were still on holidays so the man kept her until we were ready to have her. We found the man’s house and told him we wanted Harley on the day that she was supposed to get put down and we changed her name to Hayley. A new name for a new start.

The Corowa ranger delivered her from where we were camping to Melbourne and we picked her up. She immediately sat on my lap; she just wanted attention. Dad was another story. He loves dogs and is great with them, but Hayley wouldn’t go near him. She was scared away from him with fear. When she was around Dad she would put her head down and put her tail between her legs and then run away. She remembered how her last owner had treated her and thought my Dad would be the same.

Now Hayley is having a good life. She loves Dad, maybe even more than me. She is loved by our family and she loves us in return.
Once upon a time there was a very daft boy called James. He had long curly blond hair, a spray of freckles all over his body; he wore odd socks, thick dark reading glasses, big metal braces and a trucker’s hat.

James spent most of his life playing video games and never had time to do homework or make real friends. Every morning he would pretend to walk to school but he really hid in the thorn bush until his parents left the house.

One day during lunch time he heard a rattling sound coming from the front door, he assumed it was a robber. James quickly reached for his tennis racket and hid behind the door. The door creaked open, James lunged at the thief with his tennis racket and delivered 3 striking whacks that sent the scum bag to the floor. He then realised it was mum! OMG what have I done and what am I going to tell mum when she realises I’m at home. James had to think quickly, he must have a good excuse to be home and not at school. His mum lay on the floor stunned, with the Wilson logo embedded on her face. James began CPR, as he began pumping her chest, she punched him square in the nose sending him flying across the room and onto a clothes stand.

“James what are you doing home?” Mum asked in a puzzled way. James mumbled his reply, “Well school wanted me to go home because as you know it’s Fathers day tomorrow and we all needed time to make a cake”.

James had never made a cake but he had a rough idea of what to get as he walked to the shops. In the deli there were two handsome looking men in the black overcoats, maybe they can help me. “Hey vanilla faces what’s up, where can I find cheap cake mix?” asked James.

‘Let me introduce myself’, one of the men began, “I am Carmine Risotto and this is my associate Luigi Parmigiano.” “In what price range are you looking at?” “Yo well bout five bucks” James answered. Luigi had a suggestion “If you do something for us, we’ll help you with your dilemma, capisci?” “Like what?” James asked. Luigi whispered “All you need to do is walk my dog, swap her for the world champion dog Lucy Loo. Lucy is tied up outside of Papa Guiseppe’s café just across the road and try to be inconspicuous”. James was so confident, he replied immediately yes.” “Here take our dog Tortellini across now,” said Carmine. James noticed that Lucy loo was tied safely to a fire hydrant. James started undoing the knot, however he forgot to hold onto Tortellini and both dogs sprinted away. James escaped to the safety of his home.

James had only 30 minutes before his father came home, he rushed about like a mad bull. He figured that all cakes need flour, butter, milk and sugar. He grabbed all 7 eggs left in the egg carton, a tub of butter, two dessert spoons of milk, one canister of sugar and a hand full of flour into a bowl. He grabbed a Snickers bar from the pantry and grated it into smaller pieces. As he grated, he noticed a layer of what looked like thick tomato juice also dripping into the Snickers shavings. Suddenly he realised his blood was part of the recipe! He poured the bloody Snickers mixture into the bowl with the other ingredients and threw it into the oven.

25 minutes later James’ dad was home. James was very keen to get the cake out of the oven and get back to playing his video games. He put the cake down and wished his Dad a happy Fathers Day, James heard … Son you do know that I am extremely allergic to chocolate.”
I left the softness of the green grass and began to cross the rough, dark surface which was not unlike the light-speckled darkness above. Crossing the track used by roaring giants with four wheels, I began to smell dinner, a rabbit was nearby. Due to this, I didn’t notice the bright lights of a roaring giant until it was too late. A horrible pain in my leg and then complete darkness...

I woke to the sound of voices, a dull throbbing in my front leg.

“So what do you think Harry?” a womanly voice asked.

“About what?” the second, harsher voice requested.

“About poor, little Tripod here. Do you think he’ll be alright?”

“Oh don’t worry about him Angeline. I’m sure Tripod will be fine. Just give the little guy some time.”

The sound of receding footsteps reached my highly-tuned ears. What was this ‘Tripod?’ Wasn’t it some strange object with three... My musings came to an abrupt halt as I looked down at my front leg, only to see a lifeless stump. Screeching in anguish, my panic increased as I realised I was trapped inside a caged box, the cold, grey walls adding to my sense of doom. As the pain intensified, I was overcome by darkness once again.

I woke up on the seventh day I had been aware of when a sense of acceptance washed over me. Looking forlornly at the remainder of my leg, I knew it was time to move on. How, I did not know. Now the two voices returned, with human form.

“Wow Angeline, he’s stopped!” exclaimed Harry, breaking into a smile.

“Look, he’s also begun to eat and drink!” exclaimed Angeline.

“I told you Tripod would be fine, all he needed was some time.”

“He’s still lying on the ground though. Will he ever walk again?”

“I really can’t say Angeline, it takes a very strong-willed and brave animal to do that, and this is the worst case I’ve seen. If inevitably nothing happens after a month, he may have to be put down.”

So this was my fate, I was to forever be a lifeless bundle of fur upon the face of existence. Wondering what the term ‘put down’ meant, I fell asleep.

It was now, after waking up, that I finally realised how lucky I had been. Life had given me another chance and I should embrace it. Losing one leg wasn’t going to stop me! With my new resolve set, I went back to sleep. I am a cat after all.

Waking up, I felt refreshed, renewed and ready to take on the world. I’ll show those humans. I will walk. Moving aching and unused muscles, I placed my front-left paw flat on the ground. Shifting my weight, I then firmly put my back-right paw down. I was almost there. With a huge effort, I put my back-left paw flat on the ground and realised that I was actually standing! Having no support now from my front-right leg, my legs struggled to support me and, being also unbalanced, I crashed down on the floor. At first I was disappointed and depressed but then I made myself a promise. I will overcome this, no matter how hard it may be, no matter how long it takes.

Every time I could muster up the energy, I tried to stand, and walk. My hard work had paid off. After two weeks I could slowly walk as my muscles grew and I could
balance. After another week, I could run.

“Harry I can’t believe he actually did it,” cried out Angeline, tears in her eyes, “not only can Tripod stand and walk, but he is running!”

“Now all little Tripod needs is a home,” said Harry.

Angeline’s shoulders slumped as she realised the chances of this.

“Who knows Angeline? Tripod here has already shown us that anything is possible.”

With that, the humans left. I had noticed animals leaving their cages over the past weeks, and now I knew why. A spark of hope lit up in my mind, and then quickly died out. Who would want a three-legged cat? There were other cats who were much better off. It seems as though I will be trapped in this dismal cage forever, wasting away.

Waking from a short nap, I opened my eyes to see a small human girl staring back at me with big blue eyes. Immediately, her high-pitched voice sounded with the words, “Mummy, mummy, I want that one!”
Darkness
Ben Cunningham
Year 8

Darkness. My enemy. Not the only one, but the most dangerous. Darkness that is totally opressing, not just a lack of light, can be deadly It can stop your senses working until it is too late. Darkness like this nearly cost me my life. But it also saved it.

My name is J. You don’t need to know any more about me, and I don’t want you too. Whatever you think, I am not a secret agent, or a gangster. What I am is someone who knows something. Something that people don’t want me to know.

I walked along a wharf, late at night in Los Angeles. Los Angeles is dangerous enough, but it becomes 1,000 times worse at night. I was afraid. I had been witness to a murder, and a horrible one at that. This murder was not directly committed by a gangster. It was committed by a monster. This monster had no mind of its own. It was a creature created to follow the wishes of the American military. And someone had stolen one. I had seen one just minutes before, and had barely escaped with my life.

This is my story.

I was having a chat with a man at a bar, learning what he did, and had just found out he was part of an undercover agency for the Americans’ secret service, when a car pulled up outside the pub. Suddenly he leapt out of his chair and ran out the back door, yelling for me to follow. He started yelling about how “they’ll kill you too!! ‘Cause I was with you!! RUN!” I raced out the back door after him.

We ran, and our lives really did depend on it. We flew around corner after corner, finally stopping on the wharves. We hid in a gap made by some boxes, the agent keeping a lookout. I was protected from all sides except forwards, past the man. And from above. I crouched lower, into an alcove, my mind racing. I was staring upwards as the rain poured down on me. There looked to be no end to the things happening to me tonight.

There was a skitter of small feet. A rat ran from behind a huge container, marked in another language. There was something coming. The creature that rounded the corner was not human. It was not animal. It was like nothing I had ever seen before. And behind it was parked the yellow Audi that had caused all this trouble. The secret agent calmly shot the creature in the head, and lined up his next bullet for the dark tinted windows. The creature stopped, and shoved its hand into its head. It came out with the bullet, and threw it at the secret agent at supersonic speeds. It hit the secret agent square in the chest. He slumped to the ground, a look of terror on his face, dead. I receded further into the comfort of the boxes. Remember how at the start I said that darkness smothered all sound? This saved my life. Had I run, trying to escape, I would have died. But sitting here, making no sound except my breathing, I was safe. I heard an engine start and slowly fade into the distance. I had been saved by a man who had a mission. A mission that he had now passed onto me. A mission that could save the world.

They are coming.

Coming to kill us all.
The sirens of the Vendor-Van are booming as Tigerman and his supportive assistant, Crazycat, chase a criminal through the streets. Turn after turn, skidding at the bends. The criminal has stolen 30 burgers, a hefty crime! Finally, the criminal is cornered as he turns into a dead end. “Come out with your paws up. We have you cornered!” Tigerman says gleefully. Tigerman has saved the day yet again for the people of TigerTown.

“Let’s celebrate,” says Crazycat who is handcuffing the criminal. “To Peppi’s Pizzeria!”

“One Margherita please” says Tigerman as he sits down at a table.

“How can you be so good?” asks the criminal annoyingly. “This is the fifth time you’ve caught me!”

“Just doing my job,” says Tigerman. “I’ve been working as an officer for the Burger Brigade for 20 years and I’ve arrested countless criminals and have been given many awards. Always with my sidekick Crazycat, of course.”

“Sidekick?” says Crazycat confused. “I do half the work. Look! Incoming call from the chief.”

“Hello? Chief?” Tigerman says as he answers the phone.

“Tigerman, bad news,” responds the phone. “It turns out your arch-nemesis Hamburglar has escaped from gaol. He has been spreading havoc all day and now has taken over the largest burger production factory in TigerTown and plans to set the building alight!”

“I’m onto it chief. I’ll be into the office soon, just after my pizza.”

“I knew I could count on you Tigerman…” The phone cuts out.

“Hello? Chief?” Tigerman says as he answers the phone.

“Tigerman, bad news,” responds the phone. “It turns out your arch-nemesis Hamburglar has escaped from gaol. He has been spreading havoc all day and now has taken over the largest burger production factory in TigerTown and plans to set the building alight!”

“I’m onto it chief. I’ll be into the office soon, just after my pizza.”

“I knew I could count on you Tigerman…” The phone cuts out.

“What about me!?” yells Crazycat. “Oh well, lets go”.

As the superheroes arrive at the Downtown office, Chief comes running out.

“Tigerman!” she says, panting. “You must hurry. Hamburglar has explosives on all the entrances, there doesn’t seem to be a way in. But I’ve worked out there is glass under the giant burger on the roof! If you can manage to get the burger to fall, it would shatter the glass and stop Hamburglar, once and for all. There is a helicopter on the roof. Oh, and you might need this jetpack, just in case.”

“OK, but I doubt it. Thanks Chief, we’ll be leaving now. Here’s someone we picked up earlier,” says Tigerman, handing over the criminal and heading for the helicopter.

“Good Luck!” yells the Chief over the roar of the helicopter as it takes off.

It’s already night time when the heroic duo arrives at the scene and police cars, ambulances and fire trucks are everywhere.

“Steady,” says Tigerman as Crazycat lowers the helicopter onto the giant burger.

“Wait! What is that?!?!?” A zapping sound echoes through the air… SMASH!! The crowd watches in horror as the helicopter falls to the ground in flames.

“Oh no! I’m stuck! Crazycat, help!” yells Tigerman as he struggles about. But there is no response.

“Hahahahaha…” says a ghastly voice from below. “Think you could catch me,
Tigerman? Now your feline friend is unconscious and no one can save you. No escaping my Burger ray-gun! Now, I shall explode the factory and plan my escape!”

“Oh dear, I feel so hopeless,” cries Tigerman sadly. “Is this the end? Red and blue flashing lights, fiery flames everywhere, woeful cries from the crowd… Wait! My jetpack!”

ZOOOOM! Tigerman escapes from being trapped and heads for the giant hamburger at top speed!

“What?? No, this can’t be… Noooooo!!” weeps Hamburglar as the burger falls, shattering the glass and toppling onto him. The crowd immediately cheers and roars as Tigerman has saved the day for TigerTown, yet again.

“To Peppi’s Pizzeria!”
The Short Visit
Alexander Maiolo
Year 7

The Appearance
It was the black of night, the moon was not to be seen, and there wasn’t a cloud in sight. Below, the Qatar Desert was bare of all life, but high above in space an asteroid was approaching this exact location. It was no ordinary comet; it was home to a race of aliens with technology far too advanced for humans to ever conjure. These aliens consider Earth as their new breeding ground. A place where they can build an army, to cleanse the galaxy from all other life forms. They call themselves the cleansers and they are targeting Earth for an invasion.

The asteroid had already broken through the Earth’s atmosphere and was heading for its destination. As the rock was plummeting the head of it, which was facing the planet divided into 10 individual parts, these slid along the side of the asteroid exposing a huge drill. The drill grew in size until it was bigger than the asteroid itself. 10,000 meters before impact, the drill started to spin rapidly, increasing in speed as the object came closer and closer. BOOM! The impact shook the ground as the asteroid burrowed its way down until it came to a halt, just hiding the tail of the space boulder.

Within as few minutes, 10 of the aliens emerged from holes in the rock. They were wearing black long sleeve tunics and black woollen pants. They also wore masks that hid their face. All the masks looked the same, they had 2 eye holes and an opening for their mouth. The eyes narrowed down to slits and the mouth was filled with medium sized fangs all across the upper and lower lip. The creatures began crawling on the walls of the rock cave that the comet had made. They placed small devices around the entrance and then walked back inside. Another Alien then appeared, this one was bigger and it stood on 2 legs, it has razor sharp claws and on its head, 3 eyes, all yellow with black pupils. On top of its head are 3 horns facing backwards, its torso was bare and bursting with muscle and on its back demonic wings with holes in them; obviously from sparring with others of his kind. His legs were covered with woollen pants which concealed the metal lining. One of the smaller Aliens looked up at him, he acknowledged it by giving it a nod. This signalled the activation of the devices which were planted earlier, they started flickering and beeping then fell silent. From outside the hole you could not see anything, as the asteroid had burrowed it self and disappeared without the slightest hint that something was there. While the human race slept, the aliens prepared for takeover.

Mean while back at Save Our Planet headquarters, a team of highly experienced commando fighters were guarding our planet from just such a threat. Alarm bells were ringing, sirens were blaring and everyone was moving at break neck speed to see what all the commotion was about. A computer generated voice began with “Warning, Alien invasion, detected, mobilize all troops and proceed to Qatar Desert”.

The short visit
The next day a human strike force armed with a prototype armour arrived and searched the area. One of the soldiers walked right past the hologram. As he passed by, he was grabbed by the leader of the aliens. The soldier screamed and alerted the others, they turned around and ran to assist him. As they approached they walked through the field. Momentarily they were in awe at what appeared before them. They had never seen anything like it before, the entire alien army was standing right in front of them “give up, you are outnumbered” ordered the Alien leader. “Wrong” challenged a voice from behind. The prototype was there, suddenly it dropped to one knee and shot its arm forward and then it transformed into a small cannon. The soldiers ran behind the prototype, as the cannon charged up the light from the energy was blinding. Then for a split second there was silence. Then BOOM! The cannon fired and obliterated everything in its path leaving only a pile of ash, the visit was over before it even began.
The Living Night
Anthony Cotter
Year 7

I don’t like the dark. It comes with its long, skeleton-like fingers, engulfing everything it touches. I really don’t like the dark. It is the evil of the day; nothing can stop this evil unleashed upon the world. I’m in my bed right now, watching as it slowly creeps towards me; I must prepare. It’s so close now, mere feet away. I don’t have enough time, I must hurry. So close now…

As the darkness made its way across the boy’s room, he tried to prepare for its coming; he didn’t dare go near the dark. Nothing could stop it. As the boy took his final breath, he felt its cold, long fingers wrap around him. It was a new sensation, nothing he had ever felt before. As the sun rose above the horizon the next day, he was nowhere to be seen.

The boy had finally woken up; yet, he was not where he was supposed to be. He was in a world unlike any other; the sun was hidden by darkness. As he looked around this mysterious world, he noticed a dark looming object rising above the clouds just up ahead; it was a castle but none like he had ever seen. It is misty, neither here nor there; it is like it’s made of darkness itself…

* * *

I had finally reached the castle; it was very large, dark, not even of this world. I see something, a large dark figure, watching my every move. This place looks all to familiar, it’s as if I’ve been here before; I know I haven’t seen it but that thing up in the tower, its face, it doesn’t have one! Those fingers, those skeleton-like fingers. Those red eyes, full of pain and misery. I know now, it’s the night! It has brought me here…

As it watched the boy, it realized that he had figured everything out; it raced down the stairs towards the courtyard. There, it waited. It waited and waited and waited until a small figure rose through the mist. The boy. It rose up but was standing in an awkward stance. It stood there breathing heavily with its eyes burning with rage. It was ready to be rid of the boy once and for all. It raised its hands ready to engulf the boy in its web of darkness once again to send him away forever. The boy didn’t look frightened. Something’s not right, it thought. It sent its fingers flying towards the boy. I have him now!

Suddenly, a light engulfed the creature. The light! That light! The pain! The agony! The boy had taken out a torch and shone it on the creature. It had let out a blood curdling scream; the boy had to put his hands over his ears, but that didn’t help. It was starting to distort, its legs shrank but grew at the same time, and its eyes flashed every colour of the rainbow. It started to crumple up. It was the end…

After a few agonizing moments, it was gone. The walls surrounding me collapsed, the darkness had finally let its grip over the sun. The light bathed the land. All the darkness was disappearing. Everything was starting to live again. This was the start of a new age.

Then, the world around me spun uncontrollably fast, there was a blinding light and I woke up in my bed again. It was a new day…

The boy started to recount his story to his family and friends throughout that morning, who all regarded him as crazy. They all said that his imagination got the better of him. He decided there was no point in telling anyone else but to write it down and hope that it could help future generations.

As he went outside to go to the park, a large creature with red eyes and long, skeleton-like hands watched him from a nearby bush.
I sat there. How James had ended up here I’ll never know. Talking to my brother’s girlfriend had never been so hard before. I suppose that telling someone’s girlfriend that their loved one will never be coming home isn’t an easy job though.

James was my younger brother. But now, he was gone. Gone forever. We had started out as soldiers thinking that it would be an adventure. Yes, it was an adventure, but neither of us would’ve thought that would end this way.

“Come on,” James had said, when we first joined the army, “It will be a new experience for us.”

“Fine,” I replied, “But you had better know what you are putting your name down for. You’ll have to work harder than you’ve ever worked before.”

We left on the earliest plane to Sydney the next day.

On our first day on the reserve, we learned the first few rules that we would have to follow if we wished to become a soldier.

“One,” the large beefy officer had said, “Never leave your post while on duty. You are risking your own life, and the life of others around you. Two: Always, always wear your army camouflages. They could save your life. These are the few rules that you are to learn. You will be given another three rules until the end of the week. At the end of the week you will asked to memorise the rules, and tell them to your captain. Once you have successfully memorised all 14 rules, you will then be able to move on to the next part of your training, armoury.

We slept well on that first night. Camping in tents isn’t that bad. I was starting to think that army training would be a walk in the park. My thoughts were suddenly destroyed. The next morning, we were woken up at dawn, and forced to have showers that were cold and no hot. We were given a large bowl of porridge that was sloppy as jelly, and then told to get to training. The first day of training was meant to be easy. When we arrived at the commando course, it was pouring rain. We got out of the truck, and told to get through the course in under a minute. After the first three people failing miserably, James was called up to have his turn.

“On your marks, get set, GOOOO!!”

James was off like a rocket. Over the wall in well under ten seconds, across to the ropes, and finally under the tyres. That was by far the fastest time of the day.

“James! Beautiful work mate!” I recall saying this to him because he was the fastest time, a swish 51 seconds.

“Thanks Tim.”

James never was one to talk much.

This went on like this for the next few days, until finally; we were called up to progress to the next stage of our training. The night was great. Everyone passed, and we all moved on to our armoury training.

The first day of using our guns, a fight broke out. We were all so keen to get going that no-one listened properly to Bruce. As soon as he had finished talking, everyone rushed to grab a practise gun. James went straight for the biggest one there. So did everyone else.

“I got it first!” yelled James.
In his haste to get the biggest gun, Justin had accidentally pulled the trigger, sending the bullet straight into James’s stomach.

That’s how I ended up here today, telling James’s girlfriend the terrible news. I never thought it would be my job though.

War can tear families apart. And now I know that first hand.
Horror High
Adam Wood
Year 7

Hi I'm Frankie; Friday the 13’s was one of those days I'll never forget.

Let me introduce my classmates; Bloodgush is a 6 foot ogre with anger issues, Selikton is a nerdy skeleton, "One-eyed" Clops is a shy Cyclops with a habit of picking his nose when he's nervous. Last is me Frankie, I'm a vampire! Wondering why there are so few of us? It's because there aren't many "little" horrors in Melbourne

Usually for English we have Mr Mel, a germ contaminated, sown together abomination, but today we had Mrs Frankenstein "Ok class, settle down" she said in her sandpapery voice. We all suddenly fell silent; there was something about her, something ominous. "Ok class get out your laptops and research "How to chew bones", furthermore make me a procedure on it!"

Bloodgush went straight to Sorrowgoogle, Selikton pulled out a pile of books and began flipping through the pages. Me, I pulled out my coffin and would attempt to sleep until the period was over, as I was just about to drift off into the land of blood and human organs, I was rudely awakened by that dreadful voice. "Why are you sleeping..." she checked the roll, "Frankie?!"

"But Mr Mel always lets us sleep in class!" I protested. "He does not!" Selikton exclaimed as he butted in.

"He always falls asleep when you try to explain anything to him because you're so BORING!" I taunted him.

Clops threw a ball of paper at me, immediately regretted it and started picking his nose. "Aaaaaam I in tttrouble?" he stuttered, nearly in tears, "Yes, yes you are" she said as lightning struck the teachers car park outside, "Ohhh look, it's raining again" I muttered to myself. "An afterschool detention for you!" she cried at Clops. "Bwwwwaaaaaaaaaa!!" Clops howled as he broke into tears.

As Mrs Frankenstein turned to face the class, she saw something on Bloodgushes laptop. She stormed over to his desk "Was that a game?" she demanded. "Yes it is an educational game called Eat the teacher".

"I don't care if it is a game on Abraham Lincoln, no games! You will be joining Clops in detention". The class "Oooohed". "A detention to you all!" she exclaimed. "No," the class gasped.

"I'll save you" a voice sounded. The class turned.

In the entrance, stood a figure.

Mr. Mel flung himself at Mrs Frankenstein. "AAAAAHAAAAHAAAAHHH!" she shrieked as she fell through the window of the second level of the Hermitage.

Mr. Mel climbed back up panting. "She....was....not....your.....substitute teacher," he panted.

As soon as he got his breath back he started again. "Your teacher is..." The door flung open with a howl. A man stood in the doorway, "He is quite hairy for a normal man and has long teeth and nails," I thought to myself. Then it hit me "Uh-Oh I!"

The man smiled a wicked grin. Our troubles had just started, all before lunch too!
Timmy was bored. He had been sitting on the school bus for 2 hours already. Today was the first day of the year 7 school excursion to the snowfields of Mount Powdertop.

“Oh well, he told his best friend Jake, “Only three hours to go.”

“I can’t wait,” replied Jake, jumping up and down in his seat.

Timmy was 13 years old and tall for his age. He had short cropped hair, and green eyes, which sparkled like emeralds under a light. He was a fantastic skier and he had been offered several scholarships for his ability.

Jake was turning 13 in 2 months. He was below average height, with long messy brown hair, which looked as if it had never seen a hairbrush. Jake had small bullet-hole eyes, and this was his first time ever to the snow.

“Excuse me boys!” yelled Mr Vischen in a strong German accent. Silence quickly filled the cramped interior of the bus, until the only noise heard was the coughing of the school bus engine. Mr. Vischen was about as tall as a double base and just as wide. His bald head looked like an egg, and he wore thick, frameless glasses.

“We will get to the Lenovsky Lodge in about three hours. Remember, you are representing Grammarwell High, so be on your best behavior. Going to Mount Powdertop is a fantastic opportunity, so don’t misbehave, or you will be sent home. Ya?”

“Yes, Mr. Vischen,” replied the boys in unison.

When the boys finally arrived at the Lodge, they ate dinner, sorted out their rooms and went to sleep, all the while Mr. Vischen saying,” Go to sleep ya, it will be a busy day tomorrow.”

The next morning, Jake and Timmy quickly guzzled down their breakfast, and got into their ski jackets, pants and boots. They put on their helmets, goggles, neck warmers and goretex gloves.

“Make sure that you put on some thermals, because it is very cold outside boys,” shouted Mr. Vischen enthusiastically.

While Timmy was fastening the clips on his boots, he felt a tap on his shoulder.

“Is it scary?” whispered Jake nervously.

“Don’t worry Jake, you’ll be fine. It’s kind of like rollerblading, and you’re a pro at that.”

“Thanks,” said Jake.

The first part of the day was pretty uneventful, with the ski instructor Mr. Lange, making sure everyone could ski.

“In the afternoon, I’ll take you on some of the harder runs,” said Mr. Lange in a slight French accent.

After lunch, the boys caught the chair lift to the summit. The view was fantastic, with clear blue skies above and the clouds beneath the mountain. White peaks of snow capped all the mountain ranges and shone in the bright sunlight.

“Did you know that Mount Powdertop is one thousand, nine hundred meters above sea level?” asked Mr. Vischen.

“I did sir” replied Michael smugly.

Michael was of average height for a 14 year old. He had stayed down a year, so he thought he was a “know it all”, while in fact he was a “don’t know it at all”. He had
spiky green hair, which looked as if he had a mountain range on his head. He had three ear rings in his left ear, and dull blue eyes.

“Very good, very good,” replied Mr. Vischen as if he couldn’t care less.

Mr. Lange then proceeded to give a lecture about safe skiing and how to never ski where you aren’t meant to; like the opposite side of Mount Powdertop. Timmy saw Michael’s eyes light up at the “not meant to go” bit and saw him whisper to his friends who nodded. Michael then looked both ways and quietly skied to the restricted side of the mountain. Michael looked back, gave his friends a wink, adjusted his goggles and pushed off, escaping from view.

Timmy’s heart skipped a beat. He had seen Michael ski earlier, and he knew that he was terrible.

“I’d better get him,” thought Timmy. He quietly pushed off, pushing each ski through the snow until he got to the point where Michael had disappeared from sight. Timmy looked back and thought, “stuff it,” and pushed off. Timmy followed Michael’s tracks. He was bent over for extra speed, and his shins were pushing against the stiff tongue of his boots, longing to be free. While he kept his chest centered, he pointed his knees in the direction he wanted to turn, the edges of his skis carving the snow. Timmy carved through the snow like a knife through hot butter, touching the pole he was going to ‘turn around’ to the snow, explosions of powder going up after each short, sharp turn.

After a while, Timmy saw an upcoming drop, and that Michael had gone straight over it. Timmy skied around the rock, which was about the size of a giant’s marble, thinking Michael probably would have ‘stacked it’.

A groan of pain came from the bottom of the rock. Timmy skied to the source of the sound to find that Michael had indeed stacked.


Michael then let out an animal like howl of pain, so intense that Timmy was afraid they would be surrounded by a pack of curious wolves.

“Jees, you bloody moron, just can’t keep yourself out of trouble can you? When are you gonna bloody learn? Huh?”

“I’ll – I’ll – I’ll never do it again.”

“You’d better not, or I’ll tear you from bloody limb to bloody limb!”

“Can – can you just ARRGH please help me?” shrieked Michael in pain.

“Whatever,” replied Timmy, coldly.

He looked around and spotted a mountain hut. He roughly grabbed Michael by the collar and dragged him to the door. Timmy kicked down the door, the rusty old hinges giving way easily, and pushed Michael inside. There was a radio transmitter in the hut, and Timmy tried to contact ski patrol, but after ten seconds, smoke started pouring out of the speaker. In frustration, Timmy threw the transmitter out of the window.

“I’m goin’ down the mountain, and I’m gonna get the ski patrol to come and get you. So stay HERE.”

“Okay,” replied Michael weakly.

Timmy left the hut and trudged through the snow, leaving little trenches in his wake. He kicked on his skis and started skiing down the steep, rocky side avoiding all the drops he could see, going so fast he felt he would be thrown back by the wind. When he was about three quarters of the way down he saw an unavoidable drop. Timmy plucked up his courage, headed for it at full speed, and took off. Up in the air he felt the indescribable sensation, which makes dropping so addictive, and then he looked down.
“Oh God,” was all he had time to scream before he hit the ground and his skies fell off. Timmy lost consciousness.

Ten minutes later Timmy woke up feeling dazed. After a while he remembered what he was meant to be doing. He found his skis and poles, and continued down the mountain until he reached the bottom of the Summit Chair.

“Call ….Ski….Patrol. Tell them…..There’s an…emergency…..restricted side….of mountain,” yelled Timmy breathlessly at the “liftie” who was called Stevie.

“Restricted side? Did you go on the restricted side? Did ya ski down by yaself? Not even the pro’s can do that mate” said Stevie in a strong Australian accent.

“Just ….call….Ski Patrol.”

“Okay.”

When the ski patrol arrived they wanted Timmy to go with them and show them the hut. He jumped on the back of the skidoo and they roared up the mountain. As they reached the hut, Timmy couldn’t hide his joy.

“Here it is ,” he yelled, and ran inside.


“Thanks. You did a good job.”

“Thanks. Feeling better?”

“Way better!”
“Mum.” Says Billy, “Did you know that when an astronaut takes off his helmet all the air in his suit would be sucked away and the astronaut would die if they didn’t get their helmet back on?” Billy waited for her answer when he heard nothing he pressed on. “Mum, are you listening!”

“Sorry honey I was just hanging the washing, what was your question? Something about astronauts I presume.”

“Yeah, how did you know?”

“Just a lucky guess, honey now go on.”

So Billy repeated the question and as usual his mum zoned out. Billy was getting frustrated now.

“Muuuuuu!” he said, tired of repeating the question, “why aren’t you listening?!”

“I’m sorry Billy but we don’t have time for this it’s–,” Billy’s mum looked at the time, they were late.

“C’mon Billy!” she said stressfully, “We have to go! Quick get dressed, eat your breakfast, brush your teeth, HURRY!”

“But mum, you didn’t answer my question. Did you know that–”

“No time for questions Billy! Now go and get dressed!

Billy went and got dressed shaggily, ate his breakfast slowly and brushed his teeth carelessly. He was upset that every time went to ask his mum a question she’d just ignore him. Why couldn’t she share the same love of rockets, space and astronauts?

“Get in the car Billy!” his mum yelled.

“Coming mum.”Billy replied.

* * *

In the car Billy sat in the backseat unhappily playing with his toy rockets and astronauts he was playing his favorite game where his two astronauts get kidnapped by aliens and he comes to the rescue. He glanced out the window and realized they weren’t anywhere near his school.

“Mum?” he asked, “Where are we going?”

“I’ve got a surprise for you Billy.”

“Really?” Billy chirped, “What is it?”

Billy’s mum pulled up outside the NASA headquarters. Billy looked out the window, saw what she meant and immediately cheered up. He bolted out of the car and started running towards the big building, his toys grasped in his hands.

“Billy!” His mum yelled out, “Leave the toys in the car!”

“No mum!” Billy protested, “I want them to see this too!”

Billy kept running to the entrance, his mum following behind.

“C’mon mum! Hurry up.” Billy said excitedly

* * *
“Muuuum!” Billy said unhappily, “Why’d we have to take the tour?”
“Because mummy wants to learn too, honey,” She replied
“This lady’s boring!” Billy protested.
“Shush Billy, I’m trying to listen.”
“I’m going to play over there mum,” said Billy pointing to a stack of crates
“Shush honey, whatever.” his mum answered uninterested.
Billy walked off angrily. He had just started to play his favorite game when he fell over and hit his head on the edge of a crate.

* * *

He woke up in the a really comfy chair
“Aww.” Billy groaned, “where am I?” he asked as he looked around dazed.
“You’re on a rocket ship,” someone answered.
“Who said that?” Billy asked, scared.
Two astronauts appeared from two chairs in front of him. One was tall and skinny the other short and stocky.
“Wow! Two real astronauts,” Billy exclaimed excitedly, “and did you say I’m in a rocket ship??”
“Yes we did.” answered the taller one of the astronauts.
“What’s your name?” asked the shorter astronaut.
“I, I, I’m Billy.” Replied Billy nervously.
“Well I’m Danny and this is Jimmy.” said the shorter astronaut.
“Can you please teach me how to be an astronaut? Billy pleaded
“Well you’ll be needing a suit,” said Jimmy, “I think we’ll have one in the back about your size. Let me go get it and Danny, you teach our friend Billy here the basics.”
Jimmy left the room.
“Well Billy, what you need to know about being an astronaut is that––”
Danny was cut off by an aggressive jolt that shook the ship.
“What was that?” asked Billy, scared now. Danny glanced up and immediately yelled for Jimmy.
“We gotta problem out here Jimmy!”
“What is it?” asked Jimmy rushing into the cockpit.
“It’s a black hole.”
“What do we do? What do we do?” asked Billy
“Just relax Billy,” Danny said sternly. “Let me and Jimmy handle this.”
Billy sat back in the chair he woke up in. He watched, interested but scared.
“Now Danny,” said Jimmy, “I think the best thing to do is ride the first spin and then accelerate as fast as this baby’ll go.”
“Are you crazy?!?” protested Danny that’s basically suicide! We’ll––”
“Just trust me on this one,” Jimmy said frustrated. “It’s our only hope. This is a
light ship. The black hole will eat us alive if we try to fight against it. Riding the wave is our only hope.”

“Jimmy, I swear you’ll be the death of me,” replied Danny with a sarcastic laugh.

“Let’s find out.” Jimmy said with a grin on his face. There was another jolt even harder than before. The black hole was reeling them in. There was another jolt as they started to turn with the black hole. Billy was on the edge of his seat.

“Here we go!” yelled Danny, his foot resting on the accelerator. The black hole gave its last jolt they were riding the wave now. They were building speed. 100, 120, 140, 160 kph and faster! They’d almost finished a full turn, Whooosh!! Danny slammed down on the accelerator. The black hole tried a counter attack but it was no use they were going too fast for the strength of the black hole. There were cheers and hugs all around. Billy was jumping up and down on his chair.

They were safe.

“Now Billy,” said Danny, “where were we?”

“You were telling me the most important part of being an astronaut,” Billy said cheerfully, sitting up in his chair.

“Oh yes,” Danny said remembering, “You always have to–”

“LOOK OUT!!” screamed Jimmy. Billy and Danny turned their heads to look where Jimmy was pointing. There was an incredibly large asteroid heading straight for them. Danny tried steering out of the way but it was too late. They were hit with a massive thud and lost control.

“We’re going down!” yelled Jimmy. They were heading straight for an unknown planet.

“We’re going to crash!” yelled Billy while clinging on to the side of the ship.

“Brace yourselves!” warned Danny.

CRASH!

They hit the planet and skidded for what must have been at least a mile.

Finally they came to a halt.

“Is everyone Okay?” asked Jimmy. When he heard two yes’s he carried on speaking. “Everyone put your helmets on or we’re going to explore.”

* * *

They stepped outside and immediately saw some figures in the distance. Billy straight away started running towards them.

“Look,” he yelled, “people!” and he kept running.

“Wait!” yelled Danny, “They’re not people. They’re aliens! Billy, get back here NOW! Jimmy, grab your ray gun! We’ll fight our way through this.” Billy had just got back behind the two astronauts when the aliens started shooting.

“Billy, hide behind that rock,” Jimmy said pointing at a nearby boulder. The fight went on for a while. Jimmy and Danny were looking pretty successful. They had almost wiped out all the aliens when two came and grabbed the two brave astronauts from behind before Billy could warn them. The aliens dragged them off leaving their ray guns on the ground.

It was up to Billy to save his two new best friends. He grabbed the two ray guns and set off in hot pursuit of the aliens. As he got close he tiptoed from boulder to boulder. He slowly and quietly waited at a rock just in front of the aliens. He was going to time his rescue to exactly the right moment. Then with a huge war cry (a
lot like the native American Indians) he kicked off the rock and started to shoot down aliens flying sideways – Matrix-style. It seemed like he was in the air for ages. (Luckily there was no gravity or he would have hit the deck hard!) Once he had shot down all the remaining aliens, he through the ray guns aside and picked up his astronaut friends and carried one on each of his shoulders. When he reached a safe area he gently lay his two friends down on the ground. They suddenly regained consciousness.

“You did it, Billy,” Jimmy said weekly, “You did it.” he repeated himself while giving Billy a big hug.

“Danny,” said Billy. “Do you think you’d be able to tell me the one thing I have to do to become an astronaut now?”

“Sure,” Danny said weekly, “all–” he coughed, “all you have to do is wake up.”

“I don’t understand,” said Billy confused.

“I don’t understand,” said Billy confused.

“Just wake up. Please wake up,” Danny continued.

“What do you mean?” asked Billy frustrated.

“What do you mean?” asked Billy frustrated.

“Please Billy. Just wake up. Wake up please wake up.”

* * *

Billy woke up with his mum calling his name by his side. She was filled with joy when she saw him awake and gave him a big hug.

“Where am I?” asked Billy glancing around, confused.

“You bumped your head Billy. You were out for hours. I’m never going to let you out of my sight again.” She said giving him another big hug.

“Yes hon.” His mum answered.

“You wouldn’t believe what I dreamt about...”
The Debut
Ged Logan
Year 10

Tela Tumanau ecstatically jogged onto the pitch; he had waited and planned for
this moment his whole life. As a child he had watched the Wallabies, with a
twinkle in his eye, and had always dreamt of reaching this point. As he matched
up against the opposition during the Haka he felt belittled, which was a
strange feeling for him because he had always been the biggest in his team
standing at an amazing 6 foot 10 inches and all muscle. But a reassuring pat on
the back from his team mate, gave him his confidence back.

As the siren sounded he knew that this moment here and now was his make or
break moment. Daniel Carter, the starting number 10 for the All Blacks and
arguable one of the best players in the world ceased Tela with his eye contact.
He had noted before the game it was his first test and decided to put pressure on
him early. Carter kicked the ball hard and long, it went a good 38 metres
spinning and twirling straight towards Tela. The enormous New Zealand mobile
forwards ran straight for him with the look of wild animals. Tela caught the ball
and sprinted it straight at them, showing no hesitation or fear. Jerry Colin's a
huge Islander forward with fake albino, white hair made the bone crunching
tackle. As they connected it felt like all of his bones rattled. His body went limp
and he hit the ground hard.

Tela took the first hit hard but after that his body became used to the contact
and he even started to thrive on it. He began to get used to the fast and physical
game. Tela slowly but surely slipped back into his usual game strategy of big runs
off the back of the scum and trying to knock as many people down as he possibly
can. The rest of the half finished at two tries all. New Zealand converting 2 of
them, thanks to the wonder boot of Carter and Australia only one giving the Kiwi's
a two point lead going into the break.

As the team marched into the change room for a team talk and a rev up from the
coach, Tela stood very tall and strong. He truly felt he had accomplished a
brilliant first half. He may be physically battered but he had just played his first
40 minutes of test football and he was still raring to go. This feat was one that
many thousands had dreamed of doing but he was one of the very few that actually
did it. As the coach finished up his team talk he walked up to Tela, pulled him
aside from the rest of the team and said, "Boy, you're doing great out there, keep it
up."

He knew immediately that that was one moment he felt he would never forget.

The words were still ringing in his ears as he ran back onto the pitch. Hearing
the crowd roar was something he knew he would never get tired of. This time it
was his chance to chase the ball and boy was he going to do it fiercely. The kick
went high and short landing right on Tony Woodcock a bustling prop who's body
was a ball of muscle. But that didn't stop Tela, the second the ball nipped Tony's
fingers Tela hit him, hard and right in the gut, winding Tony sending him from the
field. A gratifying moment for Tela, revenge was sweet and this confidence boost
rolled on through the play. Tela continued making meters with bone crunching runs,
going straight through the opposition players, gaining many line breaks.

As the minutes began to run out Tela noticed that the score line hadn't changed in
the whole second half leaving New Zealand with a handy two point lead. It was crucial
that Australia put points on the board fast because very soon it would be all I over.
Unfortunately they were at the half way mark and it was about 50 meters to the try
line. There was a ruck happening and Tela was standing at the back of it. He had
the ball under him and was picking the line he was going to run. When he noticed
that, they had only left one player on the blind side marking up on the advantage line.

Tela took the ball and ran with a low body shape at the middle of the player. The player, Collin's, lined him up but with less than a meter between them Tela changed his running line toward Collin's shoulder. Then Tela exploded, his entire body moved upward on impact causing Collins to be bumped off.

This left plenty of space for Tela to run, it also meant that Tela only had to beat two more players and he would have a free run for the try line, which would seal victory for Australia. The first player Tela encountered was Joe Rockafoko, who was a surprisingly huge winger. But Tela made short work of him with a quick, don't argue, palm off, leaving Joe in the dirt of Tela's trail. The second, a full back named Leon MacDonald who was already looming on Tela after Joe had slightly slowed his momentum. Leon lunged for the tackle but Tela did the same to Leon MacDonald as he had done to Collin's. He bumped him leaving Leon MacDonald on the ground as well.

Tela now only had to make it twenty meters before he could dive over the try line. Daniel Carter was hot on his tracks. When Tela was ten meters out he could feel Daniel's hot, ferocious breath breathing down his neck. He realized he was only about a body length away. Both players took three more strides and simultaneously leaped for the try line!