

Emily Anderson
Grade 10

"The Quake"

Clearwater
School

"SKYLA! GET OUT OF BED! IT'S EIGHT O'CLOCK, AND SCHOOL STARTS IN TWENTY MINUTES!" I heard a faint voice calling from downstairs. I groggily opened my eyes, and slowly emerged from my room. I staggered down the stairs, and once I reached the kitchen, I was greeted with a symphony of screaming.

"KAYLA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?" My younger brother, Caleb, screamed. Caleb was an annoying child. He was thirteen years old, and was a nerdy geek. He always spent his time on his computer playing *Minecraft* and *League of Legends* everyday, and he rarely ever came out of his room.

"WHAT DO YOU THINK I'M DOING? I'M MAKING PANCAKES!" Kayla barked. Kayla was my step-mother since my mom died a couple of years back in a fatal car accident.

"What a great way to start the morning," I yawned.

"Oh look who decided to come out of her room," Caleb snickered.

"Shut up Caleb. Like you're ever out of your room since all you do is play on your laptop everyday," I replied back hastily.

I looked up at the clock, and it read: "8:05 AM." I quickly made myself a bowl of Cheerios and scarfed it down.

"Not going to eat pancakes with us, Skyla?" Kayla asked.

"No, I'm late to school," I replied with a mouth full of cereal; milk dripping down from the corners from my mouth. Kayla nodded, and turned away quickly disgusted by the sight.

After I finished devouring my food, I ran back into my room to put on something nice for school. I threw on my jeans and a nice blue shirt. I quickly brushed my blonde hair, and brushed my extremely white teeth. I grabbed my backpack from my room, speedily ran down the stairs, and rushed out the door towards the school.

Once I reached the school, I bolted through the front doors and ran to my first class, biology.

"Skyla Holman," Mr. Walter, announced reading through the roll call list.

While he was making sure people were there, I burst through the doors as he was calling my name, "HERE!" I yelled out of breath.

"Well... Late again Ms. Holman?" Mr. Walter sighed shaking his head in disapproval.

"I apologize Mr. Walter, I woke up late an-"

"Now, I don't want to hear any of your excuses. Now everyone turn to page fifty-two in your biology textbooks if you will," he said interrupting me, facing the whiteboard writing down our assignment.

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I opened up my textbook and did the questions that he wrote up on the board. After about twenty minutes I felt shaking underneath my feet. I shrugged it off, until people were freaking out, wondering what it was.

"Uhm, what is going on?" one of my friends, Megan, asked.

"I don't know..." I replied.

Suddenly the PA turned on with the principal freaking out, "Everyone this is an earthquake. Please do what you're supposed to do when we have an earthquake drill."

All of the students were all screaming; instantly crawling underneath desks for safety. I faintly saw cracks forming into the ground, until after a short period of time, they grew larger and larger every second. After about a minute, the ground split entirely. How could an earthquake this strong, make the ground split this quickly? The large cuts in the terrain grew even larger until it started swallowing people to their doom. All I could hear were the deadly screams of my classmates, holding onto the legs of the desks, so they wouldn't fall to their demise.

My light blue eyes widened up in fear, and my first instinct was to run towards the door. I was stopped fairly quickly as a fault formed right in front of me. I skidded to a halt, trying to keep my balance, and ran once again. This time, I bolted to the shattered window, climbed over it, and got multiple shards lodged into my skin. I could feel my vision going blurry, but I couldn't give up yet. I lost my balance, and hit the ground fairly hard. I bonked my head on a large chunk of rock, as I watched blood drip from my arm, hand, and leg from the small portions of glass. I felt myself losing consciousness as I was swallowed into a dark abyss.

"Uhhh... Are you okay Skyla?" a faint voice called.

Feeling my head, I opened up my eyes. I looked around at my surroundings, noticing that I was in somebody's house. There was a large bandage covering half of my skull, and various purple bandages on my skin where the shards of glass used to be.

"Good! You're awake," a deep male voice spoke with his back turned to me.

"W-where am I?" I asked in confusion.

"You're in my house, silly."

"Your house? Who exactly are you?"

He turned around fairly slowly, and when I finally got a glimpse of his face I could see who it was: Aaron Samuels. Aaron was an extremely nice guy. He always helped me with my math when I needed his assistance.

"Oh hey Aaron. Surprised to see that you helped me, but why did you help me?" I asked suspiciously.

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"You were laying on the ground after the tremors were over, so I decided to take you to my place, and help you. Plus you also lost quite a lot of blood from the glass, so I decided to take you to my home and care for you," he smiled.

"Well, thank you very much, but I'm afraid I have to get going."

"Where are you going?"

"Away from here.. Maybe find a new place to live, or something."

I steadily got up, and limped out the front door. I felt extremely dizzy from the lack of blood loss. I heard a noise from behind me, and turned around to see that Aaron was right behind me wielding a knife just incase something happened.

"Did I say you could come with me?" I asked.

"No, but I want to get away too just incase another earthquake comes, and destroys everything. Plus, I don't want you to get hurt even more..." he answered.

I nodded and continued walking through the dark forest. It was night-time, but the sky was stunning. Beautiful glistening stars shining everywhere with a full moon gleaming brightly. I stared up at the sky in awe. Aaron nudged me to keep moving. I shook my head, and continued walking, until the ground started to vibrate once again.

"Oh no.. Not again..." I sighed.

I ran to a large tree that was located behind me, and climbed up it as much as I could with my injured leg. Aaron was behind me following my steps as I climbed up the tree.

"Ouch!" I hear Aaron say behind me. I whipped around to see that he had lost his footing on the tree, and slipped, "Um, Sky, do you mind helping me here?" he asked with his hand up in the air, asking to be pulled up.

I grabbed his arm and pulled as hard as I could. I looked down as I was yanking Aaron up, and noticed that the fault kept growing and growing. The tree kept moving as the ground kept shaking. I lost my footing, and fell off the tree, bringing Aaron down with me. I kept falling to my doom, until I saw the ground. The earthquake didn't go that far into the earth, but you couldn't see how far it went from the surface. I closed my eyes, and as I hit the ground, my vision darkened, and I never woke up.

The light from the sunset was beginning to fade as Ashley began her journey from her home. Hatred continued to boil in her veins. She was still angry after the fight she'd had with her parents several hours earlier. Had she failed to see how narrow-minded they were after all these years? It wasn't a fair argument, and they had known it. Ashley gripped the handle of the window and landed lightly on the rocks beneath. Her high tops made the rocks crush together slightly, but by all accounts she'd managed to escape without her parents noticing.

Quickly but silently, Ashley made her way across the front lawn. How dare they judge her? She had been trying to tell them who she really was, and they had prevented her from doing so. Rather than accept her, they had shot her down and told her that her identity was a sin. How could being totally truthful with herself be harmful to anyone, especially herself? All week, her friends had repeatedly encouraged her to tell her parents. She hated them now, too. It was mostly because of them that her relationship with her parents was ruined forever.

Ashley's pace quickened as she drew further away from her house and closer to the meeting place in the woods. She was thankful that the woods were only a stone's throw on the other side of the street from her house. While Ashley had to admit that the woods were an odd place to meet up, she didn't question it.

Sticks cracked and rocks shifted beneath her feet. Ashley was almost running now. She had to speed up in order to get to the meeting place on time. As she drew closer, rock music could now be heard from an iPod dock. A grin spread across Ashley's face as she saw a sign: *Welcome to the Jungle*, it said. The song playing could easily be recognized as a Nickelback song. She hadn't wanted to come to this party originally, but after what had happened with her parents, she couldn't think of a better place to let off some steam.

Ashley immediately spotted her best girl Marley. "How's the best girl at school?" she asked, coming up beside her.

"Pretty terrible," Marley replied. "My parents didn't take the news so well. How about yours?"

"The same," Ashley muttered.

"I'm sorry," she murmured. "I guess we'll just have to hope they can grow, huh?"

"Yeah," Ashley agreed as she accepted a beer and took a sip. She coughed. "Oh my God, that's strong. Is that a beer? What is that?"

Marley shrugged. A group of kids had found a makeshift dance floor in the clearest spot of the area, and the two girls went to join them. They danced to ABBA, Taylor Swift, AC/DC, and loads of other bands that Ashley loved. The night went on, and Ashley had more drinks. She didn't want to stop now. She was on top of the world. Who cared what her parents thought? The only opinion that really counted in Ashley's book was her opinion of herself – and Marley's, of course, because right now, Marley was one of the few people she didn't hate.

The night went on, and it was only when the sun began to peek its smiling face over the trees that the group really realized how long they had been out there for. As if some signal had been exchanged, they ran around the area, gathering up every single piece of evidence. They tossed the beer cans and wine bottles into one bag, and wrappers from snacks into another. Everyone grabbed their phones, and the kid who had brought his iPod dock unplugged it from its portable charger. It was six-thirty when they checked the time. Everyone realized what was going on. Their parents had texted them several times throughout the night, and they were probably all on the missing persons list.

"Let's go, guys," declared Jared Moore, the captain of the varsity football team.

"Why?" Marley, who had probably gotten the highest of them all that night, asked. "If we go back, our parents will just get mad at us for staying out all night. I say we stay here. How about we make a club? We could be the Woodlanders."

This sounded appealing to several kids. "Yeah, let's stay here," they agreed, but most looked hesitant. Suddenly, Marley toppled over.

Ashley, along with several others, raced to her side. "Marley?" Ashley asked, getting to her knees beside her. "Are you okay?"

"Someone call 911!" Cara Belzer cried, and at least ten kids whipped out their phones, rapidly dialling the ambulance.

Jodie Cooper
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Too Little, Too Late

While the kids stayed on the 911 calls, the others helped to carry Marley out to the sidewalk so she would be ready when the ambulance came. The paramedics immediately got to work, while her friends all got into their cars and raced after the screaming ambulance in order to meet Marley at the hospital.

It was six fifty when they reached the hospital, and seven forty-five by the time they got any news about Marley's condition. Dr. Reynolds came out to greet them and saw them seated silently in their seats, praying. Wishing. Hoping. "Are the parents of Marley Chase here?" he asked, glancing around.

"Mar's parents aren't here," Ashley told him, "And they won't be coming. What's wrong with her?"

"There was a dangerous mixture of drugs and alcohol in her system," Dr. Reynolds informed her. "That amount can play games with the body and mind. We did our best to cleanse her system, but despite our best efforts, Marley Chase passed away at six thirty-three this morning." Ashley was frozen at the moment she heard the words "passed away." Hours ago, they had been agreeing with one another to tell their parents about their relationship.

The doors opened. Mr. and Mrs. Chase burst through. "Where's Marley?" Mrs. Chase wailed. "Where's our baby?"

Ashley turned to them. "Too little, too late."

Mary Falade, Grade 10,
Westsyde Secondary, "The
Perfectionist"

The Perfectionist

"It's your choice."

It felt as though a hundred years had come and gone since she'd spoken those words.

"You can stay here where everything is wrong. Or you can leave."

"I guess you're right." A lump had sat in his throat, and a heavy weight had settled on his chest. "Are *you* going to leave?"

"I am."

And she had. She had left him behind in the place where everything was wrong; a prison of white hallways patrolled by men and women in white coats. They had wielded frightening silver instruments and spoke in foreign languages. As a prisoner, they'd forced him, to spend his days all alone in a small room. In this room, he had laid in bed, surrounded by machines that he couldn't seem to understand. The unfathomable contraptions were unlike any he'd ever seen. With plastic and metal eyes, they watched him, his every move

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recorded and every breath measured.

The prison staff worked on a schedule, appearing several times throughout the day. Each time, he had protested as they pulled him out of bed and away to another room, where they would probe and poke at him. He had known why he and the other prisoners had found themselves there. They were all part of an experiment of which the goal was, of course, to rid mankind of their faults. It's all anyone wanted; a perfect world.

His memory of his first day within those white walls was vague. He still didn't know how he'd arrived there, only that he'd woken up with masked faces peering down at him. Pain had rippled across body; his skin had burned, his clothes wet and sticky.

"We're going to make you better." A voice had said. "We're going to fix you."

But, they couldn't fix him. In fact, he had come out further away from perfection than he'd ever been.

"Where did we go wrong?"

"It's a mistake."

*Mary Falade, Grade 10,
Westsyde Secondary, "The
Perfectionist"*

"There's nothing we can do about it."

The people in white had muttered, shaking their heads. He had failed. But, what did success even look like? The answer to question came later that week.

As men in white escorted him to the examination rooms, she had appeared at the other end of the corridor. A staff member stood on either side of her. She was a prisoner, which meant that she was imperfect like him. Except there were no faults that he could detect. Why was someone so flawless in a place like that?

As he'd passed her, she had glanced down her nose at him and gave a small "hmp". So he had been right. She *was* perfect. Why else would she have assumed such an air of superiority?

One day, he met her again in another room. It was a large room that the prisoners shared. They used the rooms for training routines and exercises; all part of their journey into perfection. He had had no clue why he was even there. They'd already established that he was beyond saving. So why continue to torture him?

Gathering courage he didn't know he had, he had asked this question of the girl.

*Mary Falade, Grade 10,
Westsyde Secondary, "The
Perfectionist"*

"There must still be hope for you," was her reply.

He had shaken his head. "There isn't."

"There is no other explanation," she'd argued.

"I guess you're right. What about you?"

"Me?" She'd raised her head, chin out, not letting him forget for a moment just how perfect she was. "I still have room for improvement. But, I'm almost done."

"You're lucky," he had sighed. "I don't know if I'll ever get to where you're at."

At this, her eyes had softened and she had lowered her head. "It's your choice. You can stay in this place where everything is wrong. Or you can leave."

That was when she spoke those words that would later save his life.

Not too long after that day, she was gone. At first, he'd sulked, envious and feeling betrayed. But, then he had remembered her words; if he wanted to, he could leave.

Mary Falade, Grade 10,
Westsyde Secondary, "The
Perfectionist"

The next days were exhausting ones. He'd pushed himself, working beyond the point of pain. He reached towards his new found goal of perfection, certain that he would achieve it.

Only, he didn't.

Yet, he now found himself free from those depressing white hallways. Gone were the figures in white and the scary machinery. A bright sky and busy city had replaced them.

People towered above him, and he avoided their glances, afraid he would only see pity. He could almost hear them thinking, "*What an unfortunate soul.*"

Then he remembered that none of that mattered, because she walked behind him, humming a tune that chased away his insecurities. He leaned against the back of his wheelchair, watching the wheels spin as she pushed him along. She didn't stop until they reached a stone walkway that ran along a beach. She sat on a bench behind him, gazing out into the grayish sea, trembling in the cold.

"I tried, you know," he spoke, voice soft. "But, this was the best I could do."

"It's ok. No one's perfect." Her lips were smiling, yet somehow she appeared sad. She

*Mary Falade, Grade 10,
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reached down and slipped her fingers under the hem of her pant leg, dragging it up to reveal shiny metal. "See?"

He was sure the surprise was evident on his face. Nothing could have prepared him for her revelation. She had hidden her imperfection so well, and at first he didn't know what to think. He cocked his head, silent for several moments. She watched him, anxious. Finally, he turned to her and smiled.

She seemed relieved. "Besides, there is a kind of beauty in imperfection."

He nodded in agreement. "I guess you're right."

Somber Society

Cat Hartt-Towle
Grade Ten
Beattie Secondary
Page 1

Dark days pass
Dark people do dark things
We are accountable for
Who does what and
Why
But when others are hurting
Because of things we've done
Nobody cares
Especially ourselves
Selfish and Hateful?
Yes in a way
But nobody is completely good
Or evil.
The world revolves around the sun
The sun is not a person.
But when a parent chooses to
Disregard their son
And tell him lies
To make him feel worthless
Those, are the evil actions
Choices we make.
Actions we do.
Out of spite, malice, jealousy?
Chaos is a choice

Somber Society

Cat Hartt-Towle
Grade Ten
Beattie Secondary
Page 2

And the verdict is based on our own
Actions.
Lies will always be more plentiful than
Truth.
It's easier.
Such is human nature
But we don't treat everyone as
Human
Do we?
That's a judgement.
A judgement we shouldn't make.
Because we are not just books
And books are not to be judged by their
Covers
Everybody has a story
A story you might not want to hear
Because you might actually
Feel.
You might change your judgement.
But certain societies don't accept that.
They don't accept change.
Most believe that nobody else is
Allowed to have an opinion.

Somber Society

Cat Hartt-Towle
Grade Ten
Beattie Secondary
Page 3

They're afraid.
Afraid of people.
The greater population.
That's why they treat others
As if they are rats
As if they have no brain to think
Why they don't care if they die.
Because that would make them human.
Just like them.
And they don't want that.
It's easier to be mean.
To not believe everybody has a story.
To ignore science even.
Because to them
The earth does not revolve around the
Sun.
It revolves around themselves.
And everyone else
Is left in the dark.

Lay Your Head

Cat Hartt-Towle
Grade Ten
Beattie Secondary
Page 4

LAY YOUR WEARY HEAD
TO REST
AND NEVER OPEN YOUR
EYES
DAWN WILL NOT WAKE THEE
FOR LIGHT IS BUT THE
ILLUSION OF A SOUL
SOUL OR NOT WE SLEEP
WE DIE
WHO CARES
BUT OF THE GODS
NOBODY UNDERSTANDS BETTER
NEVER KNOWING
ALWAYS UNSURE AND DISAPPEARING
DON'T YOU DARE OPEN YOUR
EYES
THE MOON BURNS
MORE THAN MY LOVE FOR YOU
WHICH DIED THE SAME NIGHT AS
THEE
LEFT MY ARMS IN AN ETERNAL
SLUMBER
NOW DAWN WILL NOT WAKE THEE
AS THERE IS NOTHING TO

Lay Your Head

Cat Hartt-Towle
Grade Ten
Beattie Secondary
Page 5

WAKE
THEN I TOO SHALL REST
FOR NOTHING WILL ALWAYS
REMAIN
SAMENESS IS GREY
GREYER THAN THE CLOUDS
THAT VERY DAY
SOON TO JOIN THEE
LAY YOUR WEARY HEAD
TO REST
AND NEVER OPEN YOUR
EYES
DAWN WILL NOT WAKE
THEE
NOR I.

A Masked Ragdoll

She was wearing a mask, to hide who she really was.
She thought she had to hide, hide from everyone,
Hide from who she really was,
Who she really wanted to be just to make others happy.
She wanted to be the same as everyone else.
She felt like a ragdoll in a world full of Barbies.
So she wore her mask,
Hiding herself from everyone, even herself.
She wanted to be a Barbie,
She wanted to be like them all,
All the same, all the time.
She felt like she was alone, the only one in the world who felt this
way.
She wears her mask, wanting nothing more than to be like
them.
She felt like she was drowning and no one could see her,
She felt like she had no way out,
Like she was stuck,
Suck on the feeling that she will never be good enough,
Like she will never be what they want her to be.

But she is a ragdoll,
In a world filled with Barbies.
She was a ragdoll,
And she was
What everyone wanted to be.

Unfulfilled Promise

The unspoken words lingered,
Thou no one dared to utter them.
But we knew what they were,
We knew what the words where.
The room filled with their own grieving,
Their own way to let go.
But in the corner of that awful room,
Sat a girl,
Who slowly let the words sink in.
But never wanting to say,
That the words were true.
She spoke her words,
Cause once she did,
She would have to admit,
That it was true.
She didn't want it to be true.
Cause once she said the words,
There was no going back,
And that meant,
There would forever me an unfulfilled promise.

My name is Lyric. Please don't judge me for that. I had artsy parents. (I have nothing against artsy-ness, by the way; I love almost everything about my parents, their creative sides included.) And yes, I say 'had', because they are no longer in this world. They died in a car crash. No, I don't want pity. I know it's overdone to say that, but sometimes, I've learned, overdone is better than underdone. Underdone is good, if you've really thought about it, but it's a commitment. And underdone can get really awkward. Like that time my teacher played some music, and lo and behold, there I was, dancing alone, because, why not? Everyone else will in a moment, I thought.

Well, let's just say that now I know 'why not'.

That's right up there with my most horribly embarrassing moments. Not to judge it, though. My foster mom, Alice, doesn't believe in judgements, although that belief is a judgement. She knows that. She's not as thick as I used to think, before I realized that everyone has had as much time as I have to fill up with thoughts, which must have got them somewhere. I'm getting off track, though. My foster mom just doesn't want to go around in circles, thinking that disliking judgements is a judgement. She must be smarter than I am.

Anyway, I can get pretty caught up with feeling sorry for myself. I pride myself on my cheerfulness, but really, I can enter into a dull frame of mind. I don't want to talk about that now, though, because it's boring, hence the word 'dull'. I hold to my request of no pity, though. Usually, I can remember that the phrase "waste not, want not" can apply to life too.

Anyway, I've invented a little plan. I won't allow myself to give up until the floor swallows me up and I'm stuck down there with someone who smells like cucumbers and is dressed in purple leopard-print. And I don't think that's going to happen. So I keep plodding on.

Now, I'd better get started on the story I've got to tell you.

It's 'Take Your Kid to Work Day.' My foster mom is a meditation teacher, and she only teaches at night. My foster dad is a carpenter. So here I am, on a construction site, surrounded by men in hard hats (I'm wearing one myself, and rocking it, if I do say so for myself) and chainsaws that are buzzing away like bees who've had *way* too much coffee.

I'm glad that my foster dad is facing away from me, because he's always wanted a kid who'd follow in his footsteps, and my hammer-swinging is *not* pretty.

Suddenly, I hear a sound like a real bee. I see the insect whizzing around the room. And then one of my nearby chainsaw-wielders begins swinging his weapon around.

My reflexes kicking in, I put myself into fetal position, like they teach you at school, although I don't think they had an emergency category for 'man playing "helicopter" game with chainsaw instead of skipping rope'. I shut my eyes tightly, expecting my life to end.

Instead, I hear splintering wood, and feel a sudden drop. I look up, and see floor underneath my feet. But when I look around me, the rest of the floor is gone, replaced by dirt.

Then I understand. The crazed carpenter cut a fissure in the floor, which gave way, taking me to the next level.

I feel a shiver as I realize that in a sense, the floor just swallowed me up. Well, I don't expect any cucumber-scented, purple leopard-print-dressed man to show up any time soon.

I look around, trying to figure out how far down I am. It's kind of peaceful down here, compared to chainsaw-mania, so I might stay for a bit even if I *can* find a quick escape plan.

I make my decision.

“Yes. I’ll try to get us out of here.”

The crime of living.
Created from: Hunger games: Catching Fire Ch.17
by Maliah Walker.
Sa-hali Secondary
Grade 10

Satisfying small shrieks and wine glasses shatter,
Steadily stained from wisdom, my brashness is a crime
Still we all are faintly stained with something we're unable to wash away.
Say as if it's only for a moment you'll desire a sense of sleep,
Something I'm not saying, But I'm perfectly honest.
Personal tragedy has consumed me, this final act of defying.
Beauty at the expense of my own life and an act of defiance, refusal to play by the rules.
I paint my face with darkness,
Wish wasted I sink into sleep,
Forgotten like the night I feel guilty and awful.
The number of sunsets and I don't want to miss any.
Little Talk with silent tears,
Does the world know it?,
But no danger of tears.
I reveal the wedding dress,
Heavy white silk and pearls at my throat.
Reasoning the greatest offender,
My pain and loss in the brightest spotlight.
It's so barbaric leaving me with a dull ache.
I am the mockingjay.

Leaving

By: Maliah Walker

Sa-hali Secondary

Grade 10

All things that exist,

They disappear like car keys in an old couch,

Like family after a tragedy.

Like anything and everything we age, we grow old.

I love everyone and I love them dearly,

Trying desperately to stop this natural behavior, this occurrence.

I cry and the tears sting my red puffy eyes.

As I realize to myself the truth.

Everyone will leave ...

I am alone and I always will be.