



2016



School District No. 73 (Kamloops / Thompson)

2016 Young Authors' Conference

Marg van Duesen Award Recipients & Honorable Mentions

ELEMENTARY WINNER - Marg van Duesen Award

Axel Hansen, South Sa-Hali Elementary: Grade 4

Honorable Mentions

Mataya Pockett, South Sa-Hali Elementary: Grade 4

Amira Alam, Beattie School of the Arts, McGill: Grade 5

Mya Loring, Arthur Stevenson Elementary: Grade 5

Eilidh Nicol, Beattie School of the Arts, McGill: Grade 6

Laura Nixon, Pacific Way Elementary: Grade 7

SECONDARY WINNERS - Marg van Duesen Award

Alexa Marshall, South Kamloops Secondary: Grade 8

Sage Needham, @KOOL: Grade 9

Honorable Mentions

Vivian McLean, Desert Sands Community School: Grade 8

Jaida Barker, South Kamloops Secondary: Grade 9

Kirsten Zubak, St. Ann's Academy: Grade 10

Bailey Schmidt, South Kamloops Secondary: Grade 11

Morgan Lacusta, NorKam Secondary: Grade 12

THE FORMATION

The snowflake fell for about ten seconds before two slits opened in its middle. What the snowflake's eyes saw was astounding. A vast open field of mountains, so tall they touched his birthplace. They went right through the clouds like kabobs at a barbecue. The mountains seemed to get larger as the snowflake fell, growing like marshmallows in a microwave. Minutes later the snowflake was near the ground. Then out of nowhere it was caught by a streak of grey. Now the snowflake was zooming across the countryside at high speeds. The lynx it had fallen on was chasing a rabbit. The cat sped under trees and down hills. He jumped and the snowflake fell off, drifting over a cliff. A town was now visible below, its lights glowing like sprinkles on a cupcake. The snowflake kept falling and it landed on the street outside a restaurant.

A boy was sitting on his bed wondering if his dream had been real. It had definitely seemed so. The cars outside cast a dancing red light across his bedroom window as he turned it all over in his mind. A snow god had sent a snowflake that had a mind. It seemed impossible.

The smell of cinnamon buns wafted into the apartment. He slipped on jeans, sneakers, and a red 'ROCK ON!' T-shirt and opened the door to his room. His mother was already dressed. She looked up from her computer and smiled, "You ready to hit the road dear?" They walked toward the elevators unaware that strange things were going to happen that very day.

Soon they were seated near the window at Pluto's, a rather nice restaurant that sold

very nice pancakes. Aron glanced out the window and gagged on his pancake. It was the exact place that the dream snowflake had landed. He could swear there was a trail of bluish light floating just above the sidewalk. Aron stood up so fast he spilled his orange juice. He told his mom he needed to go get something and before she could ask, he was gone.

The trail was now so visible it looked solid. Aron followed the trail almost running. The snow seemed more intense with each step. The trail ended in a clearing in Central Park. A voice spoke and Aron jumped. The voice was sharp and cold like icicles. "Hello Aron. Thank you for coming."

Aron stepped back in alarm. The man was unusual. He was tall with a long beard and he held an astounding staff. It was half the height of a lamp post with engraved pictures of snowy mountains. The staff seemed to glow with the power of the snow.

"Who are you?" asked Aron.

The man sized him up. "I am Arcton, the snow god. I have come to give you a chore." Aron was stupefied.

The snow god walked closer to Aron and looked him straight in the eyes. The man's eyes were like pure sapphire. "I have searched a long time to find you, Aron Hamprook. The quest I give, only you can achieve. You must collect a special grinding stone from the Mayan caves in Mexico. It will look like a normal stone but will be dented, with a glowing white aura. I need this stone to become king of the gods. "

Aron was dumbfounded. A god wanted him to travel halfway across the planet to retrieve a random stone. He plucked up his courage and said, " I don't think it's a good

time. My mom is waiting for me.”

“Aaah,” the snow god interrupted, “but in return I will grant you riches and a proper house.”

This took Aron by surprise. It really sounded great. The god looked at Aron for a long while, then away. Aron said, “I’ll do it.”

The snow god turned back to Aron and picked something up. When the god stood up Aron realized, with disbelief, that he held THE snowflake from his dream. He handed it to Aron and in that moment a surge of energy went through his body, and then pain. Pain so bad, Aron fell to the ground and passed out.

When Aron awoke Arcton stood above him. The pain had stopped. He got to his feet feeling rather disgruntled. “Finally. Do you feel stronger?”, the snow god said. Aron now noticed he did feel much stronger. The snow god said, “It is time for you to depart.” Aron turned and there was a dragon. “This is Misha. She will take you to the caves.” Before Aron knew it he was climbing onto the dragon’s leathery back. Misha reared and took off.

Flying was the most wonderful experience. The wind rushed through Aron’s hair and he liked the graceful motion of Misha’s wings. Aron was rather cold but every time the dragon shot fire her body would warm him quickly. They flew over lush green forest and hills of rock. Misha didn’t slow until they came to the yawning mouth of a cave. She touched down with as much grace as a snowflake. Aron hopped off to peer into the cave. It was filled with crystals and rocks but none of them were what the snow god wanted.

Aron's footsteps echoed on the ground as he walked deeper into the cave. When he looked back he could just make out a tiny red and gold spot that was Misha. Then he rounded a corner. It was pitch black. The only thing that kept him upright was his hand on the rough cave wall. He kept tripping on things that were littered all over the cave.

After several minutes of stumbling, a light appeared in front of him. The light was from stones. Stones that looked exactly like the snow god had described. In the light, Aron realized the things that he had been tripping on were bones. A shadow fell across the stones. It came from a massive black dog standing over a half eaten goat. This was definitely not a pet. The horns. The red eyes. It was a chupacabra. It lunged at him and he did a football dive toward the wall. The chupacabra crashed into the place where he had been. Aron scrambled up to see the black body hurtling at him again. The chupacabra was on him. Its breath reeked of rotten meat and blood. A claw pierced Aron's chest and a burst of pain expanded through his body. He could feel the agony spreading. Then the chupacabra's eyes widened and it slumped over sideways.

Standing over its dead body, Misha roared with a triumphant tone. Aron got up, his chest aching. He grabbed one of the glowing stones. There was blood dripping down his shirt. He stopped. A glow was coming from inside his pocket. He reached in and brought out the snow flake. It felt good in his hand. It floated up and went inside his wound. The bleeding stopped and the wound sealed. They reached the cave entrance and Misha knelt. Aron got on her back, she reared and they took off for home.

My name is Elisabeth Jones, and I have the most incredible story. You might not believe me, but let me tell you, it's true. Every last word.

It all started when my parents got a job in France. My dad got a job at the Eiffel Tower, and my mom as the head of the police force. We bought an apartment and we were on the top floor, so whenever I looked out of my window I could see the Eiffel Tower. The strange part about my bedroom was the window right above my bed. It opened and closed just like a regular window, but instead of being able to look outside there was a mirror. It rippled like water when I breathed on it.

In the first few nights that I lived in France, every night I dreamt of being sucked into the mirror. The thing was, I ALWAYS woke up before I figured out what was going on. I hated it when that happened because I love mysteries and adventures. That night I dreamt of the mysterious mirror again. First, the mirror started shaking, then it started to suck stuff up. It took my desk and chair. Then, I started being sucked in! I hoped that the portal would bring me back to my old house in Ontario!

I woke up! I got out of bed to get a glass of water. When I came back from the kitchen, I realised that my desk and chair were missing. Oh. My. Goodness. My dream actually happened! I opened the mysterious mirror and reached in to touch the mirror, but the mirror vanished as soon as I put my hand out and I fell face first into the

mysterious mirror. Splash! I opened my eyes and I saw that I was sitting at the bottom of the ocean. I took a deep breath in shock. Then I remembered that I can't breathe underwater. "Aaargh!", I tried to scream. But, it came out sounding like "Blaach". I swam to the surface and realised I was surrounded by nothing but water. I swam back to the bottom where I came from and looked for an opening that I could have got to the ocean from. I found a small handle and pulled it. The next thing I knew I was lying on my bed soaked. I looked at my clock to see what time it was. Just as I looked at my clock my alarm went off. I had opened my newly found portal at midnight! I was only under the water for a few seconds, so I must have been in the portal for hours! I looked out my real window and hoped to see the Eiffel Tower. But, it was gone!

My mom came into my room and told me that there was no school that day because every security guard in Paris was looking for the Eiffel Tower because it disappeared around midnight! When my mom left the room I immediately jumped into the portal and found myself sitting on the bottom of the ocean again. I swam straight to the surface of the water. I saw something floating in the distance. I swam toward it and saw the silhouette of the Eiffel Tower! Oh, my gosh! I immediately turned around and swam back to where I had come from, then I swam back to the bottom of the ocean floor, and eventually found the handle to get back home.

As soon as I got home, I turned on my laptop and googled "How could the Eiffel Tower disappear?" One result came up. It said, "the only way the Eiffel Tower can

disappear is if it had a glitch with another dimension.” Of course! It must have had a glitch with the world I had travelled to! I decided that at midnight I would bring a wire through the portal and find a wire from the Eiffel Tower and glitch the Eiffel Tower back to our world!

At dinner time I didn’t speak much. My mom kept looking at me suspiciously. When I was done eating I went straight to my room and set my alarm for midnight. The next thing I knew my alarm went off! I unplugged my lamp and pulled the wire towards the portal. I opened it and got in.

When I got to the ocean, I swam to the surface and looked for the Eiffel Tower. I spotted it and swam towards it. When I got to it, I climbed into the elevator and went to the third floor to look for a wire. Eventually, I found one and I started banging it and the wire from my room together. After a few tries everything froze. Then, there was a blinding flash of light. The next thing I knew I was back in the ocean. It worked! I swam back towards the portal and found the handle.

When I got back home, the first thing I did was look out the window to see if the Eiffel Tower was there. The Eiffel Tower was back! Just then, my mom came bursting into my room. “THE EIFFEL TOWER IS BACK!!” she screamed in shock. I pretended to be in shock too, so I screamed, “I KNOW! HOW DID IT HAPPEN?” My mom and I stared at each other in shock. Well, my mom was in shock and I was trying not to laugh.

After a few minutes, my mom decided to leave my room, and as soon as she did I collapsed onto my bed laughing.

The security guards of Paris decided that some really smart teenagers covered up the Eiffel Tower with some kind of awesome contraption that projected the stuff around the Eiffel Tower so it looked like the Eiffel Tower was gone.

Whenever I hear people speaking about how people made it look like the Eiffel Tower disappeared, I smile to myself, for I know the true story of how the Eiffel Tower REALLY disappeared.

Amira Alam

Grade: 5 School: Kamloops School of the Arts

The Ugly Flower

The Ugly Flower

Once upon a time there was a huge flower field, filled with the most vibrant and colorful flowers you could ever imagine. Pinks and purples, blues and greens, yellows and oranges, red and... one black flower.

“That flower is so ugly, no one would ever want him, he’s just a nobody, black and boring and ugly,” that is what all the other flowers thought of him.

The flowers would tease and bully the poor little black flower. All the flowers would say things like, “you’re so ugly” and “no one would ever want you, a boring ugly, dull flower like you”. They teased, “who was the flower that everyone hated? Who was the flower the was so ugly and boring? Who was it, again? Was it you? Or you!? Oh, right it’s you, the little black flower, that lacks in beauty!”

The Little black flower would always cry about all the mean things the other flowers had said, he would always reply with, “just you wait, my day will come, where I will shine and glimmer with beauty.” Or, “Well, I do have a name you know, it’s not little black flower who lacks in beauty, it’s Shade.”

Although it looked as though he was confident and nothing bothered him at all, inside he felt alone, abandoned, and unwanted.

One day a fairy from the forest nearby came over to the flower field. She announced that she would be giving up her beauty for someone else who needed it. “I shall give away my beauty to someone who needs it more than me, someone who deserves it.”

Every flower thought that they would get the beauty for themselves, and every flower thought they deserved it, except for Shade, who felt that if no one liked him then he didn’t deserve it. The fairy, flying all around the field, was looking for the one she would give her beauty to.

“Not those plants, they’re already so vibrant and pretty, oh, not them they’re so colorful and beautiful too. Besides I can tell that all these flowers don’t deserve such a thing,” the fairy thought to herself.

Then she saw the little black flower but she saw him like no one else did, kind and loving, but sad. She then knew who to give her beauty to. She flew over to the darkest part of the field where Shade sat, and announced to the flower field who would get her beauty. “I know who will get my beauty, someone who has deserved it for so long....”

All you could hear in the flower field now was shouting, all the flowers were yelling out, “That’s me! I’ll get the beauty” or, “I’m the one who has deserved it for so long!”

Then the flowers lowered their voices to see who would get the beauty, it was as silent as an empty field, and every flower listened close.

“My beauty goes to... SHADE!” The fairy had announced it, but hardly anyone was happy, they were all booing. Shade went to talk to the fairy.

“How is this possible, how do I deserve it?” Shade asked the fairy.

Amira Alam

Grade: 5 School: Kamloops School of the Arts

The Ugly Flower

“It’s because you are the one who had to put up with all the mean old flowers, you were looking all around at beautiful flowers, and everyone knows that you have been waiting around for something good to happen to you, haven’t you?” The fairy replied.

Shade thought that through and decided that maybe he did deserve it. As soon as he looked back at the fairy, gold dust started covering him, from root to petal. Once the gold dust had gone, he was transformed into a beautiful flower! He had sparkling, vibrant, bluish purplish pinkish petals, it was beautiful! His stem and leaves were such a beautiful, and glimmering green, so vibrant like no others. Shade was so happy.

“Oh, thank you, thank you fairy! I look so beautiful now, thank you so much!” Shade said with pleasure, but the fairy had already left.

The rest of Shade’s life was turning out so great! He felt more welcome to the field than ever before! One day some girls had come to the field to pick some flowers, and the fairy was with them. The fairy had decided to punish the other flowers by picking them. The flowers had been so mean to shade, just because he was different, and now that he was so pretty they all loved him suddenly? That was not right!

However, when all the flowers were picked from the field, Shade felt lonely again, but what he didn’t know was that the fairy had planted some more flowers for each one that was taken. In a matter of days Shade saw little baby flowers pop up from the ground! Shade was happy now, he got to play with little cute, beautiful babies! When the babies had grown up, they became friends with Shade, they liked him very much for being beautiful inside and out. Shade was thrilled that he finally had some flowers that he could play, and have fun with. They played a lot together. Every flower was happy, and every flower was respected from then on.

THE END

The Full Moon

By Mya Loring

Grade 5 Arthur stevenson elementary school

One morning Rebecca went to the ocean to watch the sun rise above the mountains. She loved to watch the reflection on the water. Rebecca remembered when her mother was alive, they used to walk to the ocean and feel the wonderful breeze on their skin. Rebecca smiled like she did when her mother was still here, and then she let her feet creep into the sea. She felt the cold, wet, water on her warm toes. Suddenly she heard someone call her name.

“Rebecca!” her father shouted, “breakfast is ready”. Rebecca ran to her beach house as fast as she could then told her father how wonderful the beach was.

“Oh father,” rebecca said, “the water was beautiful and the sand was softer than my pillow! It reminded me of when mother was still here...”

“Rebecca,” her father said, “you know how I feel when you talk about your mother!”

“Yeah I know,” Rebecca said in a sad voice. She knew her father was still so sad about her mother dying. She wish they could be sad together and talk about it.

Rebecca decided she needed some cheering up, so she went outside to play with her friends Anna and Jack. Rebecca and her friends went to the cliffs where they liked to explore. Rebecca saw something unusual when they got there. It was a cave! A big cave! Rebecca showed her friends and they hadn't seen it before either. Her friends became scared, except for Anna. Anna wasn't afraid of anything. Not even

The Full Moon

By Mya Loring

Grade 5 Arthur stevenson elementary school

clowns and spiders. They all agreed to go home and come back tomorrow to check it out. Rebecca went home into her room and found there was a note on her bed.

Rebecca opened it up and it said, "*Dear Rebecca meet me at the cave at 1:00 AM and bring a flashlight and warm clothes.*" Rebecca was confused. There was no name on it and she had no clue who wrote the note. She heard her father say, "Rebecca what's wrong?" He saw her worried look. Rebecca was speechless she didn't know what to say! She had never lied to her father before.

" Nothing !" Rebecca said and then her father walked out of her room, and she started to cry to herself for lying to her father. Then she stopped so her father wouldn't hear.

Rebecca had a choice to make. If she was going to the cave, she would have to wake very early in the morning and try not to wake up her father. She needed to make a plan. If I am going to the cave, I have to put my alarm clock sound so low that I can barely hear it. I will set it to 1:00 in the morning, and get a flashlight from my closet. I'll need my blanket from my bed and then sneak past father's room and climb down the ladder from the deck.

Rebecca went to the living room where her father was watching the news. She heard the news announcer say that it was a full moon tonight. Rebecca knew that on a full moon something crazy always happens. Time went by so fast Rebecca remembered

The Full Moon

By Mya Loring

Grade 5 Arthur stevenson elementary school

she had to go to sleep early or else she would not wake up to go to the cave. So she went to sleep at 7:00.

It was 1:00 AM and Rebecca woke up and went through step by step of her plan. She reached the deck and climbed down the ladder, and then headed straight to the cave. When Rebecca got there, she looked up at the full moon and looked at the cave. She wondered if something weird was going to happen. Being brave, she kept on going and wondered what was going to happen next.

Rebecca was shaking when she finally made it to the cave entrance. She turned on the flashlight and kept on walking forward. Something caught her eye and she went over to see what it was when suddenly, her flashlight stopped working. The only thing she could see was the moonlight. The full moon.

Rebecca was scared and she knew she shouldn't have come to this scary place. She looked into the moonlight and she saw something along the sandy shore. She moved closer and saw another note! Curious, she got closer and opened it up. It was too dark to see the words, so she ran out of the cave into the moonlight. As the moonlight from the full moon shined on the page, the words on the note came into sight.

Rebecca very slowly and carefully read the words on the note. "*Dear Rebecca. You have always been such a brave girl. I knew you would come. Never forget me and never be scared. I will always be with you in your heart so face your fears.*"

The Full Moon

By Mya Loring

Grade 5 Arthur stevenson elementary school

Rebecca was shocked! Could it really be her mother trying to comfort her? She had no clue who else could have written this letter but she knew in her heart it was for her. Rebecca smiled and looked up at the full moon.

“Thanks mom!” she said. Rebecca wished she had told her father, and maybe he would have come with her and maybe he could have seen the note. Then maybe he would let her talk about her mom.

Rebecca cried on the way home. She hated that she lied to her father. She would face her fear and continue to talk about her mother and tell her father everything that happened. Rebecca would never lie to her father again, and would always face her fears and keep her mom in her heart.

The Chill in the Eastern Wind

Eilidh Nicol

Grade Six

Beattie School of the Arts Elementary

Solana Elkins took a deep breath and stepped forward into the burnt down house. This was it, her first ghost. All she had been told was that it was a young woman who had died two years ago and she had been instructed to do whatever was needed to send her to the light. Why hadn't she been sent already? Solana was dragged from her thoughts when a shrill scream cut through the air.

'It burns! It burns!' a woman screamed.

Solana rushed forward towards the scream. This woman was in pain and it needed to stop. The faded form of a crying woman slowly came into view. It was a pitiful sight, but Solana tried to smile.

'Hello,' Solana said. 'I'm Solana. I've come to help you. What's your name?'

The poor woman stopped in her tracks.

'Help me? How could anyone *help* me?' she asked, before bursting into tears.

Solana was overwhelmed now. This was the first ghost she had been told to go send to the light. It seemed like others had tried before her. Tried, and failed.

'What is your name?' she tried again. 'I can help you.'

'Eveliina,' she said, 'but how can you help me? Two years ago I died in my house. A fire it was, and a terrible one too. Nothing can be changed. I am gone!'

Solana exhaled sharply and held her dagger to the witch's throat. That was the other way.

'Alright, alright,' the witch hissed. She was angry now. 'In the next three hundred thirty-three days, if the wind blows from the east, there will be a bitter chill that will freeze over the land and kill the crops.'

The witch hadn't thought. The wind rarely blew from the east.

'Do it,' Solana said, a grin on her face.

Solana was laughing with triumph as she ran into Eveliina's burnt down house. She had won.

'Eveliina! I can set you free!' she cried.

The ghost suddenly appeared in front of her.

'What do I need to do?' she asked.

'Take your favourite memory, your happiest one. Tell me about it.'

Eveliina began to speak. Solana became engulfed in happiness. She concentrated, and slowly, ever so slowly, a light began to appear. It grew bigger and bigger until it practically filled the room.

'Go, Eveliina,' Solana said. 'Go be happy.'

Solana smiled as she heard Eveliina's scream of triumph. Her first ghost had been sent to the light.

Abstract

By: Laura Nixon

A final swirl of the brush completes the crisp signature of Quinn Douglas on her abstract portrayal of dreamscapes and wonder through paint. The flawless strokes created a new world full of mystical glory. Prior to this week, Quinn had enrolled in an exclusive, national amateur art contest, in which the winner is to receive a year's supply of art materials, a cash prize, and their work displayed at the country's most elite art museum.

"Looks great. Your best one yet." Quinn's older sister Maisie moves from her previous position of leaning on the door. "I love the, uh, fish tank?"

"Does this *really* look like a fish tank?" Said Quinn with a hint of frustration in her voice. "It's abstract. You know, a picture...with no picture?"

"I know what abstract is. *I have* been here longer," said Maisie.

"Back at it again with the older card."

* * *

February 29th. Leap Day. Some lucky person's birthday. It also happens to be the day that the National Amateur Art Contest submissions are due. All submissions must be into your local town hall by 12:00 noon.

Quinn Packs up her painting in her La La Lime bag and starts down the street to the Westchester Town Hall. She saunters up the concrete steps and into the main lobby. Inside, there is a small table, with a banner hanging off the front holding the contest's logo.

"Hello there," says the man behind the table.

"Hey. Um, my name is Quinn Douglas, and I have an entry for the contest."

"Great! Your picture looks, er, creative!" He said with a sideways glance.

"There are just a few papers and such that you have to fill out, and then you can be on your way." The man with a nametag of *Bennett* stands up and starts to fiddle with the papers.

"Alright," Quinn said, and she got to work.

Five minutes and a packet of paperwork later, Quinn and Bennett exchange goodbyes. According to the National Amateur Art Ass. handbook, the top 150 pieces are chosen and get announced exactly 10 days after the submissions are collected, and then they are narrowed down to the top 50, which are chosen 5 days later. The top 50 artists get to attend a conference, at which the elite panel of judges must select a winner. Quinn wants to win this competition so bad, she could fight someone.

The clock strikes 12, and the ten-day countdown begins. *It's only a matter of time now*, Quinn thought.

* * *

As according to regulation, exactly ten days post collection day, at 12:00 PT, the top 150 submissions to the N.A.A.C, are announced on their website. Of course Quinn logged onto that site at 11:58, just counting down the minutes. Once the clock reached noon, she refreshed the page, and BAM! The top 150 names were right under her nose. Quinn skimmed through, until she reached the D section.

Coran, Marietta
Darlen, Alfred
Dixon, Zachary
Divon, Jarrod
Dyson, Morgan
Erin, Samantha

Quinn's heart fell farther than her toes. She knew this might happen, but she still felt shocked. *It was an amazing picture, thought Quinn, They just don't understand it! I don't want to fail just because some people have terrible taste.* A blanket of depression sunk over her whole body. Quinn had never been a star athlete, or a straight A brainiac, but art was the one thing that gave her something to excel at.

Four days and 23 hours passed. The days felt like an eternity, like the world was in slow motion. Just for the heck of it, Quinn decided to log onto see all names that weren't her's. She glanced at her phone and the time. 11:59am. She lazily turned her attention back to the monitor. 12:00. She refreshed the page, and then something, or should I say nothing happened. *Nothing? What the heck?* Quinn thought. 12:01. Refresh. This was intriguing to Quinn, the National Art Association was never late; she should know, Quinn followed the contest every year until she was eligible to compete. 12:02 hit the clock, and the page was once-again refreshed. This time something came up, something different. A message from the president of the N.A.A.A. appeared in bold, black letters on the screen:

GOOD AFTERNOON, ARTISTS. WE APOLOGIZE FOR THE INCONVENIENCE, BUT A LAST MINUTE SUBMISSION JUST CAME THROUGH. UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, WE WOULD NOT ACCEPT LATE ENTRIES, BUT THIS PIECE WAS ENTERED ON-TIME AND UNFORTUNATELY GOT LOST IN TRANSLATION. OUR COUNCIL IS TO MEET THIS AFTERNOON AND RE-EVALUATE THE ALL OF THE ARTWORK. EXPECT THE RESULTS TO BE ANNOUNCED AT NOON TOMORROW. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

BEST OF LUCK,

MIRIAM YENDIS
PRESIDENT, N.A.A.A.

Quinn just stared at message and read it over and over. *Lost in translation?* She thought, and then her heart skipped a beat, *What if?* Quinn stopped herself right then and there. She knew better than to get her hopes up like that. There

were hundreds, maybe even thousands of entries, but still a small feeling lurked in her chest.

The next day came quickly, and Quinn sat at her computer, tingling with curiosity. Just like clockwork, at 12:00 on the dot, a catalog took over the monitor. The list was much shorter than the previous one, but still alphabetized:

Coran, Marietta
Divon, Jarrod
Douglas, Quinnlyn
Dyson, Morgan
Euroge, Stanley

As soon as Quinn eyes met the name she practically fell out of her chair. The odds of the lost piece of artwork belonging to her were about 3894 to 1. Utter disbelief was pouring down, and just as it did an instrumental pulse sounded to notify Quinn that an e-mail had come. With shaky hands, she pulled up her inbox and a crisp new e-mail appeared at the top, addressed to Quinnlyn Douglas from the N.A.A.A.:

Dear Ms. Douglas,

Congratulations on your stellar accomplishment! Your artwork had been selected from countless submissions from around the country to be represented at the National Amateur Art conference. . .

Here we go, Quinn thought, Let's go win this thing.

* * *

Miriam Yendis' voice boomed over the banquet hall. "Here in this room today, we have the most promising and brilliant young artists of our generation. I am truly amazed at all of the stunning submissions that we received this year, but alas we must narrow down the pool to a lone winner. So without further adieu, the winner of the 17th annual National Amateur Art Competition is--" Quinn held her breath and her sister Maisie squeezed her hand as Miriam Yendis peeled open the envelope.

"Celeste Brewer!"

A blur in her vision shifted gradually, and brought her eyes and mind back into focus. The windows framed a scenery of grey clouds and rain, the constant but light pitter-patter annoying her. A light smell of mildew and fresh grass crept into her nose, most probably from the window that was open a crack in the corner of the room. She didn't move anything other than her eyes, glancing at the small piece of hair that had moved into her vision, then to the clock on the wall, ticking away as an irking constant.

She sighed consciously, and the hand that had been supporting her chin and squishing her left cheek slumped onto the desk. She stared at the chalkboard, the lessons of the day erased, and no longer in mind, although that's what she had been here after-hours for; studying. Her hair fell into a frame of her field of vision as she looked down at the pencil in her hand, set on her lap, and she noticed the unhealthy ends of her blonde hair. She turned back to the window, resting her chin on her other hand as her eyes stayed stationary, eyeing the rain outside, the occasional bird, and her eyes finally landing on the clock, where she wrinkled her nose slightly. She grabbed the pencil case to her right, which was resting on a bag. She carefully placed her pencil in it, then the whole case in her bag, switching it for an umbrella. Pulling her bag on her shoulder, she stood up, pushed in her chair, and walked out quietly from the classroom, ignoring the open window.

Her footsteps echoed faintly in the empty hallway, even though she walked and moved delicately. She moved left into the stairwell, stepping down the large steps to the landing and turning around to walk down the other half of them, finally reaching the locker room of the school. Walking between the second and third of the seven rows of the lockers for the nearly six hundred students, she noticed, again the tips of her hair.

Bleached from countless summers, her hair tips, unlike the rest of herself, was not well put together. It stuck out from her school uniform, which colours' complimented darker hair types. The crisp white dress shirt and dark navy bow tied at the neckline restricted her as much as the flowing pleated skirt, and although she had heard complaints from her classmates about the blazer being very restraining, and far too over-the-top, she herself didn't notice, as her small stature made the thing look monstrous on her, and even so, she didn't mind the formality.

The refreshing, brisk air smelt stronger still of grass, the rain seeming to add colour to all the plant life around the school as she stepped out of the main doors. The walk to the train station was brief, as in a city as hyper-crowded as hers, there were train stations everywhere, and always within a short distance. Walking into the

terminal, and closing her umbrella, she quickly noticed a young girl staring at her, seemingly infatuated by her presence. She turned slightly and waved at the girl, who hid slightly behind her mother, and waved back, with a quiet shyness.

The ride was quieter still, hardly anyone breathing, although comfortably so, in a sense. There were a few students, but as this was an hour for the tired adults to reach home from work, they refrained from talking. She still held her bag against her shoulder as she sat, not getting comfortable like the others who were sitting. She stood up and stepped off the train precisely as the doors opened, her tiny feet guiding her small body aggressively through the thick hoards of people in the busiest station in town. The building she was searching for was on her immediate right, so she turned sharply, not minding the other people, and entered a door on the side, starting to climb stairs to reach the fifth floor. The pungent smell of bleach assaulted her nose, and the tension was thick in the air here, couples fighting for their last chances together in other rooms, and people trying to speak their minds in others.

“Enter on your right,” A soft, happy voice said, belonging to the secretary, “Doctor Mell is waiting for you.” She nodded lightly in the young woman’s direction, and walked slowly through the doorway into the next room. Stiff with an even stronger smell of cleaning product, the entire room looked perfect, the white couches placed symmetrically and the pillows sharp, but she couldn’t have felt more at home. She closed the door as per usual, marched in and plopped right down on one of the couches.

“Hello, Aries.” The woman across from her smiled warmly. “What would you like to talk about *today*?”

"Where were you?" said Flora, sounding less than impressed. Her dark brown hair was gathered into a messy side braid with pieces falling out around her face. She peered at me from behind her large tortoise shell glasses. She always looked messy, even today with her hands all covered in black ink and her green knit sweater with debatably deliberate holes in it. She didn't look gross; just layered and protected. She loved art so much, she became it.

"You were supposed to meet me at yellow door. I gave you directions," she said, more concerned than agitated. "I told you to turn off Fourth Street into the alley with all the murals, look for the one with the blue lady holding the orb thingy."

"Yes, you were very precise and clear in your directions, especially the part about the blue lady. Also, you never said anything about Fourth Street," I replied, half-heartedly poking fun at her scattered and abstract nature.

"I looked everywhere."

"Where did you end up?" she asked.

There was no use trying to explain, but I did anyways.

It began that morning when I woke up to a text from Flora that read, "Turn off into the alley with all the murals, look for the one of the blue lady holding the orb. You'll see a yellow door, go through it and meet me inside 12:30." She was always doing this, sending me her partially formed thoughts as directions. I love that girl, I really do but an address wouldn't hurt every now and then. I got out of my bed aware of my quest and that I must accomplish it. It was time to find Flora.

Step 1: Consult Marcus

Marcus is my roommate He's about 5'4 and has a funny accent. He emigrated from some Middle Eastern country that I can't pronounce when he was nineteen and has since grown into a beautiful hippy. He's also a semi hoarder and makes the apartment smell like oranges and rain. He's a pretty cool guy once you get used to his night terrors and the fact that he

carries tomato juice around with him everywhere he goes. I walked out of my room to see him making tea in the kitchen. The kettle began to make that high pitched whistling sound Marcus stared at it for about ten seconds before actually taking it off the stove. His reaction was delayed as usual.

"I been wake since four. You are meeting Flora today, yes?" asked Marcus.

"Mhm," I mumble.

"Flora very nice girl, Hudson very lucky. Where you meet?"

"She gave me directions to this weird hole in the wall place. You know Flora, normal coffee shops are just too mainstream."

"I not helping this time," said Marcus.

"Seriously? Come on, I know she always leaves you clues. I can't mess this up this time. I never found last week's place, this is really important Marcus," I replied. "You're just kidding right?"

"Not kidding, I have plants to water."

That was where the conversation ended. I knew it was no use arguing with him, he's very serious about his plants. Marcus has a vast understanding of many confusing things, Flora is sometimes one of those things. Marcus had become a very important guy because not only was he incredibly entertaining but sometimes he had great explanations about why things are the way they are.

Step 2: Do some serious Googling and make some lists

Flora's Favorite Places:

- The North Gardens: She has a tattoo on her wrist inspired by the roses that grow there; her mom used to take her there when she was a little girl.

- Herald's Used Books: She worked there every summer of high school and she loves books-particularly old ones because "they smell like vanilla and oak."
- Carmella's Italian Coffee Shop: I met her there and they've got some pretty fantastic donuts.

I created this list a while ago when I noticed that all the crazy adventures she'd take me on were in close proximity to these places. She never strayed too far from home, she just found new ways to see things she'd seen before. At this point it was 10:57 and I started to wonder if this search would be worth it.

Public Art/ Badass Graffiti near Flora's Favorite Places:

- The Lamp Man: Image portrays a man emerging from a lamp holding the sun in one hand and the moon in the other. It's not even a cool lamp, it's just your average household lamp. It's possibly a metaphor for good and bad but nobody really knows.
- She-elements: A feminist take on the elements earth, water, fire and air are personified as women in all different sizes and shapes, from all backgrounds and races.
- Mango Alley: It is called Mango Alley but it really has nothing to do with mangos. The sketchiest of all the options Mango Alley is basically just a bunch of vandalism in one place.

Step 3: Drive

I had done my research and it was time to drive. She-elements seemed to be the most sensible choice given the fact that Flora was a hard core feminist and the mural did include a blue lady. The only problem was that it was now 12:15 and I had to drive halfway across town. I drove for a while and then turned off Fourth into the alley with the mural. I parked my car. It was now 12:41 and got out and looked for the door. The rain was drizzling and the sky was gray, but the vividly painted murals seemed to light up my road. I saw the one that personified water

painted in all its glory and it's thin delicate hands possessing so much power and piercing blue eyes. That was when I saw Flora standing beside a yellow door smiling at me.

"Where were you? You were supposed to meet me at yellow door, I gave you directions," she said. "I told you to turn off Fourth Street into the alley with all the murals, look for the one with the blue lady holding the orb thingy."

"Yes, you were very precise and clear in your directions, especially the part about the blue lady. Also, you never said anything about Fourth Street. I looked everywhere." I smiled down at her and she smiled back.

"Where did you end up?" she sighed.

"Here with you and that's what matters." I said. That was when she opened the door.

Isolated and Invincible
Vivian McLean
Grade 8
Desert Sands Community School

I was doubtful. It had rained that morning and the grey clouds still covering the sky relentlessly hinted that they were not ready to leave. I hoped the bad weather held off for a bit at least. The winding dirt roads we travelled up were already slippery enough. We had slid once on the trail on the way up and it had been an experience I didn't want to relive especially because of how high we were up the mountain. I half wanted to turn back, like we had yesterday because of the fog. However, we were dead determined to get up this trying mountain sometime this weekend and this afternoon had been the only available time.

Eventually our truck reached the gate. Dad hopped out of the car with the key to unlock it and pushed it open so we could pass through. Just like every other time we had come, there was no one else here and we drove through the gate to about 20 yards away from the target stand. We opened the tailgate and prepared our gear, my dad opening his case as I grabbed the big foam target and hauled it to the stand. I walked back and put on my safety glasses and armguard as dad measured from the target and kicked makeshift shooting lines in the dirt with his muddy work boots.

And suddenly, we were in our own world. It was like we had closed off the rest of the universe. All the worries and issues swimming in my head suddenly vanished, and all that was left was the serenity that flooded the range every time I grasped my bow.

Isolated and Invincible
Vivian McLean
Grade 8
Desert Sands Community School

Dad allowed me to go first while he set up, so I grabbed my bow and opened the arrow case, grabbing one of the carbon staffs and checking it over. I quickly deemed it a perfectly fine arrow and approached my makeshift shooting line. I set one foot in front of it and one foot behind, shoulder-width apart. I then put the arrow to my bow, resting it on the riser and nocking it in between the finger rollers on my bowstring.

I corrected my posture and relaxed as I turned my head to look over my left shoulder at the familiar target. Then, I raised my arms until they were parallel to the ground, bow in hand. Grip comfortably in hand, I took a deep breath and started drawing back my bow with my right hand, using my back muscles until my right hand sat on the edge of my slightly grinning mouth. In that moment I was isolated and invincible, looking down the shaft of my arrow at the target before I unhooked the fingers of my right hand. I watched in fascination as the arrow flew away from me, as if in slow motion before it embedded itself into the foam of the target, making a soft “thunk.”

I stood there a moment, my empty bow in my left hand, and my right hand suspended by my face, still in the familiar comfortable stance, appreciating the moment before I broke out of the position and trance I had been in and walked back to the truck to fetch another arrow.

Jaida Barker

Grade 9

South Kamloops Secondary School

Flourishes in the Rain

1

Flourishes in the Rain

I stood there, in the midst of all the downpour, drenched by the beautiful rain which had graciously given me enough time to write down any remaining thoughts or dreams worth sharing. The words danced across the dampened parchment in great flourishes:

My dearest Clara,

My apologies for this letter being so terse, but I in fact am in a very difficult situation and there is simply no time to explain. Mummy loves you so much, and wishes the world that she could be there to see your smiling eyes at this very moment. Unfortunately, I cannot...

In every line, in every word, I can see her, picture her elegantly slender frame. She hasn't changed, she's merely grown into the young woman I always hoped she would.

...put into words the wondrous joy that washes over me every time I fix my weary eyes upon your incredible auburn locks (which remind me so much of those belonging to your father), your striking ocean blue eyes (much like those of your aunt Bea), and your teasing grin (which can only be that of my cheeky daughter). You mean everything to me Clara, that is why I am leaving everything I have to offer - my entire estate - in your hands, to do with as you please, my beloved daughter.

The phrases hurry and tangle, as time tugs much more fiercely upon my ear; time begs for haste, before these precious few words cost me my head. For I fear someone must be following me.

Little time remains of my pious existence, and I pray that the Lord may take me deeper in my faith, than my feet could ever wander. For I may be needing some faith, for what's about to come next.... I am saying goodbye. This goodbye is different, for it is not to say: so long, farewell, auf wiedersehen, or goodnight. It is goodbye... forever.

Just as my pen is about to leave the page, a pair of large, expert hands take me roughly from behind with a violent grip firmer than any I have ever encountered previous to this moment. Finally, this was it: "Goodbye Clara".

Kirsten Zubak

Grade 10

St. Ann's Academy

Deception

Click.

Click.

Click.

The guards tense, but they dare not turn their heads. The chance they may catch my fiery gaze, even through thick glass, keeps them docile. I sit back on the concrete floor, silencing my drumming talons, and grin. This is exactly what I need.

Calling on the fire within me, I cherish the spark's warmth. If only the guards did not carry scale-penetrating guns, I would gratefully send this place up in flames. Unfortunately, my fire must be contained – but my smoke will not.

Puffs sail through the air, as large as I can make breathing normally. The wisps weave their way through the high breathing holes in the barrier while the guards remain oblivious. A deadly smirk lights my face as the room around me disappears into eerie fog. After a moment, realization strikes the fools.

“Prepare yourselves, men!” rings through the holes of my glass barrier. A scramble of loading guns and flicking safeties off rings like the impending gunshots.

Or perhaps, they may not be so impending.

My deep chuckle booms, a distinct contrast to the guards' terrified gasps. If only they could see my shrinking form – that would make my day.

Kirsten Zubak

Grade 10

St. Ann's Academy

Deception

Gradually, my smoke dissipates, and I stand boldly, amber eyes inspecting this unfolding scene.

All guns shift in hesitancy the moment I am revealed. Where a giant, scaly monster should stand, there I am – a girl too young for her smoke-coloured hair and too human for her fire-filled eyes. A closed-mouth smile hides my fangs.

A minute passes. Tension snakes through the room as one guard finally lowers his weapon and exchanges it for a radio. “Sir, we have a situation in Containment Three. Over.”

“I’ll be right over,” the scratchy radio voice hurriedly replies.

I snigger, recognizing the voice. The guards raise their weapons higher. “Scary,” I comment, mindlessly brushing dust off my leather jacket.

While they gawk fearfully, I lick my lips. Canadian English tastes strange on my tongue, like an earthy herb. Hopefully my draconic accent does not slip through. My ability to understand and replicate foreign languages and accents has been widely admired; however, after a century of neglect, there is a chance it may backfire on me.

In the midst of the standoff, the door to my containment chamber slides open. An armoured higher-up strolls in. His impassive eyes swiftly analyse the taut scene. “What’s the situation?”

Kirsten Zubak

Grade 10

St. Ann's Academy

Deception

A painful pause grips the room. Finally, the guard who radioed in faces him. "Agent Ross, it appears we no longer have a dragon, but... a girl."

I smile arrogantly and offer a malicious wave. After a fearful gulp, the man glances anxiously at his commander.

Agent Ross smirks. "Let me guess. The dragon was there one moment, up in smoke the next and lo and behold, there's a person there after the dust settled?" At their stumped faces, he laughs incredulously. "Y'all never worked with dragons? Never heard they can switch places with a human?"

They are silent. Ross shakes his head in exasperation. "So, boys, looks like we've got a missing dragon on our hands. Smith, take the girl down to the questioning area. Find out where she's supposed to be."

Smith, the guard from before, glances nervously at me. "Yes, sir."

"Good. The rest of you, report to Agent Hoop. She'll direct you on where to go from here."

Promptly, I am released from the holding area. Some observe me suspiciously; others ignore me. Smith keeps his eyes downcast as he leads me to the door. Just before we depart, I catch Agent Ross' gaze. He winks; I smother a grin when I see the fiery amber peaking out of his contacts.

Kirsten Zubak

Grade 10

St. Ann's Academy

Deception

Soon Smith and I are on our own. As we travel through a vacant corridor, he hesitantly asks, "So, how does a human end up switching places with a dragon?"

I stop. Smith pauses, puzzled, and faces me. I leisurely approach him, placing a sharp, clawed hand on his shoulder. My lips curl into a vicious grin, revealing my razor-sharp fangs. Smoke drifts through them, and I blow it onto his horrified face.

"You!" He jerks back, but it is too late. Stumbling back into the wall, he groggily slurs, "What... what..."

As his eyelids droop, and he fights for consciousness, I snicker wickedly. "I never said I was human."

first words

Words trickle down into my ear,
inundated with a voice that forces my eyes to shudder closed,
and for every hair to stand on edge
and for my mind to go blank.

The surrounding whispers slow to a bearable point
and my mind lets go from the rapid vociferation
that had possessed a power capable
of slowing down my heart only to speed
it up...

up to the rate of a hummingbird's wings going so fast it made my head spin and go off the deep
end into my stomach and then jump back up into my throat where the beautiful voice made me
lose my speech.

It only took four words to turn my grey matter brain into white noise.
Four words had the power for me to huddle up into my head in bliss
no matter what they had said.

For a stranger to have a voice as soft as velvet and as rough as 30 grit sandpaper
mystified me.

When my mind cleared after its pithy daydreams
of how a person with such a exquisite voice could propagate so much superiority to make
cowards and heroes alike hide,
or how one voice could be so omnipotent as to paralyze thoughts
preventing anything from reaching the rest of my cerebellum,
the owner of the lovely, enchanting, mesmerizing voice
was looking down at me:

“Watch where you’re going.”

Bailey Schmidt
Grade 11
South Kamloops Secondary School

writer's block

One morning,
after waking up quite early
(I rather to spend my mornings sleeping in)
I decided to write something new.
All of my writing had become old and unappealing,
so I wrote
and I wrote,
till the late afternoon came and
nothing that sat loosely on the papers in
front of me made sense anymore.
A jumbled up language of words
fitting themselves into awkward rhyme schemes
and banal metaphors.
I had no idea what I was writing
about or why.
And after an unsated walk outside in the sun's heat,
I still didn't have an idea.
My writers block sat in my mind as a headache.
I wanted to write.
My head swarmed with ideas as I
thought of clever lines and
paradoxes to try
but as soon as my fingers wound themselves around the pen those thoughts stopped.
p o o f .
Gone like a wisp of a breath and it really sucked.
I wanted to write
but I had nothing to write about.

The sun shone through the trees, momentarily blinding me as I looked towards the sky. I was on my usual Sunday morning jog and couldn't help but notice my fellow neighbours doing their typical Sunday yardwork. Everything was the same around here and always had been. Mr. Bennett was working away in the garden, a few of the neighbourhood kids were mowing lawns and cranky old Mrs. Peterson was yelling at her husband again for letting the dog pee on her freshly planted petunias. I chuckled to myself and kept on my way.

Suddenly, out of the corner of my eye, something sparkled in the short, green grass. I slowed my jog and bent down to the ground to examine the object. A wedding ring. The small yet expensive looking diamond sparkled in the daylight, protected by a gold band. I looked around to see if anyone had noticed the ring and came to the conclusion that it was my finding. I slipped the ring in the pocket of my pants, stood up and continued my jog as if nothing had ever happened.

Later on that afternoon, I reached into my pocket and took out the ring to further examine it. There was no doubt it was a beautiful ring with great value. I knew I could make some money off of it or even keep it for myself. As I rotated the ring in the light, I noticed an engraving on the inside of the band. It read, "Today, tomorrow, always. Walter and Patricia Bennett." My heart sunk deep into my chest as I realized who the ring belonged to. About 3 years ago, Mr. Bennett had lost his wife of 46 years to cancer. Every Sunday, he would work in his wife's garden to keep it "just as beautiful as she was" as he would always explain whenever he was asked. As beautiful as the ring was, I knew what I had to do.

When Monday morning came, I made my way to Mr. Bennett's house with the ring placed in a little white box. I knocked three times before quickly making my way across the street and back into my house. Through the window, I watched Mr. Bennett open the door and look around, confused. His eyes shifted towards the ground as he bent down to pick up the box. A few moments later, his eyes filled with tears as he frantically looked around, trying to find out who had returned the precious memory of his wife. As he closed his door, I let out a sigh of content. Nothing and no one ever really changed around here, except for me.